

ACCELERATED PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

SECOND WORKSHOP ON EDUCATION SECTOR
SERVICES
22-23 MARCH 2017

*Le Meridien Hotel, Pointe aux Fleuves, Guayana
22^e and 23^e March 2017*


Contents

Introduction..... 3

Account of Proceedings 4

Discussion on Draft MOU on Education and Training..... 4

Inputs and Discussion of Action Matrix by APEI Countries..... 5

Presentation by Lead Consultant of a Harmonised Consolidated Regional Framework for implementing the recommendations agreed among member states of the APEI..... 7

Adoption of the Report..... 7

Annex I: List of Participants: 7

Annex II: Agenda of Workshop:..... 7

Annex III: Draft MoU on Education and Training in the APEI Region: 7



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1. INTRODUCTION

The second workshop on Education Sector Services took place on 22-23 March 2017 at Le Meridien Hotel, Pointe Aux Piments, Mauritius. The purpose of the workshop was to finalise the draft Memorandum of Understanding on Education Sector Services adopted by Ministers in September 2016 and to finalise a consolidated regional framework for implementing the recommendations on enhancing education sector services trade in the region.

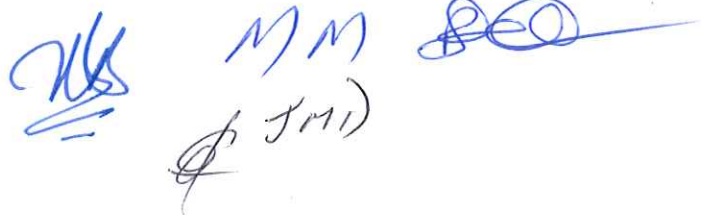
The meeting was attended by delegates and Education Sector Services Consultants from Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Zambia. The meeting was also attended by officials from the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence (RMCE). The list of participants is attached as **Annex I**.

The Chair and Lead Consultant welcomed all participants to the meeting and emphasized that the two objectives of the workshop are discussions on the MoU and obtaining views of Member States to finalise same. Each country would also present its Action Matrix

He further informed the workshop that Seychelles had observed that no specific clause regarding provision of funding is mentioned in the MoU, and that Mauritius had already provided an amended MoU. Mozambique is still having consultations in their country, Malawi has set a task force and discussions are still ongoing and Zambia will provide additional information during the workshop

Mr. K. Bhujun, Director, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research Division, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education & Scientific Research highlighted that one of the aims of the Accelerated Programme for Economic Integration has been the need to move in an accelerated manner, such that our respective countries, boosted with the best good-will and intentions, benefit from a concerted effort and grow, both through bilateral and multilateral collaborations.

He noted that a parallel APEI meeting is currently being held on the way forward to implement its first Mutual Recognition Agreement in the field of Accountancy which will pave the way for the free mobility of Professional Accountants, and also other professional grades in the near future, between our respective countries. He further pointed out that the world is now a global village and mobility, should be considered as the new norm as clearly understood by our leaders in the high level African Economic Platform meeting being currently held in Mauritius, under the aegis of the African Union which has a similar agenda to that of the APEI.



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He further stressed that this workshop will be looking into and will hopefully finalize the Memorandum of Understanding on the matter of Education which is a long standing matter. The outcome of education sector services should also be to ensure that the effort put into the teaching process produces a person who is able to deliver to the industry demand and should ensure the concept of equitable education.

He also pointed out that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research very much looks forward to the conclusions of these discussions on the MoU on Education, since it is very much a long awaited start to a formalized and structured collaboration among the APEI countries in the field of education. He concluded by wishing the meeting successful deliberations.

2. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

- 1) Opening Session
- 2) Discussion on Draft MOU on Education and Training
- 3) Inputs and Discussions of Action Matrix by APEI Countries
- 4) Presentation by Lead Consultant of a Harmonised Consolidated Regional Framework for implementing the recommendations agreed among member states of the APEI
- 5) Adoption of Report

A copy of the agenda is given at **Annex II**.

3. DISCUSSION ON DRAFT MOU ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(Agenda item 2)

Mr Bhujun presented the MoU and extensive consultations and discussions were held from Member States to reach a consensus thereof. A copy of the amended MoU is provided at **Annex III**.



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4. INPUTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF ACTION MATRIX BY APEI COUNTRIES (Agenda Item 3)

Malawi

Malawi is in the process of developing an overarching higher education Act, in addition to the existing National Council for Higher Education Act of 2013. The purpose of the new Act is to provide overall policy guidance and harmonise the regulatory framework for higher education. Malawi is also currently working on a draft national qualifications authority, aimed at regulating and standardising professional and academic qualifications.

Malawi needs to ensure that the processes of developing each of the two Acts is as consultative and participatory as possible, using the APEI MOUs and frameworks. This will make it possible for Malawi to align its education sector with the APEI framework and themes. The Malawi Action Matrix is going to give priority to the APEI MOU on trade in education services and themes.

The draft MoU on trade in education services will go through national consultative process for stakeholders' input.

Mauritius

Based on the draft MoU, a draft action matrix on trade in education sector services education for Mauritius has been prepared and will be finalised after the MoU is approved in its final version by all APEI members and after consultation with the Mauritian stakeholders. The major specific actions recommended and categorized with regards to the MOU's primary aims are described below.

Firstly, with regards to objective one which relate to the **cooperation in policy for education and training**, the following actions are proposed:

- Collaborative academic programmes, including foundation courses amongst APEI countries
- APEIs country to benefit for tuition fees at local rate
- Harmonise work permit and right to employment for students among APEI members
- Engage in bilateral and/or multilateral MoUs on academic, research and consultancy links among APEI TEIs
- Institutions undertake joint development and production of teaching and learning materials, to engage in specific bililateral MoUs between learning institutions in APEI region.
- Agree on a rationalisation of admission required and set up of the Mutual Recognition Agreement and mechanism for degree equivalence



Secondly, with respect to objective two which refers to **cooperation in higher education and training**, the following actions are recommended:

- Harmonise academic calendars through multilateral MOUs as far as possible
- Encourage research groups to set up such researchers professional associations in various fields
- Enhance cooperation among distance education institutions
- Collaborate in production of teaching and learning materials, this requires the formal agreements between institutions

Thirdly, with regards to objective three which relates to **institutional arrangements for MoU on trade in education services**, the proposed actions are:

- Setting up of the APEI national working group and a technical working group with appropriate TORs
- Collaboration between all member states to ensure a harmonised and integrated labour market information system

Mozambique

Mozambique presented information on the action matrix which it is still to be consolidated before becoming a document to be shared with other APEI Members. It is expected that before the next meeting, the Consultant will undertake consultations with concerned authorities and stakeholders in the forthcoming weeks. Mozambique observed that issues related to access to education remain one of its concern among others such as quality, cost and lack of collaboration among Tertiary Institutions.

Seychelles

Presently Seychelles has in place the essential legal framework, regulatory bodies and some key policies to address most of the issues outlined in the action matrix. The Education Act (2004 and 2017) and the Tertiary Education Act (2011) provide for access to education and training for all, including external students. However, there is the need to harmonise the laws, in particular the Employment Act (1994), the Immigration regulations and the Tertiary Education Act, to ensure equitable access to education and training as well as options for employment. Through their individual Charters education institutions are free to establish links with others regional or international institutions, including the APEI. Work is under way to develop a human resource information system, including a higher education information system as well as the establishment of a fully-fledged education management information system. Seychelles also has a comprehensive ODL policy (since 2015), but the mechanisms for its effective implementation need to be put in place.

Zambia

Presentation on Zambia's action matrix in education highlighted the following:

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1. There is already framework that allows foreign (including APEI) students to come and access higher education and training;
2. Facilitating free movement of academicians and researchers, in Zambia individual universities have MOUs but they may be need for a national framework;
3. On the issue of standardization of education and training is being facilitated by Zambia Qualification Authority and Higher Education Authority;
4. Foreign students in Zambia are not permitted to work as per immigration laws.
5. Zambia has the research and consultancy overarching body/ organ;
6. Zambia has a framework for Distance Education;
7. Zambia has an APEI National Working Group which is inactive. There is need to reactivate it and also establish a technical working group on education within the NWG

6. PRESENTATION BY LEAD CONSULTANT OF A HARMONISED CONSOLIDATED REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED AMONG MEMBER STATES OF THE APEI (Agenda Item 4)

The focus of this session was on delineating various specific measures and courses of actions which could be implemented by member countries. Measures proposed include the following:

- Offering scholarships on the basis of reciprocity
- Facilitating exchange of staff and students through the establishment of the funding mechanism similar to the fundamentals of ERAMUS+ Programme
- Creation of a network of universities among Member States
- Setting up of an Association of Academics between member States
- Implementing the SADC ODL Framework to increase collaboration between Member Countries in the area of distance education
- For better implementation of the MoU, it is proposed that Chairs of National Working Groups interact more frequently, albeit through skype or other internet means
- The Labour Market Information System be operational as soon as possible
- Countries will continue in their endeavour to foster the necessary regulatory framework to facilitate implementation of the proposed MoU

The Workshop agreed that:


- i. **APEI Countries to submit the Action Matrix within two weeks;**
- ii. **The Secretariat will send the revised MoU to all National Coordinators and Participants**
- iii. **APEI countries will consult stakeholders regarding the revised MoU and revert back with comments for finalisation within one month**

7. ADOPTION OF REPORT AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING (Agenda Item 6)

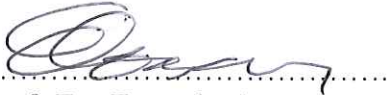
The meeting adopted its Report with amendments and thereafter signed on 23 March 2017 as reflected hereunder:



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Malawi



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