



# Study on Enhancing Intra-ASEAN University Student Mobility





SHARE, the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region, is a four-year initiative by the EU and ASEAN. They have entrusted the implementation of SHARE to a consortium of British Council (lead), DAAD, Nuffic and ENQA. Launched in Jakarta in May 2015, SHARE aims to support ASEAN in harmonising regional higher education by sharing European expertise. It does this through strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing the quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education for institutions and students, and thereby contributing to a closer ASEAN Community in 2015 and beyond.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronyms	Description
<b>ADB</b>	ASIAN Development Bank
<b>AEC</b>	ASEAN Economic Community
<b>AIMS</b>	ASEAN International Mobility for Students Programme (SEAMEO-RIHED)
<b>APSC</b>	ASEAN Political Security Community
<b>AQAN</b>	ASEAN Quality Assurance Network
<b>AQRF</b>	ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework
<b>ASCC</b>	ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASEAN+3</b>	ASEAN plus China, Japan, and South Korea
<b>ASEC</b>	ASEAN Secretariat
<b>ASED</b>	ASEAN Ministers of Education Meeting
<b>ASEM</b>	ASIA Europe Meeting
<b>AUN</b>	ASEAN University Network
<b>AUN/SEED-Net</b>	Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network (AUN & JICA)
<b>AUN-ACTS</b>	AUN ASEAN Credit Transfer System
<b>AUN-QA</b>	AUN Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>BC</b>	British Council
<b>CF</b>	Campus France
<b>CONS</b>	All 6 Partners of SHARE Consortium, plus PMU
<b>CPR</b>	ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives
<b>DAAD</b>	German Academic Exchange Service
<b>DG EAC</b>	DG Education and Culture, European Commission
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service
<b>ENQA</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>EP-N</b>	European Platform-Nuffic
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUA</b>	European University Association
<b>EUD BKK</b>	EU Delegation Bangkok, Thailand
<b>EUD HAN</b>	EU Delegation Hanoi, Vietnam
<b>EUD JKT</b>	EU Delegation Jakarta, Indonesia
<b>EUD KUL</b>	EU Delegation Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
<b>EUD MNL</b>	EU Delegation Manila, Philippines
<b>EUD PNH</b>	EU Delegation Phnom Penh, Cambodia
<b>EUD SIN</b>	EU Delegation Singapore
<b>EUD VTE</b>	EU Delegation Vientiane, Lao PDR
<b>EUD YGN</b>	EU Delegation Yangon, Myanmar
<b>EYTD</b>	Education, Youth and Training Division, ASEC
<b>GMS CTS</b>	Greater Mekong Subregion Credit Transfer System (SEAMEO-RIHED & ADB)
<b>PMB</b>	SHARE Project Management Board
<b>PMU</b>	Project Management Unit
<b>PSC</b>	SHARE Project Steering Committee
<b>RTD</b>	DG Research and Innovation, European Commission
<b>SEAMEO</b>	Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organisation
<b>SEAMEO-RIHED</b>	SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
<b>SEAMEO-VOCTECH</b>	SEAMEO Regional centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training
<b>SEAMOLEC</b>	SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre
<b>SHARE</b>	European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region
<b>SOM-ED</b>	Senior Officials Meeting on Education

# Executive Summary

Higher education plays an important role in ASEAN's economic, political and socio-cultural development agenda. As a region it has nearly 20 million higher education students and over 7000 universities (Atherton et al 2018).<sup>1</sup> Supporting the mobility of these students in the region is an important aspect of ASEAN's work on the internationalisation of higher education, consistent with the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.

## Infographic 1: Executive Summary



**20  
MILLION  
STUDENT**



**7000  
UNIVERSITIES**

This Study looks at three factors crucial to enhancing intra-ASEAN mobility for university students<sup>2</sup>:

Understanding the data available on international students

1

The role of visa provision

2

Scholarships and an ASEAN single branded scholarship (SBS)

3

<sup>1</sup> Data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics and ASEAN Member States analysed for Atherton, G, et al (2018) *The Shape of Global Higher Education: Understanding the ASEAN region*, London: British Council

<sup>2</sup> In this Study when students is used this refers to international students defined as: *An internationally mobile student is an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two Member States with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin.* (UNESCO, 2015).



Over 100 stakeholders were consulted in the production of the Study over September 2019 to April 2020 including senior education officials from ASEAN Member States, HEIs, education organisations and students. It outlines how action at the ASEAN and ASEAN Member State level could increase international student mobility in the region.

## 1 The value of international student mobility

International student mobility brings significant social and economic benefits to individuals and nations. In 2016, the value of the 5.1 million international students to the global economy was estimated to be over USD 300 billion (Choudaha 2019). The evidence for the value of international student mobility is wide ranging. It contributes to the development of cross-cultural understanding, international networks and improved relations between Member States as well as enhancing the employability of students (Münch & Hoch 2013). The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS+), is the largest regional student exchange programme in the world. Evaluation of impact of the programme undertaken in 2019 indicated that *‘Nine in ten students report gains in adaptability, ability to collaborate with people from different cultures, communication skills and problem-solving skills and more than half improved their digital skills.’*(European Commission 2019).

In ASEAN, student mobility can also support the development of regional ASEAN identity. It can also contribute to a more qualified, mobile workforce better equipped to deal with the challenges of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial revolution described in the ASEAN Integration report of 2019 (ASEAN 2019).

## 2 Understanding the data available on international students

The most comprehensive data, and that used in this Study, is provided by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics based on information they have collected from Ministries of Education in ASEAN member states. But data is not available from UNESCO covering ‘inbound/outbound mobility’<sup>3</sup> from all Member States in ASEAN<sup>4</sup>. Table 1 shows the overall number of inbound/outbound students and the Member States with the largest numbers of such students.

**Table 1: International Student Mobility in ASEAN**

Type of mobility	No of ASEAN students	Member States with largest number of students
Outbound	302,000	Vietnam Malaysia Indonesia
Inbound	235,000	Malaysia Singapore Thailand

<sup>3</sup> Inbound students are those who are studying in a particular country who have come from another country and outbound students those who go to study in another country from their origin country.

<sup>4</sup> Inbound student mobility data for students studying in ASEAN Member States from other ASEAN Member States is not available for Cambodia, Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

The data available from UNESCO identifies a number of other key features:

- The vast majority of all outbound students study outside ASEAN, while most inbound students come from non-ASEAN countries.
- Intra-ASEAN inbound/outbound mobility has increased over the 2013 to 2018 period. But in 2018 less than 10% of all inbound/outbound mobility was between ASEAN Member States.
- Inbound students are distributed unevenly across ASEAN. More than 80% study in Thailand, Viet Nam and Malaysia, with over 50% in Malaysia alone. Of outbound students leaving ASEAN, over 80% go to Australia, the US, UK and Japan.
- Student mobility within the ASEAN region is characterised by a series of 'bilateral flows' where the majority of outbound students from any one country study in one other country. For example, over 80% of all outbound students that leave Lao PDR go to Viet Nam and over 90% of outbound students that leave Indonesia for another ASEAN Member State go to Malaysia.

Data from UNESCO allows approximate levels of inbound/outbound student mobility within the ASEAN region to be estimated. However, as well as not covering all ASEAN Member States at present, it also does not include the more granular data looking at level of study, duration of mobility and socio-demographic background of participants. The Working Group on Countries (APTWG) has been undertaking work since 2016 to collect information on international student mobility but thus far it has only collated data from certain ASEAN Member States mainly on scholarship funded mobility and not at the granular level.<sup>5</sup>

In order to significantly improve the data available on student mobility in ASEAN and its analysis, it is recommended that a dedicated research centre is needed. An ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre working on behalf of ASEAN Member States would develop a common definition of international student mobility for data collection purposes and generate the granular data required. It would also build an evidence base on the benefits of student mobility in ASEAN. The Centre would regularly disseminate reports on student mobility across the region and build the capacity of ASEAN Member States to collect and analyse their own international student mobility data. It would also support the development of robust indicators that could be included in the evolving ASEAN 2025 Statistical Framework.

### 3

#### **The role of visa provision**

Significant evidence exists from outside of ASEAN on the role that visa arrangements can play in leading to increases in inbound student mobility. ASEAN is the most open-sub region in the world with 22% of the world population able to come to the region without a visa while another 33% obtain a visa on arrival (UNWTO 2016). There has also been attention paid to enhancing this openness through the introduction of one visa for the region (Chandra et al 2018). In terms of student visa provision while all ASEAN Member States have student visa programmes, as Table 2 shows, they differ significantly within ASEAN.

<sup>5</sup>This work has not yet been published but it is collated and analysed in chapter 2 of this Study.

**Table 2: Visa provision in ASEAN Member States**

Characteristics	Description
Coverage and support	All ASEAN Member States have differing titles for their student visa and students do not always use them to facilitate mobility. Only two countries, Malaysia and Singapore, have specialist agencies to support visa application.
Length	Visa length varies from 59 days to a year but for all ASEAN Member States where information is available students have an option of a visa up to a year in length. Application times range from 7 days to 4 weeks.
Cost	Costs of a visa range from USD20 to USD240.
ASEAN preference	There is no evidence of preference for ASEAN Member States in the visa application arrangements.
Information	Information on visa arrangements is available online in each country although the level of detail varies.

The ASEAN Member States with the higher levels of inbound student mobility in ASEAN are those with the better developed systems of visa support. Visa provision plays a part in understanding differences in levels of student mobility alongside the quality of course/institution, future employability prospects and financial support available.

Consultation with students and HEIs undertaken for the study suggested that a more coherent approach to student visa provision in ASEAN with more visible information in the form of a one-stop online student visa information point covering arrangements in all ASEAN Member States would be valuable. It would contribute to making studying in other ASEAN Member States more attractive to ASEAN students than leaving the region.

A step on from making visa provision across the region consistent and easier to navigate would be to introduce one student pass for the whole of the region to replace existing individual country student visas.

An 'ASEAN Student Pass' applied for centrally and electronically, could have a number of advantages. It could be a more straightforward way of achieving coherence than asking each country to conform to a common set of standards, reduce bureaucracy and enable the collection of accurate data on student mobility in the region. It would also enable issues related to a possible common visa for ASEAN giving all citizens to be better understood and act as a high profile statement of the value and importance of international student mobility in the region.

The administrative challenges associated with an ASEAN Student Pass must not be under-estimated. The introduction of an ASEAN Student Pass would need at least a 5-year time frame and piloting of common student visa arrangements with a small number of ASEAN Member States may be beneficial in establishing the impact and viability of the Pass. In order to understand more about the feasibility of an ASEAN Student Pass further, detailed consultation with ASEAN Member States would be essential to build on the initial work in this study.

#### **4 Scholarships and an ASEAN single branded scholarship (SBS)**

Scholarships have an important role to play in stimulating international student mobility. Evidence from across the world shows the contribution they can make to economic and social development as well as the overall harmonisation of higher education in a region (British Council & DAAD 2014). However, the evidence also shows that there is a shortage of detailed work on the economic and social impact of such scholarships (Mawer 2014).

In ASEAN, scholarships are delivered at the university level through bilateral and multi-lateral relationships with other HEIs, national level and through 4 major regional mobility scholarship programmes. The regional programmes currently being implemented are each administered by different international organisations and consortia:

- **The SHARE Scholarship** – led by the EU Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE).
- **The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme** – led by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization - Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED).
- **The AUN Scholarship** – led by the ASEAN University Network (AUN).
- **The UMAP Scholarship** - led by the University Mobility in Asia and Pacific (UMAP) Consortium.

As with other scholarships across the world they operate at a fairly small scale in relation to the total number of international students in the region or country (Perna et al 2014). As outlined in chapter 4 of the Study, the programmes described above reached approximately 7500 students in total from 2010 to 2018. They vary in significantly in length but also in strategic goals, funding and level of student support.

There was a recognition from the HEIs, students and education officials consulted of the value of these scholarship programmes. However, given their different origins, existing programmes do not individually or collectively align with key ASEAN strategic frameworks in particular the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the ASEAN Education Work Plan 2016-2020. There is also limited evidence at the programme level of explicit commitments to ensuring scholarships are open to all students with differing abilities and from diverse social backgrounds. As with scholarship programmes across the world, evidence of evaluation of outcomes or impact on the system is also limited.

## 4.1

### **An ASEAN ‘Single Branded Scholarship’ (SBS) Framework**

The contribution scholarships make to international student mobility in ASEAN is significant, but it could be enhanced with a more coherent approach. The creation of an over-arching ‘Single Branded Scholarship’ (SBS) framework could support the delivery of scholarship programmes in ASEAN to have an even greater impact. The framework would look to include existing and potentially new scholarship programmes. It is important that an ASEAN SBS for the region begins with the existing provision and looks to build on the existing programmes described above should be invited to become part of this framework and provided with the appropriate support and funding incentives to do so if they wish. The new scholarship programmes would be designed to align with ASEAN strategic priorities outlined in the Blueprints of the three ASEAN Community Pillars and MPAC 2025. It should also support the priorities within the next ASEAN Education Work Plan 2021-2025.

An ASEAN SBS framework would also:

- enable more robust evaluation to help prove the impact of scholarships in ASEAN
- aid in attracting additional funding into scholarship provision to support existing/new programmes
- support greater participation from diverse and low-income learners by making this one of the core principles of scholarship provision in ASEAN
- raise awareness of scholarship provision amongst ASEAN students through common communication channels.

The full Study outlines a number of options regarding how the ASEAN SBS could be funded. While ASEAN Member States would have a central role, the evidence shows that there is the potential to engage private sector corporations, foundations, dialogue countries/regions and HEIs in the funding of the ASEAN SBS framework and the programmes within it.

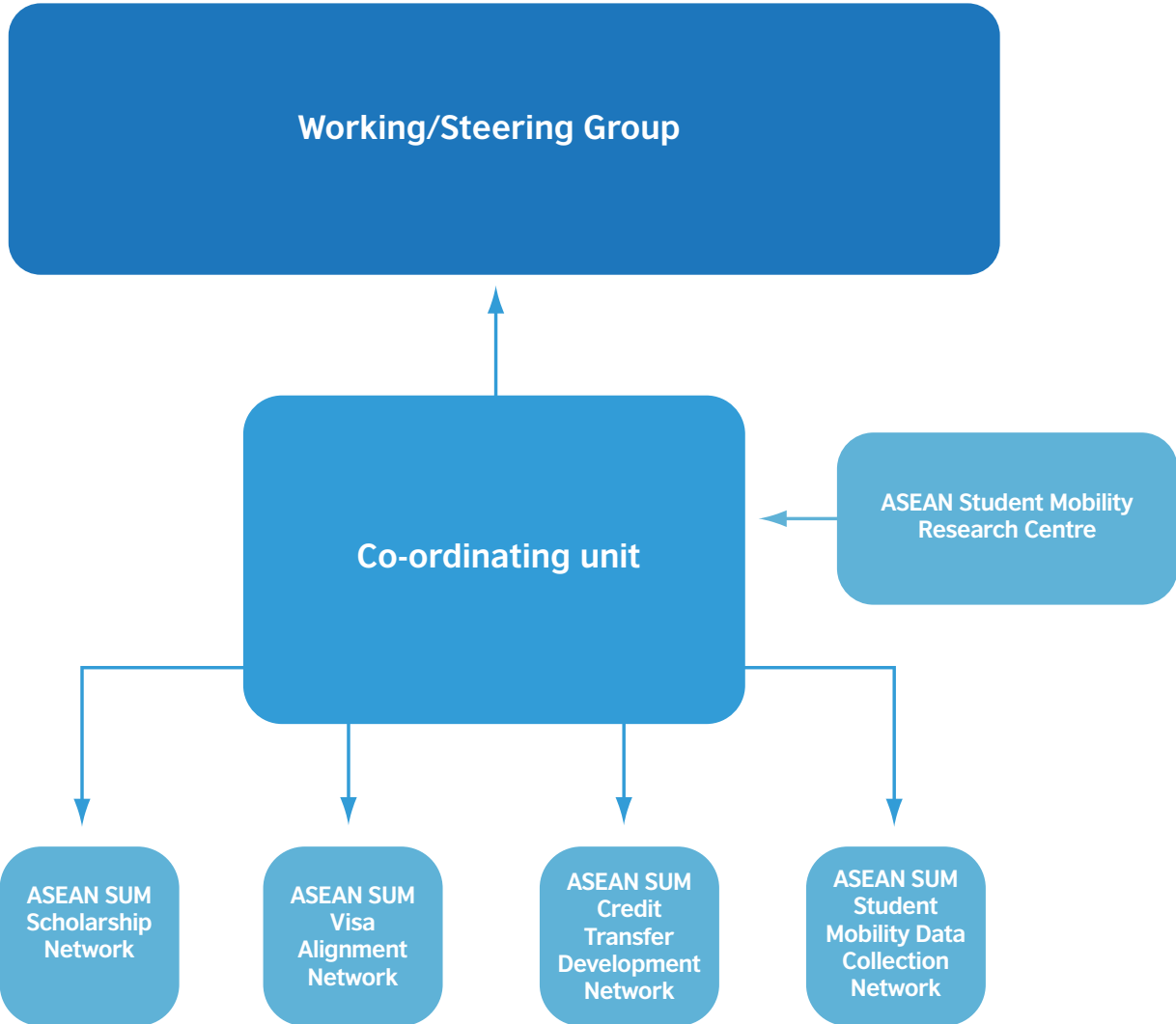
## 5

### **An ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) initiative**

There has been considerable activity undertaken to promote greater regionalisation and harmonisation in higher education in the ASEAN region in recent years led by a range of stakeholders and underpinned by an overarching commitment at the political level. But increasing intra-ASEAN international student mobility is a challenge for policymakers and HEIs. ASEAN Member States are at different stages of development in terms of higher education internationalisation and there are destinations outside of ASEAN which are attractive to students from the region. A coherent, collaborative approach to enabling greater student mobility can support all ASEAN Member States to reach their potential in terms of higher education internationalisation.

The recommendations outlined above regarding an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre, greater alignment in visa provision and the SBS, are designed to address the intra-ASEAN mobility challenge. The delivery of them would be strengthened by a coherent ASEAN approach linking these actions together to maximise their value. The ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) initiative is proposed with the aims to increase and enhance international student mobility between ASEAN Member States. Diagram 1 outlines a proposed structure for the ASEAN SUM.

**Diagram 1: The ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) Initiative**



A working/steering group would provide the strategic leadership for the initiative. It would include educational officials in the higher education field from ASEAN Member States alongside other ASEAN and non-governmental stakeholders as well as non ASEAN Member States<sup>6</sup> active in supporting student mobility. The co-ordinating unit would have responsibility for taking forward the development and then oversight of the ASEAN Student Mobility Data Centre, the single ASEAN online information point for student visa's as well as the SBS. It would be logical for the ASEAN SUM to be co-ordinated by the ASEAN secretariat as it has the mission to initiate, facilitate and coordinate ASEAN stakeholder collaboration.

In order for the ASEAN SUM to maximise its impact, the networks described in Diagram 1 have a crucial role. The networks in Diagram 1 act as 'communities of practice'. Higher education officials and HEIs will communicate regularly through face-to-face and online meetings. Where appropriate the networks will involve those from foundations and the private sector and non-ASEAN Member States. The networks will exchange knowledge, foster collaboration, build the capacity of participants and generate new policy and practice ideas.

Further information regarding how the ASEAN SUM could be co-ordinated and a roadmap for its first 5 years of operation are outlined in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Study.

## **6 The impact of COVID-19**

The majority of the data gathering for this study was undertaken before COVID-19 began to impact on international student mobility. COVID-19 has led to significant disruption to international student mobility already (Mitchell 2020) and the legacy of COVID-19 will add further uncertainty to the international student mobility landscape in ASEAN. It may discourage student mobility to Member States outside ASEAN badly affected by COVID-19 encouraging them to remain in the region. Equally it may discourage student mobility overall. COVID-19 does not necessarily reduce the need for improving data collection, greater visa alignment and the development of an over-arching scholarship framework to support what physical student mobility occurs as recommended in this Study. It does however make it imperative that ASEAN representative bodies and Member States examine more flexible methods of enabling international student mobility the region. Such methods may include 'internationalisation at home' where the focus is less on physical mobility and more on internationalisation of the curriculum (Beelen 2015), as well as combining physical mobility with virtual mobility in more 'blended' programmes.

## **7 International Student Mobility in ASEAN: realising the potential**

The number of young people in ASEAN is predicted to grow to over 220 million by 2038 (ASEAN 2017). Not all these young people will progress to higher education but those who do will benefit greatly from an international higher education experience. This Study outlines the evidence-based case for improvements in data,

<sup>6</sup> These countries include those working closely with ASEAN at present in particular China, Korea and Japan but should not be limited to these countries.

visa and scholarship provision to enable more of these students in ASEAN to benefit from such an experience and to do so within ASEAN itself. It shows that there are opportunities to build on the policies and practice in already in place to enhance international student mobility in the region.



## Chapter 1: Introduction: Understanding student mobility

### 1.1 The rise and fall of international student mobility

Over the course of this century we have seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of higher education students who are internationally mobile. These students are defined by UNESCO as:

*“An internationally mobile student is an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin.” (UNESCO, 2015).<sup>7</sup>*

From 2000 to 2018 the numbers of ‘international students’<sup>8</sup> globally has risen by from 2 million to over 5.3 million.<sup>9</sup> These students are studying predominantly in certain countries. Over 40% of international students are studying in the US, UK, Australia and Canada (OECD (2020). Research in the area has identified that what underlies these patterns of mobility are range of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors (Mazzarol & Soutar 2002). Push factors are those which encourage students to leave their own country to study based on a view that opportunities in their home country are limited either due to access, quality, cost or other barriers. The ‘pull’ factors relate to perceptions of the quality of the destination country’s educational system which attract students to study there. Those countries which attract the most international students are those with strong ‘pull factors’. The countries with the largest numbers of international students have higher education systems which are perceived to be of relative high quality and prestige and that undertaking undergraduate/postgraduate study there opens doors to future job opportunities

The evidence for the value of international student mobility is wide ranging. In 2016 the value of the 5.1 million international students to the global economy was estimated to be over USD 300 billion (Choudaha 2019). A 2019 study of 20 countries from Europe and the Americas shows a positive relationship between the proportion of international students as a percentage of the total student population and their wealth (measured by gross domestic product (GDP) per capita) (Ilieva 2019). It contributes to the development of cross-cultural understanding, international networks and improved relations between countries as well as enhancing the employability of students (Münch & Hoch 2013).

<sup>7</sup> The country of origin of a tertiary student in UNESCO’s definition above is the country in which they gained their upper secondary qualifications and foreign students are defined as those who do not have citizenship in the destination (host) country. Excluded from the data collection for internationally mobile students are exchange students, and those without physical movement across national borders, such as studying in distance learning programmes and International branch campuses .

<sup>8</sup> *“An internationally mobile student is an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two Member States with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin.” (UNESCO, 2015).*

<sup>9</sup> Information taken from analysis of UNESCO data taken from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>.

Commensurate with this increase in international students from 2000 to 2018, policymakers across the world have placed a greater emphasis on international student mobility when developing higher education systems at both the national and regional level. The British Council has produced a series of reports over the 2010s looking at policy frameworks related to international higher education in 50 countries. These reports find that attention placed on international higher education is increasing and that those countries which develop more supportive policy frameworks are rewarded with greater levels of inbound student mobility (Ilieava and Peak 2016, Atherton 2018 et al 2018, Ilieava et al 2019). There is also evidence that Asian students may be increasingly interested in studying in Asia rather than in the west (QS 2019).

At the regional level, there is also evidence of how policy can drive student mobility. Such focus has itself helped drive increases in student mobility. The most obvious example of this work has been in the European Union. The single Erasmus scholarship programme was introduced in Europe as far back as the late 1980s (European Commission 2019). The Erasmus programme sits alongside the benefits of visa free travel for the majority of European residents which students benefit from and concerted efforts to produce greater harmonisation in HE since the late 1990s through the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The result is that of the approximately 1.6 million students studying abroad in 2016, more than 40% come from Europe itself (European Commission 2019). In Europe, over 2 million students participated in the Erasmus higher education student exchange programme between 2014 and 2018. Evaluation of impact of the programme indicated that *'Nine in ten students report gains in adaptability, ability to collaborate with people from different cultures, communication skills and problem-solving skills and more than half improved their digital skills'* (European Commission 2019).

However, forecasts suggest that over this decade international student mobility while continuing to rise will do so more slowly. Research undertaken by the British Council in 2018 suggests that growth in outbound mobility of international students is predicted to slow from 5.7% on average from 2000 to 2015 to 1.7% annually through the 2020s to 2027 (British Council 2018). The impact of COVID-19 on this project trajectory is uncertain but it could certainly revise it further downwards.

There are also concerns from some that the broader geo-political environment in the later 2010s poses challenges for the internationalisation of higher education and hence student mobility. The shift to the political right in certain high profile countries with large HE systems combined with the strengthening of domestic provision in others suggests for some the need to revise what internationalisation in HE means, and look for new models that combine domestic and international provision differently (Altbach, & De Wit 2018).

Recent work looking at the preferences of students across the world also points to the need for policymakers to create environments where the higher education

offer overall can develop and change. Research released in 2019 looking at global learner attitudes showed that over 50% of respondents felt that the education system was failing the current generation (Pearson 2019). COVID-19 has only intensified this debate about the future of international education (The Boston Centre for International Higher Education 2020).

## **1.2 International higher education in the ASEAN region**

As a region, ASEAN has nearly 20 million higher education students and over 7000 HEIs (Atherton et al 2018) . The evidence suggests that overall ASEAN Member States are well positioned where international higher education is concerned. When compared to countries across the world in terms of national policy frameworks that enable internationalisation in 2018, the majority of ASEAN Member States performed strongly (Atherton et al 2018). There was evidence of pro-active commitment to building international collaborations and a range of national strategies that prioritised greater international student mobility.

In addition, the geo-political threats to international student mobility discussed above may make studying in the region more attractive. The reductions in student mobility forecast above are based on overall global performance and not ASEAN Member States, and the numbers of students overall is predicted to increase significantly, especially in Asia. East Asia & the Pacific has the highest number of students of any region in the world and is expected to increase to 148.8 million by 2030 and 257.6 million by 2040 (Calderon 2018). At least three Southeast Asian Member States– Indonesia, Malaysia, and Viet Nam – are expected to be in the top 20 in the world in terms of the number of university student enrolment by 2030 (Calderon, 2012).

## **1.3 ASEAN Policy Context and international higher education**

The commitments to international higher education identified at national level in the British Council research described above is mirrored at ASEAN level. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 (ASEAN 2016a) adopted in end of 2015 advocates the promotion of “*an innovative ASEAN approach to higher education’ which will ‘promote greater people-to-people interaction and mobility within and outside ASEAN’ leading to ‘the free flow of ideas, knowledge, expertise and skills to inject dynamism within the region’.* (ASEAN 2016a:19). This Blueprint is part of the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together (ASEAN 2015) comprising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the three ASEAN Community Blueprints.

The ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 includes a priority area entitled ‘Advancing ASEAN Studies Programme and courses at higher education level through online and cross-border mobility’ which includes 13 different actions. It also includes, under a separate priority area, the conceptualisation of a single branded scholarship which is examined in this study.

<sup>10</sup>Data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics and ASEAN Member States analysed for Atherton, G, et al (2018) *The Shape of Global Higher Education: Understanding the ASEAN region*, London: British Council

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 (ASEAN 2016b) which focuses on physical, institutional and people-to people linkages also contains an explicit strategic objective to ‘increase the number of intra-ASEAN international students’ (ASEAN 2016b:63).

## **1.4 The focus of this study**

However, if the opportunities described above are to be realised then a strong set of interlocking and complementary strategies to support international student mobility in ASEAN need to be in place. This study focuses on three key areas which shape the level and nature of international student mobility in any region. In each area, it looks at the evidence regarding the present situation and where/how progress could be made. It has been produced via a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of secondary data and reports related to international student mobility inside and outside the ASEAN region and a wide ranging consultation exercise. Two types of online surveys were developed and administered to important stakeholders of higher education in each ASEAN Member State. The first survey was answered by senior officials at relevant ministerial bodies or offices in each ASEAN Member State through the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education and the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee. The second survey was targeted for senior higher education leaders and international officers from HEIs in each country in the region. These surveys are included in Appendix 1. These surveys were supported by a number of individual and group consultation exercises.

The first subject to be examined is the data available on flows of international students within ASEAN and how it is collected. Understanding what data is available and how to improve the collection of such data is crucial. It provides the platform for policymakers to focus their actions and potentially could also assist in incentivising students to study in the region. However, data collection requires infrastructure, expertise and collective discussion on what should be collected, how, why and when. Extensive assessment of the existing data landscape has been undertaken to inform this section of the study, looking at data collected across all ASEAN Member States.

The second subject which the study focuses on is the administration and provision of student visas across ASEAN. Establishing appropriate visa arrangements is a necessity to facilitate student mobility. This section looks at the nature of visa provision for students across ASEAN drawing on the official information regarding this provision as well as the views of students. It looks in particular at the potential for visa arrangements to be a driver of increased student mobility within ASEAN.

The third and final subject examined is scholarship provision and specifically the case for a single student mobility scholarship in ASEAN. Affordability is obviously central to enabling student mobility, but how when there is finite resources mobility opportunity can be maximised is a complex policy challenge. There are a range of existing scholarship programmes in the region, some of which operate across a number of ASEAN Member States and others focus on students from one ASEAN

Member State. This section of the study maps existing provision before examining what potential options there may be to build a 'single branded scholarship' for ASEAN.

Following these three chapters which look in turn at the data on student mobility in the region, visa arrangements for students and the potential for ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship, the final section outlines how the recommendations from these chapters could be taken forward.

## **1.5 The production and commissioning of the study**

The report is commissioned by the European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN region programme (SHARE). These studies support one of the priority areas in the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 and MPAC 2025 Initiative 15 (Support Higher Education Exchange across ASEAN Member States). This activity is also part of the ongoing support of EU SHARE to ASEAN.

The study is produced by a team of experts in the international student mobility field led through the Centre for Higher Education Research (CHER) at Sunway University, Kuala Lumpur.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding student mobility data in ASEAN**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Data should be at the centre of effective policy making. To enhance international student mobility in ASEAN, it is crucial that key stakeholders working in ASEAN and individual Member States have the most complete data available on the nature of this mobility. Chapter 2 aims to construct as comprehensive a picture as possible of the data available on student mobility across the region, and to examine how the collection of such data could be enhanced.

### **2.2 International Student Mobility: the present picture**

Globally, the collection of accurate international student mobility data is a challenging task. While there is data on the overall numbers of international students across the world, this data is approximate with the level of detail and its availability varying hugely between countries. It is only for the countries with the highest numbers of international students i.e. the US, UK and Australia in particular that data by higher education institution (HEI), course and characteristics such as gender is readily available and publicly disseminated. One of the major reasons for the variability in data availability is that it is relatively recently that a common definition of the 'international student' had been established. The common definition stated in Section 1 was only agreed in 2015 by the three international bodies with the major responsibility for the collection of data on student mobility.

Alongside issues of definition are the extent to which different countries have centralised and systematic processes in place to collect data on international students either entering the country to study, or going to study in other countries. These differences in definition and capacity are exacerbated by broader differences in the structures of countries' education systems, with the terms 'higher education' and 'tertiary education' not standardised in data collection (Guhr & Furtado 2014).

#### **2.2.1 The UNESCO Information Service (UIS)**

Acknowledging the challenges described above, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) undertakes systematic efforts to collect information on international student flows globally. They provide data on international student inbound and outbound flows for more than 100 countries which is updated on annual basis and easily available from their online portal (Migration Data Portal n.d.). In doing this, they work with the other major agencies who collect educational performance data internationally in particular the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat. UNESCO UIS gathers data annually from countries with regard to international student mobility via 2 major surveys (Migration Data Portal n.d.):

## 2.2.2 UOE Survey of Formal Education

The UOE Survey of Formal Education is the main survey which provides relatively detailed data on formal education, public and private, at all levels of education, involving around 50 countries around the world (UIS 2019). UNESCO-UIS, the OECD and Eurostat have jointly administered the annual data collection through this survey since 1993. Given the engagement of OECD and Eurostat the countries who report data are mainly from high- and middle income countries who are logically members or partner countries of the OECD or Eurostat. The objective of this survey is:

*“to provide internationally comparable data (mostly at national level, with some insights at the subnational level) on key aspects of formal education systems, specifically on the participation and completion of education programmes, as well as the cost and type of resources dedicated to education”* (Eurostat 2016).

## 2.2.3 UIS Survey of Formal Education

The UIS Survey of Formal Education is completed by countries who are not participating in the UOE Survey. It is a subset of the UOE and hence contains overall less questions and less detail where international student mobility is concerned. There are approximately 150 countries who are completing the UIS Survey of Formal Education and this includes all ASEAN Member States (Eurostat 2016).

## 2.2.4 UIS and inbound and outbound data

The actual data collected by UIS via both surveys covers ‘inbound’ and ‘outbound’ students.,

- **Inbound students** are those who are studying in a particular country who have come from another country.
- **Outbound students** are those who go to study in another country from their origin country.

Consistent with the UIS definition of international students, exchange students are excluded from the data here. Inbound data is seen by UIS as the most accurate data. It is the data that is actually reported by host countries. On the other hand, outbound mobility data is an estimate by UIS where they add together the number of international students from the same country of origin in all host countries using the reported data. There is not an actual reporting line into UIS for outbound students in the surveys described above.

The accuracy of data reported by UIS depends on how each country chooses to report its data. There are substantial differences with self-reporting from certain Member States– for the reasons outlined above. Thus caution is required in comparing this data (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2018).

## 2.2.5 Project Atlas

Alongside the work of UNESCO, the other major international organisation active in

the specific field of international student mobility data collection which includes ASEAN Member States is the Institute of International Education (IEE)'s Project Atlas. The IEE is a US-based organisation set up over 100 years ago as an 'advocate for international exchange'. Via its Project Atlas, the IEE collects information on international student mobility from its 29 partner countries who join the project as members. Being members enables them to participate in dialogues with other countries on how to collect data, what it shows, the implications of it for wider internationalisation issues and other forms of collaborative research. These partner countries include two ASEAN Member States i.e. Malaysia and the Philippines. The aim of Project Atlas is to be a:

*'global research initiative that disseminates comparable student mobility data, conducts studies on academic migration and the internationalization of higher education, and provides customized workshops and research to strengthen the collection of mobility data around the world'.*

It is important to differentiate Project Atlas data on international student mobility from that collected and published by UNESCO. The data collected by Project Atlas includes those students who are *'under short-term for-credit study and exchange programs that last less than a full academic year'*. These students are not included in the UIS data.

### **2.2.6 Data from the Working Group on Student Mobility and Quality Assurance of Higher Education among ASEAN Plus Three Countries**

Attempts are being made within the ASEAN region to collect data on international student mobility as well in a systematic way. The Working Group on Student Mobility and Quality Assurance of Higher Education among ASEAN Plus Three Countries (APTWG) was established in 2013 as *'an intergovernmental meeting under the ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers Meeting'*. It is comprised of all ASEAN Member States, the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The group meets regularly to support co-operation in international higher education in the region. Since 2017, the ASEAN Plus Three countries have been reporting data on international student mobility to the APTWG. The results of this exercise are outlined in section 2.6.

## **2.3 Methodology**

In order to establish levels of international student mobility in ASEAN and how it is collected, the UIS dataset is the main source of information used in this study. In addition, a systematic review of other online resources was performed and the responses to the Study surveys described in chapter 1 examined. This section will firstly outline what is known about outbound and inbound student mobility in ASEAN. It will then examine how data is collected and used in particular ASEAN Member States before discussing how the collection of this data could be improved. In looking at how data could be collected, it will establish a common theme through the study: the case for a co-ordinated and coherent approach to enhancing student mobility in ASEAN.



## 2.4 Examining the data on outbound students

The available data shows clearly the significant differences between ASEAN Member States in the region where the numbers of outbound mobile international students are concerned. It is important to emphasise that for both outbound and inbound data, UIS information only looks at the overall number of students – it does not provide any information at a more granular level such as gender, undergraduate/postgraduate etc. Table 3 shows how the number of outbound students from each ASEAN Member State both studying outside and inside ASEAN differs. It also shows how these numbers compare to the total enrolment in tertiary education in different ASEAN Member States. In column three there is the total number of outbound students. The number of outbound students in column four is a subset of the total number of in column three.

**Table 3: Numbers of outbound students in the ASEAN region 2018**

	Country	Total no outbound students globally (UIS n.d.)	number of outbound students intra-ASEAN (UIS n.d.)	Total enrolment in tertiary education (UIS n.d.)	% of total enrolled students who outbound to all countries	% of total enrolled students who are outbound in ASEAN
1	Brunei Darussalam	3,315	1,023	11,593	28.59	8.82
2	Cambodia	5,928	1,784	207,603	2.86	
3	Indonesia	47,574	10,830	7,944,099	0.60	0.14
4	Lao PDR	5,064	4,024	111,411	4.55	
5	Malaysia	63,253	2,104	1,248,927	5.06	0.17
6	Myanmar	8,965	2,469	771,321	1.16	
7	Philippines	17,197	702	3,589,484	0.48	0.02
8	Singapore	23,715	971	194,615	12.19	
9	Thailand	32,119	2,554	2,410,713 (2016)	1.33	0.11
10	Viet Nam	94,662	1,872	2,307,361 (2016)	4.10	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>301,792</b>	<b>28,333</b>	<b>18,797,127</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>0.15</b>

In terms of the total number of outbound students, Viet Nam has the highest number, followed by Malaysia and Indonesia. There are then two clusters of countries. For Singapore, Thailand and Philippines, the number ranges from just over 17,000 to over 32,000. In the second cluster are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar who all have less than 10,000 outbound students.

The numbers of outbound student from ASEAN Member States studying in other ASEAN Member States compared to those who study outside ASEAN is small overall. While detailed exploration of the reasons students prefer to study outside ASEAN is not the focus of this Study, available evidence looking at the flows of students from Asia suggest that the prestige and reputation of established western systems is important (Bhandari, R., Blumenthal, P. (Eds) 2011).

As one of the students interviewed for the Study stated:

*'Most of the Cambodian students want to go to Korea, Japan, China, USA. ASEAN Member States are only in second tier of choices, it is not very appreciated to study in the region.'*

What is particularly noticeable is that, with the exception of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, the % of outbound students as a % of the overall total enrolment in tertiary education is less than 10%. In the case of Viet Nam for example, while there may be nearly 100,000 students who are outbound studying in other countries, this is still less than 5% of all students in the country. In total, intra-ASEAN mobility only contributed 8.6% of the total outbound mobility of higher education students from the ASEAN region.

The numbers of outbound students who study in ASEAN when compared to the overall numbers of outbound students is small. Of the total number of 301,792 outbound students only 28,333 student in ASEAN. But as Figure 1 shows the numbers of ASEAN outbound students as a proportion of all outbound students does vary across ASEAN Member States.

**Figure 1: Ratio of global: intra ASEAN mobility**

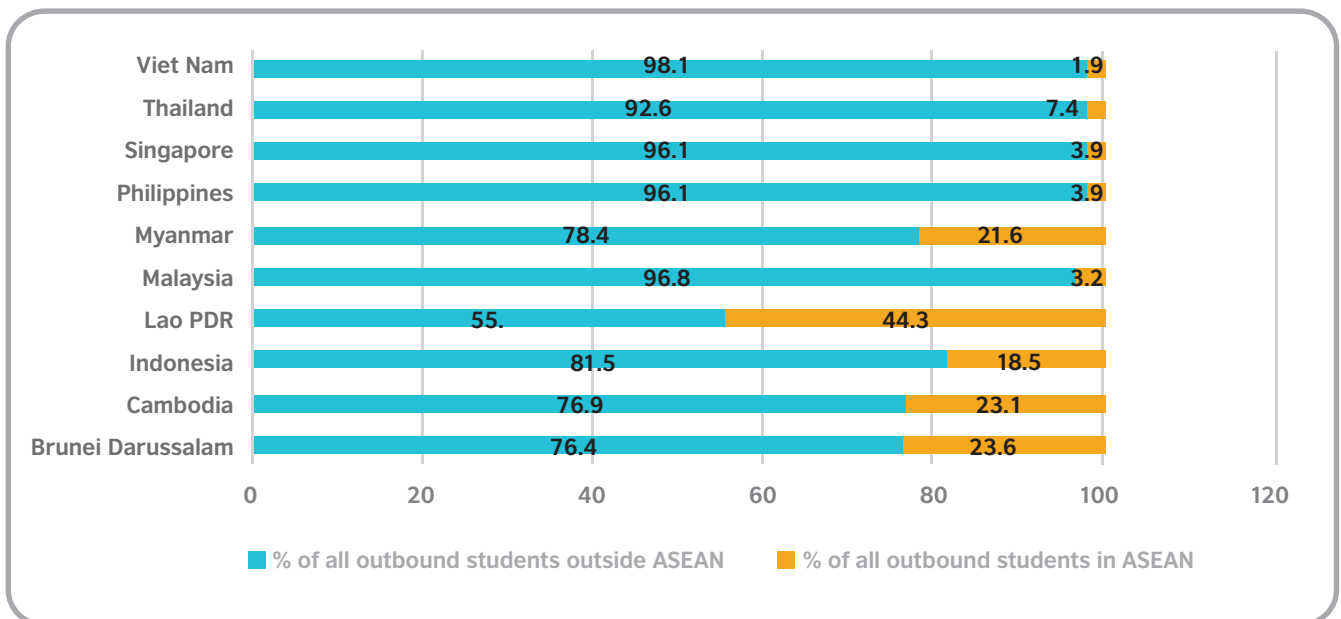
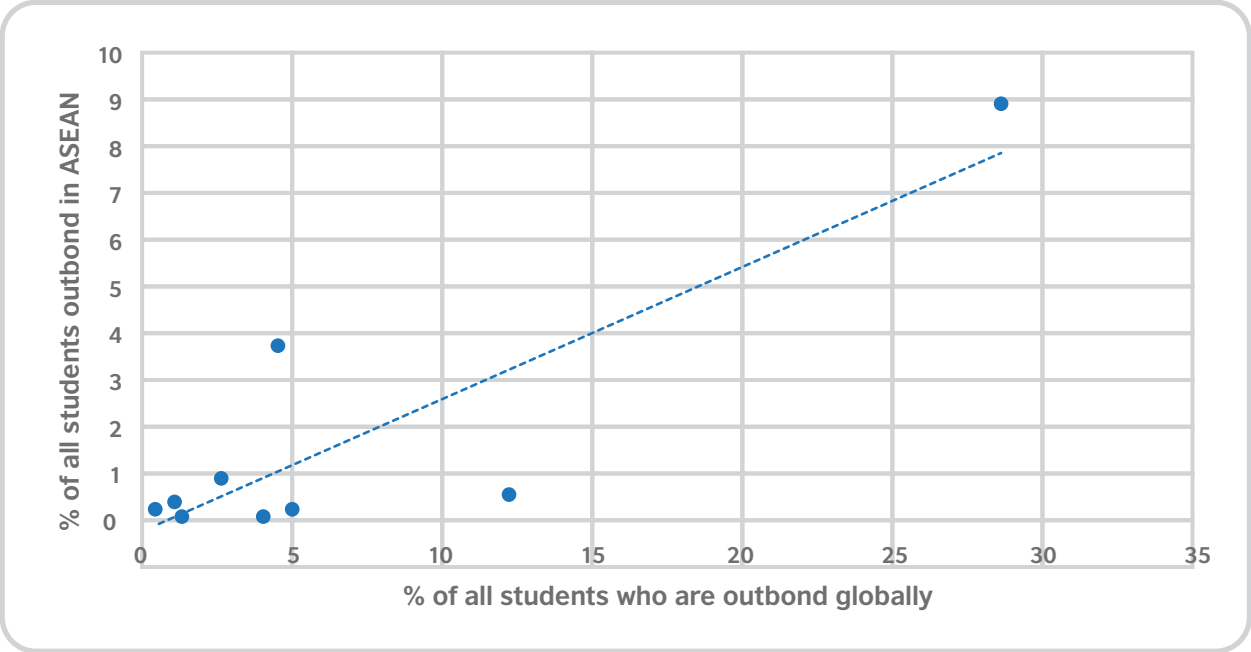


Figure 2 below shows the relationship between all the % of total outbound enrolled students and the % of outbound enrolled students who go to ASEAN Member States. There is a positive relationship between these two forms of outbound mobility. Given that one is a subset of the other this should not perhaps be a surprise, but such a relationship is not necessarily a given either.

**Figure 2: The relationship between outbound mobility to all Member States and intra-ASEAN outbound mobility**



**2.4.1 Trends in numbers of outbound mobile students in ASEAN over time**

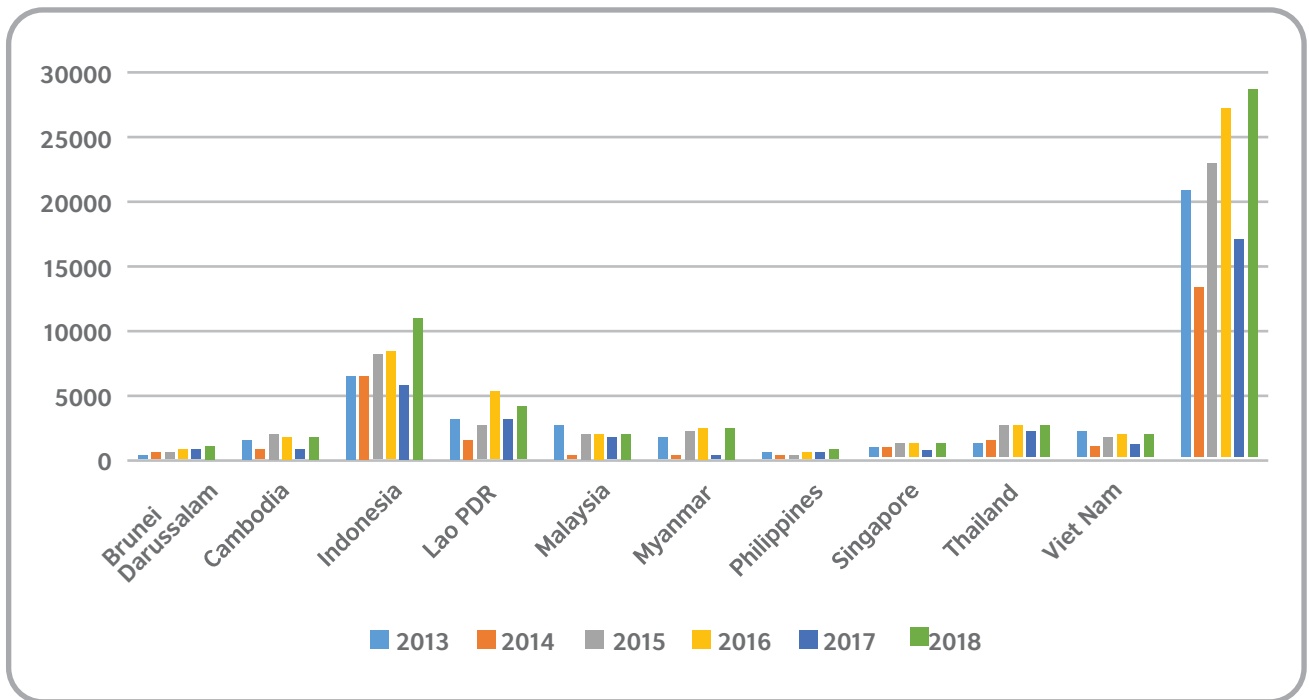
The differences between ASEAN Member States in terms of the numbers of students identified in Table 3 are significant. Table 4 indicates the number of outbound students moving from ASEAN Member States to other countries around the world and within ASEAN from 2013 to 2018.

**Table 4: Numbers of outbound students from ASEAN Member States from 2013 - 2018 studying intra-ASEAN**

Country	Year					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Brunei Darussalam	309	5,37	665	805	852	1,023
Cambodia	1,468	748	1,907	1,829	772	1,784
Indonesia	6,579	6,575	8,071	8,465	5,872	10,830
Lao PDR	3,184	1,500	2,645	5,300	3,131	4,024
Malaysia	2,766	93	1,970	2,007	1,774	2,104
Myanmar	1,833	431	2,168	2,434	438	2,469
Philippines	507	291	353	675	477	702
Singapore	855	811	973	1,048	586	971
Thailand	1,036	1,241	2,471	2,478	1,997	2,554
Viet Nam	2,003	858	1,542	1,811	965	1,872
<b>total</b>	<b>20,540</b>	<b>13,058</b>	<b>22,765</b>	<b>26,852</b>	<b>16,864</b>	<b>28,333</b>

The information in Table 4 is also outlined in Figure 3 below. The overall numbers of students fluctuate over this period but show an overall increase of approximately 40%. Looking at the sources of fluctuation however, some ASEAN Member States in particular Myanmar, Cambodia, Singapore and Viet Nam have seen some large year-on-year swings in numbers. The reasons for these shifts need further exploration. The size of the shift in numbers, particularly from 2013 to 2014 and then to 2015 is very large. One area to explore would be the accuracy of the data whenever changes of such a magnitude are observed.

**Figure 3: Outbound mobility by ASEAN Member States 2013-2018**

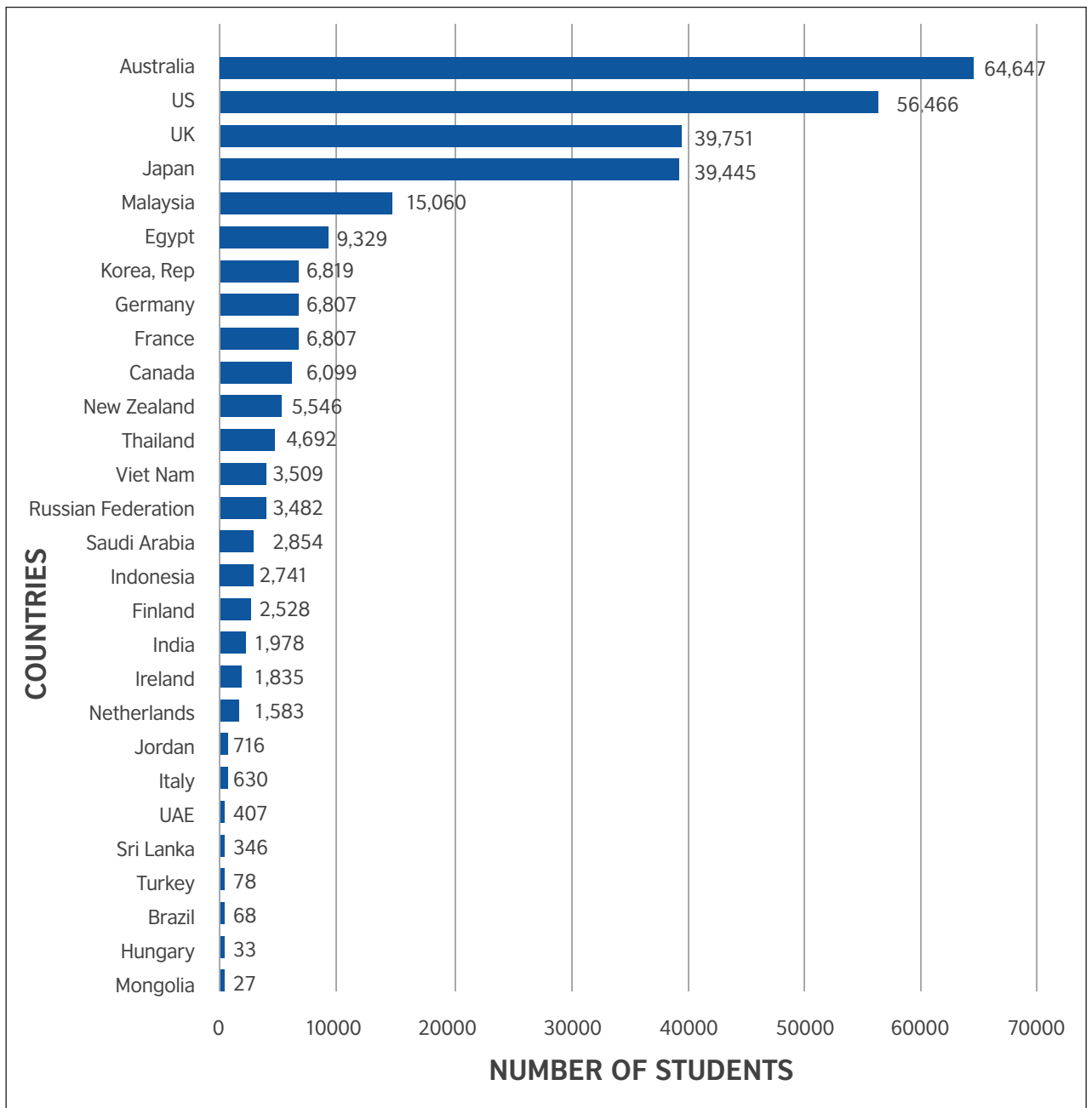


\*Based on data obtained from UNESCO UIS Statistics (UIS n.d.)

### 2.4.2 The destinations of outbound mobile students

In terms of where students from ASEAN go to study, as Figure 4 shows, three countries long established as leading global destinations for international students dominate. Australia is the leading study destination for students from ASEAN, followed by the US and UK. These three countries are followed by Japan which has been active in developing partnerships across ASEAN which can enable student mobility (ICEF Monitor 2017). Over 70% of students from ASEAN who go to study in another country do so in one of these four countries. Outside of these four countries Malaysia is the most popular destination for international students from other ASEAN Member States. The relatively high number of students entering Malaysia is likely to reflect the strong focus on internationalisation in the country. Recent work undertaken by the British Council placed Malaysia amongst the leading countries globally in terms of policy frameworks conducive to for international higher education (Atherton et al. 2018). In terms of other ASEAN Member States, several others featured in Figure 4 and whilst the number of mobile students is relatively low compared to the top 4 countries, Thailand, Viet Nam and Indonesia compare well with countries which have well-developed higher education systems such as Canada, Germany and France for example.

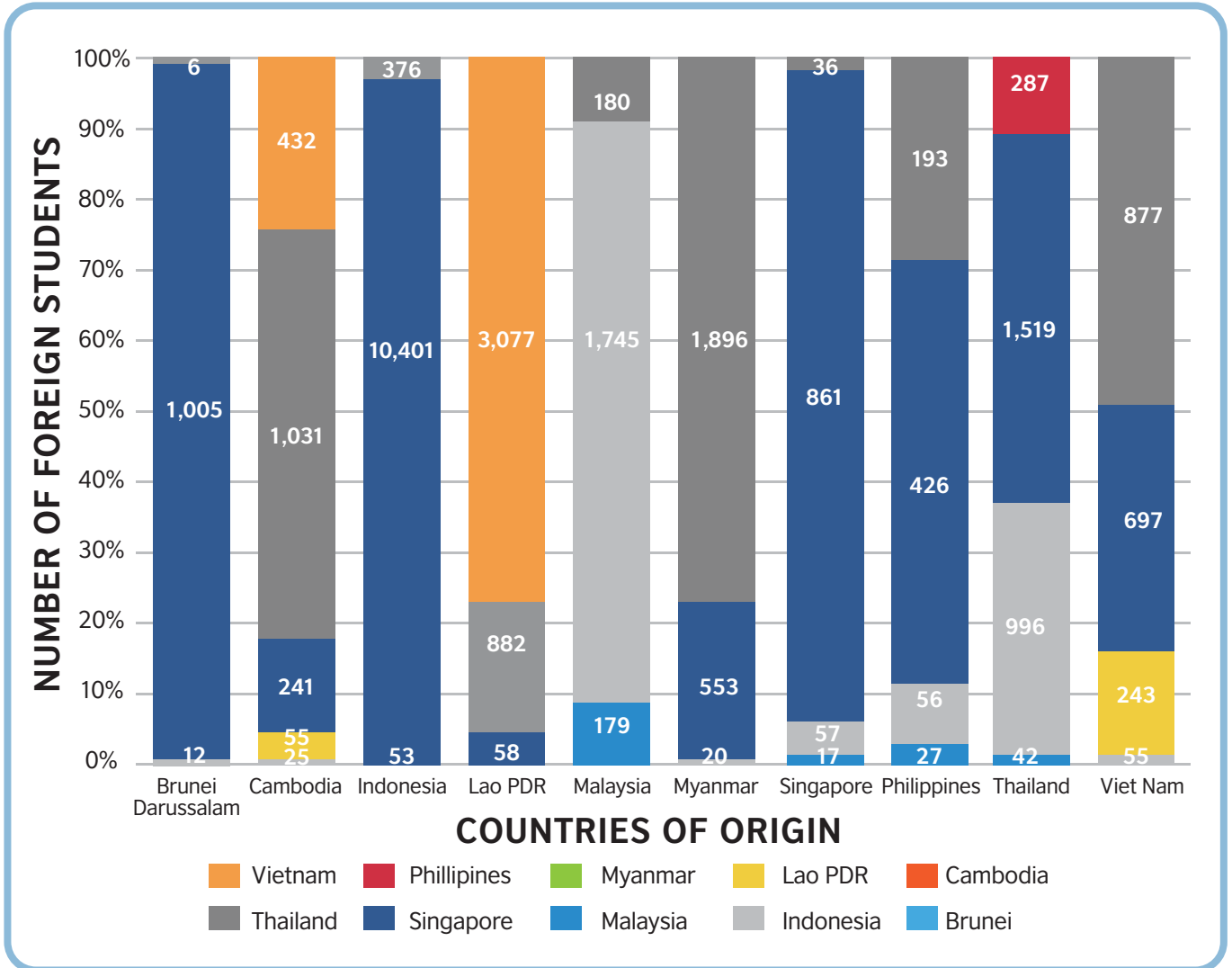
**Figure 4. Countries of destination for outbound students from ASEAN Member States 2017 (as compiled from UIS n.d.).**



In Figure 5 below, a more detailed examination of mobility within the region is attempted. It shows which ASEAN Member States outbound students from other ASEAN Member States go to. It shows that for Brunei Darussalam, for example, virtually all their students from other ASEAN Member States (all with the exception of 18) come from Malaysia. Indonesia, again admits virtually almost all of its ASEAN students come from Malaysia. While for Lao PDR the majority of students come from Viet Nam. Indeed every country with the exception of Viet Nam has one country from which they obtain the majority of their ASEAN based international students. Even for Viet Nam it is split across its neighbouring countries: Lao PDR

and Cambodia (Trines 2017). As for Thailand, students mostly went to study in Malaysia and Indonesia, while the top study destination for Myanmar’s students was Thailand.

**Figure 5: Destination countries in ASEAN for Intra-ASEAN Outbound Students**



## 2.5 Examining the data on inbound international students

The data available on inbound international student mobility is not available for as many ASEAN Member States as that on the outbound mobility of students. The available data from UNESCO also varies in date with for some ASEAN Member States the latest information coming from 2018, while for some it is only available from the years 2016 or 2017. What data is available is shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Number of inbound mobile students in the ASEAN Member States from 2016-2018**

	Country	Total inbound students globally (2016-18) (UIS n.d.)	Total number of inbound students intra-ASEAN (2016-18) (UIS n.d.)	Total enrolment in tertiary education (2017) (UIS)	Total enrolment in tertiary education (2017) (UIS)	% of total enrolled students who are mobile intra ASEAN
1	Brunei Darussalam	500 (2018)	318 (2018)	11,593	4.31	2.74
2	Cambodia	N/A	N/A	207,603	-	-
3	Indonesia	7,677 (2018)	2,974 (2018)	7,944,099	0.10	0.04
4	Lao PDR	495 (2018)	298 (2018)	111,411	0.44	0.27
5	Malaysia	122,823 (2018)	15,757 (2018)	1,248,927	9.83	1.26
6	Myanmar	Total inbound students in 134 HEIs under MOE: 425 (2017/18), 459 (2018/19) <sup>11</sup>	N/A(2016)	771,321	0.06	-
7	Philippines	14,132 (2017) <sup>12</sup>	N/A	3,589,484	0.39	-
8	Singapore	53,204 (2017)	N/A	194,615	27.34	-
9	Thailand	31,571 (2016)	5,477 (2016)	2,410,713 (2016)	1.31	0.23
10	Viet Nam	4,162 (2017)	3,509 (2017)	2,307,361 (2016)	0.18	0.15
	<b>Total*</b>	<b>235,023</b>	<b>28,333</b>	<b>18,797,127</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>0.15</b>

In Table 5 data has also been included from the survey undertaken as part of this Study. Taken together, the data shows that there were around 235,000 international students studying in ASEAN Member States. Comparing this data to the number of outbound students from Table 3, which was just over 300,000, it appears that ASEAN is an exporter of international students.

<sup>11</sup> Based on the finding from the survey “Survey on Enhancing Intra ASEAN Student Mobility”

<sup>12</sup> Based on the finding from the survey “Survey on Enhancing Intra ASEAN Student Mobility” (CHED)



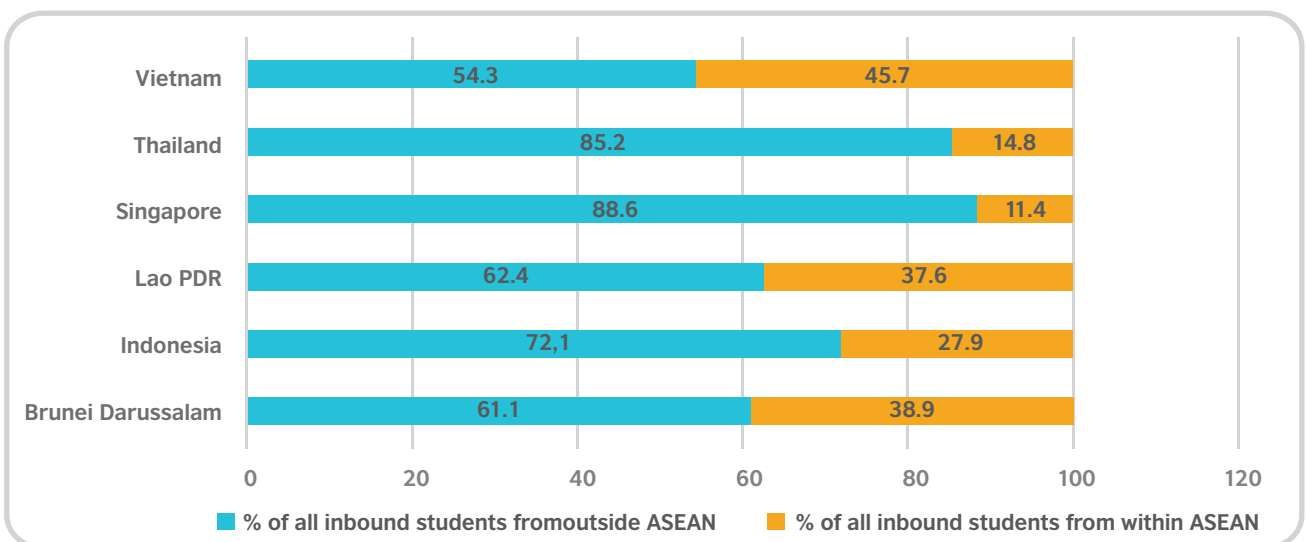
The imbalances between Member States in terms of inbound students is even more pronounced than those that existed with regard to outbound students. Malaysia is leading others with by far the highest number of inbound students in 2018. Over 50% of students studying in the region are doing so in Malaysia. This is followed by Singapore and Thailand, with 53,204 (2017) and 31,571 (2017) inbound students respectively. In contrast, Brunei Darussalam and Lao PDR have less than 1,000 students combined together. As for intra-ASEAN mobility, there were 28,333 students from ASEAN Member States studying inside the region. Malaysia hosted the highest number of ASEAN students, followed by Thailand.

As with outbound mobility, global inbound mobility i.e. students entering from outside ASEAN is far more common than intra-ASEAN inbound mobility. In total, intra-ASEAN mobility only contributed 13.5% of total inbound mobility in the region. The data available in terms of intra ASEAN mobility here is less than complete – only covering 6 countries.

Looking at the final two columns in Table 5 demonstrates that the level of inbound international mobility in the context of the ASEAN higher education system overall is very small. In Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, international students represent less than 0.5% of the total student body. In a similar way as to how the low outbound mobility levels present a challenge to policy-maker engagement, low inbound levels are an issue for HEI engagement. If they only have a small number of international students, it will be difficult for them to prioritise this area in terms of data collection, student support etc.

Figure 6 shows the relationship between the number of inbound students who come from ASEAN Member States and countries outside ASEAN

**Figure 6: Inbound students from outside ASEAN and inbound students from within ASEAN**



Intra-ASEAN mobility is highest for Viet Nam, Brunei Darussalam, and Lao PDR. The two countries with the lowest numbers of inbound students from other ASEAN Member States are Malaysia and Thailand. They also however, have the highest number of students from the ASEAN region with Malaysia welcoming 15,727 students and Thailand 5,477 students respectively.

However, Figure 6 shows that overall for the Member States where there is data, intra-ASEAN mobility represents a larger share of overall mobility where inbound students are concerned than it did for outbound students.

### 2.5.1 Trends in numbers of inbound mobile international students

Table 6 below illustrates inbound student mobility occurring within ASEAN from 2013 to 2018. It indicates that the inbound trends are quite consistent in all countries, except for Malaysia where there have been greater fluctuations in numbers of inbound students from other ASEAN Member States. The overall increase in inbound students at approximately 10% is lower than the increase in outbound students over the same time period which was approximately 40%.

**Table 6: Numbers of outbound students from ASEAN Member States from 2013 - 2018 studying intra-ASEAN**

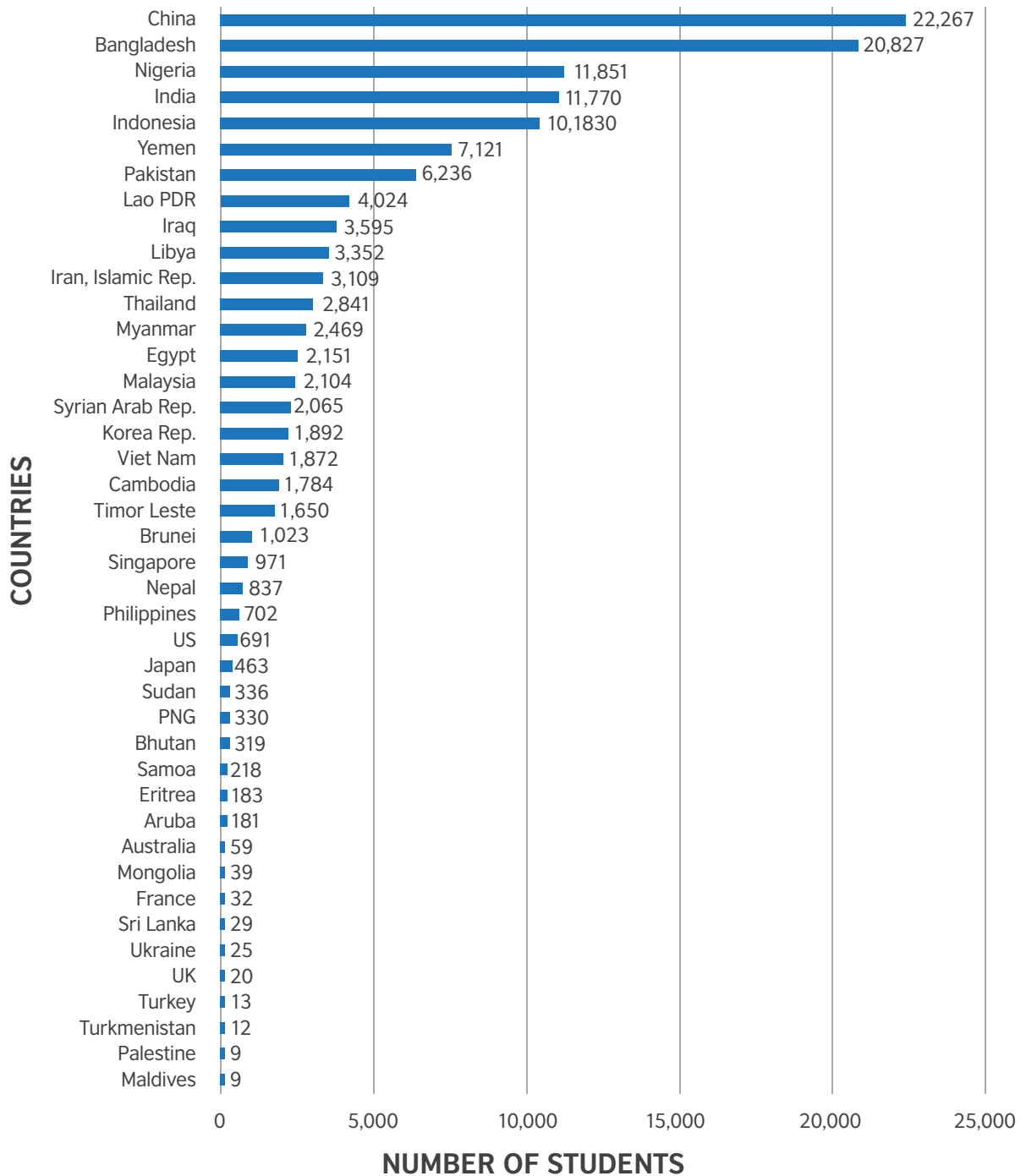
Country	Year					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Brunei Darussalam	3198	197	271	213	260	322
Indonesia	2,623	N/A	3,016	3,008	2,974	2,974
Lao PDR	262	378	184	273	279	299
Malaysia	9,394	10,569	12,158	13,101	9,843	15,757
Myanmar	8	N/A	71	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thailand	5,787	N/A	4,896	5,477	N/A	N/A
Viet Nam	2,254	1,886	2,160	4,787	3,513	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,526</b>	<b>13,050</b>	<b>22,767</b>	<b>22,768</b>	<b>22,769</b>	<b>22,770</b>

## 2.5.2 The origins of inbound students

The data on destinations of outbound students from ASEAN described above reflected the traditional dominance of certain countries as importers of international students. A detailed look at the data on who comes to study in ASEAN reflects the importance of certain countries as exporters of students, but also features some countries who do not fit this profile. Figure 7 indicates the top countries of origin for international students studying in ASEAN Member States in 2017. It is not surprising to see China as the country from which the most students come to study in ASEAN. China by far remains the world's leading source of international students for other nations (ICEF Monitor 2018). India also features highly in Figure 7. In terms of global student numbers, India is second behind China in the number of students who go to study abroad. However, there are also several countries from where students come to study in the ASEAN region at relatively high levels, but who overall do not feature as leading countries in terms of overall outbound international student numbers. For example Bangladesh, Nigeria and Yemen; the majority of their international students come to study in the ASEAN region. Of ASEAN Member States, Indonesia and Lao PDR feature relatively highly in Figure 7 below.

As with the patterns of intra-ASEAN outbound mobility, bilateral flows underpin some of the key findings from Figure 7. Bangladesh is a country where the number of students studying abroad has been growing. There were almost three times as many Bangladeshi students studying abroad in 2013, compared to 2010 (QS n.d.). However, those Bangladeshi students studying in ASEAN are all studying in Malaysia in 2017, with the exception of 16 who are studying in Brunei Darussalam. This is also the case for those students from Nigeria who are all studying in Malaysia and over 90% of those from Pakistan and Yemen. Hence, the relatively high numbers of international students studying in the ASEAN region from these countries are not studying in the 'region' as such, but the vast majority are actually studying in Malaysia.

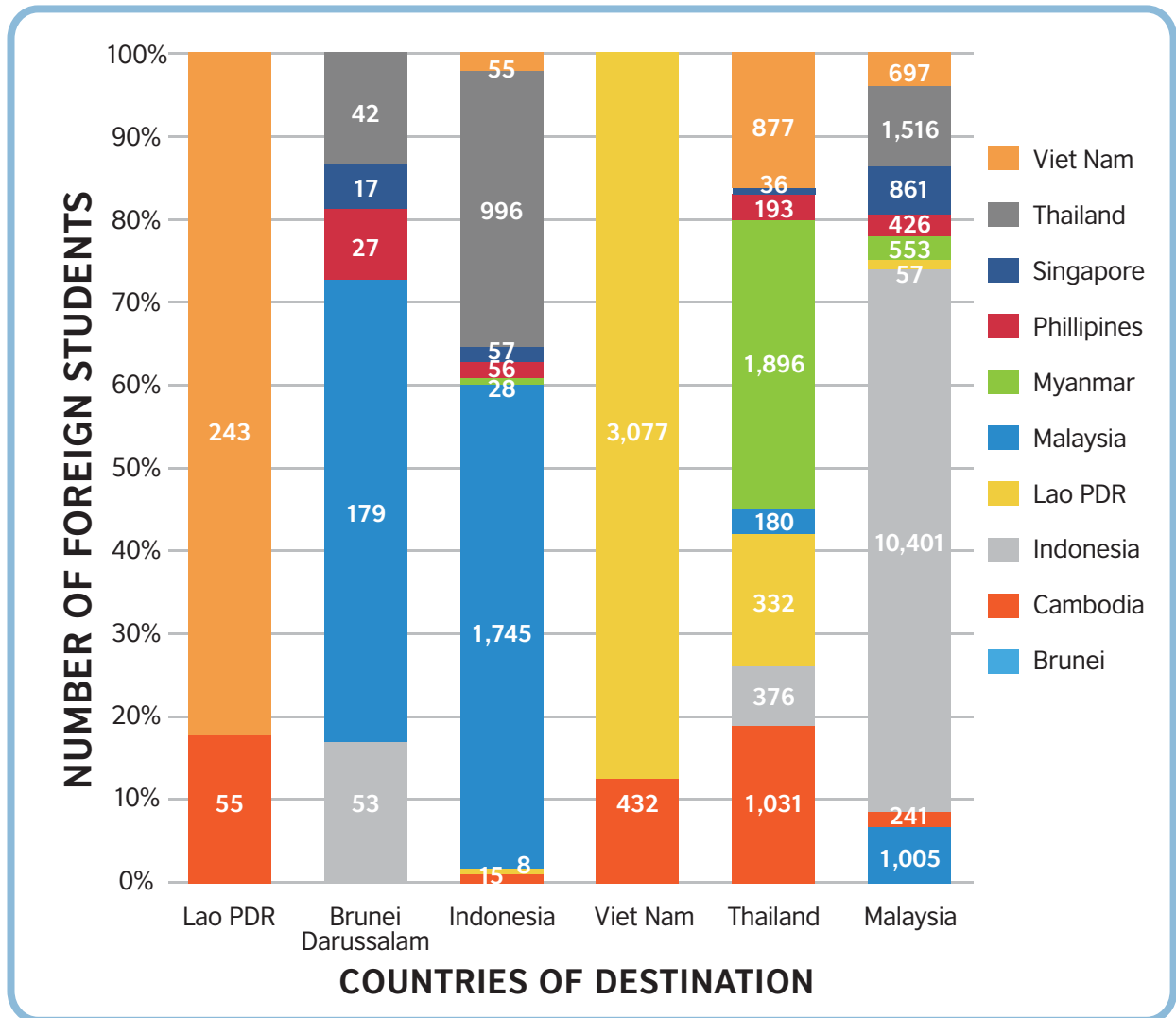
**Figure 7. Countries of Origin for Inbound Students in ASEAN Member States (as compiled from UIS n.d.).**



In terms of inbound intra-ASEAN mobility, Figure 8 again shows the importance of bilateral flows. It shows that there are limitations in terms of the extent to which intra-ASEAN student flows are multi-lateral between countries. Looking at Lao PDR and Viet Nam for example, their students only come from two countries. With Viet Nam the vast majority of their students come from Lao PDR and the vast majority of the students that study in Lao PDR come from Viet Nam. In the case of Malaysia, the majority of these students come from Indonesia. Of the countries

Thailand is the country that has inbound students from the majority of ASEAN Member States. Even in Thailand though around 40% come from Cambodia. It appears then that looking at intra-ASEAN mobility involves understanding a series of bi-lateral country to country relationships.

**Figure 8. Inbound ASEAN students and their country of origin**



## 2.6

### Data from the APTWG

While the data above gives a broad overview of outbound and inbound student mobility patterns in ASEAN, there have also been attempts to collect data within ASEAN itself via the activities of the APTWG. Table 7 shows the data collected so far. The majority of data reported refers to numbers participating in different forms of exchange programme as opposed to total number of mobile students. However, the exact definitions being used as the basis for data collection here differ across countries. For example:

- In Singapore inbound data collected refers to ‘the numbers are students who have participated in exchange programmes (i.e. semester-long exchange programmes and shorter-term programmes (e.g. summer programmes and

shorter-term programmes (e.g. summer programmes and immersion programmes - about 2 weeks), rounded to the nearest 10. Data was collected from the NUS, NTU and SMU as the bulk of exchange programmes reside with them’.

- In Indonesia, inbound data is based on those who have participated in the AIMS programme described in chapter 4.
- In Thailand, the data refers to the number of students under the AIMS Programme and DUO-Thailand Fellowship Programme.

Similar contrasts exist with the collection of outbound data.

Hence the data in Table 7 is not comparable across countries. Neither, in the main can it be compared with that in Tables 3 and 5 for example. However, Viet Nam has provided information on their total number of students and this data provides an interesting contrast with that in Table 3. In Table 3 UIS data estimates outbound mobility at 94,662 in 2018 while in Table 7 below it is at 170,000 in 2019. The latter is clearly as well an estimate but it shows significant variation between the two sets of data. Given that the latter is a direct report, then the assumption would have to be that it is more accurate. This means that the numbers of outbound students from ASEAN is potentially much higher than the figure shown in Table 3 when the data below is taken into account.

**Table 7: ASEAN Plus 3 Working Group on Higher Education Survey Data**

	Countries	Inbound data				Outbound data			
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	Brunei Darussalam			598				862	
2	Cambodia			665	665			499	499
3	Indonesia		147				161		
4	Lao PDR				72				142
5	Malaysia		11,212	127,583			15,550	421	772
6	Myanmar	266	n/a	n/a	459		186		
7	Philippines		7,314		12,787		188b	574	
8	Singapore		5,480	5,320			5230	5,810	
9	Thailand	141	143	132		124	149	129	
10	Viet Nam		13,725		21,057		130,000		170,000

## 2.7 The international student mobility data infrastructure in ASEAN

The following section draws primarily on information collected from ASEAN Member States and HEIs reporting on their data collection practices. It points to the commonalities and contrasts across ASEAN, and where there are practices that could be shared or built upon. How data is collected at the level of ASEAN Member State is examined first.

## 2.7.1 What data is collected?

Table 8 below summarises the responses from the different ASEAN Member States with regard to the actual data that they collect on student mobility. It shows that each country does attempt to collect data, but that in the main it is on scholarship-funded activity which is a small percentage of overall student mobility activity. The data that is collected is to a limited extent collected and analysed by level of study, subject, background of student etc.

**Table 8: The data collected by ASEAN Member States on student mobility**

Country	Information on data collected
Cambodia	The exact number of both inbound/outbound students is not available nor is data by subject disciplines or gender/ethnicity/socio-economic background. Data is only available for students who get the government-funded scholarships and not on students who got scholarship through other Ministries, agencies, or HEIs under a variety of other projects or scholarship schemes.
Indonesia	Outbound data is only available on the number of students under the government funding programmes, but not for self-funded students. For inbound students data is collected for those who have obtained the necessary International Student Study Permit issued by Directorate General of Higher Education allowing information to be collected on level of study, study programme, gender, country of origin, and the type of funding.
Malaysia	Inbound data is available on international student mobility in Malaysia by enrolment of the student, country of origin, level of study and academic programme. For public HEIs and polytechnics) the data of international students are collected by HEIs and submitted to Planning and Policy Coordination Division, MOHE through a data system called 'MyMohes'. For private higher institutions, data of international students are collected by individual HEIs and submitted to a system called eIPTS.
Myanmar	Inbound and outbound data collected across a range of Ministries with some information on gender and level of study.
Philippines	Data is collected on inbound but not outbound mobility, as some of those who study abroad exit the Philippines as a tourist or immigrant but later on enrol in colleges or HEIs in the destination country. Data by different programmes/disciplines is available for inbound students on a full-term degree programme and by gender and ethnicity. In terms of level of study (undergraduate or postgraduate), or credit/not credit based courses data is incomplete and not reliable and only available for government-sponsored/endorsed scholarship programmes.
Thailand	The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) collects overall inbound data from HEI. Overall outbound students data will be collected by the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) covering the number of students granted government scholarship under the supervision of the OCSC. The inbound data is classified by nationalities, gender, age group, level of study, source of fund, institution, country, and field of study.

## 2.7.2 Data infrastructure at the national level

In Table 9 below the different elements of how data is collected, analysed and used at national level is outlined for the ASEAN Member States where information was provided.

**Table 9: The data infrastructure at national level in ASEAN Member States**

Country	Are there data collection agencies?	Are the HEIs obliged to report to central body/ies on student mobility	If centralized data are collected, is this communicated publicly?	Is the data analysed at the central level?	Does such analysis of the data, or outcomes, feed into policy or guidelines?
Cambodia	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Malaysia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Myanmar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Philippines	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Thailand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Viet Nam	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

## 2.7.3 Differences in how data is collected centrally are significant

The establishment of central, specialist bodies at national level to administer student mobility data varies in the region. Some ASEAN Member States such as Indonesia, Cambodia and Malaysia, have a centralised student mobility data collection system. Some Member States have more than one body/ agency to manage the collection of different types of mobility data. Some, namely Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam have one specific body that manages student mobility data. Despite the variation, most Member States make their data available and can be requested from the relevant ministries as in Cambodia and Myanmar, or the official body managing student mobility as in Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. Box 1 describes how data is collected and analysed in Malaysia.

### Box 1. Data collection and analysis in Malaysia

In Malaysia, centralised data collection on student mobility is managed by the Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) under the Ministry of Education (MOE). As the main planning agency of the Ministry of Education, the EPRD is responsible for educational planning, research, evaluation, policy analysis and co-ordination in matters relating to educational policy and its implementation (UNESCO.org n.d.). One of its objectives is to manage, analyse, and document the country's higher education data towards becoming the main source of information resources (MOE 2019).



International student mobility data are available for public viewing in both national and international portals. For instance, the Annual Higher Education Statistics reports are published in the Ministry of Education (MOE)'s portal as well as the Malaysian Government's Public Sector Open Data Portal. The publication of the Quick Facts annual report series is part of the EPRD MOE's continuous effort to provide accurate, up-to-date, and concise statistics on education in this country (EPRD MOE 2018). In addition, the Open Data Portal, was developed by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) in 2014 to serve as an online one-service-center for anyone to access and download the open government data (data.gov.my n.d.). Data on student mobility in Malaysia are also publicly available and accessible from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Portal (UIS).

Five ASEAN Member States, namely Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam, reported that they analyse student mobility data at central level. In Cambodia and Indonesia, data are not analysed at central level.

#### **2.7.4 International student mobility data is important for policy development**

In most countries, student mobility data are used for policy development on higher education such as for strategic planning, allocation of budgets for scholarship, and for strengthening the international higher education agenda as the quotes from several respondents show:

*'The data are used to make policy for the following year and to allocated the budget for scholarship as well as for subsidies for the students exchange programmes.'*

**Indonesia**

*'The analysed data are used to upgrade the system and to feed the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).'*

**Myanmar**

*'We look into the degrees and majors our students have obtained so as to compare it with the prioritized skills and majors.'*

**Cambodia**

*'The data is used for making policy related to student mobility.'*

**Viet Nam**

Box 2 describes how data is used to support policy development in Thailand.

### **Box 2: Use of data for policy development in Thailand**

In Thailand, a unified quality assurance framework has been created to review the performance of Thailand's educational institutions. Since the National Education Act of 1999, when the NEA (Amended in 2002) was promulgated, the quality of education system in this country has been officially evaluated at both internal and external levels. HEIs are required to conduct self-assessment as part of their internal evaluation, and report the results to the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), which is the main body tasked for Thailand's higher education. These annual assessments are based on a framework covering nine areas, including teaching and Learning, student development activities, research, as well as administration and management.

Furthermore, all HEIs are obliged to implement an internal quality assurance system covering the aspects of control, audit, and assessment (The World Bank Group n.d.). In terms of external quality assurance, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established as the agency responsible for overseeing quality reviews of all HEIs in the country at least once every five years. The results of the assessments are shared with relevant agencies and also available to public (The World Bank Group n.d.).

#### **As the survey respondent from the Thailand education ministry stated:**

*'mobility data is used to improve the policy at the Ministry level and also allow Universities to boost their mobility effectively.'*

With the formation of the new Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), i.e. the merging of Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) with the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) since May 2019, MHESI is now specifically tasked with the responsibility for higher education in the country (Nuffic 2019). Under the jurisdiction of MHESI, Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy of the former OHEC will collect and manage overall inbound data in the country.

More recently, the ministry has been working to develop a more strategic approach towards achieving two specific aims: 1) to create an international learning and teaching environment which can benefit all students and staff, not specifically targeting those involved in overseas mobility programmes, and 2) to improve the international preparedness and competitiveness of Thai higher education providers, thus helping to position the country as a higher education hub in the ASEAN region (QAA 2019).

### 2.7.5 Data reporting arrangements vary between Member States

In most ASEAN Member States from which data was collected, HEIs are required to report their student mobility data to the relevant government bodies or ministries. HEIs in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, on the other hand, are not obliged to report their student mobility data. This creates significant challenges:

*'Voluntary reporting creates gaps. As a result, we do not have reliable data, for example, on outbound learners. We also have concerns on the granularity of the data we have.'*

Philippines

### 2.7.6 International student mobility data is not in the main publicly available

The availability of student mobility data for the public varies across ASEAN Member States. Centralised data on student mobility are available for public view in some Member States such as Indonesia and Malaysia. In many countries, however, the availability of the data is limited. For instance, Cambodia and the Philippines do not have online data and use the data for internal purposes only due to certain restrictions and regulations. In the Philippines, student mobility data are not publicly available through any online means. This is because there is a data privacy law to consider. The Philippines' government enacted its privacy law, namely the Data Privacy Act of 2012, otherwise known as Republic Act (RA) 10173, which seeks to protect all forms of individual's personal information and communications systems in both the government and private sectors (Ching et al. 2018).

### 2.7.7 Enablers of international student mobility data collection exist

#### Infographic 2: Enablers of international student mobility data collection exist

Looking at the data collected thus far, there appear to be four emerging factors which can enable better collection and analysis of international student mobility data.



#### Effective use of ICT

In terms of the use of ICT, Cambodia reported that it integrates ICT in its ministry's management system to collect inbound and outbound data, while Malaysia uses a single platform for reporting the number of international students.



#### Networking/communication at official level

Good networking and effective communication between relevant bodies in the ASEAN Member States and HEIs may also support the outcomes of student mobility data collection. For example, as the respondent from the Philippines stated that one of their strengths in terms of data collection was:

*'a centralized system of collection and good working relationship with the Bureau of Immigration.'*



### Human resource and management

In terms of human resource and management, there is a centralised body managing student mobility in the Philippines. In Myanmar, it was reported that gathering and managing inbound student data is easier compared to outbound due to the proper management of students' registration at the HEIs.



### Supportive policies/regulations

Having policies/regulations which underpin and support the collection and production of data in this area were reported by some countries, namely the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, as facilitative at national level. There was also an example of how collection of information related to visa administration can enable the collection of student mobility data. As the respondent from Indonesia stated:

*'According to the Indonesian Immigration Decree, all international students must obtain the International Student Study Permit issued by Directorate General of Higher Education in order to get a Visa and Temporary Staying Permit to enter and stay in Indonesia. Considering the increasing number of international students coming to Indonesian HEIs, the Directorate of Institutional Affairs, who is in charge of issuing the Study Permit, has been structurally managing the International Student Study Permit. This is informing a database of international students in Indonesia based on the level of study, study programme, gender, country of origin, and the type of funding.'*

## 2.8

### Data infrastructure at the university level

Data was collected from 26 HEIs drawn from all of the ASEAN Member States. On the basis of the data collected thus far, the following trends are emerging described below.

#### 2.8.1

### Data collection arrangements vary across HEIs, but central institution-wide arrangements are common

Respondent HEIs in most of the ASEAN Member States either have a specific office (e.g. Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia) or more than one specific office to manage mobility data (e.g. Lao PDR and the Philippines). In Thailand and Viet Nam, the data collection method varies by HEI. These HEIs have either one or more than one specific office to manage student mobility data. Data on student mobility of various categories can be obtained mostly from the international office/s in each HEI in majority of the countries. Respondents from Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and Thailand, did not specify the availability of their student mobility data. Respondent HEIs in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore analyse their student mobility data at central level. By contrast, respondent HEIs in Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam vary in terms of how the data are analysed.

### Box 3. Managing Student Mobility Data

In Universitas Airlangga in Indonesia, the centralised office, Airlangga Global Engagement (AGE), collects the mobility data and presents it in meetings with the top management of the university every three months for internal evaluation purposes. The analysed data are used for supporting the decision-making process by university leaders towards increasing the university ranking and performance. The analysed mobility data are also used for management to measure every faculty's and office's achievement performance.

Universitas Airlangga in Indonesia has a supporting unit called as Airlangga Global Engagement (AGE) which is responsible to initiate, facilitate, as well as to implement partnership and international networking of the university. AGE also manages foreign academician internal affairs and handles centralised data collection on student mobility in the university. The portal is accessible from

<http://international.unair.ac.id/english/index.php>

#### 2.8.2

### Data on international student mobility is important to HEIs

At institutional level, respondent HEIs in some ASEAN Member States, namely, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, use their analysed data for strategic planning and policy development. HEIs in Indonesia and Viet Nam, on the other hand, use their analysed data for promotional purposes. In Lao PDR, analysed data are used internally. Student mobility data may also be used for research and development as in the case of Cambodia (for institutional research needs) and Malaysia (for the analysis of external stakeholders' needs). Respondents from other Member States did not specify how their data are used for research and development. HEIs in Indonesia, Lao PDR and Malaysia feed their student mobility data to central agencies managing student mobility. The Philippines, on the hand, feed their data to an accreditation agency. HEIs in Thailand disseminate their data among themselves.

At institutional level, the faculties/departments in respondent HEIs in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam are not obliged to report student mobility data to their central office. For the respondents from Lao PDR, data are fed directly to the relevant ministries. The government's role is seen in terms of the communication of student mobility data from HEIs to the relevant national bodies/ agencies which handle the data in the case of the Philippines and Thailand. In the Philippines, HEIs who responded submit semester reports on inbound students to a central government body. Other Member States did not specify the rules and regulation regarding student mobility data reporting.

### **2.8.3 Enablers of international student mobility data collection exist at university level**

- **Effective use of ICT**

In terms of ICT use, HEIs in Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam reported that the development of an online system has simplified the process of data collection. HEIs in Malaysia also have a central database to facilitate data collection. In Thailand there is an example of a HEI that has established a data management system that is developed across all campuses of the university. A university in Viet Nam is currently using the online method, i.e. through Google Form, to support data input and export information for reports. Although stages of ICT development for higher education sector vary in this region, respondent HEIs from across ASEAN Member States are increasingly relying on technological tools to address data collection issues.

- **Networking/communication at official level**

Communication is reported to be an enabler for respondent HEIs in Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand. Cambodia, for instance, specified communication between school/faculty and international office as an enabler at university level.

- **Human resource and management**

In terms of human resource management, respondents from Cambodia reported that having sufficient staff to collect and analyse data was particularly important. A respondent from Malaysia mentioned the establishment of a specific office to coordinate and collect data as an enabler.

### **2.9 Enhancing international student mobility data collection – a ‘one region’ approach**

The evidence outlined above illustrates the extent of contrast between Member States and HEIs across the ASEAN region in how they collect, analyse and use international student mobility data. As outlined in section 2.2, the collection of detailed and up-to-date data on international student mobility is a global challenge. Looking at the picture in ASEAN through this section illustrates that these global challenges also exist in ASEAN. These differences imply that there is likely to be contrasting levels of importance placed on international student mobility by policymakers and HEIs across the different economies and education systems in the region. However, even in the context of these differences, it is possible to advance the collection of data on international student mobility in the ASEAN region.

Globally and within ASEAN, where the data collection systems are more robust is usually associated with a well-developed overall international student mobility framework (and high number of inbound & outbound international students) and a mature higher education system. In the UK, for instance, data is collected at individual university level and is reported to an independent non-government body, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). HEIs themselves pay a fee to this agency in order to collect information on all aspects of student entry, progression

and exit for the whole country. Each university has dedicated planning staff whose responsibility it is to collect this information. This information is then collected electronically and publicly available for analysis. In order to deliver this service, however, HESA has an annual income of £9 million. The HESA model might not be replicable at the individual country level in the ASEAN region. This strengthens the case for a regional approach to data collection.

There are over 500,000 students who, on the basis of the UIS data, are either international students who are outbound from ASEAN Member States or are studying in the region from other countries. Taken together, this is a significant number of students, even in the context of a region with nearly 20 million tertiary level students. In comparison, there are just over 500,000 international students in the UK who are studying in the country or leaving the UK to study abroad for example. As a region then ASEAN, in terms of its international student inflow and outflow numbers, compares closely to one of the leading countries in international higher education.

### **2.9.1 An ASEAN Student Mobility Data Centre**

The evidence outlined above shows that there is a significant amount of activity being undertaken to collect information on student mobility in ASEAN. However, there are gaps in reporting at different levels, comparability of information and a lack of granularity. This means that the information on student mobility necessary to formulate the most effective policy is either hard to obtain or it appears is not being collected. The evidence is consistent with the view expressed in MPAC 2025 '*currently the student mobility data across ASEAN Member States has a number of gaps, including country coverage, lack of timely data, and a lack of granularity (for example, the data do not distinguish between credit-based courses, degree-based courses, and non-degree-based courses).*' (ASEAN 2016c:65).

In order to address the issues above, a dedicated resource is required to ensure coherence to the data collection and analysis and undertake the ongoing work necessary to support ASEAN Member States to develop their capacity in this area. This dedicated resource could come in the form of an ASEAN Student Mobility Data Centre. Such a centre would focus on increasing the amount, accuracy and detail of the data available on international student mobility to enable ASEAN Member States to develop strategies, initiatives and capacity development opportunities in the area of higher education student mobility.

Such a centre would also be consistent with the objective stated in the ASEAN Education Work Plan 2016-2020 to '*develop a commonly agreed platform and operating mechanisms for sharing and managing data on mobility e.g. data centre (Recommendation in support of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher education)*'

The centre would also support the overall priority in ASEAN to support improvements in data usage and collection in the region, among others, the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance (DDG) which was endorsed by ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN) in December 2018. The ASEAN Digital Senior

Officials Meeting (ADGSOM) have been tasked with implementing the four strategic priorities under the Framework to enhance digital capability and cooperation among ASEAN Member States. The four priorities and the ASEAN Member States responsible for leading them are as follows: (GSMA, 2019)

- The ASEAN Data Classification Framework (Indonesia)
- The ASEAN Cross-Border Data Flows Mechanism (Singapore)
- The ASEAN Digital Innovation Forum (Viet Nam)
- The ASEAN Data Protection and Privacy Forum (Philippines)

## **2.9.2 Why an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre?**

Developing feasible policy targets and realising the potential that international student mobility has to contribute to ASEAN Community-building particularly in the area of economic and socio-culture, depends on having quality data available. This data needs to be more specific and granular than just having data on the overall number of inbound and outbound international students at country and regional level (even collecting this information accurately is challenging). There needs to be data at course- and institutional- level to enable international student mobility to be linked effectively to the objectives in the three pillars of ASEAN Blueprints as well the MPAC 2025.

In addition, data on the background of international students is required to ensure that policymakers can understand which groups in society are benefitting from international education. They can then position international student mobility within the wider policy frameworks related to the provision of economic and educational opportunities for specific ethnic, rural, socio-economic or gender groups.

Given the existing evidence, the optimum way of achieving the above goals would be via a dedicated research centre. As illustrated above, despite the best efforts of the APTWG collecting data even on international student mobility overall is challenging.

The Centre will facilitate the collection and analysis of granular data on international student mobility necessary to inform research and policy. The establishment of this centre will:

- place ASEAN at the forefront of international student data collection globally
- enable the production of evidence essential to leveraging investment in intra-ASEAN student mobility by policymakers, HEIs and students
- support ASEAN Member States in the collection and analysis of data on student mobility
- demonstrate the commitment of ASEAN Member States to increasing international student mobility in the region



- enable closer linkage for international student mobility with the ASEAN ‘people-to-people connectivity’ component under the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC) pillar of the ASEAN 2025 blueprint. It will also link enable international student mobility to link to the ASEAN pillars.

The ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre will have objectives as outlined in the Table 10 below:

**Table 10: The ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre**

	Objectives	Description
1	Develop and implement a shared understanding of international student mobility and a regional mobility data collection matrix	Working with ASEAN Member States, ASEAN partners and regional/global organisations such as UIS to develop a shared understanding of who international students are and what mobility means and generate comprehensive, granular data which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Level of study</i> – Undergraduate or postgraduate</li> <li>• <i>Demographic factors</i> – Gender, nationality, socio-economic background</li> <li>• <i>Duration of study</i></li> <li>• <i>Educational/employment outcomes</i> for students who have experienced mobility</li> </ul>
2	Report regularly on mobility levels, trends and patterns via a comprehensive knowledge exchange programme	The data generated in 1 would be reported in different accessible formats. Reports on both existing data flows and potential future changes in international student mobility would be produced to allow policymakers to develop evidence-based policy. Events and dialogues to engage policy makers and those involved in data collection/analysis across the region including an annual event would be convened.
3	Introduce a digital data collection system	The centre would lead on work to improve how data is collected across the region to improve efficiency and comparability by developing an ASEAN International Student Mobility Data Online Platform. The platform would act as a user-friendly, accessible portal that will improve the flow of international student mobility data at the granular level.
4	Deliver a regional data collection/analysis capacity building programme	Physical/online work on the operation of the digital data collection system at regional and national level and developing guidelines, toolkits and interactive materials that support HEIs in their data collection, analysis and reporting. This will include supporting HEIs to develop ‘single point of contact’ models of data collection/analysis with one department having strategic/operational responsibility for this work.
5	Make ASEAN the leading region for international student mobility research	Moving forward existing and potential inter/multi-disciplinary research projects of various disciplines in the field of student mobility to position the ASEAN region as a leading ‘hub’ for research in the field of international student mobility. This will include building networking and research collaborations at institutional, national and international levels to improve understanding regarding international student mobility and ways that it can be enhanced and evaluated.
6	Leveraging existing reporting capabilities to foster innovation (Crosling, 2019)	Ongoing work to examine where existing forms of reporting could be utilized to support the collection of data would be undertaken for example looking at the feasibility visa issuances as a means of data collection.

### **2.9.3 How the Centre will operate**

In order for the centre to be effective it will require appropriately skilled research staff and a level of visible independence from policymakers to give its work neutrality and credibility. It may be advantageous to seek an external provider rather than subsume this function as part of the work of any existing regional body or initiative in ASEAN. Having said this, the most important concern wherever such a centre would be based is that the organisation identified has a track record in the analysis of international student mobility data, knowledge of the specific ASEAN educational/political context and in particular demonstrable ability to work with policymakers. The objectives of the centre described above illustrate that its primary role is to support the formation of more effective policy. For it to make a significant impact then appropriate investment will be required. In order to ensure the centre is effective there will be five key areas to address.

### **2.9.4 A strategic commitment to data collection**

As important as a dedicated resource to collect and analyse data on international student mobility in the region is, it needs to be supported by a commitment at the strategic level to improving data collection and analysis as well as mechanisms to engage all stakeholders. Achieving this commitment and engagement should be through the workings of an ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) Initiative of which the centre is part. The ASEAN SUM is described in chapter 5.

### **2.9.5 Establish data sharing agreements**

The second challenge relates to establishing the collaborative relationships necessary to improve the data collection. ASEAN Member States will of course continue to collect data on international student mobility for their own policy purposes. There will need to be agreements in place regarding the sharing of this data for the research centre to be effective.

### **2.9.6 Incentivise data collection**

At the HEI level collaboration in collecting information is an issue particularly in ASEAN Member States where the geographical spread and number of HEIs is high. It is important that channels are opened at all these levels, as it is through these that policy/guidelines as well as processes and eventually, student mobility will flow. In the area of collection and analysis of student mobility data this may involve the inclusion of the collection of student mobility in country and HEI educational quality ratings. At the HEI level, this may involve the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to international student mobility.

### **2.9.7 Foster engagement with the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre**

ASEAN Member States will need to publicise and promote its existence and work. At the HEI level in the countries, the HEI senior administration and managers will need to be engaged in its work and consulted. The necessary incentives will need to be in place to ensure that all stakeholders engage in the work the centre is undertaking.

### 2.9.8 Establish clarity in responsibility for data collection and development at national level

In order for the centre to achieve its potential, clarity in who has responsibility for the collection of international student mobility data, its analysis and use is required. The analysis outlined earlier in the chapter has indicated that the arrangements for data collection differs somewhat between ASEAN Member States. These differences reflect the Member States own administrative and educational contexts. Through the work of the centre there is potential to initiate dialogue over what ‘good practice’ could look like in terms of data collection at national level. Initially however, clarity who collects and analyses data will be important to allow the centre to bring information, undertake analysis and build a capacity building programme.

### 3 Summary

This chapter has shown that the data available regarding international student mobility in ASEAN suggests that in 2018, there was at least 500,000 students moving into and outside the region to study each year. The actual number may be higher than this but data collection arrangements need to be developed in order to establish a more accurate picture. Of these students though, less than 10% are moving within the region. The pattern of the movement of these students within the region is best understood as a series of bilateral flows between ASEAN Member States based on social, political and educational ties between nations. In order to develop a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the student mobility in ASEAN then a dedicated resource in the form of an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre is needed. Such a centre can consolidate the work that is being undertaken to collect information on student mobility in ASEAN. Crucially, it can co-ordinate the production of the analysis essential to support the alignment of student mobility with ASEAN strategic priorities.

### 4 Enhancing Student Mobility data collection/analysis in ASEAN

Key recommendations	
For ASEAN Member States	Establish an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre which will support the enhancement of data collection and analysis in ASEAN.
	Identify key officials with responsibility for data collection and development at national level to work with those from other Member States to improve data collection and analysis via the work of the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre.
	Incentivise higher education providers to collect student mobility information.
	Review how & where national data is collected on student mobility to identify where cross-departmental efficiencies may be put in place.

Ensure there is an appropriate ASEAN level working group which has the collection/analysis of international student mobility data as part of its remit made up of senior education representatives from each country.

Discuss who an appropriate lead organisation to house and undertake the work of the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre would be which has the requisite knowledge and skills to take forward the following objectives:

- developing and implementing a shared understanding of international student mobility and a regional mobility data collection matrix
- reporting regularly on mobility levels, trends and patterns via a comprehensive knowledge exchange programme
- introducing a digital data collection system
- delivering a regional data collection/analysis capacity building programme
- making ASEAN the leading region for international student mobility research
- leveraging existing reporting capabilities and foster innovation in data collection.

## Chapter 3: The role of visas in student mobility in ASEAN

Visa arrangements are often perceived as a necessary condition for student mobility, rather than a tool to drive increased mobility. However, visa arrangements play a pivotal role in shaping the levels and patterns of international student mobility. This section will look at the visa arrangements in ASEAN Member States and in particular what potential there is for reforming these arrangements in order to enhance student mobility within the ASEAN region.

### 3.1 The relationship between student visas and international mobility

There is limited literature looking specifically at the overall relationship between student visas and international student mobility across countries. Looking at the countries which have the highest numbers of inbound students however reveals that visa arrangements are a key ingredient in their success, and changes in them can have negative consequences. The United States admits more than 1 million international students per year (IIE 2018). It has been the leading global destination for international students for over 20 years. But shifts in visa policy after the September 2001 terrorist attacks (Johnson 2018) and after the election of President Trump (Wong 2019) effected both the level of visa issuances to certain countries, the perceptions of the ease of getting a visa and led to a view that the country had become less hospitable to international students. On 24th September 2017, a Presidential proclamation selected countries in which to impose restrictions. These were Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen (Travel.state.gov n.d.). It should be noted that countries in ASEAN benefitted from these restrictions and Malaysia, in particular saw a rise in the numbers of Middle Eastern students (Sirat 2008).

Next to the US the UK has for some time been the second most popular destination for international students (Study International Staff 2018). However, stricter visa and in particular post-study rules introduced in the early 2010s have contributed significantly to a decline in international student numbers. The UK's share of the global international student markets fell by 3% between 2010/11 and 2013/14 because, it is argued, of its tougher stance on immigration (Rudge et al. 2016). There is evidence that within the ASEAN region certain Member States have benefited from the difficulties of certain nationalities obtaining visas to US or UK, especially Malaysia which as chapter 2 illustrated has the largest numbers of inbound students in the region.

Due in some part to the changes in visa legislation in the UK over the 2010s, Australia is now closing in on the UK, and soon may overtake it where international students are concerned (University World News 2018). The development of Australia's presence in terms of international student recruitment however, has been connected closely to its policies on student migration. As far back as 2001, there was a conscious policy to allow the shift from student to permanent resident for those who were in those professions that were regarded as being key to the success of Australia's future and also in which there was a shortage. This list was revised in 2005 with the addition of professions such as cooks and hairdressers,

which many viewed as neither crucial to the success of the economy nor where there was an acute shortage (Reich 2016). In 2007 and 2009, there was a doubling of numbers in Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses attracted by the possibility of permanent skilled migration. This policy was subsequently adjusted in the late 2000s which led to many students in a visa no-man's land or visa limbo as they arrived with the promise of permanent migration, but found this promise rescinded.

Finally, perhaps the best example of a change in visa related legislation that contributed to the growth in international students entering the country is Canada. In 2008 Canada introduced the PGWP (Post-Graduation Work Permit) (Lowe 2008). Canada saw an 83% increase in international students between 2008 and 2014. Further enhancement of this policy was a connection to permanent residence under the Canadian experience programme. The Immigration Minister Jason Kenney stated in 2012:

*“Until we created the Canada Experience Class four years ago, when we had bright young foreign students come to Canada and complete their degrees or diplomas, we then asked them at the end of their academic programme to leave Canada. And if they wanted to immigrate, to get in the back of a seven- or eight-year-long queue in our skilled worker programme.”* (ICEF Monitor 2012).

The evidence above suggests that specific visa arrangements can act as a constraint on international student mobility flows. As well as the practical restrictions in mobility they can present, changes in arrangements can lead to perceptions, real or illusory, that a country is friendly or unfriendly to overseas students and that the issuing of visas will be problematic regardless of the extent to which they are or not. The evidence also suggests though that student visa policies can also boost mobility - particularly when related to unlocking greater economic benefits for students.

## **3.2 Visa provision in the ASEAN region**

While looking at the global student visa picture and the experience of leading countries is important to understand their potential as a policy tool, student visa arrangements sit within the context of broader national and regional immigration policies. The problems the UK has had, for example, with growing international student numbers has been a direct result of the desire of successive governments to cap immigration into the country. Hence, in order to understand the visa arrangements for students in ASEAN it is important to examine the broader policy context in which they sit.

Unsurprisingly, far more has been written on these broader policies in relation to visa policy, international security, tourism and economic growth as well as on the relative 'openness' of different countries and regions. This literature suggests that where ASEAN is concerned, overall it appears that there is a relatively good level of openness especially in relation to tourism and this has led to significant increases in tourist numbers to the region coupled with a rising middle class, growing economies and technological innovations in visa processing (World Travel and Tourism Council 2014).

Enabling even greater openness between the Member States in the ASEAN region has been a prominent feature of the policy discourse since the early 2000s. Indeed, at the ASEAN summit in 2011 in Jakarta, the respective ASEAN Ministers of Tourism agreed to work towards an ASEAN common visa (ASEAN.org 2012b). A feasibility study looking at the possibility of a common ASEAN visa was produced in 2018 (Chandra et al. 2018). This report outlined a number of options including the 'Schengen Agreement' in operation in Europe. The Schengen Agreement was an agreement signed by Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg with the central aim of getting rid of border controls amongst them. This became a wider EU initiative in 1990s with the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam leading to free movement across 26 countries.<sup>13</sup> The report recommended the introduction of a common visa using a model developed by the researchers, but it must be noted that the aim in the report was to develop a system that would make entry into ASEAN easier as opposed to mobility within the region.

The other area where much greater research exists with regard to overall visa provision, as opposed to student visa provision, is in the potential benefits of changes in visa policy. It is argued by some that improving visa facilitation between nations can have a significant impact on increasing growth. Research by the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2012 argued that small steps towards visa facilitation could lead to five million additional jobs created in the G20 countries over a three-year window. The assumption being that a change in visa policies can lead to a rise in tourism of between 5% to 25% and that this has the effects of increased spending in country and also creation of jobs both directly tourist related and indirectly (UNWTO & WTTC 2012). Similarly various bodies have estimated the value of international students to an economy based on the fees they pay, the spending (food, accommodation etc. and also their own family visitors and their associated spending) (Coughlan 2018).

It is apparent that the conditions for developing visa policies that can support student mobility may be favourable. The region itself already has a relatively high degree of openness, work has been undertaken to extend this openness and there is evidence of the economic benefits of greater openness. The next sections will examine whether this favourable environment is reflected in the student visa context.

### **3.3 Understanding how visa provision works in ASEAN**

To understand the nature of visa provision in ASEAN, a large range of official, public information on visa provision was examined. As with section 2, a significant programme of surveys was undertaken with representatives of government agencies, HEIs and also crucially students to gain insight into their first hand experiences where obtaining visas was concerned.

<sup>13</sup>It should be noted that out of the 26 Member States- four are not EU members (Iceland, Switzerland, Norway and Liechtenstein). UK and Ireland opted out of the arrangement.

### **3.3.1 The role of visas in ASEAN**

As in other regions across the world, visa provision plays a number of roles. They include:

- Ensuring security and combating terrorism;
- Control levels of immigration (tourists, students etc.) as well as the duration and activities permitted under the visa (e.g. work);
- Generate revenue (from visa fees); and
- Safeguard capacity of nation to handle tourism/student numbers.

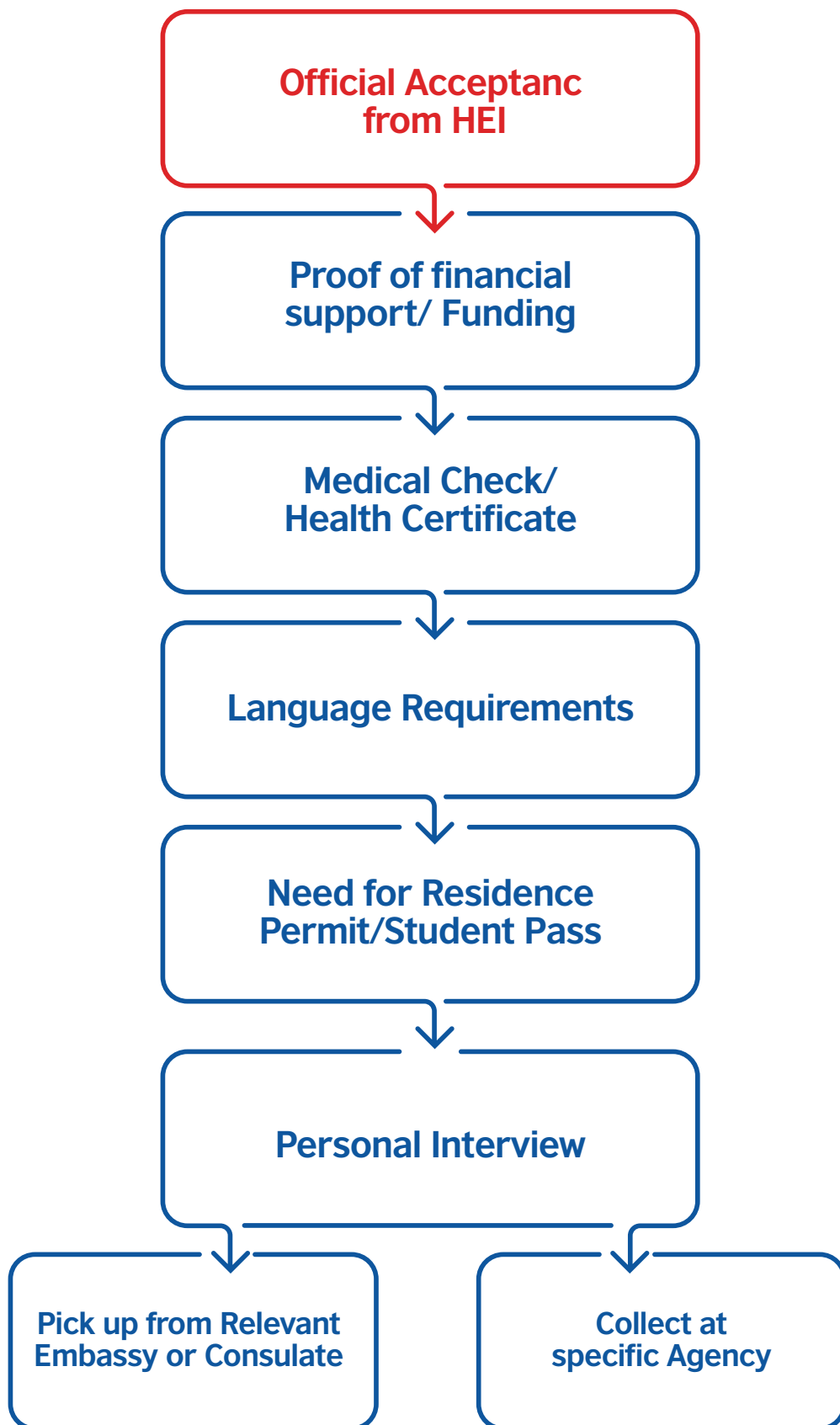
That said, across ASEAN there are clear separate categories for student visas which differ from the requirements of tourist and work visas. The differences across ASEAN are focused on several areas: -

1. Length of visa (often fixed and not tied to length of study)
2. Need for proof of sufficient funds
3. Medical requirements
4. Visa issued prior to arrival or converted post-arrival

### **3.3.2 The student visa process in ASEAN Member States**

In general, it is apparent that most student provision follows a similar pattern with some adjustments for national concerns. Much of this adjustment is based on the number of international students, migrant policy, security concerns and nationality of prospective students. The different elements of the visa process are described below and it should be noted that not all students need to follow this process, much will be dependent on their nationality, level of study (undergraduate/postgraduate), time of study overseas and, of course, the ASEAN Member State in which they wish to pursue their studies.





- **Official Acceptance**

The first and key requirement initially is an official acceptance letter from the institution from which the applicant intends to study. In many global cases, especially in countries where there are large numbers of international students such as UK, Australia, US, China and Malaysia the HEI accepting the students will need to be registered or on a prescribed list of HEIs who may accept international students. The institutions, themselves, will need to meet a separate list of requirements to ensure they can accept international students. Certain countries only grant licenses to a certain number of HEIs who can accept international students. This is to ensure quality of the learning and experience, allow for monitoring of the students, ensure that students are not being mistreated and uphold the reputation of the country's education system.

- **Finance**

Increasingly, countries are requiring adequate proof of funding for the duration of the study to support both cost of fees and associated living expenses. This may take the form of a letter from a bank or guarantee from a sponsor. Some countries require a bond/deposit prior to entry.

- **Health conditions**

The rise of global health issues such as tuberculosis, yellow fever and SARS have meant that international students will often need to prove their health prior the granting of a visa. This area may become more important post-COVID-19. This may involve evidence of medical history, health checks prior to departure and/or a health check with registered doctor soon after arrival. This may depend on the country of origin of the international students. In addition to these health checks, many countries will insist on health insurance up to a certain level is taken out during the period of study.

- **Language Requirements**

Although often part of the requirement of the chosen institution and the level of the course, some student visas will require the students to demonstrate a minimum language level as part of the visa issuance process. The broadly acceptable examinations globally are TOEFL and IELTS for English language level courses, although there are local variations such as TOEIC (Japan) and MUET (Malaysia) which may be acceptable.

- **Residence Permit**

In some countries, students may also require a residence permit and to register with the local authorities/police.

- **Multiple and Single Entry Visas**

There may be a choice of a multiple entry or single entry visas with the former allowing more than one entry during the validity of the study period.

- **Different Rights**

The rights of a student visa can differ across the globe especially in terms of work rights as we have seen in the introductory section. These restrictions may involve limits to type of employment, location (on or off campus), hours (maximum), minimum wage and/or timing (during or outside term time).

### 3.4 The student visa provision landscape in ASEAN

In this section visa provision in ASEAN is examined in greater depth. The similarity in the overall visa process across the ten ASEAN Member States described above is still evident in some respects but there are also some areas of real contrast between the different countries. Over 30 students covering ASEAN Member States responded to the questions in the stakeholder survey related to visas, as did 30 HEIs again covering all ASEAN Member States.

#### 3.4.1 Student specific visas and support available

As Table 11 below shows all ASEAN Member States have some form of student visa system in place, but only two have a specific student visa support agency.

**Table 11: Visas for students in ASEAN and nature of support available**

Question/country	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
Is there a specific visa for students?	A specific Student visa	Has an ES visa	Student visa (ST – B2 class)	Student visas fall under the ‘Social -Cultural category’	A specific student visa as well as a student pass	Education visa	SSP Visa/Student Visa	Student Pass	Non-Immigrant Education Visa (ED)	Has a student or ‘Study Entry’ Visa
Specific agency		No	No	No	EMGS	No	No	ICA (e-service for Student Pass application).	No	No

It should be noted that student visas in ASEAN Member States are constructed to support mobility that is 90-120 days or longer. Many individual HEIs will have a wide range of shorter mobility programmes both inbound and outbound across ASEAN. With these programmes, students will most likely not require specific student visas (Ziguras et al. 2011). So although short term mobility has increased across ASEAN, the visa situation is complex. One respondent Malaysian institution which runs short term courses has students on tourist visas which means enrolling on the student system, issuing certificates and dealing with issues of insurance which can be problematic.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Anonymous interview with the authors.

It is clear that for some students obtaining a visa and the process of application is challenging:

*'There was (not sure if still is) no option to apply for student visa. I could only choose a 59-day tourist visa + extension or I could obtain a free visa which would last 29 days and then I apply for a visa for my entire stay. The government should negotiate on the matter of migration beyond tourism. They should make a special status for students to stay in another country for study purposes.'*

#### **A Cambodian student applying to study in the Philippines**

In terms of more intensive support for students it is clear that Education Malaysia In terms of more intensive support for students, it is clear that Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) is fairly unique across the ASEAN region with a separate body to issue student visa and indeed promote Malaysian education overseas. No other ASEAN Member States have the same level of international student numbers, but it will be instructive to see if over time other ASEAN Member States adopt this approach when the number of inbound international students studying in the country starts to increase. Thailand may be the only other ASEAN Member State who has seen significant increases in international student numbers within the region drawn from Asia and especially China (SI News 2019). It attracts more international degree students than Indonesia or Viet Nam and is third in the region behind Singapore and Malaysia. In addition, it has specific policies to encourage internationalisation of its HEIs which include increasing the numbers of international students (Kanjaniyot et al. 2018).

In interviews with stakeholders in Malaysia, they confirmed the issues that the EMGS had in the initial phases and raised the questions of outsourcing immigration issues to a non-governmental body. In the final analysis, the question was where the ultimate authority lies and it is with the Department of Immigration. Similar issues of outsourcing have been raised in the UK. (Adams 2019).

In Boxes 4 and 5 the work of EMGS and the SOLAR system in Singapore is examined in more detail.

#### **Box 4: Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS)**

EMGS represents an interesting response to the issue of visa issuance and centralizing the process in a single body. Its creation in Malaysia in 2012 was due to a number of reasons such as a large rise in the numbers of international students, a desire to create consistency of the visa process for applicants, concerns about both bogus institutions and also an influx of students with little intention to study, but who were brought in as migrant workers from South and S E Asia. Much of the well-established private sector institution approved of this initiative with a call for a one-stop shop for visa processing as well as clarity in the process.

There were inevitable teething problems in the initial implementation and concerns that the timelines and processes were not as transparent as initially indicated. Since the majority of international students are in the private sector and at undergraduate level, the private sector students initially had to go through EMGS with the public sector coming on board a little later with a larger number of postgraduate students. There were also issues with communication between the immigration authorities and EMGS which led to bottlenecks.

However, it is clear that these processes have improved vastly and the timelines for visa issuance are being met and that there is a greater clarity for both students and institutions alike.

EMGS has also an additional promotional role in that it 'also leads marketing and promotional activities for Malaysian education institutions and products globally, including tours and participation in international exhibitions and conferences'. With the initial implementations of visa issues this marketing role has taken a back seat, but in the recent presentations by the new CEO of EMGS it is clear that there will be a greater emphasis on this promotional aspect of the body.

<https://visa.educationmalaysia.govmy/>

## Box 5: ICA (e-service for Student Pass application) system in Singapore

### ICA (e-service for Student Pass application) - A Singaporean solution

Although Singapore has a smaller number of international students and has not recently seen the need to promote the sector, it is unsurprising that the ICA Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) have established a sophisticated online process. It was set up in 2003 and applies to all public HEIs and branch campuses of foreign HEIs.

SMU's website gives a clear overview of the process

PROCESS OUTLINED FOR



Note the necessity for an e-appointment with Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) as well as a medical exam which can take up to five weeks to produce the report. Medical examination for new students can be done in their home country or in Singapore.

Rather than a specific student visa, Singaporean authorities refer to a student pass which needs to be carried at all times. This is not dissimilar to a similar i-card which has been introduced for international students.

### 3.4.2

#### Differences in visa conditions and visa processes across the region

While it is true there is some form of student visa across the region, the conditions attached to them and the process of applying for the visa varies somewhat across the region as illustrated in Table 12.

**Table 12: Visa conditions and processes in ASEAN**

Question/country	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
<b>How long the visa they may be granted will be for</b>	1 year?	1,3, 6 and 12 months		1 year with potential for renewal	Varies average is 1 year, but moving towards length of study for certain institutions.	12 months	59 days renewable 1 year	Varies according to the length of study	Initial 90 days +additional 1 year	3mths – 1 year
<b>Application time</b>	14 days				14 days		7-10 days	5 days to 4 weeks		10 days*
<b>Costs of the visa</b>			US\$20 – US\$50	US\$50 – US\$180	US\$120 – US\$240		US\$58 - 90	SGD\$30	US\$60	US\$24 – US\$145
<b>Visa conditions</b>	Letter of application from institution	Letter from institution and proof of sufficient funds	Lao PDR	Acceptance letter from university	Letter from licensed institution. Post arrival health clearance Personal bond.	letter from HEI		The security deposit for certain nationalities ranges from SGD\$1,500 to SGD\$5000,	Letter of acceptance	Pre-approval letter

Looking firstly at the length of the visa that is awarded to students, it is clear that while a year appears to be to an extent standard practice, there also appears to be some differences in the length of the initial visa award. Only Malaysia and Singapore have systems in place that will allow the student to attach their visa to their length of study - whilst most ASEAN Member States require renewal processes.

Costs vary significantly, with Malaysia being the costliest. It should be noted that the visa costs itself do not capture the full cost to the student who may have to pay additional fees for documentation, single/multiple entry visas, renewal fees, costs of medical check etc, as well as personal bonds or security deposits.

Conditions also vary, but to obtain a student visa all students will need a letter from their institution as a minimum requirement across Member States. Other additional requirements depending on the country include medical checks, security deposits and return air tickets.

Application time is inconsistent and advice varies considerably on how long it should take. Malaysia and Singapore are more explicit in their information on the process and 2 weeks seems to be a standard time frame.

*'I wish they could shorten the process day and reduce the price for the student since it's a little bit expensive, from my perspective. Indeed, make the information available on the internet or initiate the E-Visa process.'*

**A Viet Nameese students applying to study in Cambodia**

*‘There should be a study visa that allows the student to stay as long the study period without having to renew it every 30 days. The visa should also be able to be processed in 1 day because most embassy visa application process takes 3 days not counting weekends and this can be a problem for students who live far from the embassy or receive an acceptance letter to go to another country in short notice but have to provide necessary documents (visa details) in the following day.’*

A Malaysian student applying to study in Indonesia

### 3.4.3 Visa arrangements for students inside and outside ASEAN

Unlike tourist travel as highlighted above, there is little evidence of visa arrangements which encourage students within ASEAN to travel to other Member States as Table 13 shows.

**Table 13: Existence of preferential treatment for students from different ASEAN Member States**

Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Lao PDR	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam
No	Some variation amongst nationalities, but no specific policy related to ASEAN	No	No	Some variation amongst nationalities, but no specific policy related to ASEAN.	No	No	Some variation amongst nationalities, but no specific policy related to ASEAN	Some variation amongst nationalities, but no specific policy related to ASEAN	Some variation amongst nationalities, but no specific policy related to ASEAN

Apart from some isolated examples there is little evidence of systematic preference or ease of mobility granted to students from ASEAN Member States. In Brunei Darussalam, the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) advises that students should apply for a Multiple Re-entry Visa on a yearly basis (only applicable to international students from Member States other than Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore) (UBD n.d.). Of course the situation is different for those students on short-term study visits who would in many cases be able to travel without a visa and remain clarified as tourists (ASEAN.org n.d.).

There was some support however for preferential treatment arrangements for students who wished to be mobile within the ASEAN region. As a Malaysian student who applied to study in Indonesia stated:

*‘In order to encourage more students from ASEAN Member States to be mobile, there should be a special counter or lane in airport for immigration clearance. This is to shorten the time needed the students to proceed to the immigration clearance in that certain ASEAN Member States. Moreover, the students from ASEAN Member States who apply for the student visa should be given a special discount. Not only that, students should apply online only. The normal procedure of making a visa is to walk in the embassy and submit all the supporting documents required.’*



### 3.4.4 How is information provided to prospective students who may wish to apply for visa clearance to study in your country?

An area where there appears to a significant degree of commonality in the area of student visa arrangements is where the provision of information is concerned. As Table 14 shows it is possible to find online information on visa arrangements for each ASEAN Member State.

**Table 14: Information provision on visa arrangements for ASEAN Member States students**

Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
EMGS site, HEI guidance	HEI guidance and govt websites	HEI guidance and govt websites	HEI guidance and govt websites	EMGS site, HEI guidance	HEI guidance and govt websites	HEI guidance and govt websites	Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) online (ICA) online	HEI guidance and govt websites	HEI guidance and govt websites

The key information sources regarding visa arrangements that are available are listed in Appendix 1. There is a mixture of official, public and private guidance available. The official sources can be opaque and there are clear attempts by the HEIs to clarify the process, although even they admit openly in many cases that the processes are unclear and can change quickly. Ultimately the responsibility is shifted to the student to complete the process. Appendix 1 includes both private and public sources. In addition, guidance in Member States such as Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia remains less detailed.

### 3.4.5 A one-stop online information resource for student visa arrangements in ASEAN?

In the surveys with stakeholders, the issue of information provision with regard to visa arrangements was addressed. Specifically, stakeholders were asked their perspective on an online information resource for students in the ASEAN region wishing to study abroad. As the quotes below show there was support for such a resource from representatives of ASEAN Member States and HEIs.

*'In our view, this centralized information resource is essential. A centralized information resource is vital for both sending and receiving HEIs and more importantly, the students themselves.'*

*'It would be beneficial to have a one-stop website service containing useful information relating to visa clearance which also provides an online application service for students looking to study in each ASEAN country. Such a website could feature different categories and definitions of student visa, contacts for the embassies, required documents, procedures, application fees, expected number working days for processing of visa application, frequent mistakes made by applicants, as well as prohibited actions and their fines and punishments.'*

Mahidol University, Thailand

*'This (an online information site) will of course give more convenient access to the information of visa clearance procedures in each ASEAN country for the students. However, the designated online information resource or website must be well-prepared in terms with updated, a friendly user interface and information on the site outlining the visa clearance process in detail at each step. It will also increase the number of students to study in the country.'*

**Airlangga University, Indonesia**

*'I think it will be very helpful if there is a central online information resource or website with visa clearance processes. This will help students understand the procedures and a length of time taken to clear their visa. This will help them to be prepared better.'*

**Souphanouvong University – Lao PDR**

*'There should be a Visa application website where students can get information and apply visa to ASEAN countries.'*

**Myanmar student**

*'The ministry supports this as we have a similar provision in our overarching policy framework and strategies for the internationalization of higher education aimed at promoting transparency and efficiency'*

**Philippines, Commission on Higher Education**

*'The construction of a central online information resource or website with information on visa clearance processes for students looking to study in each ASEAN country should be present to help improve the provision of visa information.'*

**Myanmar Ministry of Education**

### **3.5**

#### **Pro-active student visa policymaking in ASEAN**

The evidence presented above suggests that the student visa policy across ASEAN has been reactive where international student mobility is concerned, rather than pro-active. This means that it has developed mainly in response to actual or predicted changes in student mobility in order to cope with these changes, rather than being used as a tool to initiate mobility changes. This has been the main way in which many Member States have positioned visa arrangements relative to student mobility, preferring scholarships or bilateral partnership making a policy instruments that can be used to increase mobility levels. However, as was illustrated above, those Member States which have the highest numbers of international students have at some point used pro-active visa related policy making.

The consequence of visa arrangements developing in this way across the region is that there are inconsistencies, as illustrated above, in the cost, length and nature of

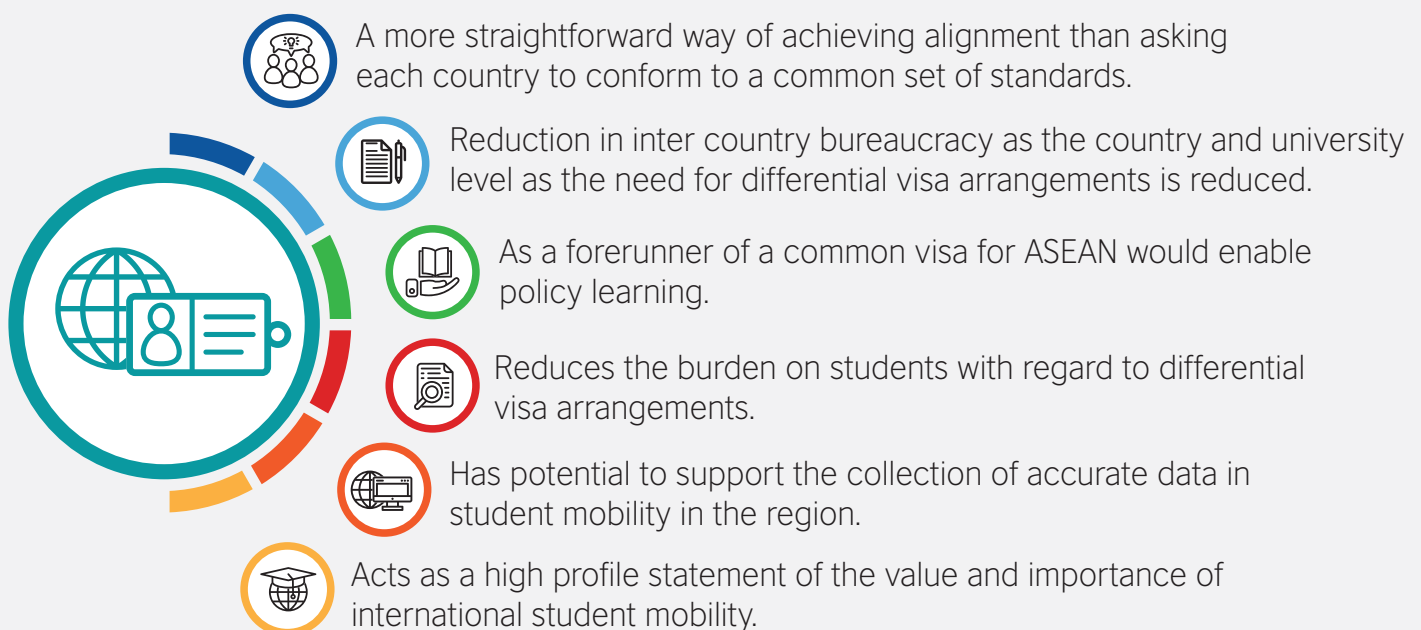
student visa arrangements across the region. As was also illustrated these inconsistencies create a set of additional barriers to students when they consider intra ASEAN vs outside ASEAN mobility. These inconsistencies also may act to deter students from participating in the ASEAN mobility scholarship programmes which mainly, as the next section shows focus on short term mobility. These students are often on short-term/tourist visas which can make it problematic to register as a student at the host university, receive credit and/or be covered by institutional insurance.

A series of recommendations are made in this section which constitute examples of what pro-active policy making could mean with relation to student visas. They co-alesce around greater alignment in what a student visa is, its cost and how it is issued underpinned by a centralized approach to providing information. These recommendations would certainly make visa arrangements more coherent and accessible and from the evidence available may have a positive impact on levels of intra ASEAN student mobility. They are consistent with the view expressed in ASEAN Master Plan for Connectivity 2025 (2016) *'there are still opportunities to improve mobility in ASEAN. Opportunities include facilitating travel throughout ASEAN by addressing the lack of information on travel options and providing simpler mechanisms to apply for necessary visas (ASEAN 2016:67).*

## An ASEAN Student Pass?

An alternative to implementing the recommendations in this section may be to introduce one student pass for the whole of the region to supersede and replace existing individual country student visas. Such a pass, applied for centrally and electronically, would remove the need for differential cost and issuance arrangements. It could have a number of advantages to the present arrangements and the other options available to improve them:

### Infographic 3: An ASEAN Student Pass?



It is the last benefit which would be of particular importance. Aside from a large expansion of scholarship provision there may be no other single policy change which would have the same potential impact on how students, families and HEIs perceive of the value and importance of intra-ASEAN international student mobility. There are important considerations in implementing a policy such as this, especially with regard to security, that must be examined carefully. Visa policy is also a multi-agency undertaking both within and across nations and significant preparation and negotiation would be required. The introduction of a full ASEAN student pass would take at least a 5-year period and if necessary more time may be required. It could also be introduced on a bi/tri lateral country arrangement and then on a staggered basis to allow the impacts to be fully monitored. As an illustration of the commitment to student mobility in the region though, such a common visa or pass if combined with the necessary communications work/stakeholder buy in could contribute to a major shift in perceptions amongst students and their families with regard to studying in ASEAN.

#### **Infographic 4: Recommendations on how student visa provision can drive student mobility in ASEAN**

##### **For ASEAN Member States**



Align student visa application and approval and the minimum period which any student visa issued should cover.



Initiate a feasibility study into the viability of a pan ASEAN student pass that would replace individual country level visas for students who wish to study in ASEAN.

##### **For ASEAN Secretariat**

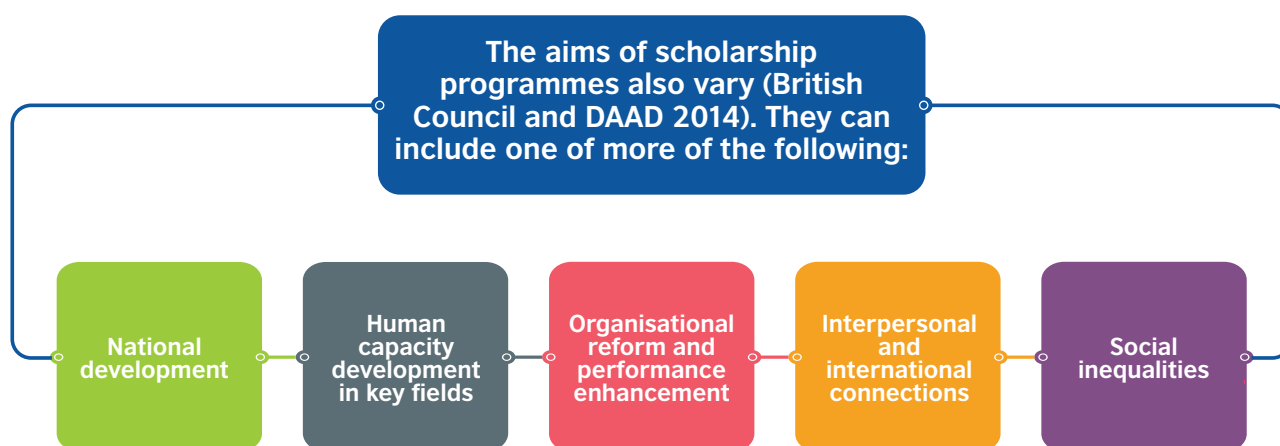


Establish a single online point of information on obtaining visas for intra ASEAN study in collaboration with education and immigration stakeholders across the region.

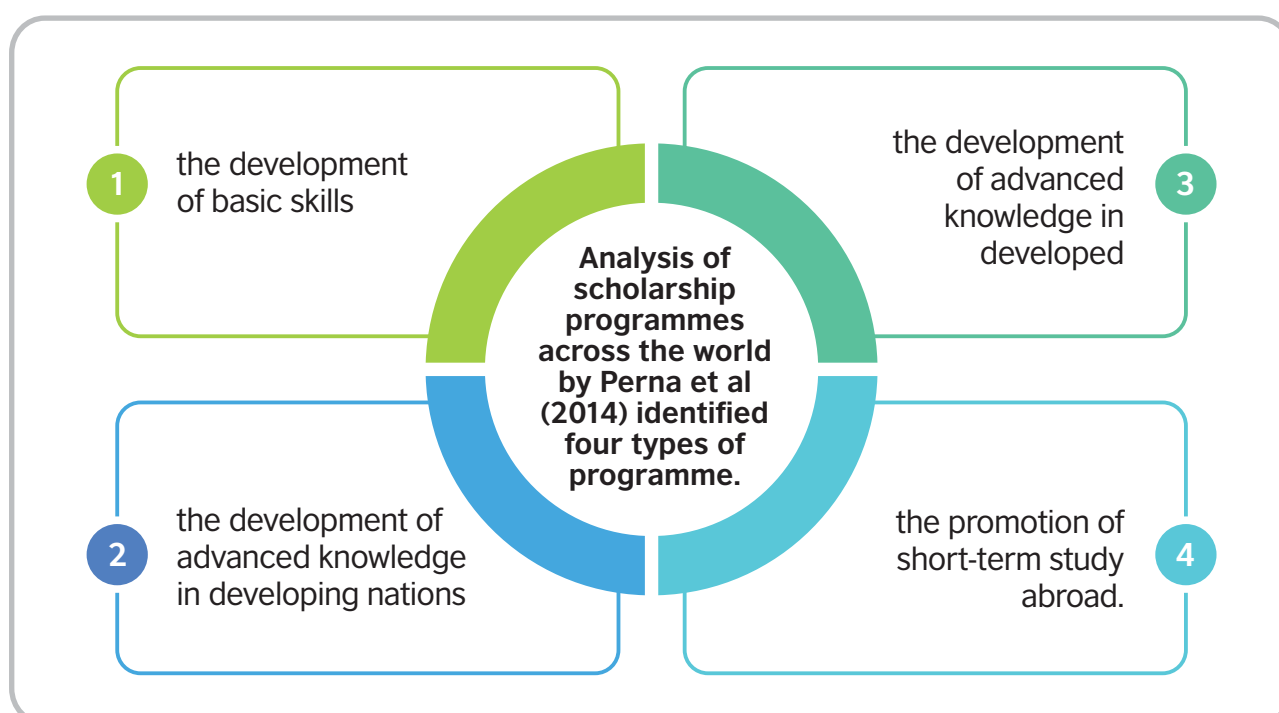
## Chapter 4: Examining the potential for an ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship Scheme (SBS)

Scholarships are often given a high-profile role in the range of policies that national governments and regional governmental bodies across the world use to support international student mobility. In ASEAN, there are a number of prominent regional scholarship programmes alongside a number of other programmes delivered at national level and initiated by HEIs themselves. Chapter 4 of the report examines the role of these scholarship programmes in ASEAN in enabling greater student mobility and the nature of the existing landscape where the provision of scholarships is concerned. It will examine in detail what could be done to enhance the impact of student mobility scholarships in ASEAN. In particular, the development of a 'single branded' scholarship (SBS) framework as a means of enhancing the impact of scholarships will be explored.

### 4.1 Infographic 5: The aims of scholarship programmes



### Infographic 6: Analysis of scholarships programmes across the world by Perna et al (2014) identified four types of programme



### 4.1.1 The impact of scholarships

While scholarship provision is widespread across the world, there is less evidence of its impact and benefits for students or for societies. Much remains to be done to fully appreciate what these scholarship programmes actually achieve – for the individuals whose mobility is supported, the countries that fund them and the HEIs in both sending and receiving countries engaged in international student mobility (British Council and DAAD 2014).

In terms of establishing the impact of scholarships, the most systematic work has been done to examine the impact of the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus+ is the European Union (EU) umbrella programme, running from 2014 to 2020, which brings together programmes for education, training, youth and sport to promote international mobility and partnerships (European Commission 2019). The Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency monitors the impact of the programme (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2020)

More than 300,000 students study or train under the Erasmus+ umbrella. Evaluation of the programme in 2019 showed 80% of Erasmus+ graduates are employed within three months of graduation, with 72% stating their Erasmus+ experience helped them secure their first job. Nearly half of Erasmus+ trainees were offered a job in the company where they trained. More than two-thirds of Erasmus+ students and trainees gained new insight about their career choices through studying or training abroad (European Commission 2019).

The studies have also highlighted how Erasmus+ builds a sense of European identity and social cohesion, with 90% of Erasmus+ students feeling the programme has improved their ability to collaborate with people from different cultures and made them more positive about the role of the EU in society. The research also highlights the programme's success at driving innovation and social inclusion in higher education with nearly two-thirds of HEIs stating projects under Erasmus+ have increased social inclusion and non-discrimination in higher education.

The European Union's integration of its higher education and enhancement of mobility across borders has been viewed as an important reference point for the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education. The Bologna Process, it is suggested, was mainly but not exclusively stimulated by the following two economic factors: reinforcing and expanding the leading position of the international higher education and establishing an integrated and highly mobilized labour market.

<sup>15</sup> Zeng, J. Adams & A. Gibbs (2012): Are China and the ASEAN ready for a Bologna Process? Factors affecting the establishment of the China-ASEAN higher education area, *Educational Review*, DOI:10.1080/00131911.2012.668872

In addition to work on Erasmus+, evaluation of the Commonwealth Scholarship Programme led by the Association of Commonwealth HEIs (ACU) has also showed the positive impact that scholarships can have on wider societal goals (ACU 2019). The programme has been in existence since 1959. While the programmes support students from Commonwealth Member States to study across the Commonwealth, the vast majority of students travel to study in the UK at post-graduate level. A study of programme alumni undertaken from 2012-2015, showed that two-thirds of survey respondents reported that their activities as programme alumni had benefited their societies in the areas of poverty reduction, health and education. However, while there is evidence of the impact the ACU programme has had there is a recognition that the evaluation needs to improve with work underway here to better establish the impact of this programme.

#### **4.1.2 The limitations of scholarships**

As outlined above, scholarships have a range of goals. These include improving the higher education experience for students, the quality of teaching, research and the contribution to society made by higher education. Although these issues are linked, it must also be stressed that even a target of 20% of students in any country of university experiencing international mobility (which is a relatively high target) means that 80% of students will not have a mobility experience. Developments in scholarship and mobility therefore, must be combined with other internationalisation initiatives to ensure that as many students as possible benefit from an internationalised education.

It also appears that the majority of international students come from more privileged groups. The 2014 report by DAAD/British Council which assessed national scholarship schemes in 11 countries stated that while the exact data on participant demographics is limited:

*'it is clear that the number of men receiving outward mobility scholarships far exceeds the number of women ..... A divide also exists between the number of urban versus rural scholarship recipients .... Informants also observed that because income plays a role in educational attainment more scholarship recipients hail from wealthy than from poor families.'* (British Council/DAAD 2014:57).

It can be also argued that investing the funds spent on a scholarship programme directly into tertiary systems 'in country' could be used in alternative ways to support the development of higher education systems. As the bulk of the scholarship expenses are consumed by tuition fees and living expenses, it is reasonable to conclude that between 80% and 90% of the scholarships' financial value remains in the funding country and hence do not contribute to the higher education system of what often may be, a more developing country.

Looking briefly at the overall evidence, shows that while scholarships are important promoting intra-ASEAN mobility also requires a consideration of the wider context of international higher education.

## 4.2 Scholarships provision in ASEAN

There are a range of scholarship programmes in existence targeted at students from ASEAN Member States. Table 15 gives an overview of scholarship provision at national level for different ASEAN Member States.

**Table 15: Scholarship provision by ASEAN Member State**

ASEAN Member State	Description of scholarships
<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>	A system of scholarships for local undergraduates and postgraduates to study at HEIs locally or overseas funded by the government covering subjects including forestry, agriculture, psychology, law and forensic science exists.
<b>Cambodia</b>	Scholarships are funded by the Cambodian Government as well as international organizations (World Bank/ADB). Opportunities also funded by the Viet Nameese, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Australian and New Zealand governments.
<b>Indonesia</b>	Indonesia's high profile scholarship programme for overseas study was managed by DIKTI and was aimed at Indonesian students, government officials and academics (1). At present, DIKTI scholarships only fund studies at local HEIs. The Beasiswa scholarship, managed by the LPDP (Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education) under the Ministry of Finance and subjected to the policies of Minister of Education and Culture, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Religion (3). It is mainly aimed at Masters and PhD students and funds around 4,000 scholars per year.
<b>Lao PDR</b>	The main sources of scholarships for studying abroad are exchange scholarships under the bilateral cooperation between different HEIs. Major sponsorship providers are from Viet Nameese, Chinese, Japanese, Thai and EU Governments. Information on the scholarships would usually be publicized in the MOES's website.
<b>Malaysia</b>	Major government sponsorship bodies in Malaysia are the Public Services Department (JPA) and the Council of Trust for the Indigenous People (MARA) and they cover all levels of higher education (BSc, MA and PhD). Scholarships would usually be publicised in the newspapers in March, after the announcement of the SPM (O Level equivalent) and STPM (A Level equivalent) results.
<b>Myanmar</b>	There is a range of such programmes including Fullbright Foreign Student Programme provides scholarships for U.S. graduate study and research and scholarships by offered by foreign institutions, s.uch as at Yogyakarta State University in Indonesia, Sun Yat-Sen University (SYSU) scholarships, and a United Nations University Full Funded Scholarship for International Students.
<b>Philippines</b>	Most of the scholarships are a result of bilateral agreements (e.g. Fulbright Commission etc.) or are offered by individual institutions/programmes abroad. A comprehensive list is published on CHED's website
<b>Singapore</b>	Study abroad programmes are provided by the Ministry of Education and national agencies like A-STAR <a href="https://www.moe.gov.sg/admissions/scholarships/asean">https://www.moe.gov.sg/admissions/scholarships/asean</a> . The ASEAN scholarship programme offers scholarships to bright young students from ASEAN countries, China and India to study in Singapore. We partner various organisations to administer these scholarships.
<b>Thailand</b>	The Office of Civil Service Commission (OCSC) oversees the government's scholarship programmes. Around 27 percent of the government scholarships are allocated to Science and Technology fields, reflecting a strong perceived correlation between the capacity of a country's Science, Technology and innovation and the quality of its education system. Scholarships are well publicised and competitive.
<b>Viet Nam</b>	Viet Nam International Education Development (VIED), a department within MOET, has the overall responsibility to manage all government backed scholarships.



Table 15 shows the range of scholarship programmes offered at national level in ASEAN. However, there are significant disparities in the scale of provision of scholarships across ASEAN Member States with some countries' internationalisation capacity not advanced enough for mobility scholarships to significantly impact on inbound or outbound mobility. There are also challenges with regard to the Member States where internationalisation is more developed. For example, Malaysia and Thailand who, as chapter 2 shows, have higher than average numbers of inbound/outbound international students also have a larger range of scholarships available, they range across the public/private sector and different government departments meaning a greater range of potential stakeholders to engage with. Many scholarship programmes are focused on destinations located outside ASEAN. The existence of these programmes which support students to study in leading international student mobility countries present additional challenges where growing intra-ASEAN mobility is concerned (Chao 2020).

#### 4.2.1 ASEAN Level Scholarship Programmes

The major scholarship programmes currently available for students from ASEAN Member States are administered by four international organisations and consortia. The programmes they deliver and how they are organised is outlined in Table 16.

Scholarship	Awarding Body	Purpose (Aim)	Location(s)	Durations	Eligibility	Funding	CTS	Scale
<b>SHARE Scholarship</b>	Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region Consortium	To augment intra-ASEAN and ASEAN-EU mobility	ASEAN (ex-Brunei) EU participating Universities	One Semester	Undergrads from selected ASEAN Universities completed at least 2 semesters	Fees waived, Round trip airfare, living / accommodation allowance, health insurance	Bilateral Agreement between home and host institution with ACTS and AECTS	TBC at time of publication
<b>AIMS Programme</b>	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Regional Centre of Higher Education Development	To promote and enhance student and academic mobility in Southeast Asia and beyond.	Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Philippines, Japan, Korea, Singapore	One Semester	Affiliated universities selected by Ministry of Education participate in the programme	Round-trip airfare, living and accommodation allowance and coverage of health and accident insurance	Bilateral framework between home and host institution	Just under 5000 students since 2010
<b>AUN Scholarship</b>	ASEAN University Network	To promote the ASEAN student mobility of undergraduates & postgraduates amongst AUN Members	Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand.	One Semester, One Academic Year, Full Degree	Nominated by home University after completing 1 academic year and be in Top 10% of Cohort	Fees waived and living allowance commensurate with costs in location provided	Bilateral framework between home and host institution	TBC at time of publication
<b>UMAP Scholarship</b>	University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific Consortium	To achieve a better understanding of other countries and territories in the region	Countries and territories in Asia-Pacific	One or Two Semesters or 1 to 8 weeks	Students at UMAP programme participating institutions	Participating institutions waive fees.	UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS)	437 students since 2011

## **Table 16: ASEAN Scholarship Programmes**

As Table 16 shows, these programmes are led by different organisations, vary significantly in number of students supported and have different aims. They concentrate in the main on short term student mobility with a semester long experience being the most common model. While each of the models focuses predominantly on ASEAN Member States, not two cover the same Member States and three involve non-ASEAN Member States. In terms of organisation the programmes also differ.

The European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme was launched in May 2015 for an initial period of four years and has engaged 32 ASEAN HEIs (EU-SHARE 2019). It is co-ordinated by one of the project partners – Nuffic who are the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education.

SEAMEO-RIHED is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization’s Centre specializing in regional higher education development and was established in 1965. Its mission is to ‘foster efficiency, effectiveness, and harmonization of higher education in Southeast Asia’. The AIMS programme began initially in 2009 as the Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand (MIT) Student Mobility Pilot Project. The programme offers 10 study fields with over 70 HEIs participating in it. HEIs who participate are nominated by their respective governments and the programme is funded by the governments of the ASEAN Member States. The AIMS programme has three objectives:

- To strengthen regional integration and community-building to enhance the profile and visibility of Southeast Asian universities and contribute to the internationalisation of the region’s higher education systems.
- To support further harmonisation of higher education by providing opportunities for International Relations Offices (IROs) to enhance their procedures and nurture the establishment of academic networks under the selected study fields of the AIMS Programme.
- To prepare students with the knowledge and cross-cultural skills to navigate an ASEAN Community and develop a sense of regional citizenship, laying a foundation for the future of the region.

The ASEAN University Network (AUN) was established in 1995. It aims to strengthen regional co-operation in higher education in the region via promoting collaborative study, research and educational programmes in the priority areas identified by ASEAN. There are 35 HEIs engaged in the AUN scholarship programme. The AUN scholarship programmes differ in length and nature dependent on the HEIs engaged in them. There is not one set, uniform programme model. While AIMS is driven by the central co-ordination from SEAMEO RIHED and the ASEAN Member States, the AUN programme is more university driven.

University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific or UMAP was established in 1991 as a voluntary association of government and non-government representatives of the higher education (university) sector. It has the aim of achieving a better understanding of the cultural, economic and social systems of other Member States and territories in the Asia Pacific region through enhanced cooperation among HEIs and increased mobility of university students and staff. The area that UMAP covers is far wider than ASEAN. It covers 35 countries/territories. There are 570 member HEIs. In ASEAN, the Philippines and Thailand in particular are well represented in UMAP in terms of number of participating HEIs. Aside from Myanmar and Singapore all other ASEAN Member States have HEIs who are members of UMAP, but numbers are small for the majority of Member States outside of the Philippines and Thailand. UMAP has three type of student mobility programme:

- **Programme A** is a multilateral exchange programme in which participating universities/institutions among UMAP members send and receive two students per semester.
- **Programme B** is a bilateral student exchange made between any two UMAP participating universities/institutions that would like to exchange more than two students.
- **Programme C** are short-term (one to eight-week long) programs offered by UMAP participating universities/institutions which are generally offered between July and September.

#### 4.2.2 Existing ASEAN Scholarships – the views of stakeholders

The challenge in identifying outcomes and impact of scholarships is that consistent with the lack of evidence of outcomes of these programmes no common evaluation methodology exists. A questionnaire based on the evaluation criteria of the Erasmus+ programme adapted to ASEAN was used to survey policy makers at national level, universities and students. The survey examines five key areas. In Table 17 these areas are mapped against the three criteria identified by the with relation to scholarship programmes.

**Table 17: Approach to examining scholarship programmes**

	Technical operation (Operational)	Political buy in	Sustainability
Relevance		X	X
Coherence		X	X
Effectiveness	X		X
Efficiency	X		X
Added value		X	X

### 4.2.3 Alignment with policy priorities

National respondents provided substantially differing levels of detail in identifying the extent to which the existing mechanisms for scholarship provision align with ASEAN and national policy priorities. The majority of HEI representatives felt to varying degrees that existing schemes did not match ASEAN priorities. For example, one university had established its own scholarship programme to address ASEAN wide issues, stating that:

*“For scholarships provided by Mahidol University, they complement each other by distributing opportunities to all students. Our scholarship scheme covers varied purposes, activities, durations, as well as the academic background and performance of the students. We also have separate scholarships for the students who contribute to the work of the university (i.e. members of MU- Student Association or MU-IR Ambassadors) to experience and explore ASEAN. For scholarships from partner institutions, as we have experienced, they are mostly targeting only the most exceptional students in certain academic areas, but do not provide opportunities for the moderate students.”*

Overwhelmingly students stressed issues of people to people connectivity, peace and community building. Both students and universities also mentioned the need to diversify the students eligible for scholarships – by year of study and subject.

*‘One important thing to my mind is that ASEAN mobility scholarship programmes give better understanding through people-to-people contact. I had little understanding of Vietnam prior to my mobility.’*

**Indonesian student**

Other responses indicated that the needs of different stakeholders and education levels are not addressed by existing scholarship programmes. One particular area that scholarship programmes are often created to address is inequities in participation amongst different groups by socio-economic, ethnic or rural background or by disability. It is noticeable that such issues were not mentioned in the responses.

### 4.2.4 Coherence and complementarity

Of the four ASEAN Member States that responded to this question, one was clear that the existing scholarships complemented each other, one that they were complementary but competing for the same students with one stating that the number of scholarships was limited and competitive. Universities confirmed that scholarships are aimed at higher achieving students and there is considerable overlap.

One university responded that:

*“All scholarships now are competing for the same students with excellent academic performance, active engagement in social activities, innovative ideas and high soft and research skills”.*

To varying extents, students across all Member States indicated that they only heard about scholarship opportunities through their international office. Information was patchy and may only be offered to favoured students.

As one student stated:

*'it is unclear what counts as ASEAN scholarship? Is it awarded by ASEAN countries, ASEAN itself, or universities or other stakeholders? There is much more knowledge and information available on other national schemes, like Japanese or Korean scholarships, than on ASEAN opportunities. It is unclear what ASEAN has to offer.'*

A number of common issues were raised with regard to coherence. They related to misaligned administrative timetables, differing priorities between funded programmes and issues of bureaucratic control and reporting structures.

#### **4.2.5 Effectiveness of scholarship provision**

Effectiveness was explored along three different dimensions i.e. in relation to individual learners, universities and national/ASEAN bodies. Only two ASEAN Member States answered this question. One indicated that their policy has been quite successful in supporting human resource objectives and delivering quality educational services. The other said that there were benefits at all three levels.

Students suggested that scholarships should be advertised and offered to more diverse groups within the student population, saying

*"as I experienced, maybe the distribution of ASEAN students in some Member States is not really diverse. For example, in Cambodia, the students are not really many and most of them came from one country."*

*And "The mobility scholarship programmes should do advertisement all over the ASEAN Member States so that all students will know about it." and "Very few opportunities and a lack of advertising."*

*"Two proposals to improve ASEAN scholarships. Most of the grants are paid by a reimbursement basis. Most of the students who apply do not have the capital to pay costs upfront. So for example if they could find a solution for this, would be an improvement. Also, universities need to rethink their assessment systems (see above) when they decide who the scholarship goes to."*

There was no available evidence that there was any measurement or evaluation of the effectiveness or impact of existing scholarship programmes.

#### **4.2.6 Cost effectiveness**

Of the ASEAN Member States who responded to this question in the survey they indicated that existing mechanisms demonstrated cost effectiveness. Some lack of efficiency was cited of students withdrawing from the scholarship once offered. More than one HEI mentioned the difficulties in receiving payment late from ministries. AUN highlighted that their evaluation had revealed a mismatch in how

member universities interpret the student exchange programme concept. Such mismatch could occur in a number of ways including understanding of programme content, timelines for academic years and with regard to the submission of application forms.

#### **4.2.7 The added value of scholarship programmes**

While there may be areas in which administration could improve as highlighted above this does not mean that participants did not identify significant added value from scholarship programmes.

Students identified:

*“opportunities to connect with students from the region;”*

*“ Students can be exposed to international experiences which is very important for this century” “An excellent labour force will be a good value”*

and

*“ It gives an encouragement to improve step by step, supports to strive for getting a quality education, invites everyone to involve together in order to achieve the goals need to develop international dimension of their institutions.”*

HEI respondent states that:

*“That students who gain international experience will have more global competencies and 21st Century skills. These qualities are important the development of a skilled workforce which can serve industries/private sector” in Thailand in the future;*

*“Scholarships can also bring about ‘transformative changes not only in our students, but also in the agencies/universities/companies that they are attached to while they are abroad”.*

*Another stated “scholarship provision help individual, faculties & departments & universities to improve their quality and performance which then help faculties & departments & universities develop the university rank/grade in terms of faculties, department, and institutional accreditation.”*

HEIs said that the process of exchange and mobility was beneficial in developing their relationships with other HEIs and this in turn had an impact on quality.

#### **4.3 Enhancing scholarship provision in ASEAN**

The evidence outlined above shows that the ASEAN level scholarship programmes experience some operational challenges in terms of how they are delivered. In addition, as with many other scholarship programmes across the world there is limited systematic evidence of the outcomes of the programmes, or evaluation undertaken to establish these outcomes. The beneficiaries also appear to be the

academic high-achievers with less diversity in scholarship awardees. They also however bring benefits to the students who undertake mobility, the HEIs who participate in the programmes and ASEAN Member States.

However, the area where appears to be the major challenge is in alignment with ASEAN education, economic or socio-cultural priorities. Given that they are delivered by different organisations and shaped to a considerable degree by the HEIs who deliver them, the lack of explicit alignment would be expected. In terms of enhancing provision and impact though this alignment is the area in which in terms of enhancing scholarship provision most focus is required.

### **4.3.1 Aligning with ASEAN Policy Priorities**

The existing range of scholarship programmes do support ASEAN policy priorities at the broader, 'macro' level. By providing the opportunity for students to study in other Member States in the region they support the goal to '*promote greater people-to-people interaction and mobility within and outside ASEAN" leading to 'the free flow of ideas, knowledge, expertise and skills to inject dynamism within the region'* as stated in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 (ASEAN 2016a). However, a more coherent approach to scholarship provision could lead to scholarships having a greater impact on improving the economic and social development of ASEAN Member States. In order to do this, they would need to align with ASEAN policy priorities across four areas. How they could do this is described below.

### **4.3.2 Economic development**

There are twelve identified economic priority integration areas for ASEAN (ASEAN 2008). A stronger link between the mobility of skilled labour and these priority integration areas is recommended in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 (ASEAN 2016c). The Blueprint highlights scholarships specifically as supporting the mobility of skilled labour, but only those delivered by AUN. It would be an option here to link scholarship provision more explicitly with one or more of the economic priority areas.

Looking forward though, the challenges that ASEAN faces in dealing with the 4th Industrial Revolution will be, as for all parts of the world, significant. As the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Economic Community stated in 2019 'Driven by increasing digitalisation and innovation, ASEAN is on the brink of technological revolution' (ASEAN 2019a). However, as argued in the 2019 ASEAN Integration report in digital terms ASEAN Member States 'still have significant untapped potential. The digital economy represents only 7% of ASEAN's GDP, compared to 16% in China, 27% in EU' (ASEAN 2019b: 146). It is forecast that realising this potential could bring a benefit of up to USD1 trillion by 2025 to ASEAN (Bain and Company 2018). Efforts have been made to address to realise the potential of science and technology in ASEAN. The ASEAN plan for science (APASTI) 2016-2025 adopted in 2015 has as its first goal 'addressing the Grand Challenges of the new millennium' (ASTNET 2015)) An ASEAN scholarship programme for scientists is one of the actions being delivered as part of this plan. Linking scholarship provision in

ASEAN, both with the work under APASTI and directly with 4th industrial revolution challenges, would strengthen their impact.

### 4.3.3 Creating an ASEAN identity

A central tenet of ASEAN is the development of an ASEAN identity (ASEAN 2015a). This identity is grounded in an understanding and appreciation of the political and legal systems, culture and history of its Member States, respecting the diversity of ASEAN, and fostering a sense of togetherness as a community. As stated in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 political-security cooperation is a means of *'strengthening ASEAN unity and cohesiveness to build a more democratic, transparent, just, rules-based and inclusive community that shares the values of tolerance and moderation'* (ASEAN 2016SEA:2). Scholarships can and should have an important role to play here. As the evidence from the Erasmus+ programme showed they can contribute significantly to regional identity building. In order to create this identity, it is argued people mobility supported by scholarships is crucial in what is described as a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to identity building (Acharya 2015). This is especially relevant in ASEAN where in terms of the size of population and range of political systems, the diversity is much greater than most of other regions in the world (Acharya 2015).

The importance of scholarships in supporting the development of an ASEAN identity came through strongly in the survey. In terms of how scholarship provision could be improved, then focusing on supporting ASEAN identity was also identified by students:

*'It is very valuable to study in ASEAN. It allows for comparison and benchmarking of countries, increases cultural and social understanding, has many intangible benefits. It is also easy to travel to other Member States in ASEAN, and explore the region during studies, which is the hidden agenda of the mobility.'*

*'An ASEAN mobility scheme for ASEAN students) would foster greater ASEAN people-to-people understanding and a development of a stronger ASEAN identity.'*

The existing scholarship programmes which span across multiple ASEAN Member States do so in an uneven way, with some states less engaged than others and also involve non-Member States. While they undoubtedly enable students to learn more about other ASEAN Member States, this is an area where greater coherence could raise really raise the contribution that scholarships can make.

### 4.3.4 Ensuring equity and inclusion

A cross-cutting theme of both the ASEAN economic and identity driven agendas is a concern for equity and inclusion. The ASEAN Community Vision 2015 states clearly that one the priorities in terms of the future of the community is to ensure that it is:



*'An inclusive community that promotes high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities for all and promotes and protects human rights of women, children, youth, the elderly/older persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and vulnerable and marginalised groups.'*

(ASEAN 2015b:16)

Inequality is a major issue in the Asia and Pacific region with evidence showing that it may in fact have increased in the last 20 years (United Nations 2019). In some Member States the richest 1% control over half the population's wealth. The importance of addressing these inequalities has been further recognized by ASEAN leaders (The World Bank 2019).

In this context explicit provision to ensure those from all social backgrounds can benefit, should be a core principle of scholarship provision and as outlined above this is not yet the case in the programmes in ASEAN. Such provision will also support ASEAN efforts to achieve UNESCO's latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Target 4.B in UNESCO's latest SDGs refers explicitly to scholarship provisions:

*'substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed Member States and other developing countries.'*

#### **4.3.5 Strengthening of higher education**

Scholarships are mainly used to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of individuals. From an organisational point of view, a single scholarship will not impact substantially on an organisation – unless that person holds a strategic position and has sufficient power to introduce change. Organisations tend to benefit more from developing a critical mass of qualified people in the organisation or staff training that is embedded in networks or capacity development projects. Hence, to enhance the chances of organizational development through scholarships, a more 'orchestrated' approach needs to be adopted.

By embedding individual staff development trajectories in broader and integrated capacity development of the department or organization, the chances for utilisation of the know-how and competencies increase considerably. Collaboration with international partner HEIs has the added advantage that individuals and their organisations become members of international academic and scientific networks (Mawer 2018). As with the impact of scholarship provision overall the evidence here is limited, however work undertaken by the DAAD/British Council looking at programmes in countries stated that:

*'... officials familiar with the scholarship programmes have identified a number of anecdotal impacts, among them: improvements to the quality of teaching and research at universities, greater collaboration between campus units, changes to*

*the provision and quality of graduate education and an increase in the number of partner agreements and programmes like joint and dual degree programmes with universities in other nations.’ (British Council/DAAD 2014:59).*

In the ASEAN context, a more coherent, focused approach to scholarship provision could potentially contribute to all areas of the next ASEAN work Plan for Education 2021-2025 related to higher education internationalisation.

#### **4.4 A new framework for delivering scholarships in ASEAN**

Enhancing the benefits that scholarships can bring to ASEAN as described above will require a new framework to support their development. The need for such a framework has already been recognised. The ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 states under sub-goal 6 which is concerned with strengthening the higher education system project 51 is ‘conceptualise a single ASEAN brand scholarship by 2025’.

In terms of how a single branded scholarship or ‘SBS’ could be conceptualised, Diagram 3 below brings together the rationale for the greater coherence argued for above. The diagram adopts an intervention logic or theory of change approach. Intervention logic models are used frequently in education and health to help outline clearly how planned policy actions are expected to lead to desired outcomes. The model provides a description and / or diagram summarising how the ‘intervention’ (in this case the SBS) is expected to work. They provide *‘in a simplified way, a hypothesis or ‘theory of change’ about how an intervention works’* (Public Health England 2018).

**Diagram 3: The intervention logic of an ASEAN SBS**

Objectives	Inputs	Beneficiaries	Types of actions	Outcomes	Long-term impacts <sup>16</sup>
Support ASEAN strategic priorities in:  Economic Development  The development of an ASEAN identity  Equity and inclusion  Strengthening of higher education and harmonisation of higher education in ASEAN	Funding	Students	Mobility	Improved knowledge, skills and understanding, wider understanding of different Member States and cultures	Improvements in academic performance Enhanced employability options Better cross-cultural understanding of ASEAN Member States and an ASEAN identity
	Infrastructure, systems and overall management	Universities	Capacity building, Networking	Improved professional development and opportunities, stronger connections with business and enterprise, stronger international networks, modernisation of Universities	Improved staff performance Improved methods of teaching and learning Improved leadership governance and management Greater networking, partnerships, internationalisation Increased competitiveness and attractiveness of ASEAN Universities and Member States
	Support for knowledge management and dissemination	ASEAN Member States	Peer learning, support for ASEAN strategies, Policy dialogue	Awareness of policy challenges, development of a learning community, enhanced data for decision	Harmonised mobility activities with respect to credit transfer and quality assurance in ASEAN Capacity-building for staff involved in managing higher education mobility programmes in ASEAN Strengthening people- to people connectivity Development of global mindset among students Boosting student mobility to improve quality of education, and promote mutual understanding and awareness

In Diagram 3, the long-term impacts for three target groups: students, HEIs and ASEAN Member States are considered. The objectives are drawn from the analysis above of ASEAN policy priorities. The inputs are partly in place already through the programmes that exist but as outlined below will need further development and additional input if the objectives are to be achieved. The beneficiaries have already been described above. The types of action include student mobility of course but

<sup>16</sup>The impacts describe here are also drawn from the European Commission (2018) Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes- Final report – main evaluation report (volume 1) Luxembourg, European Commission Available at <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/eval/icf-volume1-main-report.pdf> . Last accessed 24/4/20

the model recognises the importance of capacity building and peer learning based on the student mobility work which both enhances it and also produces the additional benefits for HEIs and ASEAN Member States described above. The outcomes and long term impacts are clearly outlined in column 4. They are the result of the actions in column 3. The impacts are those that would be expected from international student mobility scholarship programmes based on the evidence available. The impacts also relate to the four development areas of ASEAN described above i.e. economic development, ASEAN identity etc.

#### 4.4.1

#### **An ASEAN ‘Single Branded Scholarship’ SBS framework**

In order to deliver the benefits of coherence articulated in the intervention logic diagram, a certain approach to what a single branded scholarship constitutes is required. The evidence above shows that in ASEAN, there are long standing programmes at ASEAN level and a complex mix of provision at national level. Another programme added to this landscape would not deliver the coherence required. It is important to emphasise from the outset then that the term single branded scholarship is not interpreted here as meaning one programme. The ‘Single Branded Scholarship’ (SBS) is rather a framework. This framework provides a structure within which different, individual scholarship programmes can be delivered and a support mechanism for these programmes to allow them to be better connected to the priorities described above.

As a framework, the SBS should look to include existing programmes. The programmes operating at the ASEAN level should be invited to become part of the framework and provided with the appropriate support and funding incentives to do so, while being able to retain their own identity. They should also be invited to participate in the design and development of the ASEAN SBS framework.

The strategic aims of the SBS should be framed around the strategic priorities for the development of ASEAN as expressed through the Community pillars of ASEAN and the associated Blueprints and plans that sit support them. How the SBS formulates its objectives in the context of these plans will require extensive consultation with ASEAN Member States. The main challenge identified by ASEAN Member States in the survey for this Study was how the SBS would fit with national priorities.

‘Advantages of an SBS include an ability to meet the specific needs related to the economic and social development of the ASEAN region and opportunities for students to broaden their horizons and develop important skills such as leadership, communication and other life skills to equip them for the 21st century. They can also help to promote goodwill and understanding among young people from ASEAN different countries... (but there will be) difficulties in aligning respective ASEAN Member States internationalisation policies in achieving the ‘single branded scholarship’ initiative.’

Malaysia

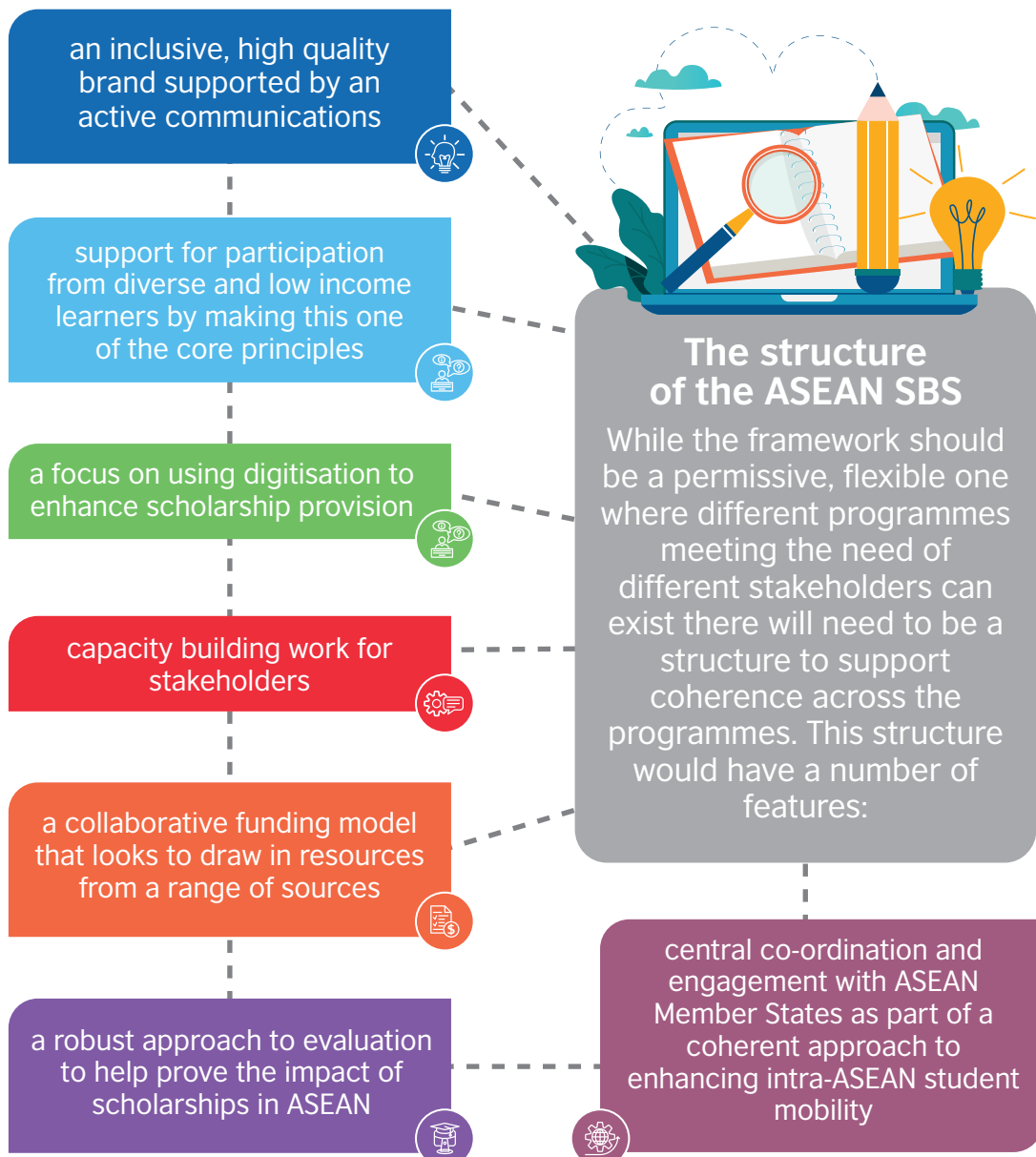
*'Advantages of an SBS include promoting cultural and academic engagement between the students in ASEAN Member States and expanding the possibility for students to experience the cultural and academic environments in ASEAN HEIs. But there are a wide range of scholarship schemes due to different socio-economic conditions between ASEAN member countries. It will be challenging to develop a scholarship scheme that fits to each country's socio-economic condition.'*

**Indonesia**

In establishing how the ASEAN SBS should fit with the priorities of different ASEAN Member States the key will be aligning these priorities with ASEAN strategic priorities as described above and issues such as sectoral coverage, types and length of mobility periods. This will require a consultative process that frames what the ASEAN SBS and is an ongoing feature of its culture and structures.

**4.4.2**

**Infographic 7: The structure of the ASEAN SBS**



#### **4.4.3 An inclusive, high quality SBS brand**

It is an imperative to develop a single ‘brand’ for the ASEAN SBS that raises awareness of the offer to prospective recipients, participating HEIs and partner organisations. Single branding would bring with it a single point of information reduction in duplication and development of a critical mass which would benefit not only individual learners but would also benefit the higher education system. This approach echoes the European experience whereby several programmes were brought together into a single Erasmus+ brand thereby facilitating promotion of study in Europe (European Commission 2020).

It is important to begin developing this brand at the earliest juncture with stakeholders from each programme that is part of the framework involved in these discussions. If the framework includes brands associated with existing programmes, this will need to be considered carefully. They bring with them a level of understanding amongst students and stakeholders capturing the distinctiveness of these programmes. However, for the SBS to develop its identity there will need to be a distinctiveness to its brand. An option for further consultation may be for each programme in the framework to have its own title but with a common ASEAN prefix applied where it does not apply at present. This branding can then be extended as a “quality mark” to denote accredited participants and providers of ASEAN SBS programmes.

To support the development of the brand, active communications will be needed. At the centre of this would be a single consolidated website which brings together the different scholarship programmes available within the framework. Currently information is dispersed across a number of sites, which those delivering the programmes have to devote resource to keep up to date. Students are dependent on their own ability to search or on their university international office. The available websites that exist to profile a wide range of scholarships from different providers are all commercial with no vetting procedure, increasing student vulnerability to fraudulent practice.

A comprehensive source of information pertaining to the ASEAN SBS should be easily searchable and accessible to all. Documents, decisions and processes relating to scholarship provision should be transparent and accessible in the public domain to the extent that data protection legislation allows.

#### **4.4.4 Support for participation from diverse and low income learners**

The case for supporting participation from diverse and low-income learners was made strongly above. Doing this however will take a concerted effort. Work by UNESCO looking at scholarships to support both domestic and international higher education entry suggest that those in higher income groups actually benefit from scholarships more than those in low income groups (UNESCO 2018).

Providing financial support, even additional support as proposed in below, is not on its own likely to be enough. There will also need to be targeted marketing and

information at the groups who are under-represented in present scholarship programmes. This targeted marketing should ideally be coupled with the allocating of a set number of places for such groups with stipulations to participating HEIs that they must recruit to SBS programmes a given number of such students.

In order to implement this set of measures, better data on who is under-represented in student mobility and scholarship funded student mobility will be required to define clearly the target groups here. One of the initial tasks of the ASEAN Student Mobility Research centre recommended in chapter 2 if it was to be funded, should be to undertake this work. The engagement of ASEAN Member States will also be essential in order to ensure that the students who fall into these targeted groups link to those groups who ASEAN Member States are focussed on already with their work to address inequalities in their society. It may be the case that who is included in this category differs across ASEAN Member States.

#### **4.4.5 Using digitisation to enhance scholarship provision**

The concept of student mobility itself has been evolving through the 21st century as information technology can enable different sorts of mobility and developments in the mobility experience. The SBS, if it is to enhance scholarship provision in ASEAN, must be able to incorporate developing technology into how the framework operates. The extent to which it can do this will depend in the main on how effectively it is co-ordinated but also being flexible and dynamic in terms of what programmes are included in the SBS framework. This will mean seeking to include programmes which feature very blended learning models which combine physical and online delivery.

A particular example of how the SBS may be able to incorporate digitisation into how the framework operates may be through the use of 'Blockchain' technology in the issuance and recognition of qualifications. The Groningen Declaration, signed on 16 April 2012, asserted that *“digital student data portability and digital student data depositories are becoming increasingly concrete and relevant realities, and in the years to come, they will contribute decisively to the free movement of students and skilled workers on a global scale”*. Since then, this agenda has been furthered by the Groningen Declaration Network's international signatories with the stated aim to *“further global human capital cross border mobility”* (McDermott, 2019).

Blockchain is a technical solution which makes it possible for participants of an ASEAN SBS to have their qualifications and credits to be issued, recognised, transferred and rendered portable through a digital credential wallet across ASEAN and beyond. The technology is available and adaptable to be embedded in the establishment of an ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship at minimal cost and maximum effect. It would constitute the first such initiative by a regional student mobility programme.

As McDermott (2019) argues “the emergence of an ASEAN standard to certify, issue, share and verify academic credentials on an ASEAN SBS Blockchain will go some way towards achieving the dream of an innovative ASEAN Higher Education Area and a vibrant, people-centred ASEAN Community.’

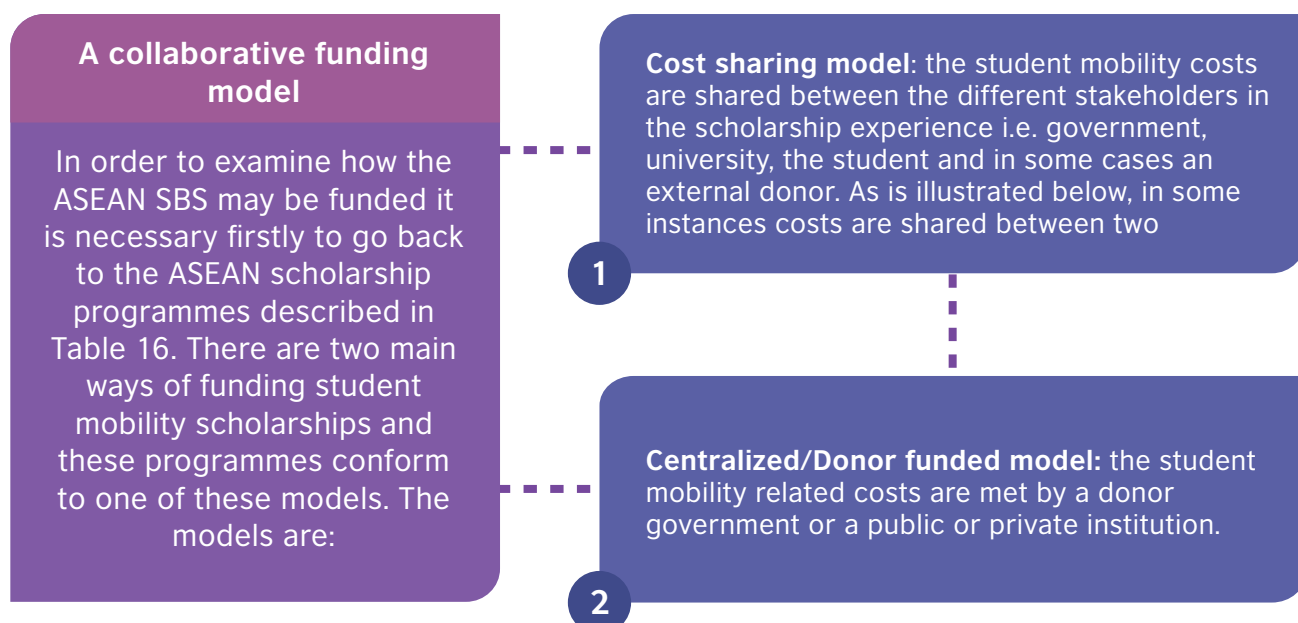
#### 4.4.6 Capacity building work for stakeholders

In order to enhance intra-ASEAN student mobility through scholarship provision education officials, programme co-ordinating organisations and HEIs will require the skills and knowledge to deliver and develop effective programmes. This will require a capacity building strategy. The strategy should include a programme of specific continuous professional development sessions in areas of scholarship provision e.g. ensuring equitable participation, embedding evaluation into programme design, developing pastoral support for scholarship students, digitisation of provision etc. Alongside these activities as part of the ASEAN Student University Mobility initiative described in the following chapter an ASEAN SUM scholarships network is proposed which will function as a community of practice to support the development of effective scholarships. The network will aim to support those engaged in scholarship provision via the ASEAN SBS through exchange of knowledge, fostering collaboration and generating new policy and practice ideas.

Of particular importance under the capacity building strand of work of the ASEAN SBS will be engaging a wider group of HEIs in scholarship provision than are engaged at present. By engaging a wider group of HEIs, with a focus here especially on ASEAN Member States with lower levels of outbound student mobility the ASEAN SBS will be better positioned to support the strategic priorities described above.

In addition, an emphasis on capacity building may be able, over the mid to long-term period, to support the development of ASEAN Joint programmes at bachelors, masters and eventually doctorate levels with embedded intra-ASEAN mobility.

#### 4.5 Infographic 8: A collaborative funding model





#### 4.5.1 The AIMS programme: government funded cost sharing

The AIMS programme, co-ordinated by SEAMEO RIHED, sees the costs of the programme divided between the home government, host government and the student as shown in Table 18<sup>18</sup>. In this model the home government bears the majority of the costs. Students participating in the programme are required to cover visa, medical tests, and other pre-entry tests, which may include English language tests.

**Table 18: AIMS cost sharing model**

Mobility cost category	HG	Host government	Student
International travel	Y		
International health insurance	Y		
Accommodation expenses	Y		
Monthly allowance	Y		
Visa costs			Y
Tuition		Y	
Pre entry testing			Y
Medical		Y	

#### 4.5.2 AUN and UMAP programmes: university funded cost-sharing

The AUN and UMAP programmes are ‘university-funded’ cost-sharing models where the costs of student mobility are borne by participating HEIs. For the AUN programme further information regarding the scholarships offered by HEIs in the AUN network is detailed in Table 19<sup>19</sup>. From the information available it appears that the main way in which HEIs contribute to the cost of student mobility is by waiving the tuition fee. The remainder of the costs – travel, subsistence etc. are met by the student.

<sup>18</sup> adapted from SEAMEO RIHED (2012) ASEAN International Mobility Programme: Operational Handbook (pp.13-16)

<sup>19</sup> Source: ASEAN University Network <http://www.aunsec.org/scholarships.php>

**Table 19: AUN cost sharing model**

University	Scholarship(s)	Type	No offered
Universiti Brunei Darussalam	UBD Student Exchange Program	4-weeks summer global discovery program Undergraduate & post graduate levels Tuition fee waiver for Exchange for AUN Member Universities students	10 exchange /partner university
Universitas Airlangga	Academic Mobility Exchange for Undergraduate at Airlangga (AMERTA)	Semester Exchange for Undergraduate 1 semester Tuition fee waived Partial scholarship provided (IDR 5 million for 1 semester)	60 students /semester
	Airlangga Development Scholarship	Full Time Study (Master and PhD)	20 students /year
University Malaya	Student Exchange Programme	Semester exchange for undergraduate	5
National University of Singapore	Temasek Foundation International Leadership Enrichment and Regional Networking Program	One semester Tuition fees waived Students will receive 6,500 Singapore Dollars	
Nanyang Technological University	Temasek Foundation International Leadership Enrichment & Regional Networking Program	Semester exchange	Up to 40
Singapore Management University	Temasek Foundation International Leadership Enrichment & Regional Networking Program	Undergraduate semester exchange Students will receive 6,500 Singapore Dollars	
Prince of Sokla University	PSU Education Hub	One semester or short-term scholarship	

As outlined above the UMAP Scholarship programme is made up of three different sub-programmes. Table 20 below outlines the differences between the programmes in terms of financial support. In addition to the three sub-programmes UMAP also offer specific summer programmes. It is unclear if program fees (e.g. tuition, accommodation and other expenses) are covered by the organizer. However, in the upcoming UMAP Discovery Camp 2020 “Uniquely Malaysia: The Colours of Culture”<sup>20</sup> programme fees are covered by the organizer, while international travel and expenses (e.g. medical insurance) are covered by the participants.

<sup>20</sup>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2020. International Relations Centre (UKM Global). [Online] Available at: <http://www.ukm.my/pha/umap/> [Accessed 1 April 2020].

**Table 20: UMAP scholarship programme funding**

Program A (Multi-lateral Exchange)	Program B (Bi-lateral Exchange)	Program C (short-term exchanges)
2 students/participating university  *universities can accept more than 2 students subject to reciprocity (outbound students) the following semester (without expiry date)	For more than 2 students	Data Not Available
Tuition fee waiver basis	Universities decide to waive or not to waive tuition	Universities decide to waive or not to waive tuition
One to two semesters	One to two semesters	One to eight weeks
		UMAP offers scholarships to selected participants

### 4.5.3 SHARE Intra-ASEAN Mobility Scheme: centralized/donor funded model

The SHARE Intra-ASEAN Mobility Scheme is an example of the centralized donor funded model. It is fully funded by the European Commission, which covers the various student mobility costs and incorporates also a management/handling fee for both host and home HEIs. Table 21 provides a more detailed analysis of how the costs of the scholarship programme are divided between its constituent parts.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 21: EU SHARE Funding Model**

Relevant Costs	Home University	Host University
Subsistence Allowance (including accommodation)		Euros 450/Month
Settling-in-allowance	Euros 150	
Study Materials		Euros 100
Student Visa/ Resident Permit costs	At cost (Max at Euros 230)	
Travel Costs a. International travel b. Domestic travel c. Travel from International airport to host university's accommodation and back	Euros 500 Euros 200 Euros 100	
Insurance	At cost (max at Euros 300)	
Tuition fee		Waived
Management/handling fee	Euros 200	Euros 200

<sup>21</sup>source: email communication with Arief Maulana, SHARE Programme Manager

While the SHARE Intra-ASEAN Mobility Scheme is the most prominent centralised donor funded model in ASEAN, other examples in Asia exist. The Asian Development Bank – Japan Scholarship program (ADB-JSP) (ADB 2020) is a state funded scholarship programme. It is fully funded by the Government of Japan, is an example of a donor funded program (at post graduate level) tailored for students in the major fields: science & technology; economics, business and management; development studies; and law and public policy. ADB-JSP provides for full tuition fees, a monthly stipend and housing allowance, an allowance for books and instructional materials, medical insurance, and travel expenses.

The DAAD-funded Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) Graduate Scholarships in Agriculture for Southeast Asians is a Masters (MS)/PhD Scholarship Programme (SEARCA 2020). It aims to ensure the relevance and responsiveness of Southeast Asia’s agricultural scientists and professionals to global sustainable development issues. It covers tuition and other school fees; travel allowance (roundtrip air ticket from home country to study post and local transportation); thesis/dissertation support; book and supplies allowance; health insurance; and a stipend for food, lodging and incidental expenses. It is noticeable how these two programmes are post-graduate as opposed to under-graduate programmes.

#### **4.5.4 How scholarships are funded in ASEAN Member States**

As outlined earlier in this chapter a range of scholarship programmes exist in ASEAN Member States. A more detailed examination of the selected scholarships offered in Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Malaysia by their respective governments, HEIs or private foundations/corporations is provided in Table 22 below. As can be seen, funding for the various programmes comes from a combination of state HEIs, government ministries and private corporations or foundations. The programmes in Table 21 are a mix of donor funded and cost-sharing models, with even in the cost-sharing models the majority of the costs borne by the funders. It is noticeable that two of the programmes: the CIMB programme in Malaysia and the scholarship offered by the National University of Singapore, focus on students from ASEAN.

**Table 22: Examples of ASEAN Member States Scholarship Programmes Funding**

Country	Scholarship provider	What the scholarship covers
Brunei <sup>23</sup> Darussalam	University of Brunei Darussalam Graduate Scholarship (UGS)	Tuition waived, including registration and acceptance fees Subsistence allowance BND 500/ month for 36 months On campus accommodation for 36 months 1 international round trip ticket Allowances for field research (BND 1000.00 for Arts and Humanities, and BND 2000.00 for Science candidates) Visa fees will be included in the scholarship for candidates.
	University of Brunei Darussalam Graduate Research Scholarship (UGRS)	Tuition waived, including registration and acceptance fees Subsistence allowance BND 1,500/ month for 36 months 1 international round trip ticket Allowances for field research (Brunei Dollar 3,000.00 for per Science PhD candidates and Brunei Dollar 1,000.00 for Arts and Humanities PhD candidates). Visa fees will be included in the scholarship for candidates.
Malaysia	Malaysian International Scholarship	Tuition fees Monthly living allowance: RM 1,500.00 Travel expenses will not be provided
	CIMB ASEAN Scholarship (undergraduate studies)	Tuition fees Living allowances; insurance & other related fees
	KUOK Undergraduate Public University Scholarship Kuok Keng Kang Scholarship/ <sup>24</sup>	Value: RM15,000/year
Singapore <sup>25</sup>	Singapore International Graduate Award (up to 4 years) <sup>26</sup>	Tuition fees Monthly stipend: S\$2,000 increased to S\$2,500 after passing qualifications exam One-time airfare grant: S\$1,500 Settling in allowance: S\$1,000
	National University of Singapore - ASEAN Undergraduate Scholarship <sup>27</sup>	Tuition fees (after MOE Tuition Grant Subsidy) S\$5,800 annual living allowance
	Lee Kong Chian Graduate Scholarship (PhD)	A monthly stipend of S\$3,300; Tuition, examination fees and other approved fees; An annual book allowance of S\$500; A one-off air travel allowance of 2 return tickets of up to S\$4,000 (only for overseas students subject to a maximum of S\$2,000 per ticket); and A one-off laptop allowance of S\$1,500

<sup>23</sup>Universiti Brunei Darussalam, n.d. *UBD Graduate Scholarship*. [Online]  
Available at: [https://ubd.edu.bn/admission/graduate/fees-and-funding\(graduate\)/ubd-graduate-scholarship.html](https://ubd.edu.bn/admission/graduate/fees-and-funding(graduate)/ubd-graduate-scholarship.html) [Accessed 1 April 2020].

<sup>24</sup>KUOK Foundation Berhad, n.d. *Undergraduate*. [Online]  
Available at: [http://www.kuokfoundation.com/study\\_under\\_latest.html](http://www.kuokfoundation.com/study_under_latest.html) [Accessed 1 April 2020].

<sup>25</sup>National University of Singapore

<sup>26</sup>Agency for Science, Technology and Research, 2020. *Singapore International Graduate Award*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.a-star.edu.sg/Scholarships/For-Graduate-Studies/Singapore-International-Graduate-Award-SINGA> [Accessed 1 April 2020].

<sup>27</sup>National University of Singapore, n.d. *ASEAN Undergraduate Scholarship*. [Online]  
Available at: [http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/scholarships/freshmen-sprs/asean-undergraduate-scholarship-\(aus\)](http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/scholarships/freshmen-sprs/asean-undergraduate-scholarship-(aus)) [Accessed 1 April 2020].

In addition to the programmes described above, it is valuable to highlight how in other ASEAN Member States there exist programmes supported by foundation and large corporations. In the Philippines, the Aboitiz Foundation, SM Foundation and Ayala Foundation offer scholarships, particularly at undergraduate levels usually for socio-economically disadvantaged students or academic excellence basis. These scholarships include full tuition, monthly allowance, and in some cases part time work (Edukasyon 2018).

Although evidence of the benefits that accrue to the above mentioned scholarships are not readily available, it demonstrates the willingness of major corporations to establish scholarships for mainly high achieving students within their respective countries.

#### **4.5.5 How scholarships are funded outside ASEAN**

Before examining how an ASEAN SBS may be funded, scholarship funding models from outside of ASEAN are examined. Again, the Erasmus+ programme supported by the European Commission provides an informative reference point. There are three areas where the ERASMUS programme differs in particular with regard to the funding model of the scholarship programmes examined above:

- A significant amount of money is provided for the participating universities to support their co-ordination of the student mobility activity associated with the programme. This support is based on the number of mobility participants and funded at 350 Euros per participant for the first 100 students who are engaged in the programme and 200 Euros per participant for additional students.
- Additional support of between 100 to 200 Euros per month is provided for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Subsistence support for students is provided related to an assessment of the level of living costs of the country where the students go to study. Member States are divided into three different bands – high, medium and low living cost countries.

#### 4.5.6 Scholarship Funding in ASEAN: diversity and difference

The analysis above illustrates that as is the case with the focus, content and organisation of scholarship programmes in ASEAN their funding arrangements also differ. Table 23 below summarises the extent of these differences.

**Table 23: Scholarship funding ASEAN level programmes overview**

Mobility cost category	Level of support provided
Tuition	0 costs to cost of full tuition
Subsistence Allowance (including accommodation)	265 to 450 Euros/month
Insurance	0 – at cost (max of 300 Euros)
Visa	0 – at cost (max of 230 Euros)
International Travel	0 – max of 500 Euros
Management/Handling Fee	0 – 200 Euros/institution

#### 4.5.7 Funding the ASEAN Single-Branded Scholarship (SBS) Framework

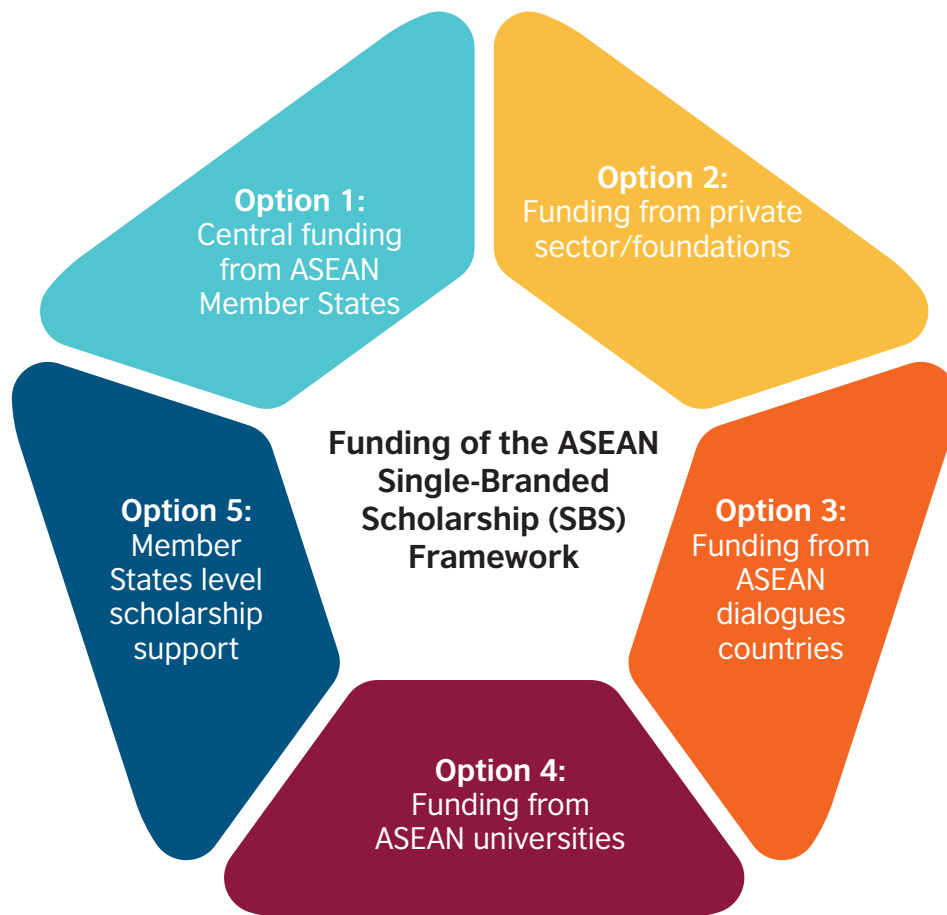
of the provision already on offer in the region. It is important to recognize though that the ASEAN SBS itself is a framework which seeks to enhance and expand the scholarship programmes on offer in ASEAN. It is not one individual scholarship programme such as those described above. The views of the ASEAN Member States who responded to the Study survey with regard to the funding of the ASEAN SBS framework are outlined below in Table 24.

**Table 24: Funding of ASEAN SBS – Views of ASEAN Member States**

Country	View on funding ASEAN SBS
Cambodia	The contribution from the member states should be on equitable, not equal, basis. Support from the private sector and beneficiaries are also needed.
Indonesia	A commitment of each AMS to regularly donate annually is needed.
Malaysia	Greater collaboration between AMS (including public and private sectors), dialogue Partners and other regional/ international organizations is needed to support cross-border funding and student mobility. MOE Malaysia has restricted funds in carrying out the existing scholarship programmes for in-service groups, if ASEAN would like to propose for a new single branded scholarship programme, it is best to get a new source of funding from the ASEAN member states by mutual study grants.
Myanmar	We believe a single branded scholarship for ASEAN can be funded sustainably
Philippines	Government, industry, academe coming together will ensure the success of an ASEAN scholarship that does not only pertain to academic learning but by experiential learning through training in industries, immersion in local communities, participation in people's organizations, building social enterprises for sustainability.
Thailand	If we are to have the scheme, contribution from member states is a must. Each ASEAN member state should contribute but we cannot comment if it should be equally or based on each country's GDP.. Additional resources from the private sector would help.

As can be seen from Table 23, there are a range of views on funding. Not all respondents detail a preferred funding methodology. There is however an interest in looking at how funding could come from a range of sources. In the section below 5 different options regarding funding an ASEAN SBS are explored which builds on the review of evidence regarding how ASEAN programmes are funded at present and the views of representatives of Member States.

**Infographic 9: Funding of the ASEAN Single-Branded Scholarship (SBS) Framework**



**Option 1: Central funding from ASEAN Member States**

The first option is to establish a fund to support the ASEAN SBS, to be managed by an ASEAN body. It is recognised that ASEAN Member States differ in size and levels of GDP. Such differences underlie some of the views in Table 23 above. There are – within this funding option – differing alternatives regarding how contributions from ASEAN Member States could be decided. Taking as a precedent the establishment of the ASEAN Development Fund (ASEAN 2005) and the ASEAN Science Fund (ASEAN 2000) equal investment from each ASEAN Member States is one potential way of funding an ASEAN SBS. Alternative approaches would look at funding related to the economic development of the ASEAN Member State. Looking outside ASEAN, the NordPlus programme described below is an example of a scholarship programme where funding from the participating Member States is related to economic performance.



Given that the ASEAN SBS is conceived to enable scholarship provision to have greater alignment with the strategic priorities for the region described above it is logical that ASEAN Member States would contribute funding to it. The exact amount funding provided by each ASEAN Member State should be decided upon by a process of consultation between ASEAN Member States and after the production of a full strategic plan for the development of the ASEAN SBS by the ASEAN Secretariat. There are also limits to the funding that ASEAN Member States can provide to any scholarship programme which makes the options below also important to explore.

### **Option 2: Funding from private sector/foundations**

As the evidence below indicates, there is a willingness of the donor community and the private sector to fund student mobility scholarships for students from ASEAN. However, the evidence also shows that private sector or donor-funded international scholarships are for full degree programmes (mostly at postgraduate level) and such programmes are strongly thematic e.g. the DAAD-SEARCA Graduate Scholarship with its focus on agriculture. As shown above, the present provision at ASEAN level covers a range of subject areas and also is in the main no longer than a semester in length.

In terms of the viability of private sector/foundations providing all or the majority of the funding for an ASEAN SBS, there would be a number of issues to address and overcome. Firstly, the ASEAN SBS to meet the needs of different ASEAN Member States, HEIs and students the framework will want to incorporate within it programmes that differ in length and cover a range of subject areas. The evidence outline above suggests that corporate interests and charitable foundations would require scholarships to be consistent with their corporate vision, mission and/or geographic business interests. Such scholarships are likely to cover only part of what the ASEAN SBS will look to include. In addition, the changing nature of the external economic environment may make it difficult to generate the level of funds necessary to implement the ASEAN SBS framework. It is forecasted that COVID-19 is likely to have a negative impact on the ASEAN economy over the next two to three years (ASEAN 2020).

However, while it may not be feasible for private sector/foundations to fully fund an ASEAN SBS, the evidence above does show there is the potential to attract funding from private sector/foundations to support programmes. Such programmes may be ones that align with the strategic priorities of the ASEAN SBS and private sectors/foundations. Examples of such alignment may in the areas of addressing the impact of climate change, developing future leaders, achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the promotion and development of the ASEAN Community pillars. The engagement of private sector business interests could also be supported by tax incentives (such as deductions) should they support programmes as part of the ASEAN SBS.

### **Option 3: Funding from ASEAN dialogue countries**

ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and other external parties are actively engaged in the provision of scholarship support at present in ASEAN, for example with the EU supporting ASEAN EU-SHARE Intra-ASEAN Mobility Scheme and China with the programme ASEAN-China Young Leaders Scholarship. However, they would not represent a viable option as sole funders as they will focus on specific programmes only and dependence on external funding entirely may place the SBS at risk if the priorities of countries/regions outside ASEAN change. As with private sector/foundations, ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and other external parties can be potentially important supporters of scholarship programmes and add their expertise and knowledge to the development of the ASEAN SBS.

### **Option 4: Funding from ASEAN universities**

As outlined above, HEIs in ASEAN are also providers of scholarship support. Through bilateral and multi-lateral activity, they support students via tuition waiver/subsidy as well as in some cases meeting travel and subsistence costs. The evidence presented above looking at existing ASEAN programmes shows that university level investment would not, on its own, support a coherent ASEAN SBS framework – it can support scholarship delivery to a degree but it would not align with ASEAN priorities explicitly. There may be potential for greater investment in scholarship programmes from ASEAN HEIs if the incentives were in place for such investment. There are three particular routes through which this investment could occur:

- expanding the range of HEIs offering scholarship support beyond those in existing programmes;
- HEIs hosting scholarship students meeting accommodation and subsistence as well as tuition costs; and
- closer integration of student mobility into existing academic programmes enabling costs of tuition to be incorporated into the cost to the student of the programme itself.

### **Option 5: Member States level scholarship support**

In addition to any contributions to an ASEAN SBS central fund there are a number of other ways in which ASEAN Member States could support the development of the ASEAN SBS framework.

- Migrating national level scholarship programmes into the ASEAN SBS framework.
- Treating ASEAN students as 'home' students equalising cost differences in tuition across countries.
- Provide student loans to support intra-ASEAN mobility

As Table 15 above showed the scholarship provision at ASEAN Member State level differs greatly across ASEAN. In some Member States, national scholarship programmes individual to that Member State do not appear to be present, although for all Member States some form of activity is evident including partnership building with other Member States to support scholarship delivery. Given this variability the existence of the ASEAN SBS could offer some ASEAN Member States the opportunity to strengthen their national provision via more collaborative working. However, as emphasised in 4.4.1 above, establishing the appropriate consultative structures to ensure that the differing goals of Member States are appreciated and reflected in the way the SBS is established and then delivered is critical here.

Treating ASEAN students as home students will benefit certain students who travel to Member States where tuition costs may be lower than in their home Member States but unless coupled with additional funding to reduce/waive tuition, cover subsistence etc. represents a form of scholarship that offers one of lowest levels of support for students.

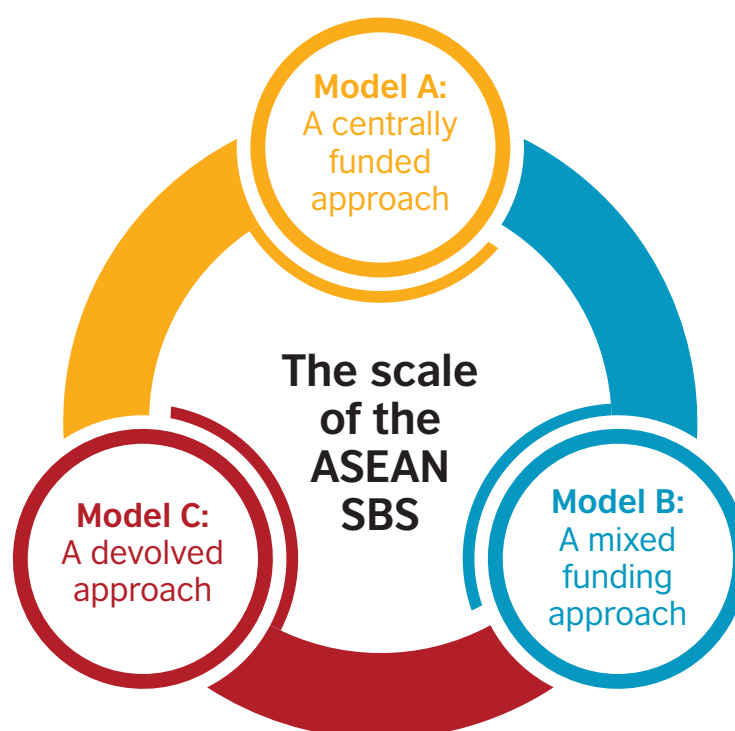
Where constraints in student funding exist, as they do across the world, loan based funding is often seen as a solution. The provision of student loans for intra-ASEAN student mobility/scholarships by national governments, through their respective Ministries of Education, or through a government guarantee arrangement with local banks has the potential in principle to support significant expansion of scholarships programmes. However, evidence from both ASEAN and non-ASEAN Member States suggests that the actual collection of student loans is a challenge across the world (Ziderman 2013). As such, although the provision of student loans is an option, a specific, detailed further study in addition to this one with a longer timescale would be required to establish the feasibility of using student loans to fund student mobility scholarships as part of the ASEAN SBS.

#### **4.5.8 The scale of the ASEAN SBS**

The analysis above has shown that there are range of potential sources of funding for an ASEAN SBS. However, while the private sector/foundations, HEIs and dialogue Member States can all contribute to an ASEAN SBS core none on their own could support it. Central funding from ASEAN Member States at some level will be required.

The level of financial support provided for the ASEAN SBS is a decision for ASEAN Member States in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This section outlines a number of options regarding the scale of an ASEAN SBS, based on the differing ways of funding the ASEAN SBS outlined above. For the purposes of illustrating how central funding could be utilised in different ways a contribution of USD 1 million per ASEAN Member State is assumed to cover a 5 year delivery period. Such an amount is also consistent with the establishment of the ASEAN Development Fund in 2005. It must be stressed that this is an indicative amount and is used below to help illustrate how different funding models for an ASEAN SBS could work. Depending on the outcomes of further, detailed consultation between ASEAN Member States this contribution may be scaled down or indeed up.

## Infographic 10: The scale of the ASEAN SBS



### Model A: A centrally funded approach

The first option uses funding from ASEAN Member States, after capacity building and co-ordination have been accounted for, to directly fund new scholarship programmes such as those described in section 4.8 below. In this model and models B and C the period of study is projected as one semester.

**Table 25: Scholarship provision for Model A**

Category	Use of ASEAN SBS Funding	No of scholarships
<b>Scholarship provision</b>		
ASEAN SBS funded	7,000,000	1750
ASEAN SBS funded for disadvantaged students	2,000,000	400
Private/Foundation	N/A	100
ASEAN level programmes	N/A	300
ASEAN Member States	N/A	200
University led	N/A	0
Dialogue countries/regions supported	N/A	200
Co-ordination	500,000	
Capacity Building	500,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>2950</b>

In Table 24 the cost per scholarship for the ASEAN SBS funded scholarships is taken as USD 4000. This costing is modelled on the EU-SHARE scholarship which provides the most comprehensive level of support of any of the programmes described above. It includes support for both the home and host university. The ASEAN SBS funded scholarships for disadvantaged students is modelled at a cost of USD 5000. Such provision, is consistent with the recommendation made above regarding integrating a focus on equitable access to the programmes within the ASEAN SBS.

A number of scholarships are forecast in this model supported by other stakeholders – but no funds are allocated directly to incentivise these stakeholders to develop programmes in the SBS framework as in the models below. The numbers of scholarships delivered under the SBS brand from through other mechanisms than ASEAN SBS funded is an estimate. The numbers of new private/foundation scholarships are modest at 100 reflecting the likely economic environment over the next 5 years. Outside of the ASEAN level programmes there is no delivery by HEIs included in this model. It must be emphasised that these numbers of scholarships will inevitably be estimates as no framework such as this has been launched before in ASEAN.

Finally, there is an element in the budget for capacity building for those in HEIs responsible for student mobility. This will enable them to more effectively support the implementation of the ASEAN SBS and continue to contribute towards the harmonisation of higher education in ASEAN. Such capacity building is also consistent with Sub Goal 6/ Priority Area 6.2 of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016 -2020 which outlines the need to coordinate capacity-building for staff involved in managing higher education mobility programmes in ASEAN.

### **Model B: A mixed funding approach**

Model A would provide in principle the most straightforward approach to ensuring that there is an increase in provision and alignment with ASEAN priorities. All investment would go to scholarship programmes managed centrally by the SBS co-ordinating unit which could be designed to meet ASEAN strategic priorities.

Under Model B, there is the potential for stakeholders to provide additional scholarships through the ASEAN SBS team building relations with these stakeholders – but there is no funding set aside to support this work. Greater emphasis could be placed on engaging such stakeholders by allocating some of the central funds to match funding with these stakeholders to create more cost-sharing scholarships. In addition, funds are allocated to support existing scholarship programmes at ASEAN level described in Table 16 to become part of the SBS happen. Table 26 outlines how this approach could lead to 4250 scholarships. The numbers of scholarships from other stakeholders are an estimate but it is assumed that using central funds to match fund will lead to more scholarships provided.

**Table 26: Scholarship provision for Model B**

Category	ASEAN SBS Funding	Partner funding	No of scholarships
<b>Scholarship provision</b>			
ASEAN SBS funded	3,000,000		750
ASEAN SBS funded for disadvantaged students	2,000,000		500
Private/Foundation	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
ASEAN level programme	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
ASEAN Member States	1,000,000	1,000,000	1000
University led	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
Dialogue Member States	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
Co-ordination	500,000		
Capacity Building	500,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>4250</b>

could use their resources to enable more scholarship provision in ASEAN. The assumptions in this model that generate the scholarship numbers in column 4 are that for private/foundation, ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners there would be a 50:50 match funding arrangements with the scholarships projected at USD 4000. For ASEAN level programmes given there is funding already in place here for provision it is assumed that these funds will be used to incentivise their entry into the ASEAN SBS. The estimate in terms of number of scholarships entering the framework from other ASEAN level programmes is, on the basis of the evidence in Table 16, around 25% of the overall provision from the 2 programmes listed there over a 5-year period.

There is broader evidence of the effectiveness of match funding in enabling scholarship provision. Such an approach designed to stimulate private sector investment in scholarships in Hong Kong. In the case of Hong Kong's matching grant initiative, the funds raised by HEIs from donors are matched by the Hong Kong government, subject to a cap based on approved funding for the Matching Grant Scheme (University Grants Committee 2003). The funds can then be utilised by HEIs to support scholarship and student exchange related activities.

There may be an issue in Model B if the funding allocated to match funding does not generate the external partner investment and therefore remains potentially unused so allocations will need to be kept under review and invested in centrally funded provision if need be.

## Model C: A devolved approach

Model C looks to fund no scholarship provision centrally and invite stakeholders including HEIs, networks of HEIs, existing scholarship schemes etc. to submit proposals for additional cost-sharing scholarship programmes. Under this option there would be no purely centrally managed/funded scholarships. Table 27 outlines the potential number of scholarships generated by this model – again numbers are estimates and the assumption is that more match funding will lead to more scholarship provision. The levels of match funding outlined in Model B are also used for Model C.

**Table 27: Scholarship provision for Model C**

Category	ASEAN SBS Funding	Partner funding	No of scholarships
<b>Scholarship provision</b>			
Private/Foundation	3,000,000	2,000,000	1250
ASEAN level programme	2,000,000	1,000,000	2000
ASEAN Member States	2,000,000	1,000,000	1000
University led	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
Dialogue Member States	1,000,000	1,000,000	500
<b>Co-ordination</b>	500,000		
<b>Capacity Building</b>	500,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>	<b>5250</b>

This model could in principle, enable a high number of scholarships as it offers the most flexibility for HEIs and others to benefit from the ASEAN SBS funding as it has the largest focus on cost-sharing. It may also offer the greatest potential to include the broad range of ways described above by which HEIs and ASEAN Member States could support scholarships by offering them the opportunity to propose creative ways of augmenting new/developing existing programmes. However, it is also the model where there is in principle, the greatest potential risk of the scholarships being offered under the SBS framework not clearly aligning with ASEAN strategic priorities as there is less central control.

### 4.5.9

## Establishing a funding model for the ASEAN SBS

The three models outlined above are illustrative and designed to assist in the planning of the ASEAN SBS. Combining the two ways of supporting scholarships described in the models above: central funding and cost-sharing in different ways would produce further models for future consideration, as would varying the assumptions regarding how much a scholarship should be worth and level of engagement from different stakeholders. The different models also highlight how the level of contribution from ASEAN Member States could be varied dependent on the extent to which funds from other sources could be identified.

## 4.6 A robust approach to evaluation

In developing the ASEAN SBS framework, the opportunity exists to learn from other regional scholarship programmes. This learning can inform the development of the framework per se but in particular with regard to evaluation. In this section two other multi-country scholarship programmes – Erasmus + and Nordplus are examined to help understand what a robust approach to the evaluation of the ASEAN SBS should include.

### 4.6.1 Erasmus+

The European scheme Erasmus+ was conceived to bring together a wide range of predecessor scholarship programmes under a single brand. It is the flagship programme of the European Union with global reach and impact. Box 6 below outlines the background and main features of Erasmus+.

#### Box 6: The Erasmus+ Programme

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the field of education, training, youth and sport. In May 2018, the European Commission adopted proposals for the Erasmus programme for 2021-2027 (European Commission 2018) involving a doubling of the budget to EUR 30 billion which it is expected should enable 12 million people to participate in the programme. The Programme has three key actions – mobility, co-operation for innovation and exchange of good practices and support for policy reform. Erasmus+ has three key actions:

- Key Action One      Mobility
- Key Action Two      Co-operation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices
- Key Action Three      Support for Policy Reform

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for people of all ages (university students but also school pupils, trainees, apprentices, etc.) to study, be trained, volunteer and learn in other countries. It also fosters the professional development of practitioners and supports cooperation on tangible results, networking and share of knowledge among organisations and universities in the fields covered by the programme.

Through cooperation in formal, informal and non-formal learning, the Programme aims to address the following challenges:

- economic recovery and high youth unemployment;
- skills' mismatches,
- low employability and education poverty;
- global competition for talents;
- Information and Communication Technology potential and digital divide;
- lack of trust in the EU and low participation in democratic life;
- threats to the integrity of sport
- and, more generally, to common European values.



The general objectives of Erasmus+ are to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, including the headline education targets, as well as the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), including related benchmarks. Erasmus+ also aims to contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and the EU Work Plan for Sport, to promote the sustainable development of partner Member States in the field of higher education and youth, as well as to foster European values (European Commission 2019).

It is useful to note that initially, the European Higher Education Mobility Programme was a stand-alone programme which along with other HE grants and award schemes was subsequently included in the Erasmus+ programme, as a single brand. Key Action One related to mobility covers all levels of education including school, vocational, adult, higher education and all kinds of mobility including short- and long-term staff and student mobility for knowledge, virtual and work placements.

In the design of Erasmus+, specific attention was paid to making it more 'result oriented' than its predecessor programmes (notably in the light of the changing policy and socioeconomic landscape discussed earlier, new governance rules at EU level, or growing funding cuts in many Member States). In terms of its impact on HEIs, Erasmus+ is essential for European higher education institutions' strategies to improve their international competitiveness and the quality of their programmes, although there are regional variations across Europe on their strategic objectives for being involved in Erasmus+. Many HEIs reported a constant over-demand for student and staff mobility under Erasmus+. Students and staff generally reported an improvement in the support available from Erasmus+ for mobility (Erasmus 2016).

#### **4.6.2 Nordplus Higher Education Programme**

In contrast to Erasmus+, the Nordplus Higher Education Programme is a mobility and network programme specifically for the higher education sector, on bachelor and master levels, for the Nordic and Baltic Member States (NordPlus 2020)<sup>28</sup>. Given that it focuses on higher education only and engages only 8 Member States NordPlus is in some ways a more useful comparator for the development of the ASEAN SBS than Erasmus+.

<sup>28</sup> The countries participating in NordPlus are Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Estonia, Iceland and Sweden

## Box 7: NordPlus

The Nordplus Higher Education Programme is aimed at HEIs and university colleges in the Nordic and Baltic countries. It supports cooperation between networks, intensive courses, development projects, joint study programmes and student and teacher mobility in HEIs and university colleges. Grants are awarded e.g. for innovative development projects, joint curriculum planning, dissemination and use of results achieved by networks and projects, quality assurance, language training and establishment of new networks.

The minimum requirement for a network and partnership is that they consist of at least three HEIs from three different participating countries. Individuals cannot apply for grants directly from the Nordplus administration, but they can participate in the activities via their home institutions. The Nordplus Higher Education Programme offers possibilities which include students, teachers as well as other staff involved in teaching and education of specific Nordplus activities.

The mobility in Nordplus Higher Education is defined as individual student or teacher exchanges between the partner HEIs in a network. The mobility activities supported by Nordplus Higher Education are student mobility, teacher mobility, express mobility and intensive courses. Student mobility grants are awarded for full time studies or work placements lasting from one to 12 months in another Nordplus country. Teacher mobility grants are awarded for teachers employed at HEIs in a Nordplus country for exchanges in another Nordic or Baltic country.

The exchange can include teaching, tutoring, development of teaching material and so on. It is also possible to use these grants for activities connected to work placements and collaboration with the labour market. Students can be awarded express mobility grants for shorter exchange. The minimum duration of express mobility is one week. Intensive courses can be seen as a mobility activity if the course takes place in another country. Awards can be granted to intensive courses lasting between one week and one month.

There is a streamlined management and administration system across all programmes and a simple website with partner searching facilities. It utilises a reporting and application system called Espresso, which has been evaluated highly in external reviews (Melin, Terrell and Henningsson 2015). The relative ease and simplicity by which students can apply to and participate in Nordplus and communication with the administration of Nordplus is valued by participating institutions. A non-bureaucratic and reasonably informal communications culture is something that characterises Nordplus.

In terms of the programme budget the contribution to Nordplus from each of the Nordic and Baltic Member States is calculated on the basis of each country's share of total Nordic/Baltic gross national product (GNP) for the last two available years – using exchange rates for the same year(s). This is the same principle used to

calculate the Nordic countries' contributions to the total budget for the Nordic Council of Ministers. The sectoral programme Nordplus Higher Education receives 38.7% of the total annual Nordplus budget while administration costs are allocated 12.2% of the total annual Nordplus budget.

### 4.6.3 Benchmarking the ASEAN SBS

A method of benchmarking the ASEAN SBS, in particular as the framework develops over its initial period, will enable an understanding of its effectiveness to be embedded within it. In the partial example in Table 28 the ASEAN SBS is compared to Erasmus+ and Nordplus. The initial findings show that Erasmus+ is not a good comparator as the size and scale is much larger than the ASEAN SBS. Nordplus is closer in size and scale and comparative information can then be used going forward to identify gaps in processes and to ensure costs and other indicators are within acceptable norms. Over time, a range of comparator schemes can be identified to both demonstrate average inputs and outputs and produce performance indicators. The indicators can also increase to include ones related to impact and dissemination.

**Table 28: Benchmarking ASEAN SBS with Nordplus and Erasmus+<sup>29</sup>**

Indicator		Description		
		ASEAN SBS	Nordplus HE	Erasmus +
Objectives	Scheme Objectives	Drawn from key ASEAN Strategy documents	Derived from The Nordic Council of Ministers	Based on key EU strategy and values
	Coherence with National policy	Through consultation	Through country representation	Many activities are decentralised
	Coherence with Regional policy	Reviewed bi annually	Aligned	Aligned
	Managing organisation	tbc	The Nordic Council of Ministers	European Commission
Delivery	Education level	First cycle, Higher Education	First cycle Higher Education	Secondary, Tertiary, HE, TVET, Adult. First, second, third and short cycles
	Geographical coverage	ASEAN Member states	10 Nordic and Baltic states	Global
	Activities	Student mobility Networking Capacity Building	Student/teacher mobility Networking Curriculum development	Mobility Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices Policy Reform
	Duration of activities	1 semester to one year	From 1 week to one year	From 1 semester to five years
	Target Groups	UG students	Students Teachers	Youth, Education, Sport All Higher Education
	Number of participants		3000 pa	
	Participation of disadvantaged groups	Yes	Yes	Yes
Funding and cost	Total Budget	TBC	4.2m	6bn
	Origin of funds	Member States and other stakeholders	Member states	Member states/centralised
	Admin Budget	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known
	Cost per participant	€4000	Not known	unclear

<sup>29</sup> The countries participating in NordPlus are Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Estonia, Iceland and Sweden

#### **4.6.4 Evaluating the ASEAN SBS**

Examining other regional scholarship frameworks can inform an ASEAN SBS approach to evaluation that is common to all the programmes in the ASEAN SBS. In both the Erasmus+ and NordPlus frameworks described above, evaluation has had a key role to play in ensuring their sustainability. The evidence base for the impact of individual scholarship programmes who are part of the ASEAN SBS framework should be stronger if a common approach is used. This will enable comparability across programmes as well as generating larger samples sizes for the tracking of scholarship alumni into the labour market.

The monitoring of the progress of scholarship alumni will be a crucial aspect of establishing the impact of the ASEAN SBS. This monitoring should not relate only to economic progress in terms of employability related measures but also the wider economic impacts of scholarship supported student mobility for example the spending of students on and off campus. There has been work done outlining how to do this type of evaluation which can be examined here (HEIs UK 2016).

Monitoring of progress should also be done in terms of cross-cultural understanding and contribution to the formation of ASEAN identity. There will need to be work done here to establish the metrics related to ASEAN identity but there has been research in this field which can inform this work (Acharya 2015).

To support the development of the ASEAN SBS framework evaluation approach an example of system wide evaluation template used for the Erasmus+ programme is included as Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **4.7 Central co-ordination and engagement with ASEAN Member States**

As recommended in chapters 2 and 3, a coherent approach is required to support increases in intra-ASEAN student mobility. This approach needs to involve relevant organisations working at the ASEAN level, engage senior officials from ASEAN Member States in its leadership and engage with higher education providers, non-government organisations, ASEAN dialogue countries/regions and importantly students. It is critically important that HEIs take a proactive role in the national and ASEAN debates on defining and implementing mobility and internationalisation policies more generally, but also in broader policies in which mobility is implicit. In this regard, an ASEAN SBS can enable greater collaboration and harmonisation of policy across ASEAN.

In chapter 5, how such an approach could be realised via an 'ASEAN Student Mobility Initiative' is described. This initiative flows from the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and builds on proposals for an ASEAN Mobility Centre (Hashim and Gibbs 2020). The development and delivery of the ASEAN SBS should be a core part of this broader ASEAN Student Mobility Initiative which should include work on improving data collection, visa arrangements and credit transfer mechanisms.

Within this initiative, for the ASEAN SBS to be successful there will need to be clarity regarding how it is co-ordinated and the nature of the relationships between the stakeholders. ASEAN Member States will need to be able to shape the development of the ASEAN SBS and the programmes within it to ensure the ASEAN SBS supports ASEAN Member States own international student mobility strategies. Achieving this alignment will require the building of consensus which is in keeping with the 'ASEAN way' (Acharya 2015). While the common goals shared by ASEAN Member States will provide a basis for this consensus-building there will need to be further work on the ASEAN SBS and how to deliver it building on this Study. This work should include a formal, transparent consultation period with ASEAN Member States which gives them the opportunity to undertake their own in-country discussions on the ASEAN SBS concept, as well as an online/face-to-face dialogue event looking at scholarship provision across ASEAN which gives all stakeholders the opportunity to fully shape the ASEAN SBS.

The ASEAN SBS will require a co-ordination unit with a dedicated staffing resource with the remit to develop the brand, organise capacity building work for stakeholders, manage funding and co—ordinate evaluation. The impact that an ASEAN SBS could have is significant, but in order for this impact to be achieved an appropriate ongoing investment in co-ordination will be essential. In constructing this co-ordination unit, the organisations that deliver ASEAN programmes i.e. SEAMEO RIHED, Nuffic for EU SHARE, AUN and UMAP should be consulted to draw on their experience in this field.

#### **4.8 Developing new ASEAN SBS programmes**

In addition to the structural features outlined above, the ASEAN SBS may also look to expand the range of scholarship options open to students in ASEAN.

While it is clear that there are a range of scholarship programmes already on offer for ASEAN students including well established regional programmes this does not mean that further provision may not be advantageous. Such provision need not necessarily mean wholly new programmes. It could be programmes that already have an established profile but whose focus may evolve to meet more specific ASEAN strategic priorities. The EU-SHARE scholarship programme for example is one that has a finite time frame. Sustaining the benefits of this programme and the infrastructure it has created will be important and the ASEAN SBS provides a framework to address this challenge. An option for the sustainability of the EU-SHARE scholarship maybe to see it evolve into a programme that has close explicit alignment with one of more of the strategic priorities outlined above and for it to become a key funded programme in the SBS framework.

If new programmes are to be developed, either new in their selves or built on existing provision, clear criteria will be required. These criteria should begin with the assembling of an evidence based case for how the programme aligns with the ASEAN strategic priorities in terms of economic development, ASEAN identity and equity discussed earlier will be required. Alongside evidence of alignment, scoping of student demand will need to be undertaken. The capacity to deliver new

programmes effectively will also need to be identified in the context of striving for balance in mobility where students and universities from across all ASEAN Member States are engaged. Given the imbalances in mobility between ASEAN Member States described in chapter 2 there is an argument for some of the new programmes in the ASEAN SBS to focus on supporting efforts to redress these imbalances.

Additional programmes will need to be relevant, display effectiveness and efficiency in their design and crucially add value to provision that already exists. Finally, their introduction will need to be phased over the lifetime of the ASEAN SBS to ensure that the quality of the programmes offered remains high and the capacity is there to deliver effectively.

In Table 29 below, a number of examples of new programmes are described. These are potential new programmes who could address some of the ASEAN strategic priorities described above, where at present there is limited evidence of scholarship provision meeting these priorities specifically. Table 29 describes the main objectives of these programmes. They are all posited a programmes delivered for undergraduate students, which involve all ten ASEAN Member States and use the blockchain technology described above to underpin their credit transfer arrangements

**Table 29: ASEAN SBS Programmes**

Programme	Aim and details
<b>The Diversity of ASEAN Scholarship</b>	To support the development of ASEAN identity by understanding the depth and diversity of the ASEAN Community through an ASEAN Studies Curriculum
<b>The Future of ASEAN Scholarship</b>	To support economic development of ASEAN by ensuring preparedness and adaptability of graduates to a future ASEAN Community of enterprise across the borders
<b>The ASEAN Future Leaders Scholarship</b>	To support the development of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural community by preparing the next generation of ASEAN civil society leaders to ensure closer people-to-people links between ASEAN Member States
<b>The ASEAN Sustainable Development Scholarship 2030</b>	To support achieving target 4.b of the Sustainable Development Goals through a specific programme that focuses on extending scholarship opportunities for those from particular ASEAN Member States.

## 4.9

### **Enhancing international Student mobility in ASEAN – the potential of the ASEAN SBS**

The SBS has the potential to be at the centre of attempts to move forward international student mobility within ASEAN. There are limitations in what scholarships can achieve and work needs to be done to improve the evidence base for their impact. The SBS framework can help address the limitations in the evidence base and strengthen the provision on offer in ASEAN. In particular, a scholarship framework for ASEAN that can focus this work on the priorities for the region could bring significant added value to the ASEAN Community.

In terms of realising its full potential locating the ASEAN SBS in the context of the broader environment of both international higher education and intra-ASEAN skills related mobility will be crucial. Both of the Erasmus+ and NordPlus programmes are part of wider initiatives which include mobility of young people, staff and students on vocational programmes. The NordPlus student mobility programme for example links to other Nordplus programmes across other education sector. As an ASEAN SBS framework is developed it should be also linked closely to other relevant mobility related activities and engage stakeholders from across the educational sector as it develops.

With engagement from governmental and institutional stakeholders from the outset the ASEAN SBS can help scale up and focus regional student mobility sustainably to meet the challenges of ASEAN economic and social integration and the expansion of its knowledge economy.

#### **4.1.6 An ASEAN single branded scholarship (SBS): Recommendations**

For the ASEAN Secretariat	For ASEAN Member States
<p>Ensure the outcomes and potential impact of the ASEAN SBS are clearly defined and support the aims of the ASEAN Education work plan prior to determining the approach to delivery.</p>	<p>Establish a new ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship framework to better align scholarship provision with ASEAN strategic priorities related to economic development, building an ASEAN identity, addressing inequality and strengthening higher education as expressed in the three pillars of ASEAN blueprints.</p>
<p>Invite existing regional scholarship providers and regional and international stakeholders to participate in the design, development and implementation of the ASEAN SBS framework.</p>	<p>Propose and implement a governance entity mandating and engaging all relevant stakeholders in aligning initiatives and resources with the overarching aims and target outcomes of the ASEAN SBS.</p>
<p>Develop a funding model for the ASEAN SBS framework which incentivises participation from a range of stakeholders including existing scholarship programmes, HEIs and in particular the private sector.</p>	<p>Determine the optimal scale and scope of the scholarships offered under the ASEAN SBS framework to ensure that it supports the strategic priorities for international higher education for ASEAN Member States.</p>

**Ensure the ASEAN SBS framework has a clear structure with the following features:**

an inclusive, high quality brand supported by an active communications strategy

support for participation from diverse and low income learners by making this one of the core principles

a focus on using digitisation to enhance scholarship provision

capacity building work for stakeholders

a robust approach to evaluation to help prove the impact of scholarships in ASEAN

central co-ordination and engagement with ASEAN Member States as part of a coherent approach to enhancing intra-ASEAN student mobility

**For ASEAN scholarship programme providing organisations**

Engage in the formation of the ASEAN SBS framework and subject to appropriate structures being put in place position existing scholarship programmes in the ASEAN SBS framework.



## **Chapter 5: Enhancing intra-ASEAN student mobility**

The preceding three chapters in this report show the challenges to be addressed in order to achieve a significant increase in international student mobility in the ASEAN region, but also the potential for such an increase to be achieved. They also show how by increasing student mobility in ASEAN, strategic priorities as expressed in the Blueprints of the three ASEAN Community Pillars, the ASEAN Education Work Plan 2016-2020 (and its future iterations) and MPAC 2025 can be realised.

In chapter 2, it is evident that the actual knowledge base regarding student mobility patterns is partial and what information does exist shows that only a small minority of mobile students overall choose to study within the region. There are though strong bilateral flows of students between ASEAN Member States which can be built on. In order to understand fully though student mobility patterns in ASEAN a dedicated resource is needed potentially via an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre.

In the case of visa arrangements in chapter 3, the regional picture is clearer in terms of the official position where visa processes is concerned. There are though distinct contrasts across the region where visa arrangements are concerned. In addition, the 'lived experience' of some students where visa arrangements are concerned inevitably differs to the official narrative. It does not appear, at least from the evidence gathered here that visa processes are proving the impediment to mobility that has been seen in other parts of the world in recent years. However, for visas to be a force that could drive mobility then concerted action would be needed. The chapter outlines what a pro-active approach to visa policy may look like and what it may constitute.

Chapter 4 provides an in depth analysis of the existing scholarship landscape in ASEAN framed within the context of policy and practice in other parts of the world. The chapter outlines a model for an ASEAN 'single branded' scholarship framework which would seek to bring coherence to scholarship provision in ASEAN and increase the ability of scholarships to meet ASEAN strategic priorities. The framework would look to include a range of programmes including existing ones and build on the good work that already exists in ASEAN where the delivery of scholarships is concerned.

### **5.1 The impact of COVID-19**

The majority of the data gathering for this Study was undertaken before COVID-19 began to impact on international student mobility. The fundamental issues identified in the Study surrounding the collection of data, visa arrangements and impact of scholarship provision will not necessarily have lost their validity because of COVID-19. It has though led to a very large immediate impact on international student mobility (Mitchell 2020) and the legacy of COVID-19 will add further uncertainty to the international student mobility landscape in ASEAN. It may discourage student mobility to countries outside ASEAN badly affected by COVID-19 encouraging them to remain in the region. Equally it may discourage student mobility overall.

COVID-19 does not reduce the case for, as recommended in the Study, improving data collection, greater visa alignment and the development of an over-arching scholarship framework it may make achieving these goals a greater challenge. There has been strong commitment for collaborative responses to COVID-19's impact as expressed in the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in April 2020 (ASEAN 2020b), but there will undoubtedly be a decline in economic growth (ASEAN 2020a). These economic pressures alongside the uncertainty regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the decision making of students regarding international study mean that while the recommendations of the Study remain valid they will be interpreted in a very different context to how they would have been pre COVID-19. The economic and social impact of COVID-19 also means that further work will now be required to examine more flexible methods of enabling international student mobility the region. Such methods may include 'internationalisation at home' where the focus is less on physical mobility and more on internationalisation of the curriculum (Beelen 2015), as well as combining physical mobility with virtual mobility in more 'blended' programmes.

## 5.2

### **An ASEAN Student University Mobility Initiative**

The recommendations emerging from the preceding three chapters could potentially be addressed separately. However, they also represent an opportunity by being addressed together to take a more sizeable step forward in developing the student mobility infrastructure in ASEAN. As highlighted throughout the Study there are significant challenges to increasing intra-ASEAN student mobility. ASEAN Member States are at quite different stages in development where international higher education is concerned, they have contrasting student visa systems, the scholarship landscape is uneven and competition from well-established international student destinations is fierce. There are a lot of positive features illustrated in this Study, not least the attraction of ASEAN culturally to some students, but if significant progress is to be made in enhancing student mobility between ASEAN Member States then a co-ordinated approach to the challenge is required.

Such a co-ordinated approach may also make it easier to facilitate the dialogue and capacity building described above required to examine how international education is delivered in ASEAN post-COVID-19 to incorporate greater digitisation etc.

There are already networks and groups working at the ASEAN level to enhance regionalisation and harmonisation in higher education and international higher education. The role of the APTWG was noted for example in chapter 1 with regard to data collection. The ASEAN University Network has undertaken work in to support academic collaboration in ASEAN aside from its scholarship programme and SEAMEO RIHED have initiated capacity building work in university governance/management. In addition, there are well developed structures in the areas of quality assurance in the form of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network and in credit transfer. It is vital that any co-ordinated approach to delivering the recommendations in this Study engage with and build upon the work of the

organisations already working on international higher education at ASEAN level. These existing structures represent foundations upon which the co-ordinated approach could be developed. In terms of what this approach could like this is described in section 5.11 below.

To achieve this greater alignment and increase the level of intra ASEAN student mobility a concerted over-arching approach which brings together stakeholders and is underpinned by shared regional goals activity is required over the short to medium term – what is described here as an ASEAN Student Mobility Initiative 2020-2025.

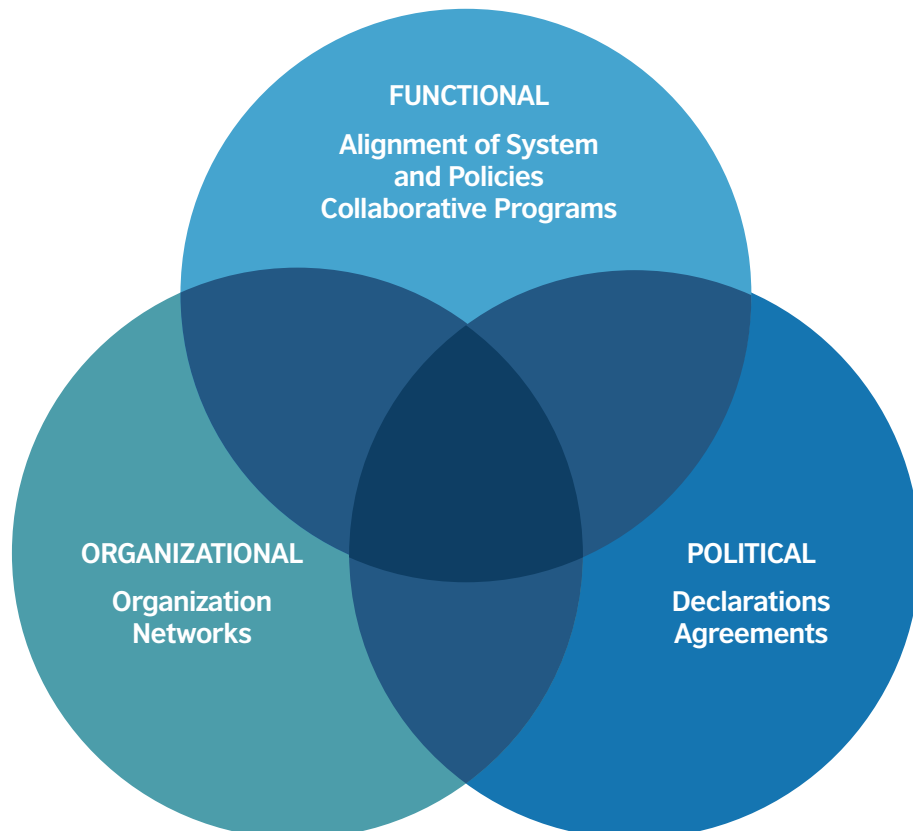
### 5.3

#### **How the ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) Initiative could work**

Given the nature of the recommendations in the Study, and the extent of the challenge as summarised above, an approach is required which combines the strategic authority of a working group, a permanent secretariat/co-ordinating function and mechanisms to engage stakeholders from across the region via a series of networks. Taken together this recommended approach is described here as an ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) Initiative.

It is proposed that the ASEAN SUM is based on the Functional, Organisational and Political (FOPA) model of international higher education regionalisation by Wright. The FOPA model was developed in order to understand higher education regionalisation across the world. The advantage of the model is a conceptual foundation to support the development of the ASEAN SUM Initiative. The FOPA model is shown in Diagram 4 below:

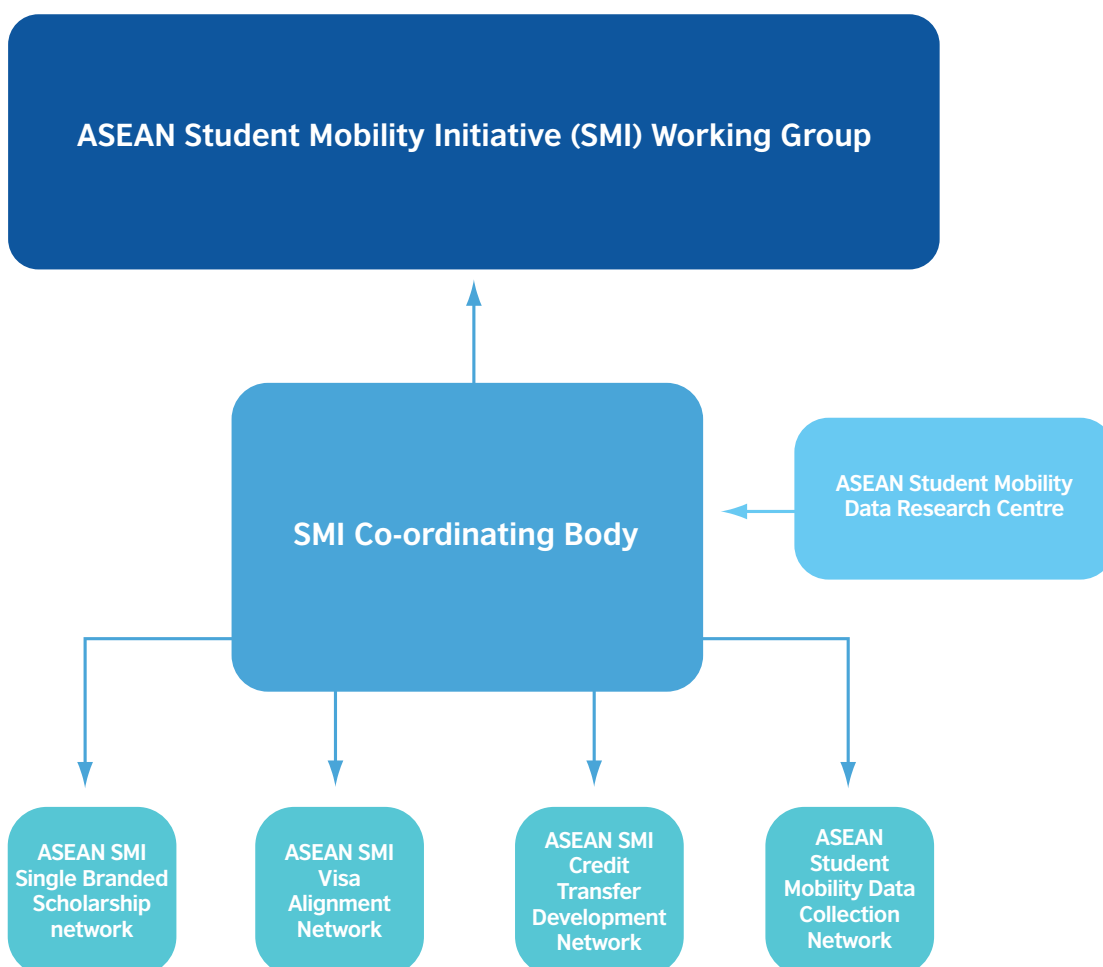
**Diagram 4: The FOPA Model**



The FOPA model provides a way of thinking about how the approaches and actions required in order to stimulate greater regionalisation can be categorised in a systematic manner. It shows how these three different forms of approach need to interact and be in place in order to achieve goals in the area of HE regionalisation. The functional elements serve to enable which closer alignment or in some cases harmonization among national/sub regional higher education systems including elements such as student mobility schemes referred to in Section 3. The organisational elements refers to the organisations and networks which serve to ensure that programmes are delivered and declarations achieved. Hence, in the ASEAN context organisations such as SEAMEO RIHED and the SHARE Initiative are located here. The political elements are what Wright describes as the ‘*Declarations of intent, binding conventions, treaties, agreements, and special meetings like summits or policy dialogues are instruments for generating political support and visibility in order to make regionalization of higher education a priority*’ (Wright 2013:120). The use of declarations as an instrument to drive forward policy in this area is evident in ASEAN i.e. the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education endorsed by ASEAN Leaders at the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015.

There are three key parts to how the initiative could work. They are shown in Diagram 5 below:

**Diagram 5: The ASEAN Student Mobility Initiative Model**



The different elements of the ASEAN SUM are described below:

- **ASEAN Student Mobility (SUM) Working Group – Political Level**

The SUM working group operates at the ‘political level’ ensuring that the initiative is linked to and supported by ministerial agreements and priorities across the region. The responsibility of the group will be to provide the strategic authority for the delivery of the initiative. It takes on the political role in Wright’s schema above. The composition of this group would include senior educational officials with responsibility for from the member ASEAN Member States. It may then include other ASEAN or non-governmental stakeholders. The purpose of the group is to ensure that there is the necessary support and capacity for the SUM and set its strategic targets

- **SUM Co-ordination unit – Organisational Level**

In terms of Wright’s FOPA model the co-ordinating unit works at the In terms of Wright’s FOPA model the co-ordinating unit works at the ‘organisational level’ this the organisational role. The co-ordinating body exists to have responsibility for taking forward the strategic directives and agreements established by the working group. This will include in particular the delivery of the ASEAN Student Mobility Data Initiative outlined in chapter 1 of this report, the work to align visa arrangements including the piloting of the Student Pass and development of a single online information point for student visas in the ASEAN region as well as progressing the ASEAN SBS. The co-ordinating body has a crucial role. They provide the capacity to ensure the initiative is successful. The nature of the co-ordinating body is for the Working Group to decide in the context of the particular resources available to deliver this initiative and the stakeholder relationships in the region. It may be a bespoke, specific body that is created for the purpose of the SUM or it could be a role taken on by an existing pan ASEAN organisation working on internationalisation of HE in the region and student mobility.

- **ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre - Organisational Level**

To an extent the role of the centre was outlined in chapter 1. It also works at the organisational level. It is framed here to focus primarily on data collection and analysis. It sits here separate to the co-ordinating body as data collection/analysis is a specialist role that requires specific skills in quantitative and qualitative research. These are different skills to the alignment in the area of visa and scholarship work which is a co-ordination and management function. There is also some merit in having the data produced by an independent centre which is not part of the co-ordinating function. This independence can add to the credibility of the work produced. However, it may be that those forming the SUM decide to bring the work of the co-ordinating body and work of the centre together in one organisational form. This may be more appropriate for the ASEAN context. If this is done, the key thing that must be recognized is that there will be those with different skills and capacities needed to lead on co-ordination to those who undertake data collection/analysis and therefore any one organisation must have the appropriate specialist skills within it to cover the distinct areas.

Returning to the operations of the centre, while its role thus far has mainly been described in terms of data collection and analysis the centre should have been able to make a meaningful contribution in terms of the development of policy across the student mobility field e.g. developing appropriate mechanisms and incentives to increase student participation in mobility programmes and monitoring/evaluating implementation of mobility programmes in the ASEAN region. However, as with the difference between the co-ordination of student mobility delivery initiatives and data collection, there is a difference between policy development and implementation. The centre's role is to develop policy options which are evidence based while there is a different function that relates to their delivery.

- **ASEAN SUM Networks – Functional Level**

In order to ensure that the objectives of the SUM move forward engagement with stakeholders across the region is crucial. These networks perform this function for the higher education providers in the region and those involved in other policy areas outside of education but whose engagement is required to take forward policy in this area. In terms of the FOPA approach the networks perform a vital organisational role. The effectiveness of the work of the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre and the proposals under the SBS in this report depend on broad engagement from stakeholders from across the region. It is essential they feel ownership of the SUM and the constituent parts of it. The networks in Diagram 5 act as 'communities of practice'. Higher education officials and HEIs will communicate regularly through face-to-face and online meetings. Where appropriate the networks will involve those from foundations and the private sector and non-ASEAN Member States. The networks will exchange knowledge, foster collaboration, build the capacity of participants and generate new policy and practice ideas.

Central to the SUM concept is co-ordinated action to address the challenges to student mobility in the ASEAN region identified in the report. The SUM is a potential way of achieving this co-ordinated action. Further information regarding how the SUM could be co-ordinated and a roadmap for its first 5 years of operation are outlined in Appendices 3 and 4.

## 5.4

### **Enhancing Student Mobility in the ASEAN region**

More than 10% of young people in the world live in the ASEAN region – with the number predicted to grow to over 220 million by 2038 (ASEAN 2017). Not all these young people will progress to HE and but those who do will benefit greatly from an international HE experience. Central to this experience is mobility in some form – even if that form may change and evolve over time. This Study has aimed to start the process of building an ongoing evidence base to support this mobility for students between ASEAN Member States.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

#### Enhancing Intra ASEAN Student Mobility

The Centre for Higher Education Research (CHER) at Sunway University, Kuala Lumpur (<https://university.sunway.edu.my/research/higher-ed>) has been commissioned to undertake the Enhancing Intra ASEAN Student Mobility for the EU-SHARE initiative. The project consists of three topic areas examining:

- Data collection on intra-ASEAN university student mobility
- Mapping student visa arrangements
- ASEAN single branded scholarships

The aim is to produce an overall report that incorporates the findings from each topic area above and includes policy recommendations for key ASEAN stakeholders and ways forward for policy/research in this area. Our focus will be on producing outputs that are relevant and useful for policy-makers through building strong relationships with ASEAN stakeholders.

The information gathered in this survey is confidential and will be seen only by the members of the CHER Project Team listed below. All data will be anonymised for analysis. If we wish to use any direct quotes in any reporting then this usage will be verified with the provider of the quote. All information will be stored securely.

As indicated in the survey we are keen to have follow on dialogue with colleagues who may have detailed knowledge of any of the three topic areas and would welcome signposting to such colleagues.

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Organisation:**

**Contact Details:**

#### Section 1: Understanding Student Mobility

The purposes of this section is to construct as comprehensive a picture as possible of the data available on student mobility across the ASEAN region, and also to examine how the collection of such data could be enhanced.

- 1. Can you provide for us, or direct us to where we can find, the most up-to date data available on inbound & outbound student mobility in your institution by the following dimensions (i.e. number of enrolment by study programme/ discipline, demographic background, length of mobility experience, country of origin/ destination, level of study, funding types, and credit/non-credit-based courses)?*
- 2. Are there any agencies/ bodies that take care of centralised data collection on student mobility in your institution? If there is any, how are the analysed data being used? (e.g. communicated publicly and feed into policy or guidelines) Does the agency/ body obtain data on inbound and outbound student mobility from Universities?*
- 3. What are challenges faced in collecting data on student mobility in your institution?*
- 4. What are the strengths in data collection on student mobility in your institution?*
- 5. Do you have contact details of any colleague(s) who may be able to answer more detailed questions regarding the data on student mobility in your*

## **Section 2**

The purposes of this section is to construct as comprehensive a picture as possible regarding the visa clearance arrangements for students looking to study across the ASEAN region, and also to examine how these arrangements and the provision of information regarding them could be improved.

- 6. What support does the government provide for students who need to obtain visa clearance to study in your country?*
- 7. As a university what is your role in the process of students who wish to study at your university obtaining visa clearance?*
- 8. How do you provide information to prospective students who may wish to apply for visa clearance to study in your country?*
- 9. How in your view could the immigration clearance procedure be improved to support greater inbound student mobility in your country?*
- 10. What is your view on the construction of a central online information resource or website with information on visa clearance processes for students looking to study in each ASEAN country?*
- 11. Do you have any other comments on the visa arrangements for students who wish to study in your country?*



### **Section 3: ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship: Exploring the Opportunity**

The purpose of this section is to construct as comprehensive a picture as possible regarding the scholarship arrangements for students looking to study across the ASEAN

- 1. To what extent do the existing mechanisms for scholarship provision align with ASEAN and national policy priorities?*
- 2. Do the existing mechanisms for scholarship provision demonstrate internal coherence – do they complement each other or are they competing for the same students?*
- 3. To what extent do the existing mechanisms for scholarship provision demonstrate the outputs they deliver – can you describe their effectiveness for a) individual learners b) universities c) national and ASEAN bodies?*
- 4. Do the existing mechanisms for scholarship provision demonstrate cost effectiveness? Please give examples, either positive or negative.*
- 5. To what extent do existing mechanisms for scholarship provision add value to other (non-HE national and international actions)?*
- 6. How do you believe a single branded scholarship for ASEAN can be funded sustainably? Can you provide examples including contributions by member states, the private sector and beneficiaries*
- 7. We wish to examine the benefits of bringing all scholarships together under a **single organisational framework (a single branded ASEAN scholarship)**. Please rank the top five benefits of such a scheme with 1 being the main benefit of such a scheme, 2 the second benefit and so on.*

## Appendix 2: Sources of official information on Student Visas

### MALAYSIA

**OFFICIAL** <https://educationmalaysia.gov.my/visa-new-application/>

**Private University**

<http://www.apu.edu.my/study-apu/international-students/international-students-application-procedures>

**Public University**

<https://umcms.um.edu.my/sites/international-student-centre/img/files/Visa%20document/STUDENT%20VISA%20APPLICATION%20GUIDELINES%20.pdf>

### INDONESIA

**OFFICIAL**

<http://www.imigrasi.go.id/index.php/en/public-services/limited-stay-visa>  
**Public University**

<https://international.ui.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/IMMIGRATION-MATTERS-UPDATE-10-compressed.pdf>

**Private University**

<https://io.binus.ac.id/international-students/post/visa-and-immigration/>  
**SINGAPORE**

**OFFICIAL** <https://www.ica.gov.sg/pass/studentpass/apply>

**Public University**

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/events/registration/information-for-international-students.html>

**Private University**

<https://www.simge.edu.sg/admissions/admin-matters/visa-information/>

### THAILAND

**OFFICIAL**

[http://www.thaiembassy.org/hague/th/services/76469-Non-Immigrant-Visa-E-D-\(Education\).html](http://www.thaiembassy.org/hague/th/services/76469-Non-Immigrant-Visa-E-D-(Education).html)

**Public University**

<https://muic.mahidol.ac.th/eng/study-abroad/incoming-students/visa-matter/>

### VIETNAM

**OFFICIAL**

<https://lanhsuvietnam.gov.vn/Lists/BaiViet/B%C3%A0i%20vi%E1%BA%Bft/DispForm.aspx?List=dc7c7d75%2D6a32%2D4215%2Dafeb%2D47d4bee70eee&ID=306>

**Private institution**

<https://www.rmit.edu.vn/student-visa-information-international-students>

## **CAMBODIA**

<https://www.movetocambodia.com/planning-your-move-to-cambodia/cambodia-visas/#types>

### **National University**

<http://www.rupp.edu.kh/iro/document/IRO-Guide-2018.pdf>

## **LAOS**

### **OFFICIAL**

<http://www.laoservicesportal.gov.la/index.php?r=site%2Fdisplaylegal&id=259#a19>

## **MYANMAR**

**OFFICIAL** <http://www.mip.gov.mm/portfolio/types-of-visa-fees-and-duration/>

## **THE PHILLIPINES**

### **OFFICIAL**

<https://www.philippineconsulatela.org/consular-services-2/visa/student-visa>  
<https://hanoipe.dfa.gov.ph/types-of-visas-for-foreign-students-in-the-philippines>

### **PUBLIC University**

<https://www.ateneo.edu/oir/info-international-students/visa-matters/information-and-procedure-for-international-students>

## **BRUNEI**

### **OFFICIAL**

<http://www.immigration.gov.bn/en/SitePages/Visa,%20Visit%20and%20Diplomatic.aspx>

### **PUBLIC**

<https://ubd.edu.bn/admission/information-for-new-students/information-for-international-students.html>

### **Appendix 3: Possible delivery arrangements for an ASEAN Student University Mobility (SUM) Initiative**

The initiative would gain much strength from being a joint collaboration between the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and SEAMEO RIHED. Outlined below are potential roles for the two partners:

The potential role for ASEC:

- Ensure the SUM is conducted in the spirit of solidarity, constructive agreement and in favour of community building through mutual respect for sovereignty, equality, territory integrity and national identity of all ASEAN member states.
- Provide start-up resources to initiate the SUM working with other partners in the region and outline potential sources of revenue which would ensure the SUM operates in a sustainable manner.
- Ensure the SUM aligns with strategic policy initiatives across the broader ASEAN policy landscape including priorities related to connectivity.
- Lead on an exercise to establish an ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre.

The potential role for SEAMEO RIHED is:

- To ensure the delivery of the SUM co-ordinating body function either housed within its own structures or by another arrangement that has the support of ASEC and ASEAN Member States.
- Produce reports and progress updates on projects and developments of the SUM and update ASEC and individual Member States on the progress of the SUM.
- Work with the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre to manage collection and reporting of data and information related to higher education student and staff mobility to ensure the delivery of the ASEAN Framework for international student mobility data collection.
- Work with ASEAN member states to build the relationships necessary to ensure the SUM and its goals are put into tangible implementation.
- Support HEIs and other stakeholders to engage with the SUM and develop partnerships for sustainability of the SUM.

## **Appendix 4: ASEAN Student Mobility Initiative Roadmap 2020-2025**

The set-up of SUM will involve three phases.

**Phase 1 is expected last until mid-2021 and will involve the following initiatives:**

- Establishment of appropriate ASEAN SUM Working Group.
- Consolidation of stakeholder roles and responsibilities and agreement of co-ordinating function for the ASEAN SUM.
- Identification of the appropriate organisation to undertake the work of the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre.
- Scoping study for integration of Blockchain into the ASEAN SBS framework.
- Agreement of funding model for the ASEAN Single Branded Scholarship (SBS)
- Determination of reporting mechanisms for
- Establishment of the ASEAN SUM networks.
- Formation of SUM Key Performance Indicators.
- Identification of key human resources, administration, professional staff and consultants.
- Agreement of common definition for student mobility in the ASEAN region

**Phase 2 will last from mid 2021–mid 2023 and will involve the following initiatives:**

- Establishment of technical resources to manage the ASEAN SBS Blockchain Solution
- Construction of the ASEAN framework for international student mobility data collection.
- Single point of information established for Visa arrangements.
- Production of annual reports on student mobility in the region by the ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre.
- National reviews of data collection in student mobility undertaken.
- Launch of ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre data dissemination platform.
- Expand scholarship provision in the ASEAN SBS framework to agreed targets.
- Producing two (2) reports, each on an annual basis to ASEAN SUM Working Group on the progress of the SUM against KPIs.

**Phase 3 is from mid 2023 – end 2025 and will involve the following initiatives:**

- Review of progress of the ASEAN SUM and assessment of renewal of SUM up to 2030.
- Continued expansion of scholarship provision in the ASEAN SBS framework to agreed targets.
- Production of annual reports on student mobility in the region by the ASEAN Student Mobility Data Research Centre.
- Annual ASEAN Student Mobility Research Centre & SUM Conferences.
- Piloting of ASEAN Student Pass by the SUM in agreed ASEAN Member States.
- Review undertaken of the impact of ASEAN SBS framework against ASEAN strategic priorities.

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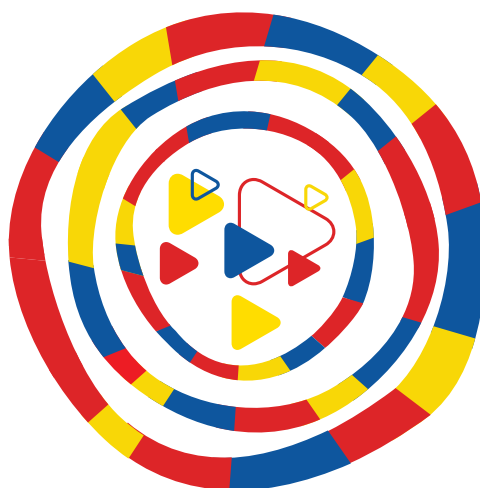
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