Stakeholders Meeting on Indicators for Internationalization of Higher Education in ASEAN+6

Bangkok, Thailand
3-4 November 2016

Concept Note

Background
For more than two decades, Asia and the Pacific has been reshaped by continuous economic growth, greater regional integration, increased student mobility and migration, and dramatic expansions of higher education. This is particularly important in the ASEAN+6 region (i.e. the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, plus Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and Republic of Korea), which together represent the largest number of mobile tertiary students in the world\(^1\) and an important source for experience sharing. Yet despite promising trends towards increased mobility and access in higher education, international cooperation in the region remains largely concentrated in elite research-intensive universities.

Given intense investments and focus on research productivity and world-class status, ‘softer elements’ of the academic system\(^2\) such as governance, academic culture, cross-border research, knowledge diplomacy and other features of internationalization are not well understood or monitored. The need for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of international higher education and research is reflected in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In September 2015, UN Member States endorsed the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG4, also referred to as Education 2030, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To achieve this ambitious goal, the Education 2030 Framework for Action\(^3\) recognized the importance of developing appropriate indicators and effective monitoring mechanisms based on national and regional priorities.

Building on core measures for higher education such as Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER), tertiary mobility and other quantitative measures, the quality and depth of internationalization indicators in ASEAN+6 countries should be closely tied to shared values and long-term aspirations. In line with this aim, ASEAN and UNESCO developed a framework agreement for cooperation in 2013. The ASEAN-UNESCO framework agreement includes higher education with a focus on the need to assist national authorities in evidence-based education sector planning and promoting collaboration in

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higher education research and development (e.g. policies, indicators and delivery partnerships). In this way, relevant indicators and effective monitoring can strengthen policy analysis, knowledge management, and advance shared goals such as building a more inclusive and equitable approach to international higher education throughout ASEAN and beyond.

**Internationalization indicators in ASEAN+6**

To advance these ideals, accountability and evidence-based policymaking requires clear indicators to monitor and assess progress toward the objectives of education policies and identify bottlenecks, problems and issues. Relevant indicators are indispensable for identifying challenges and opportunities to more effectively manage higher education systems and improve teaching, research and service. Along these lines, international higher education offers new opportunities as the range of activities and number of students involved continue to expand. However, it requires clear indicators to monitor emerging dimensions of higher education, thus poses challenges for the governance of higher education systems, academic culture and institutional management.

In addition to education policies based on evidence, countries must also have a sound data production system that can provide quality information and insight. The capacity of technical and human resources and coordination among various ministries and agencies are key considerations as prerequisites for developing meaningful national indicators. Hence, it is important to take stock of the national context and discuss possibilities and challenges for developing relevant indicators on internationalization of higher education.

While a number of studies from the International Association of Universities (IAU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Research Institute, and many others provide valuable insights about the nature of internationalization globally and regionally, currently there are no common indicators to describe the growing diversity of international higher education activities and policies in ASEAN+6, which is an important area for further research.

Building on the Education 2030 agenda and ASEAN-UNESCO Framework Agreement and work plan for 2014-2018, UNESCO Bangkok will host a regional stakeholders meeting on indicators for internationalization of higher education (Bangkok, Thailand from 3-4 November 2016). The aim of this meeting is to take stock of regional needs on data collection to support countries to monitor international higher education and the achievement of SDG4.

**Objectives**

The stakeholders meeting will assess the current context and needs for relevant indicators on the internationalization of higher education in the ASEAN+6 region. More specifically, the meeting seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Review current national higher education policies on internationalization and examine the existing indicators for higher education in ASEAN+6 countries

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5 IAU Indicators and Assessment (May 2015): [http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/indicators-and-assessment](http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/indicators-and-assessment)

• Facilitate sharing experiences and lessons learned on data collection for internationalization of higher education
• Provide a regional platform to discuss policy requirements for indicators on international higher education in ASEAN+6

Expected outputs
The meeting will produce the following expected outcomes:

• Synthesis report on national policies and practices for data collection on international higher education in ASEAN+6 countries
• Draft regional work plan for the development of region-specific indicators on internationalization of higher education

To do so, the exploratory meeting will assess and contextualize internationalization indicators and begin outlining an integrative approach to effectively monitor quality higher education for all.

Participants
With generous support from the University of Tokyo, UNESCO Bangkok will invite approximately 20 key stakeholders from ASEAN+6 countries. To ensure a diverse group of stakeholders, invited guests include researchers and government officials from ASEAN+6 countries, who are responsible for higher education planning, monitoring and statistics. With the aim to outline a sustainable approach, the participants will be asked to assess current needs and opportunities to develop indicators on the internationalization of higher education in ASEAN+6 countries.

Organisers
• The University of Tokyo, Japan
• UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok, Thailand

Venue
Novotel Bangkok Ploenchit Sukhumvit, 566 Ploenchit Road, Bangkok

Dates
3-4 November 2016

Language
English will be the working language

Tentative Programme

Day One: Thursday, 3 November
• Opening remarks
• Meeting objectives
• Unpacking Education 2030 – Exploring targets for quality higher education and research
• Perspectives from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics
• Panel discussions: Mapping and assessing internationalization indicators in ASEAN+6
• Promising trends in internationalization research
• Evening reception and dinner

**Day Two: Friday, 4 November**

• Reflection
• Developing a work plan for the development of internationalization indicators
• Taking action: Next steps for the development of a regional working group
• Closing remarks
• Afternoon departures

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