

Strengthening Leadership with Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and Timor-Leste Project

Annex 2: Project Concept Note

Project Title	Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and Timor-Leste
Main Beneficiary Countries and Target Institutions	35 institutions from 11 countries in Southeast Asia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions in the GMS Region: Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste • Institutions in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore will also be invited to participate 4 UK institutions (<i>open call for UK institutions is in progress until 3 December 2021</i>)
Duration	The project is proposed to run in UK’s financial year 2021/22.
Context	<p>Since 2015 and as part of our leadership enhancement initiatives, SEAMEO RIHED has been pursuing capacity building for universities in countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Currently, increasing uncertainties, complexities, and challenges throughout the world have put the sustainability of universities at risk, threatening the existing progress of higher education development in the SEAMEO Region.</p> <p>Among various disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic has directly affected the teaching, research, networking, and internationalisation processes of universities in the region. Although technology is often claimed to open up opportunities for the continuation of education and inclusivity, it also faces criticism in relation to deepening inequality among students with different socio-economic backgrounds, creating urban and rural bias due to digital divides and causing gender inequality.</p>

It is widely accepted that without education access for all, the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be reached. Hence, it is more important than ever that universities work together on collective learning and creating a “New Common Space in Higher Education”. This new common space must foster leaders in the higher education sector to lead universities towards becoming gender equal, and embrace diversity and inclusivity while fostering the human resources of the future with the universal values of equality and sustainable development.

Recognising the potential contribution of the GMS and Timor-Leste and the crucial role of their higher education institutions in regional sustainable development, SEAMEO RIHED plans to continue engaging universities in the GMS and bring those from Timor-Leste into the programme, which aims to empower their institutional capacities across four key components:

- Futuristic leadership and good governance
- Innovative learning and teaching
- Sustainable research ecosystems
- Future-oriented Internationalisation (ISN) of Higher Education Institutions in the SEAMEO Region

The project on Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Higher Education Institutions in the GMS Region and Timor-Leste is part of the Futuristic Leadership and Good Governance component. In recognition that gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity are culturally constructed and highly context specific, the project's ultimate aims are to engage university leaders in the reflection and analysis of their respective scenarios, providing a common space for sharing leadership tools to promote gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity as well as igniting new ideas and projects. This will lead to the successful management of higher education, contributing to SDG4 of quality in education. In partnership with the British Council, the project aims to create a sustainable network of leaders among the SEAMEO Region and UK higher education institutions to make universities more diverse and inclusive, not only to meet the human rights target but also for the sustainable development of new innovations.

As part of futuristic leadership, the project targets leaders and policymakers in higher education. To remain relevant to the needs of the region, the project and its workshops will be planned with stakeholders and backed up with baseline information. This information will be accumulated, analysed, and synthesised for a better understanding of the specific context of leadership, gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the SEAMEO Region. Building on this understanding and knowledge, the workshops will be co-designed and co-created by UK and SEAMEO regional experts together with key stakeholders, based on the identified needs for leadership enhancement. The workshop components will cover leadership discussions, the introduction of relevant tools for successful planning and implementation as well as the formulation of plans for university management in relation to gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity. A network of UK university leaders will provide practical support on the implementation of the plan for the target universities in the SEAMEO Region in the context of the next new normal era.

<p>Project Objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To enhance gender EDI in the governance and institutional management of university leaders towards an equal and sustainable community of higher education (HE). 2. To actively engage and provide a platform for leaders to share and reflect on the gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity aspects of futuristic leadership and good governance in their respective institutions. 3. To empower university leaders with innovative and leadership tools to embrace EDI in their policymaking, institutional operation, and building a sustainable HE community. 4. To formulate a plan or practical initiative to mainstream gender and EDI in HE leadership operations. 5. To strengthen university networks regarding gender and EDI in Southeast Asia.
<p>Project Activities*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 1: Pre and post Forum with key stakeholders, including monitoring and evaluation • Activity 2: Leadership training (virtual) • Activity 3: SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Grant <p><i>*See project activity outputs and outcomes in the table below.</i></p>
<p>Timeline of Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open call for UK consultant for the project– 12 November – 3 December 2021 • Open call for UK institutions to join the project - 12 November – 31 January 2022 • Pre-workshop Forum with key stakeholders – 7 February 2022 • Virtual leadership training – 23-25 February 2022 • SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Grant – 7 – 28 February • Post-workshop Forum with key stakeholders – September 2022 • M&E – ongoing from start to finish of the Exchange Grant
<p>Project Impacts</p>	<p>Impact on individuals and institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening governance, leadership, and management among institutions in Southeast Asia on gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity • Improving the knowledge and perceptions of university leaders on the gender and EDI aspects of institutional governance

Additional details

Project Activity, Outputs, and Outcomes

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
<p>Activity 1: Pre and post Forum with key stakeholders, and M&E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 policymakers and university leaders engaged and committed to the project (President, Vice President level). • Development of M&E tools for Activity 1 are developed to measure changes in knowledge and perception toward integration of Gender EDI in leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders renew their commitment to lead and advocate for SDG 4 Quality Education with gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity supported by the project. • Leaders understand the importance and benefits of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in higher education leadership and management. • Development of M&E tools for Activity 1 are developed to measure changes in knowledge and perception toward integration of Gender EDI in leadership.
<p>Activity 2: Leadership training (virtual)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of baseline and needs analysis by UK consultants together with an expert team to build an understanding of the leadership context and inform on training sessions. • 35 representatives from Southeast Asian universities join the training and four UK universities. • 35 representatives from Southeast Asia perceive ideas on how to engage gender and EDI in leadership and governance at their respective institutions. • Higher education leaders increase their knowledge and skills on gender EDI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders understand and apply the knowledge and tools acquired from the training to the planning and advocacy of gender EDI in their specific institutional context. • Leaders identify the strategic issues and draft an initiative to include gender, diversity, and inclusivity in their policymaking and institutional management.
<p>Activity 3: SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants provided to UK institutions to work with nominated universities in Southeast Asia on a particular gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity problem/issue/challenge with Southeast Asian leaders “shadowing” and drawing on UK experience/expertise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A grant will be set for each partnership. Each partnership will consist of at least one UK university with eight or nine universities in Southeast Asia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK and Southeast Asian institutional partnerships to address gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity issues. • Formation of a sustainable network of universities from Southeast Asia and the UK.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Up to four partnerships worth £15,000 each supported (one UK: one group of eight or nine university leaders from Southeast Asia).○ Four UK universities and their respective eight or nine universities in Southeast Asia to identify areas of potential EDI partnerships in HE (institutional/bilateral consortium).	
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