



## **Mission Report**

### **SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Links: SEAMEO's Study Visit of UK Education and Research Institutions**

*14-20 September 2014, United Kingdom*

#### **A. SEAMEO Secretariat Official and Staff Member on Mission**

1. Dr Witaya Jeradechakul, Director
2. Ms Lotus Moreno Postrado, Programme Officer I

#### **B. Background and Objectives of the Activity**

1. The SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link: SEAMEO's Study Visit to UK Education and Research Institutions was proposed in April 2014 to British Council for possible support from the UK-ASEAN Knowledge Partnership Framework. On May 2014, SEAMEO received confirmation of British Council's support on the initiative. The SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link is in addition to several on-going SEAMEO-British Council cooperative activities, which also include co-organizing the SEAMEO Congress in October 2014.
2. The SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link: SEAMEO's Study Visit to UK Education and Research Institutions primarily aims to link up SEAMEO Centres and SEAMEO Secretariat with relevant education research institutions in the UK with the view of stimulating education and research partnerships between Southeast Asia and UK.
3. The SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link: SEAMEO's Study Visit to UK Education and Research aims to bring a SEAMEO delegation, comprising of Centre Directors and key officials from SEAMEO Centres and SEAMEO Secretariat to visit and conduct discussions with potential partner and counterpart institutions in UK to gain in-depth understanding of their activities and jointly identify potential activities for future collaboration.
4. Specifically, the activity aims to:
  - a) promote the work of SEAMEO in relevant UK education research institutions;
  - b) develop collaborations and ties with education research institutions and universities in UK;
  - c) establish research partnerships between SEAMEO and UK institutions;
  - d) gain better understanding of policies and governance of education and research in UK (for consistency purpose) and how these policies influence UK's education research institutions' development of R&D programmes and establishment of partnerships outside UK.
  - e) gain knowledge of UK's research-industry partnership and cooperation models on education research that could potentially contribute to facilitate regional integration in Southeast Asia.
5. The expected outputs are identified activities for collaboration between SEAMEO and UK institutions and initial plans to undertake the collaboration.

#### **C. Organizer**

1. The SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link was jointly-co-organized by SEAMEO and British Council and supported through a cost-sharing scheme.

## D. Participation of SEAMEO Officials

1. A delegation of 12 officials from the SEAMEO Secretariat and SEAMEO Centres and representatives from British Council Thailand and British Council UK participated in the activity.

[Appendix 1](#) presents the List of Participants to the SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Links: SEAMEO's Study Tour to UK Education and Research Institutions

## E. Highlights of the Activity

1. British Council has identified and selected UK institutions based on what the activity aims to accomplish and based on the initial criteria provided by the SEAMEO Secretariat on the selection of UK institutions to be visited. The programme was designed mainly with the intention to provide SEAMEO delegation with adequate opportunities for interacting with officials from key UK education and research agencies and visiting leading universities, which have strong R&D initiatives and established education-industry partnerships.
2. There were four main activities that comprised the activity:
  - a. Meetings with key UK education and research agencies and discussions on possibility of cooperation;
  - b. Visit to UK universities and meetings on possible collaboration;
  - c. Participation to an education conference that has networking and partnership as its main theme; and
  - d. Debriefing session between SEAMEO and British Council for planning of follow up actions to pursue SEAMEO-UK collaborations

[Appendix 2](#) presents the Programme for the SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Links: SEAMEO's Study Tour to UK Education and Research Institutions

3. Meetings had been conducted with the following institutions. The objectives of the meetings were for SEAMEO delegation to be familiarized on UK education systems and funding facilities for education and research initiatives.
  - a. **The Higher Education International Unit (IU)**, 15 September 2014, 0930 hours
    - UK Higher Education IU initiates and carries out high profile projects and activities to support and develop the breadth and depth on the UK HE sector's international activities.
  - b. **Research Councils UK (RCUK)**, 15 September 2014, 1000 hours
    - RCUK is a strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils, covering the full spectrum of academic disciplines from the medical and biological sciences.
  - c. **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)**, 15 September 2014, 1400 hours
    - BIS is the department for economic growth; and invest in skills and education to promote trade, boost innovation and help people to start and grow a business.
  - d. **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)**, 16 September 2014, 1030 hours
    - QAA is an independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.
  - e. **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**, 17 September, 930 hours
    - HEFCE distributes public money for higher education to universities and colleges in England, and ensures that this money is used to deliver the greatest benefit to students and wider public.
  - f. **UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC)**, 17 September 1115 hours

- UK NARIC provides services for individuals and organizations advising on comparisons of international qualifications against UK qualification framework levels.
4. Visits to the following leading universities were done with the aim of SEAMEO learning first-hand from the experiences of these universities on developing R&D and building education-industry partnerships:
- a. **Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), 16 September 2014, 1420 hours**
    - QMUL is one of UK's leading research-focused higher education with around 17,840 students, 4,000 staff and annual turnover of 300M Euros. QMUL has established international research links with Southeast Asia institutions and universities. QMUL has 3 faculty structure: humanities and social science; science and engineering and medicine and dentistry.
  - b. **University of West England (UWE), 17 September 2014, 1330 hours**
    - UWE strategy for 2020 sets out a confident and ambitious future for UWE Bristol and focuses on its ultimate goal of transforming futures through research, learning and teaching and knowledge exchange.
  - c. **Swansea University and its SPECIFIC Facility, 19 September 2014, 815 hours**
    - SPECIFIC, the new innovation and knowledge centre led by Swansea University with Tata Steel as the main industrial partner, aims to develop functional coated steel and glass products that will transform the roofs and walls of buildings into surfaces that will generate, store and release energy.
    - Swansea University is a research university that thrives on exploration and discovery and thrives on collaboration with industry and global reach, to drive economic growth, foster prosperity, enrich the community and cultural life of Wales and to contribute to the health, leisure and well being of its citizens.
5. Participation of SEAMEO to the **Council of Validating Universities (CVU) Annual Conference** in Ashton University, Birmingham, United Kingdom, 18 September 2014, 1350 hours
- The 2014 CVU Annual Conference presented the changing landscape of Collaborative Provision in UK Higher Education. The conference themes addressed issues related to: (1) How changes across the Higher Education sector are impacting on partnership activity; and (2) Transnational education and the future oversight of international partnerships.
  - The Conference provided SEAMEO with opportunity to introduce to CVU member universities the work and expertise of SEAMEO Centres and importantly provided networking opportunities for the delegation.
6. **Debriefing Session between SEAMEO and British Council**, 18 September 2014, 1730 hours
- SEAMEO presented to BC initial program concepts on the following four (4) proposed areas for collaboration with selected UK institutions:
    - a. **Student and Researcher Mobility** (*being proposed to be submitted for funding under the Newton Fund*)
    - b. **SEAMEO-UK Collaborative Research Initiative** (*being proposed to be funded under the Newton Fund – Newton Institutional Links*)
    - c. **Capacity Building Programme on Quality Assurance for SEAMEO** (*being proposed to be done in partnership with QAA*)
    - d. **Technical Training and Employability** (*being proposed to be done initially in partnership with UWE*)
  - Dr John Law, British Council Higher Education Adviser and Mr Peredur Evans of British Council Thailand provided inputs and recommendations on the proposed areas for collaborations. Likewise, Dr Law and Mr Evans provided guidance on how SEAMEO can access available UK funding facilities.

## F. Agreements of SEAMEO and British Council and Follow Up Actions

1. As a result of the *SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Link: SEAMEO's Study Visit of UK Education and Research Institutions*, SEAMEO and British Council came up with the following agreements and follow up actions to pursue proposed SEAMEO-UK collaborations:
  - a. SEAMEO TROPMED Network to prepare a detailed proposal on the proposed **Student and Research Mobility** for submission to the 6 October 2014 Call for Proposal of Newton Fund. Inputs of the SEAMEO Centres shall be sought for the finalization of the proposal.
  - b. SEAMEO TROMED Network and SEAMEO Secretariat to develop a full proposal on the proposed **Capacity Building Programme on QA for SEAMEO** which could be submitted for possible funding under the ASEAN-UK Knowledge Partnership Fund and in partnership with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The proposal could be submitted should include among others:
    - Benefits of QAA will be getting from collaborating with SEAMEO in terms of development of QAA mechanisms; (i.e. support for scoping visit, access to knowledge information);
    - Scoping visit to SEAMEO to be able for QAA to appropriately design
  - c. SEAMEO INNOTECH to prepare a full project proposal on the **Proposed UK-SEAMEO Collaborative Research Initiative** to be submitted for possible funding under the Newton Fund. The proposal should:
    - Focus on research agenda identified as priorities by the target countries of the Newton Fund (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam)
    - Highlight the impact of the proposed initiative; and
    - Be aligned with the requirements/purpose/guidelines of the Newton Fund.
  - d. SEAMEO Secretariat to prepare a proposal on **Technical Training and Employability**, a proposed collaboration with University of West England (UWE). The proposal should:
    - Highlight TVET and outward student mobility as a shared priority of British Council and SEAMEO;
    - Prioritize UK companies in Thailand as pilot companies for the provision of technical training
    - Articulate the collaboration mechanisms between SEAMEO and UWE and the inputs or contributions of both partners in the proposed collaboration

[Appendices 3,4,5 and 6](#) present the initial concepts on the four proposed initiatives.

2. SEAMEO and British Council, Thailand will be the coordinating body for the proposed SEAMEO-UK collaborations. British Council Thailand will assist the SEAMEO Secretariat in facilitating the submissions of the proposals to Newton Fund facility. SEAMEO Secretariat will be coordinating with the SEAMEO Centres in the development and finalization of the proposals.
3. A report on the results of the SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Links: SEAMEO's Study Visit to UK Education and Research Institutions is to be presented to the 37<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO High Officials Meeting in November 2014.

Initial draft of the report on the results of the SEAMEO-UK Education and Research Links: SEAMEO's Study Visit to UK Education and Research Institutions is attached as [Appendix 7](#).