



Meeting Report of the 17th Annual Review Meeting of The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

8-9 November 2023

- 1 The 17th Annual Review Meeting of the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme was held on 8-9 November 2023, co-organised and hosted by the Commission on Higher Education Philippines (CHED), and the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) Batangas, and SEAMEO RIHED. The Meeting Programme appears as [Appendix 1](#).
- 2 A total of 151 government officials, designated representatives, university representatives, and AIMS alumni from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam attended the Meeting. The List of Participants appears as **Appendix 2**.
- 3 The meeting documents are accessible through this **folder**.

Day 1, 8 November, Taal Vista Hotel, Tagaytay City, Philippines

Opening Ceremony

- 4 The Lahing Batangan Dance Troupe by LPU Batangas performed a welcoming dance to welcome participants before the start of the Meeting.
- 5 Dr. Peter P. Laurel, President of Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas, in his Welcome Remarks, welcomed all participants to the meeting and expressed his university's honour to co-host the 17th Annual Review Meeting. He reiterated the contribution of the AIMS Meeting in bringing expertise and valuable insights to address challenges and discuss the future direction of AIMS. With collaborative efforts, AIMS will continue to foster exchange and create a building block for the future of higher education.
- 6 Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED delivered her Introductory Remarks. She reiterated the uniqueness of AIMS mobility which aspired to harmonise higher education through collaboration with three key stakeholders: government, higher education institutions, and learners. The key factors in moving AIMS forward are supporting student mobility policies, assisting the higher education institutions (HEI) internationalisation process, and learners' contribution to regional and global issues. As today's context has changed, she invited participants to foresee and discuss the impacts and future of AIMS and maximise the results and promote internationalisation through AIMS network.
- 7 Prof. J. Prospero E. de Vera, III, DPA, Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, Philippines, in his Keynote Address, reiterated the impact of AIMS on HEIs' internationalisation and set the scene for future transformative mobility. Following the pandemic, higher education landscape has changed worldwide, including the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a shift in job demands. Learners need to be equipped with competencies and leadership for the 21st century in the globalised world through a flexible learning system, technological ability, and accessibility of students and faculty members to enhance quality education at the local level. He invited participants to engage in a productive dialogue at the 17th Annual Review Meeting and visit LPU to learn about the achievements and prospects of the university.
- 8 The Meeting held the Signing Ceremony of the Addendum to the Letter of Intent to officially welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia to AIMS based on the mutual agreement and consent of the current

AIMS Parties. His Excellency Mr. Mak Ngoy, Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), as the official representative of the government of Cambodia, expressed his appreciation and commitment to AIMS for fruitful academic mobility and encouraged the sharing of knowledge and culture among learners for the prosperity and sustainability of the region. The Letter of Intent is as [Appendix 3](#).

Programme Overview and Updates

- 9 SEAMEO RIHED provided the overview and key updates on the AIMS Programme as endorsed by the 8th Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of the AIMS Programme, held on 3-5 July 2023, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The Presentation slides of the 17th Annual Review Meeting appear as [Appendix 4](#).

1. Updates on AIMS Participating Member Country and Universities

- 10 With Cambodia officially joining, the AIMS Programme has 87 universities from 10 countries.
- 11 Five (5) new universities from Cambodia have been endorsed to join the AIMS Programme in the following disciplines: Royal University of Phnom Penh (Language and Culture), Royal University of Agriculture Agriculture (Food Science and Technology), Royal University of Law and Economics (Economics), National University of Management (Language and Culture, Economics, International Business), Institute of Technology Cambodia (Engineering, Food Science and Technology). The updated AIMS focal points' contact details are accessible in [Appendix 5](#).

2. AIMS Resources

- 12 SEAMEO RIHED introduced the resources available in AIMS, including 1) [AIMS Website](#); 2) **AIMS Guide** for issuing Certificate for AIMS students on the completion of their exchange and update their university profile on the AIMS website; and 3) **AIMS Contacts and Disciplines list** AIMS members can access contact details and information.

3. AIMS Student Mobility Data 2023

- 13 The total cumulative number of student participation for all modes of mobility has reached 6,082 for outbound students, 6,611 for inbound students, and 194 students virtually without identifying outbound and inbound (2022). In 2023, there is an addition of 468 outbound students (458 physical and 20 virtual with credits), and 668 inbound students, (461 physical and 208 virtual with credits). In comparison to 2022, there was a decrease in virtual exchange and an increase in the number of students going on physical exchange.
- 14 Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Indonesia were the top three sending countries and Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Japan were the top three receiving countries. International Business, Language and Culture, and Agriculture were the most popular disciplines for exchange in 2023.

4. Updates on AIMS Activities

- 15 SEAMEO RIHED introduced the 3 thrusts of AIMS, AIMS Research, Virtual Regional Orientation, and AIMS USR, which working groups were formed through nominations by the governments and the progress for each thrust was presented accordingly, as well as on the AIMS Alumni Network and SEA-Europe Mobility Programme for Sustainable Development.
- 16 **AIMS Research Committee (ARC)** The research on the Impact of the AIMS Programme and the Way Forward was carried out by Sophia University as part of the Japan Research Team, and the Technical Research Team Malaysia (TRT-M) to study the impact of AIMS and provide research-based policy direction. SEAMEO RIHED thanked all the government and university representatives for their kind cooperation on the surveys and interviews.

Presentation of AIMS Research

- 17 Dr. Naoki Umemiya and Prof. Miki Sugimura from Sophia University, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fiffy Hanisdah Saikim as the representative of Technical Research Team Malaysia (TRT-M) presented the findings of **AIMS Research: Impacts and the Way Forward of AIMS**, for feedback and discussion with participants. The research aimed to investigate the impact of AIMS and identify challenges and opportunities to facilitate mobility and the future direction of AIMS. The presentation is as [Appendix 6](#).
- 18 According to the study, AIMS had a significant impact on internationalisation procedures, capacity building on IROs, and interpersonal skills for AIMS alumni. AIMS helped to accelerate Internationalisation through increasing new MoUs and MoAs with partner universities, inbound and outbound students, and courses offered in English. The harmonisation of higher education was in progress through the harmonising of guidelines, procedures, and information platforms to facilitate student exchange, and the networking of IRO and faculty staff through Annual Review Meetings. The multilateral cooperation in AIMS also supported the regional community building.
- 19 AIMS alumni reported to have enhanced their 21st century skills and the sense of regional and global citizenship through personal growth, intercultural and communication skills, respect for differences and diversity, and self-awareness. They also gained valuable experiences and opportunities which contributed to their future career development or further their education.
- 20 Challenges in facilitating AIMS mobility included limited funding, knowledge transfer about AIMS to new IROs, shift of learners' preference, and different credit systems. To move AIMS forward, priority should be given to ensuring sufficient funding and provision of infrastructure for students, training for IROs to understand AIMS, harmonised credit systems, and moving towards a more flexible and multi-disciplinary learning.
- 21 Participants provided several suggestions for the future direction of AIMS, including how to enhance employability of AIMS students through mutual recognition and qualifications, which can be through cooperation with other ministries, micro-credentials, and these can start with discussions among AIMS disciplines; utilising online (i.e. COIL) and hybrid/blended learning for effective physical mobility and expanding AIMS programme cooperation across region and at the global level. Learning for skills and preparing learners for the future of work were also encouraged by promoting both soft and hard skills in AIMS students and collaborative opportunities on micro-credentials. With cooperation and commitment from AIMS members, SEAMEO RIHED can support these recommendations for future AIMS research and projects.
- 22 **AIMS Virtual Regional Orientation** The latest AIMS Orientation [AY2023/2024 Semester 1] was held on 2 September 2023 with the participation of over 150 students, alumni, and university representatives to prepare students for mobility experience, enhance AIMS regional identity and network among learners. Students found the event beneficial to learn more about the AIMS Programme and the countries of destination.
- 23 The **AIMS Alumni Network** was officially launched at the 17th Annual Review Meeting by a working group of AIMS alumni to foster the relationship between AIMS Alumni and offer opportunities for AIMS Alumni towards continuous personal and professional growth and make a positive contribution to AIMS and the community as regional citizens. The draft AIMS Alumni Network Charter was presented and endorsed for piloting at the 8th Steering Committee Meeting. SEAMEO RIHED requested for government and university representatives' cooperation to nominate alumni country leads to support future activities, including assisting in the alumni records tracking to form the AIMS Alumni Database.
- 24 The **AIMS USR** supported AIMS efforts towards University Social Responsibility and sustainable development; the guidelines for AIMS USR activities was being developed to encourage AIMS students to participate in existing USR activities at the host universities.
- 25 The **SEA-Europe Mobility Programme for Sustainable Development** aimed to explore new ideas and innovations in learning mobility for sustainable development by sharing expertise and piloting project ideas through AIMS. On 23 October 2023, national authorities responsible for higher

education at the SEAMEO RIHED's 15th Southeast Asian Higher Education Senior Officials Meeting (SEA-HiEd SOM), shared the status and capacity-building needs to learn and explore micro-credentials for the region, which could be explored through this initiative.

- 26 SEAMEO RIHED extended its sincere gratitude to the AIMS Research Committee, AIMS Regional Orientation Task Force, and AIMS USR Working Group for their contribution in these areas

Parallel Session

- 27 The Parallel session had 3 breakout groups by governments, faculty members by disciplines, and IROs.
- 28 The government group shared AIMS scholarship management practices and discussed the targets of student mobility. Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont and Ms. Lakhana Dockkiao from SEAMEO RIHED moderated the government's group discussion.
- 29 The faculty members discussed the skills and competences that students need and explored programmes/courses/activities/collaboration and support that AIMS can provide to transform higher education. The three faculty groups were moderated by Asst. Prof. Donludee Jaisut from Kasetsart University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nakao Nomura from the University of Tsukuba, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chawin Chantharasenawong from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi.
- 30 The IROs shared effective good practices for supporting the university's internationalisation goals through AIMS and engagement with alumni. Dr. Sheilla M. Trajera from the University of St. La Salle, Mr. Wahyu Islami from Institute of Technology Sepuluh Nopember, Ms. Estrella Ho from Nanyang Technological University, and Mr. Guillian Mecate from the University of the Philippines, moderated the IROs group.

Report of Discussions from Parallel Session

Governments

- 31 The government group shared AIMS scholarship management practices and discussed the targets of student mobility. The government's group sharing on good practices were as follows:
1. Internationalisation policy is important and current adoption and implementation vary in each member country.
 2. Key performance indicators (KPI) set to measure Return on Investment (ROI)
 3. Annual review session by IROs
 4. Reviewing of guidelines such as easing visa application
 5. Process of identifying universities to participate in AIMS to ensure commitment according to the Letter of Intent (LOI)
 6. Quality assurance to ensure better and effective mobility, e.g. micro-credentials
 7. Management on finance and communication plan between governments and universities
 8. Providing recognition and incentives for student-led programmes and projects.
 9. Tracking of alumni to determine where they are and sustain AIMS as the way forward
 10. Students are more aware about AIMS
- 32 The group agreed on the preliminary target of around 500 students mobilised annually and reach 10,000 students by the year 2030. The targets set by each country will be circulated to the Steering Committee afterwards for reconfirmation.

Faculty/Disciplines

- 33 The Faculty group identified the following **skills and competencies** for students to live sustainably in the complex world: lifelong learning, resilience (mental health issues), critical thinking, language/communication, creativity, problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability. While learning technologies are important, students should also have empathy, interpersonal and intercultural competencies, and interdisciplinary thinking to be open to new ideas.
- 34 Some **suggested programmes, activities and collaboration** to support transformative higher education included enriching the curriculum programme, customised learning (e.g., project-based learning, integrating advanced technology in learning, and internship), encouraging more student-led initiatives and activities, and increasing collaboration among universities and with local communities and the private sector to create different learning experiences for students were mentioned to support transformative higher education.
- 35 On the **kinds of support for AIMS**, participants reflected on funding and policy that allows for flexible education, flexible budget for outbound and inbound students, and facilitation on the agreements, grading and credit transfers. Other suggestions included strengthening AIMS Alumni Network and alumni tracer and exploring alternative funding sources with the private sector.

IROs

- 36 To encourage **internationalisation at home**, IROs shared that goals and strategies must be set with the right stakeholders. Several activities to promote more interaction and cultural exchange include pre-departure orientation and courses, language and cultural events, social responsibility initiatives, mentorship, international student clubs, and buddy systems. The group also suggested including encouraging AIMS students to use social media platforms and interactions creatively to promote the impact and attract other students to participate in AIMS exchange.
- 37 More engagement with AIMS alumni is needed for a stronger network and keeping records through alumni tracer and databases. Alumni may also serve as ambassadors to promote the AIMS Programme and share their views and feedback on how to improve AIMS and enhance internationalisation policies. The AIMS Students and Alumni Network can be introduced to new students joining AIMS to enhance commitment.

Wrap up and Closing Ceremony

Venue of the 18th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme

- 38 The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and Hiroshima University welcomed the participants to join the 18th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme with the theme “Reimagining Mobility for Peace and Sustainability” on 7-8 August 2024, Hiroshima, Japan. The AIMS-Hiroshima Future Building Student Seminar will also be organised for students to join. More details will be shared.

Closing

- 39 Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont provided a summary of Day 1 of the meeting’s outcomes and reiterated the commitment to make the AIMS beneficial for learners, universities, and higher education. She expressed her appreciation to the hosts of the meeting for their management and warm hospitality and the participants for their active participation. She encouraged participants to join the 2nd day of the 17th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme, for the Alumni Talk and the AIMS Member Countries Roundtable Discussion.
- 40 Participants joined the Welcome Dinner, Cultural Night, and Networking, hosted by the Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas.

Day 2, 9 November, The Lyceum of the Philippines University – Cavite, Philippines

- 41 On the 2nd day of the 17th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme, participants visited the Lyceum of the Philippines University – Cavite, sister school of LPU Batangas which is a private, non-sectarian institute located in the City of General Trias, Cavite and well-known for its academic excellence in Hospitality and Tourism.
- 42 Dr. Maria Teresa O. Pilapil, Vice-President for Administration of the Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite, welcomed the participants and addressed that AIMS plays a vital role in the internationalisation of higher education landscape in the region with a significant impact on students' cultural awareness and global citizenship.
- 43 Asst. Prof. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont shared her view that participants can learn from LPU's open policy to the world, expertise in hospitality, good practices in alumni tracing and extensive community outreach and service. She welcomed participants to the final two sessions of the meeting.

Alumni Talk

- 44 Five AIMS alumni, Mr. Robin Jerome Banta, Mr. Kenneth Bryan M. Bandao, and Ms. Princess Ramonah V. Marabe from the Philippines, Ms. Siti Sarah Binti Mohammed Suhaimi from Malaysia and Mr. Yu Sungjun from the Republic of Korea shared their views on how AIMS impacted them personally and as a regional and global citizen, and their expectations for AIMS Alumni Network. Mr. Yee Teng Low, Programme Officer from SEAMEO RIHED and also a former AIMS Alumni, moderated the session.
- 45 AIMS had a positive impact on AIMS alumni's personal and professional development. Personally, they have become more confident and resilient, and improved their interpersonal skills through cultural awareness and in maintaining friendships. Professionally, AIMS influenced their current academic interests and careers, and raised their awareness of regional problems. Alumni also shared a few challenges, including the lack of communication from administrative offices, credit transfer issues due to the change of subjects, and fear about their education being delayed, which could be overcome by encouraging more timely response, orientation before departure, and incentives for staff to be responsive.
- 46 AIMS Alumni expressed their enthusiasm to contribute to AIMS in the future and empower young people. Activities such as sharing of AIMS experiences, networking, language exchange, mentoring, career advice, community service projects, and joining the Review Meetings would help to establish a stronger connection, continuation and follow up among alumni. To grow a stronger network, AIMS Alumni requested cooperation from governments and universities in gathering data for alumni tracing and databases and exploring funding support for alumni activities.

AIMS Member Countries Roundtable Discussion

- 47 Government representatives from eight AIMS Member Countries shared country updates on 1) Internationalisation (IZN) policies and how AIMS contributes to the IZN goals of the country and the region and 2) what to do together to strengthen IZN in the region. Dr. Romyen Kosaikanont, SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director, moderated the session.

Internationalisation policies

- 48 **Brunei Darussalam:** Ms. Dina Aliuddin, Senior Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam shared that internationalisation is one of Brunei's strategic objectives in the newly launched Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The Ministry of Education is working with partners to embark on revising internationalisation policies to serve flexible learning.
- 49 **Cambodia:** Ms. Niya Sear, Vice Chief of Admission Office, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia presented that internationalisation is one of the goals of the Cambodia Higher Education Roadmap (2017-2030) focusing on promoting academic mobility and collaboration for both students and faculty staff and promoting regional and international academic programs to meet regional and international quality standards and enhance research partnerships. The presentation is as [Appendix 7](#).

- 50 **Indonesia:** Mrs. Yulita Priyoningsih, Sub Coordinator of RPL & International Learning, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Indonesia shared that internationalisation is one of the KPIs used for evaluation of Indonesian higher education institutions. Student mobility and international-related activities are among the key indicators. The Indonesian Government Fund Agency also supports mobility programmes with scholarships. AIMS Programme is one of the main mobility programmes offered in Indonesia that drive international education.
- 51 **Japan:** Mr. UEMURA Masaki, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT) shared that he Council for the Creation of Future Education, chaired by Prime Minister Kishida, formulated a new initiative called Japan-Mobility and Internationalisation: Re-engaging and Accelerating Initiative for future generations (J-MIRAI) in April 2023, to increase the number of 500,000 outbound students and 400,000 inbound students by the year 2033. MEXT also expanded scholarships for Japanese students to longer study abroad and scholarships for G7 and ASEAN students. The presentation is as [Appendix 8](#).
- 52 **Malaysia:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fiffy Hanisdah binti Saikim, Executive Secretary AIMS Malaysia, shared about Malaysia's policies and guideline on AIMS, which were co-created with 10 AIMS Malaysia member universities since 2018. Malaysia also has a target of 250,000 international students in Malaysia by 2025. Internationalisation in Malaysia's Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). is related to four pillars (7-10) to transform higher education to be innovative, technology-driven, humanised, and globalised. She also introduced Edutourism, which is open for AIMS students to continue their studies. The presentation is as [Appendix 9](#).
- 53 **Philippines:** Atty. Lily Freida M. Milla, OIC, Deputy Executive Director, Director III, International Affairs Staff, Commission on Higher Education shared that internationalisation and transnational education were key for socio-economic development with the Transnational Higher Education Law. Philippines aimed to be recognised as a world-class higher education system that prepares learners to live and work in multicultural communities as responsible ASEAN and global citizens. The goals included being key hub in ASEAN for teaching, nursing and language programmes, developing HEIs as key contributors to SDGs, aligning with regional and global frameworks and conventions, and preparing future-ready graduates and lifelong learners.
- 54 **Republic of Korea:** Ms. Daseul Ji, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea shared about the Study Korea 300K Project to attract 300,000 international students and address the challenge of the country's declining population. The Ministry of Education planned to increase financial support for the recruitment of international students and researchers, particularly in high technology and emerging industries. The initiative is expected to create more domestic job opportunities, link graduates with job placement, and streamline the process for settlement in Korea after graduation. AIMS Programme has contributed to IZN goals of Korea by attracting talents from the ASEAN region. The presentation is as [Appendix 10](#).
- 55 **Thailand:** Mr. Saran Vajraphai, Director, Global Human Capital Development Group, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Thailand (MHESI) shared Thailand's goals to enhance the competitiveness of human capital according to Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation Policy and Strategy (2023-2027). Internationalisation is one of the priorities for Thai higher education in Thailand's roadmap implemented in 2020, focusing on international cooperation and engagement with international partners. The presentation is as [Appendix 11](#).
- 56 Dr. Romyen summarised the first round that the mobility programme is part of the mechanism to promote internationalisation. The purpose and objectives of IZN may differ between countries, but there are some shared similarities.

Have the direction and policies of AIMS changed due to the change in policy makers?

- 57 As an answer to the additional question, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand agreed that while changes in top management do have an impact on the policies and direction of AIMS, efforts on internationalisation will continue if included in the Blueprint/roadmap of the ministry or committed through international agreements. The way or the method may be different or integrated differently such as through cross border education, education hub, or other new national mobility programmes. With new changes, Brunei Darussalam stressed the importance to have systematic communication with stakeholders to ensure the programme's sustainability.

- 58 To improve the sustainability of AIMS, the countries discussed matching funds or exploring other funds. Some countries also matched the direction of AIMS to address their own countries' challenges on the aging society and development in the rural area, for example Japan and the Republic of Korea have activities and projects to promote internationalisation and development with the locals and local industries. The Philippines also encouraged member universities to maximise the benefits of the multilateral platform of AIMS to pursue varied interests beyond the programme.

What can we do as a region to strengthen internationalisation?

- 59 Government representatives supported further harmonisation of higher education in the region. Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, and Japan supported strengthening mutual recognition, credit transfer, quality and promoting more trust. Thailand and the Republic of Korea supported other modes of mobility, such as virtual and blended, and micro-credentials to address budget constraints and changing learners' needs for skills, competencies and credentials. Malaysia supported expanding AIMS to connect globally. The Republic of Korea and Cambodia proposed regional academic programmes and research collaboration and exchange in the future.
- 60 Dr. Romyen concluded the roundtable discussion that there are ways to share good practices, and governments play an important role in facilitating mobility at the policy level. She urged members to reinvent AIMS so it remains relevant, and governments see the importance of sustaining financial commitment. She suggested member governments and universities match AIMS with their internationalisation policies.
- 61 The meeting was adjourned after the discussion and the participants enjoyed lunch at Bay Leaf Hotel, Cavite before traveling back to Tagaytay.