# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ........................................................................... 3  
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................. 4  
Executive Summary ..................................................................................................... 5  
Background .................................................................................................................... 6  
About The Program ......................................................................................................... 7  
Program and Meeting Notes .......................................................................................... 9  
Day 1 (Monday, 12 February 2018) – Asian Institute of Technology .................................. 9  
Day 2 (Tuesday, 13 February 2018) – Meeting with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education and Ministry of Education ................................................................. 13  
Day 3 (Wednesday, 14 February 2018) – Kasetsart University and Chulalongkorn University ................................................................. 17  
Day 4 (Thursday, 15 February 2018) – Mahidol University ............................................ 20  
Day 5 (Friday, 16 February 2018) – AIT and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) .................................................. 24  
Day 6 (Monday, 19 February 2018) – Chiang Mai University ........................................... 27  
Major Follow-ups ........................................................................................................ 30  
Achievements and Outcomes ......................................................................................... 31  
Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 32  
ANNEXES ..................................................................................................................... 33  
Annex I - Summary Program Agenda ........................................................................... 33  
Annex II - Memorandum of Understanding Mahidol University .................................. 36  
Annex III – AIT Discount Offer .................................................................................... 43  
Annex IV – News and Events Coverage (Mentions) .................................................... 44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MoHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEDP</td>
<td>Higher Education Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>OHEC</td>
<td>Office of Higher Education Commission</td>
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<td>TICA</td>
<td>Thailand International Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>CU</td>
<td>Chulalongkorn University</td>
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<td>CMU</td>
<td>Chiang Mai University</td>
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<td>KU</td>
<td>Kasetsart University</td>
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<td>KMUTT</td>
<td>King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi</td>
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<td>MU</td>
<td>Mahidol University</td>
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<td>AULiA</td>
<td>Advanced University Leadership in Afghanistan</td>
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<td>NRPs</td>
<td>National Resource Persons</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The official trip of the MoHE delegation to Thailand would not have been possible with the valuable contributions of several individuals and institutions in Afghanistan and Thailand. MoHE and HEDP would like to acknowledge and extend their gratitude for their support and efforts and thank them for their time and contributions.

We would like to acknowledge the role of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for education; its leadership and the supportive staff. We are very grateful to many individuals, units and divisions at UNESCO. MoHE and HEDP team is thankful for all their support and commitment in assisting the MoHE delegation during the trip.

The delegation would also like to acknowledge the support and efforts of ministry of education, Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Asian Institute of Technology, Mahidol University, Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) and Chiang Mai University. We would like to extend our gratitude for the universities and partner government institutions for their hospitality and commitment. We also wish to acknowledge the supportive role of Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy (BICS) of OHEC.

Finally, we would like to thank the World Bank Higher Education Development Project Team who provided considerable support to MoHE and HEDP in supporting the long-term vision.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher education sector of Afghanistan is considered as vital contributor and growth engine for the long-term economic development of the country. Ministry of Higher Education is striving to achieve the strategic objectives of Afghanistan’ human capital needs. The ministry aims to produce a qualified pool of high level human resources, such as policy makers, professionals, managers, academics and technical experts, who are essential for economic development. The higher education system of Afghanistan has witnessed considerable development during the last sixteen years. The ground has been paved for quality higher education of tens and thousands of Afghan youths. However, Afghanistan’s higher education system still faces challenges on different fronts. Collaboration with international universities, lower academic level of public universities lecturers, and professional development of faculty members, technical human resources and administrative staff are some of the challenges.

To further improve the quality of higher education, MoHE targets to increase the number of academic staff with graduate degrees. One of the main purposes of Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) is to organize graduate degree programs in the country and abroad. In addition, preparing the ground for the doctorates of academic cadre staff is one main the objectives of MoHE. With the technical support of Higher Education Development Program (HEDP), MoHE is partnering with foreign governments and prestigious international universities to provide quality higher education opportunities for Afghan faculty members for their master degrees and PhD degrees. MoHE is closely working with partner institutions to identify and carefully select international universities where faculty academic staff will be sent to continue their education. In addition to the graduate degree programs, MoHE is also conducting a series of other activities in the area of strengthening professional development in Afghan universities, building capacity of ICT technicians, revision of curriculum, empowering quality assurance systems and enhancing the leadership and managerial capacity of public universities leadership.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and the office of Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs, Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) organized a visit to meet and partner with the high ranking national universities and government institutions of Thailand. The delegation consisting of MoHE and HEDP representatives led by the deputy minister for academic affairs, MoHE, visited Thailand from 11 – 20 February, 2018. During the official visit, The delegation conducted meetings and discussions with relevant universities and government institutions and returned with greater future prospects for fruitful future collaborations in the area of scholarships, joint research, professional development capacity building programs, ICT trainings, and technical assistance in curriculum revision and qualifications framework. The delegation visited and met with the leadership of Ministry of Education and Office of Higher Education Commission, UNESCO regional bureau for Education, Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, Mahidol University, Asian Institute of Technology, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) and Chiang Mai University. The delegation further strengthened the relationship with Asian Institute of Technology. The delegation returned to Afghanistan with concrete outcomes and achievements such as signing MoU with Mahidol University, fully funded scholarships for Afghan faculty members by KMUTT and AIT offered special 25-30% discount to MoHE for the future Afghan scholars studying at AIT. This report contains the details of the MoHE Delegation visit to Thailand in pursuit of exploring academic partnership opportunities in Thailand.
BACKGROUND

Afghan policy makers perceive higher education as a vital engine of growth and development. The Government of Afghanistan is fully aware of the strategic importance of human capital in the modern global knowledge economy. The higher education system produces the pool of high level human resources, such as policy makers, professionals, managers, academics and technical experts, who are essential for economic development. Policy makers also recognize that the contribution higher education can make to the promotion of civic values and attitudes needed for a modern, enlightened democracy, and the development of a socially cohesive nation.

The higher education system of Afghanistan has witnessed considerable development during the last sixteen years. The fundamental pillars of a better higher education system has emerged in the country and through establishment of new public and private universities and higher education institutes; the ground has been prepared for the higher education of tens and thousands of Afghan youths. However, Afghanistan’s higher education system still faces challenges on different fronts. Collaboration with international universities, Lower academic level of public universities lecturers, and professional development of faculty members, technical human resources and administrative staff are some of the challenges.

Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) as the lead institution and policy-maker in the context of the higher education is continuously working to enhance and improve the system and policies to collaborate with partner institutions to tackle and address the challenges. Currently, around 2,400 of academic lecturers employed at public universities are holding undergraduate degree as the highest level of academic education. This challenge greatly impact the quality of higher education. MoHE has identified the challenge and is working to provide long-term capacity building opportunities for the academic staff to further continue their education. To improve the quality of higher education, MoHE targets to increase the number of academic cadre staff with graduate degrees. One of the main purposes of Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) is to organize graduate degree programs in the country and abroad. In addition, preparing the ground for the doctorates of academic cadre staff is one main the objectives of MoHE. As emphasized in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan II, MoHE aims to “boosting the academic capacity and level of academic cadre staff of higher education institutions. Through the years, MoHE is continuously working to establish and strengthen collaborative relationship with foreign government and higher education institutions.”

In collaboration with Higher Education Development Program (HEDP), MoHE is partnering with foreign governments and prestigious international universities to provide quality higher education opportunities for Afghan faculty members for their master degrees and PhD degrees. HEDP is World Bank funded on-budget project supporting national higher education strategic objectives to strengthen higher education sector by expanding enrollment, improving quality, and orienting higher education to promote the future economic and social development of Afghanistan.

In order to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new partnerships with foreign government institutions and universities, MoHE with the support of HEDP, planned and visited Thailand. MoHE assigned a delegation and the delegation was led by the deputy minister for academic affairs. With the goal to explore opportunities for mutual collaboration with Thai higher education institutions and meet with Afghan scholars studying in Thailand, MoHE delegation visited and met with the Thailand Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), UNESCO regional bureau for education and six large national and high ranking universities of Thailand.
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Ministry of Higher Education, with the support of Higher Education Development Program (HEDP), is improving the qualifications and skills of university academic staff. Under HEDP, MoHE is awarding 300 scholarships to qualified faculty members to pursue their master degrees abroad and in-country. With similar efforts, the number of academic staff members who are qualified to at least Master’s Degree level will be substantially increased. The scholarships are awarded to academic staff from degree programs identified as priorities of economic development and provides special attention to support female academics. Scholarships target faculty staff of public universities and will be restricted to full-time, regularly employed faculty staff. Cost effectiveness and the quality of Master’s degree programs is strictly considered when selecting universities for study. Hence, MoHE is closely working with partner institutions to identify and carefully select universities in Asian countries where faculty academic staff will be sent to continue their education. In addition to the scholarships, MoHE is also conducting a series of other activities in the area of strengthening professional development in Afghan universities, building capacity of ICT technicians, revision of curriculum, empowering quality assurance systems and enhancing the leadership and managerial capacity of public universities leadership.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and the office of Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs, Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) organized a visit to meet and partner with the high ranking national universities of Thailand and government institutions. The delegation consisting of MoHE and HEDP representatives led by the deputy minister for academic affairs visited Thailand from 11 – 20 February, 2018. During the official visit, the delegation signed a memorandum of understanding with one of the top medical universities of Thailand, visited four national universities of Thailand, conducted academic partnership meetings and discussions with the Ministry of Education of Thailand, Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) and UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for education, and held operational and technical discussions with Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

The overall objective of the visit was to identify and partner with potential universities and partner Ministry of Education, OHEC and explore opportunities with UNESCO regional bureau. Additionally, more specific objectives of this visit were:

- Meeting and discussion with Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission to explore shared opportunities and partner with public universities;
- Meeting and discussion with UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education to collaborate on future potential areas of Afghanistan higher education sector;
- Signing MoU with Mahidol University and conducting preparatory meetings to place 2018 cohort of Afghan scholars in the fields of medicines and pharmacy;
- Strengthening partnership with Asian Institute of Technology, exploring opportunities for new degree programs in Water Engineering and Management and establishment of Joint Monitoring Team to assess the progress and address challenges of Afghan scholars studying at AIT;
- Meeting with national universities of Thailand to explore partnership opportunities for the 2018 and 2019 Masters and Ph.D. Scholarships Programs, short-term professional development programs, and technical assistance;
- Conducting discussions with national universities to explore tri-lateral partnership of edX program and short-term Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capacity building programs;
- Technical discussions with AIT team on the selection process of National Resource Persons (NRPs) - Advanced University Leadership in Afghanistan (AULiA);
Discussions and possible partnerships with Thai universities in the capacity development of the Afghan public universities Professional Development Centers (PDC) leads;
Discussions and possible partnership with Thai relevant institutions and universities for technical assistance in the area of curriculum revision.

The delegation visited relevant Thai institutions and universities, and international development partner, UNESCO, to discuss the aforementioned objectives and pave way for achieving the objectives. In general, the delegation returned with optimism and good impression from the trip. Overall, the universities, government institutions and UNESCO are supportive and reassured their commitment to provide support to Afghanistan. Ministry of Education and visited universities of Thailand committed to exploring opportunities together and to signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan. As a token of goodwill, one of the visited universities, KMUTT, committed three fully-funded scholarships for the Afghan scholars in upcoming semester intake. Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) committed 25 – 30% special discount, based on the number of students, to the Ministry of Higher Education for the future Afghan students pursuing their studies at AIT. UNESCO regional bureau reassured their commitment and in near future they will collaborate with MoHE in different areas such as qualifications framework, curriculum revision, quality assurance and accreditation, ICT in education and strengthening higher education statistical systems in Afghanistan.

MoHE with the support of HEDP, has already initiated the communication with the Thai universities for working on MoU and preparing to send the upcoming 2018 scholars cohort to these universities. The universities visited during the visit are as follow:

a. Chulalongkorn University (www.chula.ac.th)
b. Kasetsart University (www.ku.ac.th)
c. Mahidol University (www.mahidol.ac.th)
d. King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (www.kmutt.ac.th)
e. Chiang Mai University (www.cmu.ac.th)
f. Asian Institute of Technology (www.ait.ac.th)

The MoHE delegation for the visit was led by his Excellency the deputy minister for academic affairs the delegation consisted of:

1. Mr. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai (Deputy Minister Academic Affairs)
2. Mr. Noor Ahmad Darwish (Director HEDP)
3. Mr. Zubair Sediqi (Director of Academic Programs Development, MoHE)
4. Mr. Tariq Sediqi (Director of Administration and Finance, MoHE)
5. Mr. Yama Hashimi (Senior University Operations Manager, HEDP)
6. Mr. Bahadur Hellali (Senior Education and Technology Manager, HEDP)
PROGRAM AND MEETING NOTES

This section of the report covers the comprehensive meeting minutes conducted with all universities, Thai ministry of Education and UNESCO regional office. The overall objective of MoHE delegation while meeting with universities and organizations was focused on exploring opportunities for scholarships of Afghan public universities lecturers, establishing cooperative relationship with these institutions by proposing and signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), exploring opportunities in the area of collaboration for providing technical assistance in the area of ICT capacity building, professional development centers, outcome based education, student centered learning and understanding universities internal quality assurance systems and exploring trilateral cooperation with Thai universities in the area of conducting edX training in Thailand. In case of edX, any selected Thai university will provide the venue for training and reasonable conditions, MoHE will send their trainees and edX trainers will come to Thailand for the training. During the official visit, a MoU was signed with most prestigious medical university of Thailand, Mahidol University (Annex). The detailed agenda for the overall program is attached in Annex.

Day 1 (Monday, 12 February 2018) – Asian Institute of Technology

The delegation of MoHE commenced the official visit by meeting with leadership and management of Asian Institute of Technology. Currently, there are 34 Afghan faculty members pursuing their graduate studies at AIT. During the day, MoHE delegation met with the AIT vice presidents for technical discussions, AIT leadership and faculty deans, Afghan students studying at AIT and AIT Water and Engineering Management faculty. The overall objective of the visit to AIT is as follow:

- Further strengthen existing partnership to build capacity building for higher education in Afghanistan through post graduate education, targeted research of priority of Afghanistan and short trainings and workshops.
- Consult and address issues of MoHE Afghan scholars at AIT and receive progress made by the students.

Session 1: Technical Discussion with AIT Team

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) has been a good partner with Afghanistan higher education ministry since 2008 especially in engineering and technology disciplines. AIT has strong alumni network of Afghan faculty members in Afghanistan. Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan started revitalizing the relationship with AIT and signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in August 2016 and this MoU encompasses broader areas of cooperation such as degree programs and short-term professional trainings. In general, the MoU is broad-termed and as per the request of the AIT, this MoU shall be revised and more specific activities shall be added as addendum to the current MoU.

Capacity building and long-term capacity building initiative was the priority agenda of Afghanistan delegation and major focus to strengthen partnership with Thai universities. MoHE and AIT value this partnership. The
meeting continued and more in-depth technical discussions were carried with AIT leadership and management team. The overall discussions were carried in two areas; academic areas such as joint research and long-term academic and degree programs and short-term non-academic programs such as professional trainings and workshops in the area of capacity building of professional development centers lead, information and communications technology technicians and international quality assurance unit staff. In terms of long-term capacity building programs like graduate degree programs, some disciplines are not available at AIT and there are other national Thai universities that specializes in these fields. MoHE will work with the Ministry of Education of Thailand to partner with other universities in terms of long-term and short-term capacity building activities. In terms of collaboration several areas were proposed by AIT leadership and management such as joint academic research, faculty exchange with Afghan public universities and development of new degree programs in the area of Water Engineering and Management.

One of the major agendas during the visit was to understand the universities internal quality assurance units systems and processes, how curriculum design, development and revision is conducted in these universities. Overall discussions were carried with IQAU staff of each university, faculty deans and directors of excellent centers.

Specific discussions were carried in the area of degree programs intake for 2018 batch of Afghan faculty members to undertake their master degree program in AIT with the financial support of Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) and short-term information and communications technology technicians training. AIT student’s administration requested the delegation to finalize the scholars for next intake as early as possible. Since the next semester starts in August and the students may need bridging and preparation courses before the academic year commences. The scholars required to take bridging courses shall be finalized and confirmed as soon as possible and they shall commence their preparation course in June. AIT student affairs department also made a request about future students if they can bring in their families in the second semester, not the first semester. Following the discussions, we shared our requirement with AIT team about short-term technical training for ICT centers technicians.

As per the technical discussions of MoHE delegation with AIT leadership and management, the following action points were agreed upon:

- MoHE and AIT shall work together to identify and finalize the next batch of students studying in AIT before 20 March, 2018
- AIT will revise their fee structure and may consider scholarships, fellowships and/or discounts for future students coming from Afghanistan introduced by MoHE (An official letter is shared by AIT and attached in Annex III)
- AIT will submit proposals in the area of academic administration, short-term professional and non-academic capacity building programs, such as university management, leadership and administration (AULiA), information and communications technology, professional development centers’ lead training and joint research collaboration.
AIT will submit proposal for advanced ICT technicians training in mid-March 2018.

Session 2: Meeting with AIT Leadership and Faculty Deans

Following the technical meetings, the delegation met with the Asian Institute of Technology President, Vice Presidents and deans of faculties. The overall objective was to reaffirm the current partnership and explore additional potential areas such as post-graduate PhD programs. During the meeting his Excellency, the deputy minister of academic affairs, briefly explained the higher education situation in Afghanistan and six priorities of Ministry of Higher Education. The president of AIT reassured the strong commitment toward strengthening relationship with Afghan higher education ministry and establishing relationship with Afghan universities. AIT president proposed that lecturers of Afghanistan public universities can continue their studies and conduct joint research with AIT faculty members and AIT is able to provide them fellowship programs if their accommodation and travel cost is explored through different funding sources or such funds are provided by the ministry of higher education. AIT reassured their commitment towards regional integration in the area of higher education.

Session 3: Meeting with Afghan Scholars Studying at AIT

The delegation met with the students studying at AIT and consulted with them about their issues and challenges. In general, the scholars had good experience while pursuing their graduate studies. They had good access to academic resources and the university has been very supportive. However, there were some particular issues that some scholars in particular from the discipline of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) complained. The Afghan scholars shared the challenges that they have been facing in particular to academic issues in this two hour session. Scholars pursuing their graduate studies in the area of ICT shared the following challenges:

- The ICT field of studies provided at AIT is interdisciplinary and majority of the subjects are covering management-related courses and the scholars are looking for more technical courses
The faculty of Information Technology which offers the ICT graduate degree program has fewer full-time faculty members and majority of the faculty staff are part-time.

Some Afghan faculty members from the ICT discipline also shared challenges with limited support provided by the academic advisor and sometimes the selection of the topic takes longer when discussing the advisor and usually advisors recommend thesis topics in the area of telecommunications.

The Information Technology faculty of AIT does not have well-equipped ICT labs and the scholars do not get the opportunity to have practical experience.

The scholars also shared some general challenges faced such as extension of program beyond two years, covering the cost of English preparation courses and the current stipend does not cover the living cost especially when the scholars also bring along the families.

Following up the discussion with the scholars, his Excellency the deputy minister shared his experience while studying at AIT and reassured the scholars that relevant discussions will be carried with the management of AIT and within the ministry of higher education to address the issues. Following are the agreed actions based on the discussion with the Afghan scholars studying at AIT:

- The issue of program extension beyond two years for some scholars will be referred to scholarships commission of MoHE and it will be decided by the commission.
- Some ICT program related issues will be raised with AIT management.
- The cost coverage for English language preparation courses will be discussed and decided by MoHE.

Session 4: Meeting with Water Engineering and Management Faculty

The main objective of this session was to explore potential ideas on initiating water engineering and management (WEM) degree program in Afghanistan. His Excellency the deputy minister explained the dire need for such a program in the context of Afghanistan. The deputy minister proposed to have consultative meetings in Afghanistan with relevant ministries and organizations in the area of WEM. Additional, it was proposed by the deputy minister to have a trilateral partnership with AIT, MoHE and UNESCO-IHE (Institute for Higher Education) to support the new WEM degree program in Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by Afghan delegation and prominent lecturer of AIT WEM program, Prof. Mukand S. Babel and Chair of WEM program, Dr. Sangam Shreshta. In general, the idea was welcomed by the AIT team and already nine scholars from Afghanistan attended the AIT WEM program.

The vision of the deputy minister for such program was praised by the AIT WEM team and said it is a good opportunity to start working on such a program. The vision and strong leadership support and commitment is already there and AIT is willing to provide technical support to MoHE to start initiating such a program. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:
MoHE shall start consultative meetings with line ministries and institutions in Afghanistan to identify challenges.

Work together with AIT WEM to start working on the proposal for the establishment of new degree program in the area of Natural Resource Management and/or Water Engineering and Management.

Identify potential partners and donors to support the program and the proposal shall be prepared in next six months.

After finishing the meeting, the delegation visited Water Engineering and Management lab and facilities.

**Day 2 (Tuesday, 13 February 2018) – Meeting with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education and Ministry of Education**

The following day, MoHE delegation conducted high-level meetings with UNESCO Asia and Pacific regional bureau for education and another meeting with the deputy minister of ministry of education, Thailand. The overall objective of the delegation was to strengthen and establish relationship and explore future potential opportunities in the context of higher education of Afghanistan.

**Session 1: Meeting with UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education**

The first meeting of the day took place in UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education office in Bangkok. The deputy minister and the delegation was hosted by officer-in-charge, Maki Hayashikawa (on right), Secretary of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention, Libing Wang and Head of the Executive Office and Regional Programme Coordinator, Jun Morohashi. The regional bureau office of UNESCO covers the education programs for all Asia and Asia Pacific countries including Afghanistan. During the meeting, potential
ideas for future collaboration of UNESCO and Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan were discussed, in particular sustainable development goal 4 and more emphasizing on SDG 4.4. Ms. Maya Hayashikawa shared areas of collaboration in the area of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), higher education systems strengthening and developing skills across borders. The discussion also briefly covered Tokyo Convention and Afghanistan as a member state is also encouraged to take active part. UNESCO has initiated six regional conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications with the aim to promote the free movement of students and professionals across borders.

His Excellency, the deputy minister briefly talked on the priorities of Ministry of Higher Education and background context on the higher education system of Afghanistan. The deputy minister also shared future prospects of UNESCO Afghanistan office and MoHE partnership. Since, UNESCO Afghanistan office is mainly engaged in primary, secondary and literacy education. Partnership and engagement in the area of higher education of Afghanistan is highly appreciated and encouraged. The UNESCO regional bureau is supportive of this new partnership and currently a mission to Afghanistan is planned and as part of their mission, they will work together with MoHE to explore areas of collaboration.

Afghanistan has strong background in the area of higher education. However, due to conflict and decades of conflict in the country like any other sector, the higher education sector also experienced setbacks. Since 2002, revitalization of the higher education sector is one of the main agendas of Afghanistan government and it calls for the support of international partners. UNESCO regional bureau will assess current ongoing-efforts and with the consultation of MoHE, they will propose new initiatives in the area of quality. In higher education, UNESCO is working with state members in different areas and supporting development and implementation of Qualification Frameworks and integrating information and communications technology (ICT) in higher education are the major strengths of UNESCO. SDG 4.b is clearly states the support for countries like Afghanistan and UNESCO regional bureau is willing to provide assistance in achieving SDG 4.b. UNESCO regional bureau will also provide assistance in the area of qualification framework for Afghanistan and integrating ICT in the context of higher education of Afghanistan. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:

- MoHE will follow up with UNESCO regarding Tokyo Convention
- UNESCO Regional Bureau will work together with MoHE in drafting a proposal for future collaboration of UNESCO and Higher Education in Afghanistan

**Session 2: Open Discussion with the Senior Staff of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education**

Following up the first meeting with leadership of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the delegation met with the senior staff of UNESCO regional bureau for open discussion in exploring opportunities. The meeting commenced by a short presentation of UNESCO and UNESCO’s global activities. Following the presentation, the delegation and UNESCO staff had discussions on sharing experience and exploring areas of opportunities for future collaboration.
Both MoHE delegation and UNESCO senior staff shared their insights and raised different questions in the area of curriculum development, competency standard development initiatives, integrating ICT in Higher education and strengthening Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS). UNESCO has the experience of working with state members while supporting their initiatives within the scope of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNESCO worked with the government of Uzbekistan to design and implement competency-based ICT training for teachers and assisting the development of higher education statistical systems with different countries. UNESCO mainly provides technical assistance to government institutions and works together with the governmental institutions in achieving the objectives. UNESCO’s new programme is initiating, Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED), and it presents an excellent opportunity for the higher education ministry of Afghanistan to interlink the objectives to this new programme. The UNESCO Afghanistan office will get in touch with MoHE in this regard.

Figure 5 – MoHE Delegation Meeting with UNESCO Regional Office Senior Staff
Session 3: Meeting with Deputy Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand

High Excellency, the deputy minister for Academic Affairs, ministry of higher education, was received and hosted by his Excellency the deputy minister of ministry of education and the secretary general of Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Thailand. The meeting was conducted in the ministry of education of Thailand. His Excellency the deputy minister of education of Thailand, Clin. Prof. Udom Kachintorn, welcomed the delegation and provided brief overview of the higher education system in Thailand. In Thailand, the higher education sector is governed by Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), ministry of education. Following the opening remarks by Clin. Prof. Udom Kachintorn, his Excellency the deputy minister, Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, thanked the deputy minister, secretary general of OHEC and the officials of the ministry for hosting the delegation and provided brief overview of MoHE priorities and areas of collaboration in higher education with countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, and Turkey. His Excellency the deputy minister of Afghanistan focused on the long-term capacity building initiatives with Thai national universities where Afghan faculty members will pursue their graduate degrees in Thailand and the ministry of higher education of Afghanistan is looking forward to partnering with the Ministry of Education, Thailand, and Office of Higher Education Commission in academic collaboration. His Excellency, Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, added with similar partnerships we can prove to the world that higher education knows no boundaries and countries can become strong partners through higher education.

His Excellency the deputy minister, Clin. Prof. Udom Kachintorn, highly appreciated the initiative and looks forward to future collaboration with the ministry of higher education of Afghanistan. Thai national universities have their strengths in various academic areas such as Mahidol University for health sciences, Kasetsart University in Agriculture, Chulalongkorn University in Engineering, Art and Culture, KMUTT in technology and similarly Chiang Mai University in highland agriculture. The recent efforts of the Ministry of Education of Thailand invests in internationalization of Thai higher education and willing to collaborate with countries in the area of higher education. The ministry is willing to provide support and collaborate with the ministry of higher education of Afghanistan by signing a memorandum of understanding. The agreed actions of the meeting are as:

- The ministry of higher education of Afghanistan will follow up with the Ministry of Education of Thailand to draft a memorandum of understanding outlining the areas of collaboration

- The ministry of higher education of Afghanistan shall communicate with the bureau of international cooperation strategy of OHEC in terms of identifying areas of collaboration.
Day 3 (Wednesday, 14 February 2018) – Kasetsart University and Chulalongkorn University

On the third day of the official visit of MoHE delegation, visits and meetings with major public universities of Thailand were conducted. The delegation visited and meet with the leadership and management of major and autonomous universities of Thailand such as Kasetsart University, Chulalongkorn University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Chiang Mai University and Mahidol University. The main objective of the meetings were to explore partnership opportunities for the higher education of Afghanistan in the context of scholarships, joint research, professional development in the area of ICT, faculty members skills development
and quality assurance. The delegation had fruitful meetings with all the universities and all these universities were most welcoming to explore opportunities and provide assistantship. During all meetings with the universities, the delegation was accompanied by a representative of Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) to assist the delegation.

Session 1: Meeting with the President of Kasetsart University

The MoHE delegation led by his Excellency the deputy minister visited Kasetsart University. The delegation was received by Dr. Chongrak WACHRINRAT, Acting President of Kasetsart University along with Associate Professor Dr. Chamaipak TAYJASANANT, Acting Assistant to the President and Acting Director of the International Affairs Division. Kasetsart University is one of the largest comprehensive and autonomous public universities of Thailand founded in year 1943. Currently, the university has more than 70,000 student body studying in six campuses of the university and has international students from various Asian countries including Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan. The university specializes in the field of agriculture and forestry and currently leading the smart agriculture initiative of Thailand. The meeting with the leadership of Kasetsart University was focused on establishing working relationship and making connections for future collaboration between Kasetsart University and public universities in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan particularly in the field of Agriculture, Agriculture Engineering, Water Management, Irrigation Engineering, as well as training and exchange of faculty members to learn and further study in Agriculture fields at Kasetsart University. His Excellency the deputy minister thanked the university leadership for receiving the delegation and provided a brief overview of the higher education system, MoHE priorities and challenges on hand. Kasetsart University is willing to provide support to the Afghan public universities and Ministry of Higher Education. The university also suggested to explore additional opportunities in the area of scholarships with the support of Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) to sponsor the education of Afghan scholars in Thai universities.

TICA was established in 2004 by a Royal Decree to serve as a focal agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. In principle, TICA is responsible for the implementation of development cooperation programs of Thailand in neighboring countries and other regions of the world. The forms of cooperation and development programs included development projects, volunteer and expert programs, fellowships, scholarship and training programs. With support of TICA, Thailand Ministry of Education has cooperated with various countries in different countries.

The delegation also discussed areas of collaboration in international programs offering at Kasetsart University, the Professional Development Centers, as well as the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) center. The university acknowledged the recommendation of MoHE and will start working together with to initiate the MOU process as a common goal. The delegates from the Minister of Higher Education, acknowledged KU suggestions and will prepare the MoU to enter a formal agreement in the near future. Kasetsart University is willing to receive scholars from Afghanistan. MoHE and Kasetsart University will work together to come up with a draft MoU and together identify areas of collaboration. The agreed actions of the meetings are as follow:

- MoHE and Kasetsart University will work together to identify areas of collaboration and draft a Memorandum of Understanding
- MoHE will explore opportunities with TICA to sponsor the funding of Afghan scholars during their studies in Thailand.
Session 2: Visit to Kasetsart University Extension and Training Office and Computer Service Service Center (ICT Center)

Later the delegates were accompanied by representatives from the International Affairs Division to study and visit the Extension and Training Office and the Office of Computer Services of Kasetsart University. The Extension and Training Office mainly provides training services to other organizations engaged in the area of agriculture. Later, the delegation was received by the deputy director of Kasetsart University Office of Computer Services which is similar to the ICT centers of universities established by MoHE in Afghanistan public universities, Asst. Prof. Pirawat Watanapongse. The deputy director provided brief introduction about their ICT center and the role of the center.

Kasetsart University has impressive ICT infrastructure including a large data center and provides technology services to all campuses of the university. The university is connected to UNI-NET, Thailand’s Education and Research Network. MoHE delegation had discussion with the Office of Computer Services for potential partnership in future to provide technical assistance to Afghan public universities in the area of technology infrastructure and providing technical capacity building services to the ICT technicians of Afghan public universities. The agreed action for the visit is as follow:

- MoHE will follow with the Office of Computer Services, Kasetsart University, and explore area collaboration which shall be integrated in the general MoU.

Session 3: Meeting with the president of Chulalongkorn University

After visiting Kasetsart University, the delegation visited Chulalongkorn University (CU). CU is another major comprehensive university of Thailand and has 21 academic institutes and faculties and nine well-established research centers. The university was founded in year 1899. The university has around 39,000 students. The university provides more than 90 academic degree programs in English language. The delegation was received and welcomed by the president of the university, Dr. Bundhit Eau-arporn. The meeting was initiated by the opening remarks of his Excellency the deputy minister. During the remarks, the deputy minister briefly discussed the higher education system of Afghanistan, MoHE priorities and objective of the visit to Thailand and in particular visiting Chulalongkorn University.

The president of Chulalongkorn University assured and the university is willing to provide support to the higher education sector of Afghanistan. The university can provide support to the ministry of higher education in terms of human resource development and curriculum revision and development. In terms of research, the university can collaborate with Afghan public universities to conduct joint research. Dr. Bundhit Eauarporn emphasized that now Asia has strong knowledge of technology and has the resources to dig the opportunities
together through co-research funding. The university is also willing to share knowledge and experience in education quality assurance. Dr. Bundhit Eau-arporn added that the university is currently focusing more on innovative learning methodologies, innovative integration of ICT into teaching and learning and corporate research. The university has designed smart classrooms and currently using them. The university has a dedicated Learning Innovation Center (LIC) which works together with other faculties enhance and modernize the quality of teaching and learning. The university is working to develop Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and promote life-long learning MOOCs. The university has a dedicated Halal Science Research Center and it a renowned center of excellence in the region.

In the end of the discussions, his Excellency the deputy minister added that we shall establish and strengthen the partnership by drafting and signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The MoU will cover broad terms of cooperation between two organizations and all activities such as scholarships for faculty members, faculty exchange, joint research and similar other activities. The MoU shall be drafted with the cooperation of both parties. The agreed action of the meeting is as follow:

- MoHE and Chulalokngorn University will work together to identify areas of collaboration and draft a Memorandum of Understanding
- MoHE will explore opportunities with TICA to sponsor the funding of Afghan scholars during their studies in Thailand.

Session 4: Meeting with Chulalongkorn University Library Director and Visit to Library

Following the meeting with the president of Chulalongkorn University, the delegation visited the Office of Academic Resources, Chulalongkorn University Library. The delegation was received by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Amorn Petpomsom, Director of Academic Resources Center. During the visit, the delegation visited the university library and witnessed the innovative approaches of the university while delivering academic resources to students, faculty and researchers. During the meeting, the delegation discussed potential areas of collaboration with Afghan public universities libraries and the center is willing to provide technical assistance in the area of library management training.

Session 5: Meeting with Chulalongkorn University Faculty of Engineering and Visit to Faculty Library

Following the meeting with Office of Academic Resources, the delegation visited some of the facilities of Learning Innovation Center such as iSCALE (innovative student centered active learning environment) and smart classrooms. The delegation visited the faculty of engineering including the classrooms of engineering faculty, iSCALE classrooms and their new unconventional engineering library.

Day 4 (Thursday, 15 February 2018) – Mahidol University

One of the main objective of the official visit to Thailand was the signing of Memorandum of Understanding with of the top-ranking medical university of Thailand, Mahidol University, and exploring further opportunities in the medical education programs. Mahidol University is the best comprehensive universities in Thailand and Mahidol University is ranked as the number one university in Thailand by the recent QS.com Asian University Rankings 2016. The university was founded in year 1943. Mahidol University provides specialized higher education in the area of medical sciences. Signing of MoU with Mahidol University a notable achievement for the higher education of Afghanistan and presents an excellent opportunity for Afghan public universities to collaborate
with Mahidol University in enhancing the capacity of their faculty members to deliver quality higher education. During the visit to Mahidol University, the delegation visited Mahidol University library, had further technical discussions with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and visited Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University’s teaching hospital.

**Session 1: MoHE signing MoU with Mahidol University**

The day started with signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahidol University. On this occasion, Prof. Banchong Mahaisavariya, Acting President, Assoc. Prof. Nopraenue Sajjarax Dhirathiti, Acting Vice President for International Relations and Corporate Communication and representatives from Faculty of Graduate Studies welcomed Prof. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Deputy Minister Academic Affairs and the delegates from Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Afghanistan. His Excellency the deputy minister signed the MoU with the president of Mahidol University. The MoU consists of eight articles aiming to establish a mutually beneficial relationship built on academic cooperation. The MoU is broad and general and covers areas of cooperation between MoHE and Mahidol University includes, but are not limited. academic cooperation and human resource development in the form of structured study, culminating into award of Master’s and Doctoral degrees in all available disciplines at Mahidol University for the Afghan students sponsored by MoHE studying at Mahidol University. Under the currently signed MoU, MoHE and Mahidol University will work together for drafting a memorandum of agreement (MoA) for more specific programs for next two years. The copy of the MoU is attached in the Annex. Following are the agree actions:

- In the framework of the signed MoU, MoHE and Mahidol University will work together to draft a specific MoA and add it as an addendum to the MoU.

**Session 2: Technical Discussion about Global Connectivity and Quality Assurance System**

Following the signing of MoU with Mahidol University, the delegation held technical discussions with the Assoc. Prof. Nopraenue Sajjarax Dhirathiti, Acting Vice President for International Relations and Corporate Communication and her team. As part of their global connectivity mission, Mahidol University is focusing on attractive international students and offers 226 international degree programs taught in English. The university
offers double degree and joint degree programs. The university has six campuses with around 30,000 students. The university is actively participating in Erasmus+ program and has exchange programs with various European universities. The university has established a strong internal quality assurance system. For university-level and faculty level performance evaluation, they have adapted EdPEx (Education Criteria for Performance Excellence) which is based on the American National Quality Award methodology. For program-level quality assurance, they have adapted the ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) system.

Session 3: Visit to Division of Information Technology and University Library

Later, the delegation visited Division of Information Technology and studied their Information Technology structure and the services provided by the center to the university. The division of technology reports directly to the president of the university and provides comprehensive set of academic services in the area of ICT infrastructure, applications development, multimedia and ICT strategic goals setting and planning. The delegation visited the data center of the university. Following the visit to the division of information technology, the delegation had a tour of the university library. Similar to other major university, Mahidol University is member of UNI-NET and has access to international digital academic resources.

Session 4: Technical Discussion with Mahidol University Graduate Faculty Senior Staff

For technical discussions in terms of graduate studies for Afghan faculty members in Mahidol University (MU), the delegation met with the senior members and deans of graduate faculties of MU. Following a brief presentation about the graduate faculty of MU, the delegation had discussion about the different curriculums of graduate studies offered by MU, application and admission processing, fee structure of different programs, admission requirements and timeline, international student services and facilities, and scholarships for Afghan faculty members. MoHE and graduate faculty will revise the fee structure and ensure that reasonable compensation is offered for students of a larger batch. On annual basis, the university offers around 500 scholarships for national and international students and some of these scholarships are for graduate studies. The university persuaded the delegation that Afghan faculty members shall also apply to these scholarships. MoHE shall start working on sending the list of Afghan scholars who will start their graduate degree program in MU. The agreed action of the meeting is as follow:

- MoHE will work together with the Graduate Faculty to revise fee structure for Afghan scholars admitted in MU
- MoHE shall send the list of potential scholarship candidates to Mahidol University for screening and application processing
Session 5: Visit to Mahidol University Teaching Hospital - Siriraj Hospital

Following the meeting with the Graduate Faculty of MU, the delegation visited Siriraj Hospital and was received by the Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Prasit Watanapa. Dr. Watanapa welcomed the delegation and opened the session with introduction about the Siriraj Hospital and faculty of medicine. Siriraj Hospital is the teaching hospital of faculty of medicine of Mahidol University. The hospital is the oldest and largest hospital in Thailand and receives around 3,000,000 outpatient visits and around 80,000 inpatient admissions. Siriraj Hospital is a leading medical institution accredited with international standards, the Faculty of Medicine has attracted many foreign universities to share global perspectives on education, healthcare and research in the area health sciences. Additionally, the hospital has pioneered in Medical Simulation for Education and Training and has a dedicated center called SiMSET (Siriraj Medical Simulation for Education and Training). The delegation was briefed about SiMSET and its objective for future medical students. SiMSET provides professional skills for medical and healthcare personnel and students, both undergraduates and postgraduates including international training in order to improve quality of patient care and increase patient safety. The center also provides training for the trainers programs. Later, the delegation visited the classrooms of SiMSET.
Day 5 (Friday, 16 February 2018) – AIT and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)

On the fifth day of the official visit, the delegation held technical discussions with AIT relating to joint research of AIT faculties with Afghanistan public universities, advanced ICT technicians capacity building program, synthesis on the selection of National Resource Persons (NRPs) for Advanced University Leadership in Afghanistan (AULiA), and in the afternoon, the delegation visited King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). Due to shortage of time, some of the meetings were conducted in parallel where relevant members of the delegation participated.

Session 1: Advanced ICT Technicians Capacity Building Program and Joint Research

As part of the first session, two parallel meetings were conducted. Advanced ICT Technicians Capacity Building Program meeting was conducted with Dr. Surendra Shrestha, vice president for development, AIT. The second meeting about future joint research opportunities was conducted with Prof. Sivanappan Kumar, vice president for academic affairs, AIT.

Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) in collaboration with the Information Technology (IT) has developed a long-term capacity building program for the technical human resources of universities to manage and maintain universities ICT infrastructure. MoHE is investing in the ICT infrastructure of public universities and recently it has been decided that investment in the development of human resources to manage these ICT resources is affirmative. MoHE is planning to proceed with a training of trainers modality. MoHE will select qualified faculty members as the managers of ICT centers and these managers will be sent to partner institutions abroad for advanced training. A brief concept note on the technical requirement was developed and shared with AIT. During the meeting, the technical requirement were further discussed and the capabilities of AIT to provide similar training programs. After analyzing all the requirement, AIT will share a draft proposal with MoHE for review and further action. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:

- Office of the Vice President for Development will share a draft proposal on the advanced training of ICT technicians by mid-March, 2018
- Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will send the official discount letter and timelines for future activities

Session 2: Discussion on Selection of National Resource Persons (NRPs) for AULiA

In 2017, MoHE with the support of Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) started a new initiative to provide capacity building programs to the leadership and management of public universities. This program is known as Advanced University Leadership in Afghanistan (AULiA). The overall aim of the AULiA program is to boost the strategic leadership potential of senior decision-makers in key public universities in a way that the experience and skills of this highly influential talent pool can best serve the national development priorities of the country. The delivery of AULiA is based the Training of Trainers (ToT) modality where initially a large of pool of candidates are trained and based on the performance of the candidates, a small number is selected
for advanced ToT program. Upon successful completion of the ToT training, the candidates will become National Resource Persons (NRPs) and they are required to follow cascade modality of delivering trainings in their respective institutions. With the technical support and expertise of AIT, MoHE conducted the first round of training for 168 participants from all 36 public universities and higher education institutions in November 2017. During the five-day training, AIT experts delivered training and conducting post-session assessment of the participants. During the training, AIT team gather a large set of data from all the participants and based on the analysis of the data, candidates for advanced training will be shortlisted.

One of the objectives of the delegation to AIT was to discuss the selection of NRPs. AIT team had conducted, the synthesis of post-training based on the collected data and had filtered the candidates based on four filters such as participation and attendance in the workshop, teaching and relevant non-teaching experience, regional and universities representation, and subject-fields representation. AIT team also proposed detailed curriculum for the four-week advanced training program and proposed that during the advanced training, AIT team will work together with the NRPs to develop a training manual for AULiA tailored in the context of Afghanistan. Based on the filters and criteria, AIT team had shortlisted 45 candidates for the advanced training. The delegation further discussed the technical details of their selection and shared their concerns. AIT team delivered the complete package to the delegation and the final selection will be decided by MoHE.

During the session, his Excellency deputy minister expressed interest in the long-term Education Management program at AIT and if AIT is interested to be the training venue for edX training program. AIT is willing to support and cooperate in both and will draft a concept note for MoHE. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:

- MoHE to work on finalizing the list of candidates for advanced training of AULiA
- AIT will work on the concept note for education management and will be shared with MoHE by the end of March 2018
- AIT will work on the concept note for edX training venue and will be shared with MoHE by the end of March 2018.
Session 3: Meeting and Visit to King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)

KMUTT was strongly recommended by the deputy ministry of ministry of education, Thailand. KMUTT is one of Thailand’s top universities specializing in engineering and technology with good international student body from regional countries such as Indonesia, China, Cambodia and Myanmar. The meeting was arranged with support of ministry of education and OHEC. The MoHE delegation led by his Excellency the deputy minister visited KMUTT. The delegation was welcomed and received by Dr. Pornapit Darasawang, vice president for internationalization and deans from faculty of computer engineering and faculty of information technology. The meeting was commenced with the opening remarks of his Excellency the deputy minister. The deputy minister provided brief background about the higher education sector of Afghanistan, MoHE priorities and long-term capacity development program for the faculty members of Afghan public universities. His Excellency emphasized on expanding the academic and collaborative efforts with national universities of Thailand and signing of MoU with Mahidol University. Also, the visit to these universities has been very effective and expressed keen interest in collaborating with KMUTT as well. The deputy minister also added that further collaboration with Thai universities in the area of professional development would prove to be effective in the context of higher education of Afghanistan such as teaching and learning, research, collaborating in edX program and ICT short-term trainings. During the discussion, Dr. Darasawang committed to collaborate with Afghan public universities and MoHE in Afghanistan through various capacity building projects that could be arranged by KMUTT. After four days of meeting, KMUTT expressed their goodwill and offered three fully-funded scholarships to Afghanistan faculty members. Dr. Darasawang also recommended to the delegation to work together on developing funding proposals to other funding sources to sponsor scholarships.

In the end of the discussions, his Excellency the deputy minister added that we shall establish and strengthen the partnership by drafting and signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The MoU will cover broad terms of cooperation between two organizations and all activities such as scholarships for faculty members in the area of technology, collaboration in edX program and conducting short-term technical trainings in the area of ICT. It was also recommended MoHE shall start sending applications for admissions and can be processed in parallel to the MoU. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:

- MoHE and the office of international affairs of KMUTT will work together to identify areas of collaboration including short-term ICT technical trainings and draft a Memorandum of Understanding
- MoHE to follow up with KMUTT on the three KMUTT fully-funded scholarships for Afghanistan
- MoHE will explore opportunities with TICA and other funding agencies to sponsor the funding of Afghan scholars during their studies in Thailand.
Session 4: Visit to KMUTT Library

Following the meeting with the vice president of KMUTT, the delegation visited the library of KMUTT. The delegation was received by the director of the library and conducted a tour of the library. KMUTT Library is a central office administering the library and information technology to support the university’s missions in providing education, encouraging research, developing study techniques, and rendering academic services to society. The director also showcased the study and active learning area for graduate students. The university is also member of UNI-NET and has access to all international digital libraries and academic journals.

Day 6 (Monday, 19 February 2018) – Chiang Mai University

On February 17 2018, the delegation traveled to Chiang Mai province to visit Chiang Mai University. Chiang Mai University (CMU) is a public research university in northern Thailand specializing in highland agriculture, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. The university has around 36,000 student body with more than 2,600 international students. The university was established in 1964. Currently, the university is strategizing their research in food, health and aging society. The university provides in total 294 degree programs and 19 of these programs are international graduate degree programs. The university is gradually moving toward interdisciplinary degrees and the Thai government is supportive of this initiative. MoHE delegation discussed future collaboration opportunities with Chiang Mai University in providing long-term capacity buildings such as degree programs to Afghan faculty members and short-term professional development. The university is committed to providing support to MoHE.
Session 1 – Meeting with the Leadership of Chiang Mai University

MoHE delegation was welcomed and received by Associate Professor Rome Chiranukrom, Vice President for International Relations and Alumni Affairs, Chiang Mai University. Prof. Rome Chiranukrom welcomed the delegation. The meeting was attended by the faculty deans, IT director and director of quality development of CMU as well. The meeting was initiated by the opening remarks of his Excellency the deputy minister. The opening remarks of the deputy minister covered short overview of higher education system of Afghanistan including short historical background, MoHE priorities and objectives of the meeting. His Excellency the deputy minister explained the objectives of the visit which includes graduate degree programs for Afghan faculty members in CMU and short-term technical capacity building projects that could be arranged and conducted by CMU.

The vice president shared brief information about CMU and expressed university’s commitment in supporting the objectives of the visit. The vice president further added if there additional areas where MoHE further requires support and collaboration of CMU, CMU is willing to explore opportunities together such as joint research in the area of highland agriculture. The deputy minister proposed a general and broad-termed MoU which will be inclusive of majority of areas that CMU is willing to provide support. CMU is willing to work and sign MoU with MoHE as a common goal.

During the meeting, further discussions were carried about curriculum development and quality assurance system of CMU. CMU has a well-integrated system where curriculum revision, research, information and communications technology and teaching learning is part of overall quality assurance system of the university. They have adopted the modality to address their university needs. Additionally, the vice president further added how the university is investing in innovation and working on smart agriculture. The university is working to integrate technology in agriculture and the new curriculum of agriculture at CMU is more focused on integrating technology. The university is also focusing on precision agriculture and precision medicines with the integration of innovative approaches and technology such as using drones for agriculture fields monitoring and mobile phones.
Following are the agreed actions from the meeting with CMU:

- MoHE and office of the vice president for International Relations and Alumni Affairs will work together to identify areas of collaboration and draft a Memorandum of Understanding.
- MoHE to follow up with CMU on sharing the list of potential candidates for the next intake at CMU.
- MoHE together with CMU will explore opportunities with TICA and other funding agencies to sponsor the funding of Afghan scholars during their studies in Thailand.

**Session 2 – Meeting and Visit to Chiang Mai University IT Service Center (ICT Center)**

Following the meeting with the vice president of international affairs and alumni affairs, the delegation visited CMU IT Service Center (ICT Center) facility of CMU. The delegation was received by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rattasit Sukhahuta, Director of IT Service Center. Dr. Rattasit shared brief information about the ITSC of CMU. The university has a well-established ICT center providing technical and multimedia services to students, faculty members and researchers and maintaining university’s ICT infrastructure, software development needs and data center. The center also provides support to the lecturers to develop online courses. With the technical support of ITSC, the university has 1,500 online Moodle courses including 100 short courses. The center has also developed a university management system for CMU where all the processes of the university is digitized.

Following the presentation about ITSC, the delegation expressed their interest whether CMU ITSC is interested in collaborating with Afghan public universities to deliver short-term technical capacity buildings programs and establish similar systems in Afghanistan. The university is open to the idea and willing to explore the opportunities and provide support. The deputy minister inquired if ITSC is willing to provide venue for edX training? The center is willing to accommodate the trainers from edX and trainees from Afghanistan in CMU ITSC. In addition, the center is also willing to provide practical exposure to Afghan faculty members if they study computer science in CMU. The center will provide internships in ITSC so they are able to work on similar software as CMU’s university management system for their respective universities in Afghanistan. In the end of the meeting the delegation visited the facilities of ITSC at CMU. Following are the agreed actions of the meeting:

- MoHE and ITSC to explore and negotiate on the technical trainings for short-term technical trainings and shall be part of the MoU.
MAJOR FOLLOW-UPS

Based on the meetings conducted during the official visit with the organizations and universities in Thailand, following are the major follow-ups and agreed actions taken from the program and meeting notes section of this document. MoHE with the support of HEDP will follow up with the relevant institutions. For relevant the follow-ups with each university, please refer to specific session with each institutions highlight in Program and Meeting Notes section of this document.

- MoHE/HEDP to initiate communication with the Ministry of Education and Office of Higher Education Commission, Thailand, for drafting and signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
- MoHE/HEDP to communicate with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education to initiate discussions with UNESCO Kabul Office and work together in drafting a proposal for future collaboration of UNESCO and MoHE;
- MoHE/HEDP to follow up with Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) and Chiang Mai University for identifying areas of collaboration such as student exchange, joint research, scholarships, ICT, QA, curriculum revision and similar other areas, and drafting MoU with each respective university;
- In addition to the aforementioned universities, MoHE/HEDP to follow with Asian Institute of Technology and Mahidol University, to send the list of potential Afghan scholars for next semester intake in parallel to processing MoU;
- MoHE/HEDP to follow with AIT and Mahidol University to revise their fee structure and consider scholarships, fellowships and/or discounts for future students coming from Afghanistan introduced by MoHE;
- MoHE/HEDP to explore opportunities with Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) to sponsor the funding of Afghan scholars during their studies in Thailand;
- MoHE/HEDP to initiate communication with KMUTT, Chiang Mai University and AIT for discussion of trilateral partnership on edX program venue;
- MoHE/HEDP to follow-up on some challenges faced by Afghan scholar studying at AIT such as program extension beyond two years and cost coverage of English language program offered by AIT
- MoHE to work together with AIT Water Engineering and Management faculty on developing proposal for the establishment of new degree program in the area of Water Engineering and Management in Afghanistan public universities;
- MoHE/HEDP to follow up with KMUTT on the three KMUTT fully-funded scholarships for Afghanistan
ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

The delegation visited relevant Thai institutions and universities, and international development partner, UNESCO, to discuss potential areas of collaboration and to partner for future academic collaboration. The delegation returned with optimism and good impression from the trip. Overall, the universities, government institutions and UNESCO are very supportive and reassured their commitment to provide support to Afghanistan. Ministry of Education and visited universities of Thailand committed to exploring opportunities together and to signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan. The delegation had productive meetings and discussions with relevant organizations in Thailand and returned with greater future prospects for fruitful future collaborations in the area of scholarships, joint research, professional development capacity building programs, ICT trainings, and technical assistance in curriculum revision and qualifications framework.

Signing Memorandum of Understanding with Mahidol University, receiving three fully-funded scholarships from KMUTT and addressing the challenges of Afghan scholars studying at AIT are notable achievements of the delegation. Placing scholars in international medical universities has been a challenge for the higher education ministry and by signing MoU with Mahidol University, some of the challenges are addressed.

Similarly, Asian Institute of Technology offered special discount for the ministry of higher education of Afghanistan. The official letter is attached in Annex – III of this report. The special discount will enable MoHE to send more faculty members to AIT with the same amount of budget, comparing to year 2016 and 2017. This provides an excellent opportunity to further increase the number of Afghan scholars to AIT.

Meetings with various institutions in Thailand resulted in the beginning of new chapters of academic collaboration. Ministry of Higher Education is continuously striving to establish partnerships with peer foreign governments and international institutions to enhance the quality of higher education in the country. As a concrete outcome of the trip, MoHE delegation is confident that effective communication and closer collaboration with Thai government institutions and national universities will result in the availability of scholarships and opportunities in academic exchange and professional programs for Afghan faculty members and public universities.
CONCLUSION

The official visit of MoHE delegation to Thailand resulted in greater outputs and started a new chapter of collaborative efforts with the government institutions and national universities of Thailand. MoHE’s objective is to boost academic capacity and level of academic staff members of higher education institutions. Hence, MoHE is continuously working to establish and strengthen collaborative relationship with foreign government and higher education institutions. The official trip to Thailand contributes to the overall strategic objective of MoHE. With the goal to explore opportunities for mutual collaboration with Thai institutions and meet with Afghan scholars studying in Thailand, MoHE delegation visited and met with the Thailand Ministry of Education, Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), UNESCO regional bureau for education and six large national and high ranking universities of Thailand.

The trip is highly beneficial to the beneficiaries of MoHE including Afghan public universities and higher education institutions, faculty members and technical human resources. With the enthusiastic efforts of the delegation led by his Excellency the deputy minister and kind support and engagement of the Thailand universities and government institutions, the delegation returned to Afghanistan with new opportunities for the higher education of Afghanistan. Programs and visits of similar nature are highly valuable for the ministry of higher education and will support the ministry in achieving its long-term objectives. MoHE is seeking to sign partnerships and agreements with well-established universities in Asia and MoHE believes with committed efforts with these institutions, the higher education will be further strengthened.

Similarly, trips of this nature can be highly beneficial in terms of attracting financial support of international universities and government institutions. The major outcome of the MoHE delegation to Thailand includes financial support achievements. The average cost of a master degree scholarship to Thailand for MoHE costs around $30,000 and with this trip, KMUTT has already offered three fully funded scholarships to Afghan faculty members. Similarly, with AIT’s special discount offer, if MoHE decides to send a large batch of scholars to AIT then the financial cost every third/fourth student will be covered for free. The delegation would like to encourage trips of similar nature to attract potential financial and academic support from international higher education institutions.
## ANNEXES

### Annex I - Summary Program Agenda

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 February, Sunday</td>
<td>12:05pm via Emirates 384</td>
<td>Arrival of the delegates in Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>Hotel: Novotel - Sukhumvit 20</td>
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<td>12 February, Monday</td>
<td>9:30 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>Asian Institute of Technology:</strong> Technical Discussions followed by meetings with the President, Vice Presidents, School Deans and Director, Office of External Relations</td>
<td>Near Clock Tower, Administration Building, AIT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Meeting with MoHE Scholars studying at AIT</td>
<td>AIT Board Room, Administration Build.</td>
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<td>16:30 – 18:00</td>
<td>Meeting with Water Engineering and Management Faculty</td>
<td>Faculty of Water Engineering and Management</td>
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<td>13 February, Tuesday</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:30</td>
<td><strong>UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education</strong></td>
<td>UNESCO Bangkok</td>
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<td><strong>Remarks by:</strong> Mr. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Deputy Minister of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
<td>Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building, 920 Sukhumvit Road</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:30 – 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16:00 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>Ministry of Education, Thailand</strong></td>
<td>Ministry of Education, 139 Ratchadamnoen Nok Rd., Dusit, Bangkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 February,</td>
<td>10:00 – 11:00</td>
<td><strong>Kasetsart University</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Chongrak Wachrinrat, Acting President of Kasetsart University</td>
<td>Kasetsart University, Bangkean Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>14:00 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>Chulalongkorn University</strong>&lt;br&gt;Prof. Bundhit Eua-Arporn, President&lt;br&gt;Asst. Prof. Pomthong Malakul Na Ayudhaya, Vice President for Academic Affairs&lt;br&gt;Visits to the Professional Development Center (PDC), Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), Information and Communication Technology Center (ICT), Laboratories and Library within the university.</td>
<td>Chulalongkorn University Office of the President</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15 February,</td>
<td><strong>Mahidol University</strong>&lt;br&gt;MOU Signing Ceremony,&lt;br&gt;Visits to the Professional Development Center (PDC), Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), Information and Communication Technology Center (ICT), Laboratories and Library within the university.</td>
<td>Mahidol University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>09:00 – 12:00</td>
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<td>Mahidol University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Mahidol University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13:15 – 14:30</td>
<td>Meetings at the Faculty of Graduate Studies: Program directors from post-graduate programs</td>
<td>Faculty of Graduate Studies Building, Mahidol University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15:00 – 16:30</td>
<td>Visit to Siriraj Hospital</td>
<td>TBC by Mahidol Univ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 February,</td>
<td>09:00 – 10:00</td>
<td>Meetings with Vice President for Development (ICT) and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Joint Research)</td>
<td>Near Clock Tower, Administration Building, AIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Meeting on the selection of AULiA NRPs with AIT AULiA Team</td>
<td>Near Clock Tower, Administration Building, AIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>AIT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30 – 16:30</td>
<td><strong>King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)</strong> &lt;br&gt;Meeting with Vice President for Internationalization and visit to IT Center and Library &lt;br&gt;Dr. Pornapit Darasawang &lt;br&gt;<strong>Remarks by:</strong> Mr. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Deputy Minister of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
<td>KMUTT Administration Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18 Feb, Saturday/Sunday</td>
<td><strong>Travel to Chiang Mai</strong> &lt;br&gt;Morning flight TBC</td>
<td>Hotel: TBC e.g. Kantary Hotel</td>
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<td>19 February, Monday</td>
<td><strong>Chiang Mai University</strong> &lt;br&gt;Associate Professor Rome Chiranukrom &lt;br&gt;Acting Vice President for International Relations and Alumni Affairs &lt;br&gt;Meeting with Director of IQA, faculty member in field ICT, Graduate School &lt;br&gt;Visit ITSC Training Center</td>
<td>Office of the University, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai Main entrance on Huay Keaw Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 February, Tuesday</td>
<td>Half day and return to Bangkok &lt;br&gt;Visit to Thai universities and returning to Bangkok (evening)</td>
<td>TBC pending return flight options to BKK</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 February, Wednesday</td>
<td>02:00am on Emirates 371 &lt;br&gt;Early flight to Dubai</td>
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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
Mahidol University, Thailand
and
Ministry of Higher Education, Afghanistan

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is drawn up and agreed upon to establish the cooperation between the Mahidol University, 25/25 Phuttamonthon 4 Road, Salaya, Phuttamonthon, Nakhonpathom 73170, Thailand, and Ministry of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as MoHE) located at Kart-e-Char, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Introduction

Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) Afghanistan is a government agency established in 1977 with the aim to regularize, expand and develop institutions of higher education in Afghanistan. MoHE played a very important role in many areas, especially in the area of organizing and directing the higher education system. It is responsible for the training teachers for establishing a national higher education curriculum as well as special education programs, in-service training and promoting further education for university faculty members.

Based on the regulations of Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the MoU shall be signed and approved in both national languages of Afghanistan in addition to the English language version.

ARTICLE I:

Objectives of the MoU:

To establish a mutually beneficial relationship built on academic cooperation.

Areas of cooperation between the MoHE and Mahidol University include, but are not limited to, academic cooperation and human resource development in the form of structured study, culminating into award of degree of Masters and Ph.D. in all available disciplines in Mahidol University for the sponsored Afghan students by MoHE at Mahidol University, upon mutual agreement.

ARTICLE II: Forms of Cooperation:

The signing institutions agree to provide opportunity, as appropriate, for the following activities towards the completion of the objectives of this MoU.

i. Mahidol University agrees to provide the facilities in terms of infrastructure, course material, academic and administrative support for imparting of instruction to the designated students in the best possible environment for conducive teaching and...
learning process at Mahidol University leading up to successful award of Masters and PhD degrees in respective fields of study.

ii. The MoHE agrees to make available suitable sponsored students from Afghanistan for the duration of course at Mahidol University premises as per the scheduled curriculum of the institution.

There will be Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) comprising of representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and Mahidol University who will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the students.

ARTICLE III:

Scope of the MOU:

The scope of the MOU encompasses:

a. Successful conduct of Masters degree program for the period of the program for the suitable sponsored Afghan students.

b. The Contact person being mentioned in the MOU will be the sole representative of either party to represent them with both feedback and representation to each other to the JMG for consideration.

c. Students may enroll in the field of study program as provided by Mahidol University. The students' applications will be reviewed and evaluated by Mahidol University, and admission offers will be done as per Mahidol's regulations. The final list of students selected for admission will be provided by Mahidol University.

d. The students admitted to Mahidol University under this MOU will have the same rights and obligations as degree-seeking students at Mahidol University, and they will follow the norms and regulations of Mahidol University.

e. MoHE will pay the required academic fees directly to Mahidol University so that Mahidol University can act based on the agreements in the MoU. The details of the fees are provided in financial arrangement part.

f. Mahidol University will suggest the students to secure suitable housing.

g. All other expenses mentioned below shall be the direct responsibility of the MoHE concerned:

i. Travel expenses (only the first arrival and the last departure)

ii. Medical insurance required by the host institution (As per regulations of Mahidol University)

iii. Pocket allowance

iv. Visa Fees

v. Required student services fees at the host institution

vi. Books and academic supplies

vii. Administrative fee, if any

viii. Fees for English language proficiency courses

h. Mahidol University will provide assistance and coordination in conducting peer reviewing and curriculum development, capacity building programs in leadership,
academic management, and organize capacity development programs for the academic cadre of MoHE related to scientific researches.

i. Mahidol University will provide partial scholarships to the MoHE students. The amount of the scholarships provided to the students will vary based on the fees structure and program governance of each post-graduate program.

Article IV:

Responsibilities of Mahidol University:

a. Mahidol University shall enroll the graduate students introduced by MoHE who meet Mahidol University's admission requirements.

b. Organizing English language programs for the enrolled Afghan students who are in need to improve their English language proficiency. The course should enable students to develop their English language skill needed for graduate programs at Mahidol University. MoHE will bear the additional cost for English language courses.

c. To provide equal opportunity in all academic activities to Afghan students, as far as possible, as available to Mahidol students.

d. Intimate all financial liabilities to the Afghan Government at least six months in advance to facilitate the timely arrival of the funds at Mahidol University and to ensure uninterrupted sustenance of the course.

e. Provide suitable infrastructure and administrative facility to the students as far as possible within the constraints of reality in the campus.

f. Ensure respect to their ethnic, racial and religious sentiments within the constraints of reality and as per the university rules and regulations.

g. Ensure availability of recreational, sports and extracurricular facilities as available in the Campus to other students.

h. Critically and inpatient medical facility will be taken care of through medical insurance of the students, to be arranged by Mahidol University for which necessary financial outlay will be catered for by MoHE. But, it would be student's responsibility to get the claim and pay for initial payments to hospital/doctor etc. if any. Ensure OPD Medical facility at Mahidol University Health Centre during their stay in the campus as made available to other students on chargeable basis.

i. Facilitate academic counselling to the students as and when required as provided to other students of the university.

j. Ensure availability of all facilities in terms of safety, security and hygiene and sanitation to maintain good physical and mental health within the constraints of reality as made available to other students.

k. Mahidol University will make efforts to foster better understanding and relationship between Afghan and other students in Mahidol University culminating into a mutual respect for each other's national identity and pride, subject to rules and regulations of the university.

l. Mahidol University will provide progress report of each student to the MoHE (Foreign Affairs Directorate) at the end of each term/semester to monitor the academic progress of each student. The results need to be sent to following address.
Foreign.affairs.mohe@gmail.com
info@mohe.gov.af
Info.hedp@gmail.com
Ariffhedp@gmail.com

m. Mahidol will send yearly invoice to MoHE before the start of the semester. The invoices from Mahidol will include tuition fee, medical insurance fees, visa renewal fees, English language fee (if any) and other related fees.

n. Mahidol University will provide assistance and coordination in conducting peer reviewing and curriculum development, capacity building programs in leadership, academic management, and scientific researches.

Responsibilities of the MoHE:

a) MoHE to select suitable students as per eligibility (both academic and medical) as required for the specific course prescribed by Mahidol University.

b) Academically active to stay at Mahidol University for the duration of the degree completion and sustain to the environment of Mahidol University.

c) Passport / Visa / Medical Insurance and other documents required as per the Government of Thailand should be processed and cleared well in advance.

d) Should not have any background inclination in indulging in any anti-Thai activities.

e) Each student should give a bond within Thailand jurisdiction to abide by all rules and regulations pertaining to the student of Mahidol University.

f) If any student indulges in (e) & (d) above or in contrast of Mahidol University/Thailand, policy, rules & regulations, he/she is bound to be expelled from Mahidol University, prosecuted under Thai jurisdiction and may be deported back to Afghanistan. Information of the same may be provided to MoHE.

g) Should not have previous criminal convictions.

h) Ensure respect to Thai ethnic and religious sentiments.

i) Nominations, including a statement of students' academic records to date and the application forms required by Mahidol University, shall be provided via the appropriate offices by MoHE.

j) Monetary liability of the course will be deposited at Mahidol University at least six months in advance, failure to do so may result in the progress of the student’s academic and other services including residential / food etc provided by the university.

k) It will be the liability of MoHE to get clearance from various Ministries within Afghanistan to smoothen the departure process of the students.

l) Other financial liabilities incurred including fee for the back logs, reappears, tuition fee in case student does not complete the programme on time, damage to the university property, electricity usage beyond the permissible limit, charges for extra optional courses/ tours/ industry visits/ internships etc has to be borne by student.
m) If a student has to join internship in any other city that may relate to expenditure of accommodation, transportation etc that needs to be borne by student/MoHE.

n) During the internship, if any student might have to travel to the place of internship on his/her own for which expenses would be borne by MoHE/Student.

o) Expenditure for any chemical/lab equipment etc required by the student, beyond the permissible limit of the university, has to be borne by the student.

DURATION, TERMINATION, AND AMENDMENT

3.1 This MoU will be effective from the date of signing by both parties up to a period of five years and may be subjected to extensions by mutual consent of the parties in writing.

3.2 Either party may terminate this MoU by giving six months advance notice in writing to the other party.

3.3 The provisions of this MoU may be amended at any time with the mutual consent of both Parties in writing.

3.4 The amendment, termination, and expiration of this MoU will not affect the terms of activities ongoing at the time of notification of amendment, termination, and expiration unless otherwise agreed upon between the parties.

1. Financial Arrangement:

Fee Structure of each program shall be provided by Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University.

2. Coordination Contacts:

On behalf of the Mahidol University
Dean
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Mahidol University
Thailand
Phone: +66 (0)2441 4125
Email: dean.gr@mahidol.ac.th

On behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education, Afghanistan
Directorate of Foreign Affairs and Scholarships
Ministry of Higher Education
Karate Chahtar
Kabul, Afghanistan
Phone: +93 (0) 202500324
E-mail: foreign.affairs.mohc@gmail.com
info@mohc.gov.af
3. General:

3.1 Amendments:
No alteration, variation, addition, renewal or agreed cancellation of this MOU shall be of any force or effect unless reduced to writing as an addendum to this MOU and signed by both Parties or their duly authorized signatories.

3.2 Termination of Agreement
This agreement shall be effective on and after the date of its signing by the authorized representatives of the two parties and remain in force for the period agreed upon. On the anniversary of the agreement, Mahidol University will submit a brief report indicating any imbalances in student numbers and/or other issues or programs. This agreement may be extended, with the written consent of both the parties, for a period beyond its original date of expiry. Either party may terminate this agreement any time by serving a written notice to the other party. Such termination will take effect six months from the date of the written notice.

3.3 Dispute Resolution:
The Parties agree that any disputes, disagreements, issues or complaints that may arise from the execution or interpretation of this MOU shall be resolved amicably by mutual consultation. In case such resolution is not possible, then the unresolved dispute or difference shall be referred to a committee consisting of two members from each party appointed by their Heads of the organization, and the decision of the committee shall be binding upon both the parties. Provided, however, any party aggrieved by such decision may make a further reference for setting aside or revision of the decision to the President, Mahidol University whose decision shall bind the parties finally and conclusively.

3.4 Applicable Law and Jurisdiction:
The Parties choose their addresses mentioned on the front page of this MOU as their respective domicile for purposes of any notices or legal process that may be served in terms of this MOU. All question disputes or differences arising under out of or in connection with the MOU shall be governed by Afghan and Thai Laws, both procedural and substantive and shall be subjected to exclusive jurisdiction of Courts at Thailand and Afghanistan.

3.5 Third Party Beneficiary Rights:
The parties do not intend to create in any other individual or entity the status of a third party beneficiary, and this MOU shall not be construed so as to create such status. The rights, duties and obligations contained in this MOU shall operate only between the parties to this MOU. The provisions of this MOU are intended only to assist the parties in determining and performing their obligations under this MOU. The parties to this MOU intend and expressly agree that only parties signatory to this MOU shall have any legal or equitable right to seek to enforce this MOU, to seek any remedy arising out
of a party’s performance or failure to perform any term or condition of this MOU, or to bring an action for the breach of this MOU.

3.6 Participation in Similar Activities:
This MOU in no way restricts the parties from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

4. Special Note
This MoU is pending for amendment within THREE (3) months from the date of signing and shall be agreed with mutual consent of both parties.

5. Signatures
In witness whereof, the parties to this MOU through their duly authorized representatives have executed this MOU on the days and dates set out below, and certify that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions of this MOU as set forth herein. This MOU is effective from the date of the signature last affixed to this page.

Duly authorized to sign on behalf of
(The MoHE of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)

Prof. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai
Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs
Date 15 Feb 2018

Duly authorized to sign on behalf of
(Mahidol University)

B. Malee
Prof. Banchong Mahaisavariya, M.D.
Acting President
Date 15 Feb 2018

Pranoo Setman
(THAMMALERT UNIVERSITY)
Acting Dean
for Prof. Patcharee Lertrit, M.D.
Dean
Date 15 Feb 2018

AS WITNESSES:

Ahmad Tarqi Sediqi
Director General
(Administration and Finance)
Date 15 Feb 2018

Khawaja Amanullah Sediqi
Director Programs
(Academic Development)
Date 15 Feb 2018

N. S. Dhirastrin
Assoc.Prof. Nopraeuen S. Dhirathiti
Acting Vice President for International Relations and Corporate Communication
Date

Snee K.
Assoc Prof Dr. Snee Kanyajit
Deputy Dean for Administrations
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Date 15 Feb 2018
Annex III – AIT Discount Offer

Subject: Visit to Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand on 12th and 16th February 2018

Your Excellency,

It was our great pleasure to welcome you and your team from the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Afghanistan to the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) on 12th and 16th February 2018 and have fruitful meetings and discussions. We trust that you had a very useful and productive visit to Thailand.

As informed earlier in my email, I am happy to inform you that Professor Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, AIT President has readily agreed to provide further discount on tuition fee and suggested that we could sign a special Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the MoHE for a minimum period of four years, to assist in the development process of Afghanistan through capacity building. The increased discount/fellowship on the credit fees, to be as follows:

For more than 25 students per year - 30% discount on tuition fee
For 20 - 24 students per year - 25% discount on tuition fee

This special offer to the Ministry of Higher Education is an exceptional one, which AIT has not provided to any institution/organization. AIT is proud to provide this additional fellowship as it would like to play its part in the capacity development of Afghanistan.

We trust that this upgraded additional fellowship can be used for the coming August 2018 intake and for the next four years.

As discussed during the meetings, I am happy to share the summary/minutes of the meetings and discussions we had on 12th and 16th February for your information and further follow up.

We look forward for the continued collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in the coming days as well.

Please accept our sincere thanks to you and all members of the delegation for their useful inputs and productive discussions during the two days.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

I remain, Your Excellency,

Yours respectfully,

Prof. S Kumar
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Cc: Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, President
Mr. Noor Ahmad Darwish, Director, HEDP

SK/sk/ss
Annex IV – News and Events Coverage (Mentions)

News Coverage by MoE, Thailand

Higher education for a peaceful Afghanistan – deputy minister outlines vision during UNESCO Bangkok visit

Feb 14, 2018

“Afghanistan once had a very good higher education system. With war and conflict, we have lost almost everything – the faculty members, the staff and the infrastructure,” said Mr. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai (above, left), Deputy Minister of Academic Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. “We’re trying to recover the position we had and make Afghanistan a peaceful and stable country. In this respect, the support and collaboration of UNESCO is very much appreciated.”

Deputy Minister Balakarzai led a delegation of six senior Afghan education officials on a visit to UNESCO Bangkok on 13 February. Their visit was part of a week-long mission in Thailand that also included meetings with Thailand’s Ministry of Education, including the Office of the Higher Education Commission and several universities in the country to discuss student and scholar mobility and collaboration.

News Coverage by UNESCO, Thailand

Link: http://bangkok.unesco.org/content/higher-education-peaceful-afghanistan-%E2%80%93-deputy-minister-outlines-vision-during-unesco
The MoU Signing Ceremony between Mahidol University and Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Afghanistan took place on Thursday 15 February 2018 at Office of the President, Salaya Campus.

On this occasion, Prof. Banchong Mahaisawariya, Acting President, Assoc. Prof. Nopraemue Sajjarax Dhroothit, Acting Vice President for International Relations and Corporate Communication and representatives from Faculty of Graduate Studies welcomed Prof. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Deputy Minister Academic Affairs and the delegates from Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Afghanistan.

News Coverage by Mahidol University, Signing MoU

Link: https://mahidol.ac.th/2018/mou-higher/
Visit to Kasetsart University

**Link:**

http://iad.intaff.ku.ac.th/wordpress/?p=12812&lang=en

Visit to Chiang Mai University (CMU)

**Link:**


Visit to CMU ITSC

**Link:**

Visit to Chulalongkorn University (CU)

Link: [http://www.chula.ac.th/th/archive/73024](http://www.chula.ac.th/th/archive/73024)

Visit to Office of Academic Resources


Visit to Siriraj Hospital


Visit to AIT