



HR4ASIA

Strategic Human Resources Management for Southeast Asian Universities



Comparative Analysis of Human Resource Management Practices in Southeast Asia



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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ABSTRACT

It is widely conceded today that the relevance of quality Human Resource Management (HRM) is a hot issue for the development of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In the current study, HRM is presented in its broadest sense, which implies a strong developmental and strategic approach, beyond the technical management of recruitment procedures, contracts and salaries. This report presents the information collected and scrutinised on current practice and needs as for HRM at HEIs in Southeast Asian universities (Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Lao PDR) as well as a selection of universities from the European Union (HR4Asia partners from Lithuania, Portugal, and Italy), by way of example.

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1. Introduction

There is a worldwide consensus in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) today on the relevance of quality Human Resource Management (HRM) for the development and optimisation of their performance. HEIs face increasingly complex academic contexts, which require HRM models able to respond to new challenges in the selection, development, and motivation of their staff.

Thus, the concept of “human resource management” has been used in this report in its broadest sense. To begin with, HRM is comprehended beyond the technical management of recruitment procedures, contracts and salaries. It also implies a strong developmental and strategic approach; issues such as training schemes, incentives and rewards, evaluation and staff development support and systematic planning of future staffing needs are all part of what is considered good HRM practices. Traditionally, most of the partner country universities (PCUs) within the framework of the current study have a slightly more restricted understanding of this concept and concentrate often on technical aspects related to hiring and management of staff. Still, while some HEIs may have increasingly taken more proactive roles in developing more comprehensive strategies to HRM, countries with actual national strategies aiming explicitly at the development and reinforcement of staff are still very few.

It is certainly not an innovative insight to affirm that, as is the case in Southeast Asian (SEA) countries, there is a noteworthy diversity amongst European HEIs as far as HR organisation is concerned, partly owing to their respective institutional history and culture –some HEIs group together some or all of personnel, staff development, academic practice, health and safety and occupational health under the banner of HR, whilst in others they are considered as discrete units.

An effective governance of HR depends in many ways, i.a., on the relationship between the university governing council and the administration. One of the governing council's main responsibilities must be to ensure that the people aspects of their institution are being well managed, taking account of present and future needs within an affordable framework. This means that a suitable HR strategy should exist, which is consistent with the HEIs' overall mission and values –and yet, it should also underpin other relevant strategies (e.g., learning and teaching within their university communities). The components of a sensible HR strategy would include, i.a., an opening section that identifies the institutional strategy unambiguously, an analysis of the operating context including the strengths and weaknesses of each HEI, and the identification of

the key issues that need to be addressed by the HR strategy which directly affects the achievement of the institution's goals.

So, when it comes to recruitment or selection processes, due attention should be paid to key points such as the identification of the required skills of the staff members; methods of selection; remuneration and compensation schemes within available resources; management strategies; and other aspects covered in the present report without which HEIs may find it more difficult to deal successfully with the issues that might arise.

Thus, planning for succession management is a crucial medium and long-term approach in terms of performance management, for skills development and suitable mechanisms to ensure fairness and diversity amongst staff are instrumental in leading to a successful governance of HEIs. Still, ensuring diversity goes beyond legal compliance, for people have different needs that must be addressed in different ways, and treating everyone the same will not necessarily create equality of opportunities. Therefore, many European HEIs have adopted the diversity approach as a matter of principle.

In the SEA countries, HR approaches need to be far more efficient and be shaped to current labour and societal needs. HEIs need to take account of new issues concerning their HRM, such as training, promotion and encouragement, evaluation, development support, and systematic planning for future needs.

2. Background

2.1 Context and project objectives

The irruption of HRM as a strategic element for quality development of HEIs is relatively recent. Originally, professors themselves hired their assistants, and a few decades back and until our days, HR approaches just focused on personnel recruitment, organisation of employment contracts, and payment of salaries.

This scenario is deeply changing with the international growth and increasing complexity of Higher Education. HRM aspects such as on-going training, encouragement, evaluation, development support and systematic planning are gathering momentum under HEIs' strategic plans worldwide.

In Europe, whatever the organisational culture, there is an expectation that HEIs should go beyond simple legal compliance and promote good practice in HRM. In recent years, despite the fact that aspects of people management in HE may be becoming more mainstream, there is still a need for improvements

in this field. For many European HEIs, developing strategic HRM was a significant challenge, particularly in relation to pay modernisation, tackling poor performance, rewarding good performance, and sustaining the momentum for HR change.

Although HEIs adopt different performance management processes, most European institutions comply with the following key stages: planning and defining expectations, implementation and action, monitoring performance, and reviewing performance. If an institution appears to be deficient in any of the said procedures, governors then should rethink and relaunch a new and reliable model.

The evolution of HRM is, however, slow and certainly challenging in developing countries. In SEA, HEIs are facing significant difficulties derived from disparities in their countries' political and social structures as well as the backgrounds of their Higher Education systems, which are applying their own definitions of autonomy and reform measures.

The PCs targeted by HR4Asia (Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, and Vietnam) share political background, inheriting strict, top-down governance systems. Management staff has little motivation for change and innovation, with structured training programmes practically absent. Recent reforms are requesting, however, a new approach to HE management, which needs qualified workforce able to respond to increasing demands derived from industrialisation, modernisation, and international economic integration.

Despite their differences, all these countries share the vision of Higher Education as a strategic lever for sustainable development and growth. This sector reinforces the idea for an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, one of the pillars for turning the ASEAN into a more dynamic and competitive region.

Against this background, well-structured HRM strategies could very much contribute to HE development in these countries, thus, supporting the processes of reform towards regional growth. Government and HEIs have to adapt to counter the common problems of Higher Education, including outdated governance and people management systems, little use of e-governance tools to simplify procedures, applying more transparent recruitment criteria and processes, as well as better contractual conditions and balanced and transparent options for promotion.

Upon these premises, HR4Asia's main goal is to support Higher Education organisational changes in SEA. More specifically, this global purpose will be addressed by:

- Building capacity in HRM at SEA HEIs to enhance organisational performance;
- Improving strategic planning in HR at SEA HEIs for more staffing autonomy; and
- Setting up of the ASEAN University HR Network as a regional forum for the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

2.2 Purpose and data collection

The aim of this report is to give an overview of the ways in which HR are managed in public HEIs within the HR4Asia participating countries. Generally speaking, all the universities covered by the study considered that HRM and staff development are becoming issues which require more and more attention on behalf of individual institutions as well as from national authorities.

In order to map, complete, and concretise information related to the current practice and needs of the participating HEIs in terms of HRM, a survey was prepared by Agora Institute for Knowledge Management, Spain, (Agora Institute), attached to this report as Annex 1. The survey was structured in forty-two qualitative and quantitative queries, some of which included a number of specific nested questions. For ease of reference, all questions were grouped under six general sections. Thus, indicators relating to HRM Policy were collected in the first part of the survey; part 2 addresses HRM general practice, part 3 focuses on recruitment, part 4 deals with motivation and promotion models, part 5 approaches benefits, and finally part 6 is engaged with labour unions-related practices. These six sections are also used to vertebrate this report.

Finally, twenty-two universities provided the output gathered in the current study. The sample includes institutions from the target PCs (Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Lao PDR) as well as the three European partner universities of HR4Asia (from Italy, Lithuania and Portugal), which have been included by way of example in order to offer an alternative view of the state of play in a different geographic and socioeconomic context as far as HMR practices and standards are concerned. Answers were collected, compiled, and analysed by Agora Institute.

3. Executive summary

The importance of quality HRM policies for the development and optimisation of HEIs' performance represent an unquestionable asset today. Whereas in European countries, HRM has been developed and intensified during the last decades, performance management of the PCU staff –as well as a stronger relevance of the activities carried out at the universities to this end– has moved high on the agenda in recent years. Still, SEA HEIs need support and transfer of good practices for the creation of solid and sound strategies and instruments in this domain.

In addition to the preliminary needs analysis conducted to prepare HR4Asia proposal, the achievement of the project objectives required an in-depth study of the HRM conditions in the Asian participating HEIs, as the project activities are based on examining HR practices and undertaking actions for improvement via self-evaluation. The consortium brings varied good practice via EU HEIs, but it is also aware of other practices in the field. From identified needs, the project intends to provide specific measures supporting strategic planning, HR and technical development, and policy dialogue.

As a brief summary of the findings:

Policy

Encouragingly enough, almost the entirety of the participating HEIs included in the study, except for a scanty 5% of the respondents on the SEA side, acknowledged that HRM does constitute a strategic priority for their respective institutions.

Additionally, almost 80% of the cases reported by the SEA region as well as 100% on the European side indicated that a number of HRM reforms have been approved/implemented in either their universities or their countries in the last five years. Still, a fifth of the SEA institutions affirmed that no reforms whatsoever have been implemented within this period.

HRM general practice

As in the previous section, nearly all participating HEIs from both SEA and European regions confirmed that their respective universities do have written policies in the area of HRM, with the exception of 5% of SEA institutions. In both cases, the said policies include aspects such as recruitment, leave entitlement, scheduling, evaluation, and attendance. Health and safety proved

to be one of the least endorsed features.

On a separate issue, IT systems designed for HRM, although fairly customary –more than two thirds of the SEA institutions owned that these are used by their universities– are not as fully introduced in the SEA HE context yet as they are in Europe, where all the participating institutions affirmed to take advantage of this resource. In either case, the main HR IT-supported functions which are carried out by HEIs agree to a large extent with the aforementioned HR aspects.

Still on the subject, special mention should be made to the fact that in both regions, face-to-face interaction is the preferred form of communication with employees. Still, the use of the e-mail follows closely, especially in the case of the European participating HEIs.

On another front, as far as health and safety protocols are concerned, the two regions share a quite similar outlook, as about two thirds of the respondents identified that their respective institutions do have formal protocols to tackle this issue.

However, when it comes to whether HEIs provide health and safety training for employees, the scenario differs from one case to another. Whereas all the European participating institutions answered in the positive, 21% of the SEA respondents acknowledged that this does not remain true in their respective universities, besides 31% of cases in which, despite its existence, it is not aimed at the entire workforce.

As for the different aspects which constitute a HRM priority for the participating HEIs involved in the current study, it should be noted that both SEA and European institutions happen to produce a similar picture: students' satisfaction and evaluation of employees' performance are the two factors most referred to in this respect. On the contrary, gender balance proved to be one of the least identified aspects.

In this regard, however, more than half of the respondents considered that gender balance does prevail in their university staff.

Recruitment

As far as the ability of the universities to attract essential employees at the academic and administrative levels is concerned, 89% of the SEA participants answered in the affirmative. On the European side, one of the three partner

HEIs happen to dissent from this view, alluding to aspects such as salary rates.

Generally speaking, apart from the fact that university online adverts is identified as the most common practice in both SEA and European HEIs' context, recruitment mechanisms are found to be rather uneven in the different institutions. Whereas ministerial online adverts are pointed out as equally recurrent as the former by European respondents, referrals from current staff are the second most common procedure in SEA HEIs.

In the context of the requirements established by universities as for selection processes, the entirety of the European participating HEIs acknowledged that their respective universities do emphasise the importance of specific characteristics and abilities for providing high quality services. Withal, this circumstance is not supported by 26% of the SEA respondents.

Universities from both regions quite agree as for the use of behavioural-based interviews as a means to identify applicants' strategic competencies throughout the selection process.

Albeit a minor difference in favour of Asian participating HEIs, a substantial majority of respondents in both ambits owned that values of their respective universities and relevant faculties are indeed discussed with applicants in selection processes.

In terms of percentages of university staff assigned to a job which has undergone a formal job analysis, the range varies considerable from one country to another, spanning from the 40% of certain cases in Vietnam to 90% and even 100% (particularly also in the case of Vietnam as well as in Italy) in most of the target countries.

Regarding the participating HEIs' perception on the suitability of the academic staff's skills and knowledge to carry out their job in the best way, a significant majority of respondents on both SEA and European sides (with a slight difference in favour of the former) agree that this is just the case in their respective institutions. Lack of incentives proved to be the most common cause of the instances in which the said circumstance does not apply.

As for the administrative staff, the outcome is practically identical to that of the academic staff above. In the present case, however, causes of under-skilled staff are due, in addition to lack of incentives, to lack of training to improve and, as indicated by 16% of SEA respondents, to low standards in recruitment criteria.

An overview of an assessment completed by the participating HEIs of the qualification of the staff in their respective universities shows that most of the SEA partners are rather (when not fully) satisfied with the staff suitability for their posts as far as the required skills are concerned, particularly in the case of administrative staff. On the European side, the outcome proved to be, although quite positive overall, unanimously encouraging in the case of management staff in particular.

Motivation & promotion

In relation to whether academic staff is sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance in their respective institutions, 27% of the SEA partners considered that this is not applicable in their particular case. This is chiefly due, in the first place, to low salaries and lack of reward mechanisms. On the European side, all partner HEIs answered in the positive.

As for actual motivation of the administrative staff, on this occasion, only one of the three European participating institutions endorsed this view versus 68% of cases on the SEA side. Lack of career perspectives and low salaries are stressed as the main causes to low motivation by the European HEIs, while lack of training options and lack of reward mechanisms are the major hindrances according to SEA respondents.

Both Asian and European participating HEIs quite agree that management staff is indeed sufficiently motivated. In the European HEIs, low motivation is attributed equally to too many hours of work and to lack of reward mechanisms. In the former instance, however, lack of training options is chiefly the cause.

Job performance evaluations are carried out in almost all the participating HEIs, except for 5% of respondents on the SEA side; their main aim is, i.a., to determine compensation, according to the European institutions, and to develop employees as well as to identify training needs, according to SEA participants' view.

The said evaluations take place mostly yearly within the SEA institutions (as stated by 84% of respondents) but in the European case they happen to be also carried out every two years (Portugal) or following a particular scheme (Lithuania).

With regard to the staff involved in the aforementioned evaluations, either the dean or the head of administration are referred to as the person in charge of this procedure by almost the entirety of the Asian participating HEIs and all the three European partners, with the participation of other members of staff, depending on the case.

As far as performance evaluations are concerned, evaluations based on quantifiable objectives as well as on multiple sources (supervisors, self-reporting, co-workers, students' surveys, etc.) are identified as the most common practices within the SEA institutions. The latter, together with feedback provided to employees for improvement, are the two most recurrent exercises as indicated by the European respondents.

In terms of employees' satisfaction measurement, more than half of respondents concur that this practice is carried out in some manner in their respective institutions.

Amongst the HR related aspects which are most promoted by the participating universities, employees training (the most endorsed feature) is identified by 84% of SEA respondents and all European partner HEIs, which also measure problem-solving teams at the same level. On the SEA region, involvement in decision-making at all levels, follows (74%).

With reference to employees' training, a vast majority of SEA respondents (84%) indicated that this is either provided or supported by their respective HEIs both in-house and outside the workplace. This feature accounts for two out of the three cases on the European side, where only in-house training applies in the remaining case.

Regarding the training options offered by HEIs, the answers, though quite similar between SEA and European respondents, proved to be widely varied and rather fairly distributed. From the range of options tabled in the analysis, foreign languages and computer related knowledge figure amongst the most often highlighted features by institutions from both regions, while pedagogy follows in SEA institutions, and transversal skills (e.g. communication abilities, leaderships, team building, etc.) and institutional management (e.g. strategy, finance, HR, etc.) are equally preferable for the European HEIs.

As for opportunities for promotion in the participating HEIs, both SEA and European scenarios differ widely. In the former case, 89% of the respondents ensured that employees do have good opportunities for promotion while this view is only shared by one of the three HEIs on the European side.

Thus, merit or performance rating alone and management determined on a case-by-case basis are the promotion decisions most often applied amongst SEA participants. However, merit or performance rating alone is by far the most common feature as identified by the European respondents.

The entirety of the SEA HEIs affirmed that their respective universities are able to retain essential employees at the academic and administrative levels. Not every European participating institution supports this view.

On another front, a significant majority of both SEA and European universities owned that private HEIs do not constitute a more attractive place to work at in their respective countries in comparison with public HEIs.

Conversely, while two thirds of SEA institutions considered that companies constitute more engaging places to work at in their respective countries in comparison with public HEIs, the same rate of European respondents indicated just the opposite.

Benefits

Except for 16% of cases on the SEA side, the remainder of the participating HEIs acknowledged that social protection is included in their remuneration primarily in the form of maternity leave, pension plans and health insurance.

Regarding benefits offered to employees in their respective universities, tuition assistance is the most common advantage within the Asian participating HEIs, closely followed by life insurance. On the European side, however, tuition assistance, subsidised meals, salary premium instead of benefits and other unspecified features share equally the range of benefits offered to employees.

Labour unions

42% of the SEA respondents owned that their respective universities do have a labour union presence. Their main functions, as drawn from the present analysis, are rather diverse and non-concurrent with the EU participants. While raising managers' awareness about HR related issues and promoting reforms at the institutional level are the two purposes alone considered by the European participating HEIs, SEA institutions, furthermore, offer a wider range of other options, such as raising policy makers' awareness about HR related issues in public HE (the second most endorsed function) and promoting reforms at the national level.

According to the respondents' outlook, the European participating institutions considered that labour unions could play more significant roles in HRM. And yet, only 42% of the SEA HEIs share this view, 16% disagree, and the remaining 42% assent that they do not know.

4. HRM Policy

It is widely accepted that HRM approaches are needed depending upon organisational culture, therefore it seems reasonable to assume that intrinsic HEI's culture must be taken into account when considering their respective HR policies. Thus, it is important that the governing council of each HEI develops an effective working relationship with the HR director as they will be the ones providing most of the staffing information that the board may require.

Except for a limited 5% of the Asian participating HEIs which indicated the contrary, the overwhelming majority of respondents on both sides, SEA and Europe, indicated that HRM indeed constitutes a strategic priority for their respective institutions.

When asked about whether ensuing reforms may have been either approved or implemented in their respective HEIs/countries in the last five years, just over half of the SEA respondents affirmed that these were carried out in their institutions, as stated by the entirety of the Vietnamese HEIs, almost all of the participants in Thailand and half of the ones in Cambodia. Likewise, 31% of SEA respondents indicated that the said reforms took place in their countries, as almost all of the Vietnamese universities and one in Cambodia noted. In this regard, however, the entirety of the Laotian participating HEIs as well as one in Cambodia and another one in Thailand did acknowledge that no reforms whatsoever remained to be implemented within this period. European respondents indicated reforms at both levels. For complete results see Figure 1 below:

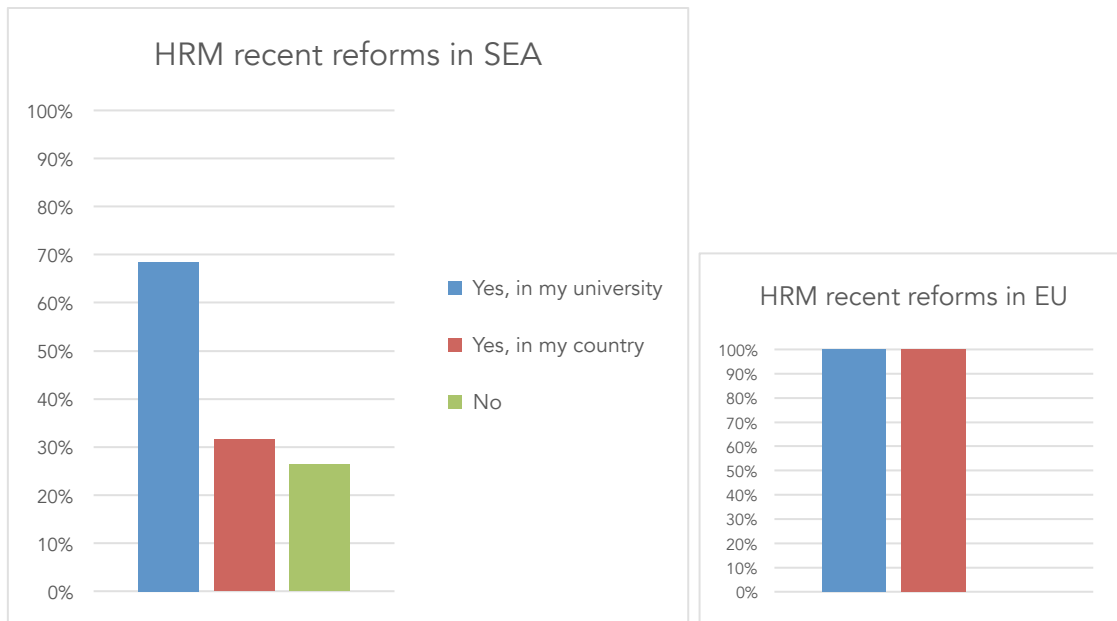


Figure 1: HRM recent reforms

In respect thereof, a more detailed account was provided by each institution. Thus, three Cambodian universities alluded to reforms on collection and categorisation of contract staff and full-time staff and teachers according to their profession, and annual salary scale up and incentives for special days (New Year and *Phchum Ben* day). Difficulties in implementation by departments were also mentioned.

Four Thai universities indicated reforms concerning structuring of HR, ensuring adequate HR to meet the strategic goals and operational plans of the university, launch of a Talent Management Project for teaching staff and administrative staff, and achieving more work efficiency following university privatisation.

Four Vietnamese universities indicated reforms in the following lines: quality enhancement in effective administration, new regulations on working conditions of administrative and academic staff, regulations on training of young administrative and academic staff, new regulations about the standard requirements for key positions in universities, e.g., rector, deans of faculty, lecturers, etc. (specifically, by 2017 lecturers should have obtained MA degree, and PhD in 2025).

All three Laotian universities indicated that, even though officially no formal reform has taken place, revising and updating the existing regulations and practices on HRM from time to time was common practice.

As for the European participating HEIs, it was indicated that, before 2015, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania performed only evaluations of study programmes. In 2015 the first external reviews of all Lithuanian HEIs were completed. HEIs were assessed for quality in several areas: strategic management; academic studies and life-long learning; research and/or art activities; impact on regional and national development. Examination of HRM was included. At the university level, several reforms were pointed out as from 2012, including academic and research annual assessment for bonus calculation; introduction of academic and administrative staff training procedures; and implementation of five internal projects related to HR (1. Creating a Non-Academic Staff Performance Evaluation and Promotion System; 2. Research Staff Policy; 3. Policy on Attracting Foreign Staff; 4. Strengthening Teachers' Educational Competences; and 5. Creating a Friendly Working Environment).

As Portugal is concerned, it was indicated that governmental policy limited the possibility of hiring new employees, as long as this led to a total increase in billing costs. At the university level, there was a reduction of invited / temporary teachers, in contrast to increased competitions for more qualified and permanent teachers. A policy of eliminating precarious contracts was also implemented whenever there proved to be permanent university needs.

Finally, it was also highlighted that Italian public sector's laws changed deeply in the past five years. An important recent reform concerned university-labours relationships. It included, in particular, recommendations for HRM, HR evaluation and performance.

In response to the question on the main HRM priorities of their respective universities for the upcoming years, each participating HEI presented a brief but thorough up-to-date picture of their respective state of affairs:

All Cambodian universities pointed out a number of priorities for HRM manuals, clear policies on incentives and common models for HRM. Building a new and complete model was the main priority for two of them. Capacity building for lecturers and supporting staff was also mentioned.

All six Thai universities placed priorities on:

- better framework;
- workforce engagement, talent management, succession planning, career path management;
- development of job performance evaluation systems, including

- workload assignment, core values;
- competency-based management, coaching for optimal performance;
 - strategic HRM - HRM alignment to university vision and strategy, HRM data system, HR departments, and recruitment.

The Vietnamese universities considered as priorities:

- regularly enhancing professional development for the teaching staff;
- upgrading administration and management skills amongst the leading staff;
- developing innovative policies in paying HE teaching staff;
- ensuring gender equality amongst employees;
- recruiting quality teaching staff to open new programmes;
- enhancing quality of administrative and teaching staff;
- improving policy, salaries, scientific research, and work environment.

Laotian universities referred that documenting HRM and recruitment processes were on their agenda for HRM improvement.

On the European side, the main HRM priorities at the university level in Lithuania (2014–2020) would comprise:

- training staff capable of working in an international environment;
- promoting academic leadership;
- developing the career system aimed at the development and attracting highest-level researchers, recruitment of young talents and ensuring their successful career;
- increasing the number of persons accepted for PhD studies;
- elaborating a professional development system covering training of employees' competencies, increasing motivation, learning and teaching opportunities;
- fostering academic culture; and
- ensuring an equal right to work, remuneration, performance evaluation, career opportunities, despite gender, nationality or disability.

In Portugal, hiring more qualified teachers and more qualified technicians to increase capacity in support services were cited as priorities at the university level.

In Italy, defining additional part of the salary, together with appropriate management of the working hours for the personnel, would be the priorities at the university level.

Regarding the main priorities in the area of HRM in HE in each of the participating countries, their respective presentations were not less illustrative:

Cambodian universities referred the same priorities as presented above. In addition, a Policy on Higher Education Vision 2030 and a Cambodian Higher Education Roadmap 2017-2030 were mentioned, as well as developing a comprehensive staff career development scheme that encourages excellence in learning, teaching, research and management.

Thai universities indicated the following priorities at the national level:

- academic staff recruitment, qualification and training, motivation and promotion;
- high discipline, high integrity, high communication skills, moderate to high IT capability, Thailand 4.0 policy and innovation.

Vietnamese universities indicated priorities on:

- enhancing the socialisation of HE;
- attracting more Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in HE;
- upgrading the quality amongst HE teaching staff, improving lecturers' professional development;
- renovating policies in recruiting, employing and evaluating HE teaching staff, team development and policy.

Laotian universities indicated as priorities: increasing well-trained teaching and administrative staff, and paying more attention to the part of academic programme training (each course of study) as to ensure quality.

On the European side, according to Lithuania's Development Strategy "Lithuania 2030", the long-term vision of Lithuanian Science and Studies "Learning Lithuania 2030" and the National Education Strategy 2013–2022, the main priorities in the area of HRM management in HE are as follows:

- international openness to ensure the quality and relevance of HE;
- attracting talented young people to work in HEIs;
- improvement of the level of the PhD studies and increasing the number of students admitted into PhD studies;
- optimisation of the HE and research institutions network;
- researchers and teachers are amongst the most prestigious professions in the country.

Regularisation of precarious contracts, increasing the number of qualified participants in HEIs for research activities, and increasing the number of more qualified teachers are cited as main priorities in Portugal.

Finally, performance and evaluation would be the priorities in Italy, following the opinion of the HR4Asia partner HEI.

5. HRM general practice

Within the European framework of HRM, managing for performance is a cornerstone of HRM for it implies an approach whose main purpose is creating an environment in which staff are encouraged to succeed. It includes both overall people management policies and also the way in which leaders and managers interact with their staff. From the perspective of the university governing council, encouraging such an approach is central to adopt a good HR practice. Still, factors such as prevailing organisational culture and style of management must be certainly taken into account.

Against this scenario, except for 5% of cases on the part of the Asian participating institutions, all remaining HEIs indicated to have written policies in the area of HRM.

In the particular context of the SEA region, 94% of the respondents who acknowledged the existence of the aforementioned written policies put an emphasis to the fact that leave entitlement (e.g., maternity leave, holidays, etc.) is included in the said protocols —as stated by the entirety of the Cambodian participating institutions as well as by all three Laotian universities, and almost all Vietnamese and Thai HEIs. This is followed closely by scheduling and recruitment with 89% and 83% of cases, respectively. In fact, the former is identified by the three Laotian universities in full as well as by all Cambodian, all Vietnamese, and half of the Thai institutions. As for the latter, it is also particularly noted by every participating university in Laos, almost all respondents in Vietnam and in Thailand, and half of the ones in Cambodia. Attendance is highlighted chiefly by all Cambodian universities as well as by most of the Thai and Vietnamese HEIs.

On the European side, leave entitlement is alluded to by two of the three participating HEIs and it is both recruitment and performance evaluation that take the lead.

As a point of interest, the lowest score (44%) is for health and safety in the SEA region, while there is a quite even distribution of HR aspects amongst the European participating HEIs.

Additionally, some of the participating HEIs cited particular aspects concerning their respective situation: One Cambodian university specified that recruitment is made under the Ministry of Education; universities cannot evaluate on the entrance exam sheet for the requested skills. One Thai university added further aspects such as HR development, and HR data system. In Lithuania, all these aspects are reflected in different university documents; and a Human Resource Policy covering all of the abovementioned aspects is being developed. See below Figure 2 for complete results:

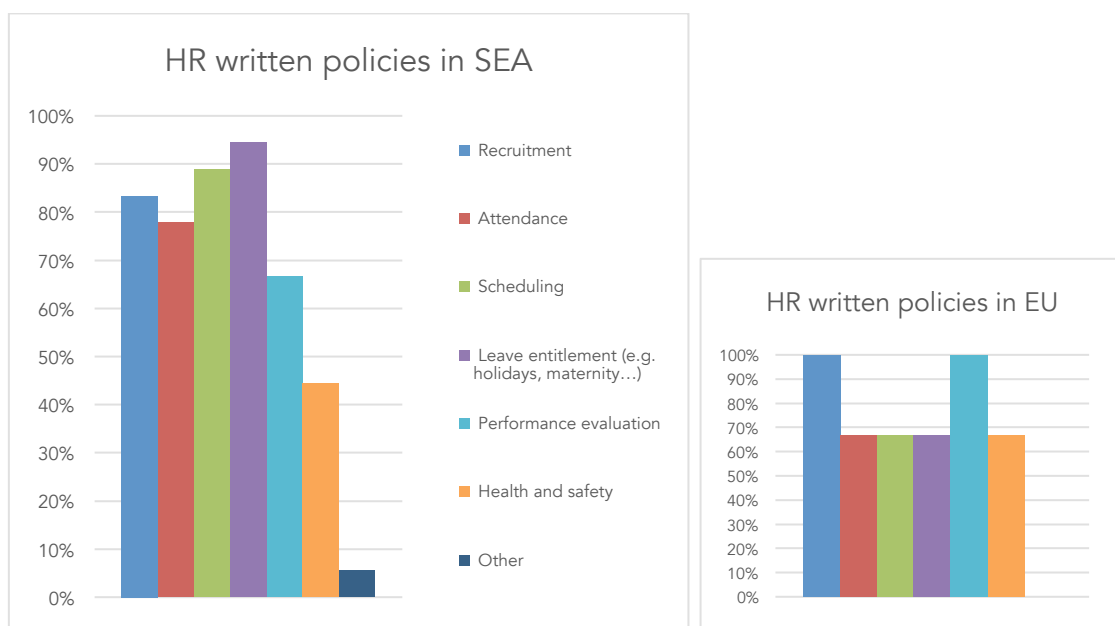


Figure 2: HR written policies

As far as the use of computer-based systems for HRM is concerned, barely one third (31%) of the Asian participating HEIs discarded the use of such practice, more specifically, three-quarters of the Cambodian participating HEIs as well as half of the Vietnamese institutions. In this instance, all the European respondents admitted to that standard.

Amongst the most commonly adopted IT-supported HR functions, performance evaluation tops the list on both sides SEA—with a particular relevance in the case of all three Laotian universities and almost the entirety of the Thai institutions—and Europe, respectively. Other features, such as scheduling and attendance follow closely in both regions. In particular, the former function is alluded to by half of the Vietnamese participants and most of Thai partner HEIs. On the other hand, leave entitlement certainly has a more

enhanced role in European participating HEIs compared to those in SEA. At the other end of the spectrum, recruitment is just mentioned by one of the three European institutions, while it is referred to by more than half of the SEA respondents who affirmed to deploy these IT-supported HR functions in their respective HEIs. Additionally, two universities in Thailand indicated pay-roll and compensation, resource planning system, and personnel database. Another university specifies that the HR IT system is now being developed; the completed system will support all HR functions. See Figure 3 for complete results:

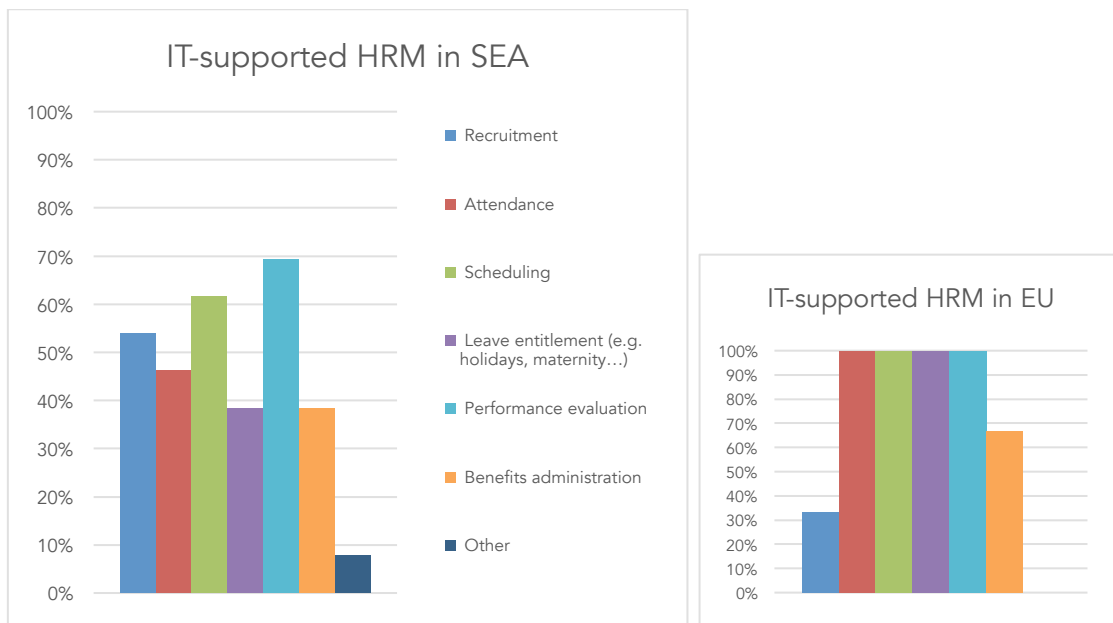


Figure 3: IT-supported HRM functions

Where channels of communication with employees are concerned, face-to-face interaction is the most frequently used vehicle in both Asian and European participating HEIs. In the former instance, the entirety of the Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Laotian HEIs as well as almost all the participating Thai universities support this affirmation. The use of e-mail is the second most endorsed feature, as identified by 27% of respondents in the SEA region (which translates into the entirety of the Cambodian and the Vietnamese respondents as well as almost all the ones in Thailand) and all the respondents on the European side. While newsletters were taken into account by 63% of SEA respondents, they are used in one of the European respondents, which also makes use of an intranet.

For further reference, some universities included some extra commentaries: Three Cambodian universities added (mobile) phone and social networks, such as Telegram and Messenger. Four Thai universities indicated Line, Facebook, meetings and University Staff Networking. Communication with employees in

Vietnam can also be made through a circulation of documents and notices and through the website. Tele conferences were also included. In Laos phone and written notice were added.

Both Asian and European participating HEIs present a broadly similar picture as for the existence of formal protocols for health and safety with around two thirds of answers in the positive. More specifically, the entirety of the Thai and Laotian universities as well as half of the Vietnamese institutions endorsed this practice.

In contrast, dissimilarities between both regions emerge regarding the occurrence of health and safety training for employees on the part of their respective institutions. The entirety of the European participants acknowledged that their universities do provide their employees with this instrument. However, in the SEA HEIs context, answers were rather unlike and divided fairly equally amongst the cases in which this circumstance does apply, the ones in which it does not (as in the cases of all four Cambodian participating universities and half of the Vietnamese), and the instances in which not entirely (as it is just the case of the whole cluster of Laotian HEIs). See Figure 4 for further detail:

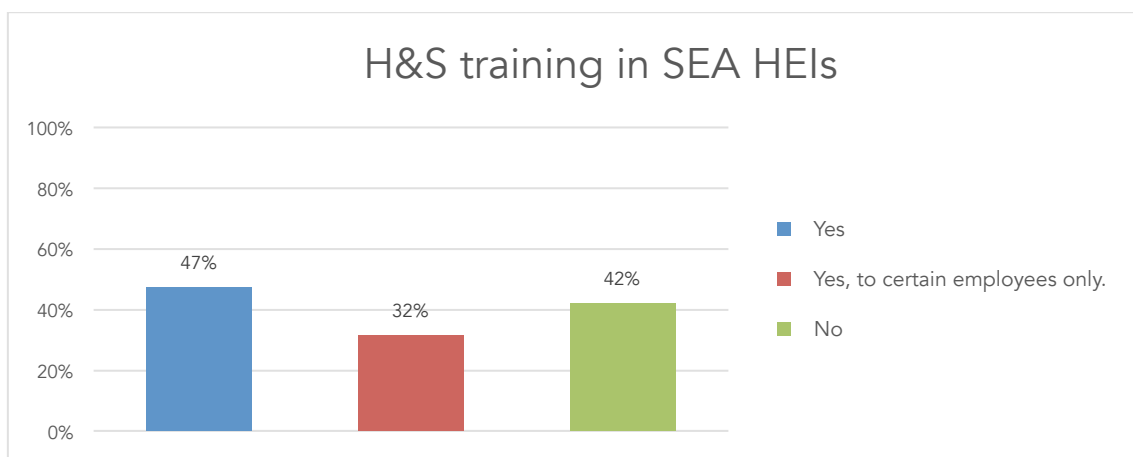


Figure 4: H&S training in SEA HEIs

As shown in Figure 5 below, in response to the question as to which aspects constitute a HRM priority for the participating HEIs, students' satisfaction was pointed out by 95% of the SEA respondents and all European HEIs, respectively. Evaluation of employees' performance proved to be not less important, as indicated by 89% of Asian participating HEIs and again, by all the European participating universities. This is followed by both keeping track of essential factors for university success and employees' absenteeism, as identified by 74% and 47% of SEA respondents, respectively, as well as by two of the three EU HEIs in both cases).

Other aspects, such as measurement of occupational safety and gender balance were also alluded to, albeit to a lesser extent.

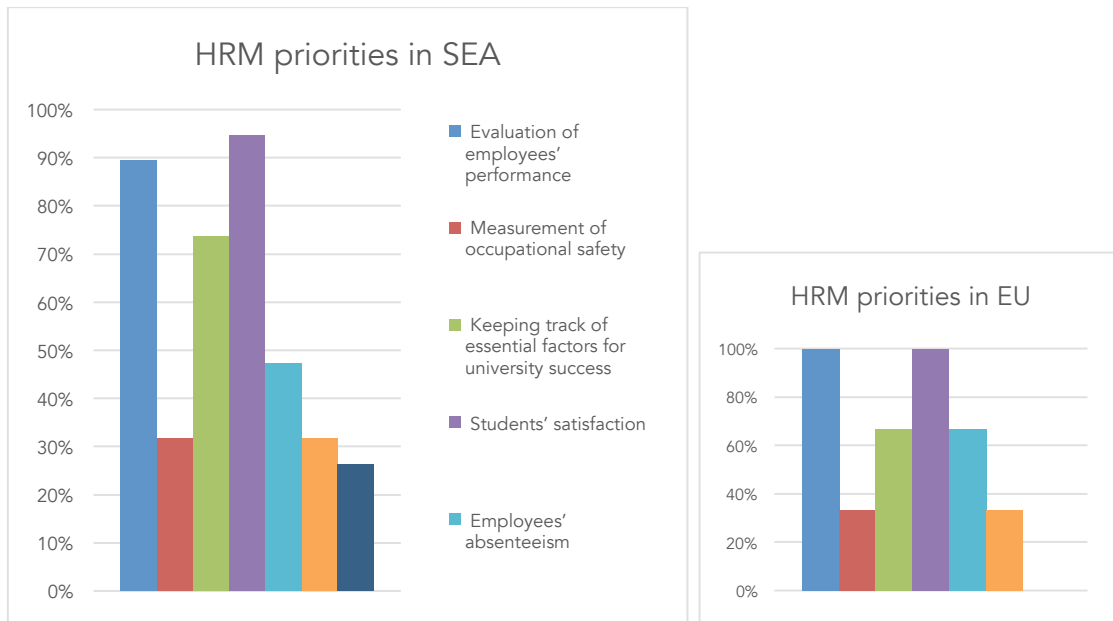


Figure 5: HRM priorities

More specifically, the entirety of the Thai and Laotian participating universities as well as most of the Vietnamese partner HEIs identified evaluation of employees' performance, keeping track of essential factors for university success, and students' satisfaction as the most prevailing aspects for their respective institutions as far as HRM priorities are concerned. All four Cambodian respondents, additionally, also mentioned employees' absenteeism, as almost all of the Thai participants, as well as gender balance. As a side note, one of the Thai universities indicated competency analysis.

Conversely, on the particular question regarding the existence of gender balance at the university staff level, 42% of the Asian participating HEIs acknowledged that this issue was not safeguarded within their university staff as against one of the three cases on the European side. More specifically, this outlook is shared by half of the Thai respondents, some Vietnamese as well as by almost all of the Cambodian universities.

6. Recruitment

Europe is no stranger to the fact that identifying essential and desired criteria is paramount to a successful recruitment process. This, however, may involve a forthright assessment of the HEIs context, i.e., what its needs and goals are. Besides, staff commitment and skills can be crucial to the successful modernisation of institutions and it is therefore necessary to pay careful

attention not only to recruitment, but also to career management and working conditions. Accordingly, i.a., a few practice principles in this respect should be taken into consideration:

- Consistency and impartiality when gathering, judging, and recording evidence on each applicant against the criteria identified.
- Adequate representation of diversity and pluralism within the pool of applicants in the selection processes.
- Guarantees in terms of fairness and equity throughout the selection processes, methods and negotiations.

As a point of interest, when asked about whether they consider that their universities attract essential employees at the academic and administrative levels, 89% of the SEA respondents ensured that this is actually the case in their respective institutions —except for one university in Cambodia and another one in Thailand. This is also the case for two of the three HR4Asia European HEIs.

Still, honing on in the main difficulties HEIs must cope with in respect thereof, one of the Cambodian universities identified as a major impediment being in a rural area; low benefits and self-development opportunities are also mentioned. On the European side, average salary rates and knowledge about the university as possible employee were adduced as the main hindrances.

On the subject of the methods employed by the participating HEIs to recruit their staff, mechanisms and priorities in this respect proved to be rather diverse and dissimilar in both regions. Although there is a prominence as well as a concordance of university online adverts on both sides (with most of the SEA institutions and all the European participants), other procedures, such as referrals from current staff as well as ministerial online adverts, are neither so consistent nor akin between both regions.

To be more precise, the entirety of the Laotian, Thai, and Vietnamese universities as well as half of the Cambodian participating HEIs identified university online adverts as their preferred recruitment mechanisms. Both, referrals from current staff (as stated by all four Cambodian universities, all three Laotian institutions, almost all of the Vietnamese and one third of the Thai participants) and newspaper adverts (according to all three Laotian partner institutions, two thirds of the Vietnamese respondents and one of the Thai participating HEIs) were also pointed out as their most adopted means. As an incidental note, all the EU respondents and 26% of the SEA universities (which in this case implies the entirety of the Cambodian participating HEIs and one

Thai institution) alluded to the use of ministerial online adverts, which is just the case of the SEA respondents who referred to employment agencies (in this case, three-quarters of the Cambodian participants as well as one Thai and one Vietnamese universities). For complete results, see Figure 6:

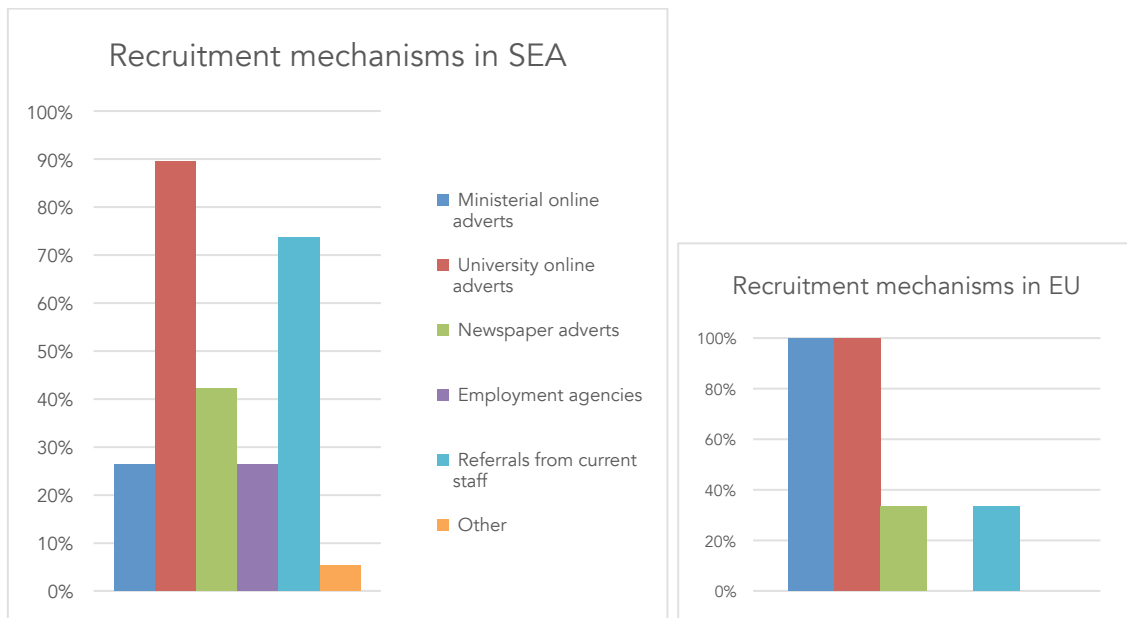


Figure 6: Recruitment mechanisms

Some further comments were collected in this regard, namely: public staff in Cambodian universities are recruited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In Thailand, this is also fulfilled by means of university publications, walk-in and social networking. In Lithuania, posting online adverts on job search websites (international website: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/> and national websites: <https://www.cvmarket.lt/> and <https://en.cvbankas.lt/>) as well as on social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) are common practices too.

Moving on to another, equally relevant issue, 74% of the SEA participating HEIs considered that selection in their universities do emphasise characteristics and abilities required for providing high quality services, except for all four Cambodian participating institutions and another one in Thailand. On the European side, however, this question had a unanimous positive answer.

Regarding identification of applicants' strategic competencies, albeit a slightly narrow margin, both Asian and European participating HEIs quite agree on the use of behavioural-based interviews in order to identify this particular aspect throughout the selection processes. However, all four Cambodian participating universities as well as another one in Vietnam are the exception to this practice on the SEA side.

As drawn from the different responses of the survey, values of the university and relevant faculties are, albeit an illustrative divergence between both regions, indeed discussed with applicants in the selection processes, as affirmed by 84% of SEA respondents (with the exception of three of the Cambodian participants) against two out of three European cases.

In terms of the percentage of the university staff who is assigned to a job which has undergone a formal job analysis, a wide spectrum of responses was elicited from each of the participating HEIs, namely:

- Two Cambodian universities stated that this represents 70% of cases, while a different university assessment placed this figure at 80%, and a fourth one at 90%.
- Two Thai universities indicated that this is so in 75% of cases, a third university reckoned 70%, and another one allocated 80% to performance agreement evaluation and 20% to competency evaluation. A fifth university filled out this question with N/A.
- The rates provided by Vietnamese HEIs span from 40% to 60%, 90% and 100%. Other two universities stated N/A and probationary analysis - official according to the job placement scheme, respectively.
- Portugal put the figure at about 90% and,
- Italy reached 100%.

Yet again, when asked whether the participant HEIs consider that the academic staff has the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out their job in the best way, one of the European respondents and 32% of the Asian participating HEIs answered in the negative. More specifically, most of the Cambodian universities as well as half of the Vietnamese participants shared this view. However, the entirety of the Thai and the Laotian universities gave a positive answer to this question.

Significantly, the reasons as to why the aforementioned percentage of respondents did not agree with the actual issue are, chiefly due to a perceived lack of incentives as well as to low standards in recruitment criteria. Additionally, some Vietnamese universities pointed out low salaries, lack of supervision, and lack of effective management.

As far as administrative staff is concerned, the scenario does not seem to differ significantly from the one previously examined: one of the three European participating HEIs still consider that administrative staff has not the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their jobs in the best way; 26% of SEA respondents shared this view —this is particularly supported by three-quarters

of the Cambodian universities, one institution in Vietnam, and one more in Thailand.

As for the reasons which support this position, lack of training to improve is cited by all of the SEA respondents who answered in the negative. Lack of incentives accounts for 60% of cases on the SEA side which emphasised these skills shortages in the administrative staff, which translates into half of the Cambodian participants as well as one of the institutions in Vietnam. In like manner, low standards in recruitment criteria also comprises 60% of Asian participating HEIs which did not answer in the positive in respect thereof; once again through half of the Cambodian participants and one more university in Vietnam. On the European side, only the first two reasons (i.e. lack of training to improve and lack of incentives) were indicated. See Figure 7:

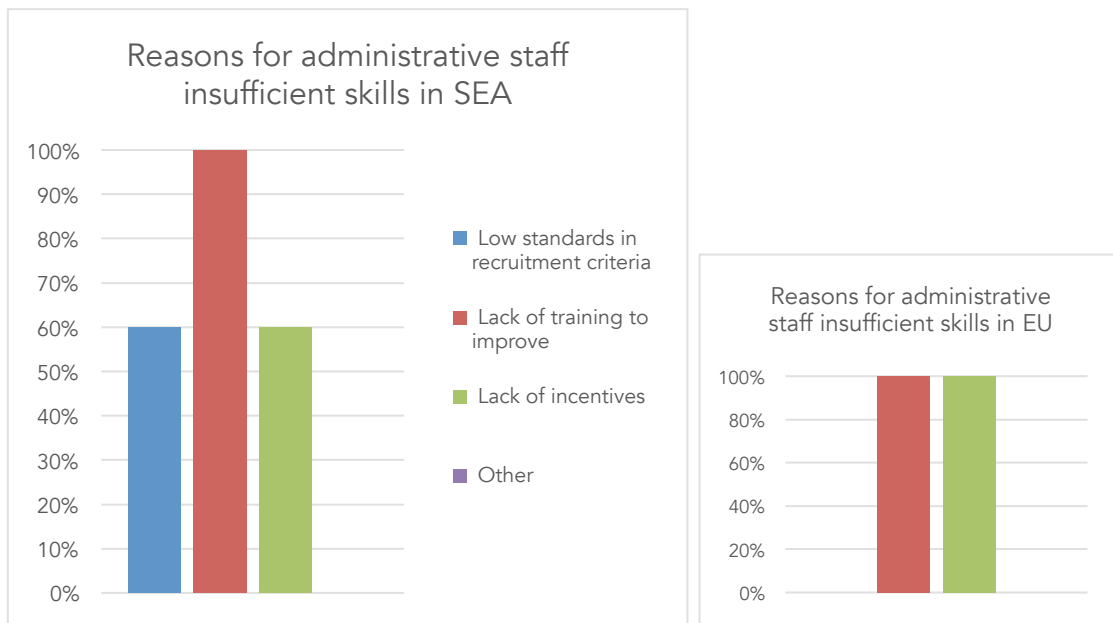


Figure 7: Reasons for administrative staff insufficient skills

When it comes to management staff, however, the entirety of the European respondents considered that this sector does have the necessary skills to perform their job appropriately. However, Asian participating institutions differed here and only 58% of cases agree with this statement. Conversely, all of the Cambodian participants as well as half of the Vietnamese and one more in Thailand disagree with this view.

While almost all of SEA respondents who consider that management staff is not sufficiently qualified for their posts, pointed to the lack of training to improve as the main cause of this scenario —as stated by all four Cambodian HEIs as well as half of the Vietnamese and one more in Thailand— half of respondents attributed this circumstance to lack of incentives as well, as

supported by half of the Vietnamese institutions and one more in Cambodia. Low standards in recruitment criteria follows, while languages and no clear manual for recruitment are cited as barriers as a further comment from Cambodian universities. For complete results, see Figure 8:

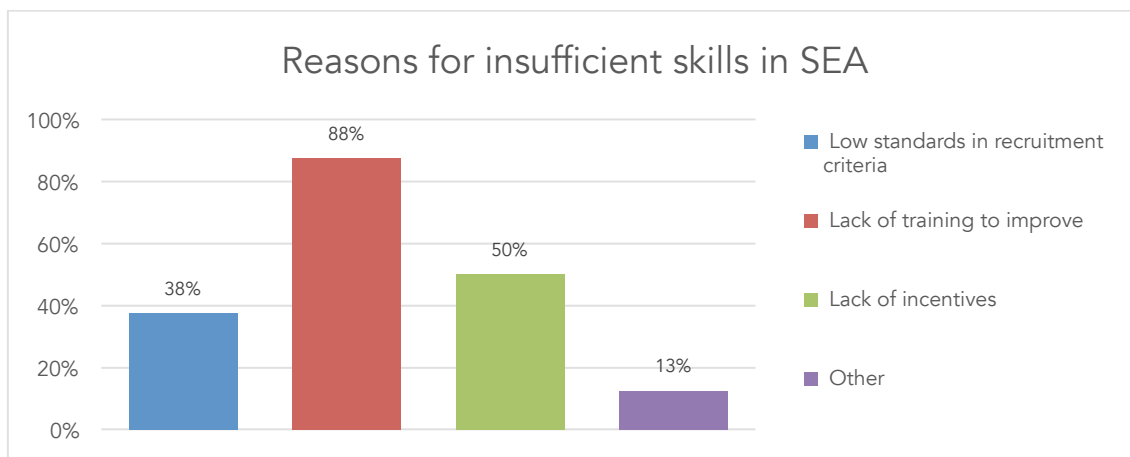


Figure 8: Reasons for management staff insufficient skills in SEA

Finally, all participating HEIs were asked to rate a set of skills –namely, communication skills, computer literacy, leadership, team-working skills, willingness to implement changes, and command of foreign languages– of their university staff (academic staff, administrative staff and management staff) from 5 to 1 (where 5 means: most of the staff have the relevant skill, and 1 means: most of the staff do not have the relevant skill). A model of the given table is shown below in Figure 9:

Skills / Staff section	5	4	3	2	1
Communication skills					
Computer literacy					
Leadership					
Team-working skills					
Willingness to implement changes					
Command of foreign languages					

Figure 9: Table of skills of university staff assessment

Generally speaking, most of the range of skills tabled for any of the staff categories are bestowed with a score of 4 by the vast majority of respondents from both the SEA and the European regions. In the former instance, communication skills, leadership, team-working skills, and willingness to implement changes are the most highly valued competences in any case. On the other hand, the lowest rated skill in each section is command of foreign languages, which is rarely valued over 3 by most of the participant HEIs—in the particular case of administrative staff, this skill is rated with a score of 2 by a fourth of the respondents and even 1 by 5.3%. In the case of management

staff, however, the degree of suitability as for this particular faculty proves to be equally valued between 5 and 3 by a third of the respondents, respectively.

As for the European case, most of the presented competences are almost equally divided between both the 3 and 4 values depending on the particular staff category: communication skills and computer literacy are the two most positively rated features as for academic staff; willingness to implement changes is the best ranked skill regarding administrative staff; and computer literacy, leadership, willingness to implement changes, and command of foreign languages are at the top of the list as for management staff. Team-working skills, however, are rated with a score of 5 by two thirds of the respondents as far as the administrative and management staff sections are concerned. Particularly, with regard to administrative staff, command of foreign languages is, yet again, rated as 2 by two thirds of the participating HEIs. Withal, none of the cases is valued below 2.

7. Motivation & promotion

HEIs, as quintessential knowledge comprehensive organisations, need a clear idea of their chief goals, procedures best fitting their needs, and an action agenda for accomplishing their purpose.

As part of the institutional strategic plan, staff motivation and productiveness –though usually the largest expenditure in HEIs– are instrumental not only to enhance academic performance but also to strengthen institutional reputation. Good contractual conditions and concrete possibilities for staff development and career advancement are thus important factors in attracting and maintaining qualified academic staff at public institutions. Such measures also ensure that staff members are not only retained, but that their skills and capacities are constantly up-graded to meet the changing requirements set on the higher education sector.

Against this background, in terms of academic staff motivation, 63% of the SEA respondents indicated that this sector is indeed sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance —conversely, half of the Vietnamese universities, one in Thailand and one more in Cambodia did not share this view. This conviction, though, was also supported by all three of the European participating HEIs.

Reasons of the aforementioned low motivation of the SEA academic staff are summarised in Figure 10 below: low salaries, by far the most endorsed cause of the said hindrance, is identified by the entirety of the respondents who

answered in the negative (which translates into half of the Vietnamese universities, one Thai and almost all of the Cambodian participants); lack of reward mechanisms rates second with 86% of the objections (through half of the Vietnamese respondents and almost all of the Cambodian institutions); both too many hours of work and lack of research opportunities represent more than half of cases each (as stated chiefly by half of the Cambodian HEIs in both cases and one third of the Vietnamese in the latter case); and finally, 43% alluded to lack of career perspectives (mainly supported by half of the Cambodian participants as well as by one of the Vietnamese institutions).

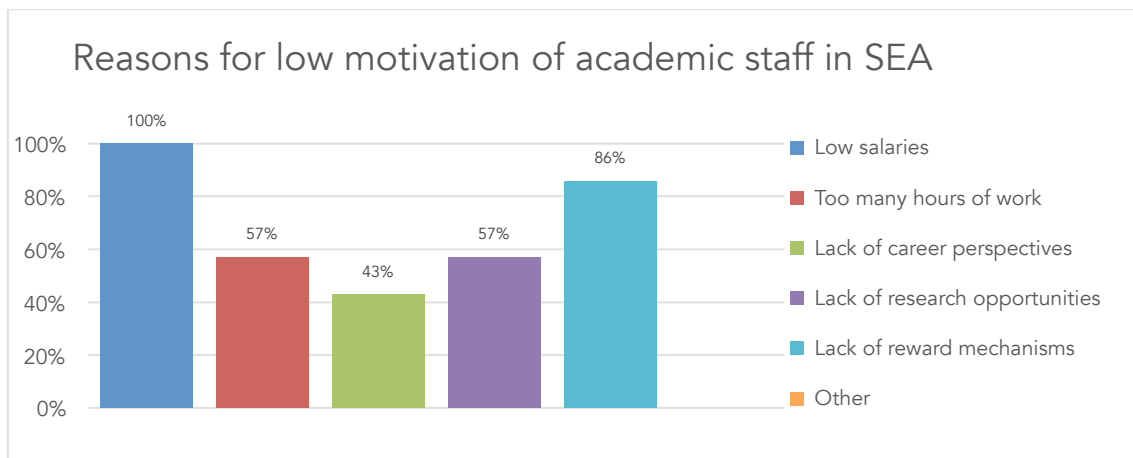


Figure 10: Reasons for low motivation of academic staff in SEA

As for administrative staff, findings drawn from European participating HEIs reflect quite a different picture from the previously depicted on academic staff as two of the three respondents considered that this sector is not sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance. Conversely, 68% of respondents on the SEA side answered in the positive, which translates into all three Laotian institutions, almost all of the universities in Thailand, and two thirds of the Vietnamese participants. Almost all of the Cambodian institutions answered in the negative.

As far as the reasons for this low motivation of the administrative staff are concerned, notoriously, the main causes of this appraisal in the SEA region are lack of training options and lack of reward mechanisms, both alluded to by the entirety of the participating HEIs who observed the aforementioned lack of motivation—which in both cases comprise almost all of the Cambodian universities as well as two Vietnamese and one Thai institutions. Both low salaries and lack of career perspectives are also identified by half of the Cambodian HEIs as well as by two of the Vietnamese institutions and one in Thailand, which totals 83% in each case. And finally, too many hours of work is referred to by half of the respondents, which actually translates into one university in Cambodia, one more in Thailand, and another one in Vietnam.

European HEIs focused mainly on both lack of career perspectives and low salaries. Lack of reward mechanisms was also noted, but on a lesser scale.

Regarding management staff, a similar pattern holds true in both SEA and Europe. Thus, 79% of Asian participating HEIs agree that management staff is sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance in their respective universities, which translates into all three Laotian HEIs, almost all of the Cambodian and Thai institutions as well as two thirds of the Vietnamese participants. In like manner, two of the European institutions share this view.

In this case, as shown in Figure 11 below, the situation in this regard is rather diversified and unevenly distributed in the SEA region as for the causes of low motivation of management staff. Thus, all of those which answered in the negative —more specifically, one third of the Vietnamese participating HEIs as well as one of the Cambodian universities and one more in Thailand— identified lack of training options as the major factor hampering motivation of management staff. Too many hours of work was alluded to by 75% of respondents as the second agent (which implies one third of the Vietnamese participants and one Thai HEI), and both lack of reward mechanisms and low salaries represented 50% of respondents each (as stated by one university in Cambodia as well as one more in Vietnam in the former case, and again one institution in Cambodia and another one in Thailand in the latter). On the European side, both too many hours of work and lack of reward mechanisms share equal responsibility as for the causes of the aforementioned low motivation of management staff.

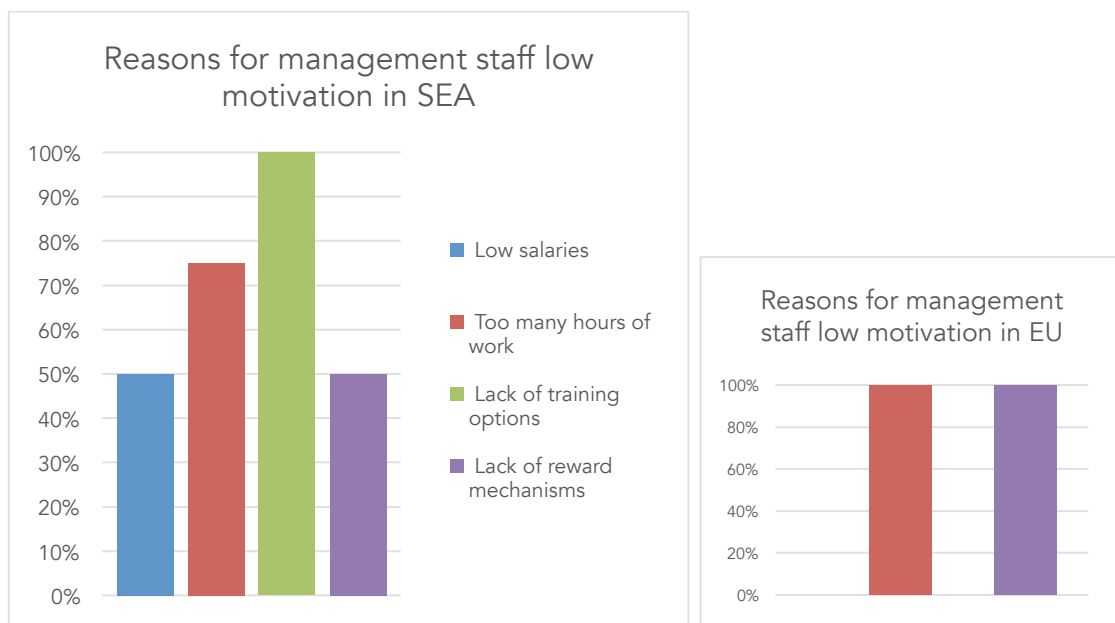


Figure 11: Reasons for management staff low motivation

Certainly, an important part of performance management is the active development of staff in their roles. Training and development in European HEIs are becoming issues which require more and more attention from individual institutions as well as from the national authorities. Still, providing institutionally planned training and development is a task that some HEIs have only relatively recently started to address in a coordinated way. It follows that if training and development is to be effective from a performance management perspective, investment must be focused on achieving institutional priorities, with all the planning that this entails. Money spent on training and development of the workforce must be considered as an investment –but it is the governing council that must ensure that its impact is being evaluated effectively.

In line with this, when asked about whether their university carries out job performance evaluations, the overall response was, on the whole, positive, except for 5% of the SEA respondents that indicated that these were not conducted in their institutions; such is the case of one university in Vietnam.

As for the purposes of the said performance evaluations, these proved to be quite dissimilar amongst Asian and European participating HEIs. In the former case, they were indeed quite diverse: the most endorsed functions, that is, both developing employees —as stated by all three Laotian universities, two in Vietnam, half of the Thai institutions, and one of the Cambodian HEIs— and identifying training needs —according again to all three Laotian universities, half of the Thai participants, two thirds of the Vietnamese, and one in Cambodia— top the list with 55% and 50% of replies, respectively. Other objectives, such as validating procedures —as affirmed by one university in Cambodia and two more both in Vietnam and in Thailand— and determining compensation —as reported by two Thai institutions, one in Cambodia, and another one in Vietnam)— complete the options provided by the survey. Finally, 28% corresponds to further purposes indicated by the respondents themselves: Two Cambodian universities indicated increase of bonus; one Thai university specified degree evaluation by peers, supervisor, and self –compensation determined by excellent (90%) performance, great, and satisfactory (60% up)– although training needs are not systematically managed; another university in Thailand indicated promotion and using evaluation as one of the mechanisms to reach university vision; and Laotian universities stated that it is seen as a guideline to encourage staff to work more effectively and promote good practices using evaluation as one of the mechanisms to realise university's target and goals.

On the European side, all of the respondents identified that the main purpose of the said evaluations is determining compensation; identifying training needs and validating procedures follow. For complete results, see Figure 12 below:

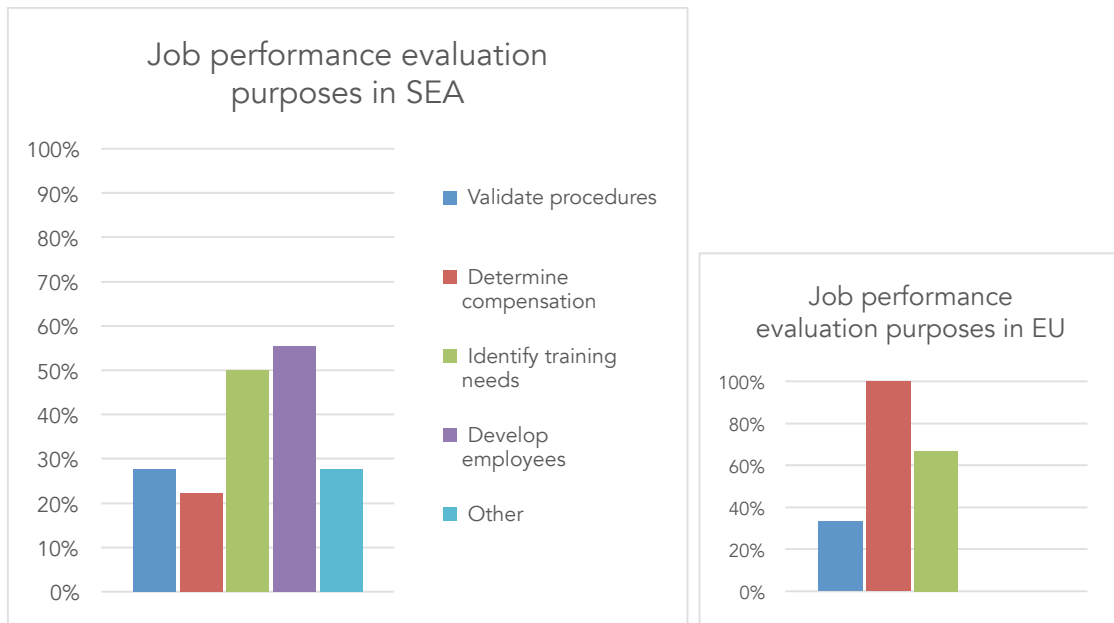


Figure 12: Job performance evaluation purposes

As for the regularity of the aforementioned performance evaluations, 84% of the SEA respondents (more specifically, the entirety of the Cambodian participating HEIs as well as all three Laotian universities, two thirds of the Thai institutions, and almost all of the Vietnamese) indicated that these take place yearly, while a noteworthy 31% referred as well to other frequency ranges, in particular, twice a year (as mentioned by three Thai as well as the Laotian universities). A fourth university in Thailand indicated also that they are conducted “very regularly when there is a need to do so, especially at present”.

On the European side, responses concerning regularity of job performance evaluations were equally distributed: one university indicated that they are conducted on a yearly basis, a second institution alluded to every two years, and the remaining third one referred to alternative options, where a two-level system is applied for the academic staff performance assessment. More in detail, the Lithuanian institution refers:

- A long-term (five years) performance assessment is organised to show if the person complies with the minimum qualification requirements for the position. Academic staff may be appraised to a higher academic position or higher academic title taking into account the results of individual research or teaching activities.

Academic staff may be appraised to a higher academic position or higher academic title taking into account the results of individual research or teaching activities.

- A short-term assessment in which academic staff results achieved during a two-year period in research, teaching and other university activities are annually assessed in order to calculate the annual bonus (additional payment to salary). The bonus can be up to 100% of the basic salary. There is no unified job performance evaluation procedure for administrative staff at the moment. All departments have their job performance evaluation procedure.

With reference to the people involved in these evaluations, the overall picture in both SEA and Europe, except for some minor differences, is quite similar. In the former case, 95% of the respondents indicated that it is either the dean or the head of administration who is at the forefront of this procedure —remark upheld by the entirety of the Cambodian, Thai, and Laotian universities as well as by almost all of the Vietnamese participating HEIs.

Additionally, 68% of the SEA respondents mentioned that this is conducted by peers (such is just the case of two thirds of the Thai institutions, one university in Cambodia and almost all of the Vietnamese participants), and 58% by the rector, as stated by all four Cambodian universities, two thirds of the Vietnamese and half of the Thai respondents. Further comments on the subject pointed out alternative systems; such is the case of Thailand where the administrative board is also involved in the process, as indicated by one of the universities.

On the European side, all three participating HEIs affirmed that it is either the dean or the head of administration who is in charge of this measure. Two of the EU universities also mentioned that peers can be involved as well. The rector, as well as all those responsible for services/departments and all hierarchical superiors, may also be involved in the evaluation processes in the Portuguese case. Particular attention must be paid to the Lithuanian case, where the evaluation of academic staff is carried out by the deans of the faculties and that of the administrative staff is placed in the hands of the heads of the departments.

In this connection, both Asian and European participating institutions lead to similar outcomes as far as job performance evaluation practices are concerned. Thus, feedback on the evaluations is given to employees for improvement as indicated by 68% of the SEA respondents, more specifically, by three of the

four Cambodian universities, as well as all three Laotian institutions, almost all of the Thai, and two of the Vietnamese participants; on the European side, the three respondents agreed to this statement. The fact that evaluations are based on multiple sources (supervisors, self-reporting, co-workers, students' surveys, etc.) is also mentioned by 84% of the Asian participating HEIs, which translates into the entirety of the Cambodian, Thai, and Laotian universities as well as half of the Vietnamese institutions; this practice was also identified by all European respondents. Disparities are more acute when comparing other job evaluation-related practices, e.g., on the SEA side, evaluations based on quantifiable objectives are alluded to by 89% of the respondents (the entirety of the Cambodian, Thai, and Laotian participants as well as two thirds of the Vietnamese). Employees' personal goals is identified by 21% of the institutions but both practices are equally common in two out of the three participating European HEIs as shown in Figure 13 below:

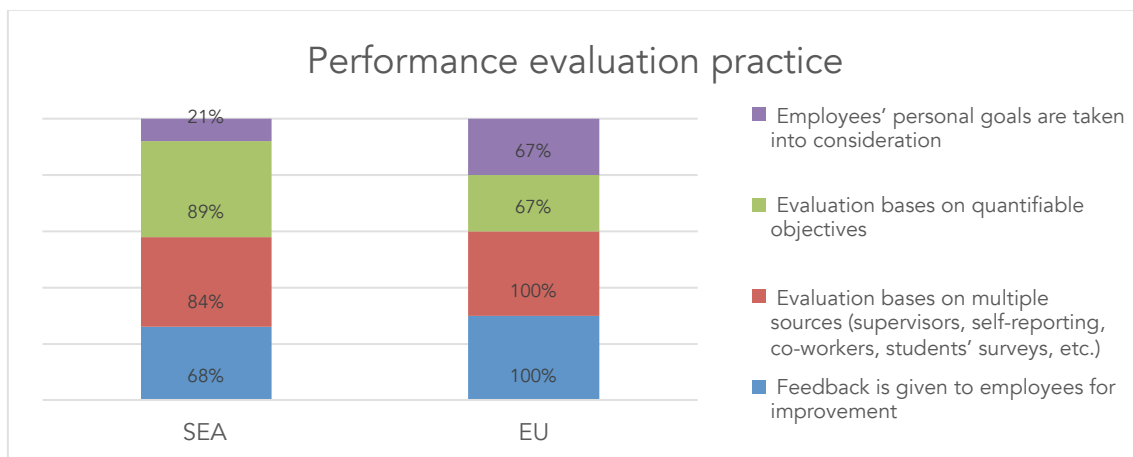


Figure 13: Performance evaluation practice

On another level, the situation concerning universities measuring employees' satisfaction is very similar in both Asian and European participating HEIs. In the former case, just over half (58%) of cases affirmed that their respective institutions do apply this approach in practice, however, all four Cambodian respondents as well as two thirds of the Vietnamese participants dissented here. Further comments revealed that one university in Thailand indicated using questionnaires, one Vietnamese university mentioned labour federation meetings, and the Laotian universities alluded to forms and questionnaires.

On the European scene, this very practice is referred to as an actual fact by two of the three respondents. Particularly, in the Lithuanian case, employees' satisfaction (administrative staff) is discussed during job performance evaluations, while a specific survey related to employees' goodwill is used by the Italian institution.

Amongst the main aspects promoted by the target institutions as far as staff skills improvement is concerned, there are several divergences between SEA and European institutions. Employees' training, involvement in decision-making at all levels as well as team building are clear priorities for the majority of the SEA HEIs, being identified by 84%, 74% and 58% of the respondents, respectively. It is worth noting that the first two practices are promoted in all of the target PCs. Autonomous decision-making and problem-solving teams are pointed out by 47% of the participating HEIs. It should be highlighted that gender balance and inclusion of groups with specific difficulties are the least promoted practices (26% and 21% of the respondents, respectively).

On the European side, all respondents alluded to promote employees' training and problem-solving teams. Two HEIs indicated team building as well, and only the Lithuanian institution answered in the affirmative as the remaining practices are concerned.

For complete results, see Figure 14 below:

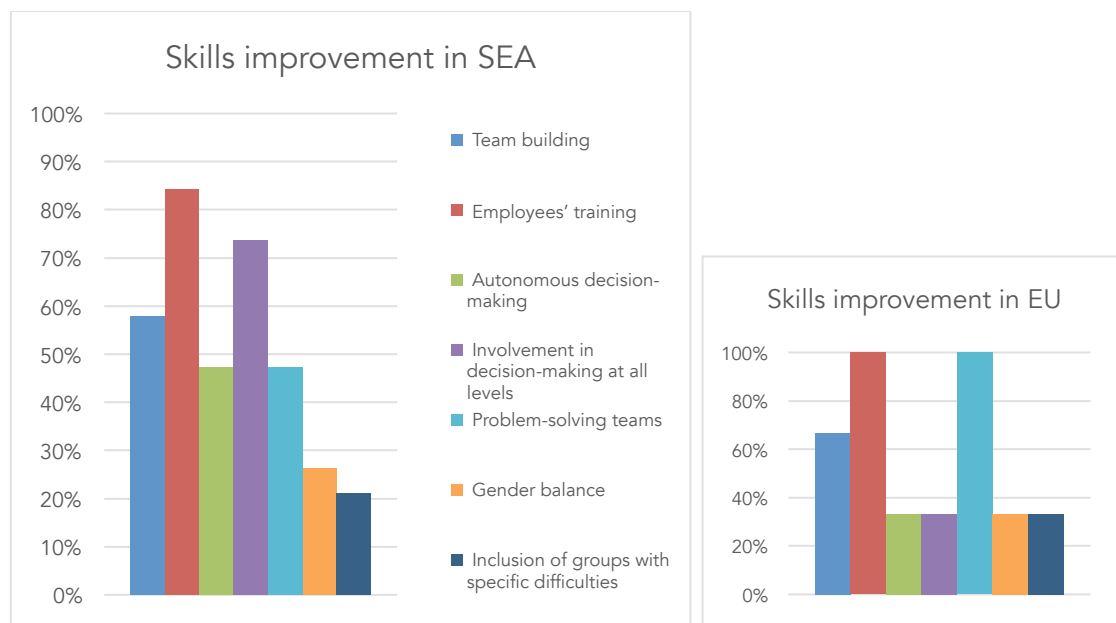


Figure 14: Skills improvement

As it emerges from the results, training schemes are as diverse as the countries and institutions included in the current study. However, it appears that there is a growing awareness of the importance of staff training as a crucial part of success as far as HRM in the participating HEIs is concerned. Indeed, according to the survey output, a great majority of the SEA respondents (84%) affirmed that their universities do provide or support employees' training both in-house and outside of the workplace. Employees' training only in-house comprises 10% of cases, which represent one university in Cambodia and another one in

Vietnam. Finally, 5% of the SEA respondents affirmed that their institutions do not provide any sort of training whatsoever, as indicated by one of the participating HEIs in Vietnam.

In this regard, as for the European HEIs' scene, two of the three respondents affirmed that their universities do provide or support employees' training both in-house and outside of the workplace, and only in-house is identified by the third university.

When considering the different types of training options offered by universities to their staff, SEA respondents give pre-eminence to foreign languages, computer related knowledge and pedagogy, as indicated by 89%, 84% and 79% of the SEA respondents, respectively. Particularly, the entirety of the Vietnamese and Laotian HEIs as well as almost all of the Cambodian and the Thailand participants do offer foreign languages; all of the Cambodian and the Laotian participating universities, almost all of the Thai institutions, and two thirds in Vietnam offer training on computer related knowledge; and the entirety of the Vietnamese, Thai, and Laotian respondents offer pedagogy. Other options outlined in the survey follow closely, as research methodology is offered in all three Laotian institutions, almost all of the ones in Cambodia and Thailand, and one third of the Vietnamese. Transversal skills (e.g., communication abilities, leadership, team building, etc.) are also pointed out by the whole cluster of the Laotian participants, almost all of the Thai respondents, half of the Cambodian, and one third of the respondents in Vietnam. Institutional management (e.g. strategy, finance, HR, etc.) is likewise identified by the entirety of the Cambodian and the Laotian HEIs as well as almost all of the Thai, and one third of the participating HEIs in Vietnam.

On the European side, foreign languages, computer-related knowledge, transversal skills and institutional management (e.g. strategy, finance, HR...) are indicated by all the three respondents. As for the remaining options, it is worth mentioning that both the Lithuanian and Portuguese institutions include all of them in their offer, while in the Italian case, pedagogy, research methodology and project management are absent. See Figure 15 below for complete results:

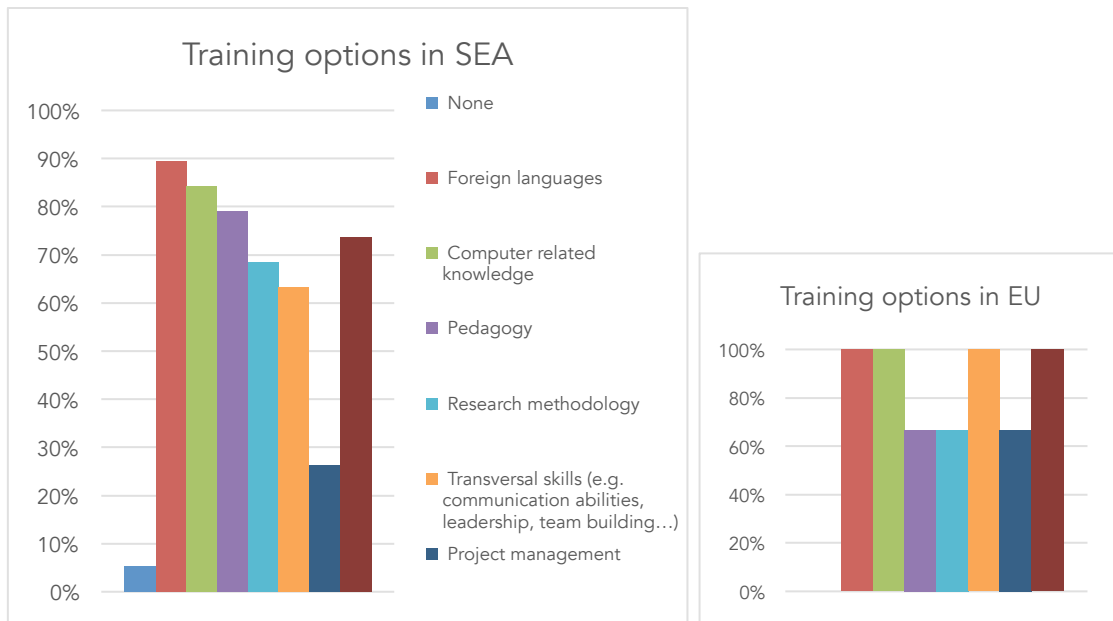


Figure 15: Training options

In terms of opportunities for promotion of employees in the participating HEIs, answers are significantly uneven in both regions. Thus, a vast majority (89%) of the SEA respondents indicated that employees do have good opportunities for promotion in their respective institutions (with the only exception of one third of the Vietnamese participants), whereas only one of the three institutions on the European side is of that view.

When it comes to promotion decisions which are more frequently applied in the participating HEIs, the answers remain quite contrasting. In the SEA region, merit or performance rating alone is identified by 58% of the respondents (which translates into all three of the Laotian participants, almost all of the Cambodian universities, half of the Thai institutions, and one third of the Vietnamese). Management decision on a case-by-case basis comprises 47% of cases, as indicated by the entirety of the Cambodian respondents, half of the Vietnamese, and one third of the ones in Thailand. And finally, seniority only if merit is equal is supported by 37% of the SEA participants, more specifically, by the entirety of the Cambodian universities, one third of the ones in Vietnam, and one institution in Thailand.

On the European side, all the respondents consider merit or performance rating alone, while seniority also counts in the Italian institution and management decision on a case-by-case basis is also considered in the Portuguese case.

As to the question on whether HEIs are able to retain essential employees at the academic and administrative levels, the entirety of the Asian participating HEIs considered that their universities actually implement this measure. Two of the three European respondents shared this view as well.

With respect to the differences in the perception between working either at a public or a private HEI, 74% of SEA respondents considered private institutions a less engaging place to work at in their country, as stated by the entirety of the Cambodian and Laotian participants as well as by half of the participating universities in Vietnam, and two thirds of the ones in Thailand. The outcome within the European participating HEIs is also very similar; only in the Italian case, private HEIs seem to be preferred. In this line, one Vietnamese university alluded to policy and salary as factors for preferring private HEIs as employers.

Finally, when compared to companies, public HEIs are preferred as a more attractive place to work at according to two of the three European respondents (in the Lithuanian views, companies may be preferred) versus the 37% of cases on the SEA side (according to all three participating institutions in Laos, almost all of those in Cambodia, and half of the ones in Thailand as well as in Vietnam), who regard working at a company as a better choice rather than at public HEIs in their respective countries. As further explained, in Thailand, high ranking, and good reputation internationally in Health Science Research are indicated by one of the universities as reasons for preferring companies as employers; providing higher salary is the main reason indicated by another Thai university. In Vietnam, higher salary is also the main incentive for this preference.

8. Benefits

As has been well proved, performance management is more than just performance related pay (PRP). Certainly, in European institutions financial reward is usually linked to individual contribution and inheres in HEI's performance management systems. But even though linking personal pay to personal performance is, undoubtedly, an effective motivator for some people in some circumstances, the use of PRP remains uncommon in HE other than at senior levels, for a number of reasons, i.a., a reluctance to weaken the collegial ethos that exists in many European HEIs, the potential difficulty of measuring individual performance in teaching roles, limited funds available for discretionary pay awards, and the absence of appropriately developed management structures and competence to deliver credible assessments.

Yet, non-financial rewards may be more motivating than individual financial rewards for part of the staff (e.g., for academic staff, alternatives to PRP which are often used include, i.a., additional study leave, relief from teaching duties, etc.).

Against this background, except for 16% of cases which answered in the negative on the SEA side, the remaining participating HEIs as a whole acknowledged that social protection is indeed included in their remuneration. All European HEIs answered in the affirmative.

An in-depth review of wider aspects of this particular issue shows that all the representatives from the EU affirmed that their respective social protection coverage systems comprise health insurance, pension plan and maternity leave. On the SEA side, the entirety of the respondents who answered in the positive here alluded to have maternity leave (more specifically, the entirety of the Laotian and Cambodian participating universities as well as almost all of the universities from Thailand and half of the institutions in Vietnam). This is followed by pension plans as indicated also by 87% of the HEIs—which was endorsed particularly by all three Laotian universities and almost all of the Thai and Vietnamese participants. Health insurance is also identified in 73% of the cases (except for the Cambodian respondents in full).

In the particular case of the duration of the maternity leave, the scenario differs widely from one country to another, for there are just as many models as there are participating countries, e.g. in Cambodia it can be extended to up to 3 months, in Thailand it goes from 6 to 24 weeks, in Vietnam it has a duration of 24 weeks, in Lithuania it is expanded up to 106 weeks, and in both Portugal and Italy it comprises 20 weeks.

As for further benefits offered to employees within the participating HEIs, Asian participating HEIs offer a complex picture where tuition assistance and life insurance take the lead, as indicated by 68% and 63% of the respondents, respectively; child care assistance is pointed out by 37% of institutions; and free or subsidised housing is specified by 21%. On the European side, answers are quite varied, with the Lithuanian institution leading the variety of benefits offered (including tuition assistance, salary premium instead of benefits, and other unspecified options). In the Portuguese case, only subsidised meals are pointed out while in the Italian example no specific benefit is indicated.

Looking at the detail, life insurance, tuition assistance, child care assistance, and salary premium instead of benefits are the most highlighted benefits by all three Laotian partner HEIs. The entirety of the Cambodian participating

universities focuses on tuition assistance as almost all the institutions in Thailand and most of the ones in Vietnam. On the other hand, free or subsidised housing is included as a benefit in one Cambodian university social protection system, another one in Vietnam’s and two universities in Thailand. Subsidised meals is only mentioned by one institution in Vietnam.

Besides, in Cambodia, New Year’s Day and *Phchum Ben* (“Spirit Commemoration Ceremony”) incentives are indicated as further benefits. In Thailand, health care, sport related actions and free Internet & Wi-Fi are also cited. In Vietnam, 13th-month salary and bonus payments in summer, national holidays and university’s anniversaries complement the record. For further results, see below Figure 16:

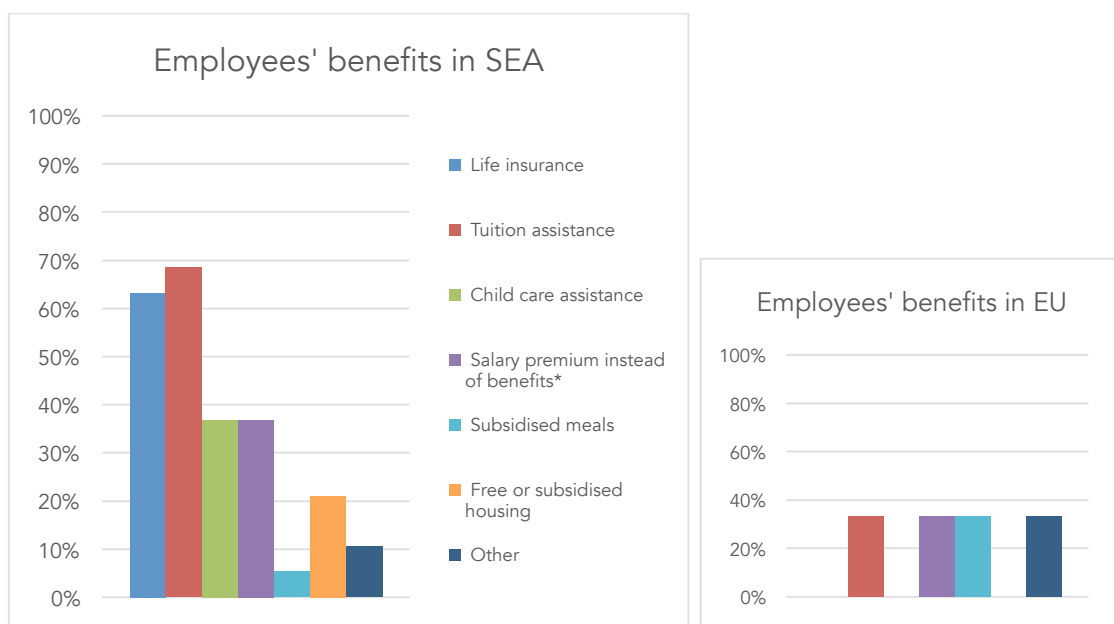


Figure 16: Employees’ benefits

It is worth noting that, in the aforementioned particular case of salary premium instead of benefits, 42% of the SEA respondents affirmed that employees do share its costs —specially, as stated by all three Laotian partner HEIs as well as half of the institutions in Vietnam and one third of the ones in Thailand.

9. Labour unions

In the context of the EU, the majority of HEIs have one or more labour unions (LUs) available for the collective representation of staff. Amongst their many endeavours, they must be provided with the opportunity to take part and comment on the institution’s draft strategy. Not to mention the advantages and benefits that result from giving such an extensive workforce the

opportunity to contribute their own ideas and proposals. In summary, much has been achieved but much still remains to be done.

In line with this, 58% of the Asian participating HEIs replied in the negative as for the existence of labour unions in their universities, which translates into the entirety of the Laotian and the Cambodian institutions as well as two thirds of the Thai institutions. Conversely, all Vietnamese HEIs affirmed to have LU presence. As for the European respondents, both Lithuanian and Italian HEIs answered in the affirmative while the Portuguese representative affirmed not to count on LU at the university.

Regarding SEA respondents' view, LUs are considered to contribute to:

- Raising managers' awareness about HR-related issues and problems, as stated by 53% of respondents, according to the entirety of the Vietnamese and Laotian participating HEIs as well as one in Thailand.
- Raising policy makers' awareness about HR-related issues and problems in public HE, according to 42% of the respondents, which comprise two thirds of the Vietnamese universities, all Laotian institutions and another one in Thailand.
- Reforms at the institutional level, as identified by 37% of the participants, specifically half of the Vietnamese institutions, all Laotian HEIs and one again in Thailand.
- Reforms at the national level, as reported by 16%, which implies one third of the Vietnamese universities as well as one more in Thailand.

European participating HEIs' perception about LUs contribution, however, is equally divided between raising managers' awareness about HR-related issues and reforms at the institutional level.

Whereas the entirety of European participating institutions considered that LUs can play a more significant role in HRM, SEA HEIs happen to struggle amongst whether they are actually relevant, according to 42% of respondents (that is, all three Laotian partner universities, half of the Vietnamese and one third in Thailand), or no relevant at all, as indicated by 16% of cases (one third of the Thai participants as well as one more in Vietnam). The remaining 42% simply claim that they do not know, which is just the case of all four Cambodian institutions, two Vietnamese and two other Thai participants. See Figure 17 below:

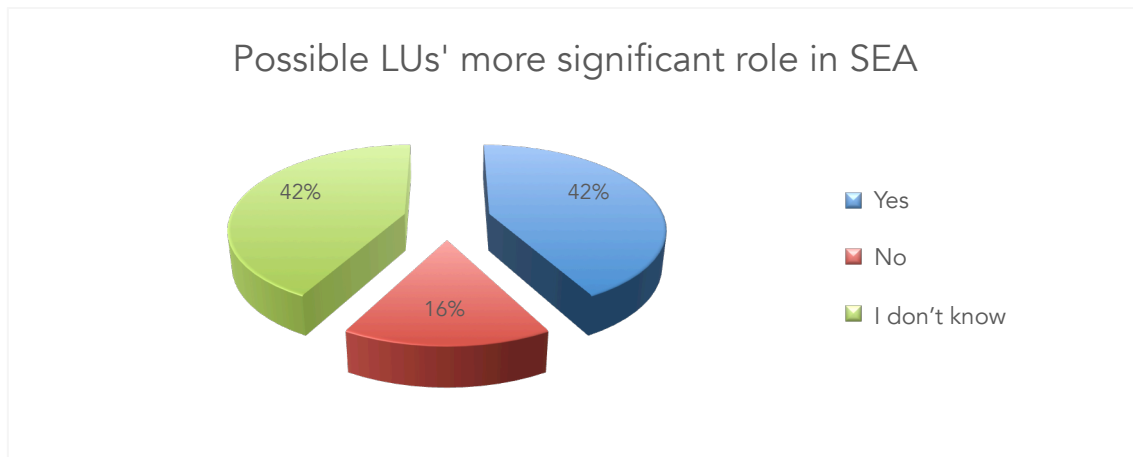


Figure 17: Possible LUs' more significant role in SEA

Additionally, two Thai universities considered a further role of LUs in helping to establishing a better network communication system with all university staff to make a right understanding about the university policy, and protecting the rights of the employees, respectively. In Vietnam, protection of interests is also cited. In Lithuania, strengthening LUs and a better dialogue between them and the administration are alluded to as advantages. In Italy, they are understood as a means of representing the needs of the personnel in specific topics like good valuation and additional payment.

Further comments in relation to HRM within the participating HEIs by country:

- Cambodia:
Universities coincide in the need of producing HRM manuals, reforming recruitment procedure, improving incentives for teaching and research, and developing a HRM system.
- Thailand:
In some cases further efforts in managing the relation between the various types of employees, thus ensuring Senates speaking for the benefit of all the employees, are cited as necessary measures.
- Vietnam:
Enhancing the academic level of both academic and administrative staff; and strengthening the link between teaching and scientific research in order to raise quality in both activities are cited as further desirable measures.

- Lithuania:
Current changes in HRM at the university level which are highlighted are the launch of structural changes of academic units in 2016, expected to be completed by the end of 2017 (the next step being reviewing administrative staff structure); and the implementation of twenty internal projects aimed at improving the University performance, five of which are related to HRM, as detailed in answer to question no. 2.

- Italy:
It would be desirable, at both the national and the university level, to find further opportunities for improving HRM, especially as the legal framework for education and professional training is concerned.

Annex 1. HR4Asia Survey on HRM at HEIs

HR4Asia Survey on Human Resource Management at HEIs

This questionnaire aims at identifying current practice and needs as regards Human Resource Management in both SEA and European participating HEIs. For ease of reference, questions are grouped under the following six sections:

1. Policy
2. HRM general practice
3. Recruitment
4. Motivation & promotion
5. Benefits
6. Labour unions

University:	Country:
Contact person:	Position:
Contact data Tel:	e-mail:

Policy

1. Does Human Resource Management (HRM) constitute a strategic priority for your university?
 Yes
 No
2. Have any HRM reforms been approved/implemented in your university / in your country in the last 5 years?
 Yes, in my university.
 Yes, in my country
 No
If yes, please indicate below these reforms:
3. What are the main HRM priorities of your university for the upcoming years?
4. What are the main priorities in the area of HRM in Higher Education in your country?

HRM general practice

5. Does your university have written policies in the area of HRM?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, please, specify which of the following HR aspects are included:
- Recruitment
 - Attendance
 - Scheduling
 - Leave entitlement (e.g. holidays, maternity...)
 - Performance evaluation
 - Health and safety
 - Other. Please, specify:
6. Does your university use a computer-based system for HRM?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, please, specify which of the following HR functions are IT-supported:
- Recruitment
 - Attendance
 - Scheduling
 - Leave entitlement (e.g. holidays, maternity...)
 - Performance evaluation
 - Health and safety
 - Other. Please, specify:
7. How is communication with employees made?
- E-mail
 - Newsletter
 - Face-to-face
 - Other. Please, specify:
8. Does the university have a formal protocol for health and safety?
- Yes
 - No
9. Does the university provide health and safety training for employees?
- Yes
 - Yes, to certain employees only. Please, specify:
 - No
10. Please indicate which of the following aspects constitutes a HRM priority for your university
- Evaluation of employees' performance
 - Measurement of occupational safety
 - Keeping track of essential factors for university success
 - Student's satisfaction

- Employees' absenteeism
- Gender balance
- Other. Please, specify:

11. Do you consider that gender balance exists in your university staff?

- Yes
- No

Recruitment

12. Do you consider that your university attracts essential employees at the academic and administrative levels?

- Yes
- No

If no, please indicate why:

13. How does your university recruit its staff?

- Ministerial online adverts
- University online adverts
- Newspaper adverts
- Employment agencies
- Referrals from current staff
- Other. Please, specify:

14. Does selection in your university emphasise characteristics and abilities required for providing high quality services?

- Yes
- No

15. Do selection processes in your university use behavioural-based interviews to identify applicants' strategic competencies?

- Yes
- No

16. Are values of the university and relevant faculties discussed with applicants in selection processes?

- Yes
- No

17. What percentage of the university staff is assigned to a job which has undergone a formal job analysis?

18. Do you consider that the academic staff has the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out their job in the best way?

- Yes

No

If no, please indicate why:

- Low standards in recruitment criteria
- Lack of incentives
- Other. Please, specify:

19. Do you consider that administrative staff has the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their job in the best way?

Yes

No

If no, please indicate why:

- Low standards in recruitment criteria
- Lack of training to improve
- Lack of incentives
- Other. Please, specify:

20. Do you consider that management staff has the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their job in the best way?

Yes

No

If no, please indicate why:

- Low standards in recruitment criteria
- Lack of training to improve
- Lack of incentives
- Other. Please, specify:

21. Could you, please, rate the following skills of your university staff? (where 5 means: most of the staff have the relevant skill, and 1 means: most of the staff do not have the relevant skill):

Skills / Staff segment	5	4	3	2	1
Communication skills					
Computer literacy					
Leadership					
Team-working skills					
Willingness to implement changes					
Command of foreign languages					

Motivation & promotion

22. Do you consider that academic staff in your university is sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance?

Yes

No

If no, please specify why:

- Low salaries
- Too many hours of work
- Lack of career perspectives
- Lack of research opportunities
- Lack of reward mechanisms
- Other. Please, indicate:

23. Do you consider that administrative staff in your university is sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance?

- Yes
- No

If no, please specify why:

- Low salaries
- Too many hours of work
- Lack of career perspectives
- Lack of training options
- Lack of reward mechanisms
- Other. Please, indicate:

24. Do you consider that management staff in your university is sufficiently motivated to carry out their tasks and improve their performance?

- Yes
- No

If no, please specify why:

- Low salaries
- Too many hours of work
- Lack of training options
- Lack of reward mechanisms
- Other. Please, indicate:

25. Does your university carry out job performance evaluations?

- Yes
- No

If no, please indicate the purpose

- Validate procedures
- Determine compensation
- Identify training needs
- Develop employees
- Other. Please, specify:

26. Please indicate the regularity of evaluations:

- Yearly
- Every two years
- Other. Please, specify:

27. Please indicate who is involved in the evaluations:

- Dean/head of administration
 - Rector
 - Peers
 - Other. Please, specify:
28. In job performance evaluations, please indicate whether any of the following applies:
- Feedback is given to employees for improvement
 - Evaluation bases on multiple sources (supervisors, self-reporting, co-workers, students' surveys, etc.)
 - Evaluation bases on quantifiable objectives
 - Employees' personal goals are taken into consideration
29. Does your university measure employees' satisfaction in any way?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, please, specify how:
30. Does your university promote any of the following?
- Team building
 - Employees' training
 - Autonomous decision-making
 - Involvement in decision-making at all levels
 - Problem-solving teams
 - Gender balance
 - Inclusion of groups with specific difficulties
31. Does your university provide or support employees' training in-house/outside of the workplace?
- Yes, both
 - Only in-house
 - No
32. What type of training options does your university offer to its staff?
- None
 - Foreign languages
 - Computer related knowledge
 - Pedagogy
 - Research methodology
 - Transversal skills (e.g. communication abilities, leadership, team building...)
 - Project management
 - Institutional management (e.g. strategy, finance, HR...)
 - Other. Please, specify:
33. Do employees have good opportunities for promotion in your university?
- Yes

No

34. Which of the following promotion decisions is applied in your university more often?

- Merit or performance rating alone
- Seniority only if merit is equal
- Seniority
- Personal relations
- Management determines on a case-by-case basis

35. Do you consider that your university is able to retain essential employees at the academic and administrative levels?

- Yes
- No

If no, please indicate why:

36. Do you consider that private HEIs constitute more attractive institutions to work at in your country in comparison with public HEIs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate why:

37. Do you consider that companies constitute more attractive places to work at in your country in comparison with public HEIs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate why:

Benefits

38. Is social protection included in your remuneration?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate whether it comprises:

- Health insurance
- Pension plan
- Maternity leave
- Please indicate the duration of the maternity leave (number of weeks):

39. Please indicate which of the following benefits are offered to employees in your university:

- Life insurance
- Tuition assistance
- Child care assistance
- Salary premium instead of benefits*
- Subsidised meals

- Free or subsidised housing
- Other. Please, specify:
- * Do employees share the costs in this case?
 - Yes
 - No

Labour unions

40. Are there labour unions in your university?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, please indicate whether, in your opinion, labour unions contribute to:
- Raising managers' awareness about HR related issues and problems
 - Raising policy makers' awareness about HR related issues and problems in public HE
 - Reforms at the institutional level
 - Reforms at the national level
41. Do you consider that labour unions can play a more significant role in HRM?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
- If yes, please specify:
42. Please state any further comment you may have in relation to HRM in your university and country.

Annex 2. Acronyms

Acronyms used in this report are explained where they first appear in the text. For convenience, these are summarised here in alphabetical order:

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning

EU: European Union

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

HE: Higher Education

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HR: Human Resources

HRM: Human Resource Management

IT: Information Technology

LU: Labour Unions

MoE: Ministry of Education

MoEYS: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

ODA: Official Development Assistance

PC: Partner Country

PCU: Partner Country University

PRP: Performance Related Pay

SEA: Southeast Asia

Annex 3. Main references

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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