



ASEAN COMMON COMPETENCY PROGRAM (ACCP)



**TRIAL CERTIFICATION TEST - SEWING OPERATOR LEVEL I
CONDUCTED BY AFTEX CAMBODIA (GMAC)
22 MAY 2010**

Reported by GMAC

I. INTRODUCTION

Common competencies for the ASEAN work force is needed to create a basis for integrated production and encourage development of skilled regional labour pool. **The ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement (ACE) Project** is providing technical assistance and support to enhance private sector competitiveness and economic integration within the Southeast Asian region. ACE supports the growth of both the tourism and textile/garment supply chains, which transects multiple countries in ASEAN.

ACE together with AFTEX established a Skills Task Force and proposed common competencies for AFTEX members' labor pool. ACE is continuing to coordinate the Skills Task Force and work with AFTEX member associations and Partner Training Institutions to adapt, develop and adopt common competencies and certification processes for the regional industry.

The activity called *ASEAN Common Competence Program (ACCP)* was established on May 2009 and become one of the ASEAN work force development activities, ***with an objective to certify and register competent workers/employees within ASEAN countries and allow the region to be able to develop a skilled labour database.***

The *ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries (AFTEX)* has approved common competencies for five textile and garment industry job positions and is piloting a scheme for certifying workers/employees in those positions. The five positions selected for the ASEAN Common Competency Program are:

- Sewing Machine Operator
- Sewing Machine Mechanic
- Sewing Machine Supervisor
- Merchandiser
- Pattern maker

II. CAMBODIA TRIAL CERTIFICATION TEST

1. Program Promotion

AFTEX Cambodia (GMAC) promoted this program by sending an e-mail announcement out to all member factories. Phone calls and direct visits to factories were also made.

2. About The Test

The first trial certification test for the position of Sewing Operator Level I was conducted on 22 May 2010 at the Cambodian Garment Training Center, a training arm of GMAC. There were 17 candidates joining the test, 14 of whom were from factories, 2 from the public and 1 from NGO. There were 4 assessors overseeing the examination and grading the results. They were also assisted by an Occupational Health and Safety person from a factory.

3. Pre-Test Orientation

Before the test, Cambodia Skill Task Force member Mr. Kaing Monika provided a brief background and objectives of the ACCP. Then the Lead Assessor Mr. Tim Savan, who is also a Senior Trainer of GMAC, gave a pre-test orientation to all candidates. The orientation aimed at making candidates well familiar with the testing process and timeframe as well as key areas to be assessed. That was also to make candidates feel relaxed and give the opportunity for them to ask questions and test the machines in advance.



4. Actual Assessment Test

When the actual test started, 3 candidates were tested at a time which took around 45 minutes on average. That included practical sewing skills and verbal interview to test candidates' knowledge of the job.

There were 3 sewing exercises and for each exercise, candidates were given the opportunity to repeat it for 3 times and selected the best result. Questionnaire interview was conducted right after completing the 3 sewing exercises. On a different note in assessing the candidates' knowledge, the assessors observed their activities when starting the machines because the machines were left unready to use. They needed to get the machines ready themselves.



In order to be certified as competent in Sewing Operation Level I, candidates must effectively perform a series of sewing operations as the followings:

- **Sewing exercise 1** (Time allowed: 3 minutes)
 1. Place cut pieces under presser foot and position needle $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from fabric edge;
 2. Sew 5 parallel lines equidistant apart on each of four sides with no thread trimming

- **Sewing exercise 2** (Time allowed: 22 seconds)
 1. Fold fabric in half and mark a center position at the fold;
 2. Sew two straight diagonals radiating out from the marked center to points one centimeter from each edge.

- **Sewing exercise 3** (Time allowed: 3 minutes)
 1. Place cut pieces under presser foot and position needle $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from right edge;
 2. Sew 5 lines by turning fabric with needle pierced at each corner;
 3. Thread trimming.

5. Assessment Results

After the test was completed with all candidates, all the assessors met to review and discuss the results. After final assessment, **13** candidates were judged as "**Competent**" while the rest **4** were judged as "**Not yet competent**" due to poor sewing quality and timing failure. The 4 will be advised to join again at the next round of test.

However, it was observed by assessors that failure of the 4 candidates could be as a result of fear, feeling nervous and not feeling concentrated.

6. Plenary Meeting

After the final assessment for all candidates, a plenary meeting was held between the assessors and AFTEX Cambodia. The assessors submitted the result to AFTEX Cambodia in their capacity as the certification body.