Agriculture remains to be the predominant provider of job opportunities in most ASEAN Member States (AMS) as about 450 million people depend on it for livelihood. Developing the competencies of agricultural workers is therefore essential in raising agricultural productivity and in adopting innovative farming processes and technologies, particularly with the aim of upgrading and greening the sector.

The ASEAN economic integration is expected to promote freer mobility of skilled workers within the region particularly from the agriculture sector. There is therefore a need to focus efforts on enabling agricultural workers to have equitable access to high quality learning and skills recognition that make them competitive in the growing and changing ASEAN labor markets.

In 2010, the ASEAN Leaders enunciated their commitment to “develop national skills frameworks in AMS through sharing of experiences and best practices as a strategy to strengthen human resource development and management and to enable member States to raise their respective levels of skills standards, as an incremental approach towards an ASEAN skills recognition framework” (ASEAN, 2010). Responding to this call, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), during its Second High Officials Meeting (HOM) on Southeast Asia – Technical Vocational Education and Training (SEA-TVET) held in May 2016 in Bali, Indonesia agreed that a regional and national qualification reference framework and assurance framework are necessary to harmonize and internationalize TVET in Southeast Asia. Towards this end, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEAMEO SEARCA) is requested to assist in developing competency standards and certification systems for agricultural workers in the region.

RATIONALE

OBJECTIVES

1. Initiate mutual recognition of competency certifications issued by ASEAN member states to its agricultural workers, and

2. Develop recommendations for the Southeast Asian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (SEA-TVET) High Officials pertaining to the promotion of skills recognition of agricultural workers the region.

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

National SEA-TVET representatives, Ministries of Labor, and national agencies and sectors concerned with agricultural labor competencies and standards.
The two-day workshop will have four major sessions. The sessions are as follows:

**SESSION 1** will set the context through a presentation of the state of play among AMS in developing competency standards and competency certification for agricultural workers and the gaps and challenges to be addressed. It will also include discussion on the initiatives of ASEAN and the International Labor Organization (ILO) on the matter.

**SESSION 2** will cover presentations of competent bodies of selected countries (Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia) on their competency certification schemes.

**SESSION 3** will be a panel discussion on experiences, issues, and lessons in promoting competency certification for agricultural workers.

**SESSION 4** will be a facilitated plenary discussion on recommendations to SEA-TVET HOM to accelerate the process of skills recognition for agricultural workers in the ASEAN region.

**RESOURCE SPEAKERS/ DISCUSSANTS**

Representative/s of ASEAN Secretariat and International Labor Organization (ILO); competent bodies from Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines (TESDA), and Malaysia that are implementing competency certification for agricultural workers; SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (SEAMEO VOCTECH); and representatives from the farmers’ organization, the private sector, agricultural professional association, and the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute.