

Terms of Reference (ToR)

National Consultant for the Phase I Project: Intra-ASEAN Scholarship Program (IASP) for ASEAN Nationals

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development (HRD) for the Changing World of Work is an attestation of ASEAN Leaders' commitment to build a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community. Investing in human resource development is fundamental to building and advancing a nation. Countries need to develop pools of well-educated workers who are able to succeed in the challenges of today's society, by developing human resources who are resilient, competitive, productive, adaptable, empowered and future ready.

Higher education is one of the key fields of HRD that is important to a nation's development and advancement. It plays an important role in ASEAN's economic, political, and socio-cultural and development agenda. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, advocated the promotion of 'an innovative ASEAN approach to higher education' which will 'promote greater people-to-people interaction and mobility within and outside ASEAN. The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2010 and 2025 also put emphasis on people to people linkages as one of the foundational supportive means to achieving an integrated ASEAN Community. Scholarships are known to significantly contribute to international student mobility and social development. It is also explicitly stated in the Education 2030 Framework of Action as one of the means to achieve a sustainable development agenda in education.

Scholarships that assist or cover full cost of pursuing higher education provide a number of benefits to scholars, the most obvious is that they make education accessible and affordable. However, given the higher costs for attending higher education, it's not surprising that students from low-income family have lower enrolment and completion rates. Universal access to equitable and quality education for its citizens, is a visible part in all HRD strategies and policies in the AMS and highly emphasised in the agenda for sustainable development in education.

While scholarships are widespread across the region, much remains to be studied and done to further improve its delivery and fully reap its benefits for students and for societies. In this regard, the 2021-2025 ASEAN Work Plan on Education, includes a specific priority output to sustain and strengthen ASEAN capacity in higher education harmonisation through strategies, mechanism and scholarship provision. One of the activities under this output is the "establishment of an ASEAN-Branded Scholarship scheme for all ASEAN Member States". In addition, the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility 2025 (AWGHEM)¹, endorsed by SOMED, was specifically established to design and operationalize this ASEAN Branded Scholarship program.

¹ The Working Group is also expected to contribute to the realization of the Outcome 3 of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025 on the **enhanced regional capacity in higher education as part of lifelong learning provision, including the harmonization of ASEAN higher education**, through its support in achieving Output 3.1: *Strengthened role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in lifelong learning through the provision of flexible, innovative, multi-disciplinary, cross-border education and*

The Intra-ASEAN Scholarship Programme, which is proposed to be implemented in three phases between 2022-2030, intends to be a long-term initiative that will benefit hundreds of ASEAN national students to get full scholarships to study in universities in Southeast Asia. The Phase I (2022-2025) aims at mapping the scholarships available in ASEAN, and use the findings as key inputs to the regional discussions on ASEAN Branded Scholarships and common higher education space in Southeast Asia.

For this purpose, the ASEAN Secretariat invites the application from individuals to undertake the assignment of National Consultant for the Phase I Project: Intra-ASEAN Scholarship Program for ASEAN Nationals.

II. OBJECTIVE AND OUTPUTS

The Phase I Project aims to conduct a comprehensive mapping of scholarships in ASEAN that would produce deliverables in the form of: (i) regional synthesis report and national reports on scholarships in ASEAN region; (ii) conduct of 2 national workshops and 1 regional workshops to validate results of the mapping and gather inputs from experts and stakeholders respectively; (iii) conduct of at least two meetings of the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility 2025; (iv) regional report that defines the higher education space in Southeast Asia and an ASEAN Branded Scholarship Scheme.

The Phase I Project seeks to hire 10 national education experts/consultants, one for each ASEAN member state who will conduct the comprehensive data collection and develop national reports (items ii). The national consultants are also expected to be involved closely in the coordination, workshop and official meeting process for the development of the reports. Please refer to Section V for the duration of work.

III. SCOPE OF WORK AND REPORTING LINE

1. The National Consultant will work directly with the Regional Consultant of IASP Phase 1 and education team of the Education, Youth and Sports Division of the ASEAN Secretariat and will report directly to the Head of Education, Youth, and Sport Division of ASEAN Secretariat
2. The National Consultant shall be responsible for the following:
 - 2.1 Conduct a comprehensive data collection process in each ASEAN Member State including the following activities and deliverables:
 - 2.1.1 Provide feedback on survey instrument, interview schedule, and other research tools. Translation of survey tools, instruments and research tools into local language if necessary.
 - 2.1.2 Lead the conduct of online surveys (coordinating the number of surveys with the regional consultant) in each AMS among representatives of ASEAN bodies, higher education ministries, higher education institutions, and mobility coordinating institutions, among others. The consultant shall collect the consent forms,

research collaboration and Output 3.2. Sustained and strengthened ASEAN capacity in higher education harmonization through strategies, mechanism and scholarship provision.

compile the responses in a tabular format, and glean patterns in the data.

- 2.1.3 Lead the conduct of 15 semi-structured interviews with policy makers, ministries, representatives from participating institutions. The consultant shall collect the consent form, record and transcribe the interviews for analysis.

- 2.2 Analyse data collected and lead the development of national reports of each AMS based on the instruction and outline provided by the regional consultant.
- 2.3 Participate in coordination meetings with the regional consultant and project team, and assist in the national and regional validation workshop when required.

IV. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

- 3. The National Consultant for each ASEAN Member State shall have the following general qualifications and required experience². Please refer Appendix 2 (Technical Requirements)
 - a. Advanced degree in education with experience in higher education at the global, regional, or national levels.
 - b. Extensive body of recognised research work, publications, or consultancy work utilized by international or regional institutions or national governments
 - c. Extensive professional experience within the respective ASEAN Member State for which the consultant is applying, ensuring a deep understanding of that specific country's local context, educational systems, and insights
 - d. Demonstrated leadership role in his/her field of expertise at national or regional level
 - e. Extensive experience working with development management teams/organisations at national, regional or international levels
 - f. Currently having an active role in his/her field of expertise at the national or regional level
 - g. Ability to work harmoniously in as team environment and with diverse groups of individuals in cross-cultural environment and international setting
 - h. Demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills, including experience in cross-cultural environment and international settings
 - i. Demonstrated commitment to collaborative work practices
 - j. Proven skills in problem solving in a complex organizational environment and in work planning
 - k. Excellent command of written and spoken English

V. TIME FRAME

The engagement of the national consultant is expected to commence his/her work in November for three months. The definitive workplan for the duration of the contract will be finalised and agreed upon between EYSD, regional consultant and the selected national consultant.