Feedback of the working group on National policies and instruments (WG 2)

1. In terms of opportunities for collaboration between the Swiss Institutions with the different countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand & Vietnam), all the country representatives reported that they have supportive policies in place and there is an openness for collaboration.

2. In terms of the challenges, they were summarised under the following three aspects:

   i. **Access**
      - It is important to identify the right entity or partner organisation to formally approach regarding the collaboration initiative.
      - This is due to the fact that there are multiple funding agencies in these countries.
      - Ideally a national focal point that has an overarching mandate or role in expanding international collaboration should be identified.
      - Sufficient lead time should also be provided to roll out the collaboration programme as several levels of approvals and endorsements may be required particularly in a Government to Government context.
      - In Malaysia the national focal point proposed was the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation or the Ministry of Higher Education.
      - Similarly in Indonesia it was proposed that the national focal point is the Ministry of Science.

   ii. **Talent**
      - Recognising that the researchers with mutual interest in the areas of research are the prime movers of effective collaboration, sufficient attention and resources should be allocated to bring relevant researchers together to discuss and identify a common agenda and focus areas for collaboration.
      - Avenues to forge researcher linkages such as workshops etc. should be organised.

   iii. **Mutual interest and commitment**
      - A well-defined funding mechanism that takes into account the interest of the different parties would be paramount to forge mutual interest and commitment.