

# DAAD

## SHARE: United for Southeast Asian Higher Education



Marc Wilde (centre) with the DAAD SHARE team from Bonn and Jakarta in Kuala Lumpur

For the EU-funded Project SHARE (European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region), the turn of the year 2016/17 means half time. Since 2015, the consortium consisting of British Council, DAAD, Campus France and the Dutch partner Nuffic, as well as the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) have jointly been promoting the harmonisation of the Southeast Asian Higher Education sector – building on the experience of the European “Bologna Process”. For the four-year project ending in early 2019, the partners were entrusted with a total amount of 10 million Euros. Marc Wilde, DAAD expert for Higher Education management, talks about SHARE, explains the relevance of Quality Assurance and sketches the characteristics of cooperation with the ASEAN partners.

**Mr Wilde, SHARE is an exceptional project: no fewer than six European organisations work together closely with numerous Southeast Asian partners over a period of four years. What are your goals? And, not least, how does the cooperation work between all the parties involved?**

(EHEA), our main objective is to support our Southeast Asian partners in developing suitable tools, mechanisms and programmes for the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region. For example, there are only very few intra-regional scholarships available so far and there is no consistent credit transfer system such as the European ECTS in place. This substantially hinders student mobility and renders the comparison of degrees and study results extremely cumbersome. Also, a regional qualifications framework and a common understanding of quality assurance are yet to be fully established.

Under SHARE, there has been intense dialogue and exchange in order to drive forward the HE harmonisation process in ASEAN. In addition to the standing project management team in Jakarta, Indonesia, there continue to be regular international working group meetings, study visits, workshops and – not least – the so-called Policy Dialogues: a series of regional conferences, each focussing on one of the core objectives of SHARE. The last Policy Dialogue, organised jointly by British Council, the DAAD, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network ([AQAN \[http://share-asean.eu/2016/10/26/asean-takes-quality-assurance-of-universities-regional-with-the-launch-of-aqan/\]](http://share-asean.eu/2016/10/26/asean-takes-quality-assurance-of-universities-regional-with-the-launch-of-aqan/)), took place in October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### **What was special about the Policy Dialogue in Kuala Lumpur?**

The Policy Dialogue put in the spotlight the common understanding of Quality Assurance in the ASEAN region. Along with setting up a universal Qualifications Framework, establishing a regional framework for Quality Assurance is the DAAD's core field of responsibility in SHARE. This is why the event in Kuala Lumpur was of particular importance to us. Among the 200 delegates attending the PD were high-ranking stakeholders such as the Malaysian Minister of Higher Education Dato' Seri Idris Bin Jusoh, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee and Rebecca Hughes, Director of international Higher Education at British Council. One essential aspect of the conference was the launch of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF), developed by the network of QA agencies AQAN. This framework provides an invaluable tool to foster trust in Quality Assurance, helping to improve the mutual recognition of degrees and enhance academic mobility within the ASEAN region.

#### **Are there any particular challenges you encounter in your work in Southeast Asia?**

What makes the region unique is the multifaceted mix of countries that each bring along a different state and speed of development. The needs of the highly-developed city state Singapore for instance differ substantially from those of rather laggard countries like Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar. This diversity is certainly one of the core challenges for SHARE. Likewise, not all countries appreciate to the same extent and in the same way the benefits of harmonisation – but then, this was not necessarily (and continues to be) the case in Europe either.

#### **What do the Southeast Asian partners expect of their European counterparts?**

There is a high level of appreciation in the ASEAN region for what has been achieved in Europe through the “Bologna Process”. This does give us some valuable credit. On the other hand, we work with extremely confident Southeast Asian partners that do explicitly not expect a one-sided knowledge transfer. Simply applying European instruments to the ASEAN setting would be a misguided, vain endeavour. Thus, it is in our mutual interest to cooperate at eye level and develop solutions that take into consideration both, the European expertise as well as the structures and conditions of the Asian systems.

#### **What is it that distinguishes the DAAD as a partner in SHARE?**

The DAAD has a long track record as an active partner in Southeast Asia. In the frame of the DIES-Programme (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies), funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), we have been working together closely with the same organisations as in SHARE: the ASEAN University Network (AUN), AQAN and SEAMEO RIHED, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation office in charge

of developing the Higher Education sector. The [DIES project ASEAN-QA](http://www.asean-qa.de/) [http://www.asean-qa.de/] focuses more on capacity building, but there are important overlaps with SHARE.

In addition, the DAAD's long-standing presence in the ASEAN region is an invaluable merit. Most notably, our Regional Office in Jakarta allows us to work within the immediate proximity of the ASEAN Secretariat, the EU Delegation in charge of SHARE as well as the British Council-led Project Management Office for SHARE. Our DAAD team in the Indonesian capital maintains the important day-to-day management and communication in the consortium – and we as the staff at the DAAD headquarters in Bonn contribute our expertise and knowledge with reference to Quality Assurance and Qualifications Frameworks.

*Interview: Johannes Göbel (2 January 2017)*

#### **ADDITIONAL SOURCES**

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[SHARE: European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region](http://share-asean.eu)  
[http://share-asean.eu]

[Report "Transcontinental Cooperation"](https://www.daad.de/der-daad/daad-aktuell/en/39022-transcontinental-cooperation/) [https://www.daad.de/der-daad/daad-aktuell/en/39022-transcontinental-cooperation/]