



# Vocational Education and Training in Asia Regional Conference Vientiane/Lao PDR –December 2015

**-Draft Conference Concept-**

Vientiane, August 2015

## 1. Relevance of vocational education and training (TVET/SD) in Asia

East and South-East Asia are politically and economically emerging regions with a market of more than 600 million consumers. In the centre of this region, ASEAN is establishing itself as a regional alliance of sovereign countries aiming at integration based mainly on agreements and decisions reached by consensus. A common market, to be introduced by the end of 2015 (AEC) poses new challenges. The comparability and harmonisation of TVET systems which emerged and developed under very different social and political contexts among ASEAN member states require very complex and complicated processes. Those processes need transparency and international cooperation as well as a high level of technical competency at all working levels.

The strengthening of regional strategies and policies in the fields of the economy and employment as well as the respective cooperation mechanisms in the area of TVET are a particular priority of the emerging economic union. So far there is a lack of empirical studies about the forthcoming social and economic impact of AEC on the development of national labour markets and – closely related to this – on education systems in general and the TVET systems in particular. In this context the need of all stakeholders, training providers, users and regional/international implementing agencies alike for more information, explanation and a willingness for cooperation forms an essential requirement for an intensive dialogue among stakeholders involved.

## 2. Background in terms of strategy and development policy

Human resources are of strategic importance for the member countries of ASEAN as well as for their integration. With regard to human resources development, different ASEAN documents<sup>1</sup> call for:

- Improvement of the quality of the labour force,
- Strengthening of the quality and importance of TVET as well as increasing adaptation and integration within the ASEAN context,
- Support for the introduction of competency standards in TVET in order to promote the free movement of a qualified labour in the future common market (AEC) and to facilitate higher transparency, recognition and comparability of completed or partially completed vocational qualification.

The demands on TVET are constantly increasing. Therefore it is essential to ensure that the demands of the business sector are as carefully kept in mind as the individuals' desire for decent

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<sup>1</sup> E.g.: Paryono (SEAMEO VOCTECH), 2013: Anticipating ASEAN Economic Community 2015: Regional initiatives on human resources development and recognition of professional qualifications. In: TVET@Asia, issue 2; Tubsee/Bunsong (Regional Cooperation Platform), 2013: Curriculum Development of Vocational Teacher Education within the Context of ASEAN Integration Process. In: TVET@Asia, issue 2; Sirep, 2010: Teaching Competency Standards in Southeast Asian Countries. Philippines; MoES, 2013: Decree No. 565, Standard of Vocational Teachers. Vientiane; SEAMO VOCTECH, 2014: Integration of Transferable Skills in TVET Curriculum, Teaching-Learning and Assessment. Brunei Darussalam.

work and adequate wages. The high interest of partner countries in supporting this field is being well received by Germany and other donor countries. The “Regional TVET Conference Asia” instrument, introduced by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and organised 2012 in Hanoi for the first time is now well established as a platform for dialogue between German development cooperation and Asia, especially with the member countries of ASEAN. The second conference in Jakarta in April 2014 reinforced the serious interest of BMZ and the partner countries once again. It is now essential that the third conference in Vientiane/Lao PDR follows this path and builds new impetus.

### **3. Objective, subject area and content structure**

#### **3.1 Theme of the conference**

In terms of integration and exchange of products, services and workforce in a common market, TVET systems have yet to catch up and close gaps. The national TVET systems are still lacking quantitatively sufficient and qualitatively adequate capacities for an increasingly harmonising regional labour market. Above all, there is a lack of qualified executive personnel, vocational teachers and trainers able to fulfil their executive and professional tasks at the decision-making level as well as in TVET institutions and enterprises in a competent and professional manner.

The development of TVET in the ASEAN countries is strongly intertwined with the growing modern economic sector and the common market. At the same time, social disparities are increasing, resulting in the exclusion of large parts of the population from vocational training, employment and a decent income. The search for adequate solutions with national and regional impact is one of the big challenges for ASEAN integration in the coming years.

In response to these challenges, the conference focusses on four key topics:

1. TVET Governance (including a labour-market oriented legal framework and financing of TVET)
2. Inclusive Vocational Education
3. Work-process and employment oriented TVET
4. TVET Personnel.

The preliminary title of the TVET conference 2015 in Laos is based on the broad range of interests of the partners on the threshold to a common market by the end of 2015. The title of the conference 2015 in Vientiane therefore reads:

***Supporting AEC-Integration through Inclusive and Labour Market oriented TVET***

#### **3.2 Objective of the conference**

Based on the abovementioned considerations, the conference has the following objectives:

- ***Promote technical debates and expert dialogues on inclusive and labour market oriented technical vocational education and training for the upcoming AEC***
- ***Promote transnational cooperation and regional harmonisation within the TVET sector in Asia and in ASEAN in particular (based on joint recommendations)***

- *Pick up recommendations from the conferences in Hanoi and Jakarta and share experiences*
- *Establish a mutual consensus for further developing and harmonising TVET systems in context of the AEC integration.*

### 3.3 Participants

The following groups will participate in the conference:

1. High level Government representatives
2. Regional and national TVET specialists and organisations
3. Business people/ chambers/ Business Membership Organisations
4. Members of the civil society, freelance professionals and consultants in TVET
5. International agencies (ADB, UNESCO, ILO)

### 3.4 Dialogue between representatives from the education and business sectors

An open forum on different views and expectations on the four key topics will allow professional discussions and revitalise the process started 2012 in Hanoi with „Quality Breakthrough“ in the TVET sector. This approach will be further promoted by the use of cutting-edge presentation and moderation methods (e.g. contesting topics, moderated technical panel debate, discussions between representatives of different interest groups). Debates and discussions with employers or business representatives could evolve around the following questions:

- How far does ASEAN integration influence education, especially the TVET sector at the national and - more importantly –regional levels?
- What reform processes or measures in TVET and labour market development should be implemented or supported at the national and regional levels?
- What are the keys to success when introducing workplace related TVET in commercial and technical professions, and what are the challenges?
- What concepts and experiences from Europe could be used to overcome obstacles and to solve problems in a sustainable manner?

### 3.5 Date and scheduling

The Vientiane conference will take place from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 with the registration starting on 13<sup>th</sup> December. On the days following the conference, field trips to project and touristic sites will be offered.