



Meeting Report of the 10th Review Meeting of The ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

14-16 November 2016, Park Royal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

I. Introduction

- 1 The 10th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme was held on 14-16 November 2016 at the Park Royal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and was co-organised and hosted by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Malaysia. The Review Meetings provide an opportunity to review operation of the Programme, address challenges, and consider the future development of the Programme. The agenda for the 10th Review Meeting appears in **Annex 1**.
- 2 The Meeting was attended by a total of 161 participants. This included government and member university representatives from 8 Member Countries of the AIMS Programme: Brunei Darussalam; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; The Philippines; the Republic of Korea (ROK); Thailand; and Vietnam. Delegates from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MOEYS), Cambodia, a representative from SIM University, Singapore, and a representative from the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) also joined the meeting as observers. The Centre Director and SEAMEO RIHED staff were also present at the meeting. The List of Participants appears in **Annex 2**.

II. Review and Concurrent Sessions

(i) Report Outputs from the 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the AIMS Programme

- 3 Ms. Phunyanuch Pattanotai, Senior Programme Officer, from SEAMEO RIHED, stated that the AIMS Steering Committee was formed in 2016 in pursuance of the collective decision reached at the 9th Review Meeting, in Ibaraki, Japan, to set programme direction and ensure synergy with national policy procedures. She explained that the AIMS Steering Committee comprises two nominated delegates from each of the 8 Member Countries; one representing government, and one representing higher education institutions (HEIs). She summarised details in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the committee, agreed arrangements for the AIMS Steering Committee Meetings, and their recommendations on technical issues with a view to the programme's future progression. Her presentation appears in **Annex 3**.

(ii) Presentation: Proposal for Measuring Experience of AIMS Students

- 4 Prof. Dr. Kiyong Byun, Director of Higher Education Policy and Professor at Korea University, Republic of Korea proposed a research project to measure effects of the AIMS Programme on student development through establishing a survey instrument. He invited the meeting to take part in developing the survey instrument further. The meeting suggested that the proposal could be further discussed at the 2nd AIMS Steering Committee Meeting. His presentation appears in **Annex 4**.

(iii) Matters for Acknowledgement

- 5 SEAMEO RIHED extended a special welcome to ROK as the newest Member Country to join the AIMS Programme. The meeting took note on the development of the AIMS Website and AIMS Certificates. All participants were invited to visit the AIMS website at www.aims-rihed.net and provide feedback for further improvements. SEAMEO RIHED informed that all participating HEIs had been issued log-in identification details to generate AIMS Certificates for students having completed an exchange under the AIMS Programme. AIMS HEIs were requested to provide updated focal point to SEAMEO RIHED in the case of any changes so as to ensure that communication is not interrupted. It shared that the AIMS Operational Handbook is in the process of being revised and SEAMEO RIHED will distribute an online survey to collect further information regarding operating guidelines from AIMS participating HEIs and Member Countries. The Matters for Acknowledgement appear in **Annex 5**.

(iv) Ministries Parallel Session

- 6 Mr. Jamalulail Bin Abu Bakar, Director of Education, MOHE, Malaysia accepted to chair the Ministries Parallel Session, and Mr. Alam Nasrah Ikhlas, Chief Assistant/Staff of Student Affairs, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (MORTHE), Indonesia accepted to be rapporteur for the Session.
- 7 The Ministries agreed that funding support for the AIMS Programme should be continued by government, but also encouraged AIMS HEIs to consider alternative channels to ensuring sustainability of the Programme, such as involvement of the private sector and other potential stakeholders. The Meeting recommended that the AIMS Programme should retain its focus on student mobility, proposing that research and faculty mobility could instead be independently explored by collaborating AIMS HEIs.
- 8 The Ministries agreed for SEAMEO RIHED to bring visa related matters to the Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM).
- 9 The Ministries applauded Cambodia's enthusiasm to join the AIMS Programme. The Meeting advised that the inclusion of other ASEAN Member Countries be discussed at the 2nd AIMS Steering Committee Meeting.
- 10 The Ministries requested SEAMEO RIHED to prepare guidelines for HEIs participation in the ten study field areas, so as to ensure a minimum of 3 participating HEIs for a study field to remain active.
- 11 The Ministries agreed to explore the possibility of integrating internships into the Programme. The Ministries suggested that Member Countries coordinate with AIMS HEIs to provide a list of internship opportunities to SEAMEO RIHED.
- 12 MORTHE, Indonesia, accepted to host the 11th AIMS Review Meeting in Indonesia in September 2017. The Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Thailand, accepted to host the 12th AIMS Review Meeting in 2018. The Ministry of Education (MOE), ROK, confirmed its intention to host the 13th AIMS Review Meeting in 2019. The Ministry of Education, Culture,

Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan, accepted to host the 2nd AIMS Steering Committee Meeting in July 2017.

(v) Study Fields Parallel Session

- 13 The Session proposed that study fields be broadened to include a greater number of sub-fields. The Session also suggested that the Environmental Management and Science, Biodiversity, and Marine Science study fields be merged, so as to resolve concerns towards ensuring sufficient participation in each area.
- 14 The Session advised that HEI websites be made available in English with an online course directory, including details of the course syllabus, credit hours (elective and non-elective), e-learning components (if applicable), and a grading table to facilitate course selection and credit transfer processes.
- 15 The Session encouraged HEIs to develop their own strategies to assess English language proficiency (instead of making TOEFL and IELTS tests a requirement).
- 16 The Session concurred with that of the Ministries to incorporate internships into the AIMS Programme. The Session also discussed the format by which these internships might take place.
- 17 The Session voiced its support for further researcher and faculty mobility opportunities to be explored through the AIMS Programme. The Session discussed the format by which this could take place, which included suggestions for an annual AIMS academic conference, and possible teaching or research exchanges.

(vi) International Relations Offices (IROs) Parallel Session

- 18 Ms. Zelina Zaiton Ibrahim, Associate Professor, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Universiti Putra, Malaysia, reported on behalf of the group on the conclusions of the IROs Parallel Session. The Session acknowledged the need for HEIs to provide a complete information package with all the necessary information for exchange, including course and syllabus information; calendar dates; credit information; details of the grading scale; and by ensuring the availability of academic transcripts. The Session also discussed a number of ways to support students transition to their chosen country and study programme, to include pre-departure trainings at the sending HEI, an on-arrival orientation in the host HEI, and possible meet-and-greet sessions with faculty and students at the host destination.
- 19 The Session noted a number of strategies to encourage further student exposure to local culture in the host country, which included use of a buddy system; a gala dinner for both local and international students; support for home-stays, international meet-ups, and the opening of specialised cafés and shops for students on campus.
- 20 The Session suggested that for countries where accommodation fees are more expensive, fee waivers should be introduced.

- 21 The Session discussed student safety and security, and the need for an orientation briefing for arriving students on any potential risks they may encounter.

(vii) Closing of Parallel Sessions

- 22 On behalf of SEAMEO RIHED, Dr. Chantavit welcomed recommendations to bring visa-related issues for discussion at the relevant platform. She encouraged the forming of university networks in respective study field areas which might lead to the future establishment of formal university consortia.

(viii) Presentation of Thammasat University: Off-Campus Programme

- 23 Asst. Prof. Dr. Supreedee Rittironk, Assistant to the Rector for International Affairs, Thammasat University, Thailand delivered a presentation on the Off-Campus Programme at Thammasat University. He emphasised the need for students to have opportunities to interact with the local community alongside their academic studies. The presentation appears in **Annex 6**.

III. Official Opening Formalities

(i) Introductory Remarks by Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond, Centre Director, SEAMEO RIHED

- 24 Dr. Chantavit conveyed a warm welcome to the 10th AIMS Review Meeting. She offered her appreciation to the host: MOHE, Malaysia; and all government agencies and HEIs. She stated that the Meeting arrived at a noteworthy time, marking 8 years of joint efforts to implement academic mobility in the region, and providing a timely opportunity to take stock of achievements and address obstacles towards enhancing the Programme. She stated that it was the commitment of all devoted parties that continued to be a strong driving force for the AIMS Programme. She anticipated that, AIMS would become a gateway to further collaboration in the future, and inclusive of all Southeast Asian Countries. She assured that SEAMEO RIHED would continue to serve the region in promoting harmonization in higher education across the region and beyond. She conveyed her sincere appreciation to all in attendance and wished the Meeting success.

(ii) Opening Speech by Yang Berbahagia Dato' Kamel Mohamad, Deputy Secretary General (Management), MOHE, Malaysia

- 25 Yang Berbahagia Dato' Kamel Mohamad welcomed participants to the Meeting and to Kuala Lumpur. He stated that it is a great honour for MOHE, Malaysia, to host the meeting for a second time. He affirmed that the internationalisation of higher education is an answer to the challenges presented by globalisation. He stated that participating in mobility programmes had immeasurable benefits for students and HEIs involved, as well as for future employers. He emphasised that ensuring the success of the AIMS Programme was therefore an important task, with the 10th AIMS Review Meeting providing an important platform to share and assess on operation of the Programme. He expressed his sincere gratitude to all parties for their commitment to organising this event.

(iii) Video Presentation from the MOHE, Malaysia

26 The MOHE, Malaysia, presented a video presentation to celebrate the participation of AIMS Member Countries in the 10th Review Meeting.

(iv) Signing Ceremony

27 ROK signed its Addendum to the Letter of Intent to join the AIMS Programme, and handed certified copies to all AIMS Member Countries.

28 Japan handed a certified copy of its Addendum to the Letter of Intent (signed in 2014) to ROK.

29 SEAMEO RIHED presented certified copies of the Letters of Intent (signed in 2013) from AIMS Member Countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, and The Philippines) to ROK.

30 ROK was officially welcomed as the 8th Member Country to join the AIMS Programme.

(v) Programme Overview and Update

31 Dr. Chantavit presented an overview and update regarding the AIMS Programme. She shared information on the current status of the Programme, its history and development, and highlighted key areas to consider towards enhancing implementation. She shared information on changes to the format of the AIMS Review Meeting this year. Her presentation appears in **Annex 7**.

(vi) Member Country Reports on National Development Plans and Progress

32 Each Member Country reported on its national development plan and progress regarding the AIMS Programme, including the higher education context, the number of participating students, challenges experienced, and its onward development plan.

a. Brunei Darussalam

33 Mrs. Siti Asmahlati Bolkini Haji A. Ahmad, Deputy Director of the International and Public Relations Office, Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) was nominated to present the country report on behalf of the MOE, Brunei Darussalam. She reported on figures in relation to students and HEI participation in the AIMS Programme, and explained that the AIMS Programme supported the national vision as a catalyst towards internationalisation and enhancing quality in higher education. She emphasised potential challenges such as the popularity of international internships, high costs of living in Brunei Darussalam, incompatibility with academic calendars, course mapping issues, and language barriers. She gave information on Universiti Teknologi Brunei's programmes, sharing a number of good practices in relation to course arrangement and administration. The presentation appears in **Annex 8**.

b. Indonesia

34 On behalf of MORTHE, Indonesia, Mr. Alam delivered the country programme report. MORTHE reported on the number of students participating in the AIMS Programme,

anticipating a possible rise due to increasing numbers enrolling in higher education in Indonesia. In addressing prospective challenges, MORTHE emphasised the need to achieve reciprocity in mobility figures, to simplify the visa process for prospective students, and to ensure the English proficiency of participating students. In view of its onward development plan, MORTHE reported that it would be selecting HEIs to participate in further study field areas, and increasing the availability of scholarships for up to 150 students to participate in the AIMS Programme. The presentation appears in **Annex 9**.

c. Japan

- 35 On behalf of MEXT, Japan, Ms. Taka Horio, Deputy Director of the International Affairs Division presented the country report. MEXT reported that AIMS is to be found under Japan's policy agenda for "Re-inventing Japan", which aims to increase internationalisation and double student mobility numbers by 2020. MEXT shared information on the number of students participating in the AIMS Programme. MEXT reported that the 11 HEIs participating in the AIMS Programme will be financially supported by MEXT for up to 5 years (ceasing in 2018), after which, HEIs are expected to continue the Programme with their own funds. MEXT affirmed that student exchange within ASEAN, and the further development of exchange opportunities in the region continued to be important areas of focus towards the future. The presentation appears in **Annex 10**.

d. Malaysia

- 36 Mr. Jamalulail presented the country report on behalf of MOHE, Malaysia. He gave an overview of higher education and AIMS participation in Malaysia, clarifying that the AIMS Programme is supported under its internationalisation objective in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025. MOHE reported on AIMS student participation figures and discussed directions and trends regarding the implementation of the AIMS Programme in Malaysia since 2010. MOHE reported a number of issues and challenges, such as differing policies and systems, and highlighted the need to have mechanisms to capture data on mobility, and to develop strategies for promoting intra-regional mobility to raise student awareness and interest in the region. The presentation appears in **Annex 11**.

e. The Philippines

- 37 On behalf of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Philippines, Mr. Napoleon B. Imperial, Executive Director IV, CHED, delivered the country report. CHED clarified that provision for AIMS is detailed in the Policies Framework and Strategy on Internationalisation of Philippine Higher Education. CHED reported on data in relation to students participation for the AIMS Programme in the Philippines, referring to a number of challenges, such as the need to achieve balanced mobility (with inbound and outbound figures), simplify visa procedures, and overcome communication challenges between home and host HEIs. Towards the future, CHED emphasised the need to promote the AIMS Programme further (especially through online mediums); promote a more diverse range of opportunities for students; recognise effective HEI partners; and coordinate internally with relevant agencies to further streamline the visa process. The presentation appears in **Annex 12**.

f. Republic of Korea

- 38 Mr. Kim Chonhong, Director of International Education Cooperation Division, MOE, Republic of Korea, delivered the country report for ROK. He stated that ROK's vision towards the AIMS Programme envisages the creation of a regional higher education community, with the goal to increase the number of participating HEI members from 4 to 10, and contribute to AIMS through its 3-year research project, led by Prof. Dr. Byun on measuring student experiences on the AIMS Programme (see section III paragraph 4). The presentation appears in **Annex 13**.

g. Thailand

- 39 Ms. Lakhana Dockiao, Chief of Education Hub Promotion Group, Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, OHEC, Thailand, presented the country report. OHEC reported on the cumulative figures concerning AIMS participation and investment since 2010, and ongoing government initiatives to overcome challenges and streamline national processes to support the Programme in Thailand. She shared a number of good practices in Thailand, highlighting the importance of trust and activities to supplement and extend the AIMS Programme into other forms of regional collaboration. The presentation appears in **Annex 14**.

(vii) Report Outputs from The AIMS Student Alumni Forum

- 40 The 10th Review Meeting included an AIMS Student Alumni Forum which provided the opportunity for students and alumni to share experiences and feedback following their exchange under the AIMS Programme.
- 41 The AIMS Student Alumni Forum consisted of two panels: the first was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anees Janee Ali, Senior Lecturer and Director of International Office, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and featured presentations from students currently taking part in exchanges under the AIMS Programme in Malaysia. The second, chaired by SEAMEO RIHED, featured students and alumni from a broad range of study backgrounds, study destinations, and study dates, including two students that had completed an exchange in 2010 under the Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand (M-I-T) pilot programme for AIMS.
- 42 During the forum, students and alumni shared how the AIMS Programme had offered them a unique and valuable educational experience. They also highlighted skills gained, such as inter-cultural competencies, confidence, language competency, inter-personal skills, and added technical and subject-specific knowledge. Students and alumni reflected on their experience as one that had re-inforced their identity as an ASEAN citizen, strengthening their knowledge of culture and nations, building tolerance and understanding, and an appreciation of the importance of diversity. Students and alumni spoke of establishing enduring bonds to host communities. They also discussed how the experience had inspired them as ambassadors to contribute back to the region as a whole, and further promote programmes of internationalisation and mobility across the region and beyond.
- 43 Students and alumni additionally presented details of a proposal to establish an AIMS Student-Alumni network, and shared further plans to develop this. The AIMS Student Alumni Programme appears in **Annex 15**.

IV. Future Directions

(i) Outputs from the Country Discussions

- 44 Dr. Chantavit initiated the session on future directions of the AIMS Programme, and referred to data pertaining to development of the Programme. She encouraged each Member Country to deliberate on the pathway forward considering 5 items: (i) Re-visiting the AIMS Programme and principles, (ii) reviewing past and current performance, (iii) future directions – looking ahead 5 to 10 years, (iv) the sustainability of the Programme, and (v) any other relevant matters for discussion. Her Presentation appears in **Annex 16**.
- 45 The Meeting divided into groups according to country. Each Member Country elected a chair and a rapporteur for the discussion, and a presenter to report to the Meeting.

a. Indonesia

[Chair: Mr. Alam Nasrah Ikhlas; Rapporteur and Presenter: Ms. Laily Alfa Citra]

- 46 Ms. Laily Alfa Citra reported on the Indonesian group's discussion. In revisiting the principles of the AIMS Programme, Indonesia asserted the AIMS objectives' continued relevance, but suggested changes to the naming of the Programme to welcome the joining of Japan and ROK. Indonesia stated that balancing the flow of incoming and outgoing students remained a challenge, but mentioned that implementation had highlighted the significance of internationalisation policies at home, and the need to build trust with all stakeholders. On future direction, Indonesia concurred that the Programme could include internships. It also suggested that AIMS might, in the future, facilitate other possibilities for collaboration, such as faculty and staff mobility and the development of cross-border degree programmes. Towards the Programme's sustainability, Indonesia recommended that HEIs explore the possibility of raising additional funding through private partnerships, so that they may gradually move towards financial independence in the Programme. The presentation appears as **Annex 17**.

b. Japan

[Chair and Presenter: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nakao Nomura; Rapporteur: Mr. Yuji Morohashi]

- 47 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nakao Nomura reported on the country discussion of Japan. In reviewing objectives for the AIMS Programme, Japan emphasised its aim to strengthen linkages with Southeast Asian HEIs, to contribute to harmonisation in the region, and to promote Southeast Asia above other study destinations. Taking note of current progress, Japan discussed strategies to move closer to these objectives with the AIMS principles in mind, also highlighting the possibility of further activities, such as new academic agreements, and further possibilities for faculty and staff exchange. Japan clarified that its participation in the Programme is subsidised by the government until March 2018 (with 11 HEIs involved), and that whilst government funding may end for the Programme in 2018, HEIs unanimously agreed to continue participation in the Programme after funding ceases. Japan suggested a next possible step could be the engagement of the private sector. The presentation appears in **Annex 18**.

c. Malaysia

[Chair: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yazrina Yahya; Rapporteur: Mrs. Siti Rahimah Mohd Yusop; Presenter: Dr. Muhizam Mustafa]

- 48 Dr. Muhizam Mustafa presented the discussions of the Malaysia group. In revisiting the principles of the AIMS Programme, Malaysia agreed that achieving balanced mobility remained a significant challenge. Concerning the country's past and present performance, Malaysia also suggested that the drafting of a national guideline helped to ensure adherence to the AIMS objectives across participating HEIs. On future directions, Malaysia concurred with the broadening of study fields to include further sub-fields, and endorsed merging the Environmental Management and Science, Biodiversity, and Marine Science study fields. Malaysia also emphasised that students should complete a minimum of 12 credits (or 4 subject areas), and underlined the need to obtain the full approval of the host programme coordinator prior to departure. Malaysia also advised HEIs to pursue additional sources of funding in case of reductions to the programme budget in the future. The presentation appears in **Annex 19**.

d. The Philippines

[Chair: Mr. Napoleon B. Imperial; Rapporteur and Presenter: Mr. Jeremy Godofredo Morales]

- 49 Mr. Jeremy Godofredo Morales delivered the outputs from the Philippines country discussion. In revisiting the principles of the AIMS Programme, the Philippines also highlighted the principle of balanced mobility, together with its challenges, and outlined solutions for overcoming this. The Philippines reported a general agreement that the AIMS Programme presented an ideal platform to promote ASEAN interconnectivity and multiculturalism. With regard to the Programme's future direction, the Philippines expressed its support for the broadening of Environment study fields to include further sub-fields, agreed with the inclusion of internship opportunities, and emphasised the need to work closely with member HEIs to maximise the Programme's impact for students. The Philippines stated that the AIMS Programme would continue to be funded under the national budget, with the suggestion that objectives could be revisited following the results of Prof. Dr. Byun's research project to measure student experiences on the AIMS Programme (see section III paragraph 4). Notes from the presentation appear in **Annex 20**.

e. Republic of Korea

[Chair: Dr. Seon-Joo Kim; Rapporteur and Presenter: Mr. Doojin Song]

- 50 Mr. Doojin Song reported that whilst ROK is new to the AIMS Programme, they looked forward to engaging further HEIs in the AIMS Programme. He reported that ROK intended to simplify the visa process further for AIMS participants, and requested that AIMS Member Countries also offer support for this. As a new member, and in moving towards the future, ROK stated that it looked forward to closer collaboration with programme coordinators so that exchanges could be most efficiently handled. ROK stated it would consider issues in relation to accommodation, as well as further strategies (such as those discussed in the Meeting) to further support students in their exchange.

f. Thailand

[Chair: Prof. Ed Sarobol; Rapporteur and Presenter: Dr. Julapot Chiravachradej]

51 Dr. Julapot Chiravachradej reported on the group discussion from Thailand. Revisiting the principles and objectives of the AIMS Programme, Thailand observed it maintained a positive balance across inbound/outbound numbers across the Programme. It suggested that promoting a diverse spread of students across the region is also a dimension that should be considered. Concerning its past and present performance, Thailand observed a measurable impact on students, particularly in strengthening cultural competency and enhancing cooperative application. Thailand stated that feedback from the AIMS Student Alumni Forum (see section **XVII**) was testament to success of the Programme. On future direction, Thailand proposed the inclusion of further Southeast Asian Member Countries into the AIMS Programme, and also advised participating HEIs to also seek additional funding support for the Programme from the private sector or through research funds. The presentation appears in **Annex 21**.

V. Closing

52 On behalf of MOHE, Malaysia, Mr. Jamalulail delivered the closing remarks. He asserted that it was poignant to reflect on a vision of the AIMS Programme towards the future. MOHE affirmed that facilitating the Student Alumni Forum (see section **XVII**) brought a new perspective, and that it was encouraging to hear their stories of success, which he believed had given resolution to solving challenges towards greater enhancement of the AIMS Programme. MOHE expressed its sincere appreciation to SEAMEO RIHED in ensuring the success of the Meeting, and conveyed its sincere gratitude to the organising committee. MOHE stated that it was looking forward to the 11th AIMS Review Meeting, tentatively in September 2017 in Indonesia, and the 2nd AIMS Steering Committee Meeting, tentatively in July 2017 in Japan, and wished all participants a safe onward journey.

53 The Meeting was adjourned.

54 The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of SEAMEO friendship and solidarity.

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