

Appendix 5

Draft SFAP 2013–2017 Implementation Review Report
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Technical Assistance Consultant's Report

Project Number: 46071
April 2017

SFAP 2013–2017 Implementation Review Report

Financed by the Technical Assistance Special Fund, People's Republic of China Regional Cooperation and Poverty Reduction Fund and Regional Cooperation and Integration Fund

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Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| ACTFA | – | Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia |
| ADB | – | Asian Development Bank |
| APEC | – | Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation |
| ASEAN | – | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| AUN | – | ASEAN University Network |
| CDC | – | Communicable Diseases Control |
| CDTA | – | Capacity Development Technical Assistance |
| GIZ | – | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| GMS | – | Greater Mekong Subregion |
| GMS-SF | – | Greater Mekong Subregion Strategic Framework |
| GMS-UC | – | GMS University Consortium |
| HRD | – | human resource development |
| ILO | – | International Labor Organization |
| IOM | – | International Organization for Migration |
| JICA | – | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| Lao PDR | – | Lao People's Democratic Republic |
| MMP | – | mobile and migrant populations |
| NAP | – | National Action Plan |
| PRC | – | People's Republic of China |
| QA | – | quality assurance |
| RETA | – | Regional Technical Assistance |
| R-PATA | – | Regional Policy and Advisory Technical Assistance |
| SEAMEO-RIHED | – | South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization Centre specializing in higher education development |
| SERC | – | Human and Social Development Division |
| SERD | – | Southeast Asia Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division |
| SFAP | – | Strategic Framework and Action Plan |
| TICA | – | Thailand International Cooperation Agency |
| TVET | – | technical and vocational education and training |
| WG | – | working group |
| WGHC | – | Working Group on Health Cooperation |
| WGHRD | – | Working Group for Human Resource Development |
| WHO | – | World Health Organization |

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The objective of the review of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan (SFAP) for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) 2013–2017 is to assess the performance of the Working Group for Human Resource Development (WGHRD) against the SFAP 2013–2017 and to recommend new strategic directions for GMS cooperation in HRD to be pursued beyond 2017.

2. WGHRD launched the review at the WGHRD-15 meeting on 13–14 December 2016, followed by in-country consultations with key stakeholders including the National HRD Focal Point, National WGHRD team members, ADB resident mission staff and sector specialists, representatives of the GMS National Secretariat, and strategic partners involved in GMS or HRD cooperation.

3. The review found that the WGHRD has been successful at supporting limited information sharing at a technical level but has not delivered the collective problem-solving and decision-making that would make it an effective platform for delivering regional solutions to HRD issues. There is evidence that it has stimulated cooperation within the health sub-sector on cross-border issues and there is demonstrated demand for continued cooperation through a working group (WG) mechanism in this sector. However, the WG has not been effective in developing and delivering regional cooperation in the education, labor and migration and social development sub-sectors. One area in which there has been little regional cooperation but which is an emerging issue is that of informal labor migration which may warrant ongoing support to develop an evidence base and provide a platform for addressing emerging regional needs and issues.

4. Demand from countries and strategic partners for ongoing regional cooperation and acknowledgement confirms that future cooperation must be refined to ensure their effectiveness. Any future WGs should have strong institutional frameworks including terms of reference for both WG and members, defined secretariat roles, a strategic framework and an action plan with monitoring frameworks, as well as strong commitment from country members and strategic partners. There are also alternative coordination mechanisms already being used by countries and strategic partners in some of these sub-sectors.

5. The review recommends that the WGHRD in its current form is reconfigured and:

- (i) That a GMS Working Group on Health Cooperation (WGHC) is created from the WGHRD health subgroup to serve as a regional platform for health issues. The WGHC will focus on cross-border health issues and communicable disease control, including those associated with mobile and migrant populations (MMPs) and on emerging health issues in economic corridors and may expand its scope to address wider health systems needs or other regional health issues.
- (ii) That ADB provides regional technical assistance to support the completion of existing higher education projects that have been supported under the regional policy advisory technical assistance (R-PATA) 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013 – 2017, where these projects cannot be merged into existing projects under the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) framework.
- (iii) That the GMS no longer addresses regional higher education initiatives through a working group mechanism and that such initiatives are instead addressed

through the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting and the ASEAN Work Plan on Education with the support of strategic partners including Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) and ASEAN University Network (AUN).

- (iv) That the GMS no longer addresses regional TVET initiatives through a WG mechanism and that such initiatives are instead addressed bilaterally with the support of strategic partners including International Labor Organization (ILO).
- (v) That the current Labor and Migration sub-sector members explore the possibility of the establishment of a Working Group on Safe Labor Migration with the assistance of strategic partners including ILO and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The WG would generate and share knowledge on safe labor migration, develop understanding of the regional implications of labor migration, and design an institutional mechanism to address regional migration issues in the future.
- (vi) That cross-cutting social development issues identified through summary poverty reduction and social strategy documents are integrated into the appropriate projects rather than addressed through a formal mechanism.
- (vii) That ADB continues to promote and coordinate regional dialogue to support the development of regional perspectives on HRD issues, and that other WGs identify and address cross-cutting HRD issues through their projects or integrate solutions into the work of strategic partners, rather than addressing them through a particular HRD WG mechanism.

II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

5. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), comprising Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, had a combined population of approximately 326 million people when, in 1992, it agreed to launch a program of regional cooperation – the GMS Economic Cooperation Program – to promote economic and social development in the subregion. The program includes nine areas of cooperation, including human resource development (HRD). The current Greater Mekong Subregion – Strategic Framework 2012–2022 (GMS-SF 2012–2022) identifies HRD as one of its sector priorities.¹

6. The Fifth GMS Ministerial Conference established the Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD) in 1995 with the objective to support HRD initiatives that facilitate GMS integration, while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration. The 2007 Mid-Term Review of the GMS-SF 2002–2012 noted that although the WGHRD had addressed key HRD concerns in the GMS, program development and implementation were essentially project-based and lacked a clearly defined strategic framework. In response, the WGHRD developed a Strategic Framework and Action Plan (SFAP) for 2009–2012 (HRD SFAP 2009–2012)² to improve subregional cooperation in HRD and to strengthen links with other subregional initiatives.

7. The HRD SFAP 2009–2012 defines HRD as a broad concept that includes activities providing vital inputs to a growing economy. Because HRD enhances the productivity of people

¹ ADB. 2013. *The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program Strategic Framework 2012–2022*. Manila.

² ADB. 2009. *Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013–2017)*. Manila.

(creating human and social capital), the SFAP argues that a more equitable distribution of HRD outcomes both between and within countries contributes to poverty reduction, political stability, social cohesion, and national security and provides opportunities for ethnic groups, women, and other vulnerable segments to better manage negative externalities resulting from increased connectivity and mobility of people and goods, thus contributing directly to human welfare and to broader poverty reduction. The main instruments of HRD are (i) effective and efficient investments in education, health, labor migration, and social development that increase the levels and equitable distribution of human and social capital; and (ii) national, regional, and international policies that promote their efficient and equitable utilization.

8. The aim of the HRD SFAP 2009–2012 was to (i) support HRD initiatives that directly facilitate the process of subregional cooperation and integration, such as managing labor migration and harmonizing HRD standards; and (ii) address cross-border issues directly linked to GMS integration, such as cross-border transmission of communicable diseases and human trafficking. The WGHRD endorsed the HRD SFAP 2009–2012 at its Ninth Meeting in May 2009 and it was then formally endorsed at the Fifteenth GMS Ministerial Conference in June 2009.

9. An external consultant reviewed the HRD SFAP 2009–2012 during 2012 and at the same time drafted the HRD SFAP 2013–2017³ based on in-country consultations and input from ADB sector specialists. The consultant presented the review findings and the draft HRD SFAP 2013–2017 at WGHRD-11 and incorporated feedback into the final version which the 18th GMS Ministerial Conference subsequently endorsed at its meeting on 12th December 2012 in Nanning, PRC.

10. GMS HRD initiatives identified in the SFAP 2013–2017 aim to exploit one or more of the following opportunities for subregional cooperation:

- (i) facilitating subregional integration by harmonizing national HRD policies, regulations, standards, and procedures;
- (ii) addressing cross-border HRD issues resulting from subregional integration;
- (iii) obtaining additional value by conducting selected activities at the subregional level; and
- (iv) exchanging relevant information and experience within the subregion.

11. The objectives of the HRD strategy are to (i) support HRD initiatives that directly facilitate the process of subregional cooperation and integration; and (ii) address cross-border HRD issues directly linked to GMS integration (e.g., the cross-border transmission of communicable diseases, or human and drug trafficking).

12. The GMS-SF 2012–2022 recommended changes to the overall GMS program, including greater selectivity and prioritization of focus areas within sectors, improved clarity on the regional issues to be covered by the GMS program and other regional programs, more attention to links across different sectors, and sharper focus on monitoring results and improvements that enhance the program's effectiveness and impact. As one of the sector priorities in the GMS-SF 2012–2022, specific recommendations for HRD include (i) further prioritization in the HRD action plan, with more attention given to labor migration; (ii) a careful review of the future directions of the Phnom Penh Plan and other GMS capacity building programs; (iii) more engagement of the WGHRD's strategic partners in the HRD program; and (iv) continued review

³ ADB. 2013. *Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013–2017)*. Manila.

and strengthening of the institutional arrangements, structure, and operations of the WGHRD at the subregional, subgroup, and national levels, including annual WGHRD meetings and use of more task-oriented subgroups. The GMS-SF 2012–2022 identifies HRD initiatives that “facilitate the process of GMS integration while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration” as one of its priorities. At the same time, the GMS-SF 2012–2022 indicates that further prioritization of initiatives is important in the GMS HRD program.

13. The ADB Study on Strengthening the GMS Institutional Framework⁴ stated that “although the WGHRD has achieved encouraging results especially in the areas of health, the complexity of the WGHRD with diverse sub-sectors (health, education, labor and migration, and social development) and involving different line ministries has hampered its effectiveness.” The national secretariats were identified as crucial to ensure smooth and effective coordination at the country level, but that their operations are constrained by staff shortages, staff turnover, weak capacity, the challenge of interagency coordination and financial constraints. As part of its recommendations on working group (WG) forums, it recommended that “the WGHRD can be restructured to make it more focused. For example, a separate working group on health cooperation can be established, given the success and importance of GMS health cooperation.”

III. REVIEW SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

14. As detailed in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1), ADB has commissioned this review, which includes the six countries of the GMS and focuses on both in-country and regional performance and achievements, to:

- i. Assess the performance of the WGHRD against the SFAP 2013–2017, specifically against the Action Plan and the Results Framework based on the seven strategic thrusts and corresponding priority programs and projects, and summarize the resultant outcomes, outputs, issues and challenges, and lessons;
- ii. Consider the performance of the WGHRD against the previous SFAP 2009–2012;
- iii. Analyze the achievements of the WGHRD since its inception in terms of GMS regional achievements and country progress within the sub-sectors that form the scope of the WGHRD; and
- iv. Recommend new strategic directions for GMS cooperation in HRD to be pursued beyond 2017.

15. ADB engaged an external consultant to conduct the review of the SFAP 2013–2017. The WGHRD launched the SFAP 2013–2017 review at the WGHRD-15 meeting held in Kunming, Yunnan Province, PRC on 13-14 December 2016, with an overview of the review presented to all participants. During session 4 of WGHRD-15, participants discussed and agreed the progress and results achieved in each sub-sector to date and outlined the activities and targets for the remaining period of the SFAP, i.e., through the end of 2017. Sub-sector teams analyzed current WGHRD working arrangements, what was working well and what the opportunities for improvement were, and then reported the outcome of their sub-sector discussions to the plenary session. The WGHRD endorsed a series of recommendations regarding future WGHRD structure working arrangements based upon these sub-sector reports and upon other presentation and discussions during the workshop.⁵ These recommendations inform the review.

⁴ ADB. 2016. *Study on Strengthening the Greater Mekong Subregion Program's Institutional Framework*. Manila.

⁵ Forthcoming. WGHRD-15 Summary of Proceedings.

16. The consultant has used desk review, analysis of secondary data, and interviews with key stakeholders as the basis of the review. Then, the consultant visited each of the GMS countries and facilitated in-country consultation meetings with key stakeholders identified by the National HRD Focal Point and ADB support staff including the National HRD Focal Point; National WGHRD team members, both past and present; ADB resident mission staff and relevant sector specialists; representatives of the GMS National Secretariat; and strategic partners involved in GMS or HRD cooperation. A list of the participants is provided in Appendix 2. In addition to the in-country consultation meetings, the consultant talked to other ADB staff including sector specialists and project officers to understand ADB's strategies, priorities, core capacities and activities. Analysis of all data and information collected has resulted in the formulation of a series of recommendations regarding the reconfiguration of the WGHRD to address future demand for GMS HRD cooperation.

IV. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. GMS HRD SFAP 2013–2017

17. **The SFAP 2013–2017 has not served as an effective guiding document for HRD across the GMS.** The document consolidates separate in-country consultations and technical inputs from ADB sector specialists. Its presentation at WGHRD-11 allowed for some WGHRD sub-group feedback, but no significant regional-level group consultation or review took place, meaning it is largely a compilation of the various requests of individual country teams and ADB sector representatives. A connection between the proposed activities and the work of other GMS WGs does not exist.

18. **Turnover and a lack of review have contributed to a lack of understanding and relevance of the SFAP 2013–2017.** Review respondents generally showed a lack of familiarity with the SFAP 2013–2017 document. This is likely the result of the changing membership of both the national HRD working groups and associated ADB staff during its term, which no longer includes many of those who contributed to the development of the SFAP 2013–2017, eroding the institutional knowledge that explained and justified the proposed activities in the Action Plan. Since its adoption changing priorities amongst GMS countries have brought new HRD perspectives and demands. However, there has been no update of either the Action Plan Proposed Activities or the Results Framework after 2015 to ensure understanding and ongoing relevance of the SFAP 2013–2017.

19. **National Action Plans (NAPs) were not effective in improving in-country progress against the SFAP 2013–2017 Action Plan.** R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013–2017 supported the appointment of National Action Planning Specialists in 2014 in each country to assist the government ministries in developing, facilitating and monitoring NAPs. With the assistance of the National Action Planning Specialists, each country prepared and presented an NAP at WGHD-13 and provided an updated priorities list and progress report at WGHRD-14. The NAPs helped nationalize the SFAP 2013–2017 and supported monitoring of its implementation. The NAPs included HRD activities supported by ADB as well as those of other development partners. National Action Planning Specialists organized consultation meetings and prepared quarterly reports throughout 2015. However, these positions were discontinued at the end of 2015, due to the perceived low demand for HRD activities.

1. Action Plan Activities

20. **More than a third of the proposed Action Plan activities never took place.** Of the 27 proposed activities across the four sub-sectors in the Action Plan (Appendix 3), the review identified regional activity in line with the proposed activities for ten proposed activities, evidence of limited activities (either at country level or addressing only part of the proposed activity) in line with the proposed activities for eight proposed activities, and no activity in nine of the proposed activities. The greatest progress was shown under the “Addressing Regional Health Issues” section where all proposed activities progressed either at the regional or country level, while very little progress was demonstrated under the “Mitigating Social Costs in the Economic Corridors” section outside of the GMS Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention activity, which is health-related.

21. **WGHRD was not a catalyst for most of the activities that did happen.** Analysis of the proposed activities suggests that most of the activities that demonstrated significant progress were already either already underway or were in the pipeline at the time of the development of the SFAP 2013–2017, and respondents suggested that these were included in the Action Plan more because of committed ADB officers working across GMS country governments to encourage regional approaches to common issues than because of the WGHRD’s objectives. Country-level activities and activities initiated by other strategic partners accounted for other areas of progress. This suggests that many of the activities that progressed would have been accomplished without the WGHRD and its SFAP 2013–2017.

22. **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) focus is predominantly national, not regional, to meet country needs.** In the TVET sub-sector the review found limited progress in proposed regional projects, and evidence, backed up by information collected during the consultations, of more of a country-level focus as country governments develop their TVET institutions and skills delivery to meet their own perceived needs, although generally in line with available regional and international TVET frameworks. All countries value TVET to support economic development, but each country has its own specific skills development priorities. As an example, as part of the “Development and piloting of a framework for the mutual recognition of technical and vocational skills in the GMS (Phase 2)” activity which was supported by R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013–2017, the six countries initially proposed 12 different skill areas for the development of Mutual Recognition Frameworks. Furthermore, each country reported that it is progressing the development of TVET to meet its own country’s needs, and only Thailand talked about skills development amongst migrants from other countries and has used the WGHRD to propose bi-lateral cooperation initiatives amongst GMS countries.

23. **Association of South East Asian Nations-wide (ASEAN)-wide cooperation is of greater interest in higher education.** In higher education, the review recognized progress in regional harmonization and networking under the Development of an Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia (ACTFA) and Strengthening Capacity of University QA Systems (Phase II) projects. Both activities are supported by the regional policy and technical assistance R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP, 2013–2017. However, feedback from in-country consultations identified a demand for wider ASEAN cooperation in higher education. One respondent identified a desire for cooperation with world-class universities in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia as a reason for a wider higher education focus.

24. **Several initiatives strengthen health coordination work.** Good progress is evident in proposed regional activities in the health sub-sector. The Second Regional Communicable

Diseases Control (CDC) project in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam is performing well and on track to meet the intended outcome.⁶ ADB has approved the follow-up GMS Health Security Project which will also include Myanmar. The GMS Health Impact Assessment Project and the regional Capacity Development Technical Assistance (CDTA) on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change in Health Sector in the GMS also have regional focuses, as does the GMS Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention Project.

25. **Other sub-sectors made minimal progress in regional cooperation.** Analysis of the labor and migration sub-sector suggests that there is currently little demand for regional approaches. Of four proposed activities under the “Facilitating Safe Cross-Border Labor Migration” section, the review only identified regional progress related to ILO’s GMS TRIANGLE Project,⁷ which Australian Aid funded and which is established outside of the WGHRD. Of the six proposed activities under the “Mitigating Social Costs in the Economic Corridors” section, four of the six activities showed no regional activity under the WGHRD. Of the two proposed activities that did progress, the GMS Youth Forum is an activity implemented in conjunction with a GMS Summit, depending on the host country, and the GMS Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention is a health sub-sector activity whose activities were planned prior to the development of the SFAP 2013–2017.

2. Results Framework

26. **The SFAP 2013–2017 monitoring framework was not an effective monitoring tool.** The SFAP 2013–2017 Results Framework (Appendix 4) defines outcomes, outputs, indicators and data sources/reporting mechanisms but in several cases, they are not specific nor relevant enough to support effective monitoring of the outputs and outcomes. For example, “effective control of cross-border transmission of HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, and other emerging diseases” does not define “effective”; and “increased student and academic mobility among universities in Southeast Asia” does not provide a baseline or appear to be significantly influenced by the higher education activities proposed during the term of the SFAP 2013–2017. In addition, the framework relies on data sources that are not readily available or not specific enough to be useful as part of the review. For example, “ILO Progress Reports” as a measure of the development of standard TVET learning materials when ILO was not implementing that activity, and “GMS University Records” as a measure of increased student and academic mobility, data that is not easily accessible.

27. **Systematic monitoring of progress of the SFAP 2013–2017 did not take place.** Furthermore, neither did updating the status of proposed activities other than annually at the WGHRD meeting. This is largely because of a lack of clarity regarding the responsibility for monitoring. National HRD working groups indicated that they expected ADB to conduct regular monitoring and reporting of progress against the Action Plan to national HRD working groups, while ADB expected national HRD working groups to be able to provide country progress reports upon request and as part of the annual WGHRD meetings. Thus, there is no evidence of regular monitoring or reporting against the results framework outputs or indicators. Additionally, it was reported by at least one WGHRD country team that ADB and strategic partners did not always involve them or keep them informed of in-country HRD activities related to the SFAP 2013–2017.

⁶ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/175681/41508-014-mcs.pdf>

⁷ http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/projects/WCMS_304802/lang--en/index.htm

28. **Excluding health, there is limited demand across the scope of the WGHRD for regional approaches.** Analysis of the Results Framework and associated discussion during the consultations indicate that while in health there is effective regional cooperation happening under the auspices of the WGHRD, less demand is evident for a regional approach to education, labor and migration, and social development at this stage.

29. **Other strategic partners are taking the lead in TVET and higher education.** In the education sub-sector, the demand for TVET exists mainly at country level and is being supported bilaterally by ADB as well as other strategic partners including International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In higher education, consultations and analysis suggest that future higher education initiatives could be better addressed through ASEAN which provides a wider basis for university cooperation and which is a more logical theater for the development of research and high-level skills.

30. **The lack of a solid evidence base hampers agreement on regional HRD approaches in some sub-sectors.** ADB and strategic partner representatives acknowledged that there was limited solid data upon which to base discussions on some HRD issues, particularly those related to informal labor migration and social development, and that this was likely to be constraining the ability of the WGHRD to develop a regional perspective.

B. WGHRD

1. WGHRD Scope

31. **The WGHRD scope is fragmented and not aligned with the WGHRD structure.** The WGHRD covers four broad sub-sectors – health, education, labor and migration, and social development. While the SFAP 2013–17 provides a definition of HRD, clear objectives and identifies seven strategic HRD thrusts, the WGHRD subsectors are not aligned with the strategic thrusts. The SFAP 2013–17 acknowledges that “the sixth (strategic thrust, being “mitigating social costs in economic corridors”) cuts across the labor and migration and health sectors, and the seventh (“strengthening institutions and mechanisms for GMS HRD cooperation”) cuts across all three sectors” However, the siloed nature of the WGHRD structure does not encourage cooperation across sub-sectors to address cross-cutting thrusts.

32. **GMS government ministries poorly understand the scope of the WGHRD.** The scope of the WGHRD within these four sub-sectors remains poorly understood, meaning that countries are often unclear as to which ministries and which departments should act as representatives on the WGHRD. The review identified several delegates from personnel/HRD functions within ministries, suggesting that governments may perceive that the WGHRD addresses internal civil service HRD needs, while there were also representatives from ministry international cooperation functions as well as technical departments. The WGHRD-15 meeting recommended that the scope is reviewed and streamlined and that the mandate of each sub-group is clarified.

33. **National WGHRD working groups lack understanding of the coverage of labor and migration issues and social development issues.** Two national WGHRD working groups indicated that they were unclear as to whether the WGHRD addressed all migration issues, labor migration issues or only unskilled and low-skilled labor migration. Analysis of the “Mitigating Social Costs in the Economic Corridors” section of the Action Plan, which presents a mishmash of only loosely related activities and consultations, uncovered very little

understanding of the social development component of the WGHRD. Thus, several national HRD working groups have not always included representatives from a ministry responsible for social development at WGHRD meetings.

34. **The breadth of the WGHRD scope presents problems in nominating delegates for limited slots on the national HRD working groups.** Within the GMS countries, there can be different ministries responsible for health, higher education, TVET, labor, migration and/or social development, as well as for international cooperation and planning. This presents a challenge in nominating delegates for limited vacancies on national HRD working groups as well as for in-country coordination of HRD issues by national HRD working groups across several ministries.

35. **The WGHRD is not a suitable forum for some issues within its scope.** While there is a recognized demand for regional cooperation on emerging labor migration issues, country representatives indicated that labor migration remains a sensitive political subject and that the technical level of the WGHRD is not a viable platform to be discussing migration issues at this point. The social cost of economic development is also politically sensitive and thus typically unsuitable for discussion at a technical level, although its lack of clear definition provides some space for accommodating less sensitive issues.

36. **Ministries generally do not utilize the WGHRD as a mechanism for regional cooperation and coordination.** The review found limited evidence of wide knowledge of and engagement with the WGHRD by country ministries as a regional cooperation and coordination mechanism to advance national and regional strategies. WGHRD members reported no proactive use of the WGHRD outside of the annual meeting to address cross-cutting HRD issues by their governments. Although national HRD working groups have prepared and presented statements at WGHRD meetings between 2013 and 2016, only a couple of countries reported formal guidance from senior government officials prior to WGHRD meetings. Country teams generally report the WGHRD outputs back to their ministries; this is often simply sharing the Summary of Proceedings.

37. **Country governments demonstrated little evidence of active demand for cross-sector cooperation within the HRD scope (among the sub-sectors) unless it is related to a specific priority issue.** This is evidenced by the lack of in-country WGHRD meetings and a lack of evidence of inter-ministerial discussions on cross-cutting issues related specifically to health, education, labor and migration and social development. No evidence was found of in-country institutional mechanisms for specific HRD sector cooperation as defined under the WGHRD. This undermines the ability of countries to coordinate their input to the WGHRD and leads to WGHRD representatives representing their ministries or departments rather than their countries and thus only being able to engage in dialogue regarding their specific sub-sector.

2. WGHRD Representation

38. **Analysis of the WGHRD meeting delegate lists indicates a significant turnover in both WGHRD country representation.** Analysis of lists of WGHRD meeting participants suggests that, of an average of 47 country delegates at each WGHRD meeting during the period 2013 – 2016, only four delegates have attended all four WGHRD meetings (three from Thailand and one from Vietnam) and that many delegates only attended one meeting. National HRD working groups and ADB staff reported that this was due to natural staff promotion, transfer, or turnover. However, it is also likely to be due to the lack of a clear understanding of the WGHRD and its scope, meaning that governments appoint different representatives to attend WGHRD meetings depending upon the understanding and priorities of the official

receiving the invitation. In addition to negatively affecting ownership and understanding of the SFAP 2013–17, high turnover reduces institutional knowledge and the development of networks, which in turn limit opportunities for regional cooperation and progress made by the WGHRD.

39. **No clear guidelines are available for WGHRD country nominees.** No terms of reference are available for the National Focal Point or WGHRD members in general which, coupled with the lack of a clearly defined WGHRD scope means that GMS National Secretariats and relevant ministries have no guidance in the appointment of WGHRD members. This also means that, when new members are appointed to the WGHRD, they have no guiding document upon which to develop an understanding of the role and that they are dependent upon existing handover processes, if any. As an example, discussions with two first-time attendees at the WGHRD-15 indicated that one had been delegated to replace a previous member without any briefing whatsoever on the WGHRD functions or their role as a member, while the other had been briefed by their predecessor on both WGHRD functions and their role.

40. **A common approach to the appointment of WGHRD delegates across countries is lacking.** The WGHRD National Focal Point is appointed variously from a central ministry such as that responsible for finance, planning or economic development, or from within one of the HRD sector ministries. While ministries responsible for health and education are represented in most WGHRD country delegations, there is not always representation from ministries responsible for labor, migration or social development. Some ministries appoint delegates from the department responsible for international cooperation while others appointed representatives of technical departments such as TVET or communicable diseases. These inconsistencies create the challenge both within and between national HRD working groups of having experts from diverse backgrounds and technical areas working together to develop common understanding and objectives.

41. **Analysis of WGHRD meeting delegate lists indicates that WGHRD appointments also vary in the civil service rank of appointees,** ranging from lower-political levels (e.g. deputy secretary of state) to sub-departmental representation (office chief or deputy department director). This creates an imbalance in power relations at WGHRD meetings and creates inconsistency in the types of discussion (political vs. technical) that delegates can and wish to participate in, resulting in constraints to open dialogue and genuine cooperation.

3. WGHRD Meetings

42. **WGHRD meetings address multiple objectives in a short time.** Analysis of the WGHRD Summaries of Proceedings between 2013 and 2016 indicate that the annual WGHRD meetings typically last no more than two days and within this time attempt to fulfill a number of objectives including: monitoring and review of progress against SFAP or National Action Plans; sub-group discussions on progress and issues, information sharing including updates of ongoing projects; consideration for proposals for new projects or activities; development partner presentations on sector activities and country-level dialogue. Feedback during in-country consultation meetings indicated that this does not provide ample time for genuine discussion and understanding of proposals by all participants. The WGHRD-15 meeting recommended that there should be clearer objectives and improved preparation for WGHRD meetings.

43. **There is a lack of regional working group activities.** The review found no evidence of actual “working group” activities, being technical study and analysis of defined issues resulting in recommendations for further action, either as part of or outside the annual WGHRD meetings.

In fact, the review found no evidence of formal, structured interaction between national HRD working groups outside of the annual WGHRD meetings at all, other than in forums unrelated to the WGHRD, suggesting that the annual WGHRD meeting is an inefficient platform for creating demand for coordinated regional responses to HRD issues and/or that there is not enough demand from countries for HRD technical cooperation to warrant ongoing WG activities between meetings.

44. **In-country WGHRD meetings are generally administrative.** Feedback suggests that in-country WGHRD meetings generally only occur as preparatory meetings for the annual WGHRD meeting or GMS reviews, or to gather information for higher-level GMS meetings such as the GMS Ministerial Conference or the Senior Officials Meeting. This suggests that there is a lack of effective coordination across the ministries represented on each national HRD working group to enable in-country meetings to discuss HRD issues of common interest.

C. ADB Support

45. **ADB envisions the WGHRD as a country-led cooperation mechanism.** ADB supports the WGHRD through ADB R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013–2017, Output 3 which has provided funding for the four WGHRD meetings in 2013–2016 as a platform to initiate regional HRD cooperation. However, ADB generally perceives the WGHRD as a country-led mechanism and thus expects that any follow-up regional cooperation activities outside of these meetings will be initiated and supported by country governments, and that monitoring and reporting of WGHRD-related activities against the SFAP 2013–2017 will be conducted by national HRD working groups. However National HRD working groups perceive the WGHRD as an ADB-lead mechanism and expect that ADB will facilitate activities outside of the WGHRD and will monitor and report progress against the SFAP 2013–2017 to GMS National Secretariats and national HRD working groups. This has led to confusion and some frustration as both parties expect each other to take the lead on WGHRD activities.

46. **ADB responsibility for the operation and success of the WGHRD is unclear.** The GMS region is split between the Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) and East Asia (PRC) Departments. The Southeast Asia Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division (SERC) is the central secretariat for the GMS program, but the Human and Social Development Division (SEHS) and Thailand Resident Mission (TRM) have acted as the secretariat for the WGHRD. In addition, resident missions in each country have a direct relationship with national HRD working groups. This creates an internal coordination challenge, which can be complicated by differing priorities among divisions.

47. **ADB staff churn has decreased SFAP 2013–2017 ownership.** Four different ADB staff have held primary responsibility for the WGHRD and the SFAP 2013–2017 during its term, and of an average of 16 attendees at each WGHRD meeting during the period 2013–2016, only three ADB staff have attended all four meetings. This changing delegation of responsibility and representation is likely to have affected the retention of institutional knowledge regarding the WGHRD and the ownership of the SFAP 2013–2017. More than one ADB respondent suggested that there is little internal organizational credibility to be gained from the effort required to coordinate the WGHRD and thus that ADB staff don't prioritize WGHRD activities and look for opportunities to transfer responsibility to another staff.

D. GMS National Secretariats

48. **GMS National Secretariats generally offer little direct support to the WGHRD.** The GMS National Secretariat is the country national secretariat/coordinator for the overall GMS Program, usually based at the ministry responsible for planning or finance. GMS National Secretariats do not facilitate WGHRD meetings or activities, nor actively monitor WGHRD activities or progress against the SFAP 2013–2017 or the National Action Plans. Their role is mainly to facilitate GMS-level activities and to act as a conduit for information between the GMS Secretariat and the country-level working groups (WGs). No evidence was found of active communication and cooperation between GMS WGs at regional level and only limited evidence of communication at country level, generally as part of GMS national reviews.

E. Strategic Partners

49. **Strategic partners are frustrated by the lack of engagement with the WGHRD.** The SFAP 2013–17 identifies 50 strategic partners and sets out to strengthen these strategic partnerships to ensure coordination of “HRD initiatives at the national, regional, and international level.” Analysis of the WGHRD Summaries of Proceedings for each WGHRD meeting since 2013 indicates that only nine of these strategic partners have been actively involved in the WGHRD at a regional level during this period, several of these as implementers of planned activities. Some of these strategic partners indicated a frustration at the limited level of engagement by the WGHRD, having not been invited to all meetings and having received very little communication between meetings.

50. **Other coordination mechanisms are available.** This includes broad non-sector specific regional mechanisms such as ASEAN and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as well as a multitude of sector-specific organizations and mechanisms. These often overlap with the regional and technical scope of the WGHRD and allow countries and partners to assess which mechanisms are most effective for pursuing their objectives. In practice, countries and partners, including ADB, tend to work through many different mechanisms depending on which is most appropriate for each issue, although it is commonly acknowledged that the investment of time in these various mechanisms does not always justify the benefits.

51. **Strategic partners value the GMS regional focus of the WGHRD for some issues.** Feedback from partners addressing issues such as communicable diseases and informal labor migration indicated that they particularly valued the GMS regional focus of the WGHRD due to its ability to bring together contiguous countries to address issues that straddle their borders. Representatives from PRC and Thailand also indicated that they saw value in a GMS regional dialogue mechanism to address emerging HRD issues related to economic development.

52. **Strategic partners that have been involved in the WGHRD appreciate the convening power of the WGHRD mechanism to support regional cooperation and as a forum for information sharing.** They suggest that the WGHRD could be enhanced to support more effective coordination of sub-sector activities amongst countries and strategic partners and to support funds mobilization and that the WGHRD should encourage more activity between WGHRD meetings.

V. ANALYSIS

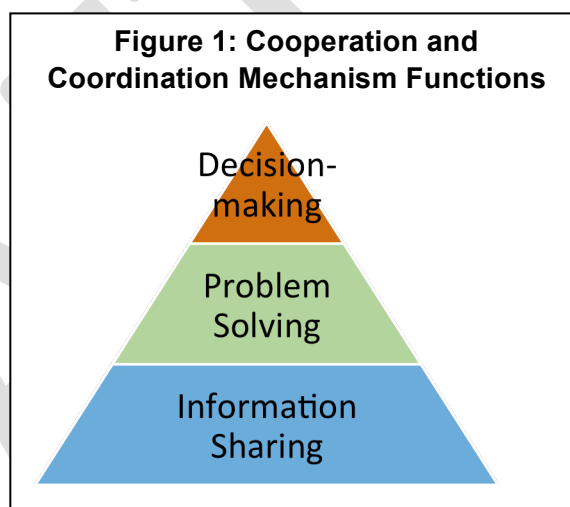
53. The WGHRD is part of the GMS regional economic development mechanism and as such it is intended to support regional cooperation and develop regional approaches to common

issues. Country-level economic development needs are addressed bi-laterally through ADB resident missions and other strategic partners at country-level. The WGHRD is thus only effective if it is supporting regional cooperation and coordination and resulting in regional development projects. The review thus seeks to identify whether the WGHRD is:

- a. supporting regional cooperation and coordination; and
- b. resulting in regional development projects.

54. The framework presented in Figure 1 identifies the three main functions of a cooperation and coordination framework. The framework illustrates that, to be effective, coordination and cooperation mechanisms need to function on three levels: information sharing, problem solving, and decision-making. Information sharing supports the development of a common understanding and provides a basis for identification of common objectives and issues; problem solving involves technical cooperation to find common solutions and make recommendations regarding these objectives and issues; and decision-making involves agreement on common strategies and actions based on the recommendations.

55. Usually these three functions will be performed separately, with information sharing being an ongoing function performed through meetings, document sharing, online information platforms and semi-formal communication; problem solving being conducted through working groups and task forces established to address specific issues; and decision-making conducted through a high-level committee with the authority to make decisions on behalf of their institutions. This framework will be used to analyze the effectiveness of the WGHRD.



56. **Information sharing** – The WGHRD-15 meeting agreed that information sharing is happening at the annual WGHRD meetings, but that the limited time available in these meetings constrains the amount and effectiveness of information sharing. There is very little information sharing happening outside of these meetings due to the lack of regional follow-up meetings, the absence of an online information platform and the very limited monitoring and reporting of progress against the SFAP 2013–17, although there have been informal communications indicating the establishment of a social network within the WGHRD. This means that the WGHRD does not have a solid foundation of information upon which to build common understanding of the GMS HRD context and to identify common issues. In the absence of shared information, countries are only able to present their national perspective and ADB is left to determine the common HRD issues that the WGHRD will focus on.

57. **Problem solving** – There was very little evidence of problem solving taking place within the WGHRD at a regional level. While largely consisting of technical experts, annual WGHRD meetings did not provide time for proper analysis of issues and agreement on ways forward and there were no follow-up meetings to allow for problem solving. Problem solving is instead conducted by ADB sector specialists and external technical advisors engaged under RETAs such as R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013 – 2017. While these sector specialists and technical advisors do consult with technical experts within each country and

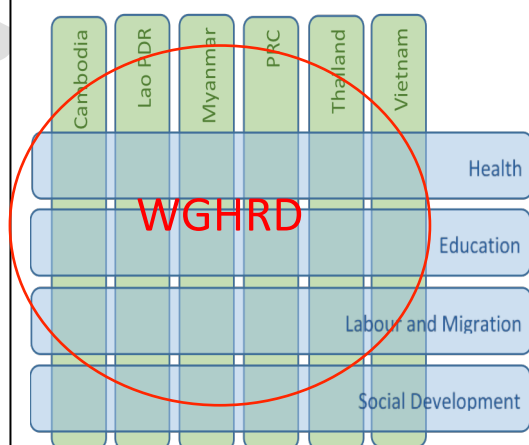
often from within the WGHRD, country representatives do not come together to analyze issues together and build a solid consensus on the way forward. The exception is in the health sub-sector where a steering committee meets regularly to oversee the Second GMS Regional Communicable Diseases Control Project. An additional issue is that problem solving cannot be effective unless there is a solid basis of shared information, which the previous paragraph identified as absent.

58. **Decision-making** – Decisions are currently made in annual WGHRD meetings based upon the recommendations of external technical advisors and ADB sector specialists, but given that there is little effective information sharing and intra-WG problem solving to support these decisions, and that the WGHRD is largely made up on technical staff who do not necessarily possess the authority to make decisions on behalf of their government, this decision-making is ineffective and not effectively owned by the governments. Some more important decisions are recommended by the WGHRD to the senior ministers meeting, but again, the lack of true engagement in the development of the recommendations undermines the ownership of the decision.

59. Analysis of the WGHRD summaries of proceedings confirm that the annual WGHRD meeting is being used to address all three cooperation and coordination functions and consultations corroborate that there is very little happening outside of the annual WGHRD meeting to support these functions outside of the health sub-sector activities. This is not to say that effective information sharing, problem solving and decision-making on HRD issues related to regional economic development is not happening. There are several other mechanisms and forums through which country governments are progressing HRD issues, including: bilaterally through ADB resident missions or other in-country bilateral strategic partners; and multilaterally through mechanisms such as ASEAN, UN agencies or region and sector coordination mechanisms.

60. The WGHRD has two potential comparative advantages over other mechanisms. The first is that it focuses on the six contiguous countries of the GMS and thus is effective for addressing issues that relate to common land borders between these countries. The predominant issues within the WGHRD scope that fall into this category include communicable diseases, drug and food safety, health impact of climate change, cross-border labor migration and the social impact of economic corridors, but other issues currently being addressed by the WGHRD such as TVET and higher education do not benefit from the WGHRD over other mechanisms. The second is that it brings together many sectors that together address issues of human and social capital, something not replicated in other regional cooperation mechanisms.

Figure 2: Working Group on Human Resource Development Coverage



61. However, although these competitive advantages make the WGHRD a viable mechanism for GMS regional cooperation on issues of human and social capital, the review found that, outside of the health sub-sector there was no focus on cross-border issues and very

little evidence of cross-sector cooperation and coordination through the WGHRD, either between or within countries, suggesting that this comparative advantage is not being realized, partly due to the ineffectiveness of the WGHRD mechanism and partly due to a lack of demand from country governments.

62. So, what do country governments expect from the WGHRD? The expectations and perceived benefits of the WGHRD vary across GMS countries. While all countries value the WGHRD for its information sharing and networking role, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar view the WGHRD as a potential source of development assistance and a mechanism for funds mobilization. PRC and Thailand view the WGHRD more as a platform for information sharing and cooperation in HRD development across the region, with Vietnam sitting somewhere between these two views. This leads to differing expectations and differing demands for WGHRD structure and operation.

63. However, country-level consultations found a consensus that the WGHRD is yet to deliver value to country governments in terms of regional cooperation in HRD issues, and this is borne out by the fact that the WGHRD is not generating regional economic development projects. At the same time, countries do see benefits because of the networking and information sharing opportunities that the WGHRD has provided. Both PRC and Thailand referred to the fact that the benefits of such a cooperation mechanism require time to be realized and thus that time and resources need to be invested over the long term, although it is acknowledged that this perspective is based upon the advantage of their more advanced stage of economic development.

64. Strategic partners that have been involved in the WGHRD indicate that they have seen some limited value in the WGHRD with regards to information sharing but little in the way of cooperation and coordination. There is a perception amongst strategic partners that an improved coordination mechanism could play an effective role in sector coordination and funds mobilization and there is recognition of the GMS and the WGHRD regional convening power. This is especially valued in terms of health and migration issues where the contiguous GMS region is a logical area of operation.

65. Thus, both WGHRD country and strategic partner representatives stated a demand for ongoing regional cooperation in HRD through a refined coordination mechanism. However, any future mechanism must have a solid institutional base, clear scope and objectives and a strong stakeholder commitment if it is to be effective.

66. Any ongoing WG mechanism(s) should have terms of reference that provide a clearly defined scope. The scope should cover sectors that naturally fit together to provide synergy in addressing targeted issues. If there is a need to address different sectors that do not logically fit together, donors should address them through separate WGs to enable better focus and more effective responses to targeted issues.

67. The terms of reference should define the National Focal Point and WG membership roles to ensure clear and common understanding. As part of this, the terms of reference should provide guidance on membership nomination to ensure that country governments and ministries can appoint the most appropriate members, both in terms of technical sub-sector representation and government rank. This will enable more homogeneous membership, which in turn will provide synergy in working together to address issues.

68. Any ongoing WG mechanism will require a guiding document that provides more targeted focus on key current issues. This may take the form of a regional strategic framework supported by a rolling action plan that is reviewed annually, enabling the WG to respond to changing government and member priorities within the sector during the timeframe of the strategic framework. A monitoring framework with clear and relevant indicators will be developed to support the strategic framework and the action plan will have clearly defined targets. Regular monitoring and reporting of progress against the action plan to all WG members and strategic partners is necessary to ensure continued engagement and coordination of inputs.

69. Greater definition of ADB and other strategic partners' roles in the WG is required. ADB views the WGHRD as a country-led mechanism and thus that, while it is committed to continuing to participate in the WG, it wishes to see countries take greater leadership in the reconfiguration and ongoing management of the WG. Other strategic partners also need to have a clear role in future WG configuration to ensure that it acts as regional coordination mechanism for all stakeholders.

70. One opportunity presented by the GMS is to refocus WG activities on supporting other economic sectors. The GMS has identified nine strategic thrusts - eight of these are clearly defined sectors that contribute directly to economic development such as transport, tourism and agriculture, while the WGHRD is more of a cross-cutting element that draws in several sectors. However, the WGHRD is not working in harmonization with the other GMS WGs to address HRD issues that emerge as part of these key economic development thrusts. Given the current lack of clear scope, there exists the opportunity to re-focus GMS HRD efforts on contributing to the success and mitigating the negative impacts of other WG activities.

71. The WGHRD should also consider the utilization of existing coordination mechanisms in sectors where effective mechanisms already exist. There is no value in maintaining GMS coordination mechanisms if there are already mechanisms being used by countries and partners that address regional and/or sector needs. WG mechanisms should only be maintained if there is a specific regional demand within the targeted sector and there is no other coordination mechanism that addresses this demand.

72. **Health** - Progress continues in regional cooperation in the health sub-sector. Examples include the Second GMS Regional Communicable Diseases Control Project, the follow-up GMS Health Security Project, the Regional CDTA on Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change in Health Sector in GMS and the Regional CDTA on Malaria and Communicable Diseases Control in the GMS. While these projects cannot be credited specifically to the WGHRD, they do indicate the demand for regional approaches to health issues. Health will continue to benefit from the synergies of GMS cooperation and coordination due to the contiguous nature of health issues such as communicable diseases, drug and food safety and the health impact of climate change and the risks they pose regionally if not effectively addressed.

73. The regional cooperation established in the health sub-sector provides the opportunity to strengthen and expand the WGHRD health sub-sector to serve as a regional platform for health issues and particularly on cross-border health issues including those associated with mobile and migrant populations (MMPs) and on emerging health issues in economic corridors. WGHRD health representatives and ADB health specialists have been developing a GMS Health Directions paper to guide future regional cooperation in the health sub-sector, which illustrates the regional commitment to and need for a coordination mechanism.

74. **Education** - Planned higher education activities progressed under Output 2 of the R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013–2017, with implementation through Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) and ASEAN University Network (AUN). National HRD working groups want to see a further phase of the ACTFA and the GMS University Consortium (GMS-UC) projects, and a project on Strengthening Capacity of University QA System towards Uplifting Higher Education Quality in GMS Countries. However, these activities may overlap with similar initiatives currently happening under the ASEAN Work Plan on Education. National HRD working groups recognize that the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting and the ASEAN Work Plan on Education provide a wider and more appropriate mechanism for higher education regional cooperation as it supports cooperation with a wider range of world-class tertiary education systems and institutions.

75. TVET demand tends to be at country level as countries work to address their internal labor skill needs, although Thailand is targeting migrants with internal TVET training. There are already regional TVET skills frameworks such as the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework available that countries can use to structure their TVET training and ASEAN is supporting ASEAN regional TVET development along with ILO who is providing technical expertise to countries in the development of their TVET systems. There thus appears to be little demand for regional TVET projects at this stage, possibly due in part to a lack of data on labor migration and regional remittances which would support wider awareness of the potential benefits of skilled and semi-skilled labor migration to both source and host countries and to the support that the sub-sector already receives under the ASEAN framework.

76. **Labor and Migration** - Informal and low-skilled labor migration remains a politically sensitive issue and lacks a solid library of data on which to base informed discussion and understanding of regional labor migration issues. Indications are that country priorities in this sub-sector are currently focused on migrant registration and social security, which are country level issues. Skilled labor migration is the addressed through TVET and Higher Education activities which support the increased flow of skilled labor in the GMS.

77. The lack of progress in the planned labor migration regional activities in the SFAP 2013–2017 is consistent with the apparent lack of regional perspective on labor migration. ILO and IOM are both working with country governments to establish migrant resource centers in GMS countries and PRC is also working to address migrant information needs on the Myanmar border. This country-level technical focus probably addresses current demands in this area at this point. However, the development and sharing of data and knowledge on labor migration issues (outside of health issues such as malaria and HIV/AIDS) and ongoing GMS regional dialogue is necessary to develop a regional perspective and encourage a future regional approach that ensures safe migration for low-skilled migrants.

78. **Social Development** - The Action Plan includes a section on projects aimed at “Mitigating Social Costs in the Economic Corridors,” which is an area of stated focus of the SFAP 2013–17. However, there was very little evidence of a focus on HRD issues specifically in the economic corridors during the consultations, and analysis of planned social development activities suggest that while the projects are desirable, little specific regional demand among the WG members exists.

79. Social development is a cross-cutting issue that applies to all development activities and thus does not benefit from being isolated in the WGHRD. The opportunity exists to strengthen cooperation amongst GMS sector WGs on social development (and HRD in general) to ensure

that the economic advantages of economic corridors are realized through the provision of the required healthy and skilled workforce and that the costs of social costs of economic are effectively mitigated.

80. In conclusion, the WGHRD has been successful at supporting limited information sharing at a technical level but has not delivered the collective problem-solving and decision-making that would make it an effective platform for delivering regional solutions to HRD issues. There is evidence that it has stimulated cooperation within the health sub-sector on cross-border issues and there is demonstrated demand for continued cooperation through a WG mechanism in this sector. However, the WG has not been effective in developing and delivering regional cooperation in the other sub-sectors. One area in which there has been little cooperation but which is an emerging issue is that of informal labor migration which may warrant ongoing support to develop an evidence base and provide a platform for addressing emerging regional needs and issues.

81. There is demand from countries and strategic partners for ongoing regional cooperation and acknowledgement that any future cooperation need to be refined to ensure their effectiveness. Any future WGs should have strong institutional frameworks including terms of reference for both WG and members, defined secretariat roles, a strategic framework and an action plan with monitoring frameworks, as well as strong commitment from country members and strategic partners. There are also alternative coordination mechanisms already being used by countries and strategic partners in some of these sub-sectors.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

82. The WGHRD has served its purpose in bringing GMS country governments together to explore HRD issues related to regional economic cooperation. The next step is to reconfigure the current arrangements to establish effective mechanisms for ongoing regional country and strategic partner cooperation on HRD sub-sector issues. The following recommendations are presented for discussion amongst the WGHRD to refine and endorse:

83. That the WGHRD in its current form is reconfigured as follows.

1. Health

84. That a GMS Working Group on Health Cooperation (WGHC) is created from the WGHRD health subgroup to serve as a regional platform for health issues. The WGHC will focus on cross-border health issues and communicable disease control, including those associated with mobile and migrant populations (MMPs) and on emerging health issues in economic corridors and may expand its scope to address wider health systems needs or other regional health issues.

85. That the core WGHC will be made up of senior officials from the health ministry of each GMS country who will act as the National Focal Point, and an alternate, giving a total core membership of 12 representatives. Other membership will be determined on an annual basis dependent upon themes and issues to be identified through the regional health strategy. Membership will likely initially consist of representatives of health ministry departments responsible for communicable diseases and may in the future extend to representatives from other relevant ministries including those responsible for labor and migration, agriculture, transport, etc. The WGHC will be supported by technical specialists from ADB, WHO and other strategic health partners.

86. That terms of reference are established for the National Focal Point and WGHC member roles that define: the role of the delegate as a country representative; the ministry and position/rank requirements; and the required commitments of the delegate, amongst other things. Delegates will be selected by their GMS National Secretariat based upon the specifications of the TOR and nominated to the GMS Regional Secretariat. This will encourage the appointment of delegates with an appropriate profile and lead to more continuity and better sustainability, which in turn will strengthen regional networks and enable improved cooperation and collaboration.

87. That the WGHC builds working relationships with other GMS WGs to ensure that emerging health issues related to GMS economic development are identified and addressed through the GMS mechanism. This will include inviting representatives of other GMS WGs to participate in WGHC meetings, sharing information with other WGs and ensuring that health issues are on the agenda for other WG meetings. Consideration should be given to the implementation of Health Impact Assessments as part of ADB regional infrastructure investments which would then be shared with the WGHC. This WG cooperation will be supported by the GMS Regional Secretariat and National Secretariats.

88. That a WGHC secretariat is established to support the WGHC and assist countries to develop and implement relevant national and regional policies on health cooperation.

89. That the WGHC establishes a regional health cooperation strategy as a guiding document, based on round-table consultations between GMS country representatives and with technical assistance inputs. The GMS health cooperation strategy will include a monitoring and evaluation framework that will form the basis of a mid-term review and a final review.

90. That the GMS health strategy is supported by a three-year rolling action plan that will define specific activities for country-level implementation, regional project pipelines, and a monitoring and evaluation framework. The action plan will be implemented with assistance of the WGHC secretariat, and will be reviewed annually by the WGHC based upon progress and emerging priorities to ensure its relevance. Six-monthly monitoring reports will be prepared by the WGHC secretariat and circulated to all GMS national secretariats and WGHC national focal points.

91. That health knowledge management mechanisms are implemented to support the sharing of information and knowledge products, including knowledge exchange and dissemination events as well as the establishment of a knowledge sharing portal/website. Knowledge management and the website will be managed by the WGHC secretariat or merged into the existing GMS program website, supported by ADB.

2. Education

92. That ADB provides regional technical assistance to support the completion of existing higher education projects that have been supported under R-PATA 8549: Implementing the GMS HRD SFAP 2013 – 2017, being Development of an Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia (ACTFA) and GMS University Consortium (GMS-UC); and Project on Strengthening Capacity of University QA System towards Uplifting Higher Education Quality in GMS Countries 2014 – 2016, where these projects cannot be merged into existing projects under the ASEAN framework.

93. That the GMS no longer addresses regional higher education initiatives through a WG mechanism and that such initiatives are instead addressed through the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting and the ASEAN Work Plan on Education with the support of strategic partners including SEAMEO-RIHED and AUN.

94. That the GMS no longer addresses regional TVET initiatives through a WG mechanism and that such initiatives are instead addressed bilaterally with the support of strategic partners including ILO.

3. Labor Migration

95. That the current sub-sector members explore the possibility of the establishment of a Working Group on Safe Labor Migration with the assistance of strategic partners including ILO and IOM. The working group would generate and share knowledge on safe labor migration, develop understanding of the regional implications of labor migration, and design an institutional mechanism to address regional migration issues in the future. The WG would work closely with the WGHC on migration health issues and be linked to other GMS WGs to ensure that labor demands and migration issues resulting from GMS economic development are identified and addressed effectively. The WG's focus would be in line with the ADB report entitled "Facilitating safe labor migration in the GMS: Issues, challenges, and forward-looking interventions."⁸

4. Social Development

96. That cross-cutting social development issues identified through summary poverty reduction and social strategy documents are integrated into the appropriate projects rather than addressed through a formal mechanism.

5. Other HRD Issues

97. That ADB continues to promote and coordinate regional dialogue to support the development of regional perspectives on HRD issues, and that other WGs identify and address cross-cutting HRD issues through their projects or integrate solutions into the work of strategic partners, rather than addressing them through a particular HRD WG mechanism.

6. Next Steps

98. That the WGHRD consider these recommendations and, in consultation with strategic partners, agree effective mechanisms for ongoing regional country and strategic partner cooperation on HRD sub-sector issues that meet the needs of the GMS region.

⁸ Asian Development Bank. 2013. *Facilitating safe labor migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Issues, challenges, and forward-looking interventions*. Manila.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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|---|--|
| Contract | 131374-S91811 |
| Project | TA-7561 REG: Strengthening the Coordination of the GMS Program - Human Resource Development Expert (39499-012) |
| Expertise | Human Resource Development Expert |
| Source | International |
| <p>Objective and Purpose of the Assignment</p> <p>Since the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Program's inception in 1992, ADB has served as the secretariat, capacity builder, financier, and knowledge provider in facilitating economic cooperation in the GMS. The GMS Program remains highly relevant as a platform for GMS countries to cooperate on a range of issues, and as a vehicle for delivering projects and results. Through infrastructure investments, capacity building, and knowledge sharing, the Program has contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction in the GMS and the realization of an increasingly prosperous, integrated, and harmonious subregion.</p> <p>The 10-year GMS Strategic Framework (GMS-SF) 2012–2022 identifies human resource development (HRD) as one of its nine sector and multisector priorities. The Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD) was established at the Fifth GMS Ministerial Conference in 1995 to support HRD initiatives that facilitate GMS integration while addressing any negative consequences of greater integration. The 2007 Mid-Term Review of the GMS-SF (2002–2012) noted that although the WGHRD has addressed key HRD concerns in the GMS, program development and implementation have been essentially project-based and lacked a clearly defined strategic framework.</p> <p>In response, the WGHRD developed a strategic framework and action plan (SFAP) for 2009–2012 to make subregional cooperation in HRD more effective and to strengthen links with other subregional initiatives, which was followed with the Strategic Framework and Action Plan for HRD in the GMS (2013–2017). GMS cooperation and integration in many sectors creates a need for increased human resource capacity in many areas. This need is echoed in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community blueprint, which calls for the free flow of skilled labor across borders. With the current SFAP for HRD ending in 2017, the WGHRD would need to examine its results and lessons learned to guide the directions for future cooperation in this important sector beyond 2017. The upcoming 15th Meeting of WGHRD in December 2016 presents a timely opportunity to discuss the preparation of a framework for the conduct of a review of the SFAP and to chart the future directions of subregional cooperation in HRD.</p> <p>The consultant is expected to prepare a concept paper and deliver a presentation during WGHRD-15 on the rationale, scope, issues for assessment, and proposed timeframe for the SFAP review during WGHRD-15. The concept paper will also serve as a guide to draw additional inputs and insights from the WGHRD heads of delegations and the breakout subgroup sessions participants on assigned topics.</p> <p>Specifically, the concept paper will address the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did the SFAP achieve its set objectives? 2. What were the concerns and challenges faced in its implementation? What were the lessons learned? 3. What are the implications of recent global and regional developments on GMS cooperation in HRD? 4. How have been the performance of WGHRD, its subgroups, and the WGHRD Secretariat in implementing the SFAP? What changes, if any, are needed? 5. What new strategic directions for GMS cooperation in HRD are recommended to be pursued beyond 2017? <p>The consultant will present the findings and recommendations of the SFAP review at a WGHRD workshop to be organized in early 2017. The workshop will also review a preliminary draft of the new HRD SFAP beyond 2017. The final draft of the new HRD SFAP will be considered at the 16th WGHRD Meeting in mid-2017.</p> | |

Scope of Work

The study will include the six countries of the GMS: Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Detailed Tasks and/or Expected Output

The consultant's responsibilities include the following:

- Through a review of multiple sources, get a large picture understanding of the value of the working group to the participating governments. Research the importance of the group, the impact of its existence and operations, and how membership benefits the ministries or departments that participate;
- Analyze the current structure of the Working Group on HRD and its institutional arrangements, whether or not these have served WGHRD's policy role and multi-sector and cross-cutting mandate, and identify measures to strengthen/improve the working group's operations to enable it to achieve its objectives;
- Examine the effectiveness of ADB as secretariat to the WGHRD, ADB resident mission staff, and GMS National Secretariat Staff in providing technical support to the WGHRD focal persons and national HRD working groups in developing, implementing, and monitoring the HRD action plan. Assess possible steps and measures to strengthen the institutional sustainability of the HRD action plan, including the possibility of transferring certain responsibilities for some activities to the GMS member countries and the national HRD secretariats/focal points;
- Analyze the results of the implementation of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013-2017) as guided by the overall GMS Strategic Framework 2012-2022, and operationalized in the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) and Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP);
- Look at the original results framework of the HRD Strategy and Action Plan based on the seven strategic thrusts and corresponding priority programs and projects, and summarize the resultant impact, outcome, outputs, issues and challenges, and lessons;
- Discuss the draft GMS Health Strategy with the SEHS health team and consider its role in the working group and its work plan;
- Review the extent by which strategic partners have been actively engaged towards the management and financing of some GMS HRD initiatives, and recommend improvements in effectiveness and sustainability, and for mobilizing additional resources for priority initiatives;
- Based on research in the areas above, recommend how to strengthen the regional focus on HRD and prioritize GMS cooperation, as well on the organization and operations of the WGHRD itself. Include suggestions on the possible strategic thrusts and directions of the next HRD strategic framework and action plan, and steps to consider at the policy, institutional, and operational levels for the consideration of the WGHRD at its next meeting;

Minimum Qualification Requirements

- Postgraduate training in international law, international relations, economics, or another development-related field; and
- Familiarity with the GMS program and GMS economies.

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|--|----------|
| Minimum General Experience | 15 Years |
| Minimum Specific Experience (relevant to assignment) | 5 Years |
| Regional/Country Experience | Required |

| Deliverables | Estimated Submission Date | Type |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Draft Concept Paper for ADB review Description The consultant will prepare a draft concept paper on the rationale, scope, issues for assessment, lessons learned and proposed timeframe for the review of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategic Framework and Action Plan (SFAP), 2013-2017. The 10-page draft concept paper will be presented at the 15th Meeting of the GMS Working Group on HRD (WGHRD-15) | 05-Dec-2016 | Report |
| Presentation of Draft Concept Paper at WGHRD-15 Description The consultant will present the concept paper in a plenary session during the conduct of the WGHRD-15 on 13-14 December 2016. He will engage the delegates from 6 GMS countries to a dialogue on strategic directions for HRD cooperation beyond 2017 and gather inputs for the drafting of the review and report on the GMS HRD SFAP implementation. | 02-Jan-2017 | Report |
| Draft Final Report Description The consultant will prepare a draft final report on his consultations and analysis on the results of the implementation of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2013-2017) as guided by the overall GMS Strategic Framework 2012-2022, and operationalized in the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) and Regional Investment Framework Implementation Plan (RIF-IP). The draft final report will present steps and measures to strengthen the institutional sustainability of the HRD action plan, including the possibility of transferring certain responsibilities for some activities to the GMS member countries and the national HRD secretariats/focal point effectiveness of ADB as secretariat to the WGHRD, ADB resident mission staff, and GMS National Secretariat Staff in providing technical support to the WGHRD focal persons and national HRD working groups in developing, implementing, and monitoring the HRD action plan. It will include suggestions on the possible strategic thrusts and directions of the next HRD strategic framework and action plan, and steps to consider at the policy, institutional, and operational levels for the consideration of the HRD working group at the WGHRD-16 meeting in Lao PDR. | 15-Feb-2017 | Report |
| Final Report Description The final report will be the result of consultation with GMS WGHRD focal points on the draft final report on the GMS HRD SFAP, 2013-2017. It will be presented and endorsed during the WGHRD-16. | 15-Feb-2017 | Report |
| Schedule and Places of Assignment | | |
| <u>City and Country</u> | <u>Est. Start Date</u> | <u>Est. End Date</u> |
| Home Office | 30/11/2016 | 13/12/2016 |
| Manila, Philippines | 14/12/2016 | 15/12/2016 |
| Kunming, China | 16/12/2016 | 19/12/2016 |
| Phnom Penh, Cambodia | 09/01/2017 | 10/01/2017 |
| Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic | 11/01/2017 | 12/01/2017 |
| Naypyitaw, Myanmar | 13/01/2017 | 16/01/2017 |
| Hanoi, Viet Nam | 17/01/2017 | 18/01/2017 |
| Home Office | 21/01/2017 | 31/03/2017 |
| NOTE: Actual schedule to be confirmed with User Unit | | |

SFAP 2013-17 REVIEW RESPONDENTS

The following is a list of the people that contributed of the SFAP 2013-17 Implementation Review:

Cambodia

1. Dr Tep Navy, Deputy Director General, Directorate General of TVET, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT)
2. Mr Suon Sophal, GMS Secretariat, Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC)
3. Ren Kun, Deputy Director, Department of Personnel, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)
4. Mr Mom Virak, Deputy Director of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)
5. Sophea Mar, Senior Social Sector Officer, ADB Resident Mission
6. Dr Leul Mekonnen, Chief of Mission, IOM
7. Kristen Dadey, Program Officer, IOM

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5. Dr Sibounhom Archkhawongs, Deputy Director, General Division of Administration Department of Communicable Disease Control, Ministry of Health
6. Haykhame KeoKanchan, Deputy Head of Administration, Ministry of Health
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10. Mr. Vilasack Xayaphet, GMS Secretariat Officer, MPI
11. Ms Anita Vannasouk, HRD Officer, MoES
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13. Ms Khamtanh Chanthay, Project Officer, ADB Resident Mission
14. Ms Phoxay Xayyavong, Project Officer ADB Resident Mission
15. Ms Ny Phanhaboun, GMS Coordinator, ADB Resident Mission
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17. Ms Dalavieng Thiladej, Senior Program Officer (HRD), Australian Aid
18. Ms Eloise Saif, Second Secretary – Development Cooperation, Australian Aid
19. Mr Bill Pennington, Institute Director, Laos Australia Institute (LAI)
20. Mr Laurent de Schoutheete, Team Leader, Laos Australia Development Learning Facility

Myanmar

1. Mr Ko Lay Win, Deputy Director General, Department of Education Research, Planning and Training, Ministry of Education
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Resource Development and Management, Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS)

3. Dr Nilar Win, Director, Department of Health Professional Resource Development and Management, MoHS
4. Mr Nay Wah Tan, Officer, Department of Social Welfare
5. Dr Okk Phyo, Assistant Director, Department of Health Professional Resource Development and Management, MoHS
6. Dr Kyaw Khieng, Assistant Secretary, Department of International Relations, MoHS
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8. Ms Mya Thuzar Swe, Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD), Ministry of Finance and Planning
9. Mr Chris Spohr, Principal Social Sector Specialist, ADB Resident Mission
10. Mr Kyi Thar, Public Health Specialist, Malaria and GMS Health Security Project, ADB
11. Dr Mya Sabe Ngon, Health Programme Manager, USAID/PMI
12. Dr Feliciano Monti, PMI Senior Malaria Advisor, USAID/PMI
13. Dr Mushfiquir Rahman, Technical Officer Malaria, WHO

People's Republic of China

1. RC Mr Li Rui, Deputy Director, Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation, Ministry of Finance
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5. Ms Tina Wu, Project Officer, ADB Resident Mission
6. Dr Chin-Kei Lee, Medical Officer, World Health Organization
7. Mr Pär Liljert, DG Special Envoy & Head of Office, International Organization for Migration

Thailand

1. Ms Sayan Kongkoey, Director, Thai Cooperation, Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA)
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3. Ms Phawida Krachai, Development Cooperation Officer, TICA
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5. Ms Jittree Klumpong, Academic Service Officer, Office of the Higher Education Commission
6. Mrs Puttachard Supalak, Director, Center of International Vocational Education Cooperation, Office of the Vocational Education Commission
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9. Mrs Jatuporn Rojanapanich, Director, International Relations Division, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
10. Mr Surasak Thananisawanyangkoon, Public Health Officer, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Health
11. Mr Wuttidetch Chumnikij, Plan and Policy Analyst, National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)

12. Mr Ongart Rukkawattanak, Plan and Policy Analyst, NESDB
13. Ms Prembun Worasappakarn, Plan and Policy Analyst, NESDB
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16. Dr Patrick Duigan, Regional Thematic Specialist – Migration Health, IOM
17. Ms Carmela Torres, Senior Specialist on Skills and Employability, ILO

Vietnam

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2. Mr Mac Van Tien, High-level Researcher National Institute for Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA)
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6. Ms Hang Dinh, National Action Plan Specialist, ADB
7. Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Thuy, National Project Coordinator, International Labour Organization (ILO)
8. Mr Robert Wardle, Project Officer, International Labour Organization

ADB Headquarters

1. Mr Cuong Minh Nguyen, Head, GMS Unit, Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB
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5. Ms Azusa Sato, Health Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, ADB
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7. Gerard Servais, Senior Health Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, ADB