On 26 March 2013, the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE) was established adding the portfolio responsibility of Climate Change; thereby changing the acronym from DIISRTE.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the East Asia Summit (EAS) Leaders Meeting on 20 November 2012, Senator Chris Evans, then Australian Minister with portfolio responsibility for Higher Education, endorsed the 2011-15 EAS Education Cooperation Action Plan, which comprised 13 projects. Australia agreed that it would undertake three projects, including feasibility into an East Asia Summit (EAS) Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment (RFEQA).

The goal of this work is a feasibility study for the EAS RFEQA. The two objectives are:

1. Develop the rationale for the feasibility of a RFEQA project and compile such information to ensure that RFEQA related decisions are well-informed.
2. Determine the feasibility of the proposed project having regard to risks and necessary inputs.

The main output is to produce a Project Feasibility Report for Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education – International Education (DIICCSRTE), which will provide a clear statement as to the feasibility of the project and a possible a model with an estimated cost.

For the purposes of this study the goal of RFEQA is to provide a regionally relevant and useful set of assessments for participating countries. RFEQA outcomes would produce a set of regional assessment reports by 2018 and be seen as a centre responsible for building capacity in educational measurement and analysis for the region and contribute to global debates about education quality. The Consultant proposes that for this study, the RFEQA model will be viewed as a regional assessment with the following characteristics:

- It would be an assessment of reading and mathematics based on the common components of the curricula of the participating countries;
- There would be two target populations - primary and secondary level students;
- A sample of students would be selected to represent each country;
- A contractor experienced in carrying out international educational assessments would be appointed to carry out initial rounds of the assessment;
- A regional centre would be established to oversee the assessment;
- Each country would establish a national centre to carry out the assessment; and
- A strong component of capacity building for the participating countries would be part of the model.

This report focuses seven countries that are members of both the EAS and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The findings and recommendations of this report relate to the views gathered by the Consultant as well as views from the United States Department of Education, bilateral and multilateral donor organisations. There was a deliberate decision taken at the project inception stage, to exclude from the study, the more developed EAS nations such as Japan, Singapore, Korea and New Zealand.

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2 There was also support for a mechanism for regional assessment in areas outside that proposed here in the domains of critical thinking and/or English language proficiency
3 The EAS comprises all ten members of ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and includes key APEC members (USA, Russia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand). It is also includes India.
Zealand as they have a raft of opportunities, both at a national and international level to participate in educational measurement related activities.

The EAS countries are a diverse group of countries, some of which have participated in a number of international surveys. The key **benefits** for countries that have implemented and analysed international surveys are that expertise in assessment is developed and that through this experience, global networks are developed to support dialogue on assessment. The participation of EAS countries in the international assessment surveys has been in Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, Programme for International Student Assessment (PIRLS), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS) and Programme for the Analysis of Educational Systems of the CONFEMEN countries (PASEC), noting that the most popular survey with these countries has been TIMSS (please see Table 1). This shows that there is, at least within these countries, a sufficient level of expertise to cope with the complex logistics of these surveys.

In addition to a literature review of existing educational assessments, the Consultant explored through a survey and interviews, the **nature of the assessments being undertaken** nationally by countries and their capacity to undertake large-scale assessments. All stakeholder representatives that responded to the survey and/or participated in the interview process supported the establishment of a regional education measurement facility. There was **strong endorsement of the potential benefits** of a RFEQA.

These stakeholders expressed a variety of views about **potential barriers to sustainability**, including financing, resourcing and capacity pressures and stressed the importance of recognising the diversity of cultural values of the region during the design and implementation phases. Sustainability then is partially dependent on the adoption of a collaborative approach with EAS countries during a design phase to ensure that it meets the needs of member countries. Long lead in times for development and integration with, or utilisation of, existing regional structures will also assist in longer-term sustainability.

The Consultant has taken into account its past experience in developing ‘like’ facilities as well as the barriers and concerns, expressed by stakeholders and, has **proposed a particular model as an entry point for discussion with EAS member countries**. The model also suggests a way that RFEQA could complement existing educational measurement programs by suggesting unique features for its sustainability. This model is supported by estimates as to overall costs at an international level over a five-year time period and an estimate of typical local costs that might be included as part of a final costing exercise. Initial funding for the facility would probably need to be provided by donors to cover the estimated USD 8 million for the engagement of an international contractor. Additional support funding for national contractor costs, estimated at the equivalent of four full time staff in each participating country and for the establishment of a physical centre may also be needed from donors.

**Technical feasibility:**

While there is a wide diversity of capacity in the area of educational assessment in the region it is believed that there is a sufficient level of technical expertise to implement RFEQA. With an emphasis on capacity building in the initiative, at the first stage the goal of providing a regionally relevant and useful set of assessments may be achieved with assistance from an external contractor but will be increasingly achieved by the countries themselves.

The facility could be fully operational in 2018, assuming that a phased development approach is adopted, commencing in 2014. RFEQA will complement existing international tests as well as
provide the additional benefits of information sharing, research and training opportunities for members.

**RFEQA Feasibility Study recommendations**

**A. Feasibility**

1. Exploration of potential funding for the financing necessary to establish the facility by 2018 should commence immediately any agreement to proceed with RFEQA. This report outlines some options available to the EAS.

2. That any model chosen needs to be inclusive using “bottom up” approaches and include working parties, expert reference groups and the like.

3. Specific attention to language and cultural issues is needed because EAS member countries are culturally and linguistically diverse and all are sensitive to the consequences of negative outcomes that would be explicit in a regional comparison.

4. That countries are able to opt in and out as needed and implement the test when it is appropriate to do so, thus reducing capacity and resourcing issues at a national level.

5. That Timor-Leste is brought into discussions about their potential participation in RFEQA even though they are not part of the EAS.

**B. Design**

6. A more detailed costing exercise be undertaken in a design phase to establish likely costs for the development, scaling, analysis and regional reporting of the data arising from any regional assessments as well as the costs for test administration and for the detailed national reporting of the results. Cost estimates of the instruments and country participation need to be low cost and progressive.

7. As part of the design, a detailed framework be explicit in outlining the proposed project inputs, activities and outputs, together with the institutional requirements for the project, including relevant structures, capacity, skills, and human resource development.

8. RFEQA should be designed to fit within existing regional structures and initiatives, such as the use of one of the existing 21 Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) centres and/or the creation of new centres under that same umbrella and /or utilise existing learning metrics, being developed by the Brookings Institute.
1. INTRODUCTION

PROJECT REQUEST HISTORY

At the Fourth East Asian Summit Leaders’ meeting (held 25 October 2009, Thailand) it was announced that Australia would cooperate with the ASEAN Secretariat to form the Education Cooperation Taskforce.

In 2010 Australia and the ASEAN Secretariat cooperated to convene two workshops of an East Asia Summit (EAS) Senior Education Officials Taskforce. The workshops reviewed the benefits of educational cooperation at regional level, discussed possible strategies for strengthening cooperation, developed criteria to help identify priorities, and canvassed possible areas for initial project work.

A key outcome of these workshops was 13 EAS education cooperation project proposals, which were noted at the inaugural EAS Education Ministers’ meeting (EAS EMM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 5 July 2012 and endorsed at the 20 November 2012 EAS Leaders meeting as part of the Education Cooperation Action Plan.

At the 2012 meeting, Senator Chris Evans, who was then the Australian Minister with portfolio responsibility for Higher Education agreed that Australia would undertake three projects, including a feasibility study into an EAS Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment. Australia’s agreement to implement this feasibility study was noted in the EAS Leaders Statement in November 2012.

For the purpose of this feasibility study and to better describe this project it will be known as the EAS - Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment (RFEQA); formerly referred to as the Basic Education Assessment Monitoring (BEAM) project feasibility study.

The project was developed partly in response to major findings of the 2008 study Harnessing Educational Cooperation in the EAS for Regional Competitiveness and Community Building (‘the Harnessing Report’) which noted that ‘One potential issue for a number of EAS countries is that a number of the international student achievement studies are focused on secondary education. For developing countries in particular, the higher priority is likely to be student achievement in primary education as secondary participation rates are relatively low...’

This report examines the feasibility of RFEQA for the developing countries in the region which are members of both the EAS and ASEAN namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. At the same time Timor-Leste has also been included in discussion as it is a developing country in the region. The rationale for this approach is that the demand for RFEQA is coming from the least developed countries of the EAS rather than the developed economies of countries such as Australia, the United States, Japan and Singapore.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND ITS OBJECTIVES

Project goal

The project goal is a feasibility study for the EAS East Asia Summit (EAS) Feasibility-Design Study for a Basic Education Assessment and Measurement (BEAM) study, now referred to as the

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4 The name was changed in response to a request from the AusAID post in the Philippines who advised the Consultant that as AusAID had funded a project in Mindanao also known as BEAM, there might be confusion within Government and donor communities if we referred to this project as BEAM.
Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment (RFEQA). The two objectives of the feasibility study are:

1. Develop the rationale for the feasibility of a RFEQA project and compile such information to ensure that RFEQA related decisions are well-informed.
2. Determine the feasibility of the proposed project having regard to risks and necessary inputs.

**Project background**

Appendix A is a statement of requirements for the RFEQA feasibility study, while Appendix B outlines the Consultant’s approach to the study and its background in more detail. It is important to note that the project was originally tendered as a project consisting of two phases: a feasibility study and design. However the Consultant was contracted to complete the feasibility study only.

Following the award of contract and at the inception meeting, it was decided that the focus of the research effort for the RFEQA Feasibility Study would be on developing and middle income countries under the EAS umbrella. The EAS countries of focus were Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Multinational organisations were also contacted for their views regarding the viability and demand for RFEQA. Views were also sought from the US Education Department given their recent interest in the project. In addition following a recommendation from United Nations Educational Scientific Organisation Bangkok (UNESCO) and the SEAMEO) to consider the inclusion of Timor-Leste as a possible RFEQA participant, the Consultant discussed Timor-Leste’s readiness with AusAID as a first step in that process. The report summarises the views of these stakeholders and together with the past experience of ACER in educational measurement and a review of current literature, conclusions about the feasibility of RFEQA is presented. These conclusions are framed in the context of assumptions inherent in the nature and conduct of the study.

**Assumptions underpinning study conclusions**

1. That until all interested stakeholders have participated in outlining their preferred RFEQA model, the Consultant recommendations are to be used as an entry point for discussions about the merit or otherwise of those recommendations.

2. That costing estimates are based only on ACER’s previous knowledge and experience of developing and implementing large-scale educational surveys.

3. That the proposed model is based on international best practice and in response to the views presented about potential barriers to the countries participation.

4. That the views of other EAS member states have not been taken into account in making these recommendations. These countries are: China, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, Brunei, India, Malaysia and Singapore. In addition the Consultant was not able to get any feedback from relevant Ministries in Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao PDR.
2. RATIONALE

CONTEXT

There are a number of driving forces, which have brought about this feasibility study. All of the countries in the region are investing heavily in education. In the past decade there has been a focus on increasing access to education, which has been largely successful. There is now a growing interest in the quality of education, which is being provided. While it is possible to gather information about the nature of the education systems including data such as enrolment rates, numbers of students and teachers, countries are now very interested in the outputs of their education systems.

The institutional, economic and social development context

There are a growing number of international bodies now focussing on global student outputs. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics has initiated the Observatory of Learning Outcomes to collect information about countries’ educational assessments, the World Bank with its Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) project is collecting information about the quality of educational assessments in the region, the Learning Metrics Taskforce established with the stimulus of the Brookings Institute (2013) is gathering world experts to discuss possible areas of student assessment and countries continue to be involved in assessments such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS.

At the same time in the ASEAN region the economies are continuing to expand and there is a need for an educated population to ensure future economic growth. The countries in the region are moving towards a common economic community by 2015.

These two streams of stimuli of educational factors and the economic factors have brought about the interest of a regional educational initiative.

The OECD has plans to introduce an assessment known as PISA for Development, which based is on PISA but which has a greater focus on developing countries. The trials for this program have not yet taken place.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders of RFEQA are:

- The students of the participating countries: with increased investment in their education, students will experience improved learning giving them better choices for their future and the ability to continue their learning into their adult life.

- The participating governments and ministries: benefits will flow in two main forms - information about the each country's student body describing its weaknesses and strengths and secondly there would be a capacity building dimension built into every stage of the regional initiative.

- Donor agencies: investment in education is a long term process and with key measures of student learning capacity carried out at regular intervals, an assessment of the needs of the countries can be better implemented and funds more efficiently directed.
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN – WHAT EXISTS

Current involvement of EAS countries in international education surveys

Before discussing the feasibility of a regional facility it is instructive to examine the extent of the EAS countries’ involvement in existing assessments.

The first part of this section describes the main international education assessment surveys – PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS, ICCS, EGRA, and PASEC with a brief description of their philosophies, history and general results. Differences between them are highlighted indicating that each gives a particular facet of information about a country’s student population.

The second part of this section discusses the involvement of the EAS countries in these international surveys. A brief description of the country’s results in the most recent survey undertaken will be included.

International surveys in education

International surveys have been part of the education research scene since the 1960s. This section describes each of them and considers which subjects are assessed, who the tests are aimed at and how frequently the tests are administered. Table 1 summarises the major characteristics of the international educational assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
<th>Subjects assessed</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Years of administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>2006, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCS</td>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>Civic knowledge and attitudes</td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGRA</td>
<td>WORLD BANK</td>
<td>Basic literacy skills</td>
<td>Early years</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASEC</td>
<td>CONFEMEN</td>
<td>French, mathematics</td>
<td>Grades 2 and 5</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of international educational assessments

PIRLS

The Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is also an IEA study and was first carried out in 2001 and was followed by PIRLS 2006. The target student population for PIRLS is Grade 4.

Countries with a focus on assessment in primary schooling, therefore, could implement TIMSS and PIRLS at grade 4 and derive useful information about students’ levels of reading, mathematics and science.

Participation in PIRLS in the EAS countries has been limited to around five countries. Participation by the countries for which the RFEQA Feasibility Study is a focus is just Indonesia (see Table 1).
**PISA**

In 2000 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) started the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 32 countries. PISA focuses on an assessment of the accumulation of education by the time students reach age 15 in the subjects of reading, mathematics and science. In PISA 2009, there were 65 participating countries – 34 of these countries were OECD member countries. For each survey, one of the areas of assessment is the main subject domain – meaning that over half the time of the assessment is taken up with that subject area. In PISA 2000 and 2009, reading was the main focus, in PISA 2003 and 2012, mathematics is the main focus and in PISA 2006 and 2015 science is the main focus. The publication, *PISA 2009 Assessment Framework: Key Competencies in Reading, Mathematics and Science* (OECD, 2006) gives a description of the assessment frameworks adopted for the implementation of PISA.

At the same time PISA has also undertaken assessments in problem solving, financial literacy and has implemented computer-based assessments of science, reading and mathematics.

Students undertaking PISA also complete a questionnaire about their home background and learning strategies.

There is no teacher questionnaire in PISA, largely because the sample is not grade or class-based as it is in TIMSS. This is largely because students of age 15 may be spread over a number of grades in a school. There is, however, a school questionnaire, which asks principals about their schools – including demographics, teacher qualifications and the level of resources (physical and human) at the school.

Participation in PISA in the EAS countries has been quite widespread with 11 countries participating in PISA 2012. Participation by the countries for which the RFEQA Feasibility Study is a focus is limited to three - Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam (see Table 1).

**TIMSS**

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) carried out the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS) in 12 countries. Data were collected in 1964 on two populations-13-year-olds and students at the pre-university year. In 1980, the IEA conducted the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS), in which 20 countries participated, and then in 1983–84 carried out the Second International Science Study (SISS), with 24 countries. In 1995, IEA completed data collection in 45 countries for the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Subsequent data collection for TIMSS (which is now known as Trends in Mathematics and Science Study) have taken place in 1999, 2003 and 2007. The target student populations for TIMSS are Grade 4 and Grade 8. The most recent round of TIMSS took place in 2011.

TIMSS is a curriculum focused assessment which gives valuable information to participating countries about the effectiveness of teaching approaches on common curriculum content. TIMSS also collects background information from teachers and students.

Participation in TIMSS in the EAS countries has been widespread since 1995 with at least 10 countries participating. Participation by the countries for which the RFEQA Feasibility Study is a focus is limited to three - Indonesia, the Philippines (not since 2003) and Thailand (see Table 1).
**ICCS**

International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS) is an IEA study aimed at assessing how countries have prepared their young to undertake their roles as citizens. 'ICCS is based on the premise that preparing students for citizenship roles involves helping the develop relevant knowledge and understanding and form positive attitudes toward being a citizen and participating in activities related to civic and citizenship education.' (Schulz et al, 2010).

Of the 38 countries participating in ICCS two of them are in the group of countries for which this feasibility study is a focus - Indonesia and Thailand. In addition there was an optional section of the assessment and questionnaire directed at all participating Asian countries (Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea and Thailand). This allowed the production of a separate report for Asian countries, the ICCS Asian Report: Civic knowledge and attitudes among lower-secondary students in five Asian countries (Fraillon, Schulz and Ainley, 2012).

**EGRA**

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) is a one-on-one oral assessment requiring about 15 minutes per child. It is a simple diagnostic of individual student progress in reading designed to measure the most basic foundation skills for literacy acquisition in the early grades: recognizing letters of the alphabet, reading simple words, understanding sentences and paragraphs, and listening with comprehension. The EGRA instrument typically is adapted for use in a particular country and language. A primary use of EGRA is to establish national or regional reading performance measures. The results then can feed into policy dialogue activities to inform education stakeholders of the current status of students' reading performance and to raise awareness about the importance of reading in the early grades.

EGRA has been used in more than 41 countries and more than 79 languages.

**PASEC**

The Programme d’Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC) is an initiative of CONFEMEN ("Conférence des Ministres de l’Education ayant le français en partage") that was established in 1960 and is a political organisation with 41 member states. Its English language equivalent is the ‘Programme for the Analysis of Educational Systems of the CONFEMEN countries’. It is a network of Education Ministries and has a secretariat based in Dakar.

PASEC is a international student assessment program established in 1991 following the Jomtien Conference on Education for All which aims at:

- Identifying contextual and school factors that impact learning outcomes.
- Developing national capacities in the assessment area.
- Producing regional comparisons.
- Disseminating analysis & data and methodological support.

Before 1995 European and Canadian research centres performed the data collection and analyses, but since 1995 national teams have performed the work supported by the CONFEMEN staff in Dakar. PASEC assesses grade 2 and 5 learning outcomes in French (or national language) and mathematics at the beginning and the end of a school year. This is significant because it
allows for the calculation of how much value is added to the students’ education during the year. In addition questionnaires are addressed to pupils, teachers and school directors.

Three countries for which the RFEQA Feasibility Study is the focus, are participating in PASEC - Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam (see Table).

**Participation of the EAS countries in international surveys in education**

The EAS countries are a diverse group of countries, some of which have participated in a number of international surveys. Experience in running and carrying out analysis of international surveys is extremely valuable in two ways. Firstly the country will possess the expertise that will enable them to contribute to the discussion on implementation and analysis of an assessment and secondly it will also have given them experience in the international arena and the possibility to establish a network of colleagues in different countries.

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*There has been no national participation of China in the assessments.  
*EGRA is not administered according to a pre-determined schedule

**Table 2. Participation of EAS countries in PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS, ICCS, EGRA and PASEC**

The participation of EAS countries in the international assessment surveys, PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS, ICCS, EGRA and PASEC is shown in Table. It can be seen that the most popular surveys with these
countries have been TIMSS and PISA. Participation in these assessment programs has given those countries valuable experience in state-of-the-art assessment techniques and has exposed them to a network of assessment specialists throughout the world. To participate they make contributions to the assessments by submitting items, reviewing proposed items, commenting on test administration procedures, designing a representative sample of students, commenting on the methods of coding student responses, and having an input to the analysis and reporting of the assessments. Within these countries, a sufficient level of expertise to cope with the complex logistics of these surveys will have been built up over time.

At the same time most countries in the region undertake national assessments for their own purposes - in most cases for certification or graduation to the next level of education. These assessments are administered to all students and are, therefore, high stakes for those individuals. Experience in creating, administering and using these assessments is invaluable.

**Other assessments**

Recognising that students in all countries are not ready to be assessed in reading at Grade 4 (the normal year for PIRLS) the IEA offers countries the opportunity to participate with students who are at a higher grade - this is known as prePIRLS. In 2011 Botswana, Colombia and South Africa participated in prePIRLS.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

Given the finding from the Harnessing Report that a number of international student achievement studies are focused on secondary education, there appears to be a desire for an assessment at the primary level which originates in the region with participating countries from the region being involved in all stages of the assessment - assessment framework development, item and questionnaire development, test administration, data analysis and reporting.

**Project focus**

This feasibility study, while being part of the agenda for EAS countries, has its focus on those countries for which existing international assessment programs may yield insufficient information given the cost of participation. In many of these countries the strengths and weaknesses of the students, especially those of limited capacity, could not be adequately described by the existing assessments.

Therefore this feasibility study focuses on Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.
3. FEASIBILITY ISSUES

PROJECT VIABILITY

With the exception of the World Bank, which offered cautious support, all stakeholders who responded to the RFEQA survey and participated in consultations with the Consultant supported the establishment of RFEQA, believing that it was viable under certain conditions. The nature of this support is described in the next section.

Views of stakeholders

The Consultant interviewed representatives of relevant line ministries and/or regulatory authorities in Indonesia and Thailand as well as a representative from Vietnam who was visiting Australia in March 2013. A survey instrument was sent to the representatives of the EAS countries listed in section 2. The survey instrument used together with a copy of the list of questions referred to during interviews is provided in Appendix D. A full list of persons consulted is in Annex C.

A completed survey was received from the Department of Education in the Philippines. The Consultant also met with regional multi-lateral organisations in Bangkok and Jakarta - organisations that are well placed to offer views about the feasibility of the proposed facility.

Interview responses

Indonesia

Indonesia is currently undergoing major curriculum reform under tight implementation timelines although at present there is little emphasis on how the new curriculum will be assessed. Importantly, there is a common view that efforts to implement the curriculum reform will stretch Indonesia’s limited resources. Despite this there was positive support for RFEQA, if strategies to reduce potential barriers were implemented.

Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC)

Stakeholders regarded some existing international tests, as not being suitable for the Indonesian context and there was interest in a hybrid model if the tests were more relevant to Indonesians, particularly those in rural areas. There was a preference for sample based testing at the upper secondary level and that the tests should anticipate future needs, such as civic knowledge and being a good citizen, which is a focus of the new curriculum. Specific barriers were mentioned (see overall summary below) but there was acceptance of the need for comparison with other countries, as evidenced by Indonesia’s long participation in PISA. There was recognition that there was wide variation of teacher capacity within Indonesia although this has not been mapped comprehensively.

Education Assessment Unit, Research and Development Bureau, MOEC

The view that existing international assessments were less relevant in Indonesia was reinforced. There was support for a regionally based assessment that could be used to share lessons learned, provide an avenue to explore common issues that may arise from international tests, such as PISA, and enable exchange opportunities for teachers. It was suggested that RFEQA should focus on different year levels to that used in TIMSS and PISA and that any RFEQA test be implemented
during the non-national test period (i.e. after May and before December). The RFEQA assessment should focus on reading, mathematics and science.

The Educational Assessment Unit has expertise in a range of areas that is relevant to RFEQA, including assessing teacher competency, the conduct if national surveys for students in years 4, 5 and 6 in mathematics, science, Bahasa and teacher mapping. The Unit has limited capacity and resources to conduct international tests.

Ministry of Religious Affairs, Research & Development, Religious Education

Consultations revealed that Madrasah schools take the national MOEC examinations. There was interest in RFEQA if it supported increased quality for Indonesian students. The subjects preferred were mathematics, science and reading at years 7 or 8 and years 4 or 5 and include all students. There was a view that RFEQA tests at years 6 and 9 (national test levels) would create extra pressure on schools. A suggestion was made to create incentives for ideas sharing, such as certification for participation in test development/analysis and study tours for teachers.

Summary of responses and issues

The barriers referred to by officials included those that related to budgetary pressures, timing of regional assessments and their relationship to Indonesia’s own examination and assessment cycle as well as broader capacity issues at a systematic and school or instructional level. Many also commented that tests caused stress to individuals (students, parents and teachers in particular) and that teaches ‘taught to the test’. There was also a difference of opinion about the degree of acceptance from civil society and policy makers over the threat of regional comparisons about results, with some suggesting that there was openness to comparison as evidenced by the country’s participation in PISA and TIMSS and other suggesting that there might be concern. Currently Indonesia is working with SEAMEO to compare data on schooling, although this does not include analysis at a student achievement level.

Most indicated that a regional assessment would be a useful way to provide a focus for RFEQA, given the competing needs of various assessments being undertaken at the country, regional and international level (refer to the rationale section of this report). There was reference to the need for capacity development, training and sharing of information throughout the region as a way of improving educational quality. There were views expressed that collaborative benefits of sharing information currently through the work with SEAMEO and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

There was diversity of opinions about the areas to be tested and at what age level but most agreed that mathematics, science and reading were important areas with some suggesting civics and attitudinal assessment could be included. Most agreed that regional assessments should be sample based but there was a difference of views about year levels/ages because of relevance and capacity barriers.

Thailand

Like Indonesia, Thailand has undergone curriculum reform over the last three years. Thailand has good experience in educational testing having national tests at years 6, 9 and 12. The oversight of educational quality is provided at the higher education and school education levels through the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) and the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC). In addition the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching
Science and Technology (IPST) is responsible for all aspects of science and technology education in Thailand.

Stakeholders indicated that there would be interest in RFEQA, particularly as there is an appetite for regional comparison in education, given that education spending is the highest proportion of the national budget. There is also wide public interest in Thailand’s PISA results. The strong appetite for regional comparison comes from policy makers and the more affluent and educated Bangkok community. Stakeholders expressed the view that RFEQA would support efforts to measure improvement over time and improve quality of education at the instructional level.

Like Indonesia, key barriers cited that might prevent their participation was the cost of testing and administration, a fear that education would be narrowed as teachers focused on the test, that it would add to a crowded test environment and that it might be a sensitive area for all if Thailand performed poorly. Another factor cited was political will and that there might be additional political pressures if there were provincial disparities, given that two thirds of schools are located in rural districts and are poorer than those in urban areas, like Bangkok.

There was general agreement that RFEQA should have a regional assessment in reading, specifically critical reading, science and mathematics and critical thinking. There was also support for testing in the 21st century skills, such as creativity. Stakeholders expressed a general view that sample based testing be used and be pitched at both the primary and secondary level, at a mid-point, such as grades 3 and 9 or be aligned to Thailand’s national testing to allow for broader comparisons.

**Bilateral Organisations**

AusAID Australia has five strategies to support the improvement of learning outcomes for children and youth, one of which concerns education quality through the promotion of learning assessment:

“Partner countries will be encouraged to participate in international student assessment programs and/or develop their own tests to an accepted level of reliability and validity”

Discussions were held with AusAID Posts in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

Discussion with the AusAID educational representative in Indonesia indicated support of a regional assessment if it was developed and implemented in a phased manner, engaging with all stakeholders, including provincial governments. AusAID suggested that RFEQA could provide an opportunity for Indonesian leadership in the region, although resources were limited and stretched at the present time, because of the current reform agenda in education.

**AusAID Philippines**

5. The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) research project defines these skills in four areas: Ways of thinking (creativity and innovation; critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making; learning to learn/metacognition [knowledge about cognitive processes]); Tools for working (information literacy, information and communication technology [ICT] literacy); Ways of working (communication, collaboration [teamwork]); Ways of living in the world (citizenship – local and global; life and career; personal and social responsibility — including cultural awareness and competence).

6 AusAID ERF Learning Resources: Education Starter Pack; December 2012
AusAID indicated that there was some sensitivity about education measurement in the Philippines. The Department of Education implements a national assessment test but has withdrawn from participating in international tests. Currently the Philippines Government is embarking on K – 12 reforms to improve the quality of education. A report provided by AusAID staff entitled ‘Unexpected learning competencies of Grades 5 and 6 pupils in public elementary schools: A Philippine report’, identified a decline in student competency levels at grade 6 compared to those at Grade 5 over time. Although the findings and conclusion, called for further study, the report does support the views put to the Consultant by AusAID staff.

There was no discussion about the specific details of RFEQA.

**AusAID Timor-Leste**

Although Timor-Leste is not a member of the EAS, it is hoping to become a member of ASEAN in the near future. There was a view from SEAMEO and UNESCO that Timor-Leste should be considered as a potential member of RFEQA, because of their high need and low capacity in the education sector.

Current Timor-Leste government policy is to expand investment in the basic education sector. At the primary level there is support for improved quality through curriculum reform, access to teaching and learning materials, improved pedagogical support and multi-language education policies. At secondary level, there is an emphasis on improved access, particularly in rural areas, improved teacher training and qualification requirements and curriculum reform that supports the development of “skills and knowledge to serve the needs of our students and the labour market and the development needs of our nation including the promotion (of) communication skills and critical thinking”.

Discussions in Timor-Leste confirmed that there is low capacity in Timor-Leste to carry out assessments at a regional level, especially given that the Ministry has no national education assessments in place. However Timor-Leste has participated in EGRA and recently has undergone an assessment of its policy intent and strength of its enabling systems to assess and improve student achievement levels, using the short form World Bank SABER instrument. AusAID is supportive of measures to begin a dialogue with the Government of Timor-Leste about education quality but is unsure as to how it would react to requests for their involvement in a RFEQA feasibility or design program.

**US Department of Education**

The US is a member of the EAS and in November 2012, the United States Education Department released its International Strategy 2012, ‘Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement’. In January 2013 there were high-level meetings between the US Education Department and DIICCSRTE regarding the potential participation of the US Education Department in the RFEQA project, as the goals of the project related to Objective 2 of its international strategy.

The Consultant analysed the ‘Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement’ strategy and prepared a written briefing for DIICCSRTE on the RFEQA project and the USA’s potential involvement as the Consultant had been a part of the original working group.

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7 Presidency of the Council of Ministers Timor-Leste ‘Program of the Fifth Constitutional Government 2012-17 Legislature’, page 15
that had recommended the 13 projects that formed a part of the Action Plan in 2010. The written advice provided the Consultant’s perspectives on:

- The difference between the original (2010) and the current RFEQA proposal; and
- The lessons learned which will arise from the RFEQA project and given the synergies with the US proposal in their international strategy, how the US might potentially take the outcomes of the Feasibility Study forward.

**Multilateral organisations**

Discussions with SEAMEO, UNESCO and UNICEF representatives were particularly helpful given the work and research they are undertaking in the sector at a regional level. All expressed their support for a regional assessment as part of RFEQA and provided useful insights into how that might be achieved successfully. All expressed the view that the proposed RFEQA was feasible, desirable and timely and emphasised the need for transparent processes and long implementation timelines for it to be a successful, useful and worthwhile initiative. Mathematics, reading and science were mentioned as potential areas for testing at either entrance or exit points on the educational ladder.

**SEAMEO**

SEAMEO is supportive of a regional assessment in language, science, mathematics and 21st Century skills, although a specific year or age level was not suggested. SEAMEO was cautious about the appropriateness of existing international assessments as suitable tests for the region, but could be supportive of a regional initiative like RFEQA and thought that it would be appropriate also to consider bringing in Timor-Leste into RFEQA discussions.

There are various regional initiatives being undertaken including the virtual SEAMEO College, the creation of a regional assessment kit in mathematics, science and language and the work being done with UNESCO through the Learning Metrics Task force (LMTF). SEAMEO and UNESCO Bangkok are on the LMTF, which is an initiative of UNESCO, through its Institute for Statistics, and the Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institute. The LMTF is being developed to identify common learning goals to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for children and youth worldwide.

Given this level of regional activity, discussion centred on the process needed to build RFEQA to complement these existing regional institutions and their initiatives. A risk mentioned was that RFEQA could duplicate or overlap other regional initiatives if not managed carefully. It was suggested that a RFEQA test would need to reflect the proficiency and skills identified through the ASEAN member country framework agreement. A consensus based approach to build the right platform for RFEQA, the need to include countries in working groups and expert reference groups to map out the curriculum and design the instruments was recommended. A key barrier to RFEQA was financing and a 70/30 model was suggested to provide the seed funding and central administration costs needed (70%) through the EAS and a donor, while EAS countries

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8 The framework is a prototype for measuring learning outcomes at the early childhood, primary and post-primary levels of education. It includes indicators, targets and measures to be used as the basis for dialogue on how learning could be measured at the global and national levels. (http://www.brookings.edu/learningmetrics)
could contribute in-country financing (30%). It was also suggested that assessment activities could be rotated through SEAMEO centres.

UNESCO

There was support for a regional assessment in mathematics, science, reading and English at the entry and exit points of primary and secondary schooling. UNESCO Bangkok was supportive of a RFEQA initiative but indicated that it was likely to be difficult to achieve because of language and cultural differences within the region. Other barriers stated were teacher attitudes and that there were already many tests operating in the region. UNESCO viewed RFEQA as feasible, desirable and timely especially as they are establishing a regular forum for ASEAN countries to build their networks and capacity in educational quality without using a ‘test’ as an anchor.

Like SEAMEO, there was recognition that some existing international assessments were not suitable instruments for the region and that the ‘results’ create difficulties for governments and ministries. There are high stakes standardised tests in all ASEAN countries to monitor educational quality, noting that in Myanmar, they are viewed as low stake tests. The desire to improve education quality is driven in part by macro-economic drivers associated with the need to promote labour mobility and competitiveness, as ASEAN becomes an economic community in 2015. Additionally there is a growing gap between countries as some move into middle-income status. The view from UNESCO is that there is a need for an instrument that tests English competence because of labour mobility demand.

UNESCO stressed the view that for RFEQA to work, it needed to be useful and that any instruments used be effective and at low cost. They suggested that RFEQA create a ‘niche’ through an English language proficiency test and a cooperative learning (21st Century skills) test. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) implemented a ‘creative test’ in 2003 and 2009 and indicated that this dimension of learning was not well covered in the region.

Further research will be available soon to inform RFEQA. UNESCO is currently implementing a survey to assess how countries use test results for curriculum improvement, teacher development and overall education quality improvement. UNICEF is developing a learning metrics proposal for primary/early childhood education and is also interested in the non-cognitive learning domain.

In addition, on 27-28 March 2013 in Bangkok, the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP) was established and launched.

This new regional platform aims to provide a forum for countries/jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region to reflect, debate and share experience, lessons learnt and best practice in monitoring educational quality.

Organised by UNESCO Bangkok, the inaugural NEQMAP meeting brought together experts from education institutions, think tanks and Ministries of Education in Australia, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Hong Kong SAR (China), India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam.
UNICEF

UNICEF reiterated support for a feasibility study and partial establishment costs for a new SEAMEO regional centre on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), as well as a possible undertaking on primary learning outcome assessment. UNICEF is supportive of a regional assessment in general terms. They have done some work in developing and analysing early learning development standards and learning metrics and regard the primary level as an uncrowded space:

- Early childhood development scale for ages 1 to 3 in partnership, led by Lyn Kagan at Columbia University
- Learning metrics at primary level based on reading, writing, mathematics and citizenship, in partnership with the University of New England.

There was a suggestion that RFEQA could be housed in one of the existing 21 SEAMEO centres and that the facility needs a ‘test’ as an anchor point for it to be useful.

The World Bank (WB)

Two interviews were conducted with the World Bank - the first was with the Senior Education Economist based in Jakarta and the second was a follow up phone conversation with the Sector Manager Education, East Asia and Pacific based in Washington. The Senior Education Economist spoke positively about the suggestion of a regionally based assessment program, because he saw that the information gained from existing assessments was limited. The Sector Manager was cautious about a new assessment, stating that anything new must clearly deliver new information not possible to obtain from existing assessments. The regularity and sustainability of existing assessments was also seen as a clear advantage over establishing a new assessment.

The Consultant also met with the World Bank project officers in Jakarta responsible for managing the student assessment project – BERMUTU – Better Education through Reform and Assessment. The aim of BERMUTU is to inform policy and to implement (relevant) government guidelines and its findings would be of use at the RFEQA national level. Although this is a national project, the officers were in agreement that there would be support in Indonesia for RFEQA if its focus was on information sharing. Unlike other stakeholders in Indonesia, they supported a test at year 1 in reading and mathematics.

Survey response: other EAS countries

In addition to visiting Indonesia and Thailand, surveys were sent to other countries in the region with the responses received from Vietnam and the Philippines were strongly supportive of the initiative.

The Philippines

The Philippines gained experience at participating in an international educational assessment when it implemented TIMSS in 1995, 1999 and 2003. In addition the National Achievement Test is an annual examination given to secondary students. The students’ knowledge and mastery of Mathematics, Science and Filipino, are measured using a multiple choice type test. The examination is administered by the Department of Education’s National Educational Testing and Research Centre (NETRC).
Regarding the RFEQA, responses from the Philippines were strongly supportive of a regional assessment given to samples of students at grades 6 and 10 in the subject areas of reading, mathematics and science. They also suggested that consideration should also be given to an assessment of English.

**Vietnam**

The Ministry for Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam has demonstrated a strong commitment to educational assessment through the establishment of a centre within the ministry, which conducts national examinations. The centre has also organised Vietnam’s participation, for the first time, in an international educational assessment - PISA 2012.

Regarding the RFEQA, responses from Vietnam were strongly supportive of a regional assessment given to samples of students at grades 5, 9 and 11 in the subject areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

**Summary of key issues raised**

Key issues that were raised in relation to implementation are summarised below:

- Language and cultural issues need to be considered carefully because EAS member countries are culturally and linguistically unique and all are sensitive to the consequences of negative outcomes that would be explicit in a regional comparison;

- The need to find a “niche” for a regional assessment so as to provide a useful service to EAS countries. Suggestions included tests for English language proficiency and cooperative learning, sometimes called “transversal skills”. Further that RFEQA should provide more than a test and include sharing, research and training opportunities;

- Consideration of cost issues – instruments and participation need to be low cost. Costing models need to be “progressive” and a funding arrangement is needed to cover see funding and central administration costs;

- RFEQA needs to fit in with existing regional structures and initiatives, such as the use of SEAMEO centres and/or the creation of new centres under that same umbrella and /or utilise existing learning metrics, being developed by the Brookings Institute;

- The development of RFEQA and the engagement of stakeholders need to be inclusive using “bottom up” approaches and include working parties, expert reference groups;

- Consideration of broadening RFEQA’s scope to include Timor-Leste.

**Summary of extent of support from stakeholders**

There is general support from almost all stakeholders who completed the survey instrument or were interviewed. At the same time, it is recognised that there must be caution and clarity about the usefulness or need for such a test. EAS countries are supportive of the initiative and are ready for a RFEQA that will provide a mechanism for regional assessment in reading, mathematics and science and possibly other areas such as critical thinking or English language proficiency. It was recognised that there may be some limitations of existing international tests not being able to provide enough detailed information about the students in the region. There was also strong support for a broader based facility to allow for information sharing and capacity development.
All strongly endorsed its potential benefits: allow for benchmarking of student outcomes including coverage in new emerging areas, increased regional educational cooperation and quality improvement.

All stakeholders indicated that if regional authorities as well as their own governments, endorsed a facility then it would be fully supported. However their support was qualified by the need to resolve the following expressed concerns:

- Competition with their own testing cycles and lack of resources and capacity to manage both at the same time;
- Budgetary pressures, including the need for long lead in implementation time and resource frameworks;
- The negative impact of potential comparisons for their own country at all levels: the government, policy makers, teachers and the public.

The donor organisations also strongly endorsed a RFEQA but cautioned that it would need to be developed in close consultation with country and regional stakeholders over time, using participatory approaches and aligning its approach and mechanisms to existing regional structures. In addition, donors expressed a strong view that because of “crowding”, the RFEQA would need to offer a point of difference to be seen as being of use and benefit to EAS countries.

**PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

The project would be sustainable if certain conditions are met at the design and implementation stages. Sustainability is partially dependent on the adoption of a collaborative approach with EAS countries during the design and implementation phase to ensure that it meets the needs of member countries. Long lead in times for development, “startup” external budgetary support and integration with, or utilisation of, existing regional structures will assist in longer-term sustainability. All stakeholders expressed views about the importance of recognising the cultural values of the region during the design and implementation phases.

**Analysis of issues relevant to project sustainability including the views of key stakeholders**

**Design**

If there was an endorsement of the RFEQA, sufficient time allowing access to key resources would be needed in order to completely capture the context in which the facility would exist. The RFEQA Feasibility study team did not have sufficient time to explore the views of all stakeholders or review all the research being undertaken by the multilateral regional organisations on initiatives related to educational measurement. For example, UNICEF is currently leading the development of a learning metrics study at the primary and early childhood sub-sector level and UNESCO is undertaking research on how ASEAN countries use results to improve educational quality. As the project sits with a dynamic environment, there is a need to work closely with the changing context to ensure that the design is well suited to the needs of all potential EAS countries and doesn’t overlap or compete with other measures in existence or being proposed.

A participatory consultative and collaborative approach with regular communication must feature in the design process if RFEQA is to be accepted and endorsed by the EAS. A stakeholder proposed that a consensus model be adopted. The design could “piggy-back” on existing regional
mechanisms and utilise the successful methods employed by regional multilateral organisations when they implement sustainable initiatives.

The model would need to propose flexible entry points for country participation allowing countries to opt in when it aligns with their own needs and resource constraints, such as not competing with their own national test cycle. It should contain features that EAS countries want and differ from what is currently available to them to support improved policy making and ultimately educational quality. The benefits of RFEQA must be seen to be real and achievable.

**Implementation**

All stakeholders stressed that budgets and resources were already stretched to meet core demand. Financial support and capacity development through twinning arrangements with like organisations or similar regional bodies are needed for sustainability purposes. Budget lines for conducting and analysing tests, information sharing, publication and reporting as well as capacity development should be stipulated over a reasonable funding envelope as part of the design process. Shared funding models (e.g. 70/30 models) were suggested. A non-mandatory and flexible approach, with staged engagement would best serve member countries and increase the chances for long-term sustainability. Finally RFEQA should be developed in a way that allows for growth, yet remain flexible to meet the changing macro and country context.

Capacity in developing banks of high quality test items, analysing and communicating results effectively and using data to inform policy are all issues related to sustainability. The funding of mechanisms needed to develop capacity in these areas should be explored. Ultimately RFEQA will need to be self-funding and be able to build its own capacity through the expertise and experience of EAS countries themselves. This will take time but experience from other regional facilities shows that it can be achieved and sustained. This is the case for the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) which is operated from the UNESCO office in Santiago, Chile and for The Programme d’Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC).

**Evidence from other regional educational measurement facilities**

The LLECE produces information on learning outcomes and analyses factors associated with educational achievement. It gives support and advice to measuring and evaluation units of the participating countries, and provides a facility to debate, share and reflect on new approaches to educational evaluation.

In Africa the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) is a programme originating in 1995 and now has fifteen participating countries. The International Institute of Educational Planning (a UNESCO body) facilitates the assessment. In addition to providing countries with information about their students, a particular focus of the programme has been to enhance the capacity of the personnel involved in each of the participating countries.

**Institutional and human resource capabilities**

The Consultant did not specifically refer to this in the survey instrument it developed for the study (refer to Appendix D). In preparing the survey the Consultant was aware that these questions are difficult to get a response in writing as they embody subjective judgements and sensitive issues, best explored through interviews and site visits. Some general views were expressed during interviews with stakeholders (refer to previous section) about their national
institutional and human resource capabilities, while discussions with SEAMEO revealed that its centres had between 12 – 20 staff members, depending on the profile and maturity of the centre itself. More detailed analysis of institutional and human capacity should be explored in the design phase.

TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

Stakeholders were questioned about their views on the technical feasibility of RFEQA. In both Indonesia and Thailand the technical capacity is well developed to carry out such an initiative.

In Indonesia the experience that has been gained through the implementation of their national examination system in addition to their long involvement in PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS gives them a good background. Indonesia has a single unit dedicated to the implementation of these assessments and could contribute positively to a regional program.

Similar to Indonesia, in Thailand there is a unit, which is responsible for the implementation of national assessments and for international assessments. Staff interviewed were well experienced and had detailed knowledge of the processes involved in large-scale assessments. They could contribute positively to a regional programme.

Description and analysis of options

Stakeholders were asked about their views on a number of different options.

Regarding target population, the stakeholders were asked whether they would favour an assessment, which was undertaken by a sample of students or a census. There was unanimous support for a sample-based survey rather than a census survey. This view was largely driven by the very high costs, which would be required to implement a survey to over a million students in Indonesia, for example.

Options were presented to the stakeholders regarding age or grade group of students who should be involved in the initiative. The options were for primary, secondary or a combination of both. There was a diversity of opinions regarding this. Some were of the view that an initiative, if it was an assessment, should be implemented towards the end of secondary schooling so that the ministry could gain some idea of the accumulation of educational expertise that students have gained in their time at school. A larger group, however, tended to take the view that the assessment was better carried out in the early primary school years so that the ministry could implement policy interventions in response to weaknesses in student capacity identified by the initiative. This early assessment should then be followed up by other assessments at the upper primary and secondary levels.

Methods and design

The stakeholders were attracted to the possibility of a longitudinal survey in which students could be followed as they move through their educational experience. This was, however, deemed likely to be expensive and unachievable. However, the notion of tracking the growth of a grade group (based on a sample) was found to be more attractive. So if a country was to carry out an assessment on a grade 3 sample, and then three years later on the grade 6 sample, a measure of growth could be inferred from the results.
Type of instrument and coverage

Most of those interviewed were of the view that an instrument should be delivered as a paper-based test with questions that included those not only of a multiple-choice format but also some questions, which required a written response from the students. For their national examinations Indonesia used tests based only on multiple choice questions, but for a smaller group of students sampled from a grade they favoured both question formats.

The countries were attracted to the notion that RFEQA would be grounded in the participating countries in its design and methods of implementation. This, they believed, would provide an assessment realistically targeted at their student populations and taking into account the capacity of the countries to implement them. The proposed RFEQA model would therefore meet the gaps identified by stakeholders in that it would be regionally relevant and focus on the specific educational and development needs of each country. The model could also be expanded over time to respond to changing needs and the growing internal capacity of each country to manage the national components of the test.

The use of computers for the delivery of the assessment was not considered to be feasible at this stage, but countries were not totally opposed to the idea.

Possible model for regional initiative proposed model

To propose an indicative costing and timeline for the regional initiative it is necessary to describe a possible model based on the consultations that were held with the countries and other stakeholders.

Underlying assumptions of the proposed model

It is proposed that the initiative could take the form of a regional educational assessment with the following characteristics:

1. It will be an assessment of reading and mathematics;
2. There will be two target populations - primary and secondary level students;
3. The assessment will be based on the common components of the curricula of the countries;
4. A sample of students will be selected to represent each country - a minimum size of 5000 is recommended;
5. A contractor experienced in carrying out international educational assessments will be appointed to guide the creation, development, implementation and reporting of the results. The contractor will also train regional personnel so that in subsequent rounds the countries will assume a greater degree of involvement and responsibility;
6. A regional centre will be established to oversee the administration of the assessment and to monitor the international contractor; and
7. Each country will establish a national centre to carry out the assessment.
### Possible Timeline for Implementation of a Regional Assessment

**Example Target Year of Reporting = 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>International Activity</th>
<th>National Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2014 | 1. Establish governing body.  
2. Appoint expert groups.  
3. Decide subject areas.  
4. Decide population.  
5. Establish secretariat to manage.  
6. Appoint contractor.  
7. Establish communications with countries with relevant organisations. | 1. Appoint local contractor.  
2. Submit sample items to international contractor. |
| 2015 | 1. Instrument development.  
2. Generate sufficient items.  
3. Establish methods of test delivery.  
4. Establish procedures for item review.  
5. Train countries in item coding.  
6. Train countries in data entry.  
7. Train countries in implementation procedure. | 1. Attend international training meetings.  
2. Establish procedures for producing tests.  
3. Publicise and gain local support. |
| 2016 | 1. Implement field trial.  
2. Conduct item analysis.  
3. Select best item set for main study.  
4. Train countries in data entry. | 1. Train test administrators.  
2. Select sample of schools and students.  
3. Schedule test administration.  
4. Arrange for booklet construction and printing.  
4. Input data from field trial. |
| 2017 | 1. Monitor implementation of main study.  
2. Check data sent from countries.  
2. Schedule test administration.  
4. Input data from main study. |
| 2018 | 1. Carry out analysis of data.  
2. Produce dataset with all results.  
3. Carry out analysis and reporting of results.  
2. Carry out national analysis.  
3. Write national report. |

**Table 2. Possible timeline for the administration of the assessment**

A possible timeline for the administration of the regional assessment is shown in Table 2. For such a complex assessment, the time between start-up and final reporting is around five years. This time is needed to attend to all the details of funding, deciding on the nature of the assessment, securing the participation of the countries, creating and implementing the assessment and producing reports based on it.
Comments on costs issues, need for detailed analysis at design stage

The RFEQA Feasibility Study team was not given specific information regarding costs at a unit or country level for national assessments. The research instruments used in the RFEQA Feasibility Study focused on the existing context and use of measurement and testing in EAS countries and the possible demand for RFEQA. While the Consultant strongly recommends that a full costing analysis be undertaken as part of the design stage of the project, it is possible to make an estimate of some components of the proposed model described above based on physical and human resource requirements. Where it is not possible to give a dollar cost estimate the extent of necessary human resources is estimated.

There are three main components of the costs associated with the implementation of the proposed model:

1. Costs for a regional centre: This refers to the cost of setting up and staffing a regional assessment centre. The physical costs of establishing a centre in terms of a building cannot be estimated at this time. It may be that a building, or part thereof, already exists and it could be made available at a minimal rental or at the other extreme a new facility would have to be built. In terms of human resources a small secretariat of around three full-time staff would be able to establish contracts with and monitor the work of an international contractor, maintain communication with the participating countries and oversee the analysis and reporting of each assessment round.

2. Costs for an international contractor: These costs will cover the activities listed in the "International Activities" column of the timeline shown above. International costs could be sourced from the participating countries (this could be done proportional to the size of each country's economy or by making costs equal for each country) or from donors. An approximate estimate of this cost is USD 8 million over the five years of the project.

3. Costs for national contractor: These costs will cover the activities listed in the "National Activities" column of the timeline shown above. Each country will need to appoint a national contractor to implement the assessment in their own country. In some cases this may be done by staff at the Ministry or in other cases a private company may be assigned the tasks. Generally this could be managed by three or four full-time staff supported by the required number of test administrators, coders and data entry staff who would be employed for a limited time.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Key factors favourable/unfavourable to the project

Favourable

Countries through the region have acknowledged the need for better information about learning outputs of their education systems - the project would provide this information.

At the same time the countries recognise that they would benefit from participation in an initiative because of the opportunity to increase the capacity of their staff and benefit from the exposure to a network of educational experts.
Unfavourable

The existence of international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS being done by around half the countries in the region already supplies information to the education ministries and this project could be seen as duplication for those countries.

The financial burden of another initiative would have to be carefully weighed against the perceived benefits - some countries may find that another initiative is too much.

While most countries may find comparisons of their student body to those in other countries to be a worthwhile activity, it is also possible that some countries may find this activity to be threatening - especially those countries with students at comparatively lower levels of capacity. This could bring negative public attention to the system and hinder progress.

Key project risks and their manageability

A project of this type, involving a diverse region of countries each with differing economic profiles as well as differing cultural and educational measurement experience and capacity, will be exposed to a number of risks. An initial broad based risk management matrix has been prepared as part of this feasibility study (refer to Appendix E) to document the types and levels of risks and how they might be mitigated. These are at a macro level and in a design phase, would need to be considered in more depth.

During interviews with stakeholders, most expressed the need for close consultation and participatory engagement in the design of RFEQA. This together with ensuring that RFEQA is designed in such a way to meet the needs of all EAS countries will help to mitigate the risks involved as will the provision of sustainable financial support. Its relevance and usefulness to member countries, alignment with existing regional structures and long development timelines, are also important pre-conditions.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT

When describing an overall assessment of the feasibility of RFEQA it comes down to three main factors which need to be considered - the countries’ willingness to commit to the project, the availability of sufficiently qualified people to carry out the project and the ongoing financial capacity to sustain the project.

Commitment to the project

The countries interviewed and surveyed all expressed support for RFEQA to be implemented. It appears that a need has been identified and that at this time a regional educational initiative will be viewed very favourably. The form proposed is a regional educational assessment.

Qualified personnel for the project

RFEQA as described in this report requires highly trained and experienced people to implement the various components of the project. This report has identified that many of the countries are undertaking international and national assessments. The experience gained through these activities provides a core group of people sufficiently qualified. There are, however, some countries that do not have this level of expertise and would need to train people to do the tasks associated with implementing the initiative. This is to be expected and incorporating capacity building into the initiative has been seen as one of the core positive points. The initiative would
therefore need to design a series of timely workshops using experienced people from the region to provide the necessary training.

*Ongoing financial support*

For an initiative such as described in this report to be sustainable, there needs to be a long term financial commitment from the countries and from associated donor organisations. At this early stage of investigation it was not possible to gain financial commitments. These will come at a later stage if the project moves from a feasibility study to a definite project proposal. At that point possible contractors will be able to provide estimated costs based on detailed terms of reference.

Countries such as Indonesia and Thailand already have departments dedicated to the implementation of assessments, so in those countries a body would not need to be established from the ground up - they would, however, need supplementary staffing to accomplish the goal of RFEQA, that is providing a regionally relevant and useful set of assessments.
REFERENCES

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http://www.brookings.edu/about/centers/universal-education/learning-metrics-task-force
DEEWR Terms of Reference for a Feasibility-Design Study for an East Asia Summit Facility for Education Quality Assessment (EAS FEQA) V3
DIISRTE (2012) Request for Tender – PRI-00002727
Timor-Leste Presidency of the Council of Ministers; ‘Program of the Fifth Constitutional Government 2012-17 Legislature’


Harnessing Educational Cooperation in the EAS for Regional Competitiveness and Community Building (‘the Harnessing Report’)

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### ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACRONYM</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAM</td>
<td>Basic Education Assessment Monitoring Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIICCSRTE</td>
<td>Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>East Asia Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>EASEMM</td>
<td>EAS Education Ministers’ meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGRA</td>
<td>Early Grade Reading Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCS</td>
<td>International Civics and Citizenship Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRT</td>
<td>Item Response Theory - relating to scoring student answers in a test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLECE</td>
<td>Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASEC</td>
<td>Programme d’Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (Programme for the Analysis of Educational Systems of the CONFEMEN countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RASCH</td>
<td>George Rasch devised a model for scoring student responses to an assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFEQA</td>
<td>Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>Systems Approach for Better Education Results(World Bank project)</td>
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<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIMSS</td>
<td>Trends in Mathematics and Science Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT

Goal of study
The goal of this work is a feasibility study for the East Asia Summit (EAS) Regional Basic Education Assessment and Measurement (BEAM) project, and a quality, relevant and feasible design for the Facility.

Method or Approach
The feasibility-design study will be undertaken in two phases:

- **Phase 1** - will be the Feasibility study into the EAS BEAM.
- **Phase 2** – will be to undertake the Design for the EAS BEAM. Phase 2 will be subject to the satisfactory completion of Phase 1 and the agreement of the Project Steering Committee, that proceeding to a full design has merit. In carrying out the tasks outlined above, the consultant will:

  1. attend a project inception briefing with the Department in Canberra;
  2. complete a literature search of relevant publications and database(s);
  3. consult with the Department’s representative in relevant countries;
  4. consult with relevant organisations and stakeholder groups including but not limited to:
     - relevant Australian Government agencies (e.g. AusAID)
     - relevant Overseas Government agencies (e.g. Departments/Ministries of Education responsible for Schooling)
     - other relevant donors (e.g. World Bank, ADB, UNESCO)
     - key people in other relevant organisations (e.g. Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, OECD);
     - key education academics working in national institutions
  5. utilise participatory consultative and survey techniques as far as practicable;
  6. demonstrate cultural sensitivity; and
  7. present findings at a debriefing/seminar/workshop meeting in Canberra with the Department at the conclusion of each Phase (as required).

Travel overseas to undertake consultations will be subject to the development of a mutually agreed consultation plan specifying proposed consultations and purposes. Overseas travel will be minimised through the use of methods such as email, survey, teleconferencing and videoconferencing. However it is likely that travel to Bangkok to meet UNESCO and the SEAMEO Secretariat and Jakarta to meet the ASEAN Secretariat and Indonesian Ministry of Education would be viewed positively.

Outputs

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9 The project is also known as the *Facility for Education Quality Assessment* (FEQA) project.
10 A project steering committee of key stakeholders will be convened by the Department to provide input and advice in relation to key reports and project progress. The Department will service the committee.
11 The Department will coordinate with the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure that appropriate contact points are identified in all EAS Ministries of Education.
The consultant will provide the following outputs:

1. a **meeting** with DIICCSRTE in Canberra at the conclusion of each Project Phase (as required);
2. an **Inception Report** which will provide a work plan that includes proposed consultations and methods to capture information including a draft survey instrument;
3. a **Project Feasibility-Design Study Mission Exit Reports** for the DIICCSRTE Post where an overseas visit has taken place;
4. a draft and final **Project Feasibility Document** for DIICCSRTE according to the format at Appendix A (as appropriate); and
5. a draft and final **Project Design Document** for DIICCSRTE according to the format at Appendix A (as appropriate).

The consultant will be expected to submit final reports within 7 days of having received the Department’s comments on the draft report.

**Phase 1 milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By 15 November 2012</td>
<td>Consultation Plan to the Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 15 February 2013</td>
<td>Draft Feasibility Report to the Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 15 March 2013</td>
<td>Final Feasibility Report to the Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 15 April 2013</td>
<td>Decision on Phase 2 (as appropriate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Team Composition and Duration**

The project feasibility-design study mission team will comprise two persons. One person will be the **Team Leader/Design Specialist** and the other will be a **Technical Specialist** in the field of education assessment.

The team will be allocated a total of up to **50 calendar days to undertake Phase 1**. Travel/transit days and meetings in Canberra are additional. Unless otherwise proposed in the inception report it is proposed that the total days allocated will be split equally between the team members.

The **Team Leader/Design Specialist** will be expected to have the following skills:

- Team leadership skills and experience in education project design and management;
- Experience in international project feasibility and design studies;
- Experience in providing strategic and policy advice to government departments;
- Demonstrated skills in participatory consultative approaches, facilitation and negotiation; and
- High level of verbal and written communication skills - especially report writing.
- Experience working with developing country stakeholders.

The **Technical Specialist** in education assessment will be expected to have the following skills:

- Relevant technical qualifications (e.g. Masters or PhD in education assessment or related field) and experience in developing countries.
- Experience in and knowledge of best practice in international education assessments, in particular as part of education policy and reform,
• Demonstrated understanding of the institutional and policy arrangements necessary for effective assessments, including the presence of a capacity to interpret and use data to inform education programming.

• Experience in providing strategic advice to educational policy makers.

• Significant experience working on the development of large-scale educational assessments and demonstrated understanding of best practice in educational monitoring and assessment programs. All team members will be expected to have the following skills:

  • Cross-cultural communication skills; and
  • Understanding of and commitment to international development.
APPENDIX B: PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project was originally conceived as a project consisting of two phases: a feasibility study and design for a Basic Education Assessment and Measurement (BEAM) study, now referred to as the RFEQA. The original Statement of Requirements is based on Terms of Reference for a Feasibility-Design Study for an East Asia Summit Facility for Education Quality Assessment (EAS FEQA), Version 3, noting that these include both the original feasibility and design phased approach.

Following submission of the proposal, the Consultant was advised that only the feasibility component would proceed under contract. The Consultant was informed that based on the outcomes of the study, a recommendation about the viability of a RFEQA like Facility would be presented at the next EAS meeting and a decision about the next steps, including possible design phase, will be made by EAS member countries.

Countries targeted for consultation and data collection

The 18 EAS countries consist of developed, middle income and developing countries. The Project’s Reference Group made a decision at the Inception meeting that the focus of the research effort for the Feasibility Study would be on developing and middle income counties under the EAS umbrella. The counties specifically contacted by the Consultant were: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Contact was attempted with a second group of countries, consisting of Brunei, China, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore to provide information about the project. Multinational organisations were also contacted for their views regarding the viability and demand for a regional education facility as proposed through REFQA.

The Consultant is indebted to the AusAID and the Australian International Education (AEI) staff who provided invaluable support to them in identifying appropriate contacts for the research that underpins this study.

Project Activities to date

RFEQA Activity Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception Meeting</td>
<td>26 Nov 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation Plan</td>
<td>7 Dec 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Scan</td>
<td>21 Dec 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation Plan</td>
<td>14 Jan 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Instrument distributed</td>
<td>23 Jan 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visit to Jakarta &amp; Bangkok</td>
<td>24 Feb to 3rd March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection &amp; analysis</td>
<td>from 14 Jan 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Feasibility report</td>
<td>29 March 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Composition of the design team and methodology used

The Consultant consisted of the following personnel: Dr. John Cresswell, Technical Specialist and Ms. Karyn Docking, Design Consultant/Team Leader, from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Methodology

The methodology used by the Consultants was based on its original proposal, the Contract for Provision of Services and the changes emanating from discussions held with DIICCSRTE at the Inception meeting and later through regular progress meetings. The approach taken was based on the principles of transparent and open consultation with all stakeholders and the provision of timely information to DIICCSRTE. The Implementation Plan, submitted on 7 December 2012, outlines the project methodology in detail.

RFEQA methodology summary

As a first step, the Consultants defined the goals of the RFEQA project for the participating countries. An Environmental Scan to summarise what assessments existed in this region as well as in other regions was completed as part of an overarching literature review into educational assessments.

Additional primary and secondary research was undertaken to answer key questions related to the study. These included the assessment needs of the countries in the region; what assessments are already being undertaken by the countries and at what level – primary or secondary and a view about the capacity of countries to implement large-scale educational assessments. Views from the countries that have been involved in international assessments for many years were sought.

Information regarding possible country interest in an assessment was obtained through a variety of means including face-to-face interviews, an online survey, phone conferencing and emails. The research activities consisted of:

(i) Literature review/s including the collection of relevant reports from the site visit.

(ii) Development and distribution of a survey on educational assessments to relevant regulatory bodies in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

(iii) During interviews, an exploration of the style and format that an educational regional facility could embody was presented so that participants could visualise the “facility”.

(iv) Consultations with the above identified EAS countries and the multinational organisations of UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and SEAMEO to assess the viability and the readiness of EAS countries for a regional assessment facility.

(v) Exploration of the barriers and risks associated with the implementation of a facility, including where it could be located.

The information was then analysed for this report and its findings and recommendations are contained in this report.
# APPENDIX C: LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED

The following is a list of people consulted or contacted throughout the course of the Feasibility Study. A mission to Indonesia and Thailand took place between 25 February and 2 March, 2013. Surveys were sent to representatives of the countries targeted for research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prof.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Susie Sugiarti</td>
<td>Operation Officer in Education, WB</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Samer Al-Samarrai</td>
<td>Senior Education Economist, WB</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Quitin (Kit) Atlenza 11</td>
<td>AusAID, The Philippines</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Luis Beneviste</td>
<td>Sector Manager Education, East Asia and Pacific, WB, Washington</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Katheryn Bennett</td>
<td>AusAID, Lao PDR</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Hannah Birdsey</td>
<td>Counsellor of Education, AusAID</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Fred Brooker</td>
<td>Senior Education Advisor, AusAID, Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Esther Care</td>
<td>Director of the Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Scott Evans</td>
<td>Counsellor, Education &amp; Research AEI</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Marie Grealy</td>
<td>Counsellor, IED, DIICCSRTE</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Kim Gwang-Jo</td>
<td>Director, UNESCO Bangkok</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Titie Hadiyati</td>
<td>Operation Officer in Education, WB</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Amelia Hapsari</td>
<td>AusAID, Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Ir. Hendarman H.</td>
<td>Secretary, Research and Development Branch, MOEC</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Julie Hudson</td>
<td>AusAID, Lao PDR</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Witaya Jeradechakul</td>
<td>Director, SEAMEO Secretariat</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Watinee Kharnwong</td>
<td>Program Manager, Australian International Education, Thailand</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Gwang-Jo Kim</td>
<td>Senior Education Advisor, UNESCO</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Sattiya</td>
<td>Lankhapin</td>
<td>Acting Director, Institute for the Promotion of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Leam</td>
<td>First Secretary, Development Cooperation, AusAID, Phnom Penh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>AusAID, Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Evy</td>
<td>Margarethia</td>
<td>Head of Subdivision Multilateral, International Cooperation and Planning Bureau, MOEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Abdurahman</td>
<td>Mas’ud</td>
<td>Head of Religion Education Section of Research and Development Unit, MORA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Cliff</td>
<td>Meyers</td>
<td>Regional Educational Adviser, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>JI</td>
<td>Mingze</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Teaching Research Section of Shanghai Municipal Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>Khairil Anwar</td>
<td>Notodipuro</td>
<td>Head of Research and Development Bureau, MOEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Palu</td>
<td>AusAID, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Pegg</td>
<td>Director of the Research Centre for Teacher Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Watanaporn</td>
<td>Ra-ngubtook</td>
<td>Senior Advisor, Office of the Basic Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>First Secretary, AusAID, Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Subandi</td>
<td>Sardjoko</td>
<td>Director for Religious Affairs and Education, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Sereyrath</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director General of Education, MOEYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Hari</td>
<td>Setiadi</td>
<td>Head for Education Assessment Unit, Research and Development Bureau, MOEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Chantavit</td>
<td>Sujatanond</td>
<td>Member of the Committee for Development of Quality Evaluation Systems for Higher Education, ONESQA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Rawiwan</td>
<td>Tenissara</td>
<td>Assistant to the President, IPST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Pham Thanh</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Dept of Education Testing &amp; Accreditation, Vietnam MOE</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>Nang Nilar Tun</td>
<td>AusAID, Myanmar</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Jen Tyrell</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, China</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Kristie Vanomme</td>
<td>Director, International Assessment and Benchmarking Section, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Ramya Vivekananda Rodrigues</td>
<td>Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Pornpun Waitayangkon</td>
<td>President Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology, IPST</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms.</td>
<td>Elaine Ward</td>
<td>Counsellor, AusAID, The Philippines</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: WORKING PAPERS, BASELINE SURVEY DOCUMENT

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR THE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT REGIONAL FACILITY FOR EDUCATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT (EAS-RFEQA)

This survey is designed to collect data to help inform the rationale and feasibility for the East Asia Summit Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment (EAS-RFEQA). EAS-RFEQA is also known as the Basic Education Assessment Measurement Project (BEAM) project.

Q1. Which country is this information for?
   Please choose from the drop down menu

   Country

Q2. Please type your name and email address in the boxes provided to allow for follow up questions.
   Name
   Email

Q3. For each of the following grade levels indicate if national educational assessments take place, indicate the type of testing and main subjects tested. Do not include international assessments such as TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Is there a national educational assessment at this grade? Please choose from the drop down menu</th>
<th>If there is a national assessment at the grade please give the best description of assessment type from the list. If there is no assessment leave the cell blank. Please choose from the drop down menu</th>
<th>If there is a national assessment at the grade please give an indication of the main subjects tested from the list. If there is no assessment leave the cell blank. Please choose from the drop down menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
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<td>Grade 6</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Grade 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. If a regional educational assessment were to be implemented which grades would be most suitable for such an assessment?
   Please choose from the drop down menu

   Grade 3
   Grade 4
   Grade 5
   Grade 6
   Grade 7
   Grade 8
   Grade 9
   Grade 10
   Grade 11
   Grade 12

Q5. If a regional educational assessment were to be implemented which subjects would be most suitable for such an assessment?
   Please choose from the drop down menu

   Reading
   Writing
   Mathematics
   Science
   History
   Geography
   Religion
Q6. If a regional educational assessment were to be implemented do you think it should be undertaken by all students in a grade or by a representative sample of the students in a grade?
   
   Please choose from the drop down menu

Q7. Please indicate how supportive you are of implementing an educational assessment across the region.
   
   Please choose from the drop down menu

Thank you very much for completing this survey - your opinion is very highly valued.

Please save the file and email it as an attachment to: john.cresswell@acer.edu.au
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>SUB-AREA</th>
<th>TYPICAL QUESTION or DISCUSSION POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the proposal and why the feasibility study is being done</td>
<td>National assessments</td>
<td>Can you provide a commentary on the current state of your national assessment profile (accuracy, capacity, acceptability etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International assessments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses of assessment at school level</td>
<td>Do you believe that there is good usage of assessment within school to help guide teaching strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses of assessment at regional or country level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjects being assessed</td>
<td>You said (subjects for regional assessments), why did you choose this over other subject combinations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample being used or census</td>
<td>Can you explain your reasoning for why you would prefer sample based over whole populations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grades being used</td>
<td>You said (grades for regional assessments), why did you choose this over other grade combinations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current situation</td>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Human Resources availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived Risks</td>
<td>To students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers to implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative nature of a regional assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible benefits</td>
<td>To students</td>
<td>What benefits would students get out of this initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To schools</td>
<td>Would there be direct benefits to schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative nature of a regional assessment</td>
<td>Although the focus of a regional assessment would not be comparability with other nations, would countries see benefits in comparisons being made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To countries</td>
<td>What are the benefits and disadvantages of participating in a regional assessment facility for your country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred option focusing on ...?</td>
<td>Enhancing capacity</td>
<td>There doesn’t seem to be enough countries participating in any one existing assessment to use it as a basis for an initiative - do you agree with this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing surveys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional centre for exchange of ideas and talent</td>
<td>Would your country be able to host such an entity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of support</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Is now the time to be undertaking this initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School level</td>
<td>Would principals and teachers be supportive of this initiative. What would be needed to explain it to them sufficiently well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry level</td>
<td>Would ministry officials be supportive of this initiative. What would be needed to explain it to them sufficiently well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>Do you get the feeling that other countries in the region would welcome a regional educational initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donor level</td>
<td>Would donors be supportive of this initiative. What would be needed to explain it to them sufficiently well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX E: RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

P = Probability/likelihood (1 = Rare, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Possible, 4 = Likely, 5 = Almost certain)
C = Consequence/Impact (1 = Negligible, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Severe)
R = Overall risk level - combination of Probability and Consequence (E = Extreme, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Owner</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Risks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of will among EAS countries to commit to Facility</td>
<td>Nos. of EAS countries that agree to participate on the design and trial stages</td>
<td>Extent of collaboration in design process</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>EAS countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Design team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Unwillingness to share results or data</td>
<td>Amount of participation in regional meetings</td>
<td>No. of times results published in home country</td>
<td>Quality of reform efforts using data from tests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Cultural and language aspects of each EAS country not incorporated</td>
<td>Extent of satisfaction in the process and outcomes of the design phase</td>
<td>Use of cultural indicators developed by SEAMEO in design process</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Design team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>No seed funding provided</td>
<td>Amount of direct and in kind funding provided over agreed timeframes</td>
<td>5 + years of funding front loaded to support development and implementation phases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Donors/multilaterals EAS countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Regional Facility for Education Quality Assessment - Feasibility Study

**P = Probability/likelihood (1 = Rare, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Possible, 4 = Likely, 5 = Almost certain)**

**C = Consequence/Impact (1 = Negligible, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Severe)**

**R = Overall risk level - combination of Probability and Consequence (E = Extreme, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Inadequate financial planning processes/timelines</td>
<td>Extent to which countries have been given adequate training and preparation</td>
<td>Capacity building and training through sharing, twinning; use of existing cooperative structures and platforms to enhance skill base; long lead in times built in to allow for planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>EAS countries and donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Facility Model is unworkable</td>
<td>Extent to which EAS countries are satisfied with structure and location of the facility</td>
<td>Use of existing regional bodies or experienced member countries to develop options for location – physical or otherwise</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>EAS countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RFEQA does not duplicate existing assessments</td>
<td>Regional development of RFEQA tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nos of EAS countries agreeing to contribute to the design of the facility</td>
<td>Collaborative process and staged engagement used to allow for flexible design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Owner</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Regional mechanisms are not utilised effectively</td>
<td>Quality of the processes and systems used to develop and implement a facility model</td>
<td>Use of working parties to ensure adherence to exiting processes and structures; RFEQA agenda items included at peak body regional meetings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Design team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Assessment instruments are poorly designed</td>
<td>Regional assessments are useful, relevant and conducted and reported in a timely manner</td>
<td>Planning is cognisant of national assessment timelines and assessment areas agreed; implementation timeline allows for single or multiple entry points</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Design team, working party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Capacity and skill constraints in EAS countries result in regional assessment being ineffective</td>
<td>Nos of staff trained in educational measurement areas, including test development, analysis and administration Quality of tests</td>
<td>Capacity assessments undertaken; training and capacity development; phased development; regional twinning arrangements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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