**AGENDA ITEM #4: BUSINESS CASE FOR NEAS INTERNATIONAL**

**OVERVIEW**

* As NEAS moves into the Revive Stage of the [NEAS 2020-2023 COVID Response Plan](https://neas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NEAS-Respond-Revive-Thrive-Plan_PUBLIC.pdf), there are new quality assurance services that can be offered to a greater range of organisations and individuals in the ELT Community in Australia and beyond.
* This business case proposes a way forward for NEAS Australia to build on the success in Vietnam and use Vietnam as a stepping stone to replicate international Quality Assurance activity in firstly regional Vietnam and then neighbouring countries in ASEAN, specifically Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL**

As part of this Business Case it is proposed that:

1. NEAS hosts the 2022 QALEN Symposium as a virtual symposium to encourage wider recognition of its position as Global Leader in Quality Assurance in ELT. The NEAS CEO has been nominated as the incoming QALEN Chair from July 2022 and the symposium is tentatively scheduled for June 2022.
2. NEAS co-hosts a live panel focusing on Quality Assurance in ELT at CamTESOL, Phnom Penh in Feb 2022, showcasing Cambodian, Thai and Vietnamese endorsed centres (NEAS has been invited to this by CamTESOL organisers).
3. If NEAS is unsuccessful with its applications for funding replication of the Vietnam Workshop Series in Thailand in January 2022, then NEAS self-funds this activity.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL BUT PRESENTED HERE FOR INFORMATION**

1. NEAS replicates the current Vietnam Workshop Series model in regional Vietnam in the second half of 2022 and seek funding from MOET / NFLP and AVEG to continue into a second year of funding.
2. NEAS replicates a similar model as conducted with use of the DFAT AVEG grant in Thailand in the first half of 2022. This model involves four workshops conducted virtually. The first and last workshop are internal and aimed at engaging decision makers and government in design and feedback of the second and third public workshops aimed at engaging teachers and English language centre managers and owners in Quality Assurance in ELT, Online Delivery and Transnational Delivery.
3. NEAS then continues to cycle through on a six-month basis a replicated model in Vietnam (in October) for the third year of AVEG and seeks funding for continued workshops in regional Thailand (in March).
4. NEAS identifies similar funding sources in either Malaysia or Indonesia for 2023, depending on momentum and traction in these countries with increases in NEAS membership or focus on Quality Assurance in ELT.
5. NEAS leverages brand recognition for quality assurance of English language centres and identifies international opportunities for expansion of quality assurance for education agents, service organisations and ELT professionals. NEAS leverage membership with QALEN and potential collaboration with AIRC to do this.

**BACKGROUND**

* This strategic item forms the beginning of a clear and distinct series of activities in readiness for development of NEAS 2023 - 2025 strategy, the planning of which will be discussed in detail at the Board Strategic Planning Meeting on 14 October and then formalised into Strategic Plan to be presented at the first Board Meeting 3 February 2022.
* This paper is to be read in conjunction with the following board papers:
  + Business Case for NEAS Professional
  + NEAS Australia Advocacy Plan
  + NEAS Australia Resources Review
* This paper builds on the paper discussed in the Board Meeting on 5 August 2021, whereby several concerns were expressed:
  + NEAS should be considering a parallel approach to source funding.
  + If source funding from The Australia-ASEAN Council Grant (announcement of grant due 1 November 2021) is unsuccessful, then NEAS should activate a similar self-funded project, currently unbudgeted in FY22.
  + The initial proposal included setting up a regional hub in Vietnam but this idea was not largely supported.
* Most recently, NEAS conducted Workshop A of the Vietnam Workshop Series on 1 October 2021, the Live Panel of which was attended by 121 participants, one of the largest webinars NEAS has conducted outside of its conference. Engagement is high with this workshop with 185 new users added to the specific workshop on NEAS Online in one month and a total of 582 users added to NEAS Online as a direct result of this campaign. This event was picked up by Vietnamese social media and greatly supported by Austrade and the Australian Embassy in Hanoi. Engagement with the National Foreign Languages Program and key officials in the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has been high. There is a second workshop scheduled for 5 November 2021.
* Current engagement with Vietnam is 50 centres across four members (including one pending member with five centres). In addition, there are 101 ELT Professionals online from Vietnam, and approx. 800 regular subscribers to NEAS News based in Vietnam.

**KEY BENEFITS OF NEAS INTERNATIONAL**

* Increase of revenue from application fees and annual fees from international membership (currently 20% of annual return fees and 46% of application fees in FY22 Budget are from international activity totalling $150K in international revenue). There is potential to double this amount in FY23 to $300K.
* Decrease reliance on international revenue from Vietnam (currently 47% of total international revenue) and diversify international revenue from other countries.
* Associated increase in revenue from endorsement of related education agents, products and services, and ELT professionals (currently no revenue for this is budgeted in FY22 but there has been a significant uptick in interest in the last several months).
* Increased brand recognition in ASEAN.
* Increased brand recognition with DFAT, Austrade and embassies in ASEAN.

**PROJECT SCOPE**

* Working with Austrade Vietnam and Austrade Sydney / DFAT, NEAS will utilise the Australia Vietnam Economic Enhancement Grant (AVEG) to map local environment and stakeholders with interests in Quality Assurance in ELT, Online Delivery in ELT, Transnational Delivery in ELT and Teacher Training / professional development in Vietnam. This will enable NEAS to identify endorsement opportunities through the workshops and convert leads to endorsement. The externally quoted budgeted cost for this stage of the strategy is: $56K (fully funded $56K from a government grant in 2021 with possible continuation in 2022 and 2023). If NEAS needed to undertake this activity and contain the expenses within the existing team and contractors, the actual cost could be reduced by 50% if conducted as a hybrid model and 25% if conducted virtually.
* This expansion activity will initially be contained with Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia.
* The workshop activity will be contained within March and October each year, complementing but not detracting from the NEAS Management Conference.

**INVESTMENT AND PAYOFF**

* There is an investment of $168K for this project over 24 months of which $56K has been sourced from government funding. Funding will continue to be sought for funding this entire activity. However, there is potential for 50% of the remaining $112K to funded from NEAS. If this is the case, there is then potential for 50% of this cost to be sourced through the Export Marketing and Development Grant (EMDG), although NEAS will need to reapply for this in 2022 so this is not guaranteed.
* The key payoff for this investment is creation of new revenue streams:
  1. Revenue from annual memberships and applications for international members.
  2. Related revenue from allied community endorsements of education agents, ELT professionals and service organisations.
  3. Increased opportunities for sponsorship due to greater international exposure.
  4. Greater credibility on grant applications, enhancing further grant applications.
  5. Diversity in membership and increased recognition as a global leader from Australia.

**DETAILED PHASES AND COSTING**

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| **Stage** | **Activity** | **Cost** |
| **Stage One**  **2021 Q3-Q4: 2021: Building on Current Successes in ASEAN** | * Utilise AVEG grant to run workshops with key ministries in Vietnam. * Identify ~ 20 schools for endorsement in Vietnam * Apply for second AVEG grant in regional Vietnam. * Apply for similar grant in Thailand. * Identify ~ 20 schools for endorsement in Thailand and add to pipeline. * Focus on conversations from pipeline to full endorsement. | $56K (funded by DFAT and budgeted in FY22). No strategic cost to NEAS in 2021. |
| **Stage Two**  **2022 Q1-Q2: Replicating the “Vietnam Model” in Neighbouring Counties within ASEAN** | * Apply for third AVEG grant. * Apply for similar grant in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. * Identify ~ 20 schools for endorsement in Malaysia. * Focus on conversations from pipeline to full endorsement. | Potential $56K from DFAT funding. Potential $28K from NEAS strategic reserves to be included in FY22 budget if this funding is not successful ($15K if conducted completely virtual). |
| **Stage Three**  **From 1 January 2023: Replicating More Widely within ASEAN** | * Replicate this model in Cambodia and/or Indonesia, leveraging endorsed members in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia. | Potential $56K from DFAT funding. Potential $28K from NEAS strategic reserves to be included in FY23 budget if DFAT funding is not successful. ($15K if conducted completely virtual). |