



Meeting Report of the 19th Annual Review Meeting of The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

4-6 November 2025, Putrajaya, Malaysia

Building Stronger Partnerships for the Future of AIMS

- 1 The 19th Annual Review Meeting of the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme was held on 4-6 November 2025, at DoubleTree by Hilton Putrajaya Lakeside in Putrajaya, Malaysia, and graciously hosted by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Malaysia and co-organised by the 10 AIMS Malaysia Member Universities and SEAMEO RIHED. The Meeting Programme appears as [Appendix 1](#).
- 2 A total of 210 government officials, university representatives, and alumni from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand attended the Meeting. Observers from Brunei Darussalam and Vietnam also attended. The List of Participants appears as **Appendix 2**.
- 3 The meeting documents are accessible through this **folder**. The Meeting PPT appears as **Appendix 3**.

Day 1, 4 November 2025

Opening Ceremony

- 4 Dr. Choltis Dhirathiti, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED, welcomed participants to the meeting and expressed his sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia and Malaysian AIMS Member Universities, for hosting the 19th Annual Review Meeting of AIMS. He highlighted the key documents of the AIMS Strategic Framework 2026-2028 (Bacolod Strategy), endorsed by AIMS Steering Committee and SEAMEO RIHED's Governing Board, which will shape the future of AIMS, strengthen stakeholder confidence, and support mobility, linkages and talent development across Southeast and East Asia. He encouraged participants to provide suggestions on the implementation of the Bacolod Strategy, which serves as a living instrument, and actively engage in the networking to build a stronger AIMS.
- 5 YB Datuk Ts. Mustapha Sakmud, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, officiated the Opening of the 19th Annual Review Meeting. He highlighted AIMS as a symbol of regional solidarity that promotes student mobility beyond borders. As Malaysia holds the Chairmanship of ASEAN 2025, he welcomed AIMS contributions in advancing harmonisation and internationalisation, sustainable higher education, cultural exchange, and nurturing global citizens and future talents for the region. The programme aligns with Malaysia's Higher Education Strategic Framework 2025, Malaysia national policy framework MADANI, and the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Higher Education, promoting the Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education that encourages collaboration, fosters innovation, and builds unity through diversity for peace, prosperity and shared progress.
- 6 The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and AIMS Malaysia launched the AIMS Malaysia Book, *Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in a Changing World*. The volume compiles timely scholarly and institutional articles on how Malaysian HEIs have adapted their internationalisation strategies amid rapid global shifts, which serves as a valuable resource for regional academics, higher education practitioners, and leaders interested in driving the next phase of internationalisation discourse.

Session 1: Overview and Introduction

- 7 SEAMEO RIHED provided an overview of the AIMS Programme and introduced the AIMS Strategic Framework (2026–2028), also known as the Bacolod Strategy, together with the AIMS Student Experience and Competence Framework, the AIMS Talent Development Model, and the Da Nang Objectives, before inviting participants to seek clarification and share their inputs for future implementation in the subsequent parallel session.
- 8 The **AIMS Strategic Framework 2026–2028** was introduced by SEAMEO RIHED in 2025 to strengthen the programme with clearer direction and strategies. The AIMS Strategic Framework 2026–2028 was reviewed and endorsed at the 10th Steering Committee Meeting in July 2025 as a living instrument to guide AIMS over the next three years, following the dual **Bacolod Strategy: “Consolidate and Connect”** ([Appendix 4](#)).
- 9 As part of the AIMS Strategic Framework, two supporting documents were introduced: the **AIMS Student Experience and Competence Framework** or AIMS Unique Competences which outlines the programme’s expected impact on students’ competences, and the **AIMS Talent Development Model** which defines AIMS students as talents and guides the management of the mobility programme throughout the entire cycle.
- 10 The AIMS Student Experience and Competence Framework (AIMS Unique Competences), as [Appendix 5](#), outlines six common core competences unique to AIMS students, representing the key knowledge, values, and skills essential for their future employability and for supporting the socio-economic development of the region. These competences are as follows:
 - Knowledge of Societies, Cultures and Languages of Southeast and East Asia
 - Ethical & Cross-cultural Understanding
 - Sustainability & Resilience of Southeast and East Asia
 - Collaborative Skills
 - Diplomatic Skills
 - Globalisation
- 11 The AIMS Talent Development Model, [Appendix 6](#), utilises a business model consisting of six interconnected stages to manage talent within the mobility programme.
- 12 To operationalise the AIMS Strategic Framework, the **Da Nang Objectives**, [Appendix 7](#) were introduced as implementing objectives of the Bacolod Strategy. They were presented at SEAMEO RIHED’s 33rd Governing Board Meeting in September 2025, following the 10th Steering Committee Meeting, and received endorsement to guide implementation over the next 18 months.
- 13 SEAMEO RIHED also presented a summary of earlier feedback from AIMS Member Universities on the Bacolod Strategy, with the full feedback provided in [Appendix 8](#).
- 14 SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director reiterated the importance of hearing members’ priorities and welcomed further suggestions for the AIMS Strategic Framework, noting that it serves as a living instrument.
- 15 SEAMEO RIHED collected questions from participants through [Padlet](#) and opened the floor for Q&A session. The questions were addressed by SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director. The summary of the Q&A appears as [Appendix 9](#).

Session 2: Panel Discussion – Enhancing Student Success through AIMS

- 16 The Panel Discussion brought together industry and alumni representatives to exchange ideas on how AIMS mobility can enhance students’ knowledge, skills and values, and explore opportunities for AIMS to better align with student and employer needs while strengthening engagement with industry. The list of panelists and moderators appears as [Appendix 10](#).

- 17 Representatives from the industry emphasised the qualities they seek in talents, including a constructive attitude, soft skills, critical thinking, lifelong learning, and a commitment to sustainability. AIMS Alumni recognised AIMS as a platform that cultivates valuable competences, including self-confidence, agility, resilience, foreign language proficiency, and an open perspective. Industry representatives also noted that international experience makes candidates unique, equipping them with cross-cultural knowledge, language skills, and a global outlook, qualities that are increasingly important in today's rapidly evolving world.
- 18 The panel's reflections underscored the importance of strengthening AIMS' unique competences and encouraged the programme to embrace interdisciplinarity and maximise the value of internationalisation, lifelong learning, and glocalisation. The discussion also highlighted the need to deepen AIMS' engagement with the industry through initiatives such as USR activities, internships, and collaborative projects, while empowering alumni to drive the development of future talents.

Session 3: Parallel Session

- 19 The parallel session was divided into four groups: 1) Governments, 2) Faculty members, 3) IROs, and 4) Students/Alumni. Each group was invited to provide input on key questions linked to the Da Nang Objectives of the Bacolod Strategy, focusing on priority initiatives to consolidate AIMS as a leading academic mobility programme and strengthen its regional and global connectivity through engagement with students, alumni, and other exchange programmes.
- 20 In addition, each group addressed topics relevant to their roles. The Government group focused on aligning the AIMS Strategic Framework with national priorities and key issues. The Faculty group explored initiatives to enhance the learning experience of AIMS. The IROs group examined priorities for implementing the Bacolod Strategy, considering the roles of the AIMS Secretariat, member universities, and governments. The Students/Alumni group discussed ways to foster AIMS connections and community through the AIMS Alumni Network.
- 21 Each group has Leads and Facilitators to support the discussions in each group. The list of Leads, Facilitators, and Presenters appears as [Appendix 11](#).

Day 2, 5 November 2025

Session 4: Report on Discussions from Parallel Session

Government Group

- 22 The Government group reported the key issues and recommendations across five main topics: (1) Internship, (2) TVET, (3) Faculty Exchange, (4) New Modality, and (5) Balanced Mobility. Presentation appears as [Appendix 12](#).
- 23 The group expressed interest in expanding the programme to include internships and TVET, recognising new modalities officially in AIMS, and encouraging faculty exchange through existing collaboration. On balanced mobility, the group explored methods to increase mobility participation.
- 24 The group highlighted the value of internship experience for AIMS students and alumni and noted good practices on visa applications such as Green Lane, and engaging industry and other agencies to support investment and collaboration. Key challenges include countries that do not permit internships within exchange programmes as well as visa and stipend-related issues.
- 25 The group acknowledged the importance of TVET, however, noting that its governance structures differ across countries and are often overseen by separate authorities. The group suggested exploring a separate future programme for TVET institutions.
- 26 Governments recognised that new modalities are already being practiced informally within AIMS, including COIL, short courses, micro-credentials, and others. It was suggested that governments collectively agree on which modalities should be formally recognised as part of the AIMS Programme and any new or clarified modalities would require endorsement by SEAMEO RIHED.

- 27 As part of the existing faculty collaborations under the AIMS Programme, the group identified opportunities for faculty exchanges through research collaboration, co-teaching, and co-creation of common curricula and other forms of academic mobility. It was agreed that AIMS should continue to prioritise student mobility while recognising ongoing faculty engagements.
- 28 As balanced mobility remains a challenge within AIMS, the group explored ways to increase mobility participation. SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director recalled findings from a 2010 study which underscored the importance of effective information flow from students to parents and highlighted the value of more personalised, one-to-one engagement. These insights reinforce current efforts under the *Bacolod Strategy*, including the development of Risk Management Guidelines for AIMS covering health, security, natural disasters, and mental health. It was noted that bilateral agreements may offer a faster pathway toward achieving balanced mobility. Members suggested conducting a new study to revisit the 2010 findings and to better understand the current context.

Faculty Group

- 29 The Faculty group reported a summary of the discussions in alignment with the *Bacolod Strategy— Consolidate and Connect*. The Presentation appears as [Appendix 13](#).
- 30 **Consolidate:** The group addressed priorities to strengthen the AIMS Programme in terms of academic quality and operational effectiveness. For academic quality, the group highlighted the need to focus on developing students' skills and competences to enhance employability and to communicate these competences more clearly to industry and other stakeholders. To enhance operational effectiveness, the group suggested securing adequate funding to support programme initiatives, develop robust AIMS student support services, aligning exchanges across the region through establishing mechanisms for credit transfer, and an efficient digital platform with a comprehensive database of academic programmes and course information to facilitate exchanges.
- 31 **Connect:** To enhance regional and global linkages, the group suggested leveraging alumni as catalysts to strengthen AIMS through the sharing of experiences and active engagement in supporting new AIMS students and connecting with the industry. This underscores the need for a stronger alumni platform and network, as well as the effective use of engaging media for storytelling and outreach. The group also proposed enhancements to the AIMS Regional Orientation to further support these linkages. Finally, the group encouraged AIMS to take a leading role in student mobility and to promote sustainability and resilience in the region.
- 32 **Enhancing Learning, Engagement, and Evaluation:** To improve learning and engagement, the group suggested student learning through internships, industry collaboration, and community involvement. They also recommended improving teaching and curriculum development through capacity building, lecturer mobility, and introduce short courses, micro-credentials, and flexible credit transfer, as well as updating curricula based on stakeholders' input. Standardised evaluation forms and evaluation of students' knowledge about Southeast and East Asia were also suggested.

IROs Group

- 33 The IROs Group presented the outputs of their discussion on initiatives for the implementation of the *Bacolod Strategy – Consolidate and Connect* and identified three key priority actions suggested for the AIMS Secretariat, member universities, and ministries to carry out as follows. Presentation appears as [Appendix 14](#).
- 34 **Consolidate:** The group acknowledged several common issues raised by other groups, including academic quality and alignment, diversifying the programme, funding, balanced mobility, and student support systems. They additionally highlighted more initiatives, particularly to support onboarding new AIMS member universities and to strengthen collaboration among disciplines, such as organising discipline-based sessions, assigning lead coordinators, and expanding activities within academic fields. The group further emphasised broadening the range of disciplines and reducing rigid boundaries through bilateral agreements.

- 35 Among the proposed initiatives, member universities would actively support the following key actions: 1) enhancing AIMS visibility, 2) diversifying programme offerings and exchange formats, 3) establishing an AIMS digital platform or portal, and 4) engaging more closely with stakeholders, such as industry partners and immigration authorities, to advance cross-cutting initiatives and address key challenges.
- 36 **Connect:** The group suggested strengthening connectivity under the Bacolod Strategy by enhancing strategic communication and promotion through alumni, universities, online platforms, and public events. The group also emphasised student and alumni engagement, noting that improvements under the Consolidate strategy, such as broader programme options and expanded partnerships, can further increase AIMS' reach and visibility. To sustain the Connect strategy, stronger digital platforms and improved data management are required to support the growth of AIMS networks.
- 37 **Priority for Bacolod Strategy:** The group identified three top priorities and recommendations for the Bacolod Strategy: 1) strengthen funding and support mechanisms 2) harmonise administrative processes and policies (e.g., visa, fees, procedures), and 3) improve data integration and programme visibility. The group noted that the AIMS Secretariat, member institutions, and ministries could contribute to these priorities from different perspectives.

Alumni and Students Group

- 38 The Alumni and Students group identified three key areas for improvement in the AIMS Programme. **First**, funding support should be flexible, fair, transparent, and sustainable to ensure access for all students. **Second**, branding should be bold and reflect that AIMS is more than an exchange. It is a movement and a symbol of collaboration, diversity, and transformation across Asia, connecting people and nations. **Finally**, the system and connections should be strengthened even after the exchange, by maintaining the Alumni Network as an active community and enhancing collaboration with stakeholders for impact that changes lives, systems, mindsets and futures. Full speech as [Appendix 15](#).

Session 5: Parliamentary Debate

- 39 Twelve AIMS Alumni engaged in a Model Parliament discussion on ASEAN Community Building which allowed them to experience and simulate the roles as government parties and opposition to debate and discuss key regional issues, policy challenges, and the future of ASEAN. The list of alumni and moderators for the session appears as [Appendix 16](#).
- 40 Two motions were debated during the session: 1) Exchange programmes should be made mandatory for university students in Asia, and 2) Exchange Programmes should focus more on developing soft skills than academic results. These debates encouraged AIMS alumni, governments delegates and university representatives, to reflect on the value of mobility, the evolving priorities of higher education, and the role of youth in shaping a more connected and resilient ASEAN Community.

Session 6: AIMS Programme Updates

- 41 SEAMEO RIHED presented the updates on AIMS Programme as follows:

a) Student Mobility Data for 2025

The overall performance of AIMS 2025 by country and academic discipline was presented during the meeting. In 2025, there is an addition of 618 outbound students (600 physical and 18 virtual with credits), and 577 inbound students (518 physical, 2 hybrid/blended, and 55 virtual with credits).

Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea recorded the highest numbers of outbound students, while Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Japan received the most inbound students.

In terms of academic disciplines, the top outbound fields of study were Engineering, International Business, and Language and Culture. For inbound mobility, the leading disciplines were International Business, Agriculture, and Language and Culture.

The total cumulative number of student participation for all modes of mobility with credits since 2010 has reached 7,226 for outbound students (6,958 physical, 17 hybrid/blended, 251 virtual with credits), 8,862 for inbound students (6,766 physical, 62 hybrid/blended, 1,346 virtual with credits).

b) Changes to Member Universities

Some changes to member universities are expected for the Republic of Korea and Japan in 2026, and potential new member universities from Brunei Darussalam and Vietnam who observed the 19th Annual Review Meeting.

c) Changes to Member Universities' disciplines participation

Updates on disciplines offered by member universities are as follows:

- **Batangas State University:** Continues to offer Engineering, with three new disciplines added, Economics, Hospitality & Tourism, and Language & Culture.
- **University of St. La Salle:** Continues to offer International Business, with Language & Culture added.

Member universities may pilot additional disciplines if permitted by their respective member governments.

d) Updates on AIMS Resources

- [AIMS Website](#) and Certificates [Login](#) function
- [Visa Procedures](#) on AIMS website - provided by AIMS member governments
- [Information to Facilitate Mobility](#) – contains information on academic calendars, compulsory costs, MOUs, additional notes, and designated contact persons.
- [List of Steering Committee Meetings and Annual Review Meetings](#)
- **Draft AIMS Operational Handbook (Third Edition)** – currently in progress

e) Updates on AIMS Activities

- **AIMS Research** - Research under the AIMS Programme will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, with proposals submitted to the Steering Committee for review and approval.
- **AIMS Orientation** - AIMS Secretariat will implement improvements to the Orientation in February 2026.
- **University Social Responsibility (USR)** - Several AIMS-related USR initiatives have been implemented in the past years, and a potential AIMS-wide USR initiative is under consideration for future implementation.
- **Promotion of AIMS Member Universities' Short-Term/Summer Programmes 2026**
The AIMS Secretariat will promote member universities' innovative short-term and summer programmes through the AIMS website and email circulation, focusing on mobility models that strengthen AIMS Unique Competences, inspire prospective AIMS students, and enhance the programme's social impact.

- **AIMS Alumni Database** – The AIMS Secretariat is currently in the process of gathering and updating the Alumni Database to better support future networking and alumni engagement. However, overall data from member countries remains limited. The AIMS Secretariat sought the cooperation of all International Relations Officers of AIMS Member Universities to collaborate with their respective Country Alumni Leads in facilitating the collection of AIMS Alumni Data.

Closing Ceremony

- 42 Dr. Choltis Dhirathiti expressed his appreciation for the active participation and contributions throughout the meeting and extended his gratitude to Malaysia for its excellent hosting, noting that the presence of participants from across Asia reflects the growing strength and unity of the AIMS community. He acknowledged the key issues and priorities raised, affirming that these insights will help guide the programme's continued development. He highlighted the strong foundation built over 16 years of collaboration among member universities and governments, expressing confidence in AIMS' continued advancement as a leading mobility programme in Asia. He concluded by emphasising that this collective commitment is essential to strengthening partnerships that empower students and promote a future of shared learning, understanding, and progress.
- 43 Datuk Prof. Dr. Azlinda binti Azman, Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, expressed her appreciation for the strong collaboration demonstrated throughout the meeting. She reflected on AIMS' growth from its 2010 beginnings as the M-I-T Pilot Project to a network of 10 member countries, emphasising AIMS' collective role in fostering meaningful connections, cross-cultural learning, and preparing future leaders. She highlighted the constructive discussions that will guide AIMS' future direction in line with regional priorities, including the recent ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Higher Education calling for the Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education, and reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to advancing higher education cooperation. She concluded by thanking all stakeholders for their dedication and reaffirming the shared commitment to strengthening the programme.

Venue of the 20th Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme

- 44 The venue for the 20th Annual Review Meeting was announced as the Philippines. During the handing-over ceremony, Datuk Prof. Dr. Azlinda Azman presented the AIMS flag from Malaysia to Ms. Elma Paz, Education Program Specialist, representing the Commission on Higher Education Philippines. The Commission on Higher Education Philippines welcomed participants to join the meeting in Ilocos Norte in mid-October 2026. The Presentation is provided in [Appendix 17](#).

Day 3, 6 November 2025

University Social Responsibility (USR) Activities

- 45 In conjunction with the meeting, AIMS Malaysia organised three University Social Responsibility (USR) activities that reflected the programme's holistic vision of integrating education, sustainability, and community engagement.
- 46 Three groups of USR activities were conducted: 1) the Asian Knowledge Corner at Raja Tun Uda Library, Shah Alam, which showcased educational resources and cultural materials from AIMS member countries; 2) the Groom Project at Zoo Negara, Ampang, which encouraged volunteerism and environmental stewardship through animal care and conservation activities; and 3) the ASEAN River Trail Cleaning Programme at Denai Sungai Kebangsaan, Sungai Langat, Bangi, which promoted environmental awareness and river conservation.
- 47 Each group shared reflections on the activities and their impact, underscoring AIMS' commitment to fostering civic responsibility, cultural appreciation, and sustainable development among students and institutions.