



Terms of Reference

Research Study on the State of Higher Education in ASEAN Member States

1. Background

The Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme is the European Union's flagship higher education programme with ASEAN since 2015.

The SHARE Programme supports the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN stakeholders to enable greater harmonisation and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education. The Programme is fully committed to the implementation of the third ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021 – 2025 and will achieve this through three result areas, namely enhancing policy dialogue in the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education (Result Area 1), supporting the further development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) and ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) (Result Area 2), and further developing a common credit transfer system and scholarship programme for intra-ASEAN student mobility (Result Area 3) while ensuring equal opportunities for all through cross-cutting engagement and coordination across all result areas. The current phase of the SHARE Programme (phase 2021 – 2022) aims to catalyse the transfer of ownership of programme key achievements to ASEAN entities and nominated organisations to be embedded within sustainable ASEAN-led structures and processes.

The SHARE Consortium – comprising the British Council, the DAAD, ENQA, and Nuffic – brings to bear its collective expertise and experience across the full scope and dimensions of international education in line with the further development of an ASEAN Higher Education Space and an ASEAN branded scholarship scheme, in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN stakeholders.

The overall objective of the SHARE Programme is to strengthen regional cooperation, enhance the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions contributing to an ASEAN Community in 2025 and beyond.

The specific objectives of the SHARE Programme are:

- To enhance the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education area through the formulation of ASEAN higher education frameworks, taking into account the EU experience and promotion of equal access for girls and women to quality higher education free from discrimination; and



- To support mutual recognition, student mobility and equal opportunities for all, including female students and people with disabilities, among higher education institutions in ASEAN, and to strengthen people-to-people connectivity.

The expected results are:

- Enhanced opportunities for policy dialogue on strategic issues (including equal opportunities and gender equality) of harmonisation of ASEAN higher education involving variety of stakeholders including ASEAN and EU as required;
- ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and ASEAN Regional Quality Assurance including disaggregated data collection further developed and supported;
- ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) and ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer System (AECTS) further developed and tested through mobility with scholarships.

The current phase of the SHARE Programme sees the Programme providing further technical assistance to the ASEAN Secretariat and regional stakeholders in their implementation of the **ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025**, which was adopted by the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM) on 31 May 2021. As a key sector for the ASEAN region, Higher Education is incorporated in the Work Plan through 'Outcome 3: *Enhanced regional capacity in higher education as part of lifelong learning provision, including the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education.*'

The realisation of Outcome 3 is supported in the main by the **ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility 2025 (AWGHEM)**, which was officially launched at the 12th SHARE Policy Dialogue on 27 July 2021 in line with the SHARE Programme's role as the technical and operational Advisor to the Working Group. The members of the Working Group are expected to contribute to the realisation of the ASEAN Education Work Plan 2021 – 2025, and specifically the activities of **Output 3.2: 'Sustained and strengthened ASEAN capacity in higher education harmonisation through strategies, mechanisms, and scholarship provision.'**

To this end, the remit of the members of the Working Group is to produce a '**Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025**' for greater people-to-people connectivity and knowledge transfer across ASEAN, in the framework of the ASEAN Education Work Plan 2021 – 2025. This Roadmap will deliver the mandates and commitments of ASEAN related to boosting intra-ASEAN student mobility by 2025, including the design, ownership, and operationalisation of an ASEAN Branded Scholarship.

However, there is a need for technical assistance particularly on an updated report on the State of Play on Higher Education in the ASEAN region. This is considering that the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Bureau for Education and SEAMEO RIHED's 'Higher Education in South-East Asia' report and the Asian Development Bank's 'Higher Education Across Asia: An Overview of Issues and Strategies' report, were published over ten to fifteen years ago in 2006 and 2011 respectively.

Furthermore, the changing world of work and the 4th industrial revolution necessitate a renewed approach to higher education particularly its contribution towards the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda including the need to address SDG Target 4.b *"By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, (...), for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries."*

As such, there is a need for a renewed assessment of the state of higher education in the ASEAN Region, and a look into the challenges and opportunities in sustaining ASEAN higher education developments post-SHARE programme in the ASEAN region through the provision of the ongoing development and sustainability of intra-ASEAN student mobility and an ASEAN Branded Scholarship Programme. This state of play of higher education report in ASEAN will include thematic analysis of challenges and opportunities in higher education inclusion, equity, relevance to the changing world of work, and sustainability of an ASEAN Higher Education Common Space.

The report will significantly contribute to guiding higher education policy development and reforms in the ASEAN region.

2. Objective

The key objective of the state of play of higher education in ASEAN report is to provide updated thematic analysis of ASEAN higher education taking into account the recent developments in the region and ongoing and planned initiatives related to higher education in ASEAN including but not limited to the development of an ASEAN Higher Education Common Space. It will inform ASEAN higher education stakeholders particularly the relevant ASEAN Ministries of Education and/or their agencies of key issues, challenges and opportunities in ASEAN higher education. Furthermore, the report is envisioned to provide guidance on higher education development and reforms in the Southeast Asian region, and address key issues of inclusion, quality, relevance, internationalisation, and sustainability of various ASEAN higher education initiatives including the establishment of an ASEAN Branded Scholarship and the ASEAN Higher Education Common Space.

3. Methodology

The following methodology is proposed.

1. This report is envisioned to produce new evidence through interviews and desk research, and further incorporating initiatives and sustainability issues on supporting an ASEAN Higher Education Common Space.
2. Descriptive statistics (where available) are expected to provide a basis on the developments of ASEAN higher education including on inclusion, equity, relevance, and internationalisation issues.
3. Consultative seminars/workshops/dialogues with the SHARE Programme, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the ASEAN Member States to validate the findings and shape the recommendations.

The consultant(s) is/are invited to propose their suggested methodology to ensure quality and depth of the state of play of higher education in ASEAN report.

4. Deliverables

For this particular research project, the expected deliverables are:

1. Inception report confirming the approach, method, and timeline.
2. Draft research report.
3. Consultative seminars/workshops/dialogues with the SHARE Programme, the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Member States, and other relevant stakeholders.
4. Final research report.

5. Reporting

The consultant will report to both the SHARE Programme Team Leader and the Head of Education, Youth and Sports Division of the ASEAN Secretariat (EYSD ASEC). The consultant will also prepare a brief monthly update report to inform both the SHARE Programme and the EYSD ASEC on the progress of the research study.

6. Skills and Expertise Required

We are seeking an experienced ASEAN/ASEAN-based consultant/expert with a proven track-record in the following:

1. Proven expertise in higher education research
2. Familiarity with the ASEAN region and its higher education context and the internationalisation agenda

3. Publication record on one or more of ASEAN Member Countries higher education sector
4. Excellent time management skills and ability to meet deadlines
5. Availability to travel internationally if and when required
6. Excellent facilitation and report writing skills

Application may come from individual or consultancy firm.

7. Indicative Timeline/Provisional Timescales

Below is indicative timeline with actual timeline to be agreed at a later stage.

Timeline	Activity
Week of 4 July 2022	Inception meeting
By 22 July 2022	Submission of inception report
By 15 October 2022	Submission of draft report
By 28 October 2022	Validation workshop/seminar/dialogue
By 30 November 2022	Final report agreed
By 9 December 2022	Launching of the Report

8. Anticipated Budget

Indicative budget for this consultancy is EUR30,000.00 at the maximum.

Associated budget for conducting in-person workshops/seminars/dialogues that involve travel shall be excluded from the proposal and will be discussed separately with the SHARE Programme at a later date.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Item of evaluation	Weighting
Research proposal	Method and delivery (35%): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research approach, research design, methodology (for example proposed tools, plan for data analysis) - Work plan (for example activities, data collection, timeline, required resources) Skills and expertise of proposed individual/team (35%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise in ASEAN higher education context and internationalisation agenda - Relevant track record in such research study - Competence of the proposed research team - Relevant publications 	70 %
Commercial	Submitted budget (including budget breakdown)	20 %
Social value	Contribution to integrated communities and encourage empowerment of women, vulnerable adults, and minority groups	10 %

10. Scoring Model

Below scoring model will be used to review the incoming proposals:

Points	Interpretation
10	Excellent – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas evidence requested in the level of detail requested. This, therefore, is a detailed excellent response that meets all aspects of the requirement leaving no ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement.

7	Good – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement and provides all of the areas of evidence requested but contains some trivial omissions in relation to the level of detail requested in terms of either the response or the evidence. This, therefore, is a good response that meets all aspects of the requirement with only a trivial level ambiguity due to the bidder's failure to provide all information at the level of detail requested.
5	Adequate – Overall the response demonstrates that the bidder meets all areas of the requirement, but not all of the areas of evidence requested have been provided. This, therefore, is an adequate response, but with some limited ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement due to the bidder's failure to provide all of the evidence requested.
3	Poor – The response does not demonstrate that the bidder meets the requirement in one or more areas. This, therefore, is a poor response with significant ambiguity as to whether the bidder can meet the requirement due to the failure by the bidder to show that it meets one or more areas of the requirement.
0	Unacceptable – The response is non-compliant with the requirements of the Request for Proposal (RFP) document and/or no response has been provided.