



## TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ASEAN TVET COUNCIL

### I. Background

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) acknowledge that the digital and technological transformation and Fourth Industrial Revolution (or Industry 4.0) bring implications to the economies, industries and employment in many countries around the world. Job creation or transformation, innovations, evolving job categories/descriptions, intensified productivity, skills gap, adaptability of human resources and education to the changing labour market demands, life-long learning culture through up-skilling and re-skilling, and new forms of employment relations are some of the emerging issues that need to be addressed.
2. ASEAN needs to manage the transition today by preparing its human resources for the future of work. Skills development through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and life-long learning are keys in achieving sustainable development with competitive workforce. With the capacity of TVET to rapidly respond to changing labour markets, it has the potential to: (i) support employment opportunities, (ii) increase competency and productivity, (iii) improve income of workers, (iv) promote enterprise competitiveness, (v) heighten job security, and (vi) supporting green skills for green jobs – all of which are essential to sustainable development.
3. However, according to the OECD<sup>1</sup>, there are challenges pertaining to TVET governance, quality and financing, particularly with respect to participation rates, access to formal and non-formal TVET especially in rural areas, public spending for TVET, quality of TVET and its relevance to the needs of businesses and industries in the ASEAN region.
4. Currently, TVET and skills development in many AMS are handled by several ministries and at the regional level, by several ASEAN sectoral bodies. Furthermore, many training institutions, private companies, international organisations and other stakeholders in the region have been collaborating to enhance TVET access, quality and relevance. Better coordination and sharing of information among stakeholders can help to address the aforementioned challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> The Role of TVET in Fostering Inclusive Growth at the Local Level in Southeast Asia (OECD Working Paper 2018/01), available online: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5afe6416-en.pdf?expires=1561546046&id=id&accname=quest&checksum=3CE317A58BE2D20DFC5326FE5590DCAB>

5. The ASEAN TVET Council is established to contribute to the realisation of the collective commitments of ASEAN as set out in the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASCC Blueprint 2025, AEC Blueprint 2025, and Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, as well as other ASEAN commitments in Declarations/Statements related to human resources development. As noted by the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2017, the Council is envisaged to intensify convergence among ASEAN Member States on TVET and workforce development efforts with a view to developing a world-class ASEAN labour force responsive to the rapidly changing needs of the labour market.

## **II. Vision**

6. Advanced TVET in ASEAN towards competitive human resources; market-responsive workforce skills; greater employment opportunities locally and overseas; and higher productivity in the digital economy and human-centered future of work towards a resilient and innovative ASEAN Community.

## **III. Mandate**

7. The ASEAN TVET Council is a multi-sectoral/cross-sectoral body that provides a platform for coordination, research and development on innovations and monitoring of regional programmes that support the advancement of TVET in the region.

## **IV. Objectives**

The Council will pursue the following objectives:

8. To develop evidence-based policy recommendations that will improve TVET systems, including quality assurance, standards development, research and development on innovations, and skills development that are aligned with disruptive technologies;
9. To strengthen coordination and cooperation with businesses and industries to improve TVET quality and responsiveness to labour market demands so as to promote greater mobility of labour, strategic alliances and resource sharing arrangements within and across industry sectors.
10. To support programmes that narrow the gaps between vocational skills demand and supply across ASEAN, systematic collection and sharing of Labour Migration Information (LMI), improvement of Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) and utilisation of LMIS for TVET development;
11. To support the advancement of access to TVET for all, especially on green jobs and green skills as well as Industry 4.0 related technological and digital skills;

12. To support the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) in identifying, promoting, and monitoring and evaluating TVET and human resources including ASEAN workforce development-related programmes under the purview of the Council; and
13. To identify a holistic/collective response of ASEAN on emerging issues and challenges affecting employment and future of work through multi-stakeholder consultations.

## **V. Functions**

The Council will serve as a cross-pillar/cross-sectoral coordination mechanism on TVET and shall:

14. Provide policy recommendations pertaining to the quality of TVET and its relevance to current and future industry requirements;
15. Facilitate mutual learning and innovations through sharing of good practices on TVET-related programmes;
16. Develop a comprehensive, integrated, and inclusive regional plan on TVET; and
17. Support regional knowledge management on TVET through the conduct of region-wide researches, studies and publications and the provision of regional knowledge sharing platforms such as forum/conferences and workshops in the context of priority issues.

## **VI. Priority Areas**

The Council will coordinate regional initiatives on the following priority areas with the voluntary participation of AMS:

18. Development of market-responsive workforce through LMIS, skills competitions (e.g. ASEAN Skills Competition), and skills needs anticipation;
19. Conduct of researches pertaining to TVET;
20. Improve the image of TVET;
21. Support to the capacity building of TVET trainers/personnel at schools and in companies, and assessment of their quality;
22. Strengthening of TVET quality assurance in AMS; and
23. Sharing of good practices and lessons learnt on TVET implementation and financing.

## **VII. Governance Mechanism**

### **Members**

24. The Council shall consist of representatives of:
- a. AMS from the economic, education, and labour sectors;
  - b. Business and industry sector; and
  - c. Other relevant stakeholders (by invitation).
25. Considering the cross-sectoral landscape of TVET, each AMS shall appoint TVET focal points at senior official level which may include representatives from national TVET councils, where they exist, Ministry of Commerce/Industry/Trade, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Education , and other relevant ministries (please refer to Annex 1); and representatives from the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, ASEAN Future Workforce Council,<sup>2</sup> ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), and ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC). The senior officials may be supported by working-level officials in assuming their roles and responsibilities.

### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

26. The first Chair of the Council shall be elected by the appointed representatives of AMS.
27. The subsequent Chair shall be rotated among AMS biennially and alphabetically. The handover of Chairmanship shall be conducted in the meeting of the Council. Should a Member State next in line be not ready to assume the Vice-Chairmanship, it may forgo its turn.
28. The Vice-Chair shall become the incoming Chair. The Vice-Chair shall provide support to the Chair in undertaking the roles and responsibilities.

### **Role and Responsibilities of the Chair**

29. The Chair shall exercise its role and responsibilities in accordance with this terms of reference with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat, which shall include:
- a. Chairing the meetings of the Council during its term of Chairmanship;
  - b. Coordinating with the Council's focal points during and in between meetings and promote the engagement of the Council with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and stakeholders;
  - c. Representing the Council at international and regional events pertaining to TVET, in particular, and human resource development in general. The Chair may designate the Vice-Chair or any other focal point to represent the Council at the event;

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<sup>2</sup> The Regional Working Group on Business and Industry Cooperation in TVET was reconstituted as the ASEAN Future Workforce Council in June 2019.

- d. Leading the preparation of reports of the Council and presenting such reports at the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM), ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED), and ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM); and
- e. Undertaking other specific functions entrusted by the Council in accordance with this terms of reference.

### **Decision Making**

- 30. The Council shall adopt a consultative and consensus approach in its decision making process in accordance with Article 20 of the ASEAN Charter.
- 31. Decision making can be made during the annual meeting of the Council or in between meetings through ad-referendum consultation that is facilitated by the Chair with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat.
- 32. In developing an outcome document, the Council shall, if necessary, consult AEM, ALMM and ASED for adoption or further submission to the ASEAN Summit.

### **Meetings**

- 33. The Council shall meet at least once a year. The annual meeting will be hosted and funded by the Chair in the first year of its two-year term and by ASEAN Secretariat in the second year. The Council may convene additional meetings as necessary. Hosting of an additional meeting shall be on a voluntary basis.

### **Reporting Mechanism**

- 34. The Council shall submit an annual report including accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations on the development of TVET in ASEAN to AEM, ALMM, and ASED through SEOM, SLOM, and SOM-ED, and other relevant sectoral bodies.

35. The Council is structured as follows:



### **Role of the ASEAN Secretariat**

36. The ASEAN Secretariat, through the Education, Youth and Sports Division (EYSD); Enterprise and Stakeholders Engagement Division (ESED); and Labour and Civil Service Division (LCSD) shall provide the necessary technical support (e.g., preparation of meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair) for the effective functioning of the Council.

### **Financial Arrangements**

37. Participation to the meetings of the Council shall be on a self-funded basis.

38. The host of the meetings will be responsible for shouldering the meeting package and necessary administrative services/support, documentation, and, where possible, hospitality.

39. AMS shall support the implementation of the Council's initiatives on a cost-sharing basis, through voluntary contributions, or by mobilising resources from external parties.

### **VIII. Partnerships with Stakeholders**

40. The Council shall coordinate and collaborate with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, including but not limited to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) Committee and ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACC-MSME), to facilitate a coherent approach.

41. Coordination and collaboration may be pursued through joint meetings/dialogue; attending each other's meetings to share information and exchange views; consultation of draft outcome documents for inputs; and joint projects where possible.
42. The Council shall promote dialogue and partnerships with other stakeholders. In particular, the Council will invite the following, but not limited to, regional entities for consultation sessions in the annual meetings of the Council:
- a) ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC);
  - b) SEAMEO SEA TVET Consortium; SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education (SEAMEO VOCTECH); and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Technical Education Development (SEAMEO TED); and
  - c) ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC).
43. The Council may engage other stakeholders for technical and/or financial support to achieve its objectives and implement its initiatives, which may include ASEAN Dialogue Partners; international organisations; academia; and businesses.

#### **IX. Amendments of the Terms of Reference**

44. This Terms of Reference shall come into force upon the approval of AEM, ALMM, and ASED.
45. Any ASEAN Member State may propose amendments to this Terms of Reference. Any amendment shall be decided by the Council based on consensus and subsequently consulted with AEM, ALMM, and ASED for approval.
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## Annex 1. List of government agencies / ministries involved in TVET

COUNTRY <sup>3</sup>	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES / MINISTRIES <sup>4</sup>
<p><b>Brunei Darussalam</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employs a 21<sup>st</sup> Century National Education System, wherein vocational and technical education is at the level of post-secondary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education (Department of Schools)</li> <li>• Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ The national agency for the development of occupational standards and the principal provider of Technical and Vocational Education, including full-time courses, apprenticeships and part-time Continuing Education and Training (CET) in Brunei Darussalam.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ministry of Energy and Industry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cambodia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists an 8-level Qualifications Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Levels 1-4: tech voc certificates</li> <li>➢ Level 5: Diploma (TVET); Associate Degree (Higher Education)</li> <li>➢ Levels 6-8: Bachelor, Master, Doctor Degree</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Primary agency managing TVET in Cambodia</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indonesia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists a 9-level Qualifications Framework, wherein levels 3-6 involves TVET</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and Culture</li> <li>• Ministry of Research and Technology / National Research and Innovation Agency</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry</li> <li>• Ministry of Transportation</li> <li>• Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries</li> <li>• Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources</li> <li>• Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• National Professional Certification Agency</li> <li>• Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lao PDR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists an 8-level Qualifications Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ TVET: Level 1-5</li> <li>➢ HE: Level 5-8</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and Sports (Department of Technical and Vocational Education) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Primary agency managing the entire education system of Lao PDR, including TVET</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ministry of Industry and Commerce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Malaysia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TVET at post-secondary level is managed through at least 9 ministries</li> <li>• Consists an 8-level Qualifications Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Level 1-3: Certificate</li> <li>➢ Level 4: Diploma</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Human Resources (Policy Division – Human Resources Policy Unit or Department of Skills Development)</li> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry</li> <li>• Ministry of Defence</li> <li>• Ministry of Rural Development</li> <li>• Ministry of Works</li> <li>• Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> SEAMEO-SEATVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training in ASEAN, <http://seatvet.seameo.org/docs>; and US-ASEAN BAC, Country Contacts, <https://www.usasean.org/countries/vietnam/contacts> (accessed on 18 October 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Level 5: Advanced Diploma</li> <li>➤ Level 6: Degree</li> <li>➤ Level 7: Master</li> <li>➤ Level 8: PhD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Home Affairs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Myanmar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and managing of TVET is under 3 agencies</li> <li>• Myanmar National Skills Qualification System               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Skill: Level 1-4</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education - Department of Technical and Vocational Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (Department of Labour)</li> <li>• Ministry of Planning, Finance, and Industry</li> <li>• Myanmar Industrial Development</li> <li>• National Skills Standard Authority (NSSA)</li> <li>• Union of Myanmar Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Philippines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three agencies (DepEd, TESDA, and CHED) manage the education system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission on Higher Education</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture</li> <li>• Department of Education (technical-vocational track of K-12 programmes)</li> <li>• Department of Information and Communications Technology</li> <li>• Department of Labor and Employment</li> <li>• Department of Science and Technology</li> <li>• Department of Trade and Industry               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) for continuing and adult education training on enterprise and business</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</li> </ul>
<p><b>Singapore</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TVET is managed by Ministry of Education, Institute of Technical Education (ITE), and Polytechnics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ministry of Trade and Industry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thailand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOE, MOL, MOC, MOI and TPQI collaborate in workforce development based on needed education qualifications, assessment, and gap-fill training, respectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education (MOE)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Office of the Permanent Secretary (OPS)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Serves as a Focal Point of SOM-ED Thailand overseeing the ASEAN Activities under education and learning schemes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Handles formal technical and vocational education.</li> <li>➤ Focuses on competency-based curriculum training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ministry of Labor - Department of Skills Development (DSD)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Trains and develops skills for new graduates coming to labour market, create opportunities for employment, and upgrade skill for employees.</li> <li>➤ Focuses on National Skill Standard.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ministry of Commerce (MOC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry (MOI)</li> <li>• Thailand Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develops professional qualification system</li> <li>➤ Supports industries in developing occupational standards and adopts foreign and international standards as well as implements them in Thailand</li> <li>➤ Accredits and monitors assessment centres</li> <li>➤ Awards professional qualifications</li> <li>➤ Promotes competency-based training that is aligned with</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	occupational standards ➤ Collaborates with public and private institutions at home and aboard to promote occupational standards and professional qualification systems.
<b>Viet Nam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TVET system at the central level is managed by MoLISA, MoET, and other line ministries, while local authorities manage TVET at the local level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) - Directorate of Vocational Education and Training</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)</li> <li>• Ministry of Industry and Trade</li> </ul>