

Minutes of JICA National Staff Meeting for AUN/SEED-Net

Date: Thursday 26 April, 2007
Venue: Alumni Building, Faculty of Engineering
Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Participants: 1. JICA Offices

1. Mr. Takao Toda (JICA Headquarter)
Group Director, Human Development Department
2. Ms. Seng Solady (Cambodia Office)
Program Assistant, Planning Sector
3. Ms. S.K. Rubiyati (Indonesia Office)
Program Officer
4. Ms. Shirlyna Binti Hassan (Malaysia Office)
Assistant Program Manager (South-South Cooperation)
5. Ms. Mi Mi Cho (Myanmar Office)
Program Assistant
6. Ms. Corrina Chiao Chin (Singapore Office)
Senior Secretary cum Accounts
7. Mr. Suzuki Hirofumi (Thailand Office)
Assistant Resident Representative
8. Ms. Rungsinee Chaiyakoon (Thailand Office)
Training Officer
9. Ms. Le Quynh Anh (Vietnam Office)
Assistant Program Officer

2. AUN/SEED-Net Secretariat and JICA Project Office

1. Prof. Dr. TSUTSUMI Kazuo, Chief Advisor
2. Assoc. Prof. Krisada Visavateeranon, Executive Director
3. Mr. UMEMIYA Naoki, Program Coordinator
4. Mr. YAMADA Sakae, Program Coordinator
5. Mr. IWADATE Hiroshi, Program Coordinator
6. Ms. Siriporn Rungreuangtanya, Senior Program Officer
7. Ms. Parichart Thammajinda, Senior Program Officer
8. Ms. Kalayaporn Teungfung, Senior Program Officer
9. Ms. Siriporn Loasang, Senior Program Officer

10. Ms. Rungchalai Punninda, Program Officer
11. Ms. Siriporn Settakanpitak, Program Officer
12. Ms. Vantanee Arunotai, Program Officer

Objectives:

1. To enhance the understanding of the national staff on AUN/SEED-Net activities including those of the Project second phase
2. To share information and to discuss issues on current logistic matters for the Project including arrangements for training programs in Japan and arrangements for visitors from the Project.
3. To discuss how to organize and activate the alumni network and how to collaborate with other JICA projects in each ASEAN country.

Assoc. Prof. Krisada, as a representative from AUN/SEED-Net, welcomed the national staff to the 2nd National Staff Meeting and briefly explained the background of the Project. He also emphasized the significance of cooperation from national staff to the Project.

Mr. Toda delivered a special message from JICA Headquarter to encourage all attendees to view the Project from a wider perspective and perceive its values and effects to the society. He further explained the Project was a systematic of building leadership and complex network for the sustainable development within the member countries.

I Introduction and explanation on AUN/SEED-Net Project

❖ Overview of the Project

(1) Ms. Rungchalai gave a presentation introducing concept, strategies, main activities and plan on 2nd Phase of AUN/SEED-Net Project. After that, Ms. Siriporn S. gave report to the meeting of progress of the Project including graduate programs and alumni, support programs and JFY 2007 activity schedule. (The presentations are as attached)

❖ Procedures for training programs and arrangements for AUN/SEED-Net visitors

(Presentation by Mr. Iwadate as attached)

Regarding the irregular operation of A2A3 form for Short-term Training in Japan for AUN/SEED-Net PhD Sandwich students whereas the procedure of the form occurred while students were not in their home country, the meeting received the following comments and suggestions;

- (2) Ms. Le Quynh Anh addressed that usually Vietnamese students or participants had to apply to Ministry of Plan and Investment (MPI) in person. For a smoother operation, AUN/SEED-Net should send a letter to officially inform the MPI of the situation why students could not apply by themselves.
- (3) Mr. Iwadate suggested that Dr. Nguyen Thanh-Son, vice rector of Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HCMUT) who knew well of the Project's activities and could be of help in clarifying the matters with MPI. Ms. Le Quynh Anh agreed to the suggestion and would plan to have a meeting with MPI together with representatives from HCMUT and Hanoi University of Technology (HUT)
- (4) Ms. Mi Mi Cho enquired if the A2A3 form could be prepared prior to student's departure from their home country. The rough period of visit and maximum period of stay (364 days) rather than the exact timing would be acceptable for JICA Myanmar office. The forms would be kept in JICA Myanmar office only and would not be sent to JICA Centers in Japan until finalized.
- (5) Ms. Mi Mi Cho proposed to the meeting to conduct a pre-departure orientation for students before leaving their country. The orientation was to explain students about A2A3-form procedure as well as the flow of government formalities and to enable them to prepare necessary documents prior to their departure. Mr. Yamada addressed two difficulties considering the training code and timing of their departure to Japan which was a year after having studied at hosted institution. At the moment, a student would be provided information sheet explaining the procedures and detailed instruction of how to fill in the form timely, in accordance with conditions and time required from contact person at student's home country. The national staff agreed with the method and to review the sheet and to give feedback to AUN/SEED-Net by email later on, should revision or further recommendation be added.
- (6) Information and communication for training programs with AUN/SEED-Net so far was considered satisfactory. However, it was suggested that information should be shared among national staff in respective JICA offices; namely, at host institution (HI) and student's home countries, from the beginning of the process. *(Response from AUN/SEED-Net – AUN/SEED-Net committed to share information to those JICA concerned countries as to ensure the smooth transition of documents)*

- (7) In response to Mr. Yamada's enquiry on an appropriate timing for students to submit A2A3 form in each office because currently it was varied among JICA offices (e.g. for Vietnam; 4-5 months prior to student's expected departure, Indonesia; 6 months), all attendees agreed that the forms should be submitted by students about six months before student's expected departure.
- (8) Ms. Mi Mi Cho informed that A2A3-form process at JICA office in home country was swift. However, two main factors which caused difficulties and delays could be (1) formalities with many government offices required and (2) cooperation from student's facilitator who helped out with preparing the documents. Ms. Rubi suggested six month before student's departure should be suitable to start the procedure.
- (9) Numbers of A2A3 original copies required are diverse among JICA offices (e.g. Myanmar 8 original copies, Vietnam 5, Indonesia 4). Mr. Yamada informed to the meeting that for AUN/SEED-Net the scanned copy was sufficient as it was required only to check the form and to know when the form was submitted.
- (10) Regarding the content of A2A3 form, Mr. Iwadata informed to the meeting that the form can be revised if necessary depending on the situation in each country.

❖ **Arrangements for AUN/SEED-Net Visits**

- (11) National staff showed their willingness to assist in arrangement of visits as it would keep them informed and involved with the Project's activities. However, they agreed to send the list of hotel and transportation available at hand for our reference as requested.
- (12) AUN/SEED-Net has inquired how much in advance should AUN/SEED-Net inform the schedule of visitors for JICA offices to arrange for accommodation and transportation etc.
- (Response from JICA Malaysia Office – There is no strict deadline. JICA can be flexible even for the short notice arrangement. Ms. Shirlyna also proposed to all national staff to share information on public holidays with AUN/SEED-Net so the Project could plan suitable timing of visits and send 'JIMU RENRAKU' in due time).*

II Discussion on involvement and roles of national staff in AUN/SEED-Net Project

- (13) Mr. Toya presented the result of questionnaires number 1 and 2 concerning the roles

and responsibilities of National Staff.

- (14) In response to a suggestion to assign a person in charge of Q&A about the Projects, Ms. Siriporn L. explained that all questions are always welcomed and could be sent to us via 'contact us' on our website.
- (15) For better communication, Ms. Solady suggested to implement JARCOM website format where information of responsible national staff involved in the Project should be listed on the Project's webpage providing contact and their responsibilities.
- (16) Mr. Yamada suggested communicating and sharing information through email at this stage would be quite appropriate. If any unsatisfactory results arise, it could be discussed and improved later.

III Discussion on further collaboration between JICA Offices and AUN/SEED-Net Secretariat

- (17) Ms. Parichart made a presentation as attached explaining the major findings from the questionnaires number 3-6, which concern the alumni activities, collaboration between AUN/SEED-Net and JICA projects, the collaboration among the JICA national staff, and PR activities.
- (18) JICA Cambodia, JICA Indonesia, JICA Malaysia, JICA Myanmar, JICA Philippines, and JICA Thailand proposed to include the AUN/SEED-Net alumni to their existing JICA alumni society as follows:
- Cambodia: JICA TAC – for ex-participants of training in Japan
 - Indonesia: IKA JICA – for ex-participants of training in Japan
 - Malaysia: MYJICA - for ex-participants of training in Japan
 - Myanmar: JICA Ex-Participant Alumni (Myanmar) - for ex-participants of training in Japan
 - Philippines: PHILJafa - for ex-participants of training in Japan
 - Thailand: FAAT - for ex-participants of training in Japan

(19) JICA Laos reported no existing alumni society. The alumni network for the ex-participants of training in Japan in Singapore has been dissolved due to the lack of fund. JICA Alumni Sub-Association of Vietnam (JICA-ASAV) does not include any ex-participants under Third Country Training Program (TCTP). AUN/SEED-Net graduates are

considered the ex-trainers under TCTP thus unable to be included.

(20) Ms. Parichart requested those JICA offices with the alumni activity to provide AUN/SEED-Net with detailed information explaining type of alumni activities, how to apply for a membership and other information concerned.

(21) National Staff expected for more involvement in AUN/SEED-Net activities such as in FWS, Monitoring Visits, and Orientation. A regular update on AUN/SEED-Net progress was also needed.

(22) AUN/SEED-Net public relations activities include the maintenance and update of website and publication of newsletter and brochure. Suggestions to improve the activities from National Staff include more photos on the webpage, some space to post the profile of National Staff as well as their contact information.

(23) While, the newsletters have been quarterly distributed to each JICA country office, the distribution of brochures is upon visits of AUN/SEED-Net staff to JICA office. Additional document can be supplied upon request.

❖ **Wrap-up session**

(24) Mr. Umemiya addressed the objectives of building alumni society as follows;

1. To allow alumni member to keep and expand network in and across the countries not only PhD but also Master level
2. To keep good communication with and contact of those who already know the Project well for future activities collaboration

(25) Mr. Umemiya added that the Project expected activities are not only the social gathering but preferably to be the academic seminar. The activities could be either with the existing group or independently. The national staff was asked to share the idea of possible activities and fund sources.

(26) Ms. Shirlyna addressed that the Malaysia government gave some support to UM and USM. However, for JICA activities, there were no other sources of fund apart from JICA. AUN/SEED-Net should come up with certain activities and propose to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and Economic Planning Unit (EPU). It was suggested to bring the issue to the meeting during the final evaluation visit in May.

- (27) Regarding funding for the alumni activities, it is more likely that the activities depend on fund supported by JICA and it would be difficult to receive support from government.
- (28) Ms. Rungsinee enquired the outline of AUN/SEED-Net pre-departure for PhD Sandwich students to prevent the overlapped of information given by JICA Thailand office. Mr. Yamada answered that the orientation for AUN/SEED-Net students at JICA office should be the same as for those who join other training programs in Japan.
- (29) The meeting agreed that the national staff meeting was fruitful and a good opportunity to have face-to-face communication. Regarding to the venue, Bangkok seemed to be proper as the office of Secretariat was located here. The meeting to be held in April was considered appropriate as it was the beginning of the new JFY; therefore, they could manage to attend the meeting.

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