

Study on
Regional Political Processes and Actors, Donor
Activities and Strategies for TVET in Asia

Final Draft

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Acronyms

AADCP	ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program
ACMECS	Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (Thailand & CLMV)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AECI	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AEI	Australian Education International
AFD	French Agency for International Development Cooperation
ALMM	ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting
AMBDC	ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation
AMS	ASEAN Member State
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT	ASEAN plus Three
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
APSC	ASEAN Political Security Community
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
AUN	ASEAN University Network
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development Cooperation
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BIMP-EAGA	Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CIDA	Canadian Agency for International Development Cooperation
CLMV	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam
DANIDA	Danish Agency for International Development Cooperation
DFID	UK Government Department for International Development
DGCS	Italian Agency for International Development Cooperation
EAS	East Asia Summit
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education For All
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GIZ	German Agency for International Development Cooperation
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program
HE(I)	Higher Education (Institute)
HOM	SEAMEO High Officials Meeting
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAI	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDCF	IAI Development Cooperation Forum
IMT-GT	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle

ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japanese Agency for International Development Cooperation
KOICA	Korean (RoK) Agency for International Development Cooperation
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MPAC	Masterplan on ASEAN Connectivity
MP3EI	Master Plan for Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesia's Economic Development
MRA(R)	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NDF	Nordic Development Fund
NDG	Narrowing the Development Gap
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation
(N)QF	(National) Qualification Framework
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
NZAID	New Zealand's Agency for International Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
P4-TTP	Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership
PNG	Papua New Guinea
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
QA(S)	Quality Assurance (System)
RoK	Republic of Korea
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDC	Swiss Agency for International Development Cooperation
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
SEAMES	SEAMEO Secretariat
SHRDC	SAARC Human Resource Development Centre
SLOM	Senior Labour Officials Meeting
SME	Small and medium size Enterprise
SOMED	ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education
SRA	Skills Recognition Agreement
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	US Agency for International Development Cooperation
WG	Working Group
WB	The World Bank
WPE	ASEAN Education Ministers' Work Plan

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Introduction

Background

In February 2013, a BMZ/GIZ workshop was conducted on initiative of the BMZ in order to elaborate starting points for a better dovetailing of joint bilateral and regional portfolios in Asia focusing on TVET and labour market issues. Within the scope of the BMZ/GIZ portfolio in charge there are demands for a better utilization of synergies. For future assignments the added value of projects on regional level should be developed and implemented more systematically. During the workshop, this combination of bilateral and regional portfolios was mutually perceived as a special characteristic of the German commitment to international development cooperation. At the same time, however, the need for further systematisation and enhancement of both the existing portfolio as well as future assignments was agreed. This study, which has been assigned by the GIZ Competence Centre for *Labour Market and TVET*, shall provide a sound contribution to this process.

Objectives

The study examines the main trends and political developments (processes and actors) of regional associations in Asia with regard to direct and indirect impacts on TVET. An additional focus is set on corresponding processes of Asian countries concerning those regional trends and developments. In conclusion, the study also analyses the portfolios of prominent bilateral and multilateral donors with regard to Skills Development and TVET and identifies relevant points of reference to respective regional trends and processes.

Scope and Method

The study is based on an extensive desk research surveying relevant, reliable and up-to-date primary and secondary sources of information on policies, actors, processes as well as recent achievements and projected targets concerning the development of labour market conditions and corresponding workforce skills development (HRD) strategies in Asia. Prominent focus has been given to ASEAN and its outreaching networks both, in the broader Pacific region (APEC, APT, EAS) and at interregional level (ASEM).

Already the sheer amount of information resources and publications available with regard to the study's particular focus suggests that corresponding trends and developments are characterized by apparently higher dynamics in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its outreaching networks than, for example, in the South Asian variant of regional cooperation, SAARC.

The first chapter will briefly show that this has its roots in the different geo-political contexts, which spurred the emergence of both organisations and considerably influenced their respective cooperative settings, joint visions and targets.

While SAARC's commitment to address regional labour market issues and TVET has basically resulted into the establishment of its Human Resource Development Centre, striving to become a knowledge hub for SAARC members' policy formulations, ASEAN's

efforts in this direction are much more sophisticated and inextricably linked to its broader vision to build the legal, economic and socio-cultural framework for a supra-national community of nations with some reference points to the concept of the European Union.

Labour market and TVET issues basically manifest as topics under the overarching term Human Resource Development (HRD) in the ASEAN policy framework. Actually, however, relevant strategies, priorities, processes and activities appear subordinate to different economic, socio-cultural and, in some cases, even operational aspects with a correspondingly complex vertical and lateral distribution of sectoral responsibilities and institutional divisions. By first outlining and then tracing ASEAN's policy framework and corresponding institutional settings the study thus analyses relevant trends, developments and activities under each of the different aspects and tries to pinpoint key gaps and challenges that partly seem to emerge between goals and operative settings.

The survey for this part of the study was guided by the following six given questions:

- What are the relevant strategic directions and goals regarding TVET, migration and labour market?
- Which are the envisaged steps or schedules for reform activities and their implementation?
- Which are the structures for decision-making processes?
- Which processes are envisaged and which have been implemented so far?
- How are single ASEAN member countries engaged with particular regional processes and what are their policy focuses regarding labour market development and TVET?
- Are there any other relevant regional associations in Asia?

The last part of the study is dedicated to the portfolios of prominent bilateral and multilateral donors with regard to Skills Development and TVET. The identification of relevant points of reference to respective regional trends and processes was guided by the following set of given questions:

- Which emphasis put different donors on the respective topics
- What are their basic strategies and future plans
- Which are their prominent modes of delivery (bilateral/regional)
- To what extent does their commitment refer to regional trends and political developments in Asia?
- Are there particular partnering structures?

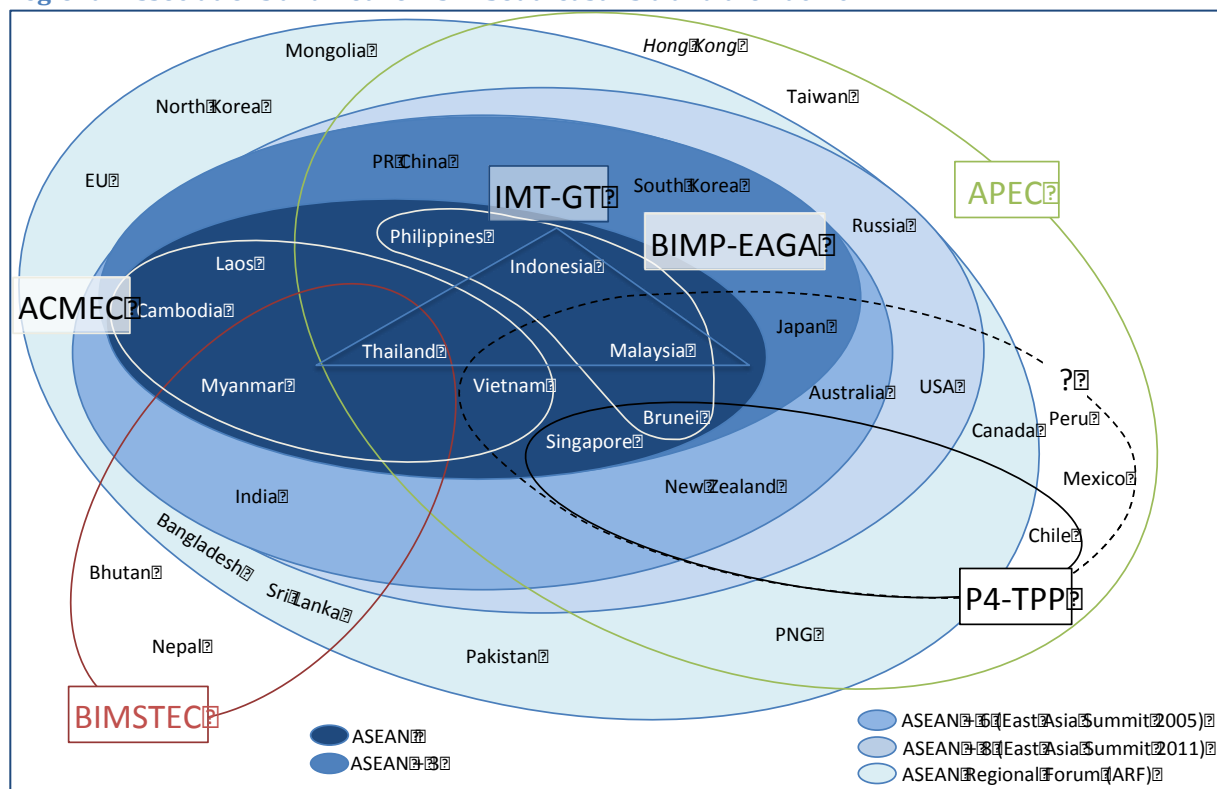
Regionalism in ASIA

During the last two decades following the end of the Cold War a wave of political initiatives has been emerging all over the world prompting regional integration of countries formerly just weakly associated due to their subdominant role in the global geopolitical paradigm of a bipolar superpower system.

The emergence of new regional formations and international trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the development of the European Single Market, seems to demonstrate a fundamental awareness on the increasing relevance of a region-by-region based political co-cooperation for maintaining and spurring joint economic competitiveness of its members.

With the fundamental shift of many Asian countries from communist regimes to market economies coinciding with the quick-rising economic and geopolitical upturn of China and India, both new political forums as well as numerous bilateral and regional trade deals have mushroomed across the Pacific, particularly in the East and South East Asian hemisphere¹.

Regional Associations and Networks in Southeast Asia and the Pacific



However, whilst the European Union can be characterized as a result of regionalism, which draws its post war concept of regional identity on a long-lasting process of

¹ According to a recent study, by early 2011 individual ASEAN countries were implementing, negotiating or conducting studies on 59 bilateral free trade agreements with other countries or groupings (vgl. Cédric Dupont, Graduate Institute of International Studies (2011), What role for regional economic organizations in a fragmented trade world? The case of ASEAN; p. 10)

democratic institutionalization and economic homogenization as a springboard for a step-wise political integration, regionalism in Asia has strong and still valid roots in an informal diplomatic mechanism of divergently developing post-colonialist nations, many of them governed by harsh authoritarian regimes, trying to balance their conflicting interests and manage their, partly severe, bilateral tensions.

This applies to both major regional initiatives in Asia: the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, which was founded as early as in 1967 by the foreign ministers of five South East Asian countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand as well as the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**, established in 1985 by the governments of Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Initiatives for Regional Cooperation: ASEAN and SAARC

In both regional initiatives for multilateral collaboration the founding principles focused on “the promotion of regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among member countries”. Whilst the ASEAN charter stipulated the “adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter while further emphasising the need for economic and social cooperation”, SAARC’s founding document similarly advocated “economic, social and technical cooperation” as the key strategy basically eschewing any formal mechanism of conflict management that could challenge the “respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, (and) non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.”

Different Models of Regionalism in Asia

	ASEAN	SAARC	APEC	CAREC
Historical roots	Established in 1967, by foreign ministers of 5 South East Asian countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand	Established in 1985 by the governments of Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka	Established in 1989 on initiative of Australia by ministers of 12 Pacific rim countries (incl. 6 ASEAN nations US, Canada; Japan, ROK and NZ) as a “forum” for “member economies”	Established in 1997 on ADB initiative as a coordination forum for planning ministries of 10 Central Asian countries*
Founding Purpose	Promote national consolidation of member states in geopolitical precarious situation (shielding from communism, foster mutual trust)	Promote peace and stability in the region through multilateral economic and social-cultural collaboration	Promote free trade and economic cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region after the end of Cold War and establish new markets beyond Europe	Create an institutional framework for facilitating economic cooperation and donor coordination in the Central Asian Region
(Current) Vision & Mission	Build supra-national community: “One Vision, One Identity, One Caring and Sharing Community” with EU as a geopolitical role model to balance PRC’s increasing dominance in the region	Promotion of people’s welfare through joint accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development. Strengthening “selective self-reliance” of SA region	Raise living standards and education levels through sustainable economic growth of member economies based on 3 pillars: 1. Trade and Investment Liberalisation 2. Business Facilitation 3. Economic and Technical Cooperation	Improve living standards and reduce poverty in CAREC countries through more efficient and effective regional economic cooperation
Trend & Dynamics	Expansion to 10 (11) member states. Since 2008 a legal entity with strategic focus on: (i) community building and integration (internally); (ii) becoming a central power in external political, economic, social and cultural relations (centrality through ASEAN++)	Difficulties to overcome tensions due to conflicting bi-lateral threat perceptions, disruptive role of extra-regional players (US, PRC, USSR), and India’s ambivalence to multi-lateralism. In 2007 Afghanistan joined SAARC	Expansion to 21 members (incl. Taiwan and Hong Kong, PRC, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Russia, Vietnam et.al.) FTA’s criticised for limited success; Bids of a dozen other nations for membership were halted from 1993 onwards. Increasing competition by more ASEAN centric ASEAN plus x initiatives (ASEAN+3, ASEAN+6/EAS)	Programs focusing on financing infrastructure projects and improving policy environment in priority areas (trade, transport, energy). ADB provides operational framework for investment and donor coordination

So far, however, international scholars have identified different success regarding pace and dynamics in the process of economic, political and cultural integration and growth.

Unlike ASEAN, the SAARC states were rated as failing to work out an informal conflict avoidance norm, as the region experienced some armed conflicts, most notably the

Kargil War between the nuclear powers India and Pakistan in 1999. Border spats, like the armed clashes between India and Bangladesh in April 2001, also added to the political instability of the region, while SAARC's economic development remained hostage to mutual political suspicions. Pakistan's denial of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India and its declared intention to have limited bilateral trade, until such time that progress is made on the Kashmir issue finds its complement in India's restrictive bilateral trade policy maintaining an array of hidden barriers, which leave little room for Pakistani exports to its neighbour. Apart from banning products from each other, both nations have also restricted transport links and business contact with each other².

Also within ASEAN, the capabilities of mutual cooperation, internal and external conflict management were widely perceived as weak and ineffective for a long period of time by many external observers³. Diverse bilateral agreements and overlapping sub-regional alliances, both among ASEAN member states as well as between single ASEAN members and external partners, nurtured reasonable doubts that ASEAN could become more than a talk shop of government bodies just leading to vague non-committal statements and lacking a mechanism of relevant sanctions in cases of disregard at local levels.

On the other hand, significant economic growth in most of its member countries, before and after the financial crisis in 1997, promoted ASEAN's international reputation as one of the most successful regional organisations in the developing world⁴. International attention grew steadily when ASEAN, during a period of continued expansion in the 1990s⁵, began to reinvent itself as a central agglomeration of potential economic and geopolitical power in the Pacific region.

This process started in 1989 with the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), on initiative of Australia. At that time, an uncertain future direction of the world trading system fuelled fears that the Southeast Asian economies could be discriminated from superseding trading blocs in Europe and North America. Providing incentives to major economies like Japan and the US to strengthen their ties with South East Asian economies, the APEC promised a way for ASEAN member states to position themselves at the core of a larger regional project.

In 1994, also ASEAN's aspirations as a future geopolitical player were spurred by the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which then was rated as a

² Syeda Sana Rahman (2011), 'Same but Different?' Comparing the ASEAN and SAARC Frameworks, ISAS Working Paper No. 123, 7 March 2011, retrieved at: www.gdnet.org

³ This refers in particular to the failures of the ASEAN community to tackle geopolitical threats and regional humanitarian crisis situations such as Vietnam's military intervention in Cambodia in mid 1970s, the escalating East Timor conflict within Indonesia, Myanmar's admission to ASEAN in the late 1990s, the tsunami disaster in 2004, as well as the brutal outbreak of ethnic rivalries in southern Thailand. (see e.g.: Catherine Drummond, Non-interference and the Responsibility to Protect: Canvassing the Relationship between Sovereignty and Humanity in Southeast Asia, at: www.polsis.uq.edu.au/.../articledrummond2.pdf or Noal M. Morada's UNISCI Discussion Paper (2006), R2P Roadmap in South East Asia: Challenges and Prospects, retrieved from: revistas.ucm.es/index.php/UNIS/article/.../28105)

⁴ According to Michael Plummer and Ganesha Wignaraja (2009), Intra-ASEAN trade grew from 17.9 per cent in 1980 to 26.9 per cent (of total trade) in 2007 (Integration Strategies for ASEAN: Alone, Together, or Together with Neighbours?' in: Joseph Francois, Pradumna B. Rana and Ganesha Wignaraja (eds), Pan-Asian Integration: Linking East and South Asia, (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.165.

⁵ by integrating the four 'CLMV countries', Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

“successful attempt to institutionalise how big powers, most notably the US and China operate and interact in the region.”⁶

Despite a widespread concern that the ARF still hasn’t stopped struggling to effectively operationalize one of its core founding principles, namely “to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific”, scholars admit that the ARF has at least notably “extended ASEAN’s reach into the larger region and appears to have socialized both the US and China into an ‘Asian-style’ multilateral interaction in the security realm”.⁷ Meanwhile the ARF comprises in total 27 countries including, the ASEAN-10, India, Japan, Australia, Russia, China, the US, and the EU, among others.

In December 1997, facing the Asian financial crisis, the expanded ASEAN-10 started to strengthen its links with the leading economic countries in North East Asia, China, Japan and South Korea by establishing the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) forum for periodical high level government summits aiming at expanding cooperation, particularly on economic and trade issues. Eventually, the APT forum became institutionalized in 1999.

Growing self-confidence and trust in its self-efficacy towards becoming a politically, economically and socio-culturally integrative alliance of aspiring nations eventually led the ten ASEAN member states to creating a rules-based regime for ASEAN by signing the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II in 2003. This treaty endorsed the creation of a comprehensive ASEAN Community, including a Security Community to “bring ASEAN’s political and security cooperation to a higher plane”, an Economic Community “to create a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region”, and a Socio-Cultural Community envisaging “a Southeast Asia bonded together in partnership as a community of caring societies”.⁸ Under the overarching Slogan “One Vision, One Identity, One Caring and Sharing Community”, eventually in 2007 ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Charter by translating the Concord’s vision and mission into a constitutional form and established ASEAN as a legal entity according to international laws. After being ratified by all member states the new Charter came into force in December 2008.

While ASEAN with its new charter confidently proclaimed to “maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners”⁹, the SAARC members decided to broaden its cooperative setting towards an international political platform for conflict resolution in the region by admitting Afghanistan to become the eighth member of the grouping (in 2007) and granting an observer status to China, Japan, Australia, the European Union (EU), Iran, Republic of Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and the US (2005-2007).

Interestingly, Myanmar, already a member of ASEAN, has expressed interest in upgrading its status from an observer to a full member of SAARC, while Russia is interested in becoming an observer.¹⁰

⁶ Syeda Sana Rahman (2011), ‘Same but Different?’ Comparing the ASEAN and SAARC Frameworks, ISAS Working Paper No. 123, 7 March 2011, retrieved at: www.gdnet.org

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (7 October 2003), <http://www.asean.org/news/item/declaration-of-asean-concord-ii-bali-concord-ii>

⁹ ASEAN Charter Article 2.15

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asian_Association_for_Regional_Cooperation

Thus, unlike ASEAN, SAARC's interaction with external partners seems to focus more strongly on the potential reduction of mutual suspicion among its own members. Potentially, the expansion might also represent "an opportunity for SAARC, as an economic bloc, to develop beneficial trade relationships amongst these external observers", though this appears as being not sufficiently determined yet.¹¹

Recent achievements, such as the establishment of the SAARC University in New Delhi and the launch of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF), a funding mechanism for social, economic and infrastructure projects in the region, indicate that SAARC's integrative focus currently emphasizes options of socio-cultural cooperation rather than a harmonized political and economic community comparable to the ASEAN vision.

SAARC's Human Resource Development Centre

A sample "manifestation of the determination of the people of South Asia to work together towards finding solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding" is SAARC 's Human Resource Development Centre (SHRDC) in Islamabad, which was established as early as in 1988 with the objective "to undertake research, impart trainings and workshops, disseminate information on HRD issues and advise the Member States on HRD related policies and strategies."¹²

In 2004, the SHRDC's was assigned also the role to coordinate a "network of centre's of higher learning, training and Skill Development Institutes (SDI) across South Asia." In 2007, SAARC's Technical Committee on Human Resource Development (TCHRD) relating to education and skills development was shifted to the SHRDC.

The Centre's mission is "to promote knowledge inputs and multiple skills that comprise a wide range of work-related knowledge, technical and behavioural skills in the SAARC region." Based on this mission the SHRDC focuses on the following objectives:

- develop capacity of government functionaries, policy-makers, trainers and development practitioners of the SAARC Member States by organizing training programmes on human resource development (HRD);
- provide forum for professional interaction and policy advocacies on HRD for achieving robust, equitable and sustainable growth;
- conduct research on HRD issues;
- Provide forum for professional interaction on HRD;
- provide service and support to institutions/organizations for promoting HRD activities in the SAARC region;

¹¹ Syeda Sana Rahman (2011), *ibid*

¹² All quotations and information provided in this section refers to SAARC HRD CENTRE's Annual Report 2011, www.shrhc.org

- disseminate information on HRD through seminars, conferences, symposiums and workshops, so as to share experiences on the implementation of HRD programmes at regional level and;
- bring out publications on HRD.

Correspondingly, the functions of the centre are:

- to stimulate activities through networking of institutions, information and knowledge;
- to develop linkages with the Nodal Points designated by the Member States, and also with the existing institutions in the region and bank upon their backup support;
- to prepare directory of research institutions and experts in the area of Human Resource Development (HRD) in the region;
- to collate HRD data as well as data on Socio-Economic Indicators of the region;
- to review HRD policies and strategies of the SAARC Member Countries and undertake need assessments;
- to facilitate exchange of experiences of Member States in the area of Human Resource Development; and
- to build capacity and impart trainings to HRD experts, policymakers and functionaries

With a total amount of 32 staff members¹³ and an annual budget of in total of US\$ 639,065.60 for the year 2011 (US\$ 392,511.60 for the institutional cost and US\$ 246,554 for program cost) SHRDC's capacity to serve a total population of around 1.6 billion seems somewhat limited. In terms of expenditures only 62 per cent of the total budget allocated could be utilized in 2011 (49% on institutional expenditures and 82% on programme expenditures).

SHRDC's plan for the year 2012 included the following activities:

Training Programmes

- i. Training Programme on HRD - The Most Effective Tool to eliminate Child Labour in South Asia (Carried forward from 2011 to 2012)
- ii. Training Programme on Millennium Development Goals in the SAARC Region: Progress, Prospects and Way Forward
- iii. Training Programme on Food Security Situation in South Asia: Problems and Prospects

¹³ incl. drivers, gardeners, cleaning and other service personnel

Workshops

- i. Development Strategies to Mitigate Employment Problems in SAARC Region
- ii. SAARC Development Goals: Commitments, Achievements and Challenges

Research Programmes

- i. Study on “Human Trafficking Situation in the SAARC Region: Bridging the Gaps”
- ii. Study on “Role of Microfinance Services in Poverty Alleviation and Human Resource Development in the SAARC Region”
- iii. Study on “Public/Civil Service Commissions of SAARC Member States” A collaborative study by SHRDC and FPSC, Pakistan (On the directive of SAARC Secretariat)

SHRDC Publications

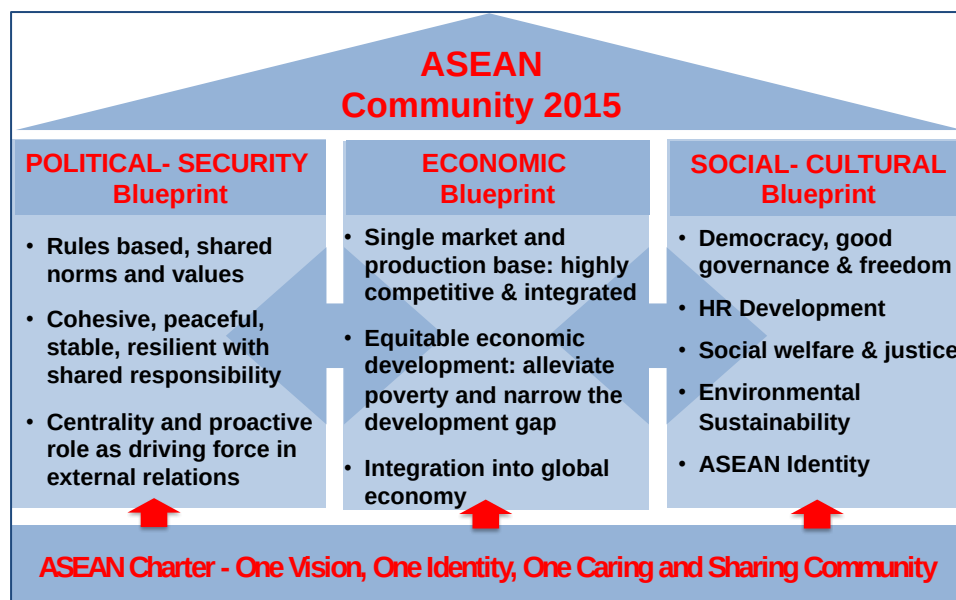
- i. SAARC Journal for Human Resource Development (SJHRD) Theme: Effective HRD in the SAARC Region: Problems, Policies and Prospects
- ii. Database Development on Macro-economic Profiles and HRD Indicators in the SAARC Region
- iii. Directory on HRD Institutions and Experts in the SAARC Region
- iv. SHRDC Newsletter (Biannual)
- v. SHRDC Annual Report to be placed on SHRDC Website

Other Programmes

- i. Interaction of SHRDC Professionals and Director’s Meetings with the HRD Institutions in the SAARC Region.

ASEAN's Vision and its Community Building Strategy

While the ASEAN Charter defined the goals, common objectives and principles of the new ASEAN community and clarifies its structure, core mechanisms and operational settings, a detailed policy framework, named “ASEAN Community Blueprints”, has been formulated and adopted for each of its community building strategies:



The Blueprints provide policies for implementing the three integral pillars of the ASEAN vision, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), by the year 2015.

Basically, each Blueprint specifies core sets of community relevant action areas, which are derived from the respective goals and objectives of the ASEAN Charter. For each of their action areas the blueprints formulate priority actions, set targets and provide timelines for the implementation of corresponding activities. The strategic plans are complemented by binding specifications on implementation mechanisms, resources such as facilities for research and capacity building support, communication as well as review mechanisms.

Additionally, the ASEAN Roadmap 2009-2015 integrates and ratifies the three Blueprints including also an additional work plan for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI Work Plan 2009-2015) into a single policy tool and stipulates “each ASEAN Member State (to) ensure its timely implementation”¹⁴.

¹⁴ ASEAN Roadmap 2009-2015, www.asean.org

ASEAN Charter Article 1:

The Purposes of ASEAN are:

1. To maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region;
2. To enhance regional resilience by promoting greater political, security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation;
3. To preserve Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction;
4. To ensure that the peoples and Member States of ASEAN live in peace with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment;
5. To create a single market and production base which is stable, prosperous, highly competitive and economically integrated with effective facilitation for trade and investment in which there is free flow of goods, services and investment; facilitated movement of business persons, professionals, talents and labour; and free flow of capital;
6. To alleviate poverty and narrow the development gap within ASEAN through mutual assistance and cooperation;
7. To strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with due regard to the rights and responsibilities of the Member States of ASEAN;
8. To respond effectively, in accordance with the principle of comprehensive security, to all forms of threats, transnational crimes and transboundary challenges;
9. To promote sustainable development so as to ensure the protection of the region's environment, the sustainability of its natural resources, the preservation of its cultural heritage and the high quality of life of its peoples;
10. To develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community;
11. To enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to opportunities for human development, social welfare and justice;
12. To strengthen cooperation in building a safe, secure and drug-free environment for the peoples of ASEAN;
13. To promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building;
14. To promote an ASEAN identity through the fostering of greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region; and
15. To maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive.

ASEAN Charter Article 2:

ASEAN and its Member States shall act in accordance with the following Principles:

- (a) respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all ASEAN Member States;
- (b) shared commitment and collective responsibility in enhancing regional peace, security and prosperity;
- (c) renunciation of aggression and of the threat or use of force or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law;
- (d) reliance on peaceful settlement of disputes;
- (e) non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States;
- (f) respect for the right of every Member State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion;
- (g) enhanced consultations on matters seriously affecting the common interest of ASEAN;
- (h) adherence to the rule of law, good governance, the principles of democracy and constitutional government;
- (i) respect for fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of social justice;
- (j) upholding the United Nations Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law, subscribed to by ASEAN Member States;
- (k) abstention from participation in any policy or activity, including the use of its territory, pursued by any ASEAN Member State or non-ASEAN State or any non-State actor, which threatens the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political and economic stability of ASEAN Member States;
- (l) respect for the different cultures, languages and religions of the peoples of ASEAN, while emphasising their common values in the spirit of unity in diversity;
- (m) the centrality of ASEAN in external political, economic, social and cultural relations while remaining actively engaged, outward-looking, inclusive and non-discriminatory; and
- (n) adherence to multilateral trade rules and ASEAN's rules-based regimes for effective implementation of economic commitments and progressive reduction towards elimination of all barriers to regional economic integration, in a market-driven economy.

Institutional Framework¹⁵

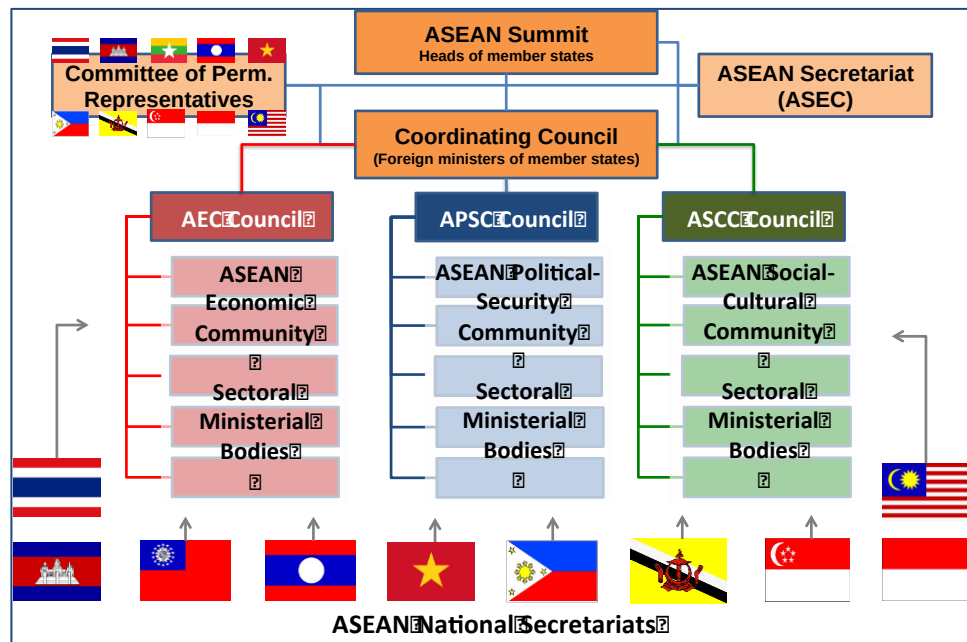
The ASEAN Charter defines areas of competence for key ASEAN bodies and their relationship with one another in pursuit of building the regional community as proposed in the ASEAN Vision.

The highest decision making body is the ASEAN Summit consisting of the government heads of each member state, who shall meet biannually. All subaltern decision making bodies are structured to reflect the three pillars for an ASEAN Community envisioned in the 2003 Bali Concord II and adopted by the ASEAN Charter.

The ASEAN Coordinating Council consists of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and also meets biannually. As suggested by its name, this body is responsible for coordinating

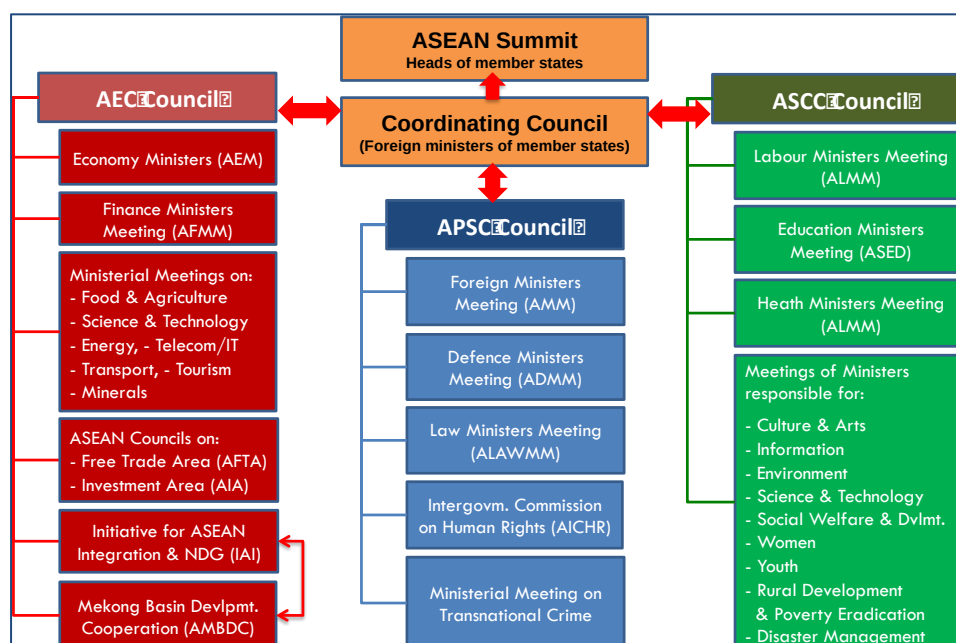
¹⁵ Parts of this chapter have been compiled from documents published by Forum-Asia.org, retrieved from: <http://www.eduinitiatives.org/sites/default/files/Module%201%20-%20Understanding%20ASEAN.pdf>

implementation of the agreements and decisions made at the ASEAN Summit and directed to Ministerial bodies working under the three ASEAN Community Councils.



The ASEAN Community Councils are made up of senior government ministers (or their representatives) from across different sectors. Each member state decides on its national representation for each of the Council's meetings. These Councils consist of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Council, the ASEAN Economic Community Council, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council. Each council coordinates and implements decisions from the ASEAN Summit and submits reports and recommendations for consideration.

Under the purview of the relevant ASEAN Community Council there are a range of ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies, which each bring together the ministers of specific sectors in periodical meetings. For example, the labour ministers of all the member countries are making up one Sectoral Ministerial Body: named "Labour Ministers Meeting".



Although the labour sector, together with the education and health sectors, has been subsumed into the socio-cultural pillar, which is represented by the ASCC Council, there is an awareness that “labour sector issues figure in all three Community Blueprints of ASEAN’s 2009-2015 roadmap, as summarized below:”¹⁶

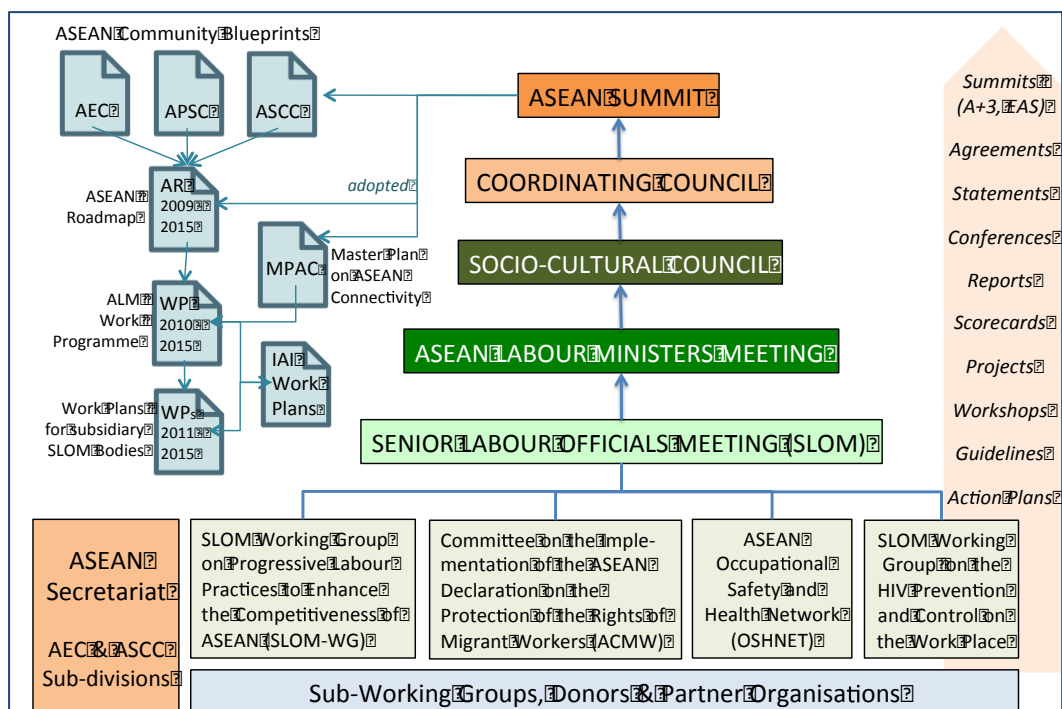
ASEAN Community	Labour Sector Actions in Community Blueprints
Political-Security	- Strengthen criminal justice responses to trafficking in persons - Protect victims of trafficking
Economic	- Facilitate movement through issuance of visas and employment passes of business persons and skilled labour - Work toward recognition of professional qualifications - Complete negotiations of, develop new, and implement mutual recognition arrangements - Strengthen human resource development and capacity building in the area of services - Develop core competencies and qualifications in priority services occupations - Strengthen active labour market program capacities in member states
Socio-Cultural	- Invest in human resource development - Promote decent work - Strengthen entrepreneurship skills - Provide social welfare and protection against possible negative effects of globalisation - Protect and promote rights of migrant workers

Thus, they are strongly influenced also by respective subsequent policy directions and agreements of the other community pillars, such as the “Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity” or the Work Plan of the “Initiative for ASEAN Integration” (IAI), both reflecting ambitious targets concerning a free flow of services and skilled labour, which are coordinated through the AEC. An operational alignment of such cross-pillar issues might be challenged by the institutional setting, since each Ministerial body shall help to

¹⁶ ASEAN Labour Ministers Work Programme 2010-2015, www.asean.org

work out agreements and decisions from the ASEAN Summit, and submit their work plans, reports or corresponding recommendations to their respective Community Councils.

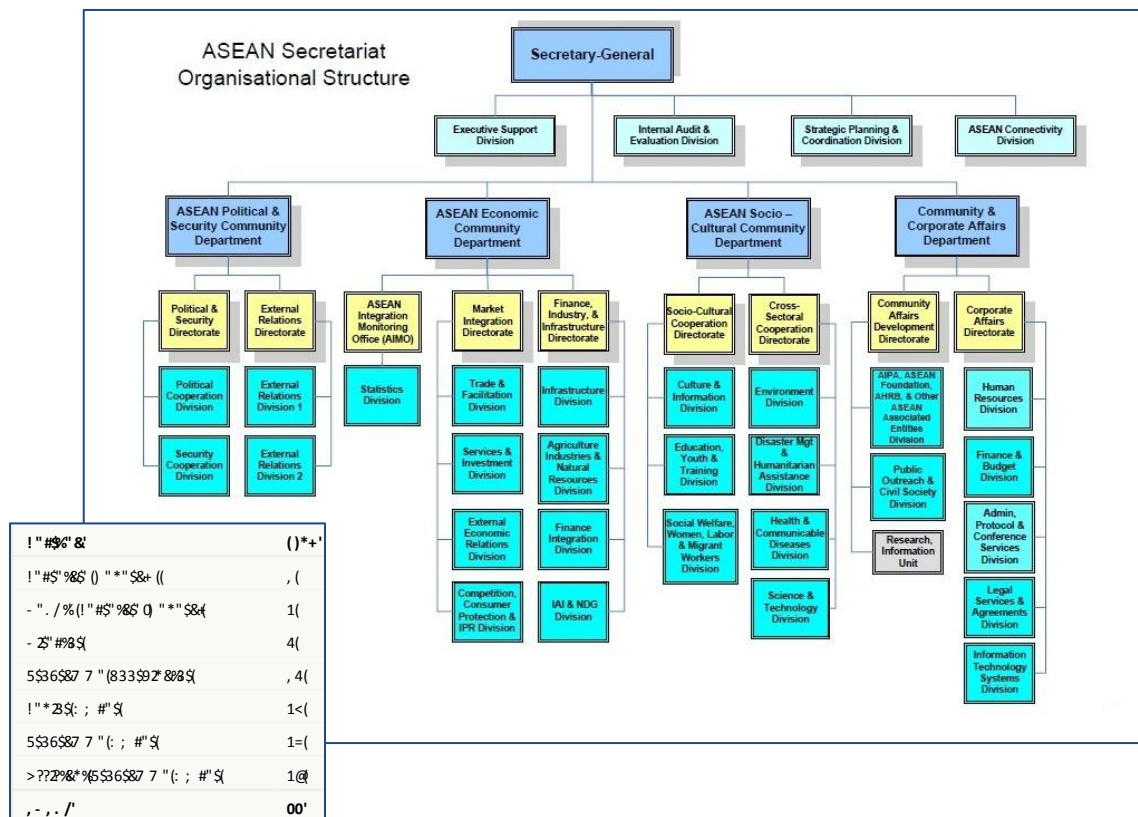
For this, the ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies get operative assistance through relevant senior officials who, with regard to their work plans, eventually also have to coordinate different working groups and committees dealing with the details of different sector specific tasks. The Senior Labour Officials, for example, delegate their work for implementing their work plans on the Socio-Cultural Blueprint to four sub-ordinate bodies (see chart below).



Additionally, the Charter establishes that each member state shall have a Permanent Representative to ASEAN with the rank of Ambassador. A corresponding committee is based in Jakarta. These representatives shall collectively support the work of the ASEAN Community Councils and ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies, and for this coordinate with the ASEAN National Secretariats and the ASEAN Secretariat. The Committee of Permanent Representatives shall also facilitate cooperation with external partners, assisting in the Charter's goal of securing a more united stance at the multilateral level.

A special task force, directly working under the Committee of Permanent Representatives, is responsible for aligning the policy documents and work plans of the Initiative of ASEAN Integration (IAI) with the particular interests of the governments of CLMV-countries. The IAI is a cross-sector initiative under the Economic Community Council for "Narrowing the Development Gap" (NDG) in ASEAN. It basically provides a framework for regional assistance and cooperation supporting CLMV countries to meet ASEAN-wide targets and commitments towards realizing the ASEAN Community. For this, the IAI Work Plan aligns the key programme areas of the three Blueprints with particular needs of the CLMV countries and accordingly refers also to a particular section in the ASEAN Road Map.

Generally, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) shall support all implementation processes towards the ASEAN community and has a corresponding organisational structure. Its basic function is “to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities”.



Accordingly, ASEC's vision is “to become the nerve centre of a strong and confident ASEAN Community (...) by 2015” and its mission focuses on the task to initiate, facilitate and coordinate ASEAN stakeholder collaboration in realising the purposes and principles of ASEAN as reflected in the ASEAN Charter”.

However, with barely a hundred personnel as the total number of staff and an operational budget of 15,763 Mio. USD (in 2012), the Secretariat appears to be “severely challenged” by lack of funding and adequate human resource. For example: “For the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC), which needs massive investment in terms of planning, knowledge, technology, regulations, coordination and finance, the ASEAN Secretariat employs only two officers.”¹⁷

It is also not clear from the organisational structure how crucial crosscutting issues among different departments and directorates (e.g. those between economy and labour) and even those among different sectoral divisions under one department (such as the collaboration between labour and education under ASEC's Socio-Cultural Community Department) are covered and managed.

¹⁷ ISEAS Institute of South East Asian Studies (2012), Sanchita Basu Das / Termsak Chalermpananupap, ASEAN in Paradox, p. 7, retrieved from: <http://asc.iseas.edu.sg/about-us/home/item/175-asean-in-paradox>

This and some other structural weaknesses in the institutional setting of ASEAN's current community building process may be reflected in ASEAN's HRD relevant strategies and activities, which will be analysed more deeply in the following sections.

HRD Strategies, Priorities and Activities in ASEAN's Policy Framework

Human Resource Development (HRD) appears as a key topic in the ASEAN policy framework including the ASEAN Charter. Whilst some generic elements for its strategic operationalization are formulated in ASEAN's Socio-Cultural Blueprint¹⁸, it draws essential impulses for priority actions from targets of the economic (AEC) Blueprint.



Since in the AEC Blueprint “Free Flow of Skilled Labour” is one of five core elements under the goal to establish “a Single Market and Production Base” in ASEAN by 2015, HRD relevant actions for achieving this goal have been outlined there as follows:

- “Enhance cooperation among ASEAN University Network (AUN) members to increase mobility for both students and staff within the region;
- Develop core competencies and qualifications for job/occupational and trainers skills required in the priority services sectors (by 2009); and in other services sectors (from 2010 to 2015);
- Strengthen the research capabilities of each ASEAN Member Country in terms of promoting skills, job placements, and developing labour market information networks among ASEAN Member Countries.”¹⁹

With regard to “Free Flow of Services”, as another core element in the AEC Blueprint, corresponding priority actions reflect that the delivery of services is inextricable linked with skilled labour and thus demand under both elements also to complete “Mutual

¹⁸ such as: „Investing in human resource development“, „Promotion of decent work“, and „Strengthening entrepreneurship skills for women, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities“

¹⁹ AEC Blueprint, www.asean.org

Recognition Arrangements (MRA) for major professional services, including PIS services sectors by 2008”²⁰.

Accordingly, a prominent linkage of HRD with the AEC Blueprint is clearly reflected in the **Work Programme 2010-2015** of the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) under one of four sections defining strategic priorities (see excerpt below):

ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme: Objectives, Priorities, and Intermediate Goals

Overall Objective	<i>To build towards the vision of a better quality of life, productive employment, and adequate social protection for ASEAN peoples through enhancing workforce competitiveness, creating a harmonious and progressive workplace, and promotion of decent work for all.</i>			
Strategic Priorities	1. Legal Foundation	2. Institutional Capacity	3. Social Partners	4. Labour Markets & Workforce Development
	Labour rights and conditions of work are protected in law and its application.	Government bodies have the capacities to oversee enforcement of labour laws and regulations.	Informed social dialogue takes place among labour sector partners at the national and regional level.	Labour markets generate decent employment opportunities, and the workforce development system contributes to the creation of a competitive workforce.
Intermediate Goals	- ALMs protect and promotes labour rights, including those of migrant workers, in the region. - Member States’ labour laws take into account the ILO core labour standards and international benchmarks, where appropriate.	- ALMs promote regional best practices with respect to Labour Ministers’ inspectorates’ oversight of workplace compliance with labour laws and referencing to the ILO inspection standards, where appropriate. - Member States effectively regulate occupational safety and health to ensure safe working conditions for ASEAN workers. - Member States’ labour justice systems effectively resolve workplace disputes. - Member States work to improve national social protection systems to cover risks faced by workers of ill health, disability, and old age. - Member States provide employment services* to job seekers/employers and effectively regulate the private employment agencies. - Member States to facilitate policy dialogue and information sharing on good practices and strategic action on issues related to HIV/AIDS in the workplace	- Unions, private sector or employer groups, and government representatives meet at national and regional levels, where appropriate, to discuss issues of common interest. - Industrial relations at the firm-level in Member States encourage progressive labour practices. - Cooperation by Member States with external labour sector partners (e.g., ILO, bilateral labour sector partners, and international labour NGOs and trade unions) is enhanced.	- Systems are in place that will promote the mobility of skilled labour within ASEAN. - Employment, wage, working condition, skills demand, and other impacts of trade liberalisation and of global economic challenges are anticipated, analyzed, monitored, and communicated to labour sector stakeholders and the public. - Progressive labour practices with regard to workforce development, skills training and standards, labour productivity, and labour law continue to be promoted to enhance the competitiveness of firms and workforces, and thus of the ASEAN Member States and the region overall - Labour market information is generated, regularly updated, and effectively disseminated.
Actions Needed	See text below.			

Under the strategic goal in rubric 4 “Labour Markets & Workforce Development”, which clearly states: “Labour markets generate decent employment opportunities, and the workforce development system contributes to the creation of a competitive workforce”, the intermediate goals have been outlined as follows:

- “Systems are in place that will promote the mobility of skilled labour within ASEAN.
- Employment, wage, working condition, skills demand, and other impacts of trade liberalisation and of global economic challenges are anticipated, analysed, monitored, and communicated to labour sector stakeholders and the public.
- Progressive labour practices with regard to workforce development, skills standards, labour productivity, and labour law continue to be promoted to enhance the competitiveness of firms and workforces, and thus of the ASEAN Member States in region overall.

²⁰ Ibid; PIS means “Priority Integration Services” referring to e-commerce, healthcare, air travel, tourism and logistics (see also: Chia, S. Y. (2011), ‘Free Flow of Skilled Labor in the AEC’, in Urata, S. and M. Okabe (eds.), Toward a Competitive ASEAN Single Market: Sectoral Analysis. ERIA Research Project Report 2010-03, pp. 205-279. Jakarta: ERIA.

- Labour market information is generated, regularly updated, and effectively disseminated.”²¹

Somewhat confusing, at a first glance, is that the formal structure of goal setting in the ALMM Work Programme may suggest a matrix system showing a kind of functional interrelation of the three “Strategic Priorities”: ‘Legal Foundation’, ‘Institutional Capacity’, and ‘Social Partners’ with the fourth topic ‘Labour Markets & Workforce Development’. Unfortunately, however, such kind of relationship does not seem to exist (at least, it would be rather difficult to discern such information with regard to LM & HRD from the table).

However, lacking legal, institutional, and stakeholder involvement aspects in the goal formulation for labour market regulation and HRD seems to generate some striking impact on the subsequent action plan of ASEAN Labour Ministers for this policy domain:

ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme: Recommended Actions and Indicative Calendar ²²

Strategic Priorities	Thematic Areas	Recommended Actions	Responsible ASEAN bodies under ALMM	Indicative Calendar	Potential Collaborators
Labour Markets and Workforce Development	Addressing employment ^a impacts of trade liberalisation and recovery from global economic crisis	Labour trends of the post-economic crisis recovery period to be assessed at Member States’ levels, synthesized, and reported to the community.	SLOM	2011	ILO
		ASEAN Member States will also embark on capacity building programme to measure the impact of trade liberalisation on labour market.	SLOM	2011-2015	ILO
	Promoting Progressive labour practices ^a	Continue holding the ASEAN HR Conference	SLOM-WG	2010 – 2015	ILO
		Conduct ASEAN Skills Competition regularly	SLOM	2010 – 2015	
		Study the development of programme to improve the labour condition , training and social protection in the informal sector	SLOM	2011 - 2015	ILO
		Complete ASEAN-Japan Collaborative Programme to strengthen basis of HR development in CLMV, phase II	SLOM	2010 -2011	Japan
	Enhancing labour mobility ^a	Improve the national skills frameworks in preparation for discussing a regional skills recognition framework	SLOM-WG SLOM	2011-2015	ILO
		Conduct a research project and regional workshops to improve overseas employment administration	ACMW	2010-2015	IOM
	Enhancing labour market monitoring ^a	Develop an ASEAN report on labour market performance based on an agreed set of labour sector variables.	SLOM	2011 – 2015	
		Creation of ASEAN ALM web portal with labour sector information	SLOM-WG	2011 – 2015	
		Establish knowledge sharing networks and platforms to provide venue for interactive discussion towards strengthening capability for better labour market information and analysis between and among Member States.	SLOM-WG	2011 – 2015	ILO
		Develop a Handbook on Labour Market Analysis to facilitate capacity building and promote analysis and wider use of labour market information.	SLOM-WG	2011	

Apparently, the “Development” aspect in labour market and workforce related topics almost seems to disappear in the handy list of four thematic areas and corresponding action recommendations²³, hence making it intransparent by whom, in which way and by what means the “the workforce development system” in the overall goal would be addressed so that it may decisively “contribute to the creation of a competitive workforce” until 2015.

With regard to regulations enhancing labour mobility in ASEAN the work plan just indicatively addresses each ASEAN member state’s responsibility to “*improve the national skills frameworks in preparation for discussing a regional skills recognition framework.*”

²¹ ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting Work Programme 2010-2015, www.asean.org

²² Ibid (excerpt for Labour Market & HRD)

²³ apart from the comprehensive but rather basic statement “to study the development of programme to improve the labour condition, training, and social protection in the informal sector” and the idea of continued outsourcing HR development in CMLV to a single ASEAN-Japan Collaborative Programme

Unsurprisingly, the largely indicative and hardly interconnected recommendations for actions regarding regional labour market regulation and workforce development are further watered down by translating them into the “Work Plans of the Subsidiary Bodies of the ASEAN Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM)”:

Work Plans of the Subsidiary Bodies of the ASEAN Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM)²⁴

Thematic Areas	ASCC Blueprint	ALM Work Programme 2011-2015	Activities / Timeline	Country Coordinator	Potential Collaborators
1. Human Resources	[B.2.] Enhance and improve the capacity of ASEAN human resource through strategic programmes and develop a qualified, competent and well-prepared ASEAN labour force that would benefit from as well as cope with challenges of regional integration	1.1. Continue holding the ASEAN Human Resources Conference biennially	- Third Conference on 9 May 2012, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Recommendations of the Conference appear as ANNEX 1. - Fourth Conference (2014)	Cambodia Myanmar	ILO
...					
4. Skills Recognition	[A.3.ii] Establish national skills frameworks as an incremental approach towards an ASEAN skills recognition framework	4.1. Improve national skills frameworks in preparation for discussing a regional skills recognition framework	- ASEAN Guidelines on Development of National Framework for Skills Recognition Arrangement (2012) - Seminar on Sharing of Expertise, Experiences, and Best Practices in Development of National Skills Recognition Framework Towards ASEAN Skills Recognition Framework (2012) - Workshop on Skills Standard (schedule is T.B.C)	Indonesia Myanmar Thailand	ILO ILO
5. Skills Development & Networking	[A.2.iii] Undertake assessments to identify gaps in training needs in ASEAN, particularly in the CLMV in order to develop joint technical cooperation programmes for the workplace				
	[A.2.vii] Develop a consolidated plan for regional cooperation for skills development for women, youth and persons with disabilities		Workshop on Youth Employment (schedule is T.B.C)	Indonesia	ILO
	[A.2.viii] Conduct ASEAN Skills Competition regularly to support ASEAN workforce development, particularly its efforts to achieve regional standard competency	5.1. Conduct the ASEAN Skills Competition regularly	9th ASEAN Skills Competition (2012) 10th ASEAN Skills Competition (schedule is T.B.C.)	Indonesia T.B.C.	

Activities proposed by the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials (SLOM) and their working groups for single HRD and labour market relevant components of the Labour Ministers' Programme focus almost exclusively on the implementation of conferences, seminars, workshops and the creation of 'guidelines'. Sophisticated questions that may be emerging concerning the potential impact of regularly conducted “ASEAN Skill Competitions” on the achievement of “regional standard competency” are not further considered.

Generally, the work plan documents seem to indicate limited resources on regional level for the implementation of the ambitious ASEAN policy goals. Basically, responsibilities for coordinating tasks are just delegated to different ASEAN member states and so far the list of “potential collaborators” has a rather limited scope.

Accordingly, also a recent presentation of achievements of the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting with regard to Labour Market and HRD²⁵ appears to be rather modest:

²⁴ Work Plans of the Subsidiary Bodies of the ASEAN Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), www.asean.org (The table shows an excerpt regarding Labour Market and HRD topics)

²⁵ Partly compiled from a presentation of Dr. Donald Tambunan, Social Welfare, Women, Labour and Migrant Workers Division, ASEAN Secretariat: “ASEAN Priorities in Labour and Employment” (April 2010); retrieved from: [http://www2.asetuc.org/media/03j%20\(ENG\)%20Presentation%20of%20Dr.%20Donald%20Tambunan.pdf](http://www2.asetuc.org/media/03j%20(ENG)%20Presentation%20of%20Dr.%20Donald%20Tambunan.pdf)

ALM's HRD Achievements

- **Employment generation/HRD in the context of globalisation**
 - Three ASEAN HR Summits (1st: Oct 2008, Singapore; 2nd: May 2010, Ha Noi; 3rd: May 2012, Phnom Penh)
 - ASEAN-Japan Collaboration Programme for Strengthening the Basis of Human Resources Development in CLMV Countries-Phase II (2008-2011 under IAI Work Plan)
 - ASEAN+3 Workshop on Youth Entrepreneurship (Nov 2007)
- **HRD planning and labour market monitoring**
 - ASEAN-ILO Technical Workshop on Labour Market Statistics, (Oct. 2007, Putrajaya, Malaysia)
 - Workshop on Labour Market Information and Analysis in ASEAN countries (2-4 March 2010, Bandar Seri Begawan)
- **Strengthening social security/social protection objectives**
 - Enhancing Skills Recognition Systems in ASEAN supported by ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase I (AADCP I 2004-2008)
 - Programme on Overseas Employment Administration for CLMV (under IAI Work Plan 2002-2008)
 - Development of ASEAN Common (competency based) Standard Curriculum (ACSC) for International Trade and Basic Electronics (HRD WG under ASEAN-Japan Development Cooperation Programme AMECC)
 - ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) including Mutual Recognition Arrangements to facilitate the ASEAN-wide flow of 8 professional services (Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Surveying, Accountancy, Medical and Dental Practices, Tourism) supported by the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II (AADCP II 2008-2015)

Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI)

As mentioned earlier in this study the IAI is a cross-sector initiative under the ASEAN Economic Community Council for “Narrowing the Development Gap” (NDG) among ASEAN member countries. The IAI basically provides a framework for regional assistance and cooperation supporting CLMV countries to meet ASEAN-wide targets and commitments towards realizing the ASEAN Community.²⁶

For this, the IAI Work Plan aligns the key programme areas of the three Blueprints with particular needs of the CLMV countries and accordingly refers also to a particular section in the ASEAN Road Map.

The 2009 Strategic Framework document for the IAI provides the following Implementation/Management Arrangements²⁷:

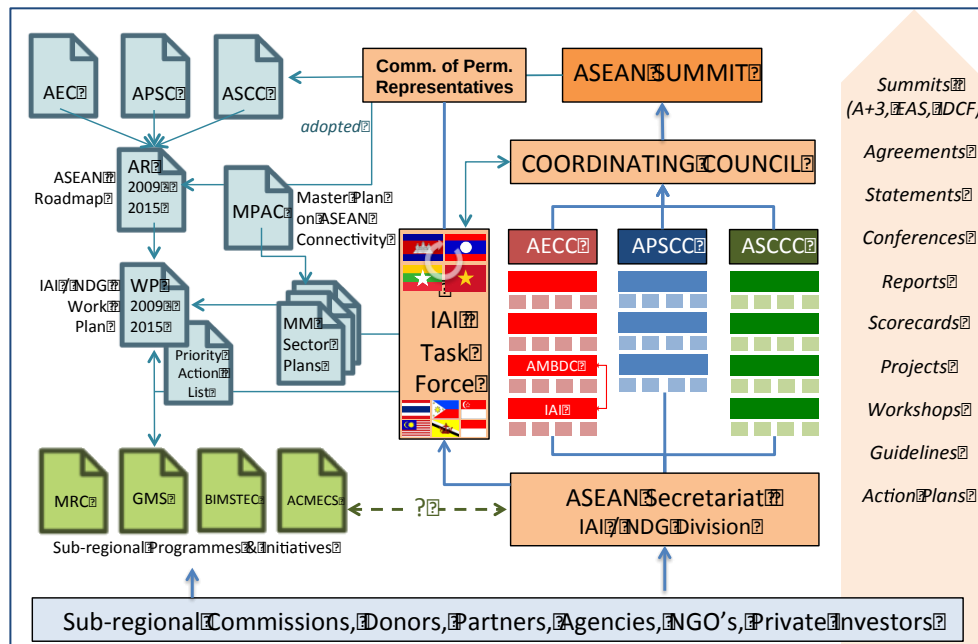
- The ASEAN Summit will provide overall guidance and advice on the implementation of the NDG initiative, and in particular approve the IAI Work Plan.
- The ASEAN Coordinating Council in consultation with relevant ministerial bodies will provide recommendations to the ASEAN Summit with regard to the implementation of the NDG initiatives.
- The IAI Task Force will provide policy guidelines, directions, and general advice on the IAI Work Plan; ensure coordination among the AMS; assist in formulation, implementation and design of the IAI Work Plan; seek funding and work closely with dialogue partners, development agencies and other partners in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan.
- The co-shepherds mechanism shall continue to operate to foster greater collaboration in the formulation and implementation of ASEAN-6 assistance to the CLMV countries.
- The ASEAN Secretariat, in particular through the IAI Unit, shall support the above bodies in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan and activities of other sub-regional frameworks. This will include servicing the meetings, assist in formulation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of projects, resource mobilization and overall operational coordination among the various bodies.

As an additional instrument “to accelerate the pace of the implementation of IAI”, the IAI Development Cooperation Forum (IDCF) was established to serve as the main venue for engaging ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners and other donors in a collective dialogue on the IAI Work Plan. So far, four IDCFs have been organised, in 2002, 2007, 2010, and 2012.²⁸

²⁶ www.asean.org; IAI’s Strategic Framework and Work Plan (2009-2015) can be retrieved from: <http://cil.nus.edu.sg/2009/2009-initiative-for-asean-integration-iai-strategic-framework-and-iai-work-plan-2-2009-2015-adopted-on-1-march-2009-in-cha-am-thailand-by-the-heads-of-stategovernment/>

²⁷ Ibid; p. 6

²⁸ <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-economic-community/category/iai-development-cooperation-forum-idcf>



The framework document makes clear that the IAI shall provide an integrating support mechanism for EAS partner countries, international donors, development agencies, private investors and NGOs to leverage bi- and multi-lateral arrangements with CMLV countries.

Accordingly, the IAI Work Plan 2009-2015 encourages ASEAN partners to “explore joint projects with ASEAN-6 that will enhance collaboration beyond aid to joint partners for IAI activities. Special consideration for the participation of CLMV ought to be built into the design of all ASEAN cooperation programs, projects, and activities.”²⁹

The question of how the IAI, e.g. through the ASEAN Secretariat, has been managing the coordination of its activities with other sub-regional initiatives, such as the ADB supported Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program (GMS), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) or the sub-regional cooperation initiative between the CLMV countries and Thailand ACMECS, could not be clarified during the research for this study. There are, however, doubts in the capacity of ASEAN to coordinate sub-regional initiatives even in its own internal institutional framework.

A study report to realign the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) with the ASEAN Economic Community comes to the conclusion that “*there is a need for better coordination and convergence of priorities and objectives among the various NDG initiatives such as the IAI, AMBDC and other subregional initiatives such as the GMS program.*”³⁰ The report recommends: “*Given that both the AMBDC and the IAI have similar objectives which is to narrow the development gap, there is a need to streamline the programs and projects to avoid overlap or duplication of activities.*”³¹

²⁹ Ibid; p. 7

³⁰ ISEAS, Study to Realign the AMBDC with the ASEAN Economic Community, Final Report (2009), p. 3; <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-economic-community/category/other-documents-26>

³¹ Ibid

Nevertheless, from 2002-2008, IAI attracted a total investment of about USD 191 million from ASEAN-6, and about USD 20 million from other partners.³²

HRD in IAI Work Plan 2009-2015

HRD planning facets in the current IAI Work Plan can be identified within three different priority areas:

Free Flow of Services

- Provide technical assistance by 2012 in formulating services related policy measures in tourism sector including air transport services, liberalization of tourism services, and the use of tourism professionals.
- Provide joint training by 2011 in tourism services sector to strengthen the capacity of government officials and private sectors in charge of services in CLMV countries.

Free Flow of Investment

- Conduct a study of the human resource requirements of the sectors to which the CLMV countries seek to draw investments, including reforms in the educational system and short-term vocational training.

Free Flow of Skilled Labour

- Conduct training by 2010 to assist CLMV in implementing the Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) signed.

“Implementing structural policies necessary for enhancing productivity” has been deemed “equally critical to the success of the CLMV countries and ASEAN as a whole.” Accordingly, in its external promotion the IAI reminds, “higher investment in social infrastructure, especially in education and health is of particular importance.”³³

However, concept notes of the recently updated IAI List of in total 34 ‘Priority Actions’ provide strong indicators for an uncoordinated piece-meal-approach with most proposals focusing on short-term one-off trainings and noncommittal dissemination of knowledge products (see ‘List of project concept notes from the CLMV Priority Action List of the IAI Work Plan’ in the Annex).

³² <http://www.asean.org/communities/asean-economic-community/category/documents-and-reports>

³³ ASEAN Secretariat News (22 March 2013), On Track and Keeping Pace: Narrowing the Development Gap is Essential to ASEAN Integration, <http://www.asean.org/news/asean-secretariat-news/item/on-track-and-keeping-pace-narrowing-the-development-gap-is-essential-to-asean-integration>

Skills Standards and Mutual Recognition Arrangements as key HRD Policy Goals

So far, the achievements indicate that ASEAN still seems to be a fair way off reaching its ambitious targets to have “systems (...) in place that will promote the mobility of skilled labour within ASEAN”, as well as “progressive labour practices with regard to workforce development, skills standards, labour productivity, and labour law” (ALMM Work Programme 2010-2015).

In particular, this refers to an onerous process, which already started in 1998 with the Hanoi Plan of Action where ASEAN members “agreed (...) ‘to establish networks of professional accreditation bodies to promote regional mobility and mutual recognition of technical and professional credentials and skill standards’ aiming ‘to overcome the problems of the non-recognition of technical and professional qualifications within ASEAN.’”³⁴

A comprehensive study report³⁵ of the AADCP II project “Free Flow of Skilled Labour” has outlined this process in some detail. Emphasising a slight but important distinction in the terms “Mutual Recognition Agreement” (MRA) and “Mutual Recognition Arrangement” (MRAR), which obviously have been confused throughout the discussions on the policy formulation, the report comes to the following, rather disillusioning, conclusion:

*“A lack of knowledge of what MRARs actually are, has led to false hopes in some AMS (i.e. ASEAN Member Countries, T.R.) that they would automatically lead to increased mobility, as in an MRA. Some AMS thought that the MRAR would guarantee mobility while now they realise that much needs to be done before this can be achieved.”*³⁶

According to the AADCP-report particularly the CLV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) “have now become concerned that few of their own people will be able to practice in other ASEAN countries. Rather, they will have large numbers with better training coming in from other AMS.” These countries currently seem to “acknowledge that this could raise their own training standards over time but in the short term they are worried about how they will benefit.”³⁷

Subsequently, the study report provides a sharp analysis of constraints that have basically hindered the MRAR process, particularly on national levels:

“The process has been government-driven with officials from relevant departments often being the chief negotiators. Some AMS did not have professional bodies at the time of the commencement of the processes but, even where they existed, they do not appear to have been adequately involved. They are the crucial standard setters, not governments, and without them being engaged in the process there can be a lack of support in later implementation stages. In other cases, professional bodies have been involved in negotiations but they have not really understood or they have

³⁴ ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II, Free Flow of Skilled Labour Study - FINAL REPORT (2010), developed by MATES Consulting PTY Ltd., published at: <http://www.aadcp2.org/home/technical.php>

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid, p. 71

³⁷ Ibid, p. 71

been opposed to foreign professionals being able to enter the country to offer trade in services.”³⁸

Evaluating the current achievements with regard to MRAR and subsequent MRAs, respectively, the report attests ASEAN and its member states rather mediocre results:

“No agreement on core competencies or harmonisation of training has been reached in any MRAR to date. This means that the existing training standards of each AMS have been accepted. This is a generous and non-judgmental approach but it means that some countries may not accept the standard of the MRARs. That is, all persons from one AMS who are placed on an ASEAN register may not be judged to be adequately qualified professionally by another AMS.”³⁹

The report suggests that there would be an “urgent need to agree on competency standards because of the wide variation that exists” and it gives some detailed recommendations on the strategic areas for core interventions required to achieve a sustainable breakthrough in this domain. Basically, these recommendations focus on the amendment of national laws and a corresponding establishment of qualified national bodies in each of the ASEAN member states including Professional Regulatory Authorities (PRA) and MRA Monitoring Committees (MC). In terms of procedures an “occupation-by-occupation approach” as currently practiced in ASEAN finds some justification as an initial step. However, taking into account lessons learned from similar processes in the EU, the report recommends “a more general approach for all remaining occupations”, which should focus more on qualification levels of the education system (academic degrees vs. qualifications below degree levels) rather than on single occupational trades.

Finally, the report authors cannot deny themselves the alerting warning, “(a)ll bodies, even MRAR MCs, may be subject to government influence and could operate in ways that in some circumstances may inhibit the inflow of AMS professionals. The prevailing political climate, therefore, may outweigh the intentions of the MRAR.”⁴⁰

The following box provides an overview on the challenges for an effective implementation of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) based on the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAR) so far accomplished in ASEAN:

³⁸ Ibid, p. 71

³⁹ Ibid, p. 72

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 72

Challenges for effective MRA Implementation in ASEAN

- MRARs do not warrant unrestricted free flow of foreign professionals. Divergent national laws and restrictive domestic regulations on employment sectors and immigration still apply.
- Lack of awareness on the existence and potential impacts of MRAs on national labour markets and education systems.
- Qualification Frameworks (NQF) in many ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia) are not yet developed, existing NQFs (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines) are different by type, level, and sector.
- This makes cross-border skills recognition agreements (SRA) sophisticated. Capacity building for the establishment of a regional SRA framework is still at an embryonic stage (AADCP).
- Most ASEAN member countries (esp. CMLV and Indonesia) lack capacity to set up the institutional framework as required by the MRARs, to adapt domestic laws and regulations, and to align their skills recognition and training systems with a common regional standard, which are necessary to eventually achieve MRA's.
- Weak communication across ASEAN sectoral bodies:
 - Collaboration between SLOM WGs, Trade & Foreign Ministry bodies on regional and on national levels appears intransparent
 - Apparently no coordination with Education Ministers' work plans
 - The principles of the ASEAN Charter do not foresee regional bodies to make binding provisions for legal adjustments in its member states

HRD in Education Policies of ASEAN's Social-Cultural Community Framework

While ASEAN's labour ministers struggle to move forward in their ambitious targets, strongly influenced by the goals of the AEC Blueprint towards the creation of "a Single Market and Production Base" by 2015, the ASEAN Education Ministers seem to follow their own discrete agenda. This is mainly informed by the action areas, targets and timelines formulated in the Socio-Cultural Blueprint.

Although an ASEAN Fact Sheet about Cooperation on Education concedes "(t)he education sector in ASEAN, by developing human resources, permeates through all three pillars of the ASEAN Community in enhancing competitiveness of individual member states as well as ASEAN as a region, in addition to building a caring and sharing society"⁴¹, information on 'Mechanisms', 'Milestones', 'the Five-Year Work Plan', and 'Main Activities in the Education Sector' indicate that there is a prominent focus on the academic stream including primary and secondary education as well as cooperation in higher education "which is promoted through the ASEAN University Network (AUN)".

Sample activities reported are developing "source materials on ASEAN for primary and secondary schools", or an "ASEAN Studies Programme for undergraduates". A "Primary School Sport Olympiad" is mentioned as well as the promotion of the "Southeast Asia Schools Principal Forum", which "aims to strengthen the effectiveness of school principals in the development of education, to provide opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences and to network."⁴² Any reference to economic and labour market demands for HRD, MRAs, SRAs or NQF, let alone actions concerning technical and vocational education, are missing.

Institutional settings for Regional Education Policies (ASEAN and SEAMEO)

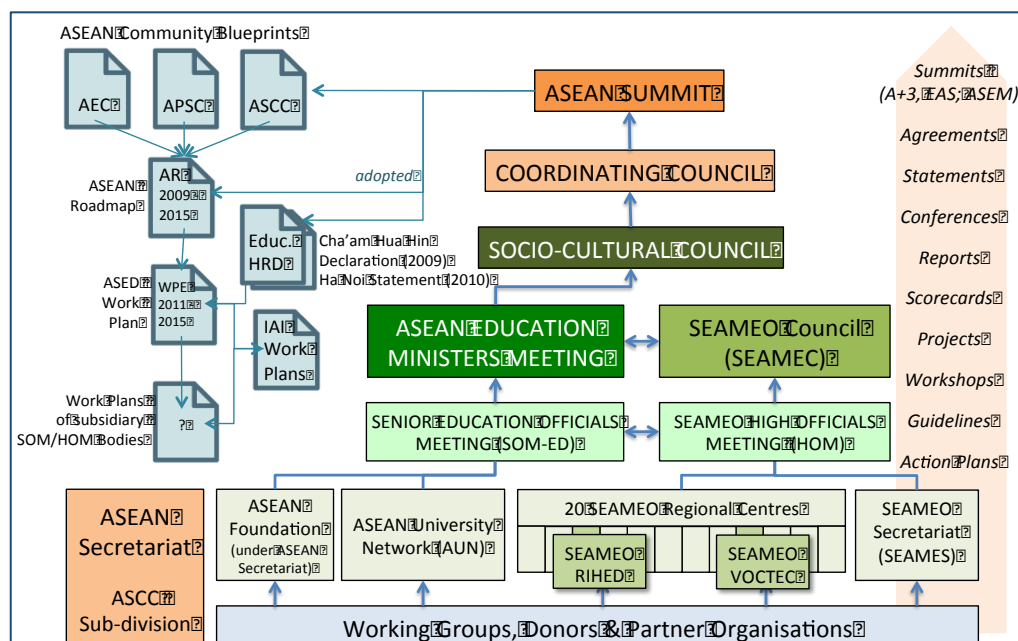
A peculiarity of dealing with educational issues is the two-tier organisational structure at the ministry level (and below) in the ASEAN setup of responsibilities (see chart).

According to the ASEAN Fact Sheet "partnerships in education among ASEAN Member States operate through the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOMED), who report to the ASEAN Education Ministers. Collaborative activities are undertaken with the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), civil society and the private sector, as well as ASEAN Dialogue Partners in pursuing regional priorities in education."⁴³

⁴¹ Fact Sheet 2009/ASCC/003, Cooperation on Education in ASEAN, issued by the Public Outreach and Civil Society Division of the ASEAN Secretariat, www.asean.org

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid



Considering that the two bodies, SEAMEO and the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, including their subordinate bodies HOM respectively SOMED are basically consisting of the same personnel⁴⁴, it might be questionable why ASEAN affords such a sophisticated institutional setting.

A potential answer (apart from the East Timor issue) may be traced to the operational capacity of the different streams. While SOMED basically can draw just on two organisations, the ASEAN Foundation (supporting People-to-People events and other PR activities) and the AUN for HEI networking, SEAMEO runs its operations through in total 20 regional centres, which are located in different ASEAN member countries.

Each SEAMEO centre has its own governance structure and acts in a particular field of specialisation, such as ‘Innovation and ICT’ (SEAMEO-INNOTECH in the Philippines), ‘Quality Improvement of Teachers Education Personnel’ (SEAMEO-QUITEPs for different academic subjects in Indonesia), or the Centres for ‘Medicine and Healthcare’ (SEAMEO-TROPMEDs in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines) among others (see SEAMEO Factsheet in the annex).

Most important with regard to HRD systems are the two SEAMEO Centres for ‘Higher Education and Development’ (RIHED) in Bangkok and the ‘Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training’ (SEAMEO VOCTECH) in Brunei Darussalam. Potentially important in the field of ‘Educational Management and Human Resource Development’ may be also SEAMEO’s Regional Training Centre in Vietnam (SEAMEO RETRAC).

Unlike the education policy stream in ASEAN’s institutional setup, SEAMEO also has its own Secretariat (SEAMES), which is basically responsible for administrative support functions for the SEAMEO Council and cross-centre coordination and cooperation.

⁴⁴ Except those representing East Timor, which is not yet a member of ASEAN but represented in the SEAMEO Council since 2006

SEAMES also administers the SEAMEO's Special Fund and the Educational Development Fund, which are important instruments of the organisation, and reportedly has collaborated with the ASEAN Secretariat in the development of the Minister's 5-Years Work Plan on Education. Both secretariats are also in the process of developing a joint work plan for 2013-2015 "to avoid future duplication of efforts among the respective work plans in ASEAN and SEAMEO frameworks".⁴⁵

Under the overarching slogan "Leading Through Learning", SEAMEO claims itself as "(t)he leading organization for enhancing regional understanding and cooperation in education, science and culture for a better quality of life in Southeast Asia" and defines its mission to achieve these goals "through the establishment of networks and partnerships, the provision of fora among policy makers and experts, and the promotion of sustainable human resource development."⁴⁶

In the context of ASEAN, however, it is highly notable that SEAMEO, as ministerial organization, explicitly perceives its status of being "non-profit and not politically oriented" as one of their strengths and thus confines itself to a kind of executive agency basically focusing on the delivery of "programmes in education" and being "attractive to countries wishing to make contributions to sustainable development at the grassroots level in Southeast Asia".⁴⁷

SEAMEO's non-political focus is clearly reflected in the organization's strategic goals covering the following targets⁴⁸:

- To develop regional centres of excellence
- To provide relevant and responsive programmes that address national and regional issues in SEAMEO's areas of specialization
- To strengthen the organizational capability to initiate and manage change and development to meet the challenges of globalization
- To ensure continued financial viability
- To promote research and development (R&D) in education, science and culture and improve the dissemination mechanism
- To enhance collaboration among Member Countries and relevant organizations
- To be ASEAN's strategic partner for the advancement of education, science and culture
- To facilitate the development of harmonized education standards
- To be a regional leader in the advancement of education, science and culture

⁴⁵ ASEAN Secretariat, Updated Info Paper on ASEAN Cooperation on Education (SOM-ED), June 2013, p. 4 According to this paper SEAMEO and ASEAN Secretariats held joint discussion meetings in 2011 and 2012 "to identify relevant past, on-going and planned activities/programs which are overlapping, and identify potential areas for cooperation on implementing the planned activities/programmes. (...) The 35th SEAMEO - HOM Meeting has already endorsed the proposed Joint Work Plan and it would be subsequently elevated to the 47th SEAMEO Council Meeting in March 2013 for approval. Parallel to the decision in SEAMEO HOM, the 7th SOMED Meeting endorsed the proposed SEAMEO-ASEAN Secretariats Joint Work Plan (2013-2015).

⁴⁶ See transcript of SEAMEO's most recent factsheet from April 2013 in Annex

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

With its dispersed structure of operational units (Regional Centres), which are heavily dependent on operational budgets from their respective host countries⁴⁹, SEAMEO's relevance in the regional development community seems to be limited to promotive, facilitative and collaborative actions addressing a broad but rather eclectic range of themes formulated as priority areas in SEAMEO's strategic roadmap (see factsheet in Annex). For Education these are namely:

- 21st Century Skills
 - Character education
 - Entrepreneurship education
 - Information and Communication Technology
 - Language and literacy
 - Scientific and technological literacy
- Continuous professional development for teacher and education personnel
- Education For All (EFA)
 - Basic education
 - Early childhood care and education (ECCE)
 - Education in emergencies
 - Lifelong learning
 - Reaching the unreached
 - Special education needs
- Education for sustainable development (ESD)
- Higher Education
- Technical and Vocational Education

A Partner Analysis on Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) conducted on behalf of GIZ in 2011 presented the following findings:

“Undoubtedly, SEAMEO represents a strong inter-governmental voice in the field of education in Southeast Asia. Its mandate is derived from the sovereign will of the member states (through the respective Ministries of Education) and this institutional foundation has shown persuasive capacity to attract associate and affiliate members from outside the region.

But there are apparent shortfalls in terms of reaching out to the margins of the region where (like Lao PDR and Cambodia) interventions are most needed and

⁴⁹ Ibid. According to a Partner Analysis on SEAMEO conducted on behalf of GIZ in 2011 (see the following footnote), “the funding structure of the Regional Centres is not provided for in the SEAMEO Charter. In practice, the governing policy on funding is stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement between SEAMEO and the host member state. In principle, host countries underwrite the capital and operational budget requires based on approved 5-year strategic plans.” However, in practice this may lead to some intransparent arrangements, as the same study reports with regard to the special case of SEAMEO-INNOTECH in the Philippines: “Within the Philippine government system (...) the funding obligation is not included in the annual legislative deliberations of the government budget (...). The budget does not even come from the budgets of the departments of health or education. The government's financial commitment for INNOTECH is generated from the governmental counterpart commitments to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and is directly coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Hence, the financial capacity would vary depending on the total amount allocated by the government for counterpart funding. (p. 25pp)

where SEAMEO has no administrative or strong operational presence. Insights from observers would also suggest that in some countries like Indonesia, SEAMEO would not have sufficient potency to influence policy and institutional reforms in the field of education.”⁵⁰

Unlike SEAMEO, the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting gets its mandate directly from the overarching setting of the ASEAN Summit and formally collaborates with other Ministerial bodies, such as Labour, through the Socio-Cultural Community Council. Thus, its potency to influence policy and institutional reforms in the field of education and HRD has by far more relevance at regional level. However, because of the principles of the ASEAN Charter, this may not always lead also to corresponding legislative changes in the national policies of ASEAN member states.

As the following section will show, this potential power has not been used very effectively so far with regard to labour market relevant HRD policies addressing technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

⁵⁰ Partner Analysis on Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) conducted on behalf of GIZ by The Health Bureau Ltd, United Kingdom in 2011, p. 15

ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education 2011-2015

Apart from the provisions of the ASEAN Blueprints and the ASEAN Roadmap 2009-2015 the Education Ministers Work Plan (WPE) 2011-2015 additionally draws on the provisions of two ASEAN Summit statements:

- The Cha'am Hua Hin Declaration on Education to Achieve an ASEAN Caring and Sharing Community (2009), and
- The ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Human Resources and Skills Development for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Growth (Ha Noi 2010).

The **Cha'am Hua Hin Declaration** broadly covers the role of education under political-security, economic and socio-cultural aspects and addresses all education sectors including basic and higher Education, TVET, and Lifelong-Learning.

The **Statement on Human Resources and Skills Development** tasks "the concerned ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies and Senior Official Bodies" to implement a list of 20 labour market relevant activities including the promotion of "vocational training and workforce learning for the purpose of improving the employability and upgrading skills of the workforce". Activities are sub-divided in four categories:

- Foster technical cooperation and capacity-building activities in ASEAN
- Promote tripartite and public-private sector cooperation in addressing human resource development, policies and programmes
- Enhance the quality and skills of workers in all ASEAN Member States
- Promote lifelong learning

However, though ASEAN Summit policy guidelines explicitly demand:

- (i) *"to improve the quality and adaptability of TVET in the ASEAN region"* (ASCC Blueprint);
- (ii) *"to enhance the quality and skills of workers in all ASEAN Member States"* (ASEAN Leaders' Statement on HR and Skills Development); and
- (iii) *"to encourage the development of a common standard of competencies for vocational and secondary education"* (Cha'am Hua Hin Declaration);

surprisingly, the 5-Year Work Plan of ASEAN Education Ministers (WPE) 2011-2015 reflects on such tasks by no means.

In its priority list of programmes and activities the term "vocational education" appears only once, namely in the context of policies and programmes promoting Lifelong Learning "that do not focus primarily on educational institutions but rather on learning in different settings over the life course."⁵¹

⁵¹ ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education 2011-2015, www.asean.org

Programmes and activities promoting cross border mobility of skilled labour are rather indicative and remain vague in their operational settings. The focus is exclusively on ‘Internationalisation’ of Higher Education:

PRIORITY 3–Cross-Border Mobility and Internationalisation of Education

Goal	Student and faculty mobility expanded and a wide range of training programmes Internationalised.		
↑	↑	↑	↑
Programmes	3.1 Share knowledge of regional resources and interconnectedness of AMS.	3.2 Strengthen activities that support student exchanges and scholarships at all levels.	3.3 Develop a regional action plan to internationalise higher education with a focus on regional strategies.
↑	↑	↑	↑
Activities	Conference on internationalising the university Connect library resources and build database through existing virtual library networks, e.g. AUNIL (AUN Inter Library Online).	Support the use of scholarships and other student mobility and exchange initiatives Facilitate regional research and policy development.	Conduct regional study and meetings of experts and policy makers. Support language training programs. Document student exchange initiatives. Establish regional faculty exchange priorities and guidelines.

The same applies to the programmes proposed for the WPE priorities 2a: “Access to Quality Education” and 2b: “Quality of Education-Performance Standards”. Both provide just input oriented generic provisions missing labour market relevant indicators (see tables below):

PRIORITY 2A–Education Programmes that Increase Access to Quality Education

Goal	Education bodies have capabilities to strengthen access to education			
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Programmes	2.1 Sharing best practices in promoting universal and equal access to quality education through - Partnership programmes and technical assistance; - Benchmarking; - NGO, private sector, and community initiatives; - Tracking mechanisms for students at risk of dropping out; - Collaborative gathering of data for use in planning.	2.2 Documenting and sharing practices for “reaching the unreached”.	2.3 Incorporating effective approaches for systematic teacher development programmes and use of relevant data for planning, policy formulation and recommendations.	2.4 Using university and corporate social responsibility programmes to broaden access to education.

PRIORITY 2B—Increasing the Quality of Education-Performance Standards, Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Goal	Education bodies have capabilities to strengthen the quality of education				
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Programmes	2.5 Promoting quality through networks of teachers, principals, administrators, teaching institutes, schools, and teacher associations.	2.6 Supporting Teacher Development initiatives • Encouraging teaching that leads to learning; • Sharing best practices on assessing students; • Establishing a sub-network on teacher capacity-building by subject among institutions & universities; • Supporting a regional teacher quality assurance framework; • Providing for continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders; • Developing guidelines on mentoring and supporting teachers.	2.7 Sharing best practices on teacher incentives, awards, and appraisal.	2.8 Promoting regional teacher accreditation and mobility programmes (physical & virtual).	2.9 Enhancing regional capacity building efforts for school management, school improvement planning, leadership development, and school governance.

In summary, the ASEAN Education Ministers' work plan does not seem to contain anything that cannot be matched with the operational capacity of SEAMEO's regional centres. Possibly, there would be just some overlapping of competencies for the implementation of higher education programmes between the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and SEAMEO's Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) in Bangkok.

SEAMEO's Strategic Collaboration Towards Regional HRD

Regarding TVET, SEAMEO's most recent strategic statement (Ha Noi, March 2013) exceeds the priority focus of the ASEAN WPE significantly.

In this statement SEAMEO recognizes „that the ever-changing labour market needs and fast paced global development pose enormous challenges for South East Asia to sustain and upgrade the competitiveness of its human resources”.

With this regard the statement inter alia emphasises the following strategic focal points⁵²:

⁵² http://www.seameo.org/images/stories/News_Events/SEAMEC/47seamec_2013/for-Media/SEAMEO-Statement.pdf

- “Create and implement innovative, sustainable and inclusive programmes addressing emergent, trans-boundary and cross-cutting issues”;
- “Further expand its initiatives on basic education thus fast tracking the attainment of national and regional EFA and MDG goals”;
- “Work with ASEAN to address the non-comparability of academic and professional accreditation standards and promote robust standards across the region by the establishment of a NQF that embodies minimum competencies, indicators and expectations at all levels of education”;
- “Capacitate SEAMEO’s Regional Centres (...) to contribute exponentially to HRD in the region. SEAMEO’s Regional Centres shall play key roles in realizing SEAMEO-ASEAN shared regional goals”.

Currently, SEAMEO also is making efforts to strategically upgrade its regional capacity for policy dialogue and research by launching the “SEAMEO College” on 20 March 2013.

According to the opening speech of SEAMEO’s current Council President, the Education Minister of Brunei Darussalam, *“SEAMEO College pioneers a platform for high-level discussions on forward-looking issues and concerns that will help prepare Southeast Asia for the challenges of the future, and support the ASEAN community. (...) It is expected to address capacity development not being fulfilled by a single SEAMEO Centre at present such as those cross-cutting issues and specific concerns and challenges confronting high-level education leaders in Southeast Asia and the world.”*⁵³

With regard to SEAMEO’s existing operational capacity *“SEAMEO College will not duplicate the capacity development programmes of the SEAMEO Centres. Instead, it will provide opportunity for SEAMEO Centres to work together to respond to unique issues and challenges of Southeast Asian education leaders through their collective efforts and resources.”*⁵⁴

The aims of the College may indicate how SEAMEO’s wants “to achieve a more global outlook and pursue a stronger fortitude for regional cooperation”⁵⁵:

- a) “Create a flagship initiative to respond to the ministerial direction in visioning SEAMEO as being more efficient and responsive to regional needs;*
- b) Enhance leadership of SEAMEO through specialized and high quality programme utilizing the cross cutting and innovative ways of knowledge delivery and practices;*
- c) Create a platform for sharing and exchanging of ideas, practices and research;*

⁵³ Introduction on SEAMEO College by His Excellency Pehin Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Education, Brunei Darussalam and SEAMEO Council President
http://www.seameo.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=472:47th-seamec-information-for-media&catid=153&Itemid=592

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid

- d) *Strengthen the integration of regional human resource development particularly in terms of promoting indigenous wisdom and talent in the region; and*
- e) *Support ASEAN's Work Plan on Education, particularly in narrowing development gaps, preparing the youth for regional leadership, and enhancing competitiveness of the peoples of ASEAN.*⁵⁶

Establishment and initial operations of the new SEAMEO College will be supported through Technical Assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)⁵⁷.

Recent EAS and APT Education Plans of Action

An important event indicating that education policies on regional level are obviously expanding their perspective towards more labour market oriented HRD and TVET was the Education Ministers Meeting during the First East Asia Summit on 5 July 2012 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

At this meeting the ASEAN+8⁵⁸ Education Ministers adopted a tentative list of actions explicitly including TVET with some high-ranking priorities:

RANK	SECTOR	PROPOSAL TITLE	SCORE	INTERESTED COUNTRY
1	TVET	Regional TVET QA Framework - Feasibility Study	74	Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Viet Nam
2	Higher Ed	Regional Interoperability of National Qualification Frameworks	71	India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Viet Nam
3	TVET	Development of a Network of TVET Providers in the EAS	68	
4	Higher Ed	Regional Credit Transfer System Harmonisation	68	Malaysia, the Philippines
5	Schools	EAS Teaching Standards Framework	67	Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines
6	Higher Ed	Capacity Building for Ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Qualifications Recognition in Asia and the Pacific	66	Australia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand
7	Schools	Teacher Mobility Study	63	
8	Higher Ed	EAS Regional Leadership Development Program	63	Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Viet Nam
9	Schools	Second Language Teaching in the EAS	62	Singapore
10	TVET	Register of TVET Providers in the EAS - Feasibility Study	61	
11	Schools	EAS Teaching Resources Website	60	the Philippines
12	TVET	Facilitating TVET Teacher and Student Mobility	59	India, Indonesia
13	Schools	EAS Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment	57	Australia

In their joint statement the Education Ministers “welcomed with appreciation the progress of Australia’s project to develop a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and noted that a TVET QAF has been developed in consultation with many EAS participating countries and was now moving to in-country workshops in five EAS countries to identify capacity building

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ According to a well-informed source of the ADB the TA shall be funded by USD 1.5 million through the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPD)

⁵⁸ 10 ASEAN Countries plus China, Japan, RoK, Australia, New Zealand, India, USA, and Russia.

needs. The Ministers noted the great need for capacity building of TVET systems in EAS participating countries as well as continuing inter-country dialogue and information sharing on skills recognition systems and qualifications frameworks, to ensure the benefits of a regional framework were achieved.”⁵⁹

During that meeting also India “expressed its interest in linking their NQF to some form of regional development.” In their report⁶⁰ the Indian delegation stated:

“It (i.e. India) can not only develop its own NQF by interactions and discussions with the EAS countries and other countries which already has a well developed Framework, but can also play a larger role in the EAS region by simultaneously collaborating with other agencies in the region in developing an NQF for the region, which can be a voluntary reference point against which other countries could benchmark and align their own NQFs”.

In their tentative Action Plan 2011-2015 the EAS Education Ministers tasked their Senior Education Officials “to develop a funding mobilisation plan, taking into consideration existing funding mechanisms and resources pledged by the EAS participating countries, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, international funding agencies and other possible sources.”⁶¹

Most notably, the explicit inclusion of TVET in action agreements among Education Ministers deviates considerably between the EAS (ASEAN+8) level and the APT (ASEAN+3) level, which includes just China, Japan and the RoK. The First APT Education Ministers Meeting on 4 July 2012 (i.e. one day before the EAS meeting) also adopted a “Plan of Action on Education”, which, however, does not exceed the prevailingly academic focus of ASEAN’s education policy by stipulating the following six rather generic areas of cooperation⁶²:

- Encourage investments in education and training to accelerate learning opportunities
- for out-of-school children and youth and to upgrade the quality of educational institutions, including human resources development for teachers, lecturers and administrative personnel.

⁵⁹ Joint Statement of the First East Asia Summit Education Ministers Meeting (1st EAS EMM) “Strengthening Global Partnership For Education And Humanity”, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 5 July 2012; www.asean.org. The TVET QAF concept development has been supported by *Australian Education International* (AEI). AEI is the international education, science and research arm of the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCS RTE). AEI works to foster international partnerships, provide strategic policy advice, ensure quality, and enhance international students’ experiences. The endorsed version of the EAS QAF concept is available at http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/e-forum/120619%20-%20East%20Asia%20Quality%20Assurance%20Framework_final%20concept%20paper_post%20worsh op.pdf

⁶⁰ Report of the Visit to Indonesia in Connection with the First East Asia Summit Sr. Officers and Education Ministers Meeting Held During July 2-5, 2012 at Yogyakarta, Indonesia; p. 7; http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/9362197_Report-of-Indonesia-visit-jul-12.pdf

⁶¹ The East Asia Summit Education Plan of Action (2011 – 2015); Draft in Annex

⁶² ASEAN Secretariat, Public Factsheet on Education (June 2013)

- Promote collaboration, networking, and research and development among institutions and authorities involved in education.
- Promote higher education cooperation, increase linkages between universities through the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and encourage credit transfers between universities in APT countries.
- Support research activities and exchanges of APT scholars and professionals interested in the APT relationship.
- Continue to make efforts to expedite visa application procedures for students and intellectuals of ASEAN Member Countries who travel to the Plus Three countries for academic purposes, in accordance with existing national regulations.
- Cultivate an East Asian identity through promotion of ASEAN Studies and East Asian Studies in the region.

Asia-Europe Strategic Education Partnership under ASEM

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was established as an informal dialogue and cooperation platform in the mid-1990s. It has evolved into a non-binding information-sharing process⁶³ between 49 countries⁶⁴, the European Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat that addresses issues in various sectors.

Ministers responsible for Education have been meeting regularly since 2008 “to demonstrate political commitment and set the agenda with regard to higher education and vocational education and training.” The ASEM education ministers established a strategic Asia-Europe education partnership in order to strengthen the ASEM dialogue and cooperation between both regions. The partnership is based on the mission that “(i)n a globalising world and in view of the increased economic interdependence, more intensive relations and cooperation between Asia and Europe are imperative, especially in the field of education and training.”⁶⁵

In ASEM’s strategic education partnership Education Ministers concentrate on four priority areas:

⁶³ Critical observers have argued, „After more than a decade, ASEM remains essentially a loose dialogue forum stuck at the level of information-sharing rather than any substantive cooperation.“ There would be „no strong desire from the ASEM leaders to change the current informal, loose character of ASEM. ASEM will remain as a forum for exchanging views, and concrete cooperation will take place mainly within the other frameworks of EU-East Asia relations.“ (Yeo Lay Hwee et al., Regionalism and Interregionalism in the ASEM Context; CIDOB editions No. 23, Barcelona 2008; p. 22; http://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/documentos/asia/regionalism_and_interregionalism_in_the_asem_context_current_dynamics_and_theoretical_approaches

⁶⁴ 27 EU Member States, 10 ASEAN member countries, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russian Federation, New Zealand, Australia, and since November 2012 Bangladesh, Norway and Switzerland.

⁶⁵ ASEM Education Secretariat (2013), From Copenhagen to Kuala Lumpur - Stocktaking Report of the ASEM Education Process; http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/imperia/md/content/asem2/events/2013_aseemme4/aseemme4_stocktaking_report.pdf

- Quality assurance and recognition;
- Engaging business and industry in education;
- Balanced mobility; and
- Lifelong learning including technical vocational education and training.

Activities of the first three priority areas (quality assurance and recognition; engaging business and industry in education; and balanced mobility) are exclusively focusing on higher education systems and are informed by a broad network of dialogue partners in the ASEM regions such as the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub (ASEM LLL Hub), the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Student Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European University Association (EUA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and, most recently, also the ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC), launched by ASEF and its partners in 2008.

The fourth strategic priority area addresses TVET, though basically as a sub-aspect of Lifelong Learning (LLL). With this regard ASEM's most prominent dialogue partners are the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization's (SEAMEO) Regional Centre for Vocational & Technical Education & Training (VOCTECH).

ASEM's most recent LLL track record basically covers a broad variety of member country activity presentations ranging from a "francophone qualifications framework" in Belgium to an Open University set up in Cyprus; a Japanese project on systematic skills recognition and curriculum development in the fields of IT, fashion and tourism; an international 'Education for All' week organised by the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO; the financial framework of Lithuania for projects spurring quality in formal and non-formal education; Malaysia's Polytechnics initiative to derive non-formal LLL-modules from their accredited full time programmes for "Reskilling and Upskilling" of employees through community colleges; Singapore's recognition of LLL "as a critical avenue (...) to continually upgrade (...) skill sets"; and the launch of a research project among higher education institutes in Europe and Asia on "Workplace Learning" organized by ASEM's LLL Hub Secretariat, the Office of the Higher Education Commission and Thailand's Srinakharinwirot University.

Most remarkable within the context of LLL, Germany (BiBB, DAAD and BMBF) organized and conducted an ASEM symposium on TVET with special regard to Qualifications Frameworks on 27 – 28 February 2012 in Berlin. In order to exchange information on the respective state of development of NQFs in ASEM member states "examples of good practice in developing and implementing Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks were presented, commonalities and differences identified and further developments explored".⁶⁶

⁶⁶ http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/imperia/md/content/asem2/events/2012_tvete_berlin/2012_tvete_wrap_up_final.pdf

The wrap-up report of ASEM's Education Secretariat contains a summary of basically non-committal agreements concerning the global relevance of QF's for LLL, sources of QF model documentations, and "the importance of trade sectors reflexions (...) about Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks". Recommendations are confined to the ideas "to bring together stakeholders from Europe and Asia from the same sector to exchange experience and to learn from each other", to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education by a promotional campaign, and Vietnam's offer "to host the next conference on qualifications frameworks with special regard to developing mechanisms to recognise informal and non-formal learning by frameworks, as well as to transitions between vocational education and higher education."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ibid

Challenge for Regional Standards: Heterogeneity of TVET in ASEAN

Structural policies on regional level for enhancing productivity in ASEAN member countries through investment in social infrastructure, especially in technical and vocational education and training, are heavily challenged by the wide variety of TVET systems and corresponding national education policies in the member states. Existing TVET systems in the ASEAN region go back to very different traditions and evolved in very different ways from country to country.

While, for example, Indonesia and Malaysia have been traditionally promoting formal TVET in their more supply driven secondary education school systems⁶⁸ under their Ministries of National Education, skills development in Thailand⁶⁹ or, most prominently, in the Philippines has been traditionally less focused on formal school based qualifications but offers vocational trainings through a broad variety of ‘centre based’, ‘community based’, and ‘enterprise based’ training programs at post-secondary level.

The TVET delivery networks in the Philippines mostly consist of private providers running under the surveillance of the public-private Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Singapore has been considerably restructuring its public TVET system under its Ministry of Education into an internationally recognized post-secondary college system (ITEs) complementing its Polytechnics and Junior Colleges by “addressing the needs of the lower 25% of a school cohort who are less academically-inclined”⁷⁰.

In the CLMV countries no unified comprehensive TVET systems are yet in place. Traditionally, several forms of TVET such as formal secondary and/or post-secondary programmes, non-formal, informal, continuous, short-term in-service trainings with a various range of providers: public, semi-public and private (people-founded) institutions have been running under different national ministries; partly they are controlled also by local authorities.⁷¹ While Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam have meanwhile embarked on major education sector reforms including realignments and/or upgrading of TVET under their respective Ministries for Labour (Vietnam), Education (Laos), or under mixed responsibility settings (Cambodia), Myanmar is still in the preparation phase for such an endeavour.

⁶⁸ Traditionally, upper secondary vocational schools in Indonesia (SMK) are used as alternative pathways to higher education and have a corresponding mission in the legal setting of the national education system.

⁶⁹ Two main Ministries are responsible for Vocational Education and Training in Thailand; the Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for basic and higher education as well as Vocational Education; the Ministry of Labour (MoL), through the Department of Skill Development (DSD), is responsible for the development of the workforce in the labour market (for those aged 15 and over) and promotes skills training to enhance employability. The MoL is also the main organization responsible for the National Skill Standards and Testing System as well as for the evaluation of workplace learning.

⁷⁰ Law Song Seng (2011), Case Study on “National Policies Linking TVET with Economic Expansion: Lessons from Singapore”, UNESCO Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012, p. 7

⁷¹ http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/tvetipedia.0.html?&tx_drwiki_pi1%5Bkeyword%5D=Countries

To all CLMV countries applies that they urgently need to reform training and education to better meet the demand for skilled labour, to increase enrolment rates at all levels of education and strengthen TVET to build a skilled labour force.⁷²

A rough indicator showing how heterogeneously vocational education and training scatters among ASEAN and its six partner countries around the Pacific may provide a compilation of gross enrolment ratios in formal TVET programmes for the respective countries (see table below).

Indicative Synopsis of Gross Enrolment Ratios in Formal TVET Programmes (in %)					
	Level:	Low Second. (ISCED 2)	Upper Second. (ISCED 3)	Post Second. (ISCED 4)	Tertiary (ISCED 5B)
ASEAN	Brunei Darussalam	-	17	-	12
	Cambodia	-	1	1	-
	Indonesia	-	35	-	10
	Lao PDR	<1	1	7	8
	Malaysia	-	15	4	36
	Myanmar	-	-	-	?
	Philippines	-	-	1	7
	Singapore	-	?		?
	Thailand	-	18	-	18
	Timor Leste	-	-	-	?
	Vietnam	-	6	-	7
Plus 6	Australia	61	70	?	35
	China	-	17	1	18
	India	2	<1	<1	<1
	Japan	-	25	-	33
	New Zealand	-	99	1	44
	RoK	-	28	-	90

Apart from showing some indicative data on TVET preferences at the different national education levels (ISCED levels), also some striking differences seem to appear in the attractiveness, respectively, in the provision of TVET compared to enrolments in general academic programmes. However, such interpretation should be treated with caution, since Gross Enrolment Ratios in TVET have some limitations to serve as exact measuring values.⁷³

Interpretations also have to deal with the fact that most TVET data available is only on “formal learning” (i.e. “organised” learning whose outcomes are accredited). By definition, however, TVET covers also a diverse spectrum of learning activities “that are hard to capture in any single classification”. UNESCO-UNEVOC admits that “although

⁷² see: OECD (2013), Southeast Asian Economic Outlook 2013: With Perspectives on China and India, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/saeo-2013-en>

⁷³ “Depending on whether the theoretical age group for the (usually general) programme that defines the level is narrower or wider than the vocational programme’s, its Gross Enrolment Ratio will be respectively overestimated or underestimated.” More about this can be found in the UNESCO-UNEVOC study „Participation in Formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programmes Worldwide – An Initial Statistical Study”, UNESCO 2006; The data of the synoptic chart of Gross Enrolment Rates in formal TVET programmes haven been compiled from this study report. For fields in the table marked by question marks no data were available in this report.

some efforts have been made to categorise types of non-formal and informal learning, particularly in relation to forms of on-the-job training, the full range of these learning types are clearly beyond comprehensive categorisation.”⁷⁴

This makes it difficult for countries with a low proportion of formal TVET in their education and training systems, as the CMLV, to develop comprehensive National Qualification Frameworks, which can provide benchmarks for qualifications comparable with those provided by other ASEAN members, let alone by their partner countries in the greater Pacific region. Similar applies to those countries that have a strict institutional separation of their traditionally supply driven formal and non-formal TVET systems (like Indonesia).

Beyond this, there are several other constraints for a regional alignment of national TVET frameworks and quality standards, such as:

- Different national foci on employment and HRD priorities informed by respective economic development stages (low/middle/high income economies) and corresponding macro economic development threats (‘middle income trap’ vs. structural pauperization);
- Different local traditions and legal provisions in perceiving the role of the government/state in enabling and managing TVET vs. academic education (TVET as a second-class path to higher education, allocation and institutionalisation of public/private responsibilities);
- Incompatible political patterns of intra-national consolidation processes (centralization vs. de-centralization) and corresponding governance issues;
- Heterogeneous models and supply driven systems in formal, non-formal and informal education and training regulated and governed under separate authorities (limited collaboration, inefficient budgeting, lack of QA systems)
- Weak intellectual and institutional capacity in conceptualising relevance and complex interrelationship of basic global TVET reform paradigms such as Occupational/Competency Standard setting, Curriculum, NQF, SRA, MRA etc. and their impact on teaching, school management and monitoring resources and systems.

⁷⁴ Ibid; p. 15

The EAS/AEI TVET Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) Project

Reflecting such challenges the EAS/AEI TVET Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) Project has recently outlined the options for establishing a “core framework that consists of a set of principles, agency standards and quality indicators to underpin quality assurance of TVET within countries and across the region”.⁷⁵ The concept includes a suggested set of standards for providers as well as measures and data sources for each quality indicator.” However, though this concept provides a comprehensive overview on relevant QA options, aspects and information requirements, it has to admit that “(t)here is no one formula for the development of a quality assurance system, nor one model design.”⁷⁶ Accordingly, the QAF Project recommends the common international approach to quality standards through a cross-national reference model emphasising the focus on generic principles, process definitions and governance structures. Regarding the development of a regional TVET QA system, key components should include:

- processes for the construction of TVET qualifications and standards, including completion rules for the qualification;
- clear processes for registration and monitoring of providers, as well as a system for moderating and/or validating assessment, and for the awarding of qualifications; and
- establishment and governance of agency/ies for maintaining the quality assurance of qualifications, developing standards and accrediting providers

Hence outputs expected to be achieved in the final phase of this initial project are reasonably moderate:

“Phase 3 will consist of in-country consultations in up to five developing EAS countries whereby the QAF will be used as a diagnostic tool to identify capacity building needs and strategies for strengthening the national TVET system. The outputs of this phase will be a set of TVET system capacity development project concept documents for each participating country and a project completion report.”⁷⁷

Nevertheless, there are already voices warning, “even in countries that have successfully developed the framework, it doesn’t always translate into successful implementation.”⁷⁸ Referring to a long history of attempts to establish Qualification Frameworks and mutual Skills Recognitions Systems in ASEAN and its member states the deputy director of SEAMEO’s Centre for Vocational Education and Training (VOCTECH) seems to slightly qualify the comprehensive systemic AEI vision by highlighting some pragmatic options for a less binding and more fragmented approach:

⁷⁵ Bateman et al. (2012), Concept Paper EAST ASIA SUMMIT Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance Framework; <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv54484>

⁷⁶ Ibid; p. 10

⁷⁷ http://cm.sejong.ac.kr/jsps/common/download.jsp?sSiteId=gyomu&file=3%20%BA%D9%C0%D32_Attachment_A1326949788500.docx&orfile=3%20%BA%D9%C0%D32_Attachment_A.docx

⁷⁸ Paryono, SEAMEO VOCTECH (2013); Mapping national and regional TVET initiatives in Southeast Asia and beyond in response to students and labour mobility; http://www.tvet-online.asia/issue1/paryono_tvet1.pdf (retrieved 25.7.2013)

“Once the framework is successfully developed, it will be a useful tool for self-assessment or accreditation. It will be up to the participating countries to utilize the framework that best fits their needs. To support this initiative, it is vital to establish a smaller TVET quality assurance, such as focusing on teacher quality standards. This can be a useful reference for all teachers to benchmark their competencies set against standards that help them gain awareness of their current status and give ideas and impetus to continuously improve their skills and get to the next level.”⁷⁹

Choosing a generous and non-judgmental fragmented approach (e.g. by taking a loss of homogeneity towards binding framework aspects or by detaching mandatory sub-components of education quality assurance into voluntary skills benchmarking guidelines for teachers), however, may face similar constraints and disappointments as reported for the long-winding process and its modest results to establish Mutual Skills Recognition Arrangements (MRA) in a previous section of this study.

⁷⁹ Ibid; p. 7

National Initiatives in ASEAN to improve Labour Markets through HRD

A recent OECD study on “Skills Development Pathways in Asia”⁸⁰ focusing on current efforts in 15 countries in the Asian region⁸¹ to upgrade the skills of their labour force for sustained growth and further job creation shows comprehensively and in much detail how “each country has different objectives and adopts different strategies to attain them.”⁸²

The study claims, “the challenges faced by Asian countries are diverse as is their stages of economic development”, and provides the following synoptic overview on these challenges⁸³:

1. Building up a system for training or creating a training market.

“Many countries have an out-dated system and lack sufficient facilities and equipment or qualified instructors. Several ways for building up the training system are being pursued, such as creating additional training academies, imposing skill levies, and using apprenticeship models. A common element is an increasing involvement of the private sector.”

2. Reducing skills mismatches and increasing the links between training and industry needs.

“As the industry skill demand is quickly upgrading, growing economies are faced with a widening gap between skill supply and demand. Several approaches are taken in this regard. One is the “train the trainers” model. When private sector initiative in providing new skills training is deficient, the public sector training for instructors can be a most efficient way in propagating new skills. The cost is charged to companies in some cases. A second model is to give subsidies to a leading technology company to provide training not only to their own workers but also to the unemployed or workers from other small to medium-sized companies. (...)”

3. Upgrading out-dated training systems and under-qualified instructors.

“There is need to assure the quality of skills training and create vocational pathways for high school leavers. In countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Philippines and Vietnam, despite the high unemployment rate among college graduates, vocational training paths are not chosen and high school graduates and their parents value academic studies over vocational studies and aim at white-collar jobs unrelated to industry demands. To improve the status of vocational training and attract youth to where there is demand, competency based training is needed. A National Qualification System

⁸⁰ Martinez-Fernandez, C. and K. Choi (2012), “Skills Development Pathways in Asia”, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers, 2012/12, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k94hdlll7vk-en>

⁸¹ Australia, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

⁸² Ibid; p. 13

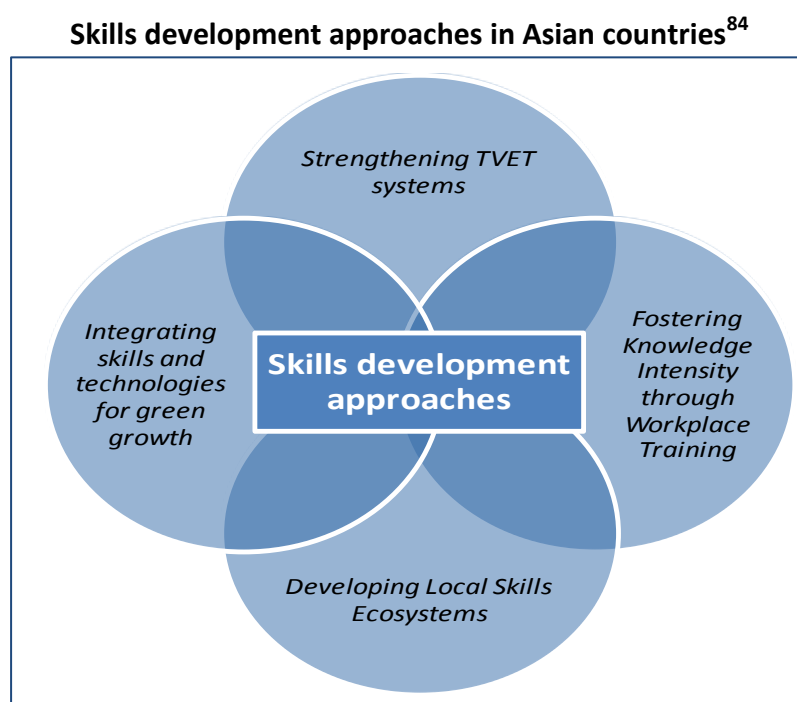
⁸³ Ibid; p. 14-15

(NQS) needs to be constructed. Quality assurance and industry ownership in training is often absent in developing countries and administrative problems or conflicts between authorities exist. (...)

4. Increasing industry participation and ownership.

“One of the major weaknesses in developing Asian countries’ skill development system is lack of industry participation and ownership in training. The vast majority of firms are small and medium sized ones and their investment in training is insufficient as they lack the required resources or they have a short planning horizon. On the other hand public sector training provision are often supply-oriented with weak links to demands. (...)”

Facing such different challenges or, partly, also a mix of them, Asian countries are utilising different strategic approaches to skills development. For this, the OECD study outlines the following scheme:



Each approach requires different measures to be formulated in a corresponding policy framework for national reform initiatives:

“Strengthening TVET and secondary education systems requires a shift from curricula-based approach to competency-based training and creating a demand-driven training system which is responsive to industry needs. Corrective measures are needed, among others: i) streamlining policy making and reorganising the current procedural overlaps among institutions; ii) setting up sector-specific centres of excellence, located in proximity to relevant industries; and iii) institutionalising industry’s role in policy making.”

⁸⁴ Ibid; p. 35

“Workplace training in most Asian countries lacks a well-developed training infrastructure at the institutional level. Therefore, developing firms’ capacity as training partners or training organisations is a pathway that can be faster and more sustainable for increasing the level of skills and the level of knowledge intensity in firms. In particular, SMEs are suffering the most from the struggle on skills development and the skills gaps they experienced. (...)”

“Local skills and training ecosystems can provide a network mechanism for vocational training co-ordination by involving more industry in training, better placing trainees in firms and providing improved incentives for training that better respond to the market in terms of satisfying employers’ changing demands. The impact of developing local skills ecosystems and fostering local skills initiatives is less known in Asian countries but some examples of integrated strategies driven by national authorities have had successful results (...)”

“Green growth has become an opportunity for many Asian countries (e.g. Australia, Singapore, South Korea, and China) to integrate their skills strategies and connect into global development networks for new technologies and the development of green sectors. Not all countries can invest at the same level. For some countries, just raising awareness among their training systems and firms is the most feasible strategy; for others, strong investments in their science and technology systems and skills and training systems are linked to job creation and sustainable development.”

Corresponding to the different skills development approach paradigms the OECD study identifies four major levels of concerns emerging in the national policies of countries analysed for its survey:

“The first level refers to ‘skills infrastructure and governance’. The second level refers to ‘the composition of the skills and jobs’ as they relate to current employment. The third level refers to ‘the knowledge intensity in the workplace’. And the fourth level refers to ‘integrating skills strategies at the local level’.

The following tables provide a brief overview on current HRD initiatives and their strategic focal points in the ASEAN member states including Timor Leste.⁸⁵

Timor Leste

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Secretariat of State for Employment and Training (SEFOPE), National Institute for Labour Force Development (INDMO), Ministry of Education	Transforming the Vocational Training sector from a predominantly non-formal system to a formal regulated TVET system. Within the structure of a newly developed National Qualifications Framework (TLNQF) the transformation process is guided by the following set of principles: access and equity; quality; proficiency; and relevance. The system shall be responsive to industry needs, based upon international quality standards, and focused on employment outcome.	ILO, AusAID, ADB, WB

⁸⁵ The information on ASEAN member states’ initiatives on HRD have been compiled from different sources including the UNESCO Study on Skills Development Pathways, OECD (2013), Southeast Asian Economic Outlook 2013, as well as from several relevant reports and presentations published on the websites of local governments, UNESCO and international donor organisations.

Cambodia

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Ministry of Labour & Vocational Training (MLVT); National Training Board (NTB); Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) ⁸⁶	De-centralize and adjust TVET to the needs of the labour market ('rapid response training model' to tackle employment crisis); Link skill development/training to local condition; promote self-employment in rural areas by short-term trainings in basic trades; expand training network and TVET institutes. Strengthen institutional capacity to plan and manage TVET, incl. NVQF	ADB, ILO, Australia Japan, UNESCO, WB

Lao PDR

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2006-2010); Ministry of Education, National Training Council	TVET-Strategic Plan 2006-2020, TVET-Master Plan 2008-2015 and Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) 2009-2015: Make TVET more accessible, efficient, relevant and responsive to labour market needs: Expand access to TVET on all levels, develop skills standards and NQF, improve curricula, teaching and management capacity and PPP systems	Australia, Japan, EC, Germany, ADB, Australia, UNESCO

Myanmar

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR); Ministry of Education	Prepare policy for a comprehensive reform of the education sector including basic, higher education and TVET to tackle challenges of dramatic socioeconomic transformations	

Vietnam

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Viet Nam Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2011-20, Viet Nam Vocational Training Development Strategy 2011-20; Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)	Improve the quality and expand the scale of vocational training meeting the demands of those sectors and occupations needing highly skilled manpower, in-country and for the export of labour. Key foci of a fundamental reform are: A national occupational skills framework, professional development of vocational teachers and managers, reforming the state management of vocational training including quality control and assurance, links to labour market and business involvement, awareness-raising about TVET development” and strengthening of international cooperation in TVET.	AECI, AFD, ADB, AusAID, CIDA, DANIDA, DGCS, GIZ, ILO, JICA, KOICA, NDF, NORAD, SDC, USAID

⁸⁶ MoEYS responsibility for technical and vocational education has re-emerged, five years after taking over the post secondary TVET programmes from the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT). The new department is basically organised to make TVE programmes available in the formal secondary education schooling system. It envisions providing students with alternative options to the traditional academic choices, such as technical and vocational programmes. However, the introduction of TVE programmes in high schools is still in its infancy. A pilot project, relying on external support, has been introduced. (OECD 2012, Skill Development Pathways in ASIA)

Thailand

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
National Socio-Economic Development Plan, National Education Plan 2002-2016 & Master Plan of Labour 2007-2011; Ministries of Education and of Labour	Increase the ratio of vocational to general academic track at the secondary education level from 40:60 to 60:40 in the next 10 years. Accelerate the development of labour skills in accordance with labour market demand. Revise employment-related definitions and classifications. Develop a strong partnership with the private sector, mobilize resources and develop demand-driven smart skill development programs to meet local needs. Provide incentives to industry for skills (re-)training of employees.	ADB, APEC HRD-WG, UNESCO, IMT-GT, Japan, WB

Indonesia

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Master Plan for Acceleration of Economic Development (MP3EI); Ministry of Education & Culture (MoEC); Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (MoMT)	Expand enrolment to TVET in upper secondary and higher education institutes (70:30 policy) and improve their quality by PPP arrangements to address skills mismatch of graduates; further de-centralize the education system and align local HRD focus of TVET with targets of MP3EI; develop legal framework for harmonization and implementation of occupational standards, educational standards and NQF.	Australia, ILO, ADB, GIZ, The World Bank

Malaysia

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Tenth Malaysian Plan 2011-2015; Industrial Skills Enhancement Programme (INSEP); Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources	Boost enrolment in the vocational and skills stream at secondary schools and HEIs; strengthen the TVE curriculum and enhance ties with industry, professional bodies and HEIs; introduce vocational subjects at upper-primary and lower secondary levels; promote lifelong learning through distance learning, e-learning, and non-formal courses; upgrade skills and capabilities of 'Knowledge Workers' by expansion of retraining activities through Skills Development Fund, Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF), and the INSEP.	ADB, ILO, Australia, Japan, NZ

The Philippines

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
Philippine Labour and Employment Plan (2011-16); Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)	Spur growth in employment and quality of employment outcomes by human capital investments, focusing on the qualitative development of human resources, increasing the prospects for productive employment and decent work, labour productivity and incomes. Address the skills-mismatch problem by promoting better coordination between employers, academia and government at local level; invest in the formal and regular skills training and upgrading of services workers through TVET. Promote MRA development for Overseas Workers (OFWs) and utilize returning OFW to transfer skills learned abroad.	WB, ADB, Austria, Australia, Japan, Korea, Germany, UNESCO

Brunei Darussalam

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
The 21st Century National Education System; HRD Department of MoE	Enhance vocational education to orientate Bruneians towards more manual, semi-skilled, and skilled jobs (special focus on non-formal training and PPPs to tackle high rate of youth unemployment)	APEC HRD-WG

Singapore

Initiative/Organization	Strategic Focal Points	Partners
National Productivity and Continuing Education Council (NPCEC); Ministry of Manpower	Upgrade skills of local workers and moderate the supply of foreign workers; provide support for low-wage workers through the Workfare Bonus Scheme (WBS), Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) and Workfare Training Support (WTS) schemes. Enhance lifelong learning through the Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre. Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) helping companies and workers to manage the economic downturn and invest in skills ahead of recovery. There are some initial sector based initiatives on “green jobs for green growth” which may lead to an integrated national skills development strategy in the near future.	

Donor Strategies in Skills Development

Most national initiatives on skills development or HRD in ASEAN countries, in particular those in the CMLV, have been supported by a wide range of international donors. Bi-lateral agreements between national governments and donor organisations are the most common form of cooperation; donor funded and/or coordinated HRD programs on regional level seem to be still an exception.

In 2007, a NORRAG working group on “Skills Development Policies and International Cooperation in East and South-East Asia”⁸⁷ has tried to elaborate typical paradigms in donor assistance strategies with regard to HRD and skills development in this region by distinguishing three different donor categories, namely (i) bi-lateral Asian (DAC and non DAC) agencies such as KOICA, JICA, SCP Singapore, ICDF Taiwan, MTCP Malaysia, TICA Thailand and even AusAID; (ii) bi-lateral “western” agencies like USAID, DFID, and GIZ, and (iii) multilateral donors like ILO, UNESCO, the World Bank and ADB.

Across all types of donors the working group identified three more or less distinct approaches of skills development: (i) a *“knowledge-based development approach with the focus on economic growth”*, (ii) a *“poverty reduction approach”*, and (iii) a *“governance approach”*.

In its report the group concedes that “the three approaches are (...) interconnected” and that it would be “difficult to characterise a particular agency as strictly following one approach”.⁸⁸ However, though many agencies seem to combine approaches, there would be some evidence that “often the approach used tends to be driven by the underlying

⁸⁷ NORRAG Working Group For International Cooperation In Skills Development (2007); Paper 11 - Skills Development Policies and International Cooperation in East and South-East Asia; <http://www.norrag.org/index.php?id=21...0>

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 10

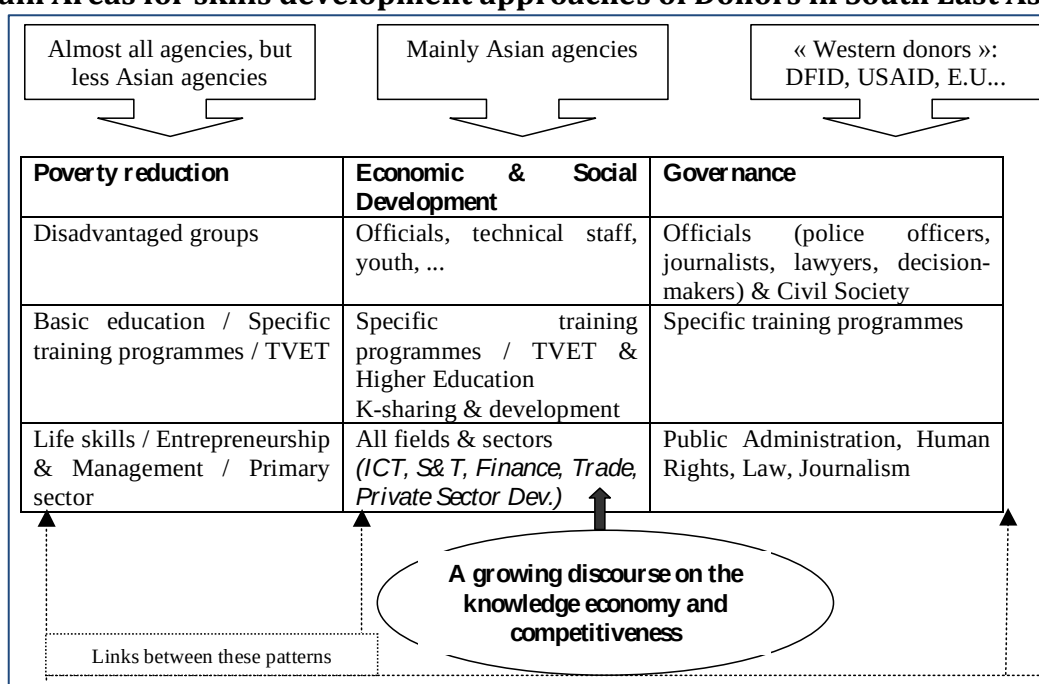
assumptions regarding the relationship between skill, growth, poverty and employment". These assumptions could be characterized as follows:

*"For some (agencies) the main objective is poverty reduction through economic growth and good governance, for others the main objective is economic growth through poverty reduction and good governance. The objective of 'pro-poor growth' is a good illustration of how growth and poverty reduction are combined by agencies."*⁸⁹

With regard to the above classification of donors the report presents the following finding:

*"Asian bilateral agencies (...) are more concerned with the knowledge economy, competitiveness and economic development; multilateral agencies are the main promoters of skills development for poverty reduction and the fight against exclusion; and, in addition to poverty reduction, governance is a priority issue for agencies such as USAID, DFID, UNDP, and EuropeAid."*⁹⁰ (see chart below)

Main Areas for skills development approaches of Donors in South East Asia⁹¹



The study identifies also a range of possible factors that might account for different approaches being used:

- the specific context of culture, society, politics and economy which can drive the approach to growth, governance and poverty reduction;
- the political and governance situation within a state, as well as the strength of its public institutions;

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 18

- the need to respond to different contextual factors within a partner country, which leads to multiple approaches within the same country (e.g. ADB in China);
- the donor country's own experience, either with a particular development approach adopted, or as a former recipient of aid;
- the history of development assistance in aid-giving countries and the extent to which the governments of these countries are accountable to their domestic populations;
- a comparative advantage of agencies towards other donors that arises out of experience with a particular approach or a particular reputation;
- the type of agency: bilateral or multilateral. While bilateral agencies might bring specific country experience and try to promote this experience in their approach to development assistance, multilateral agencies seem to "see themselves as more neutral brokers presenting a number of different approaches to a partner country.

The following tables provide a selective overview on key strategies, objectives, and focal points of different donors with regard to skills development in Asia⁹²:

ILO

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	ILO helps advance the creation of decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. Training, education and research activities shall help to advance ILO's efforts
Location of skills development within overall programme	Reform and revitalization of the ILO Regional Skills Network in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP) starting in 2005 was the first step in assisting countries in the region to improve skills development of their workforce and employability in the region.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Develop networks of technical expertise; conduct research on key skills issues; organize regional seminars and workshops; develop pilot projects and promote technical cooperation both with and between partners
Main objectives of the approach	Strengthening the work on skills and employability at the regional level through knowledge sharing and product development addressing skills recognition and qualifications frameworks, employability 'soft skills', quality of skills development through workplace learning but also skills for inclusion and economic empowerment of marginalised groups
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Pakistan, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, Samoa Regional: Cross-regional project (China, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam Korea); Sub-regional project (Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand)

⁹² Compiled from a UNESCO Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012, Youth and skills: Putting education to work"; Frances Hunt, Mapping donors' skills development strategies and programmes; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002178/217880E.pdf>, as well as from several relevant reports and presentations published on the websites of international donor organisations.

ADB

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Sector Operations Plan Education by 2020 (ADB, 2010): Increased support for workforce skills development, higher education and capacity building in all parts of education system. Skills development appears prominent within education and capacity building field (ADB 2011).
Location of skills development within overall programme	Mainly within Education. Skills development as a core priority area e.g. TVET, skills training, teacher training
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Training of public sector workers, teachers, health workers, people working in economic / finance areas, skilled professionals. Scholarship programme. Projects with a focus on youth / marginalised include: TVET; demand-driven skills training for poor; skills training for (unemployed) youth, women and adults; rural skills development; agribusiness / agricultural extension training
Main objectives of the approach	Poverty reduction; Increase labour market participation and employment rates; Increasing emphasis on meeting labour market needs
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyz Republic, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Vanuatu, Thailand, Cambodia, Pakistan, Laos, China, Timor Leste, Mongolia, Maldives, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, Micronesia. Regional: GMS, CAREC

The World Bank

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	WB's mission: 'to fight poverty ... and to help people help themselves and their environment by providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors'.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Within both Education and Labour Markets. Topics are: "Knowledge and Skills for the New Economy" (Tertiary Education). TVET in secondary education. "Skills and Employability" as a sub-topic of Social Protection and Labour
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	School to Work Transition and vocational education at secondary level; Under labour markets the "Skills and Employability" topic focuses on youth employment, VET, skills development strategies; women's economic empowerment. Other initiatives include: "Knowledge for Development Initiative" and "Global Development Learning Network".
Main objectives of the approach	Education building skills to meet labour market needs (WB, 2010); Training to build job-related skills; VET to provide workers with skills more relevant to needs of employers and the economy; improving access to / quality of HE.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, PNG, Kyrgyzstan, Timor Leste, Kazakhstan, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam Regional: No HRD relevant initiatives

USAID

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Mission focuses on food security, country stability/security, good governance and humanitarian relief. Some areas include support for Education and Training, Economic Growth and Trade. Under 'Education and Training' skills development is one of three goals (HE and workforce development).
Location of skills development within overall programme	Skills development mainly addresses basic academic and life skills "that empower youth to take full advantage of economic opportunity". Some areas of training initiatives are Health and Good Governance.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Within basic level and high-level skills training for workforce development there is a focus on linking the public and private sector to build demand-driven workforce programs.
Main objectives of the approach	Promote long-term broad-based economic growth and competitiveness, reduce poverty and inequality, improve health and promote participatory democracy.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Sri Lanka Regional: No HRD relevant activities

AusAID

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Goals: Promoting 'Opportunities for All', 'Sustainable Economic Growth', and 'Private Sector Development'. For Education: Improve relevance and quality (including VET) so students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for life and productive employment.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Skills development aligned with two strategic goals: (i) empowering women to participate in the economy, leadership and education;(ii) improving incomes, employment and enterprise opportunities for poor people in both rural and urban areas
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	TVET and scholarships highlighted in overall aid strategies. Elements are: Training of health, education and other professionals, scholarships to Australia, gender empowerment and post conflict training, small business training, and local development training
Main objectives of the approach	Main focus of education programme seems to be on school-based/aged support in order to help children into school and provide pathways out of poverty. Skills development shall improve incomes, employment and enterprise opportunities for poor people.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Indonesia, China, PNG, Philippines, Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Fiji, Samoa, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Tonga, Kiribati, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka Regional: ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program (AADCP)

NZAID

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Support sustainable economic growth. Four focus areas include - investing in economic development and human development (NZAid, 2011). Recent refocus on delivering jobs and prosperity (instead of public sector support). Skills development activities focus on production, trade, tourism revenue, remittances, infrastructure development.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Under the 'Investing in Economic Development' theme support for related technical and vocational skills. Scholarships are provided under the 'Human Development' theme in Education.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Various elements including skills training of professionals, scholarships, HE support, teacher training, language training, health worker and farmer training, business mentoring. Skills development targeting youth/marginalised include training courses in work-based skills areas in public and private sectors; skills-based training to address skills shortages in various countries (via NGOs); microenterprise skills training to disadvantaged people (PNG); small business management training (Samoa); skills training for seasonal workers.
Main objectives of the approach	NZAID supports skills training as an important part of addressing unemployment, increasing capacity, and encouraging economic growth.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Indonesia, Timor Leste Regional: Young Business Leaders Initiative (provides training and familiarisation visits to New Zealand for young business leaders from the ASEAN region); Sustainable Economic Development in Agriculture (provides support to the ASEAN Secretariat to develop a number of project proposals); Support to the Mekong Institute and the Mekong River Commission; English language training for Officials of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam

DFID

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Overall aim is to reduce poverty in poorer countries, in particular through achieving MDGs. Skills development is not obviously important in overall aid strategy, but has a role in education, health and poverty eradication
Location of skills development within overall programme	Skills development is aligned with MDGs, in particular with those relating to poverty reduction, education, and health. Vocational skills development and agricultural training refers to 'Eradicating poverty'.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Elements include: scholarships, health worker training, teacher training, training of public sector workers, HE support and communication skills development. There are programs on basic literacy, employment and numeracy skills for out of school children, agricultural training; women skills/business development; job and skills training
Main objectives of the approach	Focus on Achieving the MDGs mainly health MDG4 and MDG5 and education MDG2, but also poverty-related MDG1 and gender MDG3.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Bangladesh, Myanmar, India, Nepal, Pakistan Regional: No HRD relevant activities

AFD

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	AFD prioritizes four challenges, which include fighting poverty and inequality and promoting sustainable and shared growth - both of which linked to skills development and economic growth.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Under the 'Fighting Poverty and Inequality' theme, ADF 'helps maximise job creation and make economic growth more inclusive through specific actions that support small- and medium-sized businesses'. It also supports education under this theme. The 'Economic Growth' theme includes support to financial services and private sectors, farming and agribusiness (AFD, 2011).
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Different elements and approaches for different regions. Often focus on economy and employment, incl. professional and vocational training for youth to find employment. AFD also supports professional job training centres in both formal and informal sectors. Examples of skills development projects include: professional training, teacher training, health workers training, scholarships.
Main objectives of the approach	Economic growth and job creation and private sector growth encouraged. In Support to Social Services the 'goal is to encourage economic growth by helping adapt vocational training to the economy's needs'.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Vietnam, Sri Lanka (traditionally, AFD has a strong focus on North Africa and the Middle East) Regional: No HRD relevant activities

EU

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	EC Mission focuses on human development, social cohesion and employment. Human Development / Investing in People include Education, Health, Employment and Social Cohesion and Children's rights.
Location of skills development within overall programme	While the main emphasis within Education is on school-based education, TVET and skills development are prominent. Within Social Cohesion and Employment the importance of education and VET is highlighted addressing entrepreneurial/business skills in secondary schools and HE.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Key topics include: Public/private partnerships in TVET; managerial skills in SMEs; VET system modernisation; agricultural training; training for micro-enterprises; tourism training; basic life skills for youth and adults as well as public sector, teacher and health worker training.
Main objectives of the approach	Achieving MDGs seems to be the main objective. Thus training across a range of sectors has a range of clients / beneficiaries. A number of initiatives are linked to work and enhancing income generation chances.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: China, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Mongolia Afghanistan, Vietnam Regional: No HRD relevant activities

JICA

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Overarching motto of Japan's ODA since 1952 has been: "The Country's development depends on its Human Resources Development". JICA follows three main modalities for implementing cooperation activities, namely: assigning Japanese experts, accepting trainees to Japan or third countries and supplying equipment.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Compared with the total number of JICA technical cooperation projects, HRD projects accounted for some 29% of the total. Since the percentage of purely educational projects has been small, the majority of HRD projects have been TVET projects.
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	The majority of projects focused on capacity development, study and analysis and skills upgrading. In the TVET sector, projects were mainly to upgrade trainers and to strengthen the capacity of training centres. Less attention has been given to policy advice and system development.
Main objectives of the approach	Technical cooperation has been targeted at technical transfer according to JICA's ODA motto. Though "Reducing poverty through equitable growth" is one of JICA's mission principles operations focus mainly on institutional capacity building and skills for competitiveness.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, China, Cambodia Regional: ASEAN-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee (AMECC), ASEAN-Japan HRD Collaboration Programme

KOICA

Strategic Mission for Skills Development	Korea is dedicated to sharing its development experience and assisting with efforts to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the developing world. KOICA gives higher priority to Asian partners, but works also in other regions.
Location of skills development within overall programme	Skills development is located under various aspects: Education/training (enhance the literacy and vocational training in partner countries); Institution building (transfer strategies for economic development through capacity building); Information Technology (bridging the "digital divide" by sharing advanced information technology); Agriculture (increase productivity and income of farmers)
Key elements of recent skills development strategy	Share and transfer know-how and knowledge, including constructing/restoring vocational training centers; training personnel from partner countries; dispatching experts and volunteers to provide and share skills development incl. studies to identify skill availability and needs in partner countries. KOICA also assists with the construction of IT centers helping to increase the number of skilled-technicians;
Main objectives of the approach	To assist in achieving the MDGs related to universal primary education, gender equality in education and youth employment, KOICA has concentrated on primary education and vocational training. With regard to TVET the aim is to produce skilled work forces and to increase low productivity in the selected areas.
Key recipients for skills development programmes in Asia	Bi-lateral: Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan; Mongolia, Indonesia Regional: No HRD relevant activities

Key elements in donor-funded skills development programmes⁹³

Group receiving training	Skills development	Overall beneficiary / aim	Known number of donors in this area ³
Disadvantaged communities	Life skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy)	Individual, local community development; improve employability	9 ⁴
Women	District school facilitators;	Gender empowerment, getting women involved in politics	3 ⁵
Youth	Vocational skills, TVET; often tourism training	Economic integration of young people into labour market	19 ⁶
Unemployed disadvantaged adults	Vocational skills, small business	Economic integration of adults into labour market	12 ⁷
Disadvantaged women	Vocational skills, small business	Economic integration of women into labour market; empowering effects.	13 ⁸
SMEs	Small business training, entrepreneurship	Economic growth	7 ⁹
Business managers / businesses	Language skills; business education; business partnerships / mentoring	Trade (often with donor country); Economic growth; private sector development.	5 ¹⁰
Finance workers / bankers	Finance training; market economies	Economic integration for countries in transition; modern financing methods.	5 ¹¹
Teachers	Teacher training	MDG and wider benefits that education brings; getting more girls into school; improving VET teaching / adult education	17 ¹²
Health professionals	e.g. midwife training, training in vaccinations, training of doctors and nurses	MDG and wider benefits that good health brings.	15 ¹³
Civil / public servants	Public admin; N-S partnerships	Good governance; improve economic growth; economic integration	8 ¹⁴
Lawyers / judges	Human rights; human trafficking; violence against women		6 ¹⁵
Agricultural workers	Various agricultural techniques;	Improve agricultural productivity.	10 ¹⁶
Maritime workers	Sea faring skills, fisheries; anti-piracy	Improve fisheries income; water management etc.	4 ¹⁷
Engineers	Training in road safety	Improve roads	3 ¹⁸
Workers in water sector, environmental health	Water and sanitation, waste management	Improve water and sanitation, waste management	2 ¹⁹
Police	Gender sensitization; human trafficking; violence against women; anti-terrorism	Stop drug trafficking; police awareness of gender issues/ human rights;	7 ²⁰
Military	Security issues, anti-terrorism	Improve security	2 ²¹
Fragile communities	Mine clearance; peace building; conflict resolution; disaster relief; good governance	Improve community safety and peace; rebuilding communities	5 ²²
Customs officers	Customs control	Drug trafficking	1 ²³
Journalists	Media training	Support to democracy	2 ²⁴
Electorate	Political awareness; election / democracy training	Support to democracy	3 ²⁵
Various	Environmental issues	Raise awareness of climate change, sustainable development etc.	2 ²⁶
Young leaders	Cultural understanding programmes; leadership training	Improve future country relations and understanding; develop future leaders	2 ²⁷
Professionals	Work-based attachments / training; mid-career fellowships (in either recipient or donor country)	Improve .	4 ²⁸
Post graduate students	Academic skills / subject knowledge through scholarship programmes	Student / recipient country development capacity.	All donors.
Academics	Academic skills / subject knowledge through links programmes / fellowships	Academics / recipient country development capacity.	12 ²⁹
Donor country population	Development education; internships	Improve awareness of development issues; support to development issues.	Most donor countries.
Staff of development agency	Range of skills e.g. gender mainstreaming, PCM,	Aid beneficiaries	Most donors countries

3 It is not possible at this stage to provide a breakdown of skills development initiatives in monetary terms.

4 Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, Switz, UK, USA, EU;

5 AusAID, Norway, Sweden

⁹³ UNESCO (2012), Mapping Donors' Skills Development Strategies and Programmes
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002178/217880E.pdf> ; p. 6-7

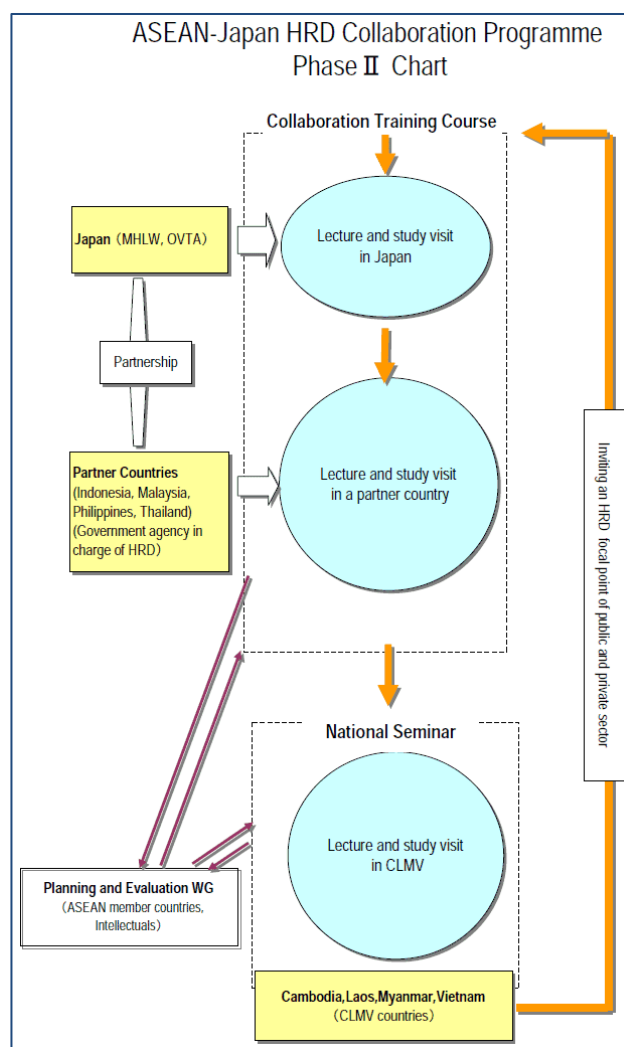
Regional Political Processes and Actors, Donor Activities and Strategies for TVET in Asia

- 6 AusAID, Austria, Belgium, Canada; Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, NZ, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switz, UK, USA, EU, AfDB, AsDB, WB
- 7 AusAID, Canada, Italy, Luxembourg, NZ, Norway, Sweden, Switz, UK, EU, AsDB, WB
- 8 AusAID, Belgium, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switz, UK, EU, AsDB, WB
- 9 Italy, Luxembourg, NZ, Sweden, USA, EU, AfDB
- 10 Belgium; Denmark; France, NZ, Norway
- 11 France, Greece, AfDB, AsDB, Luxembourg
- 12 AusAID, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, NZ, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switz, UK, EU, AsDB, WB
- 13 AusAID, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, NZ, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA, EU, AsDB, WB
- 14 Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Switz, UK, USA, AsDB
- 15 AusAID, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, UK, EU
- 16 Belgium; Finland, Ireland, NZ, Norway, Switz, UK, USA, EU, AsDB
- 17 NZ, Norway, EU, AsDB,
- 18 AusAID, EU, WB
- 19 France, Italy
- 20 AusAID, Norway, Portugal, Switz, UK, USA, EU
- 21 Portugal, USA
- 22 Austria, Ireland, Italy, Norway, USA
- 23 AusAID
- 24 Ireland, Norway
- 25 Norway, Sweden, USA
- 26 Ireland, WB
- 27 USA, AfDB
- 28 Netherlands; NZ; Sweden, USA
- 29 Australia, Austria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, UK, USA, EU, ADB; WB

ASEAN-Japan HRD Collaboration Programme (AJHRDCP)

The ASEAN–Japan HRD Collaboration Programme Phase II (2008-2011) was proposed to the ASEAN+3 (APT) Labour Ministers Meeting in Bangkok, on 8 May 2008, and succeeded Phase I, which ran during 2004 to 2007. The aims of this programme were to provide assistance in strengthening the basis for human resources development in the CLMV countries and to further the technical cooperation between the CLMV countries and other ASEAN member countries. The programme was basically made up of conferences and seminars, which were planned and implemented according to the following procedure:

Firstly, the Planning and Evaluation Working Group decided the theme and a partner country of the year. Secondly, the Collaboration Training Course for CLMV countries was held in Japan and a partner country. Thirdly, CLMV countries held National Seminars.⁹⁴ (see chart below)



The collaboration-training course and the national seminars were funded by Japan and for national seminars lecturers could be provided from a partner country and Japan.

⁹⁴ Report of ASEAN-Japan HRD Collaboration Programme Phase II;
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/development/report/index.html>

During Phase I, the programme promoted HRD policies in CLMV countries with Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand as partners. CLMV countries improved their capacity on HRD by training more than 50 attendees from CLMV countries and circulating the result in the countries through seminars.⁹⁵ The following list provides a synopsis of themes and seminar topics:

2004 Developing and Improving Vocational Training System - Focus on Instructor Training and Facilities Management

(with CEVEST, The Centre for Vocational and Extension Service Training, Indonesia)

National Seminars

Cambodia:	National Workshop on HRD in Cambodia
Laos:	HRD through Skill Development
Myanmar:	National Seminar on Promotion of HRD in Industry
Vietnam:	Japanese Experience on HRD to the Development of Vietnam's HRD

2005 Human Resources Development and Employment Promotion of the People with Disabilities

(with IRC, Industrial Rehabilitation Centre, Thailand)

National Seminars

Cambodia:	HRD, Vocational Training and Employment Promotion for People with Disabilities
Laos:	Vocational Training and Employment Promotion for PWDs
Myanmar:	Development and Vocational Training for PWDs
Vietnam:	Vocational Training and Employment Opportunities for PWDs

2006 Developing and Improving Vocational Training System - Focus on Learning Materials and Curriculum Development

(with TESDA, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Philippines)

National Seminars

Cambodia:	Curriculum and Training Materials Development
Laos:	Dissemination of Curriculum and Learning Material system in Japan to Develop the Curriculum and Learning Material in Targeted Vocational and Skill Training in Lao PDR
Myanmar:	Improving and Developing the Vocational Training System -Training for Upgrading Technology
Vietnam:	Vocational Training Curriculum and Materials Development in Vietnam

2007 Developing and Improving Vocational Training Systems - Training Upgrading Technologies

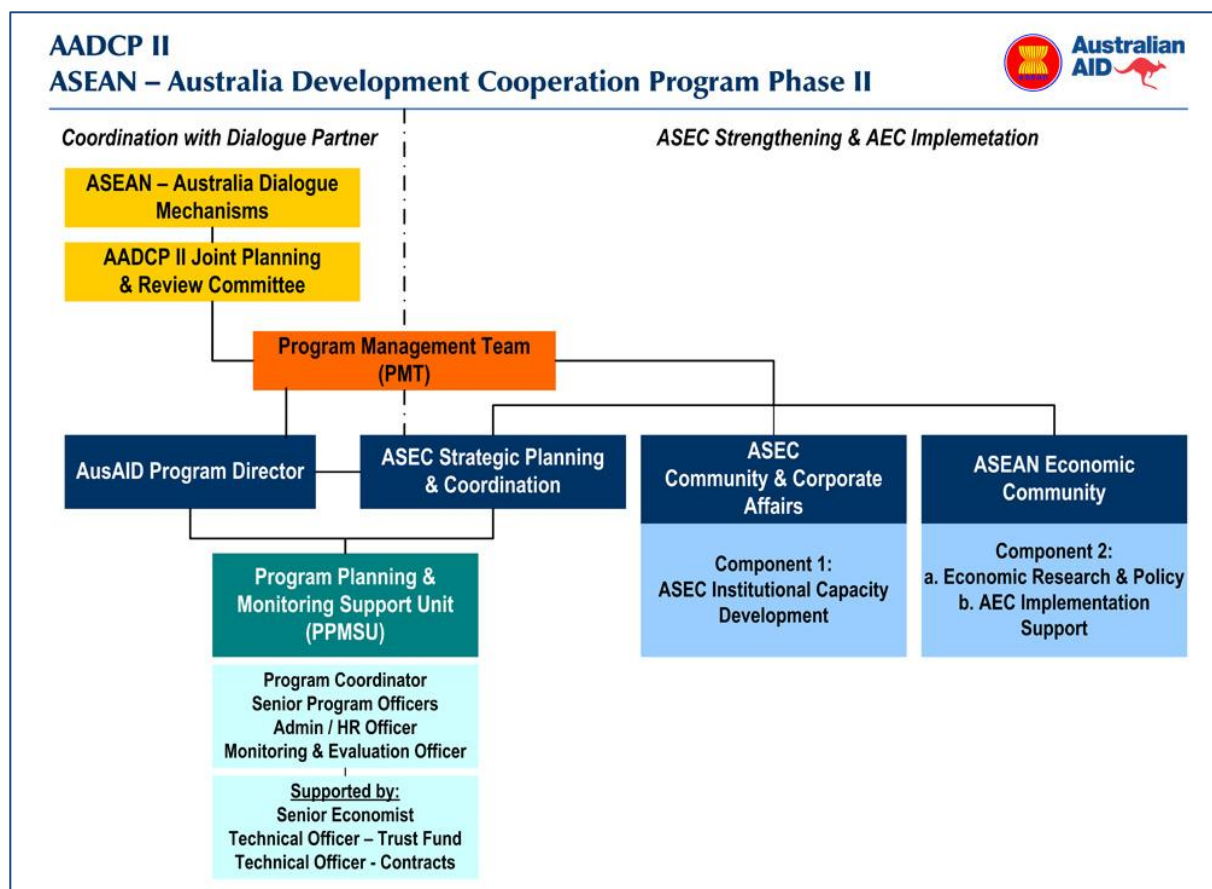
(with JMTI, Malaysia)

National Seminars

Cambodia:	Improving and Collaborating on Vocational Training System -Public and Private Sector
Laos:	Developing and Improving the Vocational Training system -Training for Upgrading Technology
Myanmar:	Developing Curriculum and Training Materials for Promotion of HRD in Industry
Vietnam:	Experience on Bridging Vocational Training with Enterprises' Needs to Adapt to the Change of Upgrading the Technology

⁹⁵ http://hrd.apec.org/images/4/42/E.Economy_Report_Japan.pdf

AusAID Regional Cooperation (AADCP)⁹⁶



⁹⁶ <http://aadcp2.org/home/content.php?id=87>

GIZ Portfolio in ASIA

No	Common Topics	Intervention Fields (Macro / Meso / Micro - based on BMZ Strategy Paper)	Indonesia	Laos	Mongolia	Myanmar	Sri Lanka	Vietnam	HCD	RCP
1	Competencies of TVET Teachers and TVET Managers	National Framework for TVET Teachers (TVET law, TVET strategy) TVET Steering Capacities of national institution resp. for TVET Initial TVET teacher training	X	X	X			X	X	5
		Further training of TVET Teachers at supp. colleges in sel. occupational fields & pedagogics	X		X	X	X	X	X	6
		Network Development for further TVET teacher training							X	1
		Capacity building for management of TVET institutes and social partners (enterprises)	X		X			X	X	4
2	Cooperation with the Business Community	National Framework for Cooperation with Business Community Dialogue and respective capacities of State and Business Community on TVET			X	X		X		3
		Cooperative Training - School / Industry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	4
		National Framework, occupational skill standard setting, testing and certification	X	X				X	X	6
3	Occupational Standard Setting, Testing and Certification	Competencies of relevant institutions/staff for Standard Setting, Testing and Certification	X					X	X	4
		Implementation of occupational skill standard setting, testing and certification	X	X		X	X			3
4	Demand oriented Training (training programmes, curricula, LTM, modules)	Framework for a demand-oriented TVET System Competencies of staff of national institution for TVET networks for demand-oriented TVET	X	X		X		X	X	4
		Means of TVET institutes to deliver demand oriented TVET offers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
5	Development of High Quality TVET Institutions	Framework for High Quality TVET Institutions High-Quality TVET Institute Models / Concepts/ Networks TVET Delivery at High-Quality TVET Institutes	X					X		1
		Legal Framework	X					X		2
6	Career Guidance, Employment Opportunities	Capacity Building, Activities to improve Employment Opportunities Career Guidance of TVET trainees	X	X		X	X			4
		Policy Framework	X					X		2
7	Research and Data	Capacity building national institutions on Monitoring TVET System labour market information systems and surveys Tracer studies, TNA, employer surveys on skills requirements at TVET institutes level	X	X		X	X	X		2
		Policy Advisory on awareness raising	X	X	X		X	X		5
8	TVET Image	Concept development & capacity building of national association on awareness raising TVET image campaigns and PR activities to improve reputation of TVET at TVET institutes					X	X		1
		TVET Financing policy framework	X					X		3
9	TVET Financing	Capacities to regulate and manage TVET Financing TVET Financing at TVET Institute Level	(X)		X			X		2
		Framework for Articulation	X			X				1
10	Permeability TVET – Higher Education	Articulation Pathways				X		X		2
11	Employment Standards	Work safety and labour quality	X		X			X		1
12	Greening TVET	Capacity Building regarding Greening TVET	(X)					X	X	3
13	Labour Mobility	Piloting Migration Models (i.e. Triple Win Migration)	X					X		2
14	Gender	Capacity Building of national institutions, concepts and networks Gender analysis and activities at TVET institute level	(X)	X	X	X	X	X		5
15	Inform. & Non-form. TVET	Capacity Building TVET for rural labourers			X		X	X		3
								(X)		1

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ANNEXES

I. List of project concept notes from the CLMV Priority Action List of the IAI Work Plan

(updated on April 2013)

1. Programme on e-commerce for CLMV government officials
2. CLMV workshop on e-commerce development
3. Building a number of market places along the border regions
4. Enhancing capacity of CLMV Market Surveillance in fighting contraband, fake and poor quality goods
5. Enhancing access to markets for farmers across CLMV countries
6. Enhancing capacity for local government officials in CLMV countries
7. Advance Trade Negotiation Skills
8. Advancing Higher Education/University Governance and Management
9. Technical assistance to harmonise the Implementation Engineering Expertise (IEE) for ASEAN-CLMV countries
10. Building Higher Education for Regional Competitiveness: a focus on the capacity development for higher education assessors of CLMV countries.
11. Capacity Building for Tour Guides from CLMV countries
12. Strengthening Agriculture Market Information Service in Myanmar
13. Training Programme on the Synthesis and Characterization of Nanomaterials
14. Training of Sustainable Ecotourism Management
15. Encouraging Private Sector Participation in Value-Chain Management for Agricultural Products
16. Project to raise English language proficiency in the CLMV countries, but, in the light of limited resource, restricted to persons engaged directly in ASEAN activities and focused on language relevant to their fields of specialization
17. Training in the formulation of project proposal
18. Formulation of national action plans for human resource development in ICT for Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar
19. Strengthening the human resources capacity in the fields of standards and conformance for CLMV Countries
20. Information Management support system to sustainable Management of Agriculture Land Resources in Cambodia
21. Development Study of water supply in the Peri-Urban areas of CLV Triangle areas in Steung Treng, Rattanakiri, and Mondulakiri Provinces
22. Capacity building in English Language for the Royal University of Agriculture
23. Workshop on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on Tourism of CLMV as a Single Destination (3 days workshop)
24. Strengthening export of "One District-One Product"
25. Organizing the Trade Fair at Attapeu Province (Organizing exhibitions and preparation for the participation in the international exhibitions/trade fair 26. Project to build CLMV capacity to participate in ASEAN Energy schemes, primarily the ASEAN power grid
26. Project on the preparation for implementation of ASEAN Framework Agreement on Multimodal Transport of CLMV Countries
27. Training Programs to Improve the Capability on Disaster Risk Management on Mining Activities for CLMV Countries
28. Implementing the Mutual Recognition Agreement in Tourism
29. Upgrading an existing inland waterways (IW) training college into a regional IW training Center
30. Tourism Development in Cambodia
31. Aquaculture Development of Indigenous Fish Species in the Mekong River
32. SME Development in Lao PDR
33. Increasing the Competitiveness of Myanmar SMEs in the International Market

II. Factsheet - Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)⁹⁷

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is a regional intergovernmental organization established in 1965 among governments of Southeast Asian countries to promote regional cooperation in education, science and culture in the region.

As an organization that has continued to nurture human capacities and explored the peoples' fullest potential, SEAMEO maintains its work and aspirations for development of the peoples of the region to make lives better through quality and equity in education, preventive health education, culture and tradition, information and communication technology, languages, poverty alleviation and agriculture and natural resources.

Vision

The leading organization for enhancing regional understanding and cooperation in education, science and culture for a better quality of life in Southeast Asia

Mission

To enhance regional understanding, cooperation and unity of purpose among Member Countries for a better quality of life through the establishment of networks and partnerships, the provision of fora among policy makers and experts, and the promotion of sustainable human resource development

Strategic Goals

- To develop regional centres of excellence
- To provide relevant and responsive programmes that address national and regional issues in SEAMEO's areas of specialization
- To strengthen the organizational capability to initiate and manage change and development to meet the challenges of globalization
- To ensure continued financial viability
- To promote research and development (R&D) in education, science and culture and improve the dissemination mechanism
- To enhance collaboration among Member Countries and relevant organizations
- To be ASEAN's strategic partner for the advancement of education, science and culture
- To facilitate the development of harmonized education standards
- To be a regional leader in the advancement of education, science and culture

Core Competencies

SEAMEO prides itself in its technical and scientific expertise in various fields of specialization, its strength in governance and management, partnership, networking and collaborative skills. It sets the pace in research, creativity and innovative programmes in education, science and culture in the region.

SEAMEO strives for excellence in the following Core Competencies:

- Technical and scientific expertise in areas of specialization
- Governance and management skills
- Collaborative partnership and networking skills
- Research, creativity and innovative skills

⁹⁷ Transcript of SEAMEO's most recent factsheet from April 2013 available on request as PDF through SEAMEO's Secretariat (secretariat@seameo.org)

Priority Areas

1. Education

- 21st Century Skills
 - Character education
 - Entrepreneurship education
 - Information and Communication Technology
 - Language and literacy
 - Scientific and technological literacy
- Continuous professional development for teacher and education personnel
- Education For All (EFA)
 - Basic education
 - Early childhood care and education (ECCE)
 - Education in emergencies
 - Lifelong learning
 - Reaching the unreached
 - Special education needs
- Education for sustainable development (ESD)
- Higher Education
- Technical and Vocational Education

2. Culture

- Archaeology and history
- Arts and design
- Cultural diversity and regional identity
- Heritage preservation and cultural management
- Traditions and values

3. Science

- Agriculture
- Biodiversity and Biotechnology
- Disaster management
- Food and nutrition
- Natural resources and environmental management
- Preventive health, reproductive health education and life skills development

Strengths

1. The Organization is non-profit and not politically oriented.
2. SEAMEO has the largest grouping of country membership (11 Member Countries) in the region to deliver programmes in education.
3. Its flexibility and resilience has enabled it to meet the challenges posed by the fast changing political and socio-economic development in the region.
4. Its professional and technical programmes and activities that are often conducted on a regular scheduled basis are special and unique.
5. The Organization has built a strong infrastructure of extensive physical and equipment resources. Almost every Centre has its own campus, training, research and information dissemination, dormitory facilities to enable it to carry out its functions successfully and with quality.
6. Non-tangible resources of the Organization include its vast experiences, information, extensive network of contacts and linkages both nationally and internationally.
7. Its activities are focused on the universally appealing theme of human resources development including sustainable development. This helps make SEAMEO attractive to countries wishing to make contributions to sustainable development at the grassroots level in Southeast Asia.
8. The competence and experience of its personnel, complemented by the technical expertise provided by the SEAMEO Associate Member Countries and partner agencies, accounts for the quality and impact of its programmes and activities.

9. The regional characteristic of the Centres' professional staff also contributes to the richness in experience and competence of every Centre to handle projects that it undertakes. SEAMEO activities are not limited to Member Countries within Southeast Asia but are also open to participants, programmes and activities from outside the region. Interactions in these activities further enrich the experiences of the participants as well.

Funding

The Operational Budget for the SEAMEO Secretariat is underwritten by the Member Countries whereby the respective annual share is determined by the Asian Development Bank contribution index. The Operational Budget of the TROPED Central Network likewise is equally shared by the SEAMEO Member Countries. The Centres' operational budget, capital and annually recurring costs of each Centre are underwritten by their host countries.

The Special Fund is a central fund administered by the SEAMEO Secretariat in order to support regular programmes and activities of SEAMEO Centres. Such programmes and activities include:

- Annual awards given by SEAMEO partners to outstanding personnel in various categories in the fields of education, science and culture in Southeast Asia
- Governing Board Meetings
- Personnel exchanges
- Project feasibility studies
- Research and development projects in education, science and culture
- Research fellowships and grants
- SEAMEO students exchange programme
- Seminars and special conferences
- Training and research scholarships

The SEAMEO Educational Development Fund (SEAMEO EDF) is the lifeblood of the Organization and has been established to serve as the central repository of gifts for SEAMEO to support the requirements of Special Funds and other Funds. Other Funds has been established to support specific programmes and projects of various SEAMEO units, which are not covered by the Operational and Special Funds.

The Council

The SEAMEO Council, consisting of the Ministers of Education or accredited representatives of the Member Countries, is the most significant body, which determines the policies and the main lines of work of SEAMEO. It is headed by an appointed member of the Council, elected at an ordinary session of the Council Meeting. At present, the President of the SEAMEO Council is His Excellency Prof Dr Pham Vu Luan, Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam.

Membership

A total of 18 countries and 3 institutions are members of SEAMEO, grouped into three categories: Member Countries, Associate Member, and Affiliate Members.

The Member Countries of SEAMEO are:

- Brunei Darussalam (since 1984)
- Cambodia (since 1971)
- Indonesia (since 1965)
- Lao PDR (since 1965)
- Malaysia (since 1965)
- Myanmar (since 1998)
- The Philippines (since 1965)
- Singapore (since 1965)
- Thailand (since 1965)
- Timor-Leste (since 2006)
- Vietnam (since 1992)

The Associate Members are:

- Australia (since 1973)
- Canada (since 1988)
- France (since 1973)
- Germany (since 1990)
- The Netherlands (since 1993)
- New Zealand (since 1974)
- Spain (since 2007)
- United Kingdom (since 2013)

The Affiliate Members are:

- International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) (since 1999)
- University of Tsukuba (since 2009)
- British Council (since 2010)

SEAMEO Secretariat

The SEAMEO Secretariat is the executive arm of the SEAMEO Council and the Headquarters of the Organization. Based in Bangkok, Thailand, the Secretariat is headed by a Director who is the legal and administrative representative of the Organization. The Director is supported by a team of professional staff recruited from Member Countries and a group of general staff from the host country. Currently, the Director of SEAMEO Secretariat is Dr Witaya Jeradechakul. The Secretariat is responsible for several functions including feasibility study of regional education projects, securing the financial support for SEAMEO, and conduct of conferences and seminars.

SEAMEO Centres

SEAMEO has established 20 specialist institutions that undertake training and research programmes in various fields of education, science, and culture. The centres play the significant roles in the provision of training and human resource development, technical assistance and consultancy, forum for policy dialogue and regional cooperation, research and development, publication and information dissemination, as well as partnership and networking. Each Regional Centre has a Governing Board composed of senior education officials from each SEAMEO Member Country. The Governing Board reviews the Centres' operations and budget and sets their policies and programmes. In the fields of education and educational development, 12 regional centres were set up. Each of these regional centres specializes in diverse expertise.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology

(Approval of Establishment - 1970) Based in the Philippines, SEAMEO INNOTECH initiates and disseminates innovative and technology oriented educational programmes that help SEAMEO Member Countries identify and solve common or unique educational problems and address anticipated needs.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Language

(Approval of Establishment - 2009) Located in Jakarta, Indonesia, the centre promotes programmes and activities in improving the quality of teachers and education personnel in the area of Language.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Mathematics

(Approval of Establishment - 2009) Located in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the centre promotes programmes and activities in improving the quality of teachers and education personnel in the area of Mathematics.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel (QITEP) in Science

(Approval of Establishment - 2009) Located in Bandung, Indonesia, the centre promotes programmes and activities in improving the quality of teachers and education personnel in the area of Science.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics

(Approval of Establishment - 1967) Established in Penang, Malaysia, SEAMEO RECSAM is designed to meet the needs of the SEAMEO Member Countries in developing science, mathematics and technology education programmes.

SEAMEO Regional Language Centre

(Approval of Establishment - 1968) Located in Singapore, SEAMEO RELC provides SEAMEO Member Countries with expertise, training facilities and training programmes to upgrade the skills of language specialists and educators. Programmes focus on knowledge and pedagogic disciplines of language teaching and learning.

SEAMEO Regional Training Centre

(Approval of Establishment - 1996) Located in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, SEAMEO RETRAC assists SEAMEO Member Countries especially Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam to identify and solve common problems in human resource development. Its area of specialization is educational management.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development

(Approval of Establishment - 1993) Hosted by the Government of Thailand, SEAMEO RIHED plays a crucial role in the capability building of SEAMEO Member Countries in the field of higher education. It responds to needs on policy and planning, administration and management of higher education.

SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre

(Approval of Establishment - 1997) Located in Indonesia, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC assists SEAMEO Member Countries in identifying educational problems and finding alternative solutions for sustainable human resource development through the dissemination and effective use of open learning and distance education.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (Approval of Establishment - 1990) Hosted by Brunei Darussalam, SEAMEO VOTEC is designed to improve the management of vocational and technical education and training (VTET) in SEAMEO Member Countries. The centre strives to develop and deliver relevant programmes in VTET to meet the local, national and regional needs in socio-economic, industrial, business and labour markets.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Special Education

(Approval of Establishment - 2009) Located in Malaysia, SEAMEO SEN specializes in education to support the needs of children with different disabilities and education for the needs of the gifted and talented children.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning

(Approval of Establishment - 2011) Fully established in 2012 in Vietnam, SEAMEO CELLL specializes in research and training on lifelong learning as foundation for educational policy development. The centre is expected to become a focal point for strengthening links between Asia and Europe in promoting lifelong learning.

Six (6) regional centres were established to provide services in the field s of Science.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology

(Approval of Establishment - 1968) Located in Bogor, Indonesia, the main activities of SEAMEO BIOTROP focus on Forest, Pest and Aquatic Biology. It assists SEAMEO Member Countries in developing the expertise to identify, prioritize, analyze and recommend solutions or alternative approaches to critical biological problems in the region, especially those related to sustainable development of tropical ecosystems.

SEAMEO Regional Center for Food and Nutrition

(Approval of Establishment - 2010) SEAMEO RECFON is formerly known as SEAMEO TROPMED Regional Center for Community Nutrition (SEAMEO-TROPMED RCCN), one of the four SEAMEO Centers under the TROPMED Network. Located in Jakarta, Indonesia, the centre for Food and Nutrition aims to assist the Member States in issues on food and nutrition.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture

(Approval of Establishment - 1966) SEAMEO SEARCA, hosted by the Government of the Philippines, serves the agriculture and rural needs of the region through its human resource development programmes and research and extension activities.

SEAMEO Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network

(Approval of Establishment - 1966) SEAMEO TROPMED Network has three sub-regional centres in Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. The central office is located in Bangkok. The Network's overall role is to promote health and to prevent and control tropical diseases and public health problems.

SEAMEO TROPMED Regional Centre for Microbiology, Parasitology and Entomology

(Approval of Establishment - 1967) SEAMEO TROPMED Malaysia, located at the Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur, conducts research for the prevention and control of diseases and provides specialized training, diagnostic, consultative and advisory services. It promotes health management as a collective responsibility of government, the private sector, non-government organizations, the community and individuals.

SEAMEO TROPMED Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration,

Environmental and Occupational Health (Approval of Establishment - 1967) The SEAMEO TROPMED Philippines, based in the College of Public Health of the University of the Philippines in Manila, conducts research and training in the fields of public health, rural medicine, hospital administration, environmental and occupational health, health policy and management.

SEAMEO TROPMED Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine

(Approval of Establishment - 1967) The SEAMEO TROPMED Thailand, hosted by the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University, Bangkok, offers training on endemic tropical diseases, parasitology, community and preventive medicine. It also conducts researches on alternative control measures of diseases and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, including trials of new chemotherapeutic compounds and new vaccines. It provides clinical care to patients suffering from tropical diseases.

Two (2) regional centres were dedicated for the study and development of culture and history.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for History and Tradition

(Approval of Establishment - 2000) Based in Myanmar, SEAMEO CHAT was inaugurated in December 2000. It promotes cooperation in the study of history and tradition among SEAMEO Member Countries through research, human resource development, education and networking.

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts

(Approval of Establishment - 1978) Hosted by the Government of Thailand, SEAMEO SPAFA cultivates awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage; promotes and enriches archaeological and cultural activities in the region; and furthers professional competence in the fields of archaeology and fine arts to advance mutual knowledge and understanding among SEAMEO Member Countries.

SEAMEO Initiatives and Projects

Education

- Reaching the Unreached: Education For All by 2015
- Mother Tongue as Bridge Language of Instruction
- Human Values-Based Water and Sanitation and Hygiene Education
- Survey of ICT Integration in Education: Status of Southeast Asian Countries
- SEAMEO-APCEIU Collaboration on the Development of Learning Materials on Southeast Asia and Korea
- Development of Teachers' Guide Integrating Climate Change Issues in Southeast Asian Schools ICT in Spoken Language Assessment
- Interactive Teaching and Learning with Low-cost Interactive Smart Board

- The M-I-T (Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand) Student Mobility Pilot Programme
- Southeast Asia Education Network (SEA EduNet)

Culture

- Culture Development Series for Southeast Asian Youth
- SEAMEO Community Outreach Programme for Cultural Preservation
- Southeast Asian History for Southeast Asian Secondary Schools
- Sowing Seeds of Peace in Mekong River Basin (Promoting Peace Awareness)

Science

- The Asia-Pacific Forum: Youth Action on Climate Change: Exploration through Cultural
- Expression Science
- ICT and HIV/AIDS Preventive Education in the Cross-border Areas of the Greater Mekong Sub-region
- Establishment of Joint Community Empowerment Centre for Poverty Alleviation and Biodiversity
- Country Study for Strategy on Integrating Biofuels and Rural Renewal Energy Production in Agriculture in the Greater-Mekong Sub-region
- Capacity Building on Risk-based Food Control Programme in Southeast Asia

SEAMEO Awards

SEAMEO-Australia Press Award

SEAMEO-Australia Education Links Award

SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award

SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award

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III. THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT EDUCATION PLAN OF ACTION (2011 – 2015)⁹⁸

We, the Education Ministers of the East Asia Summit (EAS) participating countries, have met to address the issue of education, and with the objective of improving education quality, broadening access and advancing mutual understanding.

We recognise the diversity of cultures, traditions, and practices within the education systems and values in the Asia-Pacific constitute an exceptional resource.

We understand the importance of education in improving people's productivity and prosperity, which will further strengthen peace based on mutual respect and understanding in the region.

We note that EAS Leaders emphasised at their Second Summit the need for education cooperation to strengthen collaboration to improve mutual respect and understanding between peoples. At their Sixth Summit, the Leaders "highlighted the crucial role of education in promoting human resources development, enhancing regional competitiveness, sustained economic development, as well as building friendship among people in the region. EAS Leaders supported the development of an EAS Education Cooperation Plan of Action to provide direction and momentum to education cooperation and to promote more comprehensive cooperation based on the principle of unity in diversity."

We recall prior work undertaken within the EAS on education, including the 2009 formation of an Education Cooperation Taskforce which conducted workshops in Jakarta and at Phuket in 2010; the outcomes of the Jakarta and Phuket workshops in 2010; parallel work by ASEAN, notably the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity* and the *ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015)*; and the theme announced for the 2011 Informal EAS EMM, namely *Improving Education Quality through Regional Cooperation* and the theme of the 2012 1st EAS EMM, *Strengthening Global Partnership for Education and Humanity*.

We recognise that regional cooperation aims in the first instance to raise quality and enlarge access and opportunity, not to impose uniform practice; that education for mutual understanding promotes respect for diversity; and that educational exchange and free movement of labour require consistency and compatibility in education systems, particularly in the tertiary education sector where the growth in mobility is most marked.

We emphasise the importance of ensuring that young people have strong foundation of skills and knowledge, that they are oriented to being lifelong learners, and that they are equipped to meet the challenges of rapid change, to participate effectively in a globalised environment, and to understand and respect regional diversity. High quality education for all is at the heart of these goals.

We further recognise that there remain great disparities between levels of educational opportunities between, and within, the EAS participating countries, and that the EAS should add value to existing processes wherever it can do so.

We reaffirm that the EAS needs strong mechanisms to facilitate regional cooperation and harmonization, as appropriate, so experts can discuss findings from activities as they emerge; that the diversity of EAS policy approaches offers great potential in this regard (for example, reforms to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems to improve learning's relevance to labour market needs); and that as EAS countries are at different stages on this journey, periodic policy dialogues involving officials, experts, education providers and industry could be highly beneficial.

WE HEREBY AGREE:

1. That the overarching objective of cooperation within the EAS until 2015 will be on improving the quality of education, harmonizing education systems, as appropriate, and promoting student mobility in the EAS participating countries and across the region. Key aspects of which will involve identifying avenues for developing appropriate human resources and increasing collaboration aimed at strengthening mutual respect and understanding of education frameworks.

⁹⁸ Draft currently only available as part of the Indian Delegation's report at:
http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/9362197_Report-of-Indonesia-visit-jul-12.pdf

2. To support this objective, we have adopted three strategic priorities to frame our cooperation
 - a. Systems – to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning through regional collaboration, supporting capacity building systems that sustain quality, and enlarging access to educational opportunities;
 - b. Community – to enhance mutual understanding among the peoples of the EAS, and to develop networking and the sharing of good practice in education; and
 - c. Connectivity – to facilitate the mobility and interaction of students, academics and providers among countries of the EAS in order to expand educational benefits and opportunities supported by information and telecommunication technology and the use of open education resources.
3. To help drive results in improving the quality of education, we have agreed upon the projects listed at Figure 1 as priority areas for cooperation up to 2015. This list includes the project proposals contained in the March 2011 *Report on the East Asia Summit Education Cooperation Taskforce Workshop 2* and noted by EAS Education Ministers at the Informal EAS meeting in Bali in 2011 and by EAS Leaders at the sixth EAS as well as the Nalanda University initiative and other projects aimed at strengthening education on a regional basis. The projects are grouped under the three strategic priorities as mechanisms that stand to improve quality, build community and increase connectivity. Different countries are planning to participate in different projects as appropriate. We endorse all projects and agree to initiate cooperation, subject to the resources of participating countries, on:

Systems

- a. A regional TVET quality assurance framework project;
- b. Examine and evaluate options for an EAS teaching standards framework;
- c. An EAS regional facility for assisting with education quality assessment; a feasibility study to be undertaken by Australia in 2012.
- d. Harmonisation of national qualification frameworks to assure their interoperability and facilitate student and people mobility in the region; and
- e. Examine and evaluate options for harmonisation of regional credit transfer system.

Community

- f. An EAS regional leadership development program;
- g. A second language teaching in the EAS;
- h. A teacher mobility study;
- i. An EAS teaching resources website;
- j. Development of a network of TVET providers in the EAS;
- k. Support to Nalanda University as a centre for study of Asian heritage, and for the promotion of regional peace and vision;

Connectivity

- l. Capacity building for ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Qualifications Recognition in Asia and the Pacific;
- m. Facilitating TVET teacher and student mobility;
- n. A feasibility study of a register of TVET providers in the EAS; or capacity building for education systems; and

- a. Through enhanced collaboration between EAS universities including in quality assurance and through students and staff exchanges.
5. We propose achieving these objectives through research, information, knowledge sharing and capacity building:
 - a. Regional forums based on the Strategic Priorities
 - b. Strengthening and extending existing networks and collaborations at bilateral and multilateral levels
 - c. Reviews of key policy developments and research findings in the EAS region, relevant to the Strategic Priorities
 - d. Case studies of particularly effective policy initiatives;
 - e. Capacity building of systems, officials, and institutions;
 - f. Reports of the results of the EAS projects relating to the Strategic Priorities;
 - g. Publishing and widely disseminating papers and proceedings of policy dialogues;
 - h. Promoting staff exchange and student mobility;
 - i. Strengthening collaboration between National research and education networks in the region
 - j. Promoting the use of open education resources (OER); and
 - k. Harmonizing national qualification frameworks and quality assurance system, as appropriate.
6. We requested the EAS Senior Education Officials to develop a funding mobilisation plan, taking into consideration existing funding mechanisms and resources pledged by the EAS participating countries, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, international funding agencies and other possible sources to support the timely implementation of the Plan of Action.
7. We assess that the next steps to implementing a program of work under this Plan of Action shall be:
 - a. To make provision for the ASEAN Secretariat to take carriage of the execution and monitoring of the Plan;
 - b. To arrange regular meetings of EAS Education Ministers and the EAS SOM-ED as well as working level meetings over the lifetime of the Plan to provide continuing input, strategic oversight and guidance, receive reports and progress, approve the commissioning of new projects, and provide strategic oversight and guidance; and
 - c. To review and revise the plan prior to the 3rd EAS EMM in 2016 with the objective of developing a 2016-2020 plan for endorsement by Ministers at that meeting; and
 - d. To hold policy dialogues on each of the Strategic priorities at times to be agreed by the EAS SOM-ED.

Figure 1: Overall Objective, Strategic Priorities and Actions

