

**Development of the Competency Framework for  
Southeast Asian School Heads (2014 Edition):  
A Journey into Excellent School Leadership**

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**Abstract**

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) developed a competency framework for school heads in Southeast Asia intended to serve as a basis for designing and implementing school head learning programs. Although SEAMEO INNOTECH has developed one in 2003, a decade had passed and SEAMEO INNOTECH saw the need to update it or even develop a new one so that the framework would continue to be relevant in providing guidance to school heads and in complementing existing competency frameworks developed by the governments of the countries in SEA. Towards this goal, SEAMEO INNOTECH conducted focus group discussions and consultative workshops using the Appreciative Inquiry approach in nine out of 11 SEAMEO member countries participated by a total of 225 school heads and stakeholders. The goal was to capture school head competencies common among high-performing school leaders and managers in the region. The use of AI as an approach brought the school heads and stakeholders back to a journey in time when they were at their best in leading the school towards high performance. The same approach enabled them to determine what competencies they wish excellent school heads would continue to demonstrate to keep the schools moving forward successfully. The output was a revised Competency Framework comprised of five competency domains, 16 general competencies, 42 enabling competencies, and 170 indicators. The five general competencies were ranked by the participants in terms of their importance, frequency of performance, and amount of training school heads would need the most as follows: (1) Strategic Thinking and Innovation, (2) Managerial Leadership, (3) Instructional Leadership, (4) Personal Excellence, (5) Stakeholder Engagement.

*Keywords:* competency framework, DACUM, appreciative inquiry, SEOMEIO INNOTECH

### **Introduction**

SEAMEO INNOTECH developed its first Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads in 2003 in a five (5) day DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) workshop. Since then, it has served as a basis for training programs and instructional materials developed for school leaders and managers in Southeast Asia. The first competency framework consisted of twelve (12) Major Competency Strands with a hundred and six (106) Enabling Competencies. The following were identified as the Major Competency Strands:

1. Developing personal effectiveness
2. Planning school-based programs and projects
3. Leading curricular and instructional processes
4. Developing human resource
5. Creating the learning environment
6. Managing physical facilities
7. Managing financial/fiscal resources
8. Monitoring and evaluating school performance
9. Developing school and community relations
10. Managing information
11. Managing research and development,
12. Leading and managing change.

Two additional strands were added to the Competency Framework following the same modified DACUM process. In 2005, Strand M, *Promoting and exercising a culture of peace and respect for cultural diversity* was added and Strand N, *Promoting an understanding of Southeast Asia community*, was added in 2010 (*Appendix A, Competency Framework for SEA School Heads v 2010*).

Ten years have passed since the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads was developed. Recognizing the need to see if the Framework still addresses the competency requirements of school leaders in Southeast Asia, the SEAMEO INNOTECH Governing Board in its 56<sup>th</sup> meeting approved the Review and Validation of the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads. The project aimed to review and update SEAMEO INNOTECH's Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads by holding consultative workshops with school heads and different school stakeholders from SEAMEO-member countries. The expected output was an updated Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads.

### **Research Method**

In reviewing and updating the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads 2003 version, two major activities were conducted: focus group discussions in nine (9) SEAMEO-member countries and two (2) regional workshops for the finalization of the competency framework.

## **I. Focus Group Discussion Process using the Appreciative Inquiry Approach**

Focus group discussions (FGDs) using the appreciative inquiry approach were conducted in nine (9) SEAMEO-member countries for six months. Appreciative inquiry is “the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.” (Cooperrider, D.L, Whitney, D., and Stavros, J. M., 2003).

### **Focus Group Discussion Participants**

The participants included 117 school heads and 108 stakeholders from nine SEAMEO-member countries. Stakeholders consisted of teachers, students, parents, and education experts.

Table 1.  
*Distribution of FGD Participants*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of School Heads</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Brunei Darussalam	12	12
Cambodia	12	12
Indonesia	8	13
Lao PDR	12	16
Malaysia	10	12
Philippines	36	16
Singapore	3	4
Thailand	10	12
Vietnam	14	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>225</b>	

### **Focus Group Discussion Sessions with School Heads**

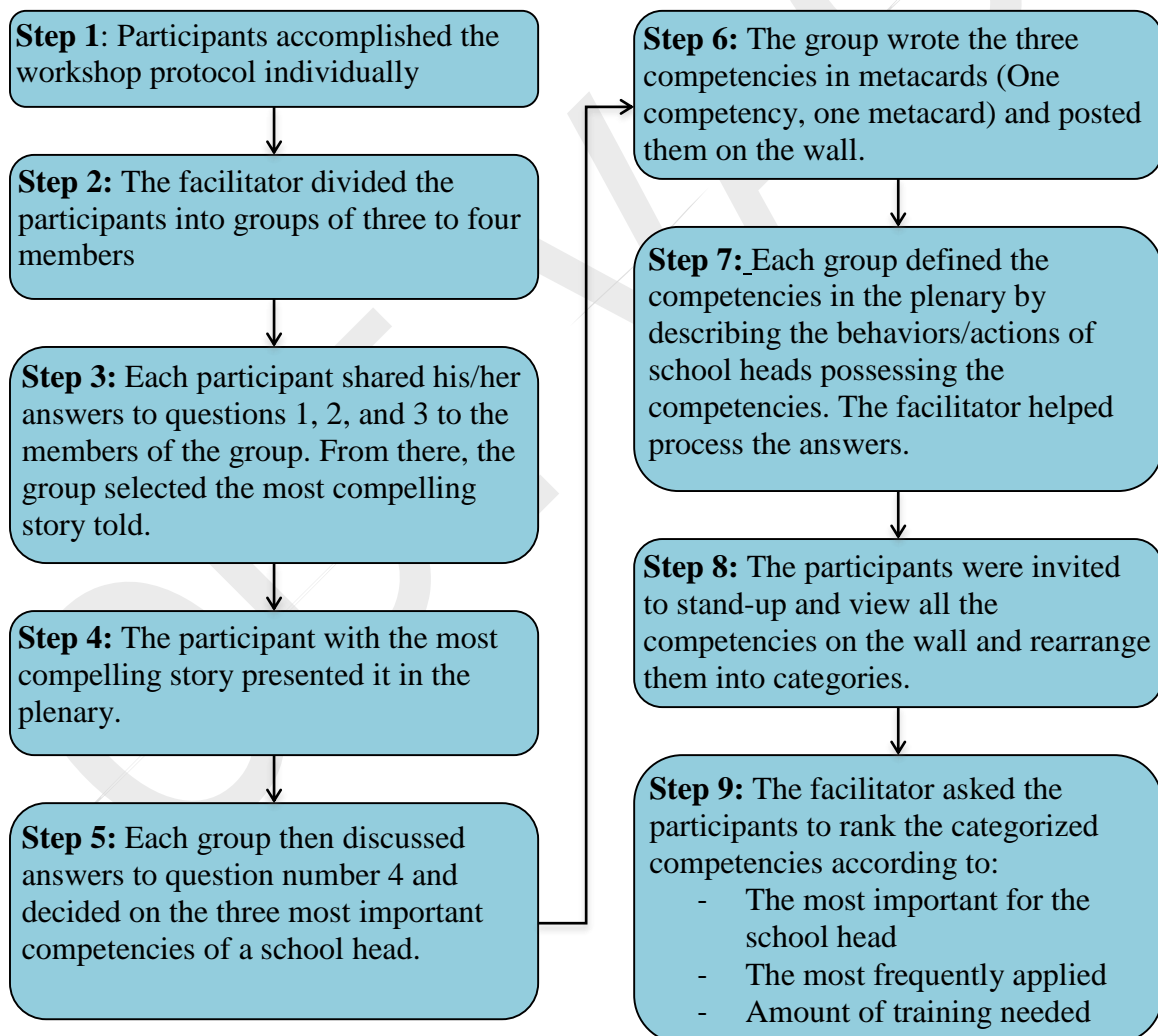
Since the focus of the research and development project was the competencies of excellent school heads, it was deemed most appropriate to adopt an approach that would highlight their positive core and look at their roles and responsibilities positively so that challenges are perceived not as setbacks but as opportunities to become better and stronger. This approach was Appreciative Inquiry (AI). During the FGDs using the AI approach, the school heads shared their stories and peak experiences as high performing school leaders. In answering the guide questions that delved on what inspired them to be educators and then school heads, and what their most successful and energizing moments were as leaders, the participants travelled back to the best times of their lives in their profession. Sharing their stories with the other participants energized them even more as they heard the others' own peak moment stories. From all the stories narrated, participants identified the competencies of an excellent school head in their country that are essential for the successful and effective performance of functions in the school.

### Focus Group Discussion Sessions with School Stakeholders

The focus group discussion with the school stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, and education experts) also applied the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach. The FGD protocol enabled the stakeholders to share their stories and peak experiences working with excellent school leaders. Hearing the other participants' stories of high performing school heads energized them to continue supporting school heads and their improvement initiatives.

From all the stories narrated, the stakeholders identified the competencies of an excellent school head in their respective country.

The focus group discussion process with the school heads and the stakeholders consisted of the following steps:



## Instruments

Two protocols were used to draw out the participants' stories and experiences: a protocol for the school heads and another one for the stakeholders consisting of teachers, students, parents, and education experts. The workshop questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions intended to discover the school heads' peak moments and the competencies that made them possible (See *Appendix: FGD protocols*).

## Focus Group Discussion Outputs

The FGDs conducted resulted in Competency Lists for each country visited reflecting the competencies that school heads and stakeholders deem as the most important for school heads in their respective countries.

## II. Regional Workshops

### Regional Workshop 1 (October 25, 2012)

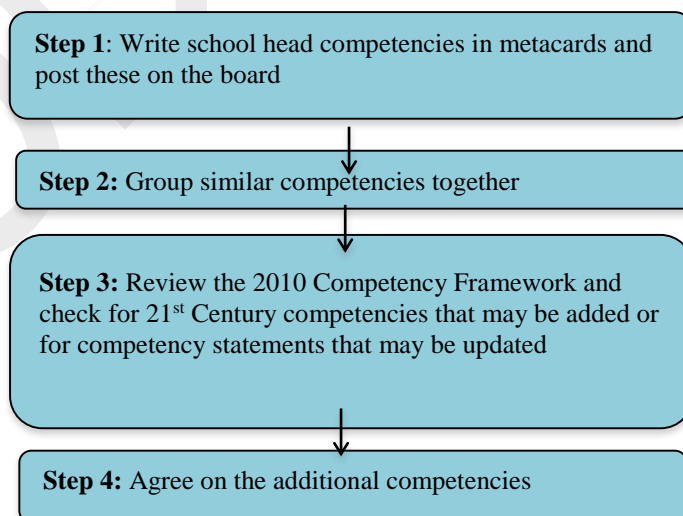
#### Participants

The participants were nine Ministry of Education officials and nine school heads from SEAMEO-member countries.

#### Regional Workshop Process

Prior to the focus group discussions conducted in the SEAMEO-member countries, a regional workshop was conducted in October 2012 at the SEAMEO INNOTECH Campus for the purpose of reviewing the 2003 Competency Framework for Southeast Asian Heads and updating it.

The participants followed the given steps:



The result of this workshop was the updating of three general competency strands and seven Sub-enabling Competencies where the participants added words to make the statements reflect 21<sup>st</sup> Century competencies.

### Regional Workshop 2 (September 18 – 20, 2013)

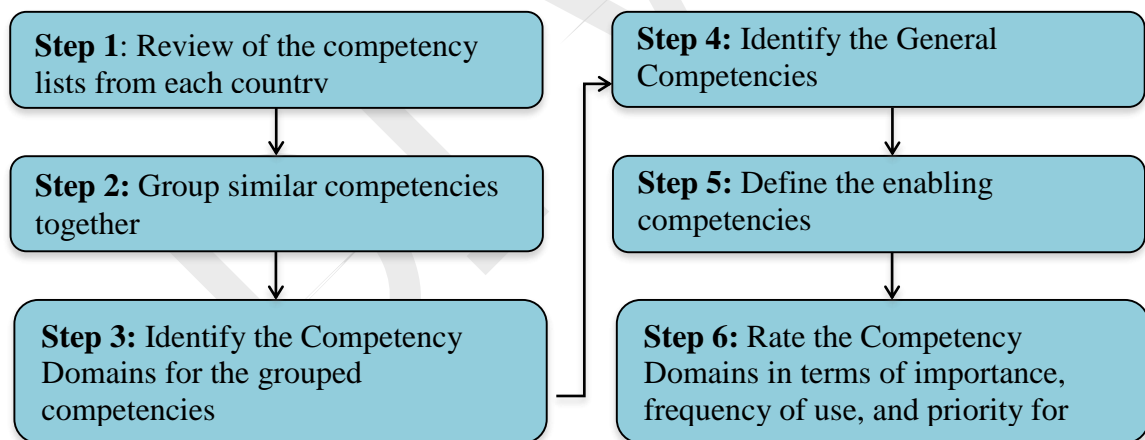
A regional workshop was conducted after the focus group discussions implemented in nine (9) SEAMEO-member countries. The purpose was to produce the final draft of the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads based on the FGD outputs. The conduct of a second regional workshop was prompted by the relatively limited amount of updating introduced to the 2003 Competency Framework in October 2012 amid the backdrop of global changes impinging on education.

### Participants

The participants included nine school heads and one Ministry of Education Official who have previously participated in the focus group discussion sessions in the different countries.

### Regional Workshop Process

The workshop process followed the following steps:



### Workshop Output

The workshop output was the first draft of the revised Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads. This draft of the new framework consisted of seven competency domains, 21 general competency areas, and 78 enabling competencies represented as a competency wheel.

The new framework was presented to SEAMEO INNOTECH's Governing Board (GB) Members during a GB Meeting in October 2013. The GB Members suggested the reduction of the framework from seven to five or less competency domains.

Based on the GB Members' suggestion, a team comprised of SEAMEO INNOTECH officials and partners that have worked with the workshop participants in making sense of data from the in-country FGDs and consultations, addressed the GB's recommendations by rethinking the seven competency domains and reclassifying some closely related domains together in order to come up with five. The team also made improvements on the general competencies and enabling competencies, and stated the Competency Indicators to define the enabling competencies.

The revised new framework was sent to the GB Members through email and courier service for feedback and approval. They were also requested to rate the General and Enabling Competencies in terms of:

- Importance to the school heads in the performance of their jobs
- Frequency of performance, and
- Amount of training school heads would need in order to achieve the competencies

SEAMEO INNOTECH received further feedback and recommendations from the GB prompting additional revisions to the framework. The revised framework was sent back to the GB for approval. In July 2014, the GB Members from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand approved the Framework. Below is the final and approved Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads (2014 Edition). The complete table of the five competency domains, 16 general competencies, 42 enabling competencies and 170 indicators can be found on the next pages, as well as a table presenting the GB Members' ratings of the competencies.

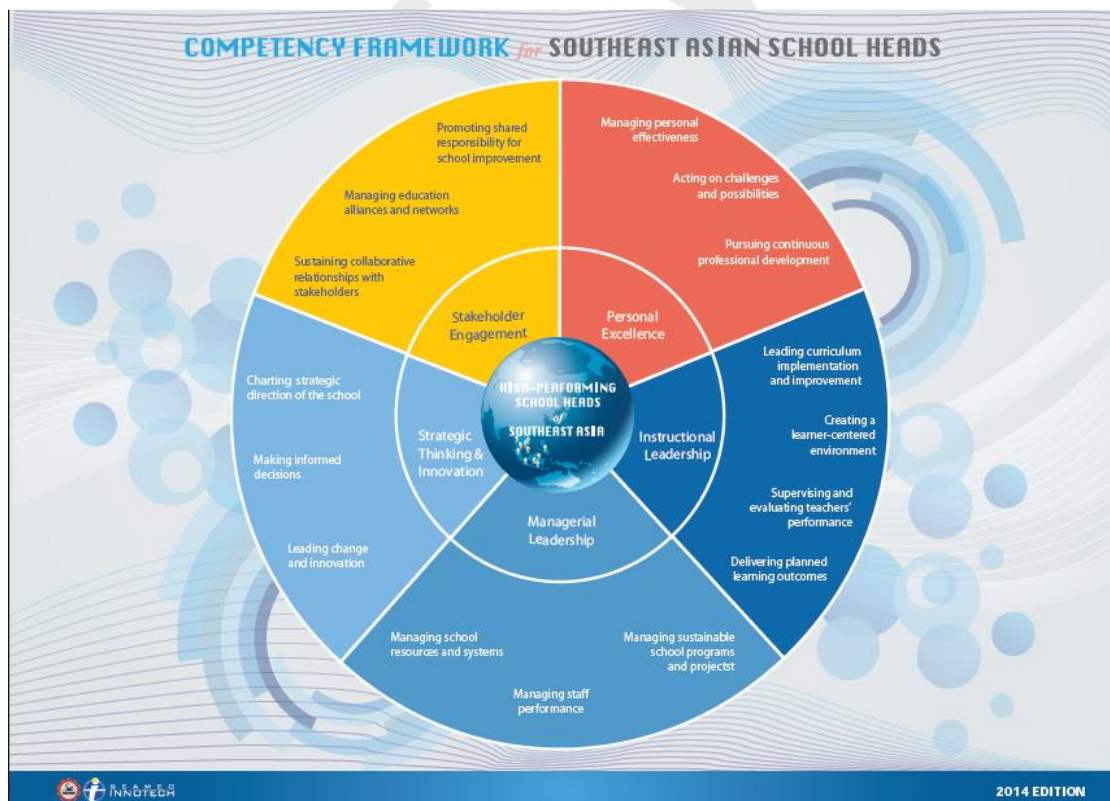


Figure 1. The Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads

Table 2.

*Domain: Strategic Thinking and Innovation (STI)*

Under the domain Strategic Thinking and Innovation (STI), the school head should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>1. (STI) Charting the strategic direction of the school</b>	1.1. Works with the school and community stakeholders in developing the strategic plan	1.1.1. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding in strategic planning process 1.1.2. Builds constituency in reviewing, creating and implementing the vision, mission, values and goals and translates these into agreed objectives and operational plan that promote and sustain school improvement 1.1.3. Ensures that the strategic plan promotes inclusion, diversity of learners, and values and experiences of the school community 1.1.4. Ensures that the strategic plan contributes to school effectiveness and continuous improvement of learners performance 1.1.5. Provides ongoing and effective communication for stakeholders to own the plan and carry it forward
	1.2. Leads in the implementation of the strategic plan	2.1.1 Delegates effectively to achieve objectives set in the plan 2.1.2 Promotes creativity, innovation and the use of technology in the implementation of the plan 2.1.3 Ensures that human, material and financial resources are made available when needed



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VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 JANUARY - JUNE 2015**

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
		2.1.4 Manages the monitoring and evaluation of plan implementation and utilizes results for improvement
	1.3. Demonstrates the vision and models the values in everyday work and practice	2.1.5 Ensures that decision-making and implementation strategies are based on a shared vision and understanding of the school culture 2.1.6 Works with stakeholders to create shared values and positive school culture 2.1.7 Holds self and the school staff accountable for aligning actions and words to the school vision and values
<b>2. (STI) Making informed decisions</b>	2.1. Uses a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve the strategic plan	2.1.8 Leads in identifying and gathering useful sources of information and utilizing additional information 2.1.9 Analyzes multiple forms of data/information and uses the findings for strategic planning 2.1.10 Synthesizes complex and diverse data and creates systems for engaging stakeholders in data discussions 2.1.11 Ensures that adequate and relevant data are available to influence school staff to improve practice
	2.2. Practices regular review of plan/program implementation and utilizes results in addressing implementation concerns and issues	2.2.1 Leads in gathering multiple data in plan implementation and utilizes these in appropriate situations 2.2.2 Analyzes a wide range of data to determine progress towards achieving goals and objectives of the plan

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
		<p>2.2.3 Resolves problems in early stages of plan implementation and develops realistic alternative solutions</p> <p>2.2.4 Assesses the importance, urgency and risk associated with each component of the school plan and takes actions which are timely and in the best interests of the school</p>
<p><b>3. (STI) Leading change and innovation</b></p>	<p>3.1. Leads change process toward the development and implementation of new approaches, systems, and structures</p>	<p>3.1.1 Assesses local, national and global challenges and trends in education and their implications for the school</p> <p>3.1.2 Maintains open mind to ideas to reach creative solutions to problems in education</p> <p>3.1.3 Assesses forces that promote and inhibit change and innovation and utilizes results</p> <p>3.1.4 Facilitates change and promotes innovation consistent with current and future school community needs</p> <p>3.1.5 Empowers and supports school staff to design programs for change and innovation that demonstrate problem-solving and creative learning process</p> <p>3.1.6 Leads the school in responding to uncertain and ambiguous environments</p>
	<p>3.2. Sustains creativity and innovations in the school programs to achieve higher learning outcomes</p>	<p>3.2.1 Fosters collegial movement to sustain creativity and innovation</p> <p>3.2.2 Recognizes and rewards those who initiates and</p>

General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
		sustain change and innovation 3.2.3 Demonstrates willingness to act against the way things have traditionally been done when tradition impedes change and innovation for performance improvement 3.2.4 Evaluates impact of change and innovations on current and future scenario 3.2.5 Facilitates institutionalization of change and innovation

Table 3.  
 Domain: *Managerial Leadership (ML)*

Under the domain of managerial leadership (ML), the school head should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
<b>1. (ML) Managing school resources and systems</b>	1.1. Manages financial resources	1.1.1 Conducts budget planning in relation to overall school improvement plan
		1.1.2 Accesses and mobilizes financial resources for the school
		1.1.3 Manages budget with flexibility and uses funds judiciously within overall budget
		1.1.4 Accounts for school funds and expenditures
	1.2. Manages the learning environments	1.2.1 Assesses and matches facilities and equipment with program needs
		1.2.2 Designs physical and facilities improvement plan into the school plan
		1.2.3 Allocates funds for improvement and maintenance of school physical facilities
		1.2.4 Supervises facilities and equipment management to ensure a safe and conducive learning environment

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
	1.3 Manages systems and procedures	1.3.1 Establishes and maintains management systems that promote learning, collaboration, and communication throughout the school 1.3.2 Implements systems and processes to ensure effective operations that support student Learning 1.3.3 Evaluates and improves systems and processes to attain learning outcomes 1.3.4 Promotes the use of technology for effective school management and networking
<b>2. (ML) Managing staff performance</b>	2.1 Manages school personnel requirements	2.1.1 Aligns staffing decisions with the vision and mission of the school 2.1.2 Uses data of effective teaching as the primary factor in recruitment, hiring, assignment and promotion decisions 2.1.3 Builds relationships in the profession to select talented, highly qualified staff 2.1.4 Builds a strong network of professional connections to complement existing school personnel 2.1.5 Conducts teachers' performance appraisal
	2.2 Supports professional development of staff	2.2.1 Creates a school culture where teachers collaborate, learn from each other, and grow professionally 2.2.2 Plans and develops research-based professional learning to support the individual needs of staff 2.2.3 Uses a range of professional development strategies to facilitate the professional growth of staff 2.2.4 Designs, implements, and evaluates a coaching and mentoring program for effective job performance 2.2.5 Develops capacity of staff to reflect on their own practice

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
	2.3 Recognizes staff performance	2.3.1 Provides clear expectations for staff performance 2.3.2 Ensures that staff take responsibility in improving one's performance 2.3.3 Provides appropriate incentives to performing staff 2.3.4 Takes appropriate personnel action for non-performing staff
<b>3. (ML) Managing sustainable school programs and projects</b>	3.1 Demonstrates programs and project management skills	3.1.1 Leads in formulating plan of action for programs and projects 3.1.2 Ensures that programs and projects support student performance 3.1.3 Supervises and evaluates programs and project implementation
	3.2 Promotes school-based programs and projects that support sustainable development	3.2.1 Demonstrates understanding of education for sustainable development 3.2.2 Collaborates with local, national, regional and international partners that support education for sustainable development 3.2.3 Engages the community in creating a safe, healthy, resilient and learner-centered environment 3.2.4 Develops and coordinates programs and projects that support sustainable development

Table 4.

*Domain: Instructional Leadership (IL)*

:General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
<b>1. (IL) Leading curriculum implementation and improvement</b>	1.1. Manages curriculum implementation	1.1.1 Reviews, enriches, and contextualizes curriculum, programs, and learning resources 1.1.2 Directs curriculum implementation 1.1.3 Organizes regular learning sessions on curriculum implementation and improvement 1.1.4 Initiates co- and extra-curricular activities that support curriculum implementation
	1.2 Promotes sensitivity of diversity and differentiated instruction	1.2.1 Ensures that teachers consider diversity in planning and delivering differentiated instruction 1.2.2 Sustains initiatives that incorporate respect for diversity

:General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
<b>2 (II) Creating a learner-centered environment</b>	2.1 Promotes learner-centered activities	2.1.1 Collaborates with teachers in analyzing student work to address learning needs 2.1.2 Provides a comfortable, stimulating learning environment that meets learners' holistic development physical, social-emotional, intellectual, and recreational needs 2.1.3 Ensures that teachers promote life-long and self-directed learning 2.1.4 Encourages teachers to utilize collaborative and effective teaching-learning activities and pedagogy
	2.2 Promotes a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment	2.2.1 Ensures that school facilities and learning resources are accessible to all learners 2.2.2 Maintains a school environment that is safe, clean, and hazard-free 2.2.3 Puts in place a system for disaster

:General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
		mitigation and resiliency 2.2.4 Assesses impact of school environment to students' learning outcomes
	2.3 Promotes a culture of peace and respect for diversity	2.3.1 Implements school policies that promote peace and respect for diversity 2.3.2 Ensures that peace education and respect for cultural diversity are embedded in the curriculum 2.3.3 Fosters the development of peace champions among students and teachers
<b>3 (II) Supervising and evaluating teachers' performance</b>	3.1 Applies appropriate models for supervision and evaluation	3.1.1 Demonstrates knowledge and understanding on current and future trends in supervision 3.1.2 Develops, implements, and evaluates an instructional supervisory plan 3.1.3 Evaluates teachers' work-in-practice and provides actionable feedback



:General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
		3.1.4 Focuses on instructional results 3.1.5 Uses technology and multiple sources of data to improve supervisory practice
	3.2 Nurtures teacher-leaders	3.2.1 Recognizes potential leaders and facilitates their development 3.2.2 Ensures that key leadership functions are delegated 3.2.3 Creates a school climate that sustains leadership among teachers 3.2.4 Influences others to be education leaders and advocates
<b>4. (IL) Delivering planned learning outcomes</b>	4.1. Promotes team-based approaches to instructional leadership	4.1.1 Creates a highly effective team that enhances school performance and promotes a professional learning community 4.1.2 Empowers teachers to share their best work and learn from each other

<b>:General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
		4.1.3 Supports team initiatives 4.1.4 Monitors and evaluates team effectiveness
	4.2. Manages assessment to improve teaching and learning	4.2.1 Ensures that standards and goals related to student assessment are communicated to stakeholders 4.2.2 Aligns teacher's instructional plan with the school standards and goals 4.2.3 Ensures regular integration of appropriate assessment in classroom instruction 4.2.4 Uses learner's assessment results for decision-making

Table 5.  
*Domain: Personal Excellence (PE)*

Under the domain of personal excellence, the school head should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>1. (PE) Managing personal effectiveness</b>	1.1. Leads by example	1.1.1 Demonstrates a strong belief that all children can learn 1.1.2 Expresses and models professional ethics and moral leadership 1.1.3 Address areas for self-improvement

General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
		1.1.4 Influences the school population to follow own example
	1.2. Demonstrates transparency and accountability	1.2.1 Informs stakeholders of own responsibilities and reports results 1.2.2 Sets a system of checks and avenues for feedback and communicates with stakeholders to account for one's work 1.2.3 Holds oneself accountable for personal and organizational setbacks and shares learning points
	1.3. Practices a balanced healthy lifestyle	1.3.1 Engages in physical and mental exercise complemented with healthy diet and adequate rest 1.3.2 Adapts and adjusts to pressures 1.3.3 Demonstrates a high level of emotional intelligence in dealing with others 1.3.4 Practices self-reflection and self-discipline
	1.4. Takes pride in one's profession	1.4.1 Shows passion in demonstrating one's profession

General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
		1.4.2 Demonstrates self-confidence, hope and resiliency 1.4.3 Demonstrates the ability to accomplish tasks
	1.5. Delivers results	1.5.1 Aligns personal goals with organizational goals 1.5.2 Sets targets and implements measures to achieve personal and organizational goals 1.5.3 Stays focused on achieving personal goals and objectives 1.5.4 Takes calculated risk 1.5.5 Influences others to contribute to achievement of organizational goals
<b>2. (PE) Acting on challenges and possibilities</b>	2.1. Manages priorities	2.1.1 Demonstrates understanding of what's important, what's not and what should be worked on 2.1.2 Focuses attention on critical tasks and manages conflicting demands 2.1.3 Uses effective time management techniques and always aware of timeline

General Competency	Enabling Competency	Indicator
	2.2. Exhibits decisiveness in addressing challenges	2.2.1 Exercises sound judgment based on facts, experience and functional knowledge 2.2.2 Demonstrates the ability to make timely and effective decisions based on prescribed national policies, appropriate tools and processes 2.2.3 Takes responsibility for decisions made
	2.3. Exhibits an enterprising attitude	2.3.1 Demonstrates optimism and positive thinking 2.3.2 Supports enterprising activities of teachers and students 2.3.3 Coordinates across and within organizations to support enterprising activities

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>3. (PE) Pursuing continuous professional development</b>	3.1. Takes responsibility for lifelong learning	3.1.1 Maintains curiosity and interest in current and future trends 3.1.2 Gains the prescribed professional qualifications and competencies 3.1.3 Seeks a mentor who gives feedback and provides lifelong leadership and development support 3.1.4 Engages in self-learning through ICT and other multimedia resources 3.1.5 Participates in learning activities sponsored by institutions and organizations that impact education 3.1.6 Develops a personal and professional learning network
	3.2 Advocates for the ASEAN integration	3.2.1 Demonstrates understanding of the rationale behind the ASEAN framework 3.2.2 Promotes multicultural understanding and respect for diversity 3.2.3 Develops skills in using a language that connects the ASEAN integration

Table 6.

*Domain: Stakeholder Engagement (SE)*

Under the domain of stakeholder engagement (SE), the school head should be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

<b>General Competency</b>	<b>Enabling Competency</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>1. (SE) Promoting shared responsibility for school improvement</b>	1.1. Builds trust and leads teams / communities for school improvement	1.1.1 Understands the school community within the socio-political context of the broader community 1.1.2 Sets expectations, roles and responsibilities of the school and the community in providing quality education 1.1.3 Promotes teambuilding and creates synergy among parents and community members to support school initiatives 1.1.4 Conducts regular socio-cultural events involving school stakeholders 1.1.5 Instills a sense of ownership of school programs and projects 1.1.6 Engages stakeholders in school governance structure
	1.2. Empowers the community to work for enhancement of school performance	1.2.1 Provides opportunities to parents and community members for knowledge sharing 1.2.2 Engages stakeholders in planning and implementing school programs and projects 1.2.3 Influences stakeholders to invest and share the cost for improving learning outcomes 1.2.4 Provides visible and proactive support to sustain the school-community based initiatives

<p><b>2. (SE) Managing education alliances and networks</b></p>	<p>2.1. Communicates effectively with different stakeholders</p>	<p>2.1.1 Uses language appropriate to different stakeholders 2.1.2 Employs appropriate multimedia to communicate with different stakeholders 2.1.3 Ensures clear, consistent and interactive communication to receive buy-in from the school community</p>
	<p>2.2. Facilitates school community partnerships and activities</p>	<p>2.2.1 Identifies education advocates, allies, partners and other critical stakeholders of the school 2.2.2 Reaches out to community stakeholders for total involvement in school affairs 2.2.3 Builds and sustains networks with teachers, students, parents, and the community 2.2.4 Ensures that the discussion objectives are met and agreements are documented 2.2.5 Serves as the key link between the school and community to project a positive school image</p>
	<p>2.3. Promotes consensus-building</p>	<p>2.3.1 Creates a climate and culture where diverse viewpoints are expected and all stakeholders empathize with others' perspectives 2.3.2 Conducts dialogue which builds unity, understanding and partnerships 2.3.3 Fosters anti-discriminatory principles and practices 2.3.4 Enforces carefully deliberated group decision</p>
	<p>2.4. Manages conflict and</p>	<p>2.4.1 Listens empathically and looks at issues as</p>



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**VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1 JANUARY - JUNE 2015**

	practices negotiation skills	<p>opportunities for improving school performance</p> <p>2.4.2 Resolves conflict in a direct but constructive manner seeking “win-win” solutions</p> <p>2.4.3 Negotiates for resources affecting school improvement</p> <p>2.4.4 Organizes a support mechanisms for stakeholders’ comments and suggestions to improve quality of school services and programs</p>
<b>3. (SE) Sustaining collaborative relationships with stakeholders</b>	3.1. Supports community-based programs and projects	<p>3.1.1 Maintains a welcoming atmosphere for parents and the community</p> <p>3.1.2 Determines community’s basic education needs in collaboration with key stakeholders</p> <p>3.1.3 Provides support to life-long and community-based learning programs</p> <p>3.1.4 Organizes working committees for community-based and outreach programs/projects students, parents and families</p>
	3.2. Communicates school performance report to stakeholders	<p>3.2.1 Prepares periodic report on school performance</p> <p>3.2.2 Maintains open communication channels through multimedia resources</p> <p>3.2.3 Engages the school community in the systematic and rigorous evaluation of school effectiveness</p> <p>3.2.4 Promotes the school image and achievements to the wider community</p>

### Competency Domain Rating and Ranking

The SEAMEO INNOTECH GB Members reviewed and rated the Competency Domains using the scale below:

<b>Value Range</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Frequency of Performance</b>	<b>Amount of Training Needed</b>
4.55 – 5.00	Very Important	Very Frequently performed	Training Is Greatly Needed
3.55 – 4.54	Important	Frequently Performed	Training Is Needed
2.55 – 3.54	Somewhat Important	Performed Occasionally	Somewhat Needed
1.00 – 2.54	Least Important	Least Frequently Performed	Least Needed

The results of the competency ratings and rankings are presented in the following tables.

Table 7.

*Mean Rating of the Importance of the Competency Domains to School Heads*

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Competency Domain</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Strategic Thinking and Innovation	4.42	Important
2	Managerial Leadership	4.35	Important
3	Instructional Leadership	4.32	Important
4	Personal Excellence	4.27	Important
5	Stakeholder Engagement	4.23	Important

While the GB members believed that all of the competency domains are important, the results of their rating show that they place the greatest importance on strategic thinking and innovation ( $X=4.42$ ) for the school heads successful performance of their duties. This may be explained by the emphasis given to leaders' ability to anticipate what the fast-changing educational scenario presents as it impacts on and is impacted by new technologies and new ways of thinking that characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As defined by the school heads themselves and captured in the general competencies under strategic thinking and innovation, school heads in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to be able to chart or plan the strategic direction of the school, make decisions based on sound information and evidence, and lead change and innovation.

Managerial Leadership ranks as the second most important competency as perceived by the GB Members. This shows their understanding of the load of managerial/administrative tasks that school heads have to accomplish on a day-to-day basis. These tasks include the general competencies of managing school resources and systems, managing staff performance, and managing sustainable school programs and projects.

Only third in rank in terms of importance is the competency domain of Instructional Leadership although this is the core business of the school. This seems to underlie the thinking that in terms of instruction, the front liners are really the teachers and they are part of the staff that the school heads manage. The principals can provide supervision and coaching to the teachers and let them do their job. But strategic thinking and managerial leadership are competency domains that they cannot delegate to the teachers and the staff.

Personal Leadership ranks fourth in terms of importance. This may be because while it is important, stakeholders usually focus more on or take note of the competencies of school heads that directly impact on their work performance (strategic thinking, managerial leadership, and instructional leadership). Personal leadership includes the following general competencies: managing personal effectiveness, acting on challenges and possibilities, pursuing continuous professional development.

Stakeholder Engagement received a rating of important. However, it ranks last among the five competency domains. This may be due to the low level of engagement of the community, particularly the parents, in school activities in Southeast Asia. This is manifested in low meeting attendances and lack of responsiveness to school requests. This is supported by research findings suggesting that Asian parents tend to be less involved in children's education (Sohn, Soomin, 2007; Legotlo, Marekwa Wilfred, 2014). With low stakeholder involvement, school heads would tend to prioritize the other competencies that are essential for tasks that take up most of their working time. The general competencies under Stakeholder Engagement are: promoting shared responsibility for school improvement, managing education alliances and networks, and sustaining collaborative relationships with stakeholders.

Table 8.  
*Mean Rating of Frequency of School Heads' Performance of the Competency Domains*

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Competency Domain</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Managerial Leadership	3.83	Frequently Performed
2	Instructional Leadership	3.81	Frequently Performed
3	Stakeholder Engagement	3.77	Frequently Performed
4	Personal Excellence	3.75	Frequently Performed
5	Strategic Thinking and Innovation	3.62	Frequently Performed

The GB Members ranked Managerial Leadership as the school heads' most frequently performed competency domain. This shows the GB's awareness that while teaching and learning is the primary focus of the school, school heads cannot avoid performing administrative work most of which they cannot delegate to school staff since they are primarily accountable.

Instructional Leadership ranked second since the school head conducted classroom observations regularly, coached and mentored teachers, and supervised the implementation of the school curriculum.

While Stakeholder Engagement ranked last in terms of importance, it ranked third in terms of school heads' frequency of performance. This may be because while the respondents believed that there were more important competencies, they were also aware that school heads interact with the school staff, students, and parents on a day to day basis in moving the school forward.

Personal Excellence ranked fourth, as with Importance, probably because while school heads needed to ensure that they pursued continuing personal and professional development, these were the competencies that they usually apply only after they have performed their managerial and instructional leadership roles.

While Strategic Thinking and Innovation ranked number one in terms of importance, the GB Members ranked it last in terms of frequency of performance. This may be because while it was a desired competency for school heads, insufficient training and the overwhelming demand to perform managerial tasks may be preventing school heads from exercising it.

Table 9.

*Mean Rating of School Heads' Need for Training on the Competency Domains*

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Competency Domain</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Strategic Thinking and Innovation	4.72	Training Is Greatly Needed
2.5	Managerial Leadership	4.40	Training Is Needed
2.5	Personal Excellence	4.40	Training Is Needed
4	Instructional Leadership	4.38	Training Is Needed
5	Stakeholder Engagement	4.28	Training Is Needed

Table 9 shows that the GB Members believed that the school heads in Southeast Asia, in general, need more training on the competency domain Strategic Thinking and Innovation. This is consistent with their ranking of this domain as the most important and yet the least frequently performed competency. The need for school heads' training on strategic thinking and innovation is echoed by Hallinger and McCary (1990), and Hester (2003). Findings show that teacher training programs have not equipped school heads with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective school leaders, including strategic thinking skills that are closely linked to instructional leadership.

Managerial Leadership and Personal Excellence occupied the second rank. Because these are important and frequently performed competency domains, school heads need to be continuously trained and retrained along these lines in order to be consistently high performing leaders.

Stakeholder Engagement again occupied the last rank among the five competency domains. This is consistent with the domain's bottom line ranking. This seems logical: The competency domain that was not as important as the others was not the priority in terms of training need.

Table 10.  
*Overall Ratings of the Competency Domains*

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Competency Domain</b>	<b>Over-all Mean Rating</b>
1	Strategic Thinking and Innovation	4.42
2	Managerial Leadership	4.35
3	Instructional Leadership	4.32
4	Personal Excellence	4.27
5	Stakeholder Engagement	4.23

Table 10 showed the overall ranking of the competency domains based on the mean ratings for importance, frequency of performance, and amount of training required. Strategic Thinking and Innovation ranked first ( $X=4.42$ ) being considered as the most important and for which training was most needed. In the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that schools need to develop and enhance among teachers and students, the competence to think strategically and innovatively will enable school heads to provide a supportive climate for students and teachers. It will enable them to promote thinking outside boundaries and to show the way for improving existing school systems.

Stakeholder engagement is fifth in rank ( $X=4.23$ ). While it is also an important competence, frequently performed, and for which school heads would need training on, the GB members does not see it as the first priority. This may probably be explained by the fact that while in some developed countries such as Canada and the United States, there is a long tradition of strong parental and community involvement in their schools, in many Asian countries, such tradition has been absent or weak. It is possible that since the community tends to be a passive partner, school heads tend to focus more on competencies that are relatively more important and frequently required of them to demonstrate.

### **Lessons Learned from the Review and Revision of the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads**

1. Among the nine SEA countries, more commonalities exist than differences in terms of competencies that high performing school heads demonstrate and apply in the work place.

The most striking commonality was the emphasis on the competence of the school head to demonstrate exemplary personal qualities and the ability to foster strong relationships.

On the other hand, the most noteworthy source of difference was the competency related to accessing financial resources needed for the improvement of the school. In some countries where financial resources and support for school infrastructure were readily available from the government, the ability and skill to source funds and oversee the maintenance of infrastructure did not surface. On the contrary, this competency recurred at varying levels of responsibility in the countries where government was not able to provide sufficient funds and support for infrastructure upkeep.

2. Among the five competency domains, Strategic Thinking and Innovation (STI) has been ranked as the most important and the competency for which training was most needed. This may be because in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the ability to take into account the changes and developments in the environment is essential in leading the school to success. However, STI ranked 5<sup>th</sup> as the least frequently performed competency. This may be based on the observation that while it is important, the school heads' job is too much. Managerial Leadership is rated as the second most important and second in priority in terms of need for training. This is also the domain that school heads most often apply in the performance of their functions and the one for which they need more training on. This shows that while the participants acknowledge that the core business of schools is instruction, the competence to daily operate or manage the school is their top priority. The explanation that may be deduced from the stories shared during the in-country workshops and the regional workshop seems to be that for effective teaching and learning to take place, school heads need to effectively manage school resources, programs, and staff performance.
3. All the competency domains were rated as "Very Important" by the participants. This may be because a deficiency in one domain could adversely affect the other domains. All the competency domains were interrelated.
4. In finalizing, validating, and rating the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads (2014 Edition), the Regional Workshop participants and the Governing Board Members placed their mark of approval and endorsement on the Framework as a valid reference for school heads on the abilities and skills that they need to have in order to effectively perform their jobs as high performing school leaders and managers.
5. Adopting the appreciative inquiry approach and capitalizing on the stories of the participants enabled the distilling of school head competencies based on the lived realities of school heads and not on what participants believe are givens and "must be's".

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions made, the following recommendations are posited:

1. In adopting the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads (2014 Edition), users need to remember that while the competencies generally apply to all Southeast Asian school heads, the various competencies' importance, frequency of use, and requirement for training may vary depending upon the context of the school head and prevailing conditions.
2. While the participants considered that they need training for all the Competency Domains, the focus in developing capacity-building activities for Southeast Asian school heads may need to be on the following competency domains deemed as the most important and for which a great amount of training is needed:
  - Strategic thinking and innovation

- Managerial leadership
3. After the school head's finalization and the GB's approval of the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads (2014 Edition), there is a need to develop guidebook for using the framework. The guidebook should contain rubrics that will lend the Competency Framework to usability not only as a guide for defining school head abilities and skills but also as an assessment tool that they can use to conduct self-assessment. Such assessment tool can also be used by Ministries of Education as a supplemental tool for evaluating current school heads and for hiring/promotion purposes.
  4. The use of appreciative inquiry and story-telling as powerful lenses for conducting research may also be applied in developing/ reviewing/validating competency frameworks for other occupation groups.

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### **Sample workshop questions used for the interviews of the school heads and other stakeholders**

#### **FGD/Workshop Protocol for the School Heads**

1. We'd like to learn about your early years in education work.
  - a. What first attracted you to join the education profession?

- b. What personal strengths and abilities did you bring with you?
  - c. What has kept you here?
2. Let us talk for a moment about some of the things that matter deeply to you, for example, what matters most to you about yourself; your school and the nature of your work as school principal?
  - a. Without being too humble, what is it that you value about yourself as it relates to your work as school principal? What are your best qualities, skills, experiences, approaches, values, etc.?
  - b. What do you value most about your school?
  - c. What do you value most about your work as a school principal?
3. Excellence in School Leadership

Think back to a time when you provided unusually excellent leadership. This was the moment where you felt energized, committed and successful.

Please describe the situation in detail:

- a. What was the situation and who were involved?
  - b. What made this a highpoint or peak experience for you?
  - c. What single thing did you do that inspired people to give their best?
- b. Given this experience, what leadership lessons do you think are the most important in leading schools?

If you think excellent school principals lead successful schools, teachers and learners:

- a. What kind of leader is most likely to carry the school into its most successful and flourishing future?
- b. What is the smallest thing that would make the biggest difference in supporting that leader?
- c. What do you think are the conditions in which exceptional school leaders can thrive and flourish?

### **FGD/Workshop Protocol for the Stakeholders**

The workshop questionnaire included the following items intended to elicit the stories of the stakeholders:

1. Think of a time when you had a really terrific experience working with a School Principal. Tell the story.
2. What do you see as the core qualities, competencies or attributes of an excellent School Principal?
3. If you had three (3) wishes for your School Principal, what would those wishes be?