



LAO PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

**EDUCATION AND SPORTS SECTOR
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2025**

Vientiane, October 2020



Lao People Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity



Ministry of Education and Sports

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PART I
EDUCATION AND SPORTS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2021-2025

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Preamble

The ESSDP 2021-25 has been developed at a critical and difficult time due to COVID-19. The pandemic has created difficulties in pursuing the level and scope of consultations that were desired and the economic fall-out has created uncertainties about the level of financial support that can be provided to the education sector, both from the Government of Lao PDR and development partners. It has also created delays in finalising the 9th NSEDP and the medium-term fiscal framework. These financial challenges have been addressed by including two financial scenarios, a steady-state and an enhanced quality scenario that will require higher levels of funding. ESSDP identifies which outcomes can be fully achieved only under the higher-level enhanced quality financing scenario.

In November 2019, the Executive level ESWG identified a small number of priorities for the period 2021-25: including a refocus on primary education to improve teaching and learning; expansion of lower secondary to be more affordable and realistic; realign the skills and competencies of MoES staff; provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DESB, clusters and schools; and to enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities, particularly across the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.

The Ministry of Education and Sports will coordinate the monitoring of the progress of the implementation of the ESSDP with development partners through the ESWG Annual Joint Sector Review Missions and MoES Annual Sector Performance Reports. In addition, the midterm review and final evaluation of the plan will also be jointly carried out with development partners.

I fully trust that this document will provide guidance for government agencies at all levels and development partners in their joint efforts and collaboration toward achieving the National Development Goals of the government and achieving the implementation of education related programmes and activities that can ensure education quality based on the mandates, roles and responsibility of each level.

Vientiane, date

Minister of Ministry of Education and Sports

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The Ministry would also like to express gratitude to the Australian Embassy, European Union and UNICEF in Lao PDR their technical assistance and financial support for organizing consultation meetings for the development of Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2021-2025).

Ministry of Education and Sports

List of Acronyms

ACSEP	Annual Costed Sector Plan
ASLO	Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (instrument)
BEQUAL	Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
CACIM	Committee for Approval of Curriculum and Instructional Materials
CERE	Centre for Education Research and Evaluation
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DEB	District Education Bureau
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
DHE	Department of Higher Education
DNFE	Department of Non-Formal Education
DoF	Department of Finance of MoES
DGE	Department of General Education
DoI	Department of Inspection
DoOP	Department of Organization and Personnel
DoP	Department of Planning
DECE	Department of Early Childhood Education
DP	Development Partners
DSA	Department of Student Affairs
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
DTVET	Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan 2016-20
ESQAC	Education Quality Assurance Centre
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
FG	Focal Group (linked to ESWG)
G3	Primary grade 3
G5	Primary grade 5
GIR	Gross intake rate
GoL	Government of Lao
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HLO	High Level Outcome
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEC	Inclusive Education Centre
IFEAD	Institute for Education Administrators Development
IO	Intermediate Outcome
JSRM	Joint Sector Review Mission
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LCCI	Lao Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LDC	Least Developed Country
LECS	Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey (5 so far)
LNQF	Lao National Qualifications Framework
LESMIS	Laos Education and Sports Management Information System
LSE	Lower Secondary Education
LSIS	Lao Social Indicators Survey
LWU	Lao Women's Union
M4	Mathayom 4 – last grade of lower secondary schooling
M6	Mathayom 6 – middle grade of upper secondary schooling
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MoAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTEFF	Medium Term Fiscal Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NA	National Assembly
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NIR	Net intake rate
NPA	Not for Profit Association
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NUOL	National University of Laos
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PA	Pedagogical Advisor
PBC	Planning and Budgeting Committee
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Service
PBMIS	Planning and Budgeting Management Information System
RIES	Research Institute for Educational Sciences
SBG	School Block Grant
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Teacher Allocation Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USE	Upper Secondary Education
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program

1. Introduction

1.1. Lessons learned from ESDP 2016-20

Based on the mid-term review of ESDP 2016-20, the MPI mid-term review of the 8th NSEDP identified major issues and challenges in the education sector, as outlined below. The impact of COVID-19 is also presented in section 3.2 below.

Given the limited education budget, the education sector will face challenges to sustain support to some of the currently donor-funded interventions¹ as they close their programmes and will need to strongly prioritize its resources. The negative impact of COVID-19 on GoL 2020 revenue flows is considerable and will last for several years and place additional pressure on funding for non-wage recurrent activities. The overall priorities for the education sector are to (i) consolidate and deepen the analysis of data on education (e.g., disaggregated (including by gender, ethnicity and disability) analysis of enrolment, completion rates, dropout, transition rates and quality indicators- literacy and numeracy levels; (ii) strengthen the linkages between education, employment and other socioeconomic dimensions to guide evidence-based planning and investment; (iii) improve the efficiency of teacher deployment and placement; and (iv) develop a strategy to allocate the non-wage budget allocation, with priority to addressing key challenges as outlined in section 3.3 of ESSDP.

The 8th ESDP mid-term review identified some specific priorities for the period 2018-2020 as set out below.

- **Out-of-school children:** EMIS data needs to be reconciled with other data sets, including the international Out-of-School-Children Study² (2017), the 2015 population census and the LSIS 2017, to obtain better data on out-of-school children. Data is lacking on children with disabilities, both in and out of school. EMIS should use the Washington Group Child Functioning Questions to gather data on children with disabilities
- **Learning outcomes:** a significant increase in operating budgets is required at district level, together with further upgrading of pedagogical advisers, to better support teachers to improve enhanced teacher-student interaction.
- A strategy needs to be implemented to **improve the efficiency of teacher deployment**, reduce the number of volunteer teachers, and allow greater recruitment of new qualified graduates. A priority for utilizing the new civil-service quotas is to recruit specialist secondary teachers in mathematics, science, and information technology.
- **The shortfall in budget allocation** for the education sector in the last few years will need to be reversed. At the same time, the education sector will need to reprioritize education sector interventions to make sure limited resources are used to address most critical needs. To this end, the priorities are to (a) strengthen linkages between planning and budgeting, (b) increase the operational budget at provincial and district levels and allocate it more equitably, with increased allocations for pedagogical advisers and school monitoring, and (c) strengthen and modernize the planning and budgeting capacity and the accounting capacity of MoES. Teacher deployment efficiency needs to be significantly improved.
- **Numbers and quality of basic education graduates:** Increasing transition rates into and completion rates within lower and upper secondary education are essential. Improving the quality of post-basic graduates will require improving the basic skills and knowledge provided by primary and lower secondary education and equipping young people with the skills to function in a modern and diversifying economy. A minimum set of competencies that include literacy and numeracy standards should be developed as the prerequisite for entry into TVET programmes. TVET programmes should also be more inclusive so that everyone regardless of gender, ethnicity and disability can benefit from the programme.

¹ Examples include top-up to school block grants and school meals

² Situation analysis of out-of-school children in nine Southeast Asian countries, UNESCO 2017

- **Literacy:** Improving the quality of primary education and therefore increasing completion rates for lower secondary education, alongside targeted NFE provision will be crucial. Equivalence programmes for youth literacy and for continuous education need to be strengthened and expanded.
- **Alignment of education with NSEDP needs:** The mid-term review of the 8th NSEDP identified that across all levels, the education system needs to be made more inclusive toward children with disabilities. Many communities, parents and school personnel are not aware of the right to education of children with disabilities and teachers need training to better understand inclusive education. Improving fundamental competencies and skills of children from early childhood education to lower secondary will be a necessary priority, as the current inadequate foundational levels of numeracy and literacy are significantly undermining the effectiveness of programmes intended to improve and expand TVET and higher education services. Regular labour market surveys and tracer studies of graduates are needed. MoES needs to develop an overall human resource development plan for the education sector to support the NSEDP's aim for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The expanding contribution of the industry and service sectors to GDP also require improved quality of graduates from upper secondary schools, colleges and universities
- **Education expenditure³:** The quality and efficiency of education spending needs to be enhanced, including: (a) improving the efficiency of teacher deployment; (b) strengthening the linkage between planning and budgeting; and (c) strengthening the coordination between central and local levels on financial data collection. Fiscal constraints will remain at least until 2020. Therefore, the sector needs to determine how to use its human and financial resources more efficiently while reducing disparities. Gender equity among administrative staff needs to be improved since few women hold senior positions at PESS, DESB, and school principal levels.
- **Education financing:** The priority will be to maintain sufficient financing for ongoing 'protected' programmes, such as school block grants and textbook replenishment. MoES has limited flexibility in the use of discretionary funds. The major space for reducing disparity is to improve the efficiency of teacher deployment. However, moving teachers from one location to another is very difficult in the Lao context. Both the Teacher Allocation Committee and the Planning and Budget Committee will examine the recommendations from the ESDP 2016-20 mid-term review to identify strategies to use human and financial allocations to reduce disparities. Consideration might be given to differential use of school block grants, formula-based allocation of operational budgets to districts, and/or future DESB operating grants to target disadvantaged schools through use of an allocation formula designed to reduce disparities.
- **Evidence-based policy:** There is a need to establish a mechanism to consolidate and more fully analyse data from various sources on education and employment and synthesize results and implications for policy developers and in a way that is accessible to non-research specialists. Support is needed to institutionalise this approach across all provinces. A mechanism to monitor sector performance effectively, particularly at the policy and strategy levels, is needed to enable government and development partners to assess progress towards revised 2020 targets. An efficient Sector Performance Assessment Framework is required that also monitors sub-national implementation of central policies and strategies.

The ESSDP 2021-25 has been developed using these recommendations as a starting point. However, a major constraint to achieving the policy objectives and eight high-level outcomes is the inadequate level of government financing to the education sector. Funding levels were historically low and this prolonged under-funding is already resulting in deteriorating performance in many areas. Given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic this situation may worsen in the medium-term (See section 3.2). As a result, section 6 identifies some intermediate outcomes necessary to fully achieve the eight high-

³ More detail is in Section 7

level outcomes that cannot be implemented if the education sector's share of the government non-wage recurrent budget remains at its current low level.

1.2. Approach for the development of ESSDP 2021-25

The structure of ESSDP 2021-25 is similar to that of ESSDP 2016-20 and comes from the original theory of change identified in 2015. A results Chain for ESSDP 2021-25 is in annex 1 and this provides a schematic overview of the high-level outcomes, intermediate outcomes, strategies and key activities to achieve the overall goal of ESSDP. The consultation process for development of ESSDP 2021-25 is outlined in Annex 2. ESSDP 2021-25 focuses on reducing disparities amongst girls and boys, ethnic groups, the rich and the poor, particularly across disadvantaged districts. ESSDP 2021-25 defines disadvantaged areas/districts as those currently included in the official MoES list of 40 disadvantaged districts (see annex 3). This list will be reviewed and updated as part of the mid-term review process.

Underlying principles for the development of ESSDP 2021-25 include alignment between Part I (policy actions) and Part II (sub-sector plans) by requiring each sub-sector to explicitly address the same Part I key policy objectives, high-level outcomes and associated intermediate outcomes in their sub-sector plans. This will facilitate policy coherence.

A participatory approach involved a series of consultative meetings at various levels to gain consensus about the policy framework to underpin ESSDP 2021-25. The financing plan of ESSDP has been formulated based on two scenarios – a “steady-state” scenario that provides the basis for merely maintaining the current level of quality and service provision with no improvements in performance. It represents the ‘budget floor’ for sector requirements; and an “enhanced quality” scenario that will only be achieved if the education share of the Government's non-wage recurrent budget is substantially increased. As actual budget allocations may fall between these two the ESSDP includes an expenditure policy to guide the incremental prioritisation of the allocated budget to agreed areas such as the primary sub-sector and comprehensive staff training. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic makes funding of the “enhanced quality” scenario unlikely in the earlier years of the 2021-25 period.

2. Main achievements during 2016-20

Achievements are outlined against the five policy objectives and 11 high-level outcomes.

Policy objective 1 states that "All learners are equipped with the foundation knowledge and skills needed, including adequate safeguards for their health to either join the labour market or continue to post basic education".

Key achievements include:

- Enrolment rates for children 5 years of age increased from 70.9% in 2015-16 to 82.7% in 2019-20 which above the target of 80% by 2020.
- Primary cohort completion rates have improved from 77.9% (female 79.1%) in 2015/16 to 79.9% with completion rates of girls at 82.7% in 2019-20, higher than that of boys in 2020.
- Grade 1 repetition rate has decreased from 11.5% in 2015-16 to 6.3% in 2019-20.
- Gross enrolment rate (GER) for lower secondary students increased from 82.2% in 2015-16 to 83.3% which is lower than the target 85% in 2020. GERs for girls (81.9%) continue to lag that of boys (84.6%)
- Lower Secondary Gross Intake Rates to the last grade have slightly improved, rising from 70.4% in 2015-16 to 71.6% in 2019-20, with the GPI rising from 0.94 in 2015-16 up to a gender-equitable 0.97 in 2019-20.
- Provision of WASH in schools continued (73% of primary schools had access to water in 2020).

Policy Objective 2 aims to "Provide post -basic education that is relevant to the requirement of Laos' socio-economic growth in each period and can be integrated into and compete with labour forces within ASEAN member countries".

Key achievements include:

- Upper Secondary GER has reached 54.8% in 2019-20 increasing from 47.8% in 2015-16. However, it could not achieve the revised target of 56% set during the ESDP MTR.
- Transition from Grade 9 to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has reached 3.8% in 2019-20, which could not meet the ESDP 2020 target of 5%.
- Enrolment in TVET is rising in response to the development of courses which are more relevant to the labour market.

Policy Objective 3 states that "Human Assets Index target for exit from Least Developed Country status is achieved with reduced disparity. For example, gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity etc.".

Key achievements include:

- The educational-related targets for the HAI index have been achieved.
- In 2020 overall, secondary education GER is 71.3%, although girls lag 4% compared to boys. This target could not meet the ESDP 2020 target of 75%.
- Self-reported literacy rates were measured in 2015 as part of the population census. Literacy rates for Youth (15 – 24 years) were 92.4% (90.4% for females) against a 2020 target of 99%. Adult (15 years and above) literacy rates were 84% (79% female) against a 2020 target of 95%.

Policy Objective 4 states that the "Sector is being planned, financed and monitored to utilize resources effectively".

Key achievements include:

- Even though there is no official number of educators and administrative staff trained each year, but there are many training programmes provided under different donor funded projects. A systematic approach to monitoring who has been trained and in what is needed.
- Staff from each primary school and the VEDC have received some basic training in school-based management focussing on use of resources to implement the school development plan. However, more comprehensive school management training is required
- Education financing from the State Budget (including ODA) is 13.1% in Budget 2020, and 15.4% excluding ODA, against an ESDP 2020 target of more than 17%.

Policy Objective 5 states that "Lao sport is gradually integrated to regional and international standards".

Key achievements include:

- 30% of the Lao population participate in sports activities. However, there is no systematic data collection on sport activities.

High Level Outcome 1: Number of learners from ECE to lower secondary Grade 9 increases with special focus on the disadvantaged and ensuring gender equity.

There has been a considerable expansion of ECE services, with the percentage of the age 5 population enrolled in ECE has increased from 70.9% in 2015-16, to 82.7% in 2019-2020. This expansion has occurred across all provinces and gender equitably, with the GPI consistently falling between 0.99 and 1.01 and 142 of the 148 districts now enrolling over 60% of their age 5 population in ECE.

At primary level, between 2015-16 and 2019-2020 the national level the primary Gross Intake Rate (GIR) for entry into Grade 5 has remained constant fluctuating between 103.5% and 100.4%, and gender equitable, with the GPI consistently falling between 0.99 and 1.00. Repetition rates have fallen from 4.8% in 2015-16 to 3.1% in 2019-20. This small but important reduction will assist in reducing class sizes and overall costs in the sub-sector. Equally importantly it will assist in lowering the age of

entry for students accessing lower secondary school and may assist in their longer-term retention in school. At lower secondary level the Gross Intake Rate for entry into Grade 9 has improved, rising from 70.4% in 2015-16 to 71.6% in 2019-20, with the GPI rising from 0.94 in 2015-16 up to a gender-equitable 0.97 in 2019-20. A similar positive result has been seen in primary drop-out rates which between 2015-16 and 2019-20, fell from 4.7% to 4.1% in 2017-18 and then rose slightly to 4.3% in 2019-20. Female drop-out decreased from 4.5% in 2015-16 to 3.7% in 2019-20. Whereas male drop-out fell only 0.1% from 5.0% to 4.9% in 2019-20. Broadly this primary drop-out GPI of 0.81 means that for every four girls who drop-out of primary five boys drop-out, a worrying trend for male retention.

Alongside and in support of these improvements there has been: significant development of policy documents, revision of curricula, provision of teaching and learning manuals and teacher training which have contributed to increased enrolment and completion rates as evidenced in EMIS; the 2015 amendment to the Education Law has made lower secondary education compulsory; the establishment of the Department of Early Childhood Education; and the approval of the Strategy and Action Plan (2016–2020) for the Inclusive Education Policy.

High Level Outcome 2: Increased number of primary school children with functional literacy and numeracy skills.

The phased introduction of the new primary curricula has continued alongside the following supporting activities: new textbooks, teacher guides and learning materials are in process of being revised alongside the introduction of new pedagogical methodologies through in-service training. More broadly the national learning outcomes assessment framework is being developed. Student learning outcomes have recently been assessed by RIES at primary Grade 3 and secondary Grade 9 (M4) and show inadequate learning proficiency in Lao language, mathematics and science at lower secondary level⁴.

High Level Outcome 3, Increased number of qualified and competent teachers with better student learning outcomes across all subjects of the national curriculum from ECE to primary and secondary education.

The pre-service teacher education curricula are being revised to better align with the ECE, primary and lower secondary school curricula, alongside strengthening the teacher trainee practicum requirements. All the curricula that are being revised should adhere to inclusive education principles of being child centred, using active and participatory pedagogy and training teachers in how they can meet the diverse needs to students in their classroom. The set of competency-based teacher standards for TTC staff which were approved in 2015 have provided the foundation for the development of the continuous professional development system. Complementing this the National Education Qualifications Framework for teacher development and a comprehensive framework of primary education teaching standards has been developed in 2019. Specific in-service training for teachers to deliver the new primary and pre-primary education curricula has begun. To raise the quality of teacher trainees entering the profession, a new entrance examination has been implemented.

High Level Outcome 4: All schools have financial and human resources to equitably improve student learning outcomes.

Schools have been provided with School Block Grants (SBG) in order to support school level planning and assure that basic materials are in place. The Education Quality Standards (EQS) have been rolled out to support school level planning and prioritisation. MoES has introduced Annual Costed Sector Plans (ACSEP) to strengthen the linkage between the ESDP, sub-national plans and budgets. A new set of procedures for allocating primary teachers more equitably within each district have been developed and are currently being implemented. The MoES has identified 40 “Priority Districts” based on a set

⁴ Unpublished reports but publicly presented from RIES

of social development and education indicators. The Textbook Management Information System (TIMS) has been established though further development is required to support its effective functioning. To maximise effectiveness of extremely limited state resources, the MoES has encouraged development partners to prioritize their programme/project support and capital investments in these districts.

High Level Outcome 5: Increased numbers of basic education graduates who have acquired basic skills and knowledge and can apply for work in the labour market or continue post-basic education or become entrepreneurs.

Implementation of the ESDP 2016–2020 strategies to encourage lower secondary graduates to enrol in TVET programmes. The private sector is encouraged to invest in TVET. A module on entrepreneurship has been introduced into the upper secondary and TVET curricula.

High Level Outcome 6: Increased adult literacy rates and ensure gender parity index for adult literacy.

MoES has implemented equivalency programmes for youth to help the move towards universal literacy. Adult literacy (15+ years) has increased from 73% in 2005 to 84.7% in 2015 but literacy rates among ethnic groups other than Lao-Tai are lower. Literacy rates for those speaking Lao, or a dialect of Lao are 78% for males and 63% for females. Mon-Khmer group literacy rates are 67% for males and only 38% for females. The Tibeto – Chinese group have the lowest literacy rate at 50% for male and 35% for females. The Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) 2017 found that three quarters of people in the Lao PDR aged between 15 and 30 years are able to read and write, almost all having acquired these skills by attending school. It also found that the illiteracy rate is decreasing rapidly across generations, reaching 11% for men and 17% for women in the youngest (15 to 17 years old) age bracket, which is consistent with increasing attendance rates in all levels of education.

High Level Outcome 7: The quality and number of post-basic education graduates from public and private education is aligned with the needs of the 8th NSEDP.

At upper secondary level, the GIR for entry into Grade 12 has improved significantly, making GER rising from 42.7% in 2015-16 to 54.8% in 2019-20, alongside an improving GPI which rose from 0.87 in 2015-16 to 0.91 in 2019-20. New TVET programmes and teacher training have been introduced to improve the quality of post-basic provision in line with socio-economic development targets. As programmes to meet this demand are expanded, they are complemented with efforts to ensure opportunities are accessible to girls/women and to the disadvantaged. A 20% quota for women in certain high demand courses, including "blue-collar" occupations and a voucher assistance programme (also with a set quota for women) is in operation. The target to increase enrolments at public universities has been reduced to focus more on improving the quality of teaching and learning and to establish minimum standards in line with ASEAN standards. Investments are planned to establish industry centres of excellence in Agriculture, Logistics, Engineering, Tourism, and Environmental Studies. Development partners are supporting Master and Ph.D. scholarships for study both within and outside the country.

High Level Outcome 8: Education and Sports sector is appropriately structured, resourced and monitored by using Annual Costed Sector Plans that are linked to the ESDP 2016 – 2020.

To meet the demands of education development and the aim of government to reduce the number of civil servants, MoES has recently restructured its organization by revising the mandates for MoES departments, PESS and DESB centres. The new mandates outline new/revised roles, responsibilities, scope of rights, structure, personnel and working methods. Annual Costed Sector Plans (ACSEPs) have been introduced as a planning tool to operationalize the 5-year ESDP on an annual basis. The ACSEPs are produced at central and provincial level, with a pilot underway at district level. They have improved costing and financial analysis as policy options and corresponding costs are analysed against real budgetary and capacity constraints. A Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) as well as a

Teacher Allocation Committee (TAC) have been established to improve both human and financial resourcing of the sector, particularly at the sub-national level.

High Level Outcome 9: Financing plan of ESDP takes into account the need to reduce disparities related to gender, ethnicity, poverty and location.

Scholarships have been provided to students at ethnic boarding school as well as for up to 40% of students in TVET institutions focusing on girls and students from poor families. The MoES has directed ODA mainly towards disadvantaged districts. This now provides stronger direction to the non-wage operational budget at the provincial and district levels and as a result, DESBs have started to receive larger operating budgets over the last five years. With the growing constraints on available resources, MoES is undertaking several activities intended to improve allocation efficiency and budget management. These include a plan to rationalize teacher deployment, strengthen the application of the Costed Action Plan methodology at the national and subnational level and development of systems (like a Planning and Budgeting MIS -PBMIS) and methods for making budget allocations at all levels more responsive to strategic priorities and local (District) conditions.

High Level Outcome 10: Policy development is evidence-based.

A strategic development plan to implement an overarching Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS) has been prepared, although the quality and timeliness of data needs improvement. A Planning and Budgeting Management Information System (PBMIS) is being developed to more effectively link existing data bases on personnel and salaries. Ways to incorporate collecting disaggregated disability data need to be realised within EMIS.

High Level Outcome 11: The number of general and professional athletes matching regional and international quality standards is increased and contributes to the Nation's art and culture preservation.

People of all ages and genders have been participated in physical activity and sports reached 30% compared with the country's population; completed the establishment of the Sports Talent School and Sport and Physical Institute with the objective is to produce the next generation of athletes, and sports personnel to the national and professional level.

The Lao PDR had sent 957 athletes participated in the sub-regional, regional and international competitions, it was the first time, Lao athletes passed the qualification round for 29th Olympic Games held by Brazil 2016; the 11th Paralympic Games held by Brazil 2017; the 29th SEA Games in Malaysia 2017, won 2 gold 3 silvers and 21 bronzes medal;

Participated the 9th Para-games, held by Malaysia in 2017, won 4 silver medals and 4 bronze medals; 12th Asian Para-games, held by Indonesia in 2018, won the 1st historical gold medal from the men's weightlifting event; The 29th SEA Games, held by Malaysia won 2 gold medals, 3 silver medals and 21 bronze medals; The 18th Asian Games, held by Indonesia in 2018 won 3 silver medals and 2 bronze medals, set in 31st ranking of 45 countries; Participated the Asian School Games total 4 times won 2 silver medals and 14 bronze medals.

Lao Athletes won a world champion of Sapaktakraw (Women double event and Men double event); Vovinam (Men Single, 4 element staff event) and second place of the world champion of Petanque (Triple women event).

Lao Elite Sport Department, Department of Sport for All, Physical Education and Arts Department in coordinate with the National of Olympic Committee and National Sport Federations have been organized the physical activities and sports competition on important national days; organized and hosted the sports competition events in national and international level, held the 6th National School Student Games in Bolikhamxay Province in 2017 that composing 10 sports.

3. Context for ESSDP 2021-25

3.1. Background

The mid-term review of ESDP 2016-20 was undertaken in late 2018 noted five themes and areas of concern that were common across findings. These were:

1. Significant achievements but disparities remain. How can allocation of human and financial resources reduce disparities, including changes to formula for determining operating budgets at all levels?
2. Inadequate learning outcomes at primary level have flow-on effects to higher levels of education, including TVET. What factors contribute to different learning outcomes?
3. Inefficiency of teacher allocation. What long-term strategy is needed?
4. Transition rates from primary to lower secondary declining and dropout rates from the early grades of lower secondary increasing. There is a need to study the root causes of these issues.
5. Engagement with private sector and utilization of existing data sources to periodically assess trends in labour market demand. What information is missing?

The five key themes identified in the mid-term review were used to draft the initial development of the objectives for the sector and identification of the key challenges and guide the key questions and activities that have been discussed through the consultation process both at national and sub-national levels. The outcomes of these initial consultations were as follows:

1. *Significant achievements but disparities remain. How can allocation of human and financial resources reduce disparities, including changes to formula for determining operating budgets at all levels?*

- Schools in the 40 priority districts have poor educational performance, are in food insecure areas and are remote. They are often severely under-staffed and must rely more on multi-grade teaching, volunteer teachers or non-subject specialist teachers.
- Additional financial incentives are needed to motivate teachers to go to these schools alongside specialist training in areas such as multi-grade teaching.
- Continuation of school meals across these disadvantaged districts is required;
- The current school block grant formula does not reflect the higher costs faced by smaller schools.
- The very small size of operating budgets at district level make it difficult for districts to support smaller remoter schools which often incur higher travel costs and longer travel time. Increased funding and a prioritised focus on more disadvantaged schools is needed.

2. *Inadequate learning outcomes at primary level have flow-on effects. What factors contribute to different learning outcomes?*

- Low content knowledge and low pedagogical skills of many teachers leads to inadequate learning outcomes. A 2019 assessment of learning outcomes at Grade 9 (M4) confirms this flow-on effect with low proficiency in Lao language, mathematics and science.
- The curriculum is too crowded, and teachers focus on completing the crowded curriculum rather than checking if students understand what is being taught.
- Support for students with diverse learning needs is generally not provided.
- There is limited pedagogical support for teachers. Pedagogical Advisers (PA) focus on checking lesson plans and administrative work rather than observing lessons to identify results-based performance of teachers. PAs also require further training on how they can observe and support teachers in meeting the diverse needs of students in the classroom.
- Textbooks are often under-supplied and not replenished regularly due to inadequate budget availability and high losses due to over-use from sharing, climate and lack of appropriate storage.

3. *Inefficiency of teacher allocation. What long-term strategy is needed?*

- Redeployment of teachers within a cluster is possible. Moving teachers within a district is also possible but more challenging⁵. However, it is almost impossible to get teachers to move from a school in one district to another district. Teachers face the high costs of moving their family and finding a new home and need financial support if they are to be redeployed across districts.
- Many districts face an overall under-supply and need to be prioritised for receiving new teachers and redeployed teachers from other districts. Other districts have an overall over-supply of teacher and should not receive any new teachers.
- Procedures for allocating teachers need to be monitored carefully and strictly enforced.
- Overall strict implementation of a long-term national deployment and redeployment strategy, together with a review of the potential for school merging is needed⁶.
- Current procedures and protocols for allocating teachers will need to be adjusted as there are fewer civil servant entering education than are lost through attrition.

4. *Transition rates from primary to lower secondary declining and dropout rates from the early grades of lower secondary increasing. There is the need to study on the root cause of these issues?*

- Students do not see the value of lower secondary education. They have seen older siblings and relatives completing lower secondary but then returning to work with the family.
- A lack of formal or well-paid job opportunities acts as a disincentive.
- The poor level of academic ability of students entering lower secondary leads to high drop-out.
- The distances to travel to attend lower secondary schools are a barrier for some students (particularly girls), and other costs such as uniforms can be a disincentive for poorer students.

5. *Engagement with private sector and utilization of existing data sources to periodically assess trends in labour market demand. What information is missing?*

- Consultations indicate a need for MoES, MoLSW, MoIC, and MAF to regularly engage with each other and private sector representatives, including the Chamber of Commerce.
- The ESSDP 2021-25 will support the creation of a joint Technical Working Group (MoES, MoLSW, MAF, private sector and development partners) under the Post-Secondary Focal Group (#3) to identify a realignment of roles and responsibilities for TVET provision based on the new TVET Law.

The Executive ESWG meeting was also informed about key messages coming from sub-national consultations and priority policy implications arising from these consultations. In summary, these were:

Early Childhood Education

The current quality of ECE is insufficient. There is a need to develop teaching standards and Fundamental Quality Standards for ECE to improve quality together with a specialist ECE Pedagogical Advisor at each DESB. Further expansion to new sites will need to be through low cost approaches.

Primary Education

The curriculum in early grades is too crowded and there is no extra support for students with diverse learning needs in the curriculum focus is on completing the curriculum and not on understanding of students with written lesson planning being the priority because this is what are checked by PAs. There

⁵ There are financial and social costs to moving to a different village

⁶ This will also require a prior review of the efficiency of school locations and the concept of each village has its own primary school to improve efficiency

needs to be recognition that checking on lesson plans is a much more practical task while changing the teaching pedagogy to meet learning needs of all students requires technical skills which at present the PAs nor the teachers are trained in. Multi-grade teachers need more support and training. Textbook replenishment is insufficient and not consistent with needs.

School clusters: need a regulatory framework to ensure success. The School Block Grant formula and guidelines should be reviewed, particularly for small and remote schools. A cost-benefit analysis of support and retention strategies (such as school meals and scholarships) for poorer students, particularly in remote areas is needed to ensure that their attendance and progression is supported.

Lower Secondary Education

The quality of primary graduates is inadequate for entering secondary education, and the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of secondary teachers is inadequate for teaching a curriculum that has too many subjects. Requiring subject specialist in all subjects is restricting further expansion due to the high cost. Students drop-out for a number of reasons including: poverty, distance to school, a challenging curriculum for which they are not sufficiently prepared, and because they know that they are very unlikely to get a good job after graduation. Fundamental levels of quality will need to be implemented in lower secondary if access is to continue to expand.

Upper Secondary Education

Catchment areas of schools are too large and lower secondary schools should be made complete. Rural children are five times less likely to attend school than those in urban areas. The current assessment methodology needs to be improved through use of more varied methods. Subject specialist PA are needed to support teachers. Further strategies will need to be developed to address increasing levels of upper secondary drop-out.

Vocational secondary education is needed with a priority for ethnic boarding schools.

Non-formal Education

The current approach is too theoretical and more practical vocational programmes are needed with data entered to EMIS. Equivalency to formal programmes requires strengthened non-formal programme content. Community Learning Centres (CLC) need more equipment and an increased operating budget and the number of CLCs need to be expanded.

A Lifelong Learning Committee should be established at national and sub-national levels to lead stronger linkages between formal and non-formal education.

Administration and Management of the Sector

Teacher allocation and redeployment requires a national approach based on a strong legislative framework that is strictly applied. Teacher redeployment is possible within school clusters, challenging within district but reported to be impossible across districts.

There are insufficient textbooks and an inefficient distribution system. TMS is not yet practical so it may be better to use data from EMIS but EMIS data must be more timely, and the replenishment procedure will need to be realigned to compensate for the textbook attrition.

Financial allocations to schools and district offices need to be reviewed and realigned more closely with their needs in order to reduce disparities in service delivery.

Staff skills and competencies have not kept pace with reforms within the sector and significant capacity building will be required in order to address the policy-implementation gap at all levels.

3.2. Impact of COVID-19

A recent report⁷ has outlined the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Lao economy with two scenarios depending on (i) the duration and depth of outbreaks and lockdown in Lao PDR; (ii) the magnitude and effectiveness of economic relief policies; and (iii) the depth and duration of the global downturn. In the more favourable scenario, the Lao economy is expected to grow at 1 percent in 2020, while in the downside scenario the economy could contract by 1.8 percent. In either case, this will be “the slowest growth rate since 1990.” The report also notes that COVID-19 will further aggravate the long-standing structural vulnerabilities of Lao PDR, even before the onset of the pandemic: the country has a weak macroeconomy, resulting in limited fiscal and foreign currency buffers. The report also notes the severe disruption on the labour market.

The impact of the crisis on public finance is expected to be considerable, with domestic revenue falling from 14 to 10 percent of GDP in 2020, and slowly recovering to 12.5 percent in 2021 and 2022. High deficits will push up public debt to high risk level, and debt service is projected to reach 55% of domestic revenue in average in the medium term, thus capturing any available fiscal space. Public expenditure will fall from 20.2 percent of GDP in 2019 to an average of 18.9 percent in the period 2020-2022, thus severely constraining the budget.

The report predicts that the fall-out from the pandemic could push as much as 214,000 people into poverty. According to World Bank⁸, Poverty in Lao PDR declined from 33.5% to 23.2% in the last decade lifting half a million people out of poverty. However, many people escaping poverty remain close or have slipped to the poverty line – about half of the poor in 2013 were not poor in 2008. About 80% of the population in 2013 live on less than \$2.5 per day and face a 10% chance of falling back into poverty. Results of the LSIS 2017⁹ indicate that poverty is a key contributing factor to students not completing a level of education and is named as a key factor contributing to inequalities.

There are already indications¹⁰ that the pandemic is causing negative impacts on nutrition. A recent COVID-19 impact survey on food security and agriculture, conducted by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, indicates that about one-third of respondents felt a negative change regarding food consumption. Most of those surveyed said they were unable to consume all food groups due to price increases and the reduced availability of meat in markets. The development of a strong immune system in children through the consumption of healthy food is crucial in order to fend off health risks.

The World Food Programme and UNICEF are warning of a silent hunger pandemic that may drive an additional 130 million people globally into severe hunger due to the fallout from Covid-19. Families who are already poor or on the brink of poverty, and whose nutrition status is often concerning, are at the forefront of this danger. In Lao PDR, more than half of children under six months are not exclusively breastfed, and more than two-thirds of children under two years of age are not meeting the minimum dietary standards in terms of meal frequency, quality and diversity.

Thus, the negative impact of the pandemic on the education sector will come from a more limited ability of GoL to provide adequate financial resources to the sector and from poorer families reduced capacity to send their children to school given the increased opportunity costs of labour, including foraging for food in forests.

⁷ *Lao Economic Monitor, May 2020. World Bank*

⁸ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/publication/drivers-of-poverty-in-lao-pdr>

⁹ *COUNTRY REPORT Lao People's Democratic Republic Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 MICSLao Statistics Bureau. 2018. And Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017, Survey Findings Report. Vientiane, Lao PDR: Lao Statistics Bureau and UNICEF.*

¹⁰ *From Vientiane Times 17 June*

3.3. Priority Policy Objectives for ESSDP 2021-25

The overall objective of ESSDP is to develop education system in order to develop human resource with knowledge, skills, have a moral and right values, love the country, faithful, disciplined, healthy both physical and mental, solidarity in the country, love lifelong learning, love their own customs and tradition, love progress and science to be a quality workforce, consistency and can meet the demands of a growing and sustainable economy, are ready to cooperate and compete with countries in the region.

The Executive ESWG meeting agreed with four priority policy objectives for ESSDP 2021-25 as the following:

- Refocus the sectoral priority on primary education to improve content knowledge and pedagogical skills of primary teachers. This will require a significant budget
- To expand lower secondary in more affordably, effectively and realistically, but benefits of access to lower secondary will not occur until primary graduates have much improved literacy and numeracy skills. (Expanded access to ECE should also impact on improving quality of primary graduates.)
- Realign the skills and competencies of MoES staff in order to more effectively meet the current and foreseen needs of the system (doing more with the same through improved HR systems).
- Provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DESB, clusters and schools to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through realigning their mandates, roles and responsibilities; clarifying Job Descriptions and Specifications; establishing systems to allocate human and financial resources according to needs.

There are also several on-going policy objectives

- To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance in particular in the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.
- To provide enhanced post-basic education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSEDP.
- To enhance Lao sports which are inclusive towards regional and international standards for the sports sub-sector.

These priorities are consistent with the broad outcomes and outputs of the emerging 9th NSEDP. Drafting of the 9th NSEDP has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Outcome 2 (Develop human assets) of the draft 9th NSEDP, the priority output is to achieve “Quality education for the preparedness of the 4th industrial revolution, labour and technical skills, including female participation. As part of the 2020 Roundtable Meeting preparations for the 9th NSEDP, MPI has requested the education sector to identify “at least three gender-sensitive measures dedicated to acceleration of the SDG targets on quality of education and percentage of students at primary and lower secondary levels having achieved minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics”. MPI also identifies the importance of vocational training is recommended to ensure that Lao PDR can fully reap the benefit of its dynamic young population and is able to translate this investment into a skilled and productive workforce. MPI has also identified the need for greater investment in training of the primary teacher workforce; enhancing early child development and school readiness, reducing drop-out rate, particularly among girls, and ensuring education quality and efficiency; increased investment and cooperation with the private sector in TVET; and a holistic and strategic approach needed to the development of the education profession.

3.4. Risks for ESSDP 2021-25

The major risk to achievement of ESSDP 2021-25 policy objectives is lack of adequate financial resources as has been the case during the 2016-20 period. During the last few years, a number of indicators have shown a reversal of performance compared to earlier years (See annex 4). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated both the capacity of GoL to significantly increase funding to the education sector in the future and for poorer families to afford the opportunity costs of keeping their children in school. Given the uncertainty about the duration of these impacts, ESSDP 2021-25 presents two financing scenarios: a “steady state scenario” and an “enhanced quality scenario”. The latter will require increased funding from GoL and development partners whereas the former is designed to protect earlier investments and achievements. The ESWG will need to work even more strongly to ensure that external financing is aligned with MoES priorities. A more detailed risk management matrix is in annex 5.

4. Overall Goal 2021-25

“The Education and Sports Sector in Lao PDR is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunity for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and sports and to contribute to, and benefit from socio-economic development and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress towards attainment of SDG-4.”

Over the past five years with the assistance of development partners the Lao economy has grown rapidly, although in recent years slowing revenue growth and growing debt repayments have hindered financial expansion, including to the education sector. Despite this constraint, significant improvements in access and retention in school-based education have continued. The mid-term review of ESSDP 2016-20 concluded that disparities continue to exist for access to education and that the quality of education must be improved, particularly to ensure adequate and sustainable literacy and numeracy skills are evident among graduates of primary education. These conclusions have been strongly reinforced during the consultation process to prepare ESSDP 2021-25.

The period 2021-25 will thus focus on reducing disparities and improving the quality of primary education outcomes. The Ministry of Education and Sports have identified the 40 most educationally disadvantaged districts of the country where education outcomes are lowest. These same districts are also very poor with many families being food insecure. A priority for ESSDP 2021-25 is to reduce the gap in education performance between these 40 districts and the rest of the country. Lack of access to ECE and poor learning outcomes at primary level have a flow-on effect on secondary education and higher levels. Lower secondary education is compulsory but the benefits of universal access to lower secondary schooling will only occur once all primary graduates have adequate and sustainable literacy and numeracy skills, necessary to contribute to, and benefit from socio-economic development and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025. Apart from improving the quality of primary teachers, greater access to some type of pre-primary education will assist students in learning to read and write Lao language, particularly for those who do not have Lao as their mother tongue. The interruption to formal schooling caused by the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the need to develop and expand support mechanisms for those rural and remote students and teachers who cannot access on-line learning.

The projected financial constraints through to 2025, made worse by the economic impact of COVID-19 make it imperative that funding priorities are identified in ESSDP 2021-25. At the same time, ESWG will review an updated ESSDP financing plan on an annual basis and modify these priorities accordingly.

5. Overarching Outcome 2021-25

All Lao citizens are equipped with appropriate academic and non-academic education to develop their capacity to contribute to, and benefit from socio-economic development in order to support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country Status by 2025.

Education-related targets (Secondary gross enrolment rate and adult literacy) of the Human Assets Index required for graduation from Least Developed Country Status have been achieved. However, the major focus of ESSDP 2021-25 will be to improve the quality of academic education through improved teaching quality, particularly at primary education level.

6. Expected High Level Outcomes

Part I of the document outlines the eight main high-level outcomes to be achieved by 2025 together with required intermediate outcomes and associated targets for 2025. Key performance indicators for each high-level outcome and intermediate outcome are provided in section 8 (M&E Framework). Policy actions required to achieve these targets are also identified. Part II of the document presents more detailed sub-sector plans with strategies, targets disaggregated by sex and key activities linked to the same intermediate outcomes outlined in Part I. Four of the high-level outcomes include strategies designed to improve learning outcomes, including: improved curricula, student learning outcomes measurement, strengthened capacities of teachers and principals, teacher performance assessment, and the introduction of fundamental quality standards. Results from the 2017 ASLO Grade 3 and 2019 M4 surveys demonstrate the poor learning and the 2016 school autonomy study showed the poor content knowledge and low pedagogical skills of primary teachers. Although there is currently no research base for some strategies, ESSDP has been informed by sub-national consultations, including school principals who have extensive local knowledge of what is required to improve learning outcomes.

Important caveat regarding achieving the eight high-level outcomes

Part II of the ESSDP outlines the strategies and key activities required to achieve each of the eight identified outcomes necessary to support the overall goal of the ESSDP 2021-25. However, it may not be possible to implement all these activities if the financing share of the Government of Lao budget to education remains at levels similar to that during the period 2016-20. ODA is not projected to increase over the period to 2025 and therefore the education sector's share of the non-wage recurrent budget will need to significantly increase if these eight high-level outcomes are to be achieved. For this reason, the ESSDP includes a section (7.1.2) outlining an expenditure policy and provides two possible scenarios: a steady state scenario and an enhanced quality scenario. A note is made against those intermediate outcomes where achievement can be expected only if future funding is aligned with the enhanced quality scenario. In accordance with section 3.2 endorsed priorities. This does not apply to any Intermediate Outcomes related to primary education.

6.1. **High-Level Outcome 1:**

Increased number of graduates from ECE to upper secondary including NFE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills but also other 21st Century skills¹¹, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity.

6.1.1. Rationale

The mid-term review of ESSDP 2016-20 found that disparities exist in participation and learning outcomes based on gender, ethnicity, language, disability, location, etc. and that more attention to

¹¹ Critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and communication, creativity and innovation, information media and technology literacy, ICT literacy, social and cross-cultural skills, personal responsibility, self-regulation and initiative, meta-cognitive skills.

these disadvantaged groups is needed to improve overall levels of participation and learning outcomes. The mid-term review noted that ethnic students who most needed ECE experience were least able to access ECE services and that while primary completion rates had improved, transition rates to lower secondary were declining and dropout rates in lower secondary were increasing. Provision of the necessary financial and human resources to establish a lower secondary school in low population density areas hinders the expansion of access to lower secondary education. Feedback from sub-national consultations (PESS, DESB, principals and students) indicate that students are increasingly disinterested in attending secondary school due to a lack of perceived job opportunities. Students whose older siblings or relatives completed lower secondary school but returned to the family farm to work act as a disincentive to attend lower secondary education. Based on EMIS data for school year 2018/19, of those students enrolling in Grade 1, 83% survive to Grade 5, 51% to the last year of lower secondary and 33% to the last year of upper secondary. Females perform slightly better than males at all levels. This equates to 25 pupil-years invested per upper secondary graduate demonstrating the financial inefficiency of the system. There is an urgent need to improve internal efficiency in the school system given financial constraints.

The mid-term review noted the poor learning outcomes in Lao language and mathematics as measured at Grade 3 in 2017, Grade 9 in 2019 and a World Bank study in 2016 found that primary teachers have mastered only about half of the content they are teaching. To improve learning outcomes, new curricula are being incrementally introduced for the one-year pre-primary, primary and secondary programmes and teachers are progressively being trained in their implementation. Feedback from sub-national consultations was that there are too many subjects being taught in the first two years of primary education and a greater focus and more time for teaching Lao language and mathematics should be implemented.

The Ministry recognises the huge cost of introducing new curricula goes far beyond the comparatively low costs of its actual development. The introduction of new textbooks, materials and teacher guides and the obsolescence of the previous resources present a huge cost to the Ministry. Similarly, the costs of training all teachers in the new syllabus and pedagogical methods, and the change management required to help them accept the new approaches all present the Ministry with recurrent cost burdens and staff capacity requirements that it is not always able to meet. The further impacts on teacher training curricula, assessment approaches, etc. All contribute to further strain the system's capacity to reform.

A new pedagogy for teaching Lao language is being introduced to particularly help students who have Lao as a second language. A 2019 assessment at Grade 9 (M4) also found poor learning outcomes in Lao language, mathematics and science showing the cumulative impact of poor-quality primary education. Across all primary grades, 27% of classes are multi-grade creating additional challenges for teachers and students. To ensure and take advantage of graduation from Least Developed Country status, more graduates from secondary education who have the required literacy and numeracy skills to tackle other 21st century skills will be needed. This will require major realignment of the delivery of compulsory lower secondary education through policies and strategies that will increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of provision. This will require significant improvements, and financial investments to improve education performance nationally, and in particular across disadvantaged districts.

6.1.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Early Childhood Education, Department of General Education, Department of Teacher Education, Department of Non-Formal Education, Inclusive Education Centre, Research Institute for Educational Sciences (Centre for Education Research and Evaluation), Education Standards and Quality Assurance Centre.

6.1.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels of school education.

Policy Actions

- The Committee for Approval of Curriculum and Instructional Materials (CACIM) will approve all new learning materials (textbooks, teacher guides, learning resources), including compliance with inclusion and gender principles prior to being printed, distributed and used in the new curricula.
- Assess the effectiveness of various approaches to improve Lao language for early grades, particularly for students who do not have Lao as their mother tongue and recommend for Ministerial approval a unified approach to strengthening Lao language across pre-primary and early grades of primary education.
- Review the number of subjects and their time allocation in grades 1 and 2 of primary education
- Examine the interface between curricula at the last year of primary and the first year of secondary education and ensure alignment between the primary and lower secondary curricula. Various development partners working with RIES on different levels of education will coordinate to ensure continuity between primary and secondary curricula.
- Proposed changes to some specific lower secondary subject curricula will also be based on the new Grade 5 curricula for these same subjects.
- The Ministry will require that a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the direct impact on improved student learning outcomes compared to the financial and human costs of realigning the education services provided is conducted and reviewed prior to considering the introduction of new curricula beyond the current plans. The cost-benefit analysis would then be presented to MoF with a view to securing the significant additional financial resources required.

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M6.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Teacher Guides will be revised to include simple and practical assessment rubrics that teachers can use in the classroom, including for students with disabilities and students who have Lao as their second language. A costed action plan to train all teachers to apply improved assessment techniques will be developed and implemented.
- A budget line and action plan to conduct regular, standardised student learning assessment at G3, G5, M4 and M6 will be developed and implemented.
- Minimum standards for setting of M4 (Grade 9) exams are established, including flexibility for students with special needs.
- The primary Grade 5 examination system will be strengthened to enable a more standardised and systematic examination process to be implemented and used for comparison of learning outcomes across districts, including flexibility for students with special needs. If successful, the examination results may be able to replace the expensive national assessments currently in use.

Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates.

Policy Actions

- The TAC and the PBC takes a more active role in establishing the priority for expansion of the one-year pre-primary programme (or other alternative approaches) over expansion of kindergartens. This will include providing advice to the sub-national level on how to prioritise expansion across the 40 disadvantaged priority districts. This will require strengthening legislation to empower these committees, particularly in sub-national decision-making.
- Support will be given to promoting innovative approaches to provision of ECE together with research and cost-benefit analysis of such approaches to enable financial sustainability of broader implementation.
- The current approach to expanding access to lower secondary, including the current 5+4+3 structure will be reviewed. This review will inform recommendations to the Minister and ESWG concerning required changes to increase participation of students in rural and remote areas. Depending on the outcomes of this review, legislation may be required to establish a new education structure for primary and secondary education and to outline a new approach to delivery of lower secondary education, particularly in smaller rural schools.
- A National Committee for Lifelong Learning will be established at national and sub-national levels to lead stronger linkages between formal and non-formal education. ToRs for this committee will be developed and approved.
- The Lifelong Learning Decree will be implemented covering early childhood education, primary to tertiary education, non-formal education and informal learning. Quality standards will be developed to recognise of all forms of learning to be accredited by issuing certificates together with a review of existing accreditation systems in order to acknowledge the learnings gained from various sources, including informal learning experiences of learners, based on international and regional qualifications frameworks.
- Following the agreement for MoES to take over responsibility for the WFP school meals programme, a policy to implement school meals and nutrition programmes at different levels in a financially sustainable manner will be developed. A cost-effectiveness study of school meals will be undertaken. Such a policy must target disadvantaged students living in food insecure areas and consider taking into consideration any research that WFP had undertaken on the food insecure areas where they were providing school meals. One area of research conducted by WFP was how inclusive school food programme was and the study found that they need to do a lot more in this area to ensure that the most marginalised children with disabilities have access to school meal programme. A comparative assessment of the relative impact on student retention of food provision compared to cash or other resource transfers to students will be undertaken.
- The importance of inclusive WASH programmes in influencing student retention has been recognised and using the FQS framework, DESBs will take forward responsibility for mobilising provincial, district and community resources to ensure that all schools obtain access to clean water and inclusive adequate, separated male and female latrine facilities, and understand how to maintain them in a fit state. The EMIS school census questionnaire will be modified to include more relevant information on WASH. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of schools having access to clean water and the promotion of proper hygiene practices as a key prevention and control measure.
- A joint technical Working Group is established between MoES, MoLSW, MoH and development partners to ensure that screening, identification and provision of services for children with disabilities can be achieved.

- Emergency preparedness and disaster risk resilience of the education sector to minimize disruption to schooling will be reviewed and strengthened through further research by higher education agencies. To better inform preparedness, MoES will prepare an education sector disaster contingency plan including a GIS enabled platform for monitoring and planning of emergency preparedness and response and linked to the new LESMIS,
- The progressive promotion policy will be reviewed to strengthen the implementation of remedial support, both during and between school semesters for students who lack sufficient learning outcomes for regular promotion.
- Teachers will need to be trained on the basic teaching skill of how to better use formative assessment approaches, as outlined in the new primary teacher guides to identify the need for and provide remedial support.
- Develop a policy on how to facilitate the return of students following early marriage and/or pregnancy and birth to formal education.
- Investigate the feasibility of a concessional loan scheme to improve retention rates in upper secondary through a public-private partnership.
- Promotion of digital learning as a possible remote learning option, especially during school closures during emergencies minimizing disruptions to learning.

Intermediate Outcome 1.4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training to develop skills for students to complete upper secondary school.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

A pilot of mixed general (60%) and vocational (40%) upper secondary has been implemented in three ethnic boarding schools of three provinces with positive results. Vocational subjects are taught at TVET institutions with a curriculum that is different to TVET and using specially trained upper secondary teachers. Eight ethnic boarding schools in eight more provinces have expressed interest in implementing the same mixed model of upper secondary education.

Policy Actions

- An assessment of the linkages between vocational upper secondary education and existing TVET programmes will be undertaken to identify the need for a separate vocational curriculum at upper secondary level.
- Depending on the outcomes of this assessment, a Ministerial Decree may be issued outlining the roles and responsibilities of DGE, DTVET and Ethnic Boarding Schools to extend implementation of vocational classrooms in up to 11 provinces, include use of TVET facilities for students of ethnic boarding schools and training of general education teachers in vocational skills by TVET lecturers.

Intermediate Outcome 1.5: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters.

MoES has identified 40 priority districts where educational performance is below the national average on selected indicators. A strengthened primary Grade 5 examination system will also facilitate identification of potential differences in learning outcomes. The mid-term review of ESDP 2016-20 identified an urgent need to reduce disparities in educational performance but additional human and financial resources will need to be allocated to these 40 districts if the gap is to be reduced.

Policy Actions

- A Ministerial Decree will be issued to establish school clusters to support improved service delivery across the 40 priority districts, identifying additional human and financial resources for these clusters and use of ICT to reduce disparities. Prior to issuing of this decree, DGE and DTE will identify cost-effective approaches to establishing and using school clusters and outline a feasibility study to test this concept.

- The TAC will develop a plan to ensure that these 40 districts are included in the prioritisation framework for allocating new civil service quota positions are prioritised for allocation and the PBC ensure that operating budgets prioritise these same districts. This will require a strengthened mandate for both committees to direct resources at sub-national level.
- A literacy and mathematics “boost” programme will be implemented across the 40 priority districts.
- The formulae for DESB operating budgets and school block grants will be reviewed with consideration given to providing a greater share of operating budgets and school block grants to these districts.

6.2. High-Level Outcome 2:

Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment.

6.2.1. Rationale

The primary teacher workforce is quite weak, both in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. An assessment of learning outcomes was conducted at Grade 4 level for both students and their teachers. This study¹² quantified the very low level of teacher ability. Fourth-grade teachers scored an average of 49% in mathematics and 52% in Lao language, indicating that teachers have mastered only about half of the content they are teaching. Teacher scores on tests of pedagogical knowledge were even lower, with the average score at 27%. Without improving teacher performance, student learning is unlikely to improve.

Quality assurance is being strengthened through the phased introduction of teaching standards and teacher performance assessment based on these standards. At the same time, it is critical that school principals understand their roles and can support teachers. Master and provincial training teams are being established and strengthened to undertake in-service teacher training and planning is underway to make Teacher Training Colleges Professional Development Centres for teacher pre-service, in-service and training of pedagogical advisors. Where university Faculties of Education exist in the same province as a Teacher Training College, there is a need to integrate the mandates and responsibilities of both. The pre-service teacher training curricula is being reviewed to better align with school curricula. As the new primary curriculum is developed, there will be a need to ensure alignment between the new last year of primary and the existing first year of lower secondary where they have not yet been updated.

The ESSDP 2021-25 promotes the formulation and implementation of a holistic and strategic approach to the development of the education profession. Such a strategic approach should span the whole professional lifecycle, including teacher attraction, initial education, retention, career progression and continuous professional development, including collaborative peer support. A stronger focus on supporting the continuous professional development of teachers and principals at school and local level is promoted. The PAs have a key role to play in this which in turn calls for a substantial and sustainable investment in their capacity, particularly in their ability to provide practical support to teachers of primary multi-grade classes, early grade primary classes with students who have Lao as a second language, and to secondary teachers who have limited content knowledge of the subjects that they are teaching. This requires substantial and essential investments in developing teachers’ and school principals’ capacity at the school and local level through a significant increase in the non-wage recurrent budget.

¹² World Bank 2016. Lao PDR School autonomy and accountability

6.2.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Teacher Education, Department of General Education, Research Institute for Educational Sciences, Institute for Education Administrators Development, Department of Organisation and Personnel and the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Centre.

6.2.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers to implement the new school curricula through support from clusters and PAs.

Policy Actions

- MoES will review the current teacher support system to accommodate the introduction of school clusters as an additional support and update the roles responsibilities between these clusters, the DESB and (internal and external) PAs.
- Such a system may also include continuous mentoring, peer support and communities of practice as modalities in addition to more formal one-off in-service training workshops and PA support.
- In-service training of primary teachers will focus on training in implementation of the new curriculum until school year 2023/24, including implementation in multi-grade settings and providing support to students with disabilities.
- Other in-service training of early childhood and secondary teachers will address areas of need as identified in the assessment of teacher performance.
- For secondary education, the priority is to build the content capacity of natural science subjects, Lao language and English language. The prioritised training plan will form the basis for the longer-term development of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) plan.
- Training needs identified within the prioritised training plan will need endorsement by the Executive ESWG level to ensure that all development partners and government use their training budgets to address training needs identified in this way.

Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Pre-primary, primary and secondary pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula is enhanced and implemented to align with the new school curricula and teaching standards.

Policy Actions

- The legislative framework for TTCs will be reviewed to support new pre-service curricula and in-service training and continuous professional development support for teachers within the context of the existing capacities of teachers, the need for multi-grade teaching, use of active learning opportunities, coaching, and feedback. The framework will outline a single systematic approach to responsibility for teacher professional development.
- As the new secondary curricula is developed and alternative approaches for future provision of lower secondary education in small schools are considered, the existing legislative framework for TTCs will need to be reviewed. Strategic partnerships with other teacher training colleges/institutions in other countries will be pursued.
- Procedures to approve new pre-service teacher training curricula will be reviewed and updated to ensure linkages between the different levels of education and to address the need for all secondary teachers to teach at both lower and upper secondary education levels and across more than one subject.
- A policy to allow school-based training to be recognised alongside more formal in-service training approaches will be needed.

Intermediate Outcome 2.3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system with updated performance assessment tools, linked to teaching standards, implemented to identify priority teacher training needs for ECE, primary and secondary levels.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Development of teaching standards for early childhood and secondary education. The teaching standards should be developed in a way that enables them to be used as the basis for assessment of teacher performance at all levels.
- A framework for implementation of teaching standards is developed outlining the roles of teachers, principals, DESB, PESS and central MoES/DTE. Guidelines for their use will also be required in addition to capacity building for school principals and DESB staff.
- Following development and piloting, teacher performance assessment tools for different levels (ECE, primary and secondary) will be endorsed and disseminated.
- Considering the large numbers of teachers, a decentralised approach to teacher performance assessment will be identified, including a quality assurance mechanism, and a secure and comprehensive information management system.
- A policy framework for teacher performance assessment is required to outline roles and responsibilities of assessors of teacher performance at differing levels and the mandate of various DESB units.
- A policy framework to outline how priority training needs are identified by an analysis of teacher performance assessments, including roles and responsibilities of all levels is required with oversight at the central level to ensure that priority training needs are addressed according to the teacher learning needs and performance assessment outcomes.

Intermediate Outcome 2.4: Upgraded Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) are professional development centres for all pre-service, in-service (ECE, primary and Secondary), and Pedagogical Adviser (PA) training.

Policy Actions

- A comprehensive teacher policy will be required to consolidate existing decrees and instructions related to teacher education. This comprehensive policy will outline the new roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders for all teacher education to be delivered by TTCs and provincial teacher development centres: pre-service; in-service (cluster-based, district-based and others) and school-based (PAs and others) training. The cost-effectiveness of PA school support will be conducted.
- The updated policy will also define the requirements of existing TTC staff to deliver this new mandate and identify minimum qualifications of all lecturing staff and identify requirements for adjunct training staff, such as existing master and provincial training teams.
- The same policy will also recommend how to link TTCs with university Faculties of Education where both exist in the same provincial capital to strengthen synergy.
- DTE will develop a comprehensive costed plan to implement their expanded mandate, including the significantly expanded in-service teacher training programmes.
- Minimum standards will be set for entrants to all TTC pre-service programmes, including flexibility to allow applicants to re-sit entrance examinations.
- Teaching standards for lecturers at TTCs and Faculties of Education will be developed and regularly used to assess the quality of teaching in all TTCs and Faculties of Education.
- Legislation will be developed to ensure promotion and salary increments will be based on satisfactory performance in support of the broadened mandate for TTCs as professional development centres for teacher education.

- The mandate of TTC demonstration schools will be expanded to pilot innovative models of teaching and learning.
- An assessment of the quality and relevance of the practicum will be undertaken.
- Development of new curricula for TTCs will include knowledge on the non-formal system for future teachers to improve linkages between formal and non-formal education system.

Intermediate Outcome 2.5: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning in their schools.

Policy Actions

- Development of professional standards, linked to the seven core tasks are updated to include SBM, SDP, FQS, quality assurance of school teaching and school meal provision for school principals. The professional standards will be developed and used as the basis for assessment of principals’ performance at all levels and across all core tasks.
- A framework for implementation of principals’ professional standards is developed outlining the roles of principals, DESB, PESS and central MoES/IFEAD and DoOP.
- Guidelines for their use will also be required in addition to capacity building for school principals and DESB staff.

6.3. High-Level Outcome 3:

All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity to enable improved student learning outcomes.

6.3.1. Rationale

The MTR report noted an imbalance between wage and non-wage financing which needs to be addressed to release funds to support implementation of non-wage related strategies in the ESSDP. It shows clearly that the education sector has remained under-financed in the period 2016-2018. The review also suggests that, whereas an increase in the non-wage recurrent and investment budget would be essential to achieve its objectives and improve the quality of education, more should be done to improve budget management and the efficient use of scarce resources. Considering that the wage budget is non-discretionary, the only real margin can be found in the allocation of the national non-wage recurrent and investment budgets, in which the education sector appears to be particularly under-funded.

The MTR also noted the results of a study managed by MoES Department of Organisation and Personnel that confirmed inefficiencies in teacher deployment leading to over-supply in some areas and under-supply in others as well as many volunteer teachers.

The MTR recommended that a rigorous analysis of the impact of School Block Grants on quality improvements and student outcomes (learning achievement, completion, gender equity, improvement in participation of disadvantaged children, etc.) be undertaken to guide policy makers on potential revisions to the scheme to improve the return on investment

Previously, sector planning, resource allocation, monitoring and assessments have predominantly focussed on the aggregated situation at the national level. This has provided an important basis for sector management and assessment but has often failed to give sufficient focus to the wide disparities that can exist in service provision and address some of the weakness in the procedures and protocols that are responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision at school level is as equitable as possible.

Over the period of the last ESDP there was an increasing focus on provincial and district level performance which assisted in highlighting the wide levels of disparity that are occurring within the system. Alongside this MoES established two important reforms in respect to school-based management approaches education quality standards to support more effective school planning and

the core set of Fundamental Quality Standards that represent the minimum that a school requires in order to function at the most basic level. In combination these two reforms provide a platform upon which to build over the next five years a more systemic focus on ensuring that all schools have the basic resources and capacity required to provide an acceptable quality of education services and support more effective prioritisation of scarce resources to ensure that this provision is more equitable.

Key areas of focus for this will include: ensuring that teacher allocation protocols are feasible given overall national staffing constraints and are supported with effective legislation and allocation procedures that will over the medium term ensure greater equity in the provision of teachers; a review of the school block grants formula to ensure that the funds for school running costs are allocated more in accordance with school needs and circumstances; textbook and teacher Guide supply and replenishment processes and their supporting management information systems will be reviewed in order to ensure more efficient and more effective procedures are in place to ensure individual school needs are met.

Placing the schools and the services they deliver at the forefront of education management and planning also requires institutional strengthening and improved management and administration systems. In particular:

The Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) that have been developed for primary level will become more formally linked into the national and sub-national administration and management systems that are used to guide resource allocation, with a priority focus on ensuring that all schools have at least the basic minimum level of resources required. New with information and planning systems will be developed and established to support this management reform. Ongoing support to the strengthening of School Based Management (SBM) systems and school principal training and strengthening of the engagement of the village education development committee (VEDC) will also assist in strengthening the planning and reporting capacity, and accountability systems at the school level.

FQS frameworks and the institutional systems to support their use as a resource prioritisation tool will also be developed for ECE, Lower and Upper secondary level and incrementally established in a similar manner. Baselines, indicators and targets reflecting the focus on school level resources, such as the percentage of primary schools with the correct staff complement will be developed and introduced over the five-year period to complement national aggregated targets. In order to ensure that sub-national offices can effectively support these organisational mandates structures the operational funding allocation for DESBs will be reviewed and revised to more fully reflect their scope of duties in respect to the number of schools they support.

6.3.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Organisation and Personnel, Department of Finance, Department of Planning, Department of Early Childhood Education, Department of General Education, Department of Teacher Education, Education Standards and Quality Assurance Centre, Department of Inspection and the Inclusive Education Centre.

6.3.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 3.1: FQS for ECE and secondary education are developed, tested, approved and implemented within a framework that outlines fundamental standards for levels of school-based education and forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning.

Policy Actions

- Ministry will approve FQS for ECE and secondary education **and forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning.**
- Legislation and operational guidelines for school, DESB and PESS level supporting the introduction of the FQS will be developed, approved and disseminated.

Intermediate Outcome 3.2: Establishment of a sustainable school self-evaluation and development planning process (using FQS) that informs district level planning and targeting of support, including teacher and learning materials allocation.

Policy Actions

- The mandates and responsibilities of the PESS and DESB and staff will be revised to encompass their role in supporting the FQS reporting and resource prioritisation systems.
- Under the oversight of the PBC, procedures and guidelines to support central offices, PESS and DESB in more effectively allocating resources to schools that are unable to meet FQs will be developed and disseminated.
- The mid-term review will include an assessment of the potential need to adjust DESB and PESS funding formula to reflect their role in supporting schools in attaining the FQS.
- The strengthened LESMIS will be expanded to incorporate and consolidate findings from the FQS reports. Baselines, indicators and targets reflecting the focus on school level resources will be developed and introduced over the five-year period to complement national aggregated targets.
- A Ministerial decision to designate the institutional body responsible for oversight of School Based Management issues will be taken and departmental mandates revised accordingly.
- The responsible body will develop a school management policy that will define the school level roles and responsibilities, and the supporting roles of DESB, PESS; outline the long-term approach to ensuring all principles are fully capable of implementing their SBM duties.

Intermediate Outcome 3.3 School Block Grants (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome (increasing the unit cost) will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- The PBC will review the SBG policy, formula and expenditure items to align with the policy priorities of ESSDP 2021-25, including as outlined in Section 3.2 above. This review will also consider equity issues for the SBG approach.
- The PBC will provide a recommendation for a revision of the SBG formula that reflects the comparatively higher costs per student incurred in smaller schools and in more disadvantaged areas.
- The PBC will oversee a verification the bank account details of all recipients of SBGs. MoES and MoF will meet to discuss ways to improve the timeliness of SBG delivery and efficiency of SBG fund collection for small and/or remote schools.

Intermediate Outcome 3.4 Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.

Policy Actions

- A review of the geographical distribution of public schools, particularly primary schools, will be undertaken to identify possible gains in efficiency of teacher allocation through consolidation of small schools closely located to other schools.
- A legislative framework is developed by the TAC to support implementation of the new teacher allocation guidelines.
- The TAC will oversee the development of a 10-year prioritised teacher allocation implementation plan to reduce disparities, including the distribution of multi-grade classrooms, with impact reviewed at the MTR. This plan will include projected teacher

demand plan, teacher training programmes for each level and stream as well as education and sport personnel plans are aligned with real need in each period.

- The TAC will consider undertaking a feasibility study on incentivized teacher redeployment and make a recommendation to the PBC and the Minister
- The TAC will use the LESMIS to track teacher allocations.
- The TAC will oversee the development and approval of guidelines (and a handbook) to provide advice to DESBs in the implementation of a teacher allocation plan that prioritises the deployment of new teachers to the most under-staffed districts and freezes all new appointments to over-staffed districts will be required. A system to monitor compliance with the new teacher allocation guidelines will be developed and approved.
- At the mid-term review the TAC will again review the teacher allocation formula to assess its feasibility given the current uncertain impact on staffing numbers resulting from the Covid-19 crisis.
- As part of a strengthened EMIS (LESMIS), develop and pilot an app to monitor teacher absenteeism.

Intermediate Outcome 3.5 Textbook and Teacher guide allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.

Policy Actions

- Under the oversight of the PBC, the textbook replenishment budget will be reviewed and updated in order to ensure sustainable long-term provision given current textbook attrition rates.
- Guidelines and regulations will be issued to strengthen textbook management and disbursement practices at DESB level to improve efficiency and reduce disparity, including guidelines for safe storage of materials at school and district level to reduce risk from damage¹³, and textbook care by students.
- Under the oversight of the PBC, a review of the most effective and simple means of ensuring appropriate textbook supply to school will be made. This will include a comparative review of: the current textbook MIS (TMIS) with recommendations for improvements; and the feasibility of using EMIS data whilst building in a textbook attrition rate to compensate for the delay incurred in compiling the school annual censuses.

Intermediate Outcome 3.6 All schools are supported in attaining the minimum level of basic toilet, washing and hygiene facilities.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Under the oversight of PBC procedures and guidelines to support central offices, PESS, DESB and schools in more effectively allocating resources to schools to enable them to meet FQS in respect to latrines, water and hand washing facilities will be developed and disseminated.
- MoES will review the potential for adopting the WASH programme approach on a national scale with a view to ensuring that all schools reach at least the minimum 1-star rating.
- In order to ensure long term sustainable implementation of this programme a Ministerial decision to designate the institutional body responsible for oversight of the programme will be taken and departmental mandates revised accordingly.

¹³ Damage and loss often caused by flooding during the rainy season

6.4. High-Level Outcome 4:

Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities related to gender, poverty, ethnicity, disability and location.

6.4.1. Rationale

The MTR noted that female literacy remains consistently lower than that of males, particularly among non-Lao-Tai groups and that learning outcomes, as measured by ASLO at grade 3 level, remain quite low and it is not known how many children who drop out before completing primary school have sustainable literacy skills.

The MTR recommended that non-formal programs to deliver literacy courses should target areas where literacy rates are lowest, particularly where there are concentrations of females from ethnic groups.; and a screening test for all primary school leavers should be conducted to determine if they have sustainable literacy skills and the results should be used as a basis for further decision making at local, sub-national and national level as appropriate.

The Human Assets Index used to determine graduation from Least Developed Country status has adult literacy as one of its indicators, but it is also important to monitor youth literacy rates due to the significant numbers of school drop-outs from primary and lower secondary levels where assessed student learning outcomes are low¹⁴. Such monitoring is needed to ensure that primary school leavers do not fall back into illiteracy and the results of monitoring should be included in the regular EMIS. Literacy programmes are not integrated into lifelong learning approaches and there is a shortage of instructors trained in delivering lifelong approaches, including innovative approaches to deliver literacy programmes.

6.4.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Non-Formal Education, Department of General Education, Education Standards and Quality Assurance Centre, Inclusive Education Centre and Research Institute for Educational Sciences.

6.4.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions.

Intermediate Outcome 4.1: Literacy rates for youths and adolescent increased and decreased disparity in gender, ethnicity, economic status and geography

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions.

- An action plan for literacy programmes prioritising 15 to 40-year olds is drafted and informed by the 2015 and 2020 population censuses, and the 2017 Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS).
- This action plan will place priority on improving literacy in the 40 priority districts and for females and ethnic populations with low literacy rates as well as learners with disabilities with low literacy rates.

Intermediate Outcome 4.2: Sample monitoring of NFE literacy programmes is conducted to assess the impact on functional youth literacy.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

¹⁴ LSIS II found that “60 per cent of young people who only attended primary school do not have the necessary skills to read simple sentences. This is very problematic and calls for closer monitoring of and support to students and teachers to assure quality of teaching and learning.”

Policy Actions.

- RIES (CERE) is given the mandate to develop and implement a sample functional literacy assessment strategy, in conjunction with the Non-Formal Education Development Centre (NFEDC).

Intermediate Outcome 4.3: Non-formal services and structures contribute to increased adult and youth literacy rates and are well established at village and district level (NFEC and CLC).

Policy Actions.

- Priority for enrolments in non-formal literacy programmes is given to the 15-40 year age group with a focus on the 40 priority districts.

6.5. High-Level Outcome 5:

The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering employment, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status.

6.5.1. Rationale.

The ESDP 2016-20 mid-term review found that MoES must continue to prioritize the need to address key issues affecting the relevance and outputs of post-basic education by 2025, including the insufficient knowledge and skills acquired by upper secondary graduates to better support the 9th NSEDP. Skills acquired and other learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy, of basic education do not meet the current demands of the labour market.

To improve alignment with the needs of the NSEDP, the MTR noted that it is not enough to improve upper secondary education, TVET and higher education; but also to improve fundamental competencies and skills of children starting from early childhood education to lower-secondary and also to identify required support for people with disabilities. Better alignment is hindered by a lack of regular labour market surveys and tracer studies of graduates. There is also limited capacity of the private sector to articulate labour needs, both current and projected. Better quantification of what “alignment” with the NSEDP means is required and MoES needs to develop an overall human resource development plan for the education sector. The expanding contribution of the industry and service sectors to GDP also require improved quality of graduates from upper secondary, colleges and universities.

A 2018 analysis of the labour market¹⁵ showed that shortages of quality labour are one of the main constraints to the development of the private sector in Lao PDR. These shortages relate primarily to a lack of both skilled and unskilled labour, due partly to the low level of education provided by public vocational colleges and schools; and problems associated with the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy. These shortages relate primarily to a lack of skilled labour and, more worryingly, unskilled labour. Employment in Lao PDR is highly concentrated in the agricultural sector with 2.3 million people working in agriculture, 920,000 working in construction and services, 248,000 working in manufacturing and 22,000 working in power and mining in 2013. The population of working age is 4.4 million, with approximately 96,000 additional people expected to reach working age each year in the coming decade. The agricultural and industry sectors contributed 3.7% of GDP growth of 6.5% in 2018, but there is a shortage of trained technicians in both areas. Many schools and teachers still struggle to effectively teach the new upper secondary curriculum and lack adequate training, laboratories/equipment and teaching and learning resources to teach natural science¹⁶ skills. This impacts the labour market, as upper secondary accounts for the second largest share (following lower secondary) of entrants into industry and service sector work. It also has downstream effects on higher

¹⁵ Labour Market Analysis - Lao PDR Literature review and qualitative insights, GIZ, February 2018

¹⁶ “Natural sciences’ refers to science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects (STEM)

education and TVET. While 75% of university graduates get formal jobs¹⁷, there are insufficient graduates in natural science fields. The quality of private sector colleges is still lagging to the extent that some have been prevented from providing Bachelor and above level programmes until quality of facilities and lecturers is increased.

The MTR identified a key challenge will be to ensure that TVET teachers are fully trained to deliver the technical content of the new courses and understand how to use the new equipment and resources. The department will need to pro-actively manage a rolling program of training and upgrading to ensure that the quality of teaching is in line with national, regional and where possible, international standards, supported by the international partners. Another key, related, challenge is to effectively measure graduate employability as well as employer satisfaction and use the results as a basis for decision making. There is a need to develop national guidelines for TVET centres on how to conduct effective tracer studies and use the results to inform decision -making. It is often a challenge to find suitable work placements for students to gain practical experience as part of their studies. TVET centres should maintain a strong network of local employers to support students' practicum.

The MTR identified the need for more high quality university graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are essential to accelerating economic development in the future.

6.5.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of Department of Technical and Vocational Education, Department of Higher Education, Department of Non-Formal Education, Teacher Training Colleges and TVET Institutions, ESQAC, Department of Student Affairs, and HRD Division of the Department of Planning. The role of National Training Council in engaging with the private sector, strengthening the trade working groups, maintaining the relevance of curriculum development and managing TVET training fund is also important.

6.5.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 5.1: Improved quality of upper secondary teaching and learning to meet the need of the labour market and higher education, including model secondary schools.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions:

- A secondary teacher training plan to upgrade the content knowledge of teachers who have mostly taught at lower secondary level to enable them to teach upper secondary subjects will be developed and implemented. This plan will outline the roles and responsibilities of the Department of General Education, PESS, DESB, school clusters, TTCs, Secondary school principals, Secondary PAs and Faculties of Education.
- A Ministerial Decree to establish a model upper secondary school in each province, outlining required facilities, staff capacity, school management and the mandated function of the model schools will be issued.
- Provincial ICT centres are merged into their host schools in order to establish model schools.
- Agreement to produce and use online learning materials for upper secondary education.

Intermediate Outcome 5.2: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher graduates at TTCs and Faculties of Education leading to improved natural science teaching and learning at secondary level.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

¹⁷ Some graduates work in family business, establish their own business or are unemployed

Policy Actions

- Priority for entry to TTC and Faculty of Education teacher training programmes is given equally to male and female entrants who are applying to become natural science teachers.
- Opportunity is given to all natural science teacher trainees to improve their content knowledge while at TTCs.
- The curriculum of natural science subjects at upper secondary level will be reviewed to consider splitting the curriculum into two streams: natural science and social science,
- scholarships for teacher trainees provided by MoES and development partners gives priority to students studying natural science subjects and to students from the 40 MoES priority districts, with attention to disparities by way of gender and ethnicity.

Intermediate Outcome 5.3: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET through improved facilities, teachers and learning materials

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Qualification Standards for inclusive agriculture and industry curricula will be developed, approved.
- The TVET funding formula includes additional funds for agriculture and industry students but if increases in overall funding are not forthcoming, priority will be given to expanding enrolments in agriculture.
- MoES will formally coordinate with MoLSW and MoAF to have an overall training programme for agriculture and industry related fields programmes with enrolment targets for each sector across the 5-years of ESSDP.
- MoES/DTVET will discuss with MoLSW and MoAF the feasibility to utilise shared facilities and teaching materials where possible to plan expanded facilities and materials as part of the overall TVET training programme for agriculture, services and industry related fields programmes (Intermediate outcome 2 above).
- TVET facilities will be established in Xaysomboun Province.

Intermediate Outcome 5.4: Improved relevance of TVET programmes to demands of the 9th NSEDP.

Policy Actions

- Lao National Qualifications Framework (LNQF) is endorsed by all stakeholders.
- Approve vocational guidance and counselling systems.
- Establish a mechanism to strengthen cooperation with the private sector.
- Endorse the Dual Cooperative training approach in conjunction with the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI).

Intermediate Outcome 5.5: Improved quality of TVET programmes.

Policy Actions

- Occupational standards for all new TVET courses are endorsed.
- Review of effectiveness of C1 and C2 programmes.
- Enable implementation of C1 and C2 courses with lower secondary equivalency, Introduction of a voucher system.

Intermediate Outcome 5.6: Improved quality of TVET teachers.

Policy Actions

- Endorse teaching standards which are inclusive for TVET teachers.
- Ministerial decision on academic grades, nomenclature and incentive policy for TVET teachers produced.

- VEDI produces a 5-year costed operational plan.

Intermediate Outcome 5.7: Strengthened TVET cooperation at national and local levels with public, private and international organisations.

Policy Actions

- High-level cross-sectoral (Education, Planning and Investment, and Labour and Social Welfare) negotiations will lead to an agreement for formal establishment of a joint MoES, MoLSW, MoIC), DPs, and private sector technical working group under Focal Group 3 on meeting changing labour market needs and creation of more job opportunities.
- Discussion and recommendations from this joint technical working group may lead to further policy development.
- Framework developed for cooperation between TVET institutions and private sector business units.

Intermediate Outcome 5.8: Strengthened TVET management.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Improve and endorse the TVET regulatory framework.
- Develop rules, regulations and decrees to support implementation of the TVET Law.
- Update and endorse a quality assurance system for TVET institutions with support from ESQAC.
- Endorse a framework for implementation of a TVET Development Fund and broader financing of the TVET sub-sector.

Intermediate Outcome 5.9: National Qualifications Framework includes linkage of non-formal and TVET qualifications and is aligned with the ASEAN QF.

Policy Actions

- A Ministerial instruction will be issued to direct DTVET and DNFE to work together to integrate non-formal programmes into the existing TVET National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- Part of this development will be to examine the balance between theory and practice of both formal and non-formal programmes.
- Legislation will be drafted to integrate non-formal education into the NQF.

Intermediate Outcome 5.10: Strengthened university teaching and research programmes in 9th NSEDP priority areas, including natural sciences, engineering and technology.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- A feasibility study will be implemented to establish a new Institute of Technology, including an Artificial Intelligence Centre. This study will outline the staffing allocation and recurrent budget needs and an action plan for expansion over the 5 years of the sector plan.
- Agreement will be reached on ToRs for an independent appraisal of all four Centres of Excellences. These ToRs will focus on identifying processes to strengthen these four centres, particularly to improve linkages to 9th NSEDP priorities.
- Department of Higher Education and the Scholarship Office of the Department of Student Affairs will develop a proposal to weight the scholarships allocations in favour of students who enrol in priority programmes and disadvantaged students. The approved proposal will be discussed at ESWG to gain endorsement by development partners to ensure alignment of their scholarship programmes to government priorities.

- NUOL will lead the development and implementation of a higher education website promoting scientific research by university lecturers and post-graduate students.
- Ministerial instructions to prioritise natural science infrastructure and gender-responsive teaching materials at TTCs and universities for budget priority utilization are approved and disseminated.
- Agreement with prospective donors concerning upgrading of the Faculty of Engineering. Priority is given to students entering and continuing to study in natural sciences programmes. A Ministerial instruction will mandate this priority.
- The policy for scholarships will be updated to prioritise natural science students.
- The JTWG under the Post-Secondary Focal Group (see Intermediate Outcome 5.7) will issue guidance for universities and TVET institutions on how and when to conduct effective tracer studies and use the results as a basis for future decision making on curricula and me. ESWG will endorse this guidance.

Intermediate Outcome 5.11: Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments, with external assessments conducted every 5 years.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- The NUOL Quality Assurance Unit is mandated to support other public universities in developing and implementing best practice in conducting annual self-assessments.
- A Ministerial Instruction will direct all public universities to conduct these assessments with reports submitted to the Minister and the Education Senior Administrators Annual Conferences.
- A teaching performance assessment framework for higher education lecturers at differing levels of qualifications and experience is developed and endorsed.
- A Ministerial Instruction will direct all higher education institutions to undertake such teaching assessments on a regular basis.
- A Ministerial instruction and regulatory framework will be issued to manage lecturer academic titles at higher education institutions.

Intermediate Outcome 5.12: Legislation for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities are disseminated (flat rate, per student, per natural science, disparity-based).

Policy Actions

- Ministerial approval will be provided to develop a proposal for development and modelling of a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities (flat rate, per student, per natural science, disparity-based). The proposal will provide recommendations and guidelines for Ministerial consideration.

6.6. High-Level Outcome 6:

Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance

6.6.1. Rationale

MoES continues to prioritise the need to address key issues in planning, budgeting and performance monitoring in the education and sports sector by 2025. Considerable fiscal constraints will remain at least until 2025 exacerbated by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore the sector needs to determine how to more efficiently use its human and financial resources. Improving efficiency can be facilitated by reviewing organisational structures at all levels to identify areas of

inefficiency. School-based management has been introduced at primary school level with support from the GPE II project, however to become sustainable, there is a need to institutionalise it at all levels with a focus on strengthening DESB management of school-based management as it is a cross-cutting issue across DESB units. The mandate of the Inclusive Education Centre should be reviewed and strengthened to better implement the Inclusive Education Policy. There is currently an imbalance between wage and non-wage financing with about 92% of the sub-national level education sector budget being allocated to wage-and wage-related expenditure. There is a need to improve the quality and efficiency in education spending. Improving allocative efficiency within the education sector, through the development of a budget prioritisation framework to be applied during the central and sub-national budget formulation and revision process: where should any available additional resources be allocated to achieve maximum improvement in education quality (prioritisation framework); how to ensure a more equal allocation of resources across provinces and districts, to reduce disparities within the overall ESSDP priority to the primary sub-sector.

These efforts must include: (i) improving the efficiency of teacher deployment; (ii) strengthening the linkage between planning and budgeting through full operation of the PBC (with formal presentation and discussions of the ACSEPs and of draft annual budgets); (iii) improving financial data collection for enhanced accountability and analysis; (iv) further capacity building of administrative staff, particularly at sub-national level; and (v) strengthening of data quality, management and utilization for planning, monitoring and budgeting processes through consolidation of different MISs into an integrated single LESMIS.

Need strong coordination with development partners during their project design work to ensure that external financing is appropriate, strongly aligned to ESSDP 2021-25 priorities and does not lead to unsustainable recurrent costs.

6.6.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Finance, Department of Organisation and Personnel, Department of Inspection, Department of Planning and Research Institute for Educational Sciences.

6.6.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 6.1: Strengthened MoES organisational structure at central, provincial and district levels to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies, including institutionalisation of SBM and role of VEDCs at school level.

Policy Actions

- A staffing allocation framework to ensure efficiency, complementarity and completeness at all levels will be developed and approved.
- This framework will consider any introduction of “school clusters” to support improved service delivery and be based on differing workloads and responsibilities, including population differences across provinces and districts and be implemented in a cost-effective manner.
- A decree to institutionalise school-based management will be issued, outlining roles and responsibilities at all levels, including the VEDC. This decree will explicitly outline the roles and responsibilities of VEDCs in management of SBGs and drafting of school development plans, including legislative recognition of VEDCs as an entity within the education sector.
- The decree will also specify the important linkages between FQS as a tool to inform and prioritise school development plans and SBGs to fund implementation of the plan. The decree will also address how SBM should inform district-based planning and management.
- A legislative framework acknowledging the cross-cutting nature of SBM, particularly at district level will also be drafted to support implementation of the decree.

- A review of the mandate of the Inclusive Education Centre will identify how to better focus on implementation of the IE Policy, including links with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labours and Social Welfare.

Intermediate Outcome 6.2: Education Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy is implemented, including DESB and PESS staff allocated according to need and provided with appropriate capacity building to adequately implement their roles and responsibilities, as defined by job descriptions and job specifications.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- IFEAD will develop a costed action plan to implement the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS), to be reviewed by the Education and Sports Management and Administration Focal Group (FG#4), approved, disseminated and used to inform the TAC and wider sector capacity building programmes of IFEAD, DTE, TDC and TTCs.
- A regulatory framework will be drafted to indicate how the HRD strategy will be used as the basis for capacity building of staff, particularly at PESS and DESB.
- IFEAD will develop self-study manuals and training modules that can be used by DESB staff as part of their monthly meetings with principals¹⁸.
- A Ministerial Instruction issued to ensure an allocation of time at monthly principal-DESB meetings for capacity building of principals, including peer learning and assessment of teacher performance.
- IFEAD will develop a database of administrative staff who have been trained and in what area, in conjunction with LESMIS development.
- Revised ToRs and staff allocation protocols for PESS and DESB, based on real needs and workloads will be developed and approved.
- An action plan for capacity building by IFEAD of PESS, DESB and cluster staff will be developed and based on the education HRD strategy, including SBM and school development planning, including recommendations for sustainable financing from GoL rather than dependence on external financing.

Intermediate Outcome 6.3: Strengthened MoES operational committees (TAC and PBC) at central, and sub-national levels use evidence from ASCEPs. Learning outcomes assessments and integrated LEMIS (includes PMIS FMIS & EMIS) to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions.

- The mandate and responsibilities of the TAC are reviewed and revised in order to provide the Minister and Vice Ministers with policy informing advice to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher allocation.
- Recommendations for the establishment of sub-national TACs are developed and reviewed by the TAC for approval by the Minister.
- The scheduling and the operational tasks of the PBC will be reviewed, strengthened and realigned in order ensure its coordination function between the planning and budgeting process is effective and timely.

¹⁸ a key module should be on the new SDP process, using FQS and that links to district development planning, monitoring and targeting of support

- Recommendations for the establishment of sub-national PBCs are developed and reviewed by the PBC for approval by the Minister.
- A decree is issued that authorises the PBC to examine annual reports of the district budget allocations for all DESB and to inform the Minister about compliance with centrally produced DESB budget guidelines with discrepancies reported in the annual sector report.
- A Ministerial Instruction is issued authorising the PBC to receive ACSEPs from all provinces and to validate these by using information from a functioning PBMIS that produces timely budget plans and timely budget execution reports for PBC review and budget prioritisation discussions.
- A regulatory framework will be developed that enables the PBC to examine and report on alignment with provincial ACSEPs with ESSDP 2021-25 priorities and its broader implementation.
- A Ministerial Instruction is issued to mandate the Statistics Centre to disaggregate education performance in disadvantaged (MoES 40 districts) and non-disadvantaged districts annually and report on trends in reducing disparity gaps.
- The Statistics Centre of MoES provides each PESS with sex disaggregated education data¹⁹ and reporting templates to enable each PESS to report on progress to reducing disparity gaps.
- The current initiative to develop a new Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS) strategic development plan for 2018 to 2022 will be updated to include TEMIS, TVETMIS and LUMS as integrated components of the LESMIS. An updated LESMIS will be endorsed.
- MoES identifies and prioritises key areas for further research and analysis, in coordination with development partners in order to strengthen its on-going evidence-based policy development.
- A costed action plan to build capacity of CERE staff and to establish a research and education performance evaluation network will be developed.
- Legislation and ToRs for a Research Ethics Committee
- The new EMIS strategy (LESMIS) will review the potential for including literacy data disaggregated by gender, poverty, ethnicity, disability and location, and provide recommendations and an operational roadmap for integrating literacy data as part of overall data collection and reporting by the MoES Statistics Centre

Intermediate Outcome 6.4: Monitoring and Evaluation framework for ESSDP 2021-25 is implemented on an annual basis.

Policy Actions

- Reporting against the M&E Framework of ESSDP is presented annually to both ESWG and the MOES Annual Conference.
- The proposed upgrading of EMIS (LESMIS) and reports from PBMIS will inform the M&E reporting.
- A review will be implemented to consider how to reconcile EMIS population data with that projected by the Lao Statistics Bureau and other surveys such as LSIS.

Intermediate Outcome 6.5: Education system emergency preparedness and resilience to disasters strengthened.

Policy Actions

- Finalization and implementation of Education Emergency Contingency Plan, taking into account climate change.
- Integration of orientation on emergency preparedness in MoES, PESS, DESBs and school trainings as well as trainings for teachers and PAs, in collaboration with the Education Cluster.
- Rollout of online monitoring tool for emergency response integrated to LESMIS.

¹⁹ Sex, ethno-linguistic group and including data on children with disabilities

6.7. High-Level Outcome 7:

Disparities are reduced through a supporting ESSDP financing plan that directly addresses relevant output targets, considering the context of real resource and capacity constraints.

6.7.1. Rationale

The ESSDP 2016-2020 midterm review shows clearly that the education sector has remained under-financed in the period 2016-2018. The review also suggests that, whereas an increase in the non-wage recurrent and investment budget would be essential to achieve its objectives and improve the quality of education, more should be done to improve budget management and the efficient use of scarce resources.

The MTR recommended that MoES should prepare a concise explanatory note on education budget needs for the attention of MoF and MPI during the budget formulation process, showing concretely the link between additional budget requests and ESSDP policies and targets. The note would be formally endorsed by the Planning and Budgeting Committee. It should, for instance, cover the request for DESBs' Chapter 63 increase to empower them and to implement the pedagogical support programme currently under revision, or the need for extra investment budget to repair schools affected by floods.

Due to fiscal constraints during the period 2016-20, the budget for in-service teacher training and pedagogical support to teachers in low-performing schools was reduced and there is no budget line to support transition to inclusive classrooms. Most of the education budget goes to salaries and allowances whereas non-salary operating costs take up about 12 percent of the sector budget, and only 8 percent at sub-national level.

As a result of a stagnating sector budget in the past years, priority was given to maintaining 'protected' programmes, such as school block grants and to some extent textbook replenishment. Strong Government prioritization of recurrent education spending is required if key programmes to support education quality, such as in-service teacher training, pedagogical advisors' school visits, learning materials, equipment, stipends, investment in WASH school-infrastructure are to be taken forward. Development partners have an important role to play by aligning their programme implementation according to the national priorities outlined in Section 3.2 of the ESSDP 2021-25 and targeting with the MoES defined list of 40 disadvantaged districts (See annex 3 for list). All proposed projects supported by development partners should clearly identify any ongoing and future recurrent liabilities after the closing of these projects.

Non-wage resource allocations to education vary across provinces and districts but are not necessarily linked to the levels of services provided or the disparities of participation. MoES have limited flexibility in the use of discretionary funds and the major space for reducing disparity is to improve the efficiency of teacher deployment. However, moving teachers from one location to another is very difficult, particularly across different districts and wage allocations are very difficult to change.

A further strategy to use the financing plan to reduce disparities is to review the funding formula for school block grants and potentially provide larger grants to areas with weaker education services or performance. Both the TAC and the PBC will examine the recommendations from the ESWG appraisal of the full ESSDP 2016-20 and mid-term review report to identify strategies for using resource allocation (human/financial) to reduce disparities through strengthening support to weaker performers. Consideration may be given to differential use of school block grants and/or formula-based allocation of operational budgets to districts to target disadvantaged school populations. There is also a need to maximise the effectiveness of school block grant funds through ensuring their timely delivery to schools.

However, the major constraint to reducing disparities is the small share of the education budget to operating budgets, particularly at district level. Currently, districts receive a very low share of the total

non-wage recurrent budget of the sector. Increasing allocations and providing guidelines on expenditure priorities to districts is a priority if disparities are to be addressed. This would require an increase in the overall education sector non-wage recurrent budget as further efficiency gains are limited.

Gender equity among senior administrative staff also needs to be improved since few women hold senior positions at PESS, DESB and school principal levels.

6.7.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of Department of Planning, Department of Finance, PBC, TAC, Provinces and Development Partners.

6.7.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 7.1: The ESSDP financing plan includes an explicit expenditure policy that guides the central and sub-national annual budget development and revision process reflects the need to address disparities and improve learning outcomes.

Policy Actions

- The PBC reviews and identifies potential targeted financing strategies, existing legislation and financial disbursement and reporting mechanisms; and potential eligible expenditures that would reduce disparities in education performance.
- Based on PBC findings the ESSDP expenditure policy is updated at the mid-term review to ensure that expenditure priorities continue to address disparities.
- Annual budget plans of sub-sectors integrate as a priority the higher impact and more cost-effective interventions identified in the ESSDP and ACSEPs.
- The PBC is given the mandate to review annual budget plans of sub-sectors to ensure alignment with the priorities of ESSDP.
- The mandate for the development of the mid-term ESSDP revised financing plan and the annual financing plans is placed with DoF, with strategic guidance from the Department of Planning and oversight from the PBC.
- The Management and Administration Focal Group (FG#4) recommends to ESWG a preferred approach to prioritizing cost-effective interventions with priority to disadvantaged districts.

Intermediate Outcome 7.2: ESWG review and endorse the updated mid-term financing plan for ESSDP.

Policy Actions

- The ESWG work-plan includes a review and endorsement of the compliance of the annual budget with the ESSDP financing plan and recommendations for updating the mid-term financing plan.

Intermediate Outcome 7.3: Development partners provide predictable financial support aligned to ESSDP priority targets and that proposed new interventions are sustainable where partners expect MoES to take over after project completion.

Policy Actions

- The ToRs of ESWG are updated to ensure that all new development partner programmes take into account and explicitly state the recurrent financing liabilities that are created through investment and development programmes and prioritise programmes that are identified as key priorities in the ESSDP and are in support of the MoES identified disadvantaged districts or have national coverage.
- Development partners provide and annually update comprehensive information on all projects and programmes to the Project Management Division of the Department of Planning for inclusion in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) database.

Intermediate Outcome 7.4: Resources mobilised through more active international cooperation, including with private philanthropic organisations.

Policy Actions

- The Department of International Cooperation has an extended mandate to liaise with other potential funding organisations, including private philanthropic organisations.
- Legislation to promote and manage international and private organization to invest in quality education development.

6.8. High-Level Outcome 8:

Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international stages makes pride to all Lao people

6.8.1. Rationale

Although Sports for All performance has been expanded, the expansion has not reached the communities and local areas. The organizational structure is not yet strong; the development of quality standards has yet been completed; there is insufficient number of high-quality staff; the infrastructure and equipment do not respond to the need for Sports for All activities.

The development and improvement of athletes, coaches and referees is in greater demand to meet regional standards. Sports facilities at all levels need to be managed and maintained. The investment in the area at both the central and grassroots levels is still limited and discontinuous.

6.8.2. Responsible departments

Achievement of this strategic high-level outcome is the joint responsibility of the Department of Elite Sports, Department of Sports for All and Physical and Arts Education, the National Sports Federations.

6.8.3. Intermediate outcomes and required policy actions

Intermediate Outcome 8.1: Increasing the number and quality of Sports Club, public and social in Village, district and province/capital level, public and private organizations, companies, factories. And improve the sport athletes, disabled athletes to be increased in quantity, quality into international level.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Legislation for further expansion of Sports for All.
- Standardized physical and sport infrastructures, equipment and facilities.

Intermediate Outcome 8.2: Teaching and learning of physical and arts education have been more widely implemented; the number of personnel and technicians in physical education has increased, and the number of students participate in the sports events in the country, regional and international level increased.

Policy Actions

- Integrate sports and physical exercise in the school activities as well as expand the implementation of physical education curriculum.
- Organize the Annual Students Sport Competition and participate in the competitions and host the ASEAN Students Games.

Intermediate outcome 8.3: Talented athletes, national athletes and professional athletes have potential in equality of the regional and international standards.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- A sustainable athletes’ development strategic plan will be developed within the context of fiscal constraints, including a strengthened system for Elite Sport administration and management, Sports competitions will be scheduled.
- If funding becomes available, establishment of a sport education institute, (infrastructure and equipment) that will undertake sports science and research.

Intermediate Outcome 8.4: Sport administrators, referees, coaches, and scientists are more familiar with international standards.

Full achievement of this intermediate outcome will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Policy Actions

- Develop sport- physical exercise infrastructure, rehearsal courts, competitions equipment and sport-gymnastics clubs in education institutions.

Intermediate Outcome 8.5: Strengthen the governance of administration of elite sports in central as well as in local level

Policy Actions

- Develop and implement an action plan aiming to meet the criteria of the Asian Olympic Council, including organization of regular sport competitions at district and provincial levels.

7. Resources and Financial Requirements for ESSDP 2021-25

7.1. Budget developments during 2016-20

Since 2016, the education sector has faced the challenge of a strict budgetary constraint as the Government has given priority to containing the recurrent budget (wage bill and operational expenditures), and to increasing capital investment in major infrastructure projects (railway and road construction). Anticipated increases in the education budget have not yet materialised. Education expenditure in 2017 was lower than in Fiscal Year 2015/16. The State Budget Plan for 2019 saw a net decrease in the education sector budget as compared to the State Budget Plan for 2018. The Education Law provides that the sector should receive a benchmark target of 18%-of-the-Government Budget per annum. As can be seen in the table below, the education sector share of the budget has remained consistently been far below this and has recently fallen from 14.2% of the State Budget 2018 (primary expenditure²⁰) to 13.1% in the State Budget Plan 2020.

Table 1: The Share of Education Budget during 2016-2020

	Budget 2015/16 (actual)	Budget 2017 (actual)	Budget 2018 (plan)	Budget 2019 (plan)	Budget 2020 (plan)
State budget (primary expenditure)	28,980,352	28,465,896	29,552,412	29,467,150	31,535,000
Education budget	3,846,563	3,793,775	4,187,995	4,038,132	4,144,761
Education share	13.3%	13.3%	14.2%	13.7%	13.1%

²⁰ Primary expenditure = total budget minus debt service and reserves

Sources: Budget execution reports for FY 2015/16 and 2017; State Budget Plans 2018, 2019 and 2020

These budgetary restrictions have had a considerable impact on ESDP implementation and therefore on sector performance. ESDP 2016-2020 was developed according to budget projections prepared by the MoF for the period 2016-2020. The education share of the budget had been set at 17% of domestically financed expenditure, plus projected ODA. As can be seen in the table below, the education budget fell well short of ESDP projections in the period 2015/16 to 2020, resulting in considerable financing gaps.

Table 2: The Education Budget Vs ESDP Financing Requirement

<i>LAK million</i>	2015/16 (actual)	2017 (actual)	2018 (budget)	2019 (budget)	2020 (budget)
Original ESDP financing requirements	4,416,806	4,898,126	4,969,860	5,322,760	5,517,092
Revised ESDP financing requirements (MTR)				4,253,079	4,523,169
Education budget	3,846,563	3,793,775	4,187,995	4,038,132	4,144,761
Gap	(570,243)	(1,104,351)	(781,865)	(214,947)	(378,408)

Over the period 2016-2020 these large financing gaps resulted in the reduction or postponing of a number of expenditure programmes envisaged in the ESDP 2016-2020. These programmes were key to improving the quality of education service delivery. These include:

- Teacher in-service training programmes: the ESDP had made it a target that teachers would undergo a 10-day in-service training session every 5 years. The programme was almost entirely cancelled for lack of funding.
- School block grants for primary and secondary schools were not increased as much as planned, reaching LAK 70,000 per student in 2020, instead of LAK 100,000 planned originally.
- DESB operating budgets were not increased, thus preventing full outreach of support services to schools, such as pedagogical support, in particular to more remote and most in-need schools.
- Upgrading schools to WASH standards: limited investment, and exclusively by development partners, have resulted in the percentage of WASH schools to total primary schools remaining flat at 64% from 2015 to 2018, a figure likely to have worsened after the flood disasters of 2018 and 2019, which have affected a significant number of schools.

Findings from the 2018 ESDP Mid-term Review show some of the impact these budget limitations have been on overall ESDP implementation:

- The Lao Social Indicator Survey 2017 shows that while the education system expansion has reduced inequity, there are still wide disparities in access, survival and outcomes.
- A 2017 learning assessment shows that only one-third of Grade 3 students had met literacy standards for entry into Grade 4, and less than 20% had met the standards for mathematics. A 2019 assessment at Grade 9 found similar low learning outcomes²¹. The MTR identifies clearly the lack of proper in-service teacher training and pedagogical support services as two reasons for poor education outcome, as well as inefficient teacher deployment.
- Secondary completion rates and TVET enrolment remain low. There is a lack of qualified teachers for certain subjects in secondary schools. More attention is required to support students from disadvantaged groups (ethnicity, poverty, location) through affirmative funding. More funds are needed for teacher training and incentivizing.

²¹ Lao language: 90 % of students perform at basic level or below; 49% for science and for mathematics, 90% below basic level.

During the 2018 ESDP Mid-term Review, the ESDP 2016-20 Financing Plan was revised for the period 2019 and 2020. Taking into account the budget constraint²², most ESDP expenditure programmes had to be revised downwards. As can be seen in the table above, the revised ESDP financing requirements for 2019 and 2020 are well below the original plan. Moreover, the finally approved education sector budgets for 2019 and 2020 fell short of even these greatly reduced budget requirements. However, the performance targets and operational priorities in the ESDP 2016-20 were in general maintained at their original level. This resulted in a disjoint between the sector's performance targets and the resources required to attain them. In effect sector performance assessments have been made against a resource level that was not made available, and without factoring in the future deterioration in performance that will result from this continued under-funding. In order to avoid a repeat of this situation, ESSDP 2021-25 will include a more explicit expenditure policy providing a hierarchy of the operational priorities, and a 'steady-state' budget scenario.

7.2. Objectives and principles of expenditure policy for 2021-25

This section forms the education sector's expenditure policy for the period of this ESSDP 2021-2025, which will be updated during the ESSDP Midterm Review. It aims at:

- Securing of a fair share of the State Budget for the education sector, in the context of National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) priorities and the hard budget constraint, to ensure the sustainability of the expanding education system.
- Improving allocative efficiency within the education sector, through the development of a budget prioritisation framework to be applied during the central and sub-national budget formulation and revision process: where should any available additional resources be allocated to achieve maximum improvement in education quality (prioritisation framework); how to ensure a more equal allocation of resources across provinces and districts, to reduce disparities.

Systematic discussions and research are required to identify the options that arise from these questions, and education managers require mechanisms to enable them to transfer these findings into budgetary policy. To that effect, the MoES formally established a PBC in April 2017, as part of a full reorganisation of the MoES structure. The MoES intends to further enhance the PBC to be fully operational and to take on its responsibility to ensure strategic and efficient planning and budgeting, supported by the introduction of a Planning and Budgeting Management Information System (PB MIS) operational at central, provincial and district level. The PB MIS will be instrumental as it includes an ACSEP module that allows for projections and costing of policies and related expenditure programmes.

7.2.1. Securing a fair share of State Budget to ensure the sustainability of the education system

Securing a fair share of the State Budget relates to the process of allocation of national resources across sectors. The process is guided by the NSED, which sets the country's priorities for a period of 5 years. However, the NSED does not give strict indications of its priorities in terms of budget. It is therefore the MoF for the recurrent budget and the MPI for the investment budget, that are responsible for allocating resources across sectors, under the hard budget constraint. That said, it should be noted that in practice the hard budget constraint means that increases in recurrent budgets are often off-set by decreases in capital budgets. Concerning the education sector, the article 57 of the Education Law mentions that the Government must consider the sector a "*first priority*" and gradually increase its share of the State Budget to "*18 percent and more*". As shown previously, this target has not been reached, and the education sector budget has oscillated for years between 13 and 14 percent of the State budget.

The Ministry of Finance is planning to introduce a Medium-Term Budget Framework with sector ceilings for the following year's budget, and the MoES would participate in this initiative as a pilot

²² Based on MoF medium-term macro-fiscal projections of November 2017

ministry. The determination of sector ceilings and introduction of improved formats for the development of budget proposals and for budget hearings presents an opportunity to review the current budgets allocated to the different sectors, including education, and their appropriateness. As can be seen in the table below, the education sector receives 14.6% of the national recurrent budget 2020, and only 5.1% of the investment budget (including ODA). However, there are important discrepancies between the categories of expenditures (chapters) within the recurrent budget. For instance, education receives 22.9% of the Chapter 60 (wages) in Budget 2020, as education services are notoriously labour intensive, but only 7.3% of the Chapter 63 (technical activities), which is the most relevant chapter to increasing the quality of education as it includes textbooks, in-service teacher training and pedagogical support, etc.

Table 3: The Share of Education Budget by Chapters

	2015/16 (actual)	2017 (actual)	2018 (budget)	2019 (budget)	2020 (budget)
Education share of State Budget (primary expenditures)	13.3%	13.3%	14.2%	13.7%	13.1%
Education share of national recurrent budget	14.2%	17.4%	16.8%	15.7%	14.6%
Education share of national 60/61 combined	24.3%	23.3%	22.8%	22.3%	21.9%
Education share of national Chapter 60 (wages)	25.4%	24.1%	24.0%	23.2%	22.9%
Education share of national Chapter 61 (allowances)	17.2%	17.6%	16.3%	17.0%	16.9%
Education share of national Chapter 62 (operational)	12.6%	12.5%	11.8%	12.0%	11.5%
Education share of national Chapter 63 (technical activities)	9.8%	11.7%	13.9%	8.1%	7.3%
Education share of national Chapter 66 (equipment)	5.1%	2.2%	0.0%	13.9%	12.9%
Education share of national Chapter 67 (investment)	9.1%	5.5%	6.3%	5.2%	5.1%
<i>Education share of national ODA</i>	9.4%	5.7%	6.4%	6.7%	6.7%
<i>Education share of national domestic investment</i>	8.4%	5.1%	6.1%	3.1%	2.4%

It is therefore in the non-wage recurrent and investment budgets that the education sector appears to be particularly under-funded, especially considering the scope of its operations (it is the largest and most decentralised *public service* provider) and volume of its physical assets (thousands of administrative buildings and schools to maintain). Addressing these important gaps will be discussed with MoF and MPI during sector ceilings and annual budget discussions to ensure Lao PDR achieves the SDG4-Access to *quality* education. It is essential that the education sector's non-wage recurrent and investment budget increases to finance the programmes required to reach the ESSDP targets and SDG4.

Finally, it cannot be overstated that the education sector has made considerable efforts in 2016-2020 to cope with continued expansion of its services, especially in early childhood and secondary education, while seeing its budget share and purchasing power decreased. To be compliant with universal secondary education mandated by law, student numbers will need to increase significantly. This will require more staff even if system restructuring were to allow for significant efficiency gains. However, given the objectives of the ongoing civil service reform that puts a cap on civil service numbers, all efforts should be aimed instead at improving the effectiveness of the existing teaching force. As can be seen in the following section, this will require increased recurrent financing under Chapter 63, to upgrade skills and reallocate staff across sub-sectors.

7.2.2. Improving allocative efficiency

It is important to consider this objective in the context of ongoing PFM reforms, in particular in the way the annual budget will be prepared, structured and negotiated with MoF and MPI. Assuming there will be a gradual increase of the education sector budget, the key question is: where should any available additional resources be allocated to achieve maximum improvement in education quality? The other important question is: how to ensure a more equal allocation of resources across provinces and districts, to reduce disparities?

Available additional resources to be allocated in priority to cost-effective interventions with higher impact on learning outcomes and reduction of disparities, according to overall priorities outlined in Section 3.2.

The identification and prioritisation of cost-effective interventions with higher impact on learning outcomes and reduction of disparities shall take place at the planning stage (ESSDP and ACSEP), based on ESSDP policy targets and FQS used as planning parameters. They shall be subsequently integrated in the annual budget plan, depending on their affordability.

In the following table, priority expenditure programmes are ranked by priority, based on three key criteria:

- Criteria 1: Improves the efficiency or effectiveness of existing resources (for instance improves the quality of pedagogy or management of existing staff) as shown by cost-benefit studies.
- Criteria 2: Priority sub-sector: the ESSDP 2021-2025 clearly gives priority to improving the quality of primary education
- Criteria 3: Reduces disparities (focus on the disadvantaged)

Any additional financial resources shall be allocated in priority to the following programmes:

Table 4: Priority Expenditure Programmes

Expenditure programme	Improves efficiency / effectiveness of existing resources	Priority sub-sector	Reduces disparities / Focus on disadvantaged	Priority category (1 to 4)	Cost (annual average in million kip)
Ensure minimum Primary principals and teachers in-service training coverage (20%, 5-day training). The training is over and above training for introducing new curricula.	Very high	Yes	High	1	7,581 (Chapter 63)
Ensure all teachers are trained in the new curricula (Grade 3 in 2021, Grade 4 in 2022, and Grade 5 in 2023)	Very high	Yes	High	1	47,551 (Chapter 67, over 2021-2023)
Ensure minimum Primary Pedagogical Advisory service coverage (all primary schools visited 4 days per year in average)	Very high	Yes	High	1	8,518 (Chapter 63)
Increase the number of beneficiaries of Primary scholarships for disadvantaged students (from current 1,000 to 5,000 by 2025)	High	Yes	Very high	1	4,050 (Chapter 61)
Increase the number of beneficiaries of Lower Secondary scholarships for disadvantaged students	High	No	Very high	2	5,130 (Chapter 61)
Primary Textbooks for every student (replenishment to ensure stable 1:1 ratio)	High	Yes	High	2	18,796 (Chapter 63)
School meals (ECED+Primary, average of 75,895 beneficiaries per year)	Medium	Yes	High	3	10,625 (Chapter 61)
Increase primary School Block Grants unit cost per student (from current 70,000 to 100,000 by 2023)	High	Yes	Medium	3	17,310 (additional cost on Chapter 62)

Secondary Textbooks for every student (replenishment to ensure stable 1:1 ratio)	High	No	High	3	8,437 (Chapter 63)
Upgrading pre-primary and primary schools to WASH standard 1	Medium	Yes	Medium	3	18,552 (Chapter 67)
Upgrading secondary schools to WASH standard 1	Medium	No	Medium	4	1,528 (Chapter 67)
Equipment quality investment in Secondary and TVET	High	No	Medium	4	105,680 (Chapters 66 and 67)
Construction of classrooms (ECE, PE, LSE/USE, TVET)	Medium	Yes	High	4	119,710 (Chapter 67)

It should be noted that the activities and prioritisation included in this list will be subject to review, particularly in respect to the results of the Ministry's anticipated analysis of programme cost-effectiveness, and more generally during the mid-term review.

Ensure a more equitable allocation of resources across provinces, districts and schools, to reduce disparities

Whereas it is crucial to ensure a fair share of the national budget to the education sector, it is equally important to ensure that funds are efficiently allocated within the education sector.

Allocation to provinces

The allocation of non-wage recurrent budgets to provincial education services has been mainly incremental so far, and it shows widening imbalances between provinces, many of which are confronted by significant budget gaps. The MoES will continue to work with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that budget envelopes allocated to the provincial education and sports budgets are equitable, i.e. aimed at reducing disparities between provinces. Indeed, the allocation of education budgets across provinces needs to be based on objective indicators that reflect the level of services provided and these disparities (poverty, remoteness, number of schools and students etc). It is also important to continue promoting the strategic role of education vis-à-vis provincial governors as they are responsible for budget execution.

Allocation to districts

The role of DESB is central in the strategy to improve the quality of education service delivery at the local level. However, DESB are severely constrained by very small budget allocation for their operations. In 2019, the 148 districts combined only received about 7 percent of the Chapter 63 budget of the education sector, or around 11 billion kip (i.e. USD 1.2 million). In average, each district receives therefore USD 8,000 per year. Chapter 63 expenditures at district level are for education quality improvement. This is the budget that is used by DESB to reach out to the schools to support them, through pedagogical support and monitoring missions, organising Grade 5 and Grade 9 exams, organising teacher or manager training and workshops, etc. Increasing allocations to districts is a priority if education quality is to be improved. This would require an increase in the overall education sector non-wage recurrent budget in the range of LAK 20 billion (or USD 2.2 million), as potential efficiency gains from already under-funded central or PESS-level budgets can only be very limited.

Moreover, the allocation of budgets to districts presents considerable disparities from one province to another, and even within the same province. The MoES has started to address this issue in 2018 with the preparation and dissemination of Guidelines to help PESS allocate district operational

budgets more equitably, based on a formula aimed at reducing disparities. Formula indicators were reviewed and refined in 2019 and more flexibility given to PESS to ensure that disadvantaged districts would receive more budget.

Allocation to schools

School Block Grants (formula and eligible expenditures) should be more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to the ECE and primary FQS. The MoES intends to revise school block grant formulas and to update the related guidelines.

7.3. Financial costs of ESSDP 2021-2025: two scenarios

Financial costs of the ESSDP were calculated under two alternative scenarios: the 'Steady-State' scenario and the 'Education quality' scenario. Projections of enrolments and financial costs by year for the period 2021-25 are provided in annex 6.

The 'steady-state' budget scenario is the medium-term budget envelope required to allow the sector to continue under its current policies and operational approaches with **no improvements or deterioration in the coverage of education services, the quality of education services or equity of this service provision**. It was constructed using current civil servant allocations and projected wage increases, current operating budgets, current textbook policy and attrition rates, minimal in-service training (in order to merely maintain rather than improve skills), and no additional programme interventions. One challenge faced was that some key performance indicators, such as secondary drop-out are currently worsening. To some extent this may be due to the failure to meet current policy commitments such as textbook provision and WASH facilities. In order to attempt to counter this declining state where feasible the 'steady-state' is based upon attaining current policy commitments.

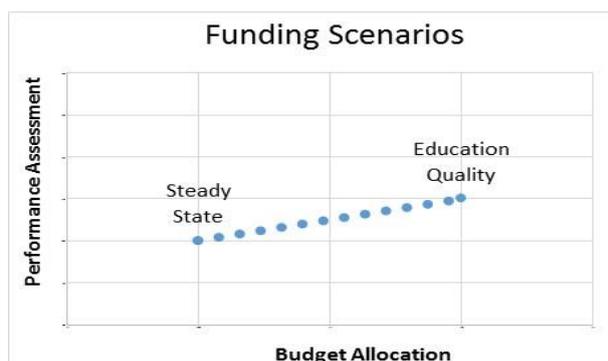
In summary, the steady state scenario is intended to provide a medium-term baseline from which performance can be assessed, as key sector performance indicators are expected to remain unchanged under this scenario.

A second scenario, the 'Education Quality' scenario is provided. This scenario is based upon full implementation of the ESSDP policy targets and programmes which are intended to improve education outcomes and ensure adequate investment in the country's future in line with SDG-4 commitments. The performance targets in ESSDP 2021-25 are based upon this funding scenario.

Budget allocations above the 'steady-state' scenario level will be allocated in accordance with the sector expenditure policy. It is anticipated that the additional funding will enable improvements in education services and improvements in sector performance indicators lifting them from their current level towards the targets set in the 'Education Quality' scenario. This approach should provide a more robust and meaningful basis for assessing sector performance relative to the level of resourcing provided.

It has been noted that the current global crisis may lead to a fall in government revenues and consequently a fall in education sector budgets even below the level required to merely maintain current levels of service as outlined in the 'steady-state' budget scenario. Under such conditions the sector expenditure policy will provide the framework for determining funding priorities and where budget cuts will fall. The impact on sector performance, in particular by how much indicators will be anticipated to fall from current levels will need to be assessed in detail with the two financing scenarios providing at least a starting point for this assessment.

The Steady state and the Education Quality scenarios provide two points on a graph that link performance and funding levels. Clearly the relationship between funding levels and performance will not be as simplistic as shown in the graph to the right, but the approach may at least provide some insight into the relationship between budget allocation and sector performance.



It is worth noting that the key determinant of improvements and deteriorations in the sector may not be the overall budget but may in fact be more dependent upon the discretionary recurrent non-salary component of the budget such as Chapter 63 (technical activities). It is acknowledged that it may be more useful to focus on this budget line as the key means of assessing relative performance.

Table 5: The key parameters for the two scenarios

Cost item	Steady State scenario	Education Quality scenario
Teacher average salary increase	1% increase per year	idem
School Block Grants	No increase in unit cost per student as compared from Budget 2020	Increase of 10,000 kip per year of the unit cost per student, until 100,000 kip is reached in ECE, PE, LSE and USE
Textbooks	Primary Textbook per Pupil Ratio: 1:1 + building stocks in 2021 LSE textbook per Pupil Ratio stable at 2020 level	Primary Textbook per Pupil Ratio: 1:1 + building stocks in 2021 LSE textbook per Pupil Ratio at 1:1 by 2025
Teacher in-service training (regular)	Requires 20% of the teaching force in all sub-sectors to undergo every year a 5-day course responding to teacher performance assessment (budget under DTE)	Requires 20% of the teaching force in all sub-sectors * 10-day course.
Teacher in-service training for new curricula in 2021-2023	Requires all teachers of Grades 3, 4 and 5 to be trained for 7 days over 2021-2023	Idem
Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)	Kept stable as in baseline (ECED PTR = 23.3; Primary PTR = 23.6; LSE PTR = 19.5; USE PTR = 20.5)	Idem
Pedagogical advisory service	All schools (ECED, PE, LSE, USE) visited 4 days a year in average by pedagogical advisors	All schools (ECED, PE, LSE, USE) visited 6 days a year in average by pedagogical advisors
Pupil-Classroom Ratio (PCR)	Kept close to baseline (ECED PCR = 22; Primary PCR = 20; LSE PCR = 23; USE PCR = 20)	Idem
Primary and Secondary scholarships for the disadvantaged	Increase of the number of beneficiary students: 1000 PE students in 2021, 2000 LSE students in 2021, up to 5000 PE students and 4000 LSE students in 2025	idem
WASH schools	Keep the number of WASH equipped schools stable at 2020 level by financing only maintenance	100% of schools by 2025
Maintenance of buildings	Annual maintenance budget based on 2% of classrooms/schools	Idem

School replacement/relocation	Replacement/relocation budget based on 1% of total number of schools	Idem
Construction of dormitories (LSE/USE)	1 per province per year	2 per province per year
Construction of labs (LSE/USE)	1 per province per year	2 per province per year

7.3.1 Costs of the Steady-State scenario

The 'steady-state' scenario shows a regular and rather moderate increase of the overall education budget over the five years of the ESSDP.

Table 6: Costs of the Steady-State scenario

	2020 (Budget Plan)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TOTAL	4,144,761	4,275,245	4,323,027	4,369,580	4,572,124	4,675,478
Chapter 60 (wages)	2,630,739	2,645,180	2,683,766	2,741,829	2,814,282	2,882,117
Chapter 61 (allowances)	362,798	364,350	368,488	374,459	380,468	386,690
Chapter 62 (operational)	333,033	336,244	337,599	341,913	346,371	350,353
Chapter 63 (technical activities)	154,481	206,423	223,690	196,007	267,191	225,996
Chapter 66 (equipment)	3,859	16,580	16,580	16,580	16,580	17,880
Chapter 67 (investment)	659,849	706,468	692,904	698,792	747,232	812,442

As can be seen in the table above, the most noticeable budget expansion would be required in the following chapters:

- Chapter 61, mainly because of school meals and scholarships;
- Chapter 63, mainly because of regular in-service teacher training and textbooks replenishment;
- Chapter 66, for equipment (mainly computers);
- Chapter 67 for: (i) capital investment such as classroom and school construction, maintaining WASH standards in already equipped schools, dorms and labs, and (ii) special one-off expenditure programmes such as in-service teacher training related to the introduction of new curricula, usually financed by development partners²³.

7.3.2 Education quality scenario

The 'education quality' scenario shows a slightly larger increase of the education budget every year as compared to the 'steady state' scenario above.

Table 7: Costs of the Education Quality scenario

	2020 (Budget Plan)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TOTAL	4,144,761	4,431,256	4,475,848	4,548,864	4,745,520	4,852,174
Chapter 60 (wages)	2,630,739	2,645,180	2,683,766	2,741,829	2,814,282	2,882,117
Chapter 61 (allowances)	362,798	364,350	368,488	374,459	380,468	386,690
Chapter 62 (operational)	333,033	351,188	367,600	387,411	394,658	401,732

²³ ODA in Laos is accounted for in Chapter 67 (investment), even if it finances expenditures that are recurrent in nature

Chapter 63 (technical activities)	154,481	234,852	253,092	226,708	295,064	254,787
Chapter 66 (equipment)	3,859	16,580	16,580	16,580	16,580	17,880
Chapter 67 (investment)	659,849	819,106	786,322	801,879	844,468	908,968

As can be seen in the table above, the difference with the steady-state scenario would be mainly needed in:

- Chapter 62, to accommodate an increase in School Block Grants unit cost;
- Chapter 63, to allow for 10-day regular in-service teacher training (instead of 5 days the steady-state scenario);
- Chapter 67, as a result of higher targets for WASH schools (100% of schools to comply with WASH standards), school replacement.

7.4. Financial resources and gap analysis under the two scenarios

The economic crisis that struck the world following the Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 is expected to significantly impact domestic revenue mobilisation in the Lao PDR, and possibly external financing, in the medium term. The extent to which public spending in general and education spending in particular will be affected is not clear at the time of developing this ESSDP. The Financing Plan will therefore be updated on a yearly basis during the period 2021-2025, to reflect macro-fiscal adjustments and the actual budget constraint.

Since updated macro-fiscal projections are not yet available at this stage, it is not possible to calculate a projected education budget constraint as a percent share of total State Budget, as is usually done. Therefore, the assumptions used to project the education budget for the period 2021-2025 (the 'budget constraint') were the following:

- Education Budget 2021 (excluding ODA) at the same level as originally approved Education Budget 2020. Although GoL has announced cuts to the initial 2020 budget (30% at central level and 10% at local levels) but with no implementation details
- Education Budget (excluding ODA) increasing 2% per year from 2022 to 2025.
- ODA projections calculated by MoES based on development partners' commitments and past trends.

Once greater clarity on the budget allocation is received and the ESSDP is finalised, Annual Costed Sector Plans (ACSEPs) will be produced at District, Provincial, and Central (MoES) level. The ACSEPs will be made available to ESWG and GPE secretariat.

Moving forward MoES will continue to advocate for and request the provision of a sector budget at a level that will enable this plan to come to fruition and thereby support future development in Laos. Continued discussion with the ESWG and key Ministries in order to increase the prospects of attaining an increased non-wage budget will be taken forward throughout the period of this plan.

7.4.1. Financing Plan under Steady State scenario

The projected education budget (domestic and ODA) would not be sufficient to cover the needs under the 'steady state' scenario. Indeed, the table below shows that there would be a growing financing gap every year, cumulating to LAK 485 billion (or around USD 54 million) for the entire period 2021-2025.

Table 8: Financing Plan under Steady State scenario

<i>(million Kip)</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Education budget (excluding ODA)	3,599,576	3,671,568	3,744,999	3,819,899	3,896,297
ODA	673,718	584,155	580,000	580,000	580,000
Total education budget (projection)	4,273,294	4,255,722	4,324,999	4,399,899	4,476,297
Financing requirements (steady-state scenario)	4,275,245	4,323,027	4,369,580	4,572,124	4,675,478
Financing gap/surplus	-1,951	-67,305	-44,581	-172,225	-199,181
Financing gap (cumulative)	-1,951	-69,256	-113,836	-286,061	-485,242

This financing gap could be covered by either or both:

- an increase of the education sector budget of 2.8% per year in average, starting in 2021, instead of 2% starting in 2022 in the current scenario, would be sufficient to cover most of the gap;
- an increase in ODA.

7.4.2. Financing Plan under Education quality scenario

The financing of the ‘education quality’ scenario would require more resources. Under the same budget constraint assumptions as above (i.e. domestic budget increasing by 2% a year starting in 2022), the table shows that the cumulative financing gap for the five-year period would reach LAK 1,323 billion (or around USD 147 million).

Table 9: Financing Plan under Education Quality scenario

<i>(million Kip)</i>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Education budget (excluding ODA)	3,599,576	3,671,568	3,744,999	3,819,899	3,896,297
ODA	673,718	584,155	580,000	580,000	580,000
Total education budget (projection)	4,273,294	4,255,722	4,324,999	4,399,899	4,476,297
Financing requirements (quality enhancement scenario)	4,431,256	4,475,848	4,548,864	4,745,520	4,852,174
Financing gap/surplus	-157,962	-220,126	-223,865	-345,621	-375,877
Financing gap (cumulative)	-157,962	-378,088	-601,953	-947,574	-1,323,451

Covering the financing gap would require more funding.

7.5. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic and related economic crisis have created considerable uncertainties about the future financing available to the education sector of Lao PDR, whether domestic or external. The ESWG has agreed to update the ESSDP Financing Plan on a yearly basis, starting in 2021. This will allow MoES to reflect the impact of the evolving economic situation on the education sector budget.

Of the two scenarios presented above, the ‘Steady-state’ scenario is the most affordable. It shows that even just keeping education service delivery afloat would require an increase in the education budget, which is only be possible if the negative trend of the share of education in the State Budget is reversed. However, this scenario will not improve education outcomes.

The 'Education Quality' scenario, in turn, would allow for the full ESSDP policy targets and programmes to be implemented in a way to improve education outcomes and ensure adequate investment in the country's future, in line with SDG-4 commitment. This second scenario is included in ESSDP since it is not yet clear the speed with which the global economic crisis will recover. It may be that some elements of the 'education quality' scenario can be implemented before 2025.

8. Implementation M&E Framework for ESSDP 2021-25

8.1. Implementation Arrangement

The ESSDP 2021-25 is a cross sector development plan, therefore all parties including public and private sectors and development partners should cooperate and collaborate by developing detailed action plans which are reviewed on an annual basis to support the effective implementation of the ESSDP. MoES has identified implementation mechanisms in line with the GoL's "Three-Builds" decentralization policy as follows:

1. **Ministry of Education and Sports:** The MoES takes the lead in providing overall directions to all subsectors to implement the plan. The Department of Inspection is responsible for carrying out the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan and together with the Department of Planning, report the progress and achievements to the Annual Senior Education Administrators Conference and ESWG.
2. **Education Sector Working Group (ESWG)** is tasked with coordinating with development partners in order to consider the integration of the policies identified in ESSDP 2021-25 into the Official Development Assistance Plan (ODA) for the Ministry of Education and Sports where appropriate, especially the ODA Plan for support to technical departments. The ESWG identifies key themes to follow-up through Joint Sector Review Missions, discusses findings and makes recommendations for updating of ESSDP 2021-25. ESWG also takes the lead for implementation of the mid-term review of ESSDP 2021-25.
3. **Focal Groups:** These currently include Early Childhood Education Focal Group; General Education Focal Group; Post-Secondary Education, Education and Sports Management, Research Focal Group and Sports Focal Group. These focal groups have a key responsibility to coordinate with departments, the Cabinet Office, education centres and institutes under the Ministry of Education and Sports to monitor the progress, challenges and issues of the implementation of the policies and provide recommendations and suggest solutions to address the challenges and issues that can potentially hinder the implementation of the policies and plan.
4. **Technical Departments** have the responsibility to guide PESS and Education Institutes under their management to achieve policies and strategies specified in the ESSDP 2021-25 through their annual action plans that are aligned with the five-year plans of ESSDP.
5. **Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS)** has the responsibility to develop its own annual plans and five-year plans based on the policies and strategies of the ESSDP 2021-25 and guide DESBs. These plans should also be aligned with provincial Socio-economic Development Plans.
6. **District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB)** follow education development plans of PESS in the development of the DESB annual development plan. In addition, the DESB must disseminate the policies and strategies of the ESSDP to school principals and VEDCs and support them in developing their school development plans that align with the ESSDP 2021-25.

8.2. Planning and budgeting for ESSDP Implementation

The Ministry of Education and Sports will continue working towards integrating medium term and annual planning with the budgeting process through the Annual Costed Sector Plan (ACSEPs) module of the Planning & Budgeting Management Information System (PBMIS) and supported by a systematic planning process. The ACSEPs are a tool to operationalize the 5-year national and provincial ESSDPs

on a rolling-annual basis: the ESSDP Financing Plan is developed every five years, and updated at midterm (during the third year of implementation of the ESSDP). The ACSEPs form in essence an annual update of the ESSDP Financing Plan, based on updated data and policy targets at district, provincial and central level, to ensure policy is reflected in the annual budget. The objective is to strengthen the link between the annual budget and sector policy through improved coordination between the planning and budgeting departments, both at central and provincial levels. A PBC has been established to facilitate the strengthening of linkages between planning and budgeting.

The ACSEP module of PBMIS is used to cost national education policy based on the outputs and outcomes stipulated in the ESSDP. It estimates their fiscal impact against the projected budget constraint over the forthcoming fiscal year and allow assessment of the financing gap for implementing the stated ESSDP policy objectives.

This process serves as a tool to understanding the budget constraints for education sector planning and budgeting. In practice, it serves to discuss indicative financial allocations for education to districts, provinces and central departments of the MoES, which become the basis for the budget formulation process of the forthcoming year.

The planning and budgeting process is broadly divided into eight steps:

Step 1: In January, the Department of Planning of the MoES (DoP) issues instructions to PESSs, MoES central departments and NUOL on the preparation of the ACSEPs for the next year. PESSs issue similar instructions to DESBs. DESBs, PESSs, MoES central departments and NUOL use the ACSEP module of the PBMIS to determine their planning targets for the next year and generate their ACSEPs. Deadline for submission of the draft ACSEPs to DoP is mid-February.

Step 2: From mid-February to mid-March, DoP reviews the provincial and central ACSEPs. Clarifications are sought from PESSs, central departments and NUOL as needed to finalise the draft ACSEPs.

Step 3: During the third week of March, DoP holds *planning hearings* with PESS, central MoES departments and NUOL to discuss the planning targets and the prospective individual budgetary needs. The ACSEPs are finalised during the hearings.

Step 4: DoP consolidates the ACSEPs and updates the ESSDP Financing Plan and submits to the MoES PBC by the end of April, i.e. in time for annual budget preparation.

Step 5: In May, MoF issues the annual budget Instructions. MoES, PESSs (and their DESBs), and NUOL prepare their budget bids. MoES consolidates the education budget and shares it with the PBC.

Step 6: MoF consolidates the state budget and submits to National Assembly, which approves the aggregate ceilings in July.

Step 7: In July-August, MoES, PESSs and NUOL adjusts their budget bids to the ceilings communicated by MoF.

Step 8: MoF consolidates the budget and submits to Government in September, and to National Assembly in November. The budget is approved in December. MoES consolidates the education budget.

8.3. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for ESSDP 2021-25

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for the ESSDP 2021-25 provides a hierarchical structure of results that will facilitate the regular monitoring, mid-term and end-line evaluation of the ESSDP 2021-25. Its development has been guided by the findings and recommendations of the GPE independent appraisal of ESDP 2016-20, the ESDP 2016-20 mid-term review and the lessons learned during the final years of the ESDP 2016-2020 implementation. It seeks to provide a unifying results structure that the policy actions of Part I and all 10 sub-sector plans (Part II of the ESSDP) can easily

and logically fit under and has prioritised maximising the utility of existing data sources and monitoring, governance and planning structures and processes. This section will outline how these structures and processes will be adapted to improve the overall monitoring of progress towards the targets of the ESSDP 2021-25.

8.3.1. ESSDP Impact Monitoring and Evaluation

Final and Mid-term Reviews: A mid-term review of ESSDP 2021-25 will be conducted in 2023, to allow for evaluation of progress, updating of the financing plan, targets if required and any significant strategic course correction. A final review of ESSDP 2021-25 will be conducted in 2025 to assess and evaluate the overall impact of the plan and review how effectively and efficiently the programme has contributed to the outcomes and goals of the 9th NSEDP 2021-25. The final review will also be used to guide the development of and provide lessons learned for ESSDP 2026-30. The assessments will be directed and co-ordinated by the senior management of the MoES and ESWG.

8.3.2. ESSDP Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

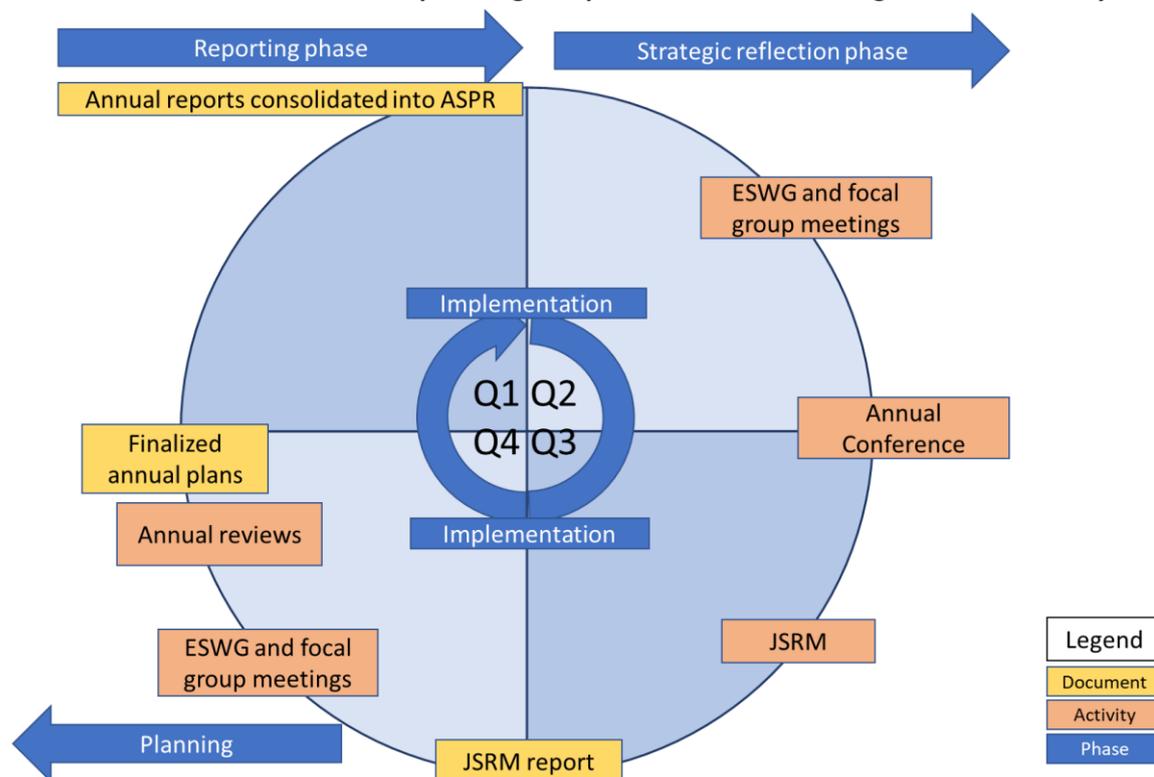
The regular monitoring and evaluation of the ESSDP will be based on the existing processes and structures such as the ESWG (including Focal Groups, and Technical Working Groups) and the Annual Conference of Senior Education Administrators, with activities and key documents organised to maximise the impact of monitoring and evaluation on the planning and implementation of the ESSDP.

The key M&E report is the Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR) which will follow the structure of the ESSDP and present results against the ESSDP Results Structure (Section 8.5). This overarching sector performance report, led by DoP, will be complemented by a limited number of more detailed thematic reports corresponding to major priorities of the ESSDP 2021-2025. For example, TAC and PBC annual reports and reports of the Joint Sector Review Missions (JSRMs)²⁴.

The annual performance monitoring and evaluation cycle and its links to ESSDP planning and implementation by quarter (Q) is visualised in figure 1 below.

²⁴ External financing from GPE is likely to be available to support annual JSRMs.

Figure 1: ESSDP 2021-2025 and annual planning and performance monitoring and evaluation cycle



Reporting phase Q1

PESS and central departments will produce annual performance reports based on the plans outlined in Step 4 above and aligned to the ESSDP results structure. DOI, through its M&E Network, will provide support to central departments and PESS to develop and report against 5-year result frameworks aligned to their own plans and the overall result structure of the ESSDP. These reports will then be consolidated into the ASPR by DoP and will be complemented by a wider situation analysis, and input from other reports e.g. from TAC (DoOP) and JSRM (DoI). The ASPR will follow the structure of the ESSDP i.e. policy actions, under intermediate actions, under eight high level outcomes, under one overarching goal. Annual performance and trends against the agreed indicators and targets at Goal²⁵, High Level Outcome²⁶ (HLO), and Intermediate Outcome² (IO) levels will be presented and discussed in relation to the supporting policy actions, activities, and expenditures²⁷. Critically the reports will reflect upon the challenges of the year's implementation and will propose corrective actions/shifts for the subsequent year, based on the reports produced by central departments and provinces. The reports will employ a traffic light reporting system to concisely communicate the state of progress of ESSDP implementation towards the Goal, HLO and IO targets and easily direct stakeholders to the sections of ESSDP 2021-25 that require greater attention.

Strategic reflection phase Q2

Informed by the annual reports produced, DoP prepares the disaggregated provincial and central MoES departments planning targets with their corresponding budgetary implications for the forthcoming budget year (Step 1 above). In advance of being presented and discussed at the Annual Education Conference, the consolidated ASPR will be presented and discussed at relevant Focal

²⁵ ESSDP 2021-25 Section 3

²⁶ ESSDP 2021-25 Sections 6.1-6.8

²⁷ This will represent a change in the ASPR structure from statistical descriptions by sub-sector to a more policy-oriented content. Reports from the TAC and JSRM will also follow this shift

Groups, their Technical Working Groups and the ESWG. Their feedback and reflections will feed into the presentations and discussions at the Annual Conference of Senior Education Administrators. The Annual Conference will discuss the findings of the annual reports and input from the ESWG and use them as the evidence base for their official resolutions and any priority areas or strategic shifts. The ASPR and the surrounding discussions will also inform the development of the national, central departments and PESS targets and budgets. The annual conference will also identify potential focus areas for the JSRMs.

Implementation phase Q3

During the implementation phase the national level monitoring of ESSDP implementation will be centred on the JSRM, led by DoI. Based on the output of the Annual Conference and the ESWG's review of the ASPR, the ESWG will select focus areas for the JSRM to provide more targeted monitoring in order to determine the underlying causes of identified challenges and/or assess the level of implementation of programmatic/policy shifts specified in the annual plans. The scope of the JSRMs will always include, but will not be limited to, the topic of financing. These monitoring missions will take place in Q3 and their findings will be consolidated into a report presented and discussed at an ESWG meeting. Key findings and ESWG responses will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders in time to inform PESS and central departments annual reviews and the finalisation of the annual plans. A summary of the JSRM and its findings will also be included in the ASPR, so that it links back to the annual conference the following year. In recognition of the challenges that previous versions of JSRMs experienced. The proposed JSRMs are fully aligned with the Annual Conference and are intended to be directly informed by and directly contribute to the Government led annual review meeting and the development of annual plans at department and PESS level.

Planning phase Q4

Informed by the outputs of the Annual Conference, the findings of the JSRM and the various planning hearings (steps 2 to 4 above), the central departments and PESS will finalize their annual plans for the coming year. A crucial part of this planning process will be the internal annual reviews. These reviews will be based on the monitoring of the implementation of the current year's plan and a critical reflection of the results achieved. This review process will also directly feed into the annual performance reports that will be finalised in Q1.

8.4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Supporting Structures

The results structure in the following section outlines the indicators, and their associated data sources, at Goal, HLO, and IO levels. Once again priority has been given to enhancing and maximising the use of already existing structures and systems e.g. EMIS and PBMS and selecting indicators that are consistent with reporting against the SDG-4. Sub-sector and provincial internal monitoring systems and processes will be a vital source of information especially in relation to the regular monitoring of activities, policy actions and intermediate outcomes. In addition, the already existing monitoring and evaluation networks connecting different departments at central level and provinces to central level will play an important role in producing high quality, annual departmental and provincial level reports, that can be meaningfully consolidated into the comprehensive ASPR.

8.5. Monitoring and Evaluation: Results Structure

The monitoring and evaluation results structure follows the structure of the ESSDP 2021-25: One overarching goal; eight high level outcomes (HLO); each with associated intermediate outcomes (IOs). Its indicators have been selected to provide a hierarchical, comprehensive and objective means to monitor progress of the ESSDP 2021-25 in the short, medium and long term. In a limited number of cases a number of closely related intermediate outcomes have been grouped under a single indicator.

Table 10: ESSDP Indicators (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a MTFF is not available from MoF and therefore there is uncertainty about the education budget, thus targets are indicative only, and will be updated after the MTFF becomes available)

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
Goal: The Education and Sports Sector in Lao PDR is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunity for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and sports and to contribute to, and benefit from socio-economic development and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress towards attainment of SDG-4.	1. Gross intake ratio into last grade of lower secondary education (G9) - Male - Female	- Male 72.7% - Female: 70.5%	- Male: 75.0% - Female: 73.0%	EMIS	4.1.3
	1b. Student intake into final grade of lower secondary education - Male - Female	- 46,603 (M) - 43,767 (F)	- 39,814 (M) - 39,490 (F)		4.1.1
	2. Percent of Grade 3 students reaching the minimum standard level in - Lao language - Mathematics 3. Percent of Grade 9 students reaching the minimum standard level in - Lao language - Mathematics	Grade 3 - Lao language 34% - Mathematics 18% Grade 9 - Lao language 28% - Mathematics 8%	Grade 3 - Lao language 50% - Mathematics 30% Grade 9 - Lao language 40% - Mathematics 20%		

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
HLO 1: Increased number of graduates from ECE to US including NFE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy, numeracy, and other 21st Century skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity	4. Percent of primary entrants who have attended ECE; - National (Nat.) - Average in 40 districts - Average in Non-Disadvantaged districts (NDD)	National (69.8%) 40 districts (58.7%) NDD (76.1%)	National (75%) 40 district (63.9%) NDD (81.3%)	EMIS	4.1.3
	4a. Students Age 5 in ECE	Total 109,684	Total 122,621		
	5. Gross intake ratio into last grade of primary education; - National - Average in 40 districts - Average in NDD	National (100.4%) 40 districts (75%) NDD (85.7%)	National 100% 40 District 100% NDD (100%)		4.1.3
	5a Student intake into last grade of primary education (G5); - National - Male - Female	National (136,644) Male (66,685) Female (69,959)	National (131,507) Male (66,495) Female (65,012)		
	6. Transition rate to lower secondary: - National - Average in 40 districts - Average in NDD	National (87.9%) 40 districts (79.3%) NDD (89.7%)	National (95.0%) 40 districts (86.4%) NDD (96.8%)		
	7. Gender parity indices of: - Percent of primary entrants who have attended ECE;	- 1.02	- 1.00	EMIS	4.5.1.b

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gross intake ratio into last grade of primary education; - Transition rate to lower secondary: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0.95 - 0.97 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.00 - 1.00 		
IO 1.1: Improved curricula is implemented at all levels of school education.	8. Primary schools with learning materials aligned to new curricula in accordance with approved allocation ratios	All Grades 1-2 of primary schools	All Grades 1-5 of all primary schools	EMIS/CACIM	
IO 1.2: Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M6	9. Student learning outcomes assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASLO Grade 3 in 2017 - ASLO Grade 5 in 2020 - ASLO Grade 9 in 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASLO Grade 3 in 2023 - ASLO Grade 5 in 2025 - ASLO Grade 9 in 2024 	RIES	4.1.2
IO 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates.	10. Percentage of primary schools with pre-primary classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Average in 40 districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nat: 26% - 40 Districts: 29% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nat: 35% - 40 districts: 40% 	EMIS	
	11. Primary NIR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Average in 40 districts - Average in NDD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National (98.5%) - 40 Dist (95.5%) - NDD (98.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 98.9% - 40 Districts 95.9% - NDD 99.2% 		
	12. Primary dropout rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Average in 40 districts - Average in NDD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nat. (4.3%) - 40 dist. (7.1%) - NDD (3.4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 2.1% - 40 Districts 3.4% - NDD 1.6% 		

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
IO 1.4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training to develop skills for students to complete upper secondary school.	13. Number of ethnic boarding schools offering mixed general and vocational upper secondary	8 schools	11 schools	DGE	
IO 1.5: Reduced gap in resources between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters	14. Percentage of schools with over 80% compliance with the teacher allocation protocols - National - 40 District - NDD	- National 66.7% - 40 Districts 47.7% - NDD 74.6%	- National 79.5% - 40 Districts 69.5% - NDD 83.6%	EMIS	
HLO 2: Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment.	15. Percentage of qualified in-service teachers (compared to teaching standards) - ECE - Primary - Secondary	N/A N/A N/A	>80% >80% >80%	EMIS	4.c
IO 2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers to implement the new school curricula through support from clusters and PAs	16. Percentage of teachers, receiving in-service training each year - ECE - Primary - Secondary	- 20% - 20% - 20%	- 20% - 20% - 20%	DTE, Development Partners	4.c.1

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
IO 2.2: Pre-primary, primary and secondary pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula is enhanced and implemented to align with the new school curricula and teaching standards.	17. Education levels with teacher training curricula aligned to new school curricula	- Primary	- ECE - Primary - Secondary	CACIM and DTE	
IO 2.3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system with updated performance assessment tools, linked to teaching standards, implemented to identify priority teacher training needs for ECE, primary and secondary levels	18. Education levels with teacher standards and performance assessment tools	- Primary	- ECE - Primary - Secondary	DTE, DGE, DoOP	
IO 2.4: Upgraded Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) are functional centres for all pre-service, in-service (ECE, primary and Secondary), and Pedagogical Adviser (PA) training.	19. Number of TTCs coordinating both pre- and in-service training for all levels of school-education	None	All 8 TTCs	DTE	
IO 2.5: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning in their schools.	20. Education levels with standards and related performance assessment tools for school principals	none	ECE, Primary and Secondary	DTE, DGE, DoOP	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
HLO 3: All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity to enable improved student learning outcomes					
IO 3.1: FQS for ECE and secondary education are developed, tested, approved and implemented within a framework that outlines fundamental standards for levels of school-based education.	21. Education level with approved FQS and related legislation and operational guidelines	Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECE - Primary - Secondary 	ESQAC	
IO 3.2: Establishment of a sustainable school self-evaluation and development planning process (using FQS) that informs district level planning and targeting of support, including teacher and learning materials allocation	22. School-based management policy that outlines roles and responsibilities at school, district, provincial, and central levels, and the long-term approach for implementation.	Not available	2022	ESQAC?	
IO 3.3: School Block Grants (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to school level	23. School block grants formulas and guidelines revised and updated	Using existing guideline	2022	PBC	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.					
IO 3.4: Teacher allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.	24. Percentage of primary schools that are more than 80% compliant with the teacher allocation protocols	66.7%	75%	EMIS	
IO 3.5: Textbook, teacher guides and learning materials allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS.	25. Percentage of primary schools that are more than 80 percent compliant with the national textbook policy	Grades 1 & 2 only	All 5 grades	EMIS	
IO 3.6: All schools are supported in attaining the minimum level of WASH facilities.	26. Percentage of schools that have basic latrine and hand-washing facilities - ECE - Primary - Secondary	- 77% - 76% - 88%	- 80% - 80% - 90%	TBD	
HLO 4: Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities related to gender, poverty, ethnicity, and location	27. Literacy rates of population 15-24 years old - Male - Female	- 84.6% (M) - 76.5% (F)	- 94.0% (M) - 88.0% (F)	(LSIS)	4.6.1
IO 4.1: Literacy rates for youths and adolescent increased and decreased disparity in gender, ethnicity,	28. Number of youths and adolescent participated in NFE programmes	276,000	226,000	DNFE	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
economic status and geography					
IO 4.2: Sample monitoring of NFE literacy programmes is conducted to assess the impact on functional youth literacy.	29. Number of assessments on impact of NFE literacy programmes on functional literacy	None	Two	RIES and NFEDC	
IO 4.3: Non-formal services and structures contribute to increased adult and youth literacy rates and are well established at village and district level (NFEC and CLC)					
HLO 5: The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering employment, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status.	30. Students entering final grade Upper secondary	- 65,462	- 62,332	EMIS DGE	
	31. Total enrolment in: - TVET programmes - Universities	- 52,252 - 36,144	- 80,000 - 59,000	DTVET DHE	
IO 5.1: Improved quality of upper secondary teaching and learning to meet the need of the labour market and higher education, including model secondary schools	32. Number of model upper secondary schools	0	18	DGE	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
IO 5.2: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher graduates at TTCs and Faculties of Education leading to improved natural science teaching and learning at secondary level.	33. Number of TTCs with appropriate natural sciences facilities	0	8	DTE and TTCs	
IO 5.3: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET through improved facilities, teachers and learning materials	34. Number of graduates from TVET institutions annually	More than 15,000	More than 20,000	DTVET	
IO 5.4 Improved relevance of TVET programs to demands of the 9th NSEDP.					
IO 5.5 Improved quality of TVET programs.					
IO 5.6 Improved quality of TVET teachers.					
IO 5.7 Strengthened cooperation at national and local levels with public, private and international organisations.					
IO 5.8 Strengthened TVET management.					

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
IO 5.9 National Qualifications Framework includes linkage of non-formal and TVET qualifications and is aligned with the ASEAN QF.	35. Linkages between formal TVET and non-formal education qualifications	Not Existed	Completed		
IO 5.10 Strengthened university teaching and research programs in 9th NSEDP priority areas, including natural sciences, engineering and technology	36. Number of natural sciences, engineering and technology graduates from universities	2,000	4,000	DHE	
IO 5.11 Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments, with external assessments conducted every 5 years.	37. Number of universities and higher education institutions implementing quality assurance standards	NUOL only	All 4 public universities	DHE	
IO 5.12 Guidelines for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities are disseminated (flat rate, per student, per natural science, disparity-based).					
HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all					

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance					
IO 6.1: Strengthened MoES organisational structure at central, provincial and district levels to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies, including institutionalisation of SBM and role of VEDCs.	38. Organizational structure and mandates revised and approved.	In the process	Completed	DoOP	
IO 6.2 Education Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy is implemented, including DESB and PESS staff allocated according to need and provided with appropriate capacity building to adequately implement their roles and responsibilities, as defined by job descriptions and job specifications.	39. Percentage of education administrators trained in education management related topics	N/a	20% per year	DoOP and IFEAD	
IO 6.3: Strengthened MoES operational committees (TAC and PBC) at central, and sub-national levels use evidence	40. Operational committees at both central and sub national	Only at central level	At both levels	PBC	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
from ASCEPs. Learning outcomes assessments and integrated EMIS to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies.	levels established and fully functioned				
IO 6.4: Monitoring and Evaluation framework for ESSDP 2021-25 is implemented on an annual basis.	41. M&E framework report for ESSDP 2021-25 is presented	1 per year	1 per year	DOP/DOI	
HLO 7: Disparities are reduced through a supporting ESSDP financing plan that directly addresses relevant output targets, considering the context of real resource and capacity constraints	42. DESB operational budget allocation in full compliance with the District operational budget allocation Decree	15 DESBs	All 148 DESBs	DoF, PBC	
IO 7.1: The ESSDP financing plan includes an explicit expenditure policy that guides the central and sub-national annual budget development and revision process and reflects the need to address disparities and improve learning outcomes	43. The operational budget allocation compliant with expenditure policy identified in ESSDP financing plan.	N/A	50% compliant	PBC	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
IO 7.2: ESWG review and endorse annual budgets and the updated mid-term financing plan for ESSDP.	44. The ESSDP financing plan is reviewed and endorsed at ESWG annual meetings	Not in the TOR	Every year	DoP, DoF	
IO 7.3: Development partners provide predictable financial support aligned to ESSDP priority targets and that proposed new interventions are sustainable where partners expect MoES to take over after project completion.	45. Share of development partner financial support aligned to ESSDP priority	100%	100%	DoP, DoF	
HLO 8: Outcome 8: Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international arena makes pride to all Lao people	46. Number of people participate in physical exercises and sports compare to a total population is increased; Number of all level of sports personnel and athletes is achieved the sub-regional, regional and international quality standards.	30%	Increased by 20% compared to the baseline	Department of Sports for All, Physical and Art Education	
IO 8.1: Increasing the number and quality of Sports Club, public and social in Village, district and province/capital level, public and private organizations, companies, factories. And improve the	47. Number of districts have non-profit sports organizations, physical and sport infrastructures, equipment and facilities have been supported with standards;	N/A	See detail in Sports Sub Sector Plan	Department of Sports for All, Physical and Art Education	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
sport athletes, disabled athletes to be increased in quantity, quality into international level and sport administrators, coaches, technicians, referees, coaches, athletes have been upgraded.	48. Number of administrators, coaches, technicians, referees, athletes have been upgraded.				
IO 8.2: Teaching and learning of physical and arts education have been more widely implemented; the number of personnel and technicians in physical education has increased, and the number of student participate in the whole country, regional and international level have increased.	49. Number of school is widely implemented the teaching and learning of physical and arts education; Number of students involved in physical activities and play sport games in school; Number of schools that have organized the teaching-learning of self-defense, national defense ; Number of schools declared and certified as drug free.	N/A	See detail in Sports Sub Sector Plan	Department of Sports for All, Physical and Art Education	
IO 8.3: Talented athletes, national athletes and professional athletes have a potential in equality of the regional and international standards.	50. Number of talented athletes, national athletes and professional athletes won the medal in the regional and international sport competitions.	N/A	See detail in Sports Sub Sector Plan	Department of Elite Sports	
IO 8.4: Sport administrators, referees, coaches, and sport scientists have a quality and	51. The number of sports administrators and technical staffs in both central and local	N/A	See detail in Sports Sub Sector Plan	Department of Elite Sports	

Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source	Related SDG 4
capacity matched with international standards.	level have been trained and upgraded				
IO 8.5: Strengthen the governance of administration of elite sports in central as well as in local level	52. Number of sport legislation 53. Number of elite sport organization have matched the standards of good governance	N/A N/A	- 8 Legislations - 10 Organizations	Department of Elite Sports	

PART II: SUB-SECTOR PLAN 2021-2025

Introduction

The financing plan of ESSDP has been formulated as two scenarios – a “steady-state” scenario that provides the basis for merely maintaining the current level of quality and service provision with no improvements in performance. It represents the ‘budget floor’ for sector requirements; and an “enhanced quality” scenario that will only be achieved if the education share of the GoL non-wage recurrent budget is substantially increased. As actual budget allocations may fall between these two scenarios, therefore the ESSDP includes an expenditure policy to guide the incremental prioritisation of the allocated budget to agreed areas such as the primary sub-sector and comprehensive staff training. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic makes complete funding of the “enhanced quality” scenario unlikely in the earlier years of the 2021-25 period. However, there is a need to protect education investments, otherwise, gains in education over the last few years will be eroded.

A note is made against those intermediate outcomes where achievement can be expected only if future funding is aligned with the enhanced quality scenario.

I. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an important intervention in promoting children’s physical, intellectual, mental and social development and in preparing children for entry into primary education Grade 1. Pre-primary education provides the highest return on investment of all education sub-sectors. Yet, it receives the smallest share of government expenditure compared to primary, secondary and tertiary education.²⁸

Over the last five years, ECE in Lao PDR has developed and expanded in terms of quality and quantity: building basic infrastructure; WASH, teacher supply; teaching materials; inside and outside classroom play materials; developed national policy and strategy; and legislation for both public and private ECE institutions. Attention has been paid also to developing a childcare and education plan for children aged 3 to 36 months, curriculum, experience orientation for kindergarten teachers, teacher manuals, Pedagogical Adviser assessment instruments, teacher’s academic titles and 5-Year-Olds' Reading Readiness Guide. In addition, the quality standards for ECE, water and sanitation standards in ECE and general education institutions have been developed, and developed water and sanitation assessment databases using the 3-star model, and developed standards for model Crèche and kindergartens. At the same time, children from some remote areas have been provided greater access to ECE in different modalities. The table below shows the progress on ECE development.

Table 11: Comparison of indicators of ECE from 2016-2020

Indicators		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total schools		2,807	3,056	3,211	3,432	3,496
Total students (Public and Private)	Female	92,947	99,539	106,789	111,997	121,842
	Male	93,674	100,908	108,352	113,179	124,007
Teachers (Public)	Female	8,648	9,355	9,933	10,302	9,991
	Male	116	109	99	111	105
Enrolment rate of 3-4 years old	Female	37.7	41.8	45.2	48.2	50.0
	Male	36.9	41.0	44.7	47.5	49.7
Enrolment rate of 3-5 years old	Female	49.2	52.8	56.26	59.1	61.3
	Male	48.9	52.5	56.12	58.8	61.3
	GPI	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.01	1.00
Enrolment rate of 5 years old	Female	70.7	74.2	77.0	79.5	82.5
	Male	71.0	74.6	77.2	79.4	82.8
	GPI	1.00	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00
Enrolment rate of 5 years old in 40 priority districts	Female	55.6	60.1	62.6	68.0	76.5
	Male	56.0	60.1	61.8	65.9	76.6
	GPI	0.99	1.00	1.01	1.03	1.00
% of grade 1 students who have ECE experience	Female	57.0	62.4	65.5	66.4	70.6
	Male	55.4	61.0	63.7	65.1	69.0
	GPI	1.03	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.02

Source: MOES EMIS

1.2. Challenges

Part I (section 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. ECE has faced several challenges such as lack of training on ECE management for administrators in ECE institutions; and ECE teachers lacked training on the new pre-primary curriculum. While significant progress has been made, there is still an unmet demand for expansion of ECE provision particularly for disadvantaged groups. There are

²⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/education/early-childhood-education>

also geographical disparities; for example, 91% of primary entrants in Vientiane capital have ECE experience, only 57% have ECE experience in Saravan Province. Some ECE facilities are not in good condition: some are damaged, unstable and unsafe for children without WASH.

At present, the quality of ECE is quite low, therefore, it is necessary to develop teaching standards and Fundamental Quality Standards for ECE to improve the quality alongside with improving ECE PAs in each district. (Data from Part 1)

Although the enrollment rate in ECE increased compared to the previous year, but there are teacher shortage across the country, many ECE schools lack of toys for children and lack of equipment and learning – teaching materials. Therefore, the new recruitment should be prioritized for ECE, encourage the private sector to invest more on ECE, provide toys for children and expand play group and pre-primary classes in the area where possible.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1 Policy Objectives

1. To provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DEBS, clusters and schools to enhance their quality, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through realigning their mandates, roles and responsibilities; clarifying Job Descriptions and Specifications; and establishing systems to allocate human and financial resources according to needs.
2. To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance across the sector with priority to the 40 most disadvantaged districts
3. To provide good care, sanitation and healthy nutrition to children, and to develop in accordance with age-group as well as Lao language skill, good discipline, moral and preparedness prior to attending primary Grade 1;
4. To construct and renovate school infrastructure, provide teaching-learning and play materials in ECE learning facilities.

2.2 Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

1. Enrolment rate of 3-5 years old children: 67%
2. Enrolment rate of 5-year-old children: 86%
3. GPI for national enrolment rate of 5-year-old children is equitable (0.97 to 1.03)
4. Enrolment rate of 5-year-old children (including children with disabilities) in 40 districts is 83%
5. GPI for enrolment rate of 5-year-old children 40 districts is equitable (0.97 to 1.03)
6. Number of districts achieve enrolment rate of 5-year old children >60% is 145
7. Percent of children who have ECE experience before beginning primary Grade 1 is: 75%
8. Number of disadvantaged districts with 50% or more primary entrants having ECE experience is 26 out of 40 disadvantaged districts.
9. Percentage of ECE in-service teachers trained annually is 20%

2.3 High-level Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some High-Level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

2.3.1. Increased number of ECE graduates with improved primary school readiness, particularly language skill and numeracy skills with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity. (Part I: High-level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

A detailed rationale is included in Part I of ESSDP and ECE challenges are outlined in section 1 above. Some key additional points are as follows:

- Despite a rise in participation from children in the bottom 20% of households, most enrolments in kindergarten and pre-primary classes are still from urban areas and rural areas with good road access. LSIS-II data²⁹ show that poorer and rural children have less chance of attending ECE, as do those whose mothers are less educated or whose parents belong to non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups.
- ECE in Lao PDR is still relatively new and heavily based on a model of education that suits primary school aged students rather than developmentally appropriate teaching methods considering the age, capacity and emotional vulnerabilities of young children.
- Considering the low participation and high drop-out rates in primary schooling, ECE is a crucial investment for children's development so they are ready for primary education, and more widespread provision of ECE will provide greater equity in school readiness for students entering primary education.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased access to quality ECE: (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IOs 1.2 and 1.3)

Strategy 1: Prioritised and targeted expansion of the one-year pre-primary program subject to quality improvements to provide more access in remote and more disadvantaged areas.

Key activities:

- Expand sufficient number of pre-primary classes and Community Based School Readiness Programme;
- Provide sufficient number of teachers based on need;
- Update and develop pre-primary class and Community Based School Readiness Programme materials;
- Strengthen pre-primary and Community Based School Readiness Programme management;
- Provide facilities for pre-primary classes and Community Based School Readiness Programme;
- Support integration of parenting education activities into ECE to promote holistic child development and increased parental engagement;
- Monitor, encourage and support the management of pre-primary classes and Community Based School Readiness Programme.

Strategy 2: Scaling up of proven innovations/pilots for 3-5-year olds, with priority on programmes for 5-year olds, such as multi-age teaching (more research may be needed)

Key activities:

- Feasibility analysis of scaling up innovative interventions, such as: Community Child Development Groups, Multi-age Teaching, Reading Readiness Program, short (10 week) programs and so on;
- Develop the implementation manual on community child development groups, multi-age teaching, Reading Readiness program, short program during the school break (10 weeks);
- Implement community child development groups, multi-age teaching, Reading Readiness program, short program during the school break (10 weeks);
- Provide teaching and learning materials and toys for children;
- Monitor, motivate, assist and evaluate the implementation of the programs.

Strategy 3: Development of a sustainable and cost-effective (human and financial resourcing) targeted ECE school meals strategy and action plan.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

²⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/laos/reports/country-report-lao-pdr-social-indicator-survey-ii-2017-mics>

- Development of strategy and action plan for a cost-effective school meals programme;
- Formulate unit cost for school meal in ECE schools;
- Dissemination of legislation on school meals provision;
- Capacity building to ECE school personnel, parents and communities on school meals provision in remote areas;
- Implement school meal programme in 40 disadvantaged districts.
- Provision of food and equipment;
- Conduct monitoring, encouraging and supporting school meals programme.

Strategy 4: Expand programs to promote health, hygiene and nutrition in ECE schools and provide health and hygiene facilities for ECE children, especially for girls.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome, it will also require coordination with the health sector, including active NGOs.

Key activities:

- Capacity building for academic staff on promotion of healthy behaviours, clean water and sanitation;
- Development of manuals on school meals, safe and nutritious drinks;
- Development of school health and safety manuals;
- Capacity building for provincial staff on promotion of healthcare, clean water and sanitation;
- Provision of healthcare and sanitation facilities;
- Conduct monitoring, encouraging and supporting work.

Strategy 5: Encourage individuals, organizations, local and international investors to invest in ECE development.

Key activities:

- Develop and revise legislation related to private investment into ECE;
- Disseminate about the importance of ECE in various approaches;
- Strengthening the management of both public and private schools;
- Develop database to monitor and provide technical support to ECE providers;
- Develop and update early childhood education and training manuals for parents / guardians;
- Disseminate the importance of 1,000 days of child development, health care, childcaring and early childhood education to education administrators, academics, teachers and parents / guardians.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Reduced gap in ECE performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.5)

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a strategy to reduce disparities in supply of teachers to rural and remote schools.

Key activities:

- Development of strategy and legislation to reduce disparities in supply of teachers to rural and remote ECE schools;
- Dissemination of strategy and legislation to reduce disparities in supply of teachers to rural and remote ECE schools;
- Allocation of primary teacher education graduates to teach pre-primary classes by providing training on the use of teaching curriculum and experience orientation plan;
- Monitoring of strategy implementation to reduce disparities in the supply and allocation of teachers to rural and remote schools.

2.3.2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment, (Part I: High-Level Outcome 2)

➤ **Rationale**

A detailed rationale is included in Part I of ESSDP and ECE challenges are outlined in section 1 above.

Intermediate Outcome 1: ECE pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula is revised to align with the new school curricula. (Part I: High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

Strategy 1: Effectively coordinate the development of the pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula at all levels to ensure alignment.

Key activities:

- Revise and improve ECE pre-service teacher training to align with ECE curricula;
- Strengthening of revised ECE pre-service teacher training curricula;
- Monitor and assess the implementation of revised ECE pre-service teacher training curricula;
- Development of crèche curriculum;
- Strengthening of crèche curriculum implementation;
- Monitoring, encouraging and supporting crèche teaching and learning programme.

Strategy 2: Effectively coordinate the development of the in-service teacher training curricula, based on inclusive principles to ensure alignment and identify a systematic approach to responsibility for teacher professional development.

Key activities:

- Revision of ECE in-service teacher training curricula;
- Capacity building for ECE in-service teachers;
- Monitor, encourage and support ECE in-service teachers.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement the action plan for expanding school-based management training for ECE.

Key activities:

- Develop training program on school-based management.
- Strengthen the capacity of the education administrators at all levels on early childhood education.
- Monitor and support the school.

Strategy 4: ECE PAs provide on the job training targeted to reduce disparities in education performance at all levels.

Key activities:

- Legislation on ECE PAs management to be formulated;
- ECE PAs manuals to be revised;
- Capacity building for ECE PAs to be conducted;
- Provide training to ECE Pas.
- Monitor and assess ECE PAs performance.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Teaching standards for ECE are developed and approved. (Part I: High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

Strategy 1: ECE teaching standards appropriate to the Laos context, that can be used as the basis for teacher performance assessment are developed, including teacher ethics.

Key activities:

- ECE teaching standards are developed;
- ECE service standards are developed;
- ECE teaching and service standards and are disseminated.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Teacher performance assessment instruments for ECE are updated to link to teaching standards and used to guide the professional development needs of teachers. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

Strategy 1: ECE teacher performance assessment instruments are improved to be aligned with the newly developed teaching standards and new pre-primary curriculum that include age appropriate active learning pedagogy and used as manuals for teacher development.

Key activities:

- Instruments for teacher's performance assessment based on ECE teaching standards is developed building on work currently being implemented by projects supported by development partners (For example, TEACH and MELE);
- Capacity building on the use of teacher performance assessment instruments aligning with ECE teaching standards is conducted;
- Capacity building on the use of teacher's academic titles assessment instrument is conducted at provincial and district level;

2.3.3. All ECE schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity and active VEDC support to meet Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) and enable improved student learning outcomes (Part I High-Level Outcome 3)

➤ **Rationale**

A detailed rationale is included in Part I of ESSDP and ECE challenges are outlined in section 1 above. The key point for ECE is:

To use FQS as a mechanism to prioritise resources and support and thereby improve the quality of teaching and learning in ECE facilities to better prepare children for entry to primary schools.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) for early childhood education are approved and rolled-out nationally. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3; IO 3.1)

Strategy 1: Develop and establish FQS for ECE.

Key activities:

- Building on the framework for primary FQS, FQS for ECE are developed, reviewed and approved;
- FQS-self assessment tools are developed and piloted for ECE providers;
- Legislation and operational guidelines for ECE providers, DESB and PESS level supporting the introduction of the FQS are developed and approved;
- Costed implementation, training and dissemination plan for ECE FQS is developed and approved;
- ECE FQS are rolled-out as a pilot, assessed and revised;
- ECE FQS are rolled out nationally in accordance with the implementation, training and dissemination plan;
- Implementation of ECE FQS is monitored and assessed.

Strategy 2: Develop and approve an action plan for the use of ECE FQS information at the DESB level to support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity

Key activities:

- Conduct capacity building for DESB in planning processes based on prioritising the attainment of FQS;
- Monitor, encourage and support districts in prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparities.

Strategy 3: Strengthening the capacity of DESB's Inspection, Quality Assurance and Monitoring units.

Key activities:

- Develop inspection, monitoring and evaluation manuals based on QA procedures;
- Conduct capacity building for DESB QA inspection, monitoring and evaluation;
- Conduct activities to monitor, motivate and support QA units on inspection and evaluation processes.

Strategy 4: Assesses the extent to which the ECE FQS inform District Education Development to reduce disparities within the district.

Key activities:

- Develop guidelines for DESP;
- Conduct capacity building for DESB on District planning;
- Monitor motivate and support DESP processes.

II. PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Other key achievements include construction of more classrooms and WASH facilities and the school-meals program has continued. The primary curriculum is being renewed with all grades completed by school year 2023-24. Fundamental Quality Standards for primary education have been developed and approved.

The demand for primary education is growing overall – see Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12: Comparison of indicators of primary education from 2016-2020

Indicator		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of schools (Public and Private)		8,864	8,849	8,857	8,854	8,823
Number of classes (Public and Private)		34,229	34,305	34,120	33,992	33,226
Number of students (Public and Private)	<i>Female</i>	397,529	389,326	378,298	371,442	367,111
	<i>Male</i>	430,458	419,379	407,948	399,217	393,455
Number of public students	<i>Female</i>	376,658	367,314	355,044	346,369	340,547
	<i>Male</i>	407,518	395,424	382,440	371,484	364,058
Number of teachers (public)		35,682	35,671	35,405	34,829	32,214
Net Intake Ratio (%)	<i>Female</i>	97.8	97.4	97.6	97.9	98.4
	<i>Male</i>	98.1	97.8	97.9	98.4	98.6
Net Enrolment Rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	98.5	98.6	98.6	98.8	98.7
	<i>Male</i>	99.0	98.8	99.0	99.3	99.0
Gross Intake Rate to Grade 5 ³⁰ (%)	<i>Female</i>	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	104.3	103.6	100.3
	<i>Male</i>	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	104.8	103.4	100.5
GPI GIR G5		N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	0.995	1.002	0.998

Source: MOES EMIS

Table 13: Comparison of internal efficiency for primary education

Indicator		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Grade 1 dropout rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	7.0	6.2	5.1	5.4	5.3
	<i>Male</i>	7.4	7.5	6.4	7.0	7.3
Grade 1 repetition rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	10.4	8.2	7.8	7.4	5.2
	<i>Male</i>	12.6	10.2	9.8	9.4	7.2
Dropout rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	4.5	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.7
	<i>Male</i>	5.0	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.9
GPI Drop-out (%)		0.90	0.87	0.86	0.81	0.76
Repetition rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	4.1	3.4	3.3	3.1	2.4
	<i>Male</i>	5.5	4.8	4.8	4.6	3.8
GPI repetition (%)		0.75	0.71	0.69	0.67	0.63
Cohort completion rate (%)	<i>Female</i>	79.1	80.8	82.1	81.9	82.7
	<i>Male</i>	76.6	77.9	78.9	77.9	77.4
GPI CCR		1.03	1.04	1.04	1.05	1.07

Source: EMIS, MoES

³⁰ Gross Intake Rate to Grade 5 calculated by using the number of new entrants in Grade 5, regardless of age, is expressed as a percentage of the 10 years old population.

1.2. Challenges

Part I (section 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. A key priority for the sub-sector is to ensure that all primary graduates, including those who do not use Lao as the mother tongue are literate and numerate. There is a “gender gap” with girls performing better than boys on many indicators, although it is not clear why this occurs and more study on this is needed. That said, the GPI for entry into the final grade is equitable. Other key challenges caused by budget limitations include constraints in the number of pedagogical advisers and DESB staff to provide guidance to teachers and monitor school performance, as well as a lack of teachers in areas where they are most needed. A target of all schools attaining more than 80% compliance with the teacher allocation protocols has been set. Given the recognised difficulties in redeploying teachers the target is below the 100% required by the FQS. In addition, this interim lower target will increase the priority given to the most under-staffed schools, and to the smallest schools who will generally fall below this threshold if they are under-staffed by even one teacher.

Requests for additional school buildings was a common demand during ESSDP consultation workshops at provincial and district level but no evidence was provided on how many children in any one village or community are without adequate access to primary school.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) Improve content knowledge and pedagogical skills of primary teachers.
- 2) Provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DEBS, clusters and schools to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in primary education development.
- 3) Enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance across the sector and in particular to the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table), Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Percentage of Grade 3 students reaching the minimum standard level.
 - in Lao language 50%
 - in mathematics 30%
- 2) Primary gross intake rate to grade 5.
 - National is 100%
 - 40 districts is 100%
- 3) Gender parity indices of Primary gross intake rate to grade 5.
 - National is between 0.97-1.03
 - 40 districts is between 0.97-1.03
- 4) Primary dropout rate.
 - National 2%
 - 40 districts 5%
- 5) Primary cohort survival rate.
 - National 90%
 - 40 districts 78%
- 6) Percentage of primary schools MORE than 80 percent compliant with the teacher allocation protocols.
 - National: 79.5%
 - 40 priority districts: 69.5%

2.3. Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from primary education including NFE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills but also other 21st Century skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I, High-Level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The key issues are: (i) time allocated for complete coverage of the primary curriculum in all grades is not adequate, (ii) support that schools and teachers receive through visiting pedagogical advisors is not sufficiently effective, (iii) the allocation of time by the school for remediation with learners in need is inadequate, (iv) pedagogy for teaching Lao as a second language for ethnic children is inadequate (v) learning resources to improve the transition of ethnic learners to the Lao language are not widely available or used, and (vi) inexperienced teachers often teach Grade 1.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels of school education. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.1)

Strategy 1: Review the number of subjects and their time allocation in grades 1 and 2 of primary education.

Key activities:

- Annual JSRMs to monitor the adequacy of time allocation to Lao language and mathematics in primary Grades 1 and 2.
- Ensure that the MTR addresses the issue of the impact of the new curriculum in Grades 1 and 2 on proficiency in Lao language and mathematics.
- Following the MTR, identify any need to enable more time to be allocated to Lao language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2 by reducing the number of subjects in these grades.

Strategy 2: Improve and revise primary curriculum and ensure the contents are appropriate and inclusive for the country.

Key activities:

- Revise grade 3 – grade 5 curriculum;
- Promote teaching foreign language in primary schools;
- Promote and support new methodology of teaching Lao language so that students can read and write grammatically correct;
- Promote and support new methodology of teaching mathematics so that students can perform 4 basic numeracy skills.

Strategy 3: Improve student time on task in the classroom.

Key activities:

- Analyse current contact hours at school and consider 45 minutes per lesson instead of 90 minutes per lesson.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, and G5, (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.2)

Strategy 1: Strengthen the primary Grade 5 examination system.

Key activities:

- Develop standards for grade 5 final exams.
- Develop guidelines for comparative exams and Grade 5 final exam.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the comparative exams and grade 5 final exam.

Strategy 2: Establish standardised student learning assessment at G3, and G5.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop and implement a budget line and action plan to conduct regular, standardised student learning assessment at G3, and G5 will be developed and implemented.

Strategy 3: Strengthening teachers’ capacities to assess student learning using formative and summative assessment practices.

Key activities:

- Teacher Guides will be revised to include simple and practical assessment strategies such as assessment rubrics, unit exercises, etc. that teachers can use in the classroom to ensure that teachers check individual student learning and record the results on a regular basis;
- Integrate learning assessment practices and tools (formative and summative) into pre-service, in-service trainings and continuous professional development for teachers;
- Teachers will be supported technically in applying the new curriculum and use active learning pedagogies effectively;
- Develop and revise student learning outcome assessment tools from grade 1 to 5
- Build capacity of in-service teachers on student learning outcome assessment from grade 1 to 5
- Monitor and support the implementation of new curriculum
- Strengthening internal and external PAs in school cluster.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

Strategy 1: Development and implementation of a sustainable (human and financial resourcing) targeted primary school meals strategy and action plan.

Key activities:

- Analysis of outcomes of previous and current school feeding/meals programs, including cost-effectiveness;
- Draft strategy and action plan to 2025 for school meals³¹ targeting disadvantaged students living in food insecure areas, through a cost-effective and financially sustainable approach;
- Capacity Building on school meal program implementation for local community;
- Provide cooking equipment to schools and food or financial support to obtain food;
- Monitor and support the implementation of the school meal program by using school meal application.

³¹ One plan for both ECE and primary students

Strategy 2: Expand gender, sex education, life skills, nutrition, disaster prevention, and UXO risk programs to primary schools.

Key Activities

- Develop, improve tools and provide training to provincial, district and school personnel on gender, nutrition, sex education, life skills, disaster prevention, and UXO risk.

Strategy 3: Improve the school environment to align with Fundamental Quality Standard

Key activities:

- Improve accessible school infrastructure and provide necessary facilities for teaching and learning;
- Create a clean and safe environment, such as building a green, clean and safe school for all children;
- Construct and maintain toilets and provide clean water;
- Provide hand washing facilities, implement hand washing and tooth brushing activities

Strategy 4: Implement progressive promotion policy more effectively, including provision of appropriate remedial support.

Key activities:

- As part of the continuous professional development for teachers, train teachers on the basic teaching skill of how to better use formative assessment approaches, as outlined in the new teacher guides to identify the need for and provide remedial support;
- Review the testing schedule required of students at differing grades, including number of monthly tests;
- Train teachers and principals on students' assessments and progressive promotion policies;
- During training on the new primary curriculum, teachers are shown how to identify students at risk of repeating or dropping out as well as learning assessment for students with disabilities;
- Monitoring of teachers' practice in identifying at-risk students;
- Encourage teachers to pay more attention to and assist the at-risk students;
- Provide support on the implementation of progressive promotion and students assessments;
- Include teachers' provision of remedial support to struggling students within the teacher performance assessment;
- Promote the outstanding students' contest;
- Promote and improve the monthly student assessment system;
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the progressive promotion;
- Develop legislation on remedial classes.

Strategy 5: Promote Reading through provision of more age-appropriate reading materials and advocacy

Key activities

- Conduct reading contest during the National Reading Day;
- Coordinate with development partners to provide additional reading materials for children;
- Create reading corners in schools;
- Provide reading materials and story books to all primary schools across the country;

Intermediate Outcome 4: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.5)

Strategy 1: Establish and provide resource for primary school clusters in the 40 priority districts.

Key activities:

- Develop guideline on school cluster establishment and implementation focusing on 40 priority districts;
- Provide training on, disseminate legislation and guidelines on the implementation of primary cluster school;
- Provide support for the implementation of primary cluster schools;
- Inspect, monitor and evaluate the implementation of cluster school.

Strategy 2: Supply teachers and provide necessary incentives to students and teachers in rural and remote primary schools.

Key activities:

- Prioritize the provision of facilities such as teaching and learning materials, building a small dormitory with toilet and clean water in primary schools, providing scholarships for needy students and other resources;
- Improve school management principles in determining student absences between urban, rural and remote areas;
- Provide adequate quotas for teachers in remote areas.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement mathematics and literacy “boost”-programs for all pedagogical advisors, principals, teachers, in the 40 target districts.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop a mini-training curriculum for the mathematics and literacy “boost” program.
- Develop special curriculum on maths and Lao language for talented students.
- Strengthen the capacity of PAs on maths and Lao language.

2.3.2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 2)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale, based upon the formulation and implementation of a holistic and strategic approach to the development of the education profession with a stronger focus on supporting the continuous professional development of teachers and principals at school and local level through a stronger PA system.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of teachers to implement the new school curricula through support from clusters and PAs (Part I High-Level Outcome 2 IO 2.1)

Strategy 1: Establish school cluster to be the focal point for continuous professional teacher development and exchange the lesson learned.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Disseminate legislations related to school cluster development to DESB and schools so that they understand the purpose of school cluster establishment;
- Strengthen the capacity of school cluster's steering committee to ensure the effectiveness of the school cluster implementation;
- Provide facilities for the implementation of school cluster;
- Develop system to monitor school cluster implementation.

Strategy 2: Targeted teacher training program

Key activities:

- Improve guideline for multi-grade and inclusive teaching;
- Training on multi-grade teaching with inclusive education integrated (includes children with disabilities) - targeted at all teachers in multi-grade schools;
- Training on classroom-based assessment with inclusive education integrated (includes children with disabilities) targeted at all teachers in multi-grade schools and 40 priority districts;
- Training on teaching Lao language as a second language in early grades with inclusive education integrated (includes children with disabilities) - targeted at non-Lao-Tai ethnic schools;
- Develop tool to evaluate the teachers who teach multi-grade classes and inclusive classes;
- Support, monitor and evaluate multi-grade teachers and teachers who teach inclusive classes;
- Provide training on assessment methods for multi-grade teachers to measure the learning outcomes of students in multi-grade classes and inclusive classes.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Primary pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula is enhanced and implemented to align with the new school curricula and teaching standards (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

Responsibility of teacher training is under the Department of Teacher Education and TTCs, Priorities for the primary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Realign primary in-service teacher training curricula to the new curriculum and teacher professional development strategies.

Strategy 2: Enhance national in-service teacher training for implementation of the new primary curriculum.

Strategy 3: Primary PAs provide on the job training targeted to reduce disparities in education performance at all levels.

Responsibility for PAs has now shifted to the Department of Teacher Education, and further details regarding PAs is included in their sub-sector plan. The following priorities for PAs from the perspective of the Department of General Education are as follows:

Key activities:

- Improve and revise the legislation related to PA;
- Capacity building for all internal and external PAs, based either in schools, clusters or in DESBs; Provide appropriate facilities including vehicles for conducting PA school visits;
- Provide appropriate budget for PA school visits.

Strategy 4: Enhance teaching and learning in multi-grade classes through improved teacher skills.

Responsibility for teacher professional development is with the Department of Teacher Education. Also linked to IO 2.1 Strategy 2.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system with: updated performance assessment tools linked to teaching standards, including teacher ethics; and implemented to identify priority teacher training needs for primary level (Part I High-Level Outcome 2 IO 2.3)

The Department of Teacher Education will be the lead for achieving this intermediate outcome. IFEAD will be responsible for management training of school principals. Priorities for the primary sub-sector are as follows:

Strategy 1: Establish the institutional structure and procedures for the national teacher and principals' performance assessment system, taking into account the perceived over-emphasis on lesson planning, and a focus on student learning outcomes

Strategy 2: Develop and implement the national teacher and principals' performance assessment system, focussing on the prescribed seven tasks

Strategy 3: Strengthening principals' capacity for SBM/FQS to improve teaching and learning.

Strategy 4: Strengthening the DESB capacity to support peer learning and sharing of experiences by principals in school clusters during monthly meetings at DESB

2.3.3. All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3).

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. All schools require a basic level of resources and capacity with which to function effectively and provide an acceptable quality of education, based upon Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS). Core education resources such as operating budgets, teachers, textbooks and basic hygiene facilities are allocated as equitably and comprehensively as possible.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Establishment of a sustainable school management and self-evaluation and development planning process (using FQS) that informs district level planning and targeting of support, including teacher and learning materials allocation. (Part I section 6.3.2 IO 3.2)

Strategy 1: Implement FQS for primary education

Key activities:

- FQS-self assessment tools are developed and piloted for primary education;
- Legislation and operational guidelines for primary education, DESB and PESS level supporting the introduction of the FQS are developed and approved;
- Costed implementation, training and dissemination plan for primary education FQS is developed, piloted and approved before being rolled out nationally;
- implementation of primary FQS is monitored and assessed.

Strategy 2: Develop and approve an action plan for the use of primary FQS information at the DESB level and support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity

Key activities:

- Conduct capacity building for DESB in planning processes based on prioritising the attainment of FQS;
- Monitor, encourage and support districts in prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparities.

Strategy 3: Support the implementation of improved School Based Management, including principal training

Key activities:

- Support the dissemination of the school management policy that will define the school level roles and responsibilities, and the supporting roles of DESB, PESS; outline the long-term approach to ensuring all principals are fully capable of implementing their SBM duties;
- Training of school principals in SBM
- Identify more cost-effective approaches (for example via clusters) to support capacity strengthening of VEDCs and school principals;
- Strengthening and streamlining data collection at school level.

Intermediate Outcome 2: School Block Grants (SBG) (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.3)

DoF has responsibility for school block grants and will work with DGE to review how grants are determined for the primary sub-sector. The priority for the primary sub-sector are:

Strategy 1: Ensure SBG funding levels and eligible expenditures are more responsive to the needs of each school, as determined by FQS

Intermediate Outcome 3: Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.4)

Responsibility for teacher allocation is under the Teacher Allocation Committee with support from DoOP, PESS and DESBs. Priorities for the primary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Reduce disparity in teacher supply in primary schools

Strategy 2: Reducing teacher absenteeism, including by a) trialling a mobile app for reporting teacher absenteeism by VEDCs and parents as part of the LESMIS strengthening; b) media campaign on the importance and role of VEDC, parents and others for reducing teacher absenteeism.

Strategy 3: A review of the geographical distribution of public schools, particularly primary schools, will be undertaken to identify possible gains in efficiency of teacher allocation through consolidation of small schools closely located to other schools.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Textbook and Teacher guide allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.5)

Responsibility for allocation of textbooks and other teaching/learning materials is under the Planning and Budgeting Committee with support from the Assets Management Division of DoF, PESS and DESB. Priorities for the primary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Reduce disparity in textbook and teacher guide supply and allocation in primary schools

Strategy 2: Develop and implement prioritisation strategy to ensure all schools attain at least 80% of their textbook and teacher guide requirements

Strategy 3: Determine the most cost-effective approach to monitoring textbook availability (TMIS or expanded EMIS)

Intermediate Outcome 5: All schools are supported in attaining the minimum level of (1-star or above) inclusive WASH facilities. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.6. See also High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

Strategy 1: Expansion of inclusive WASH facilities and program at primary level (See IO 6.3.5)

III. LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Other key achievements include:

Teachers trained to identify and support students with vision, hearing or cognitive impairment. A new pre-service teacher training curriculum was approved in 2016 enabling new teachers to teach Grades 6 – 12. This has helped to reduce the lack of teachers, particularly in remote areas. The new curriculum places more emphasis on soft skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, etc.) needed by employers. Teacher manuals on comprehensive sexuality education based on international technical sexuality education for lower and secondary education have been developed and training of teachers in their use has begun. New FQS are being developed and will be in place by 2020. A key activity to build capacity in administration and management is the national roll-out of the School Based Management system.

Table 14: Comparison of indicators of lower secondary education from 2016-2020

Indicators		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
No. of classroom (Public and private)		12,100	12,428	12,681	12,903	13,153
No. staff and teachers (Public schools)		21,410	21,108	20,970	20,972	20,826
Total students (Public and Private)		452,464	452,532	447,757	442,856	429,150
Gross Enrolment Rate		82.2	82.9	83.1	82.8	83.3
Gross Intake rate grade 9 (M4) (%)	Female	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	70.3	71.5	70.5
	Male	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	73.3	73.2	72.7
GPI for grade 9 (M4) GIR		N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	0.96	0.98	0.97
Transition rate from primary (%)	Female	86.6	85.7	84.3	84.1	84.5
	Male	88.8	88.0	86.6	86.0	85.6
GPI for transition rate (%)		0.98	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.99
Transition rate to upper secondary (%)		90.4	89.7	88.0	87.9	87.9

Source: MOES EMIS

Table 15: Comparison of internal efficiency for lower secondary education

Indicator		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
M1 drop-out rate (%)		10.3	10.5	11.5	11.3	12.3
M1 repetition rate (%)		1.5	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.7
Drop-out rate for lower secondary education. (%)	Female	8.1	8.0	8.6	9.1	9.7
	Male	8.1	8.5	9.6	10.0	10.8
GPI for drop-out (point)		1.00	0.94	0.90	0.91	0.90
Repetition rate for lower secondary education. (%)	Female	0.53	0.53	0.51	0.60	0.60
	Male	1.58	1.54	1.60	1.70	1.69
GPI for repetition (point)		0.34	0.34	0.32	0.35	0.35
Cohort survival rate primary G1 to M4 (%)		76.6	74.7	71.9	71.5	68.9

Source: MOES EMIS

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. The new law mandating compulsory education at lower secondary level has meant that many students transitioning to Grade 6 may have different expectations from those who chose to make the transition in previous years. A 2019 assessment at Grade 9 (M4) also found poor learning outcomes in Lao language, mathematics

and science. Unlike primary education, there is no gender gap. However, male rates of drop-out are inequitably high and may in future lead to less equitable results for gross intake into grade 9. There is a need to enhance the vocational education and training sections of the curriculum to mitigate against drop-out and ensure that graduates have sufficient skills and knowledge to find viable employment or establish their own small, start-up businesses.

Access to clean toilets, girls' counsellors and encouraging the community to understand the societal benefits of educating girls are all needed to increase female participation. Similar or additional approaches may also be needed to ensure improved male retention. There is no active cluster system in operation at lower secondary level and many teachers do not have the skills and knowledge to offer effective remedial classes.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) Expansion of lower secondary must be more affordable and realistic but benefits of access to lower secondary will not occur until primary graduates have much improved literacy and numeracy skills

Increases in the gross enrolment rate in lower secondary have been modest during the period 2016-20 following earlier strong annual growth and the gap between males and females enrolment has not reduced. However, the enrolment GPI may be misleading as male numbers are swollen by a repetition rate nearly three times higher than females, and the proportion of the male and female population entering grade 9 (using the GIR Grade 9) is more equitable with a GPI of 0.97. The dispersed nature of the population in rural areas creates extra challenges to provide lower secondary education and poor learning outcomes from primary education flow through to lower secondary. As a result, a review of current approaches to delivery of lower secondary will take place to identify more affordable service delivery.

- 2) To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance across the sector and in particular in the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.

Villages across the 40 priority districts tend to be small and more dispersed compared to other districts. Thus, a more affordable approach to delivery of lower secondary education will be needed before targeting expansion in these 40 priority districts.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Percentage of Grade 9 students reaching the minimum standard level
 - In Lao language 40%
 - In mathematics 20%
- 2) Transition rate to Lower Secondary
 - National 95%
 - 40 districts 86%
- 3) Lower Secondary GER
 - National 87%
 - 40 districts 68%

2.3. Outcomes

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from LSE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly 21st Century skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I, High Level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale, two major challenges to expand lower secondary numbers are recent declines in the transition rate from primary to lower secondary education and increasing drop-out rates in the early years of lower secondary.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Improved curricula is implemented at all levels of school education. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, 1 IO 1.1)

Responsibility for renewal of school curriculum is under RIES. The priority for lower secondary is:

Strategy 1: Roll out new curricula nationwide

Key activities:

- Integrate life skill - comprehensive sexual education as well as disaster response in the curricula;
- CACIM approves new curricula and teaching materials;
- New teaching materials distributed;
- Teachers trained in new curricula.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of new curricula

Strategy 2: Ensure continuity between G5 and M1 school curricula.

Key activities:

- Effectively coordinate with all stakeholders to appraise the continuity of curricula between the new G5 and M1;
- Evaluation on alignment and progression of G5, M1, LS curricula for updating;
- Review and update LS curriculum, textbooks and handbooks;
- Printing of LS textbooks and handbooks;
- Conduct a training on the application of new updated curriculum and the revised LS textbooks;
- Monitor the application of LS textbooks and handbooks.

Strategy 3: A focus on classroom-based assessment across all lower secondary schools in Lao PDR

Key activities:

- Develop student learning outcome assessment tools.
- Teachers trained in classroom-based assessment.
- Monitor and evaluate teachers use of assessment tools

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G9. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.2)

Strategy 1: Standardised student learning assessment at grade 9 (M4) will be established.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- A budget line and action plan to conduct regular, standardised student learning assessment at grade 9 (M4) will be developed and implemented;
- Future Grade 9 large scale assessment will use the Grade 9 ASLO 2019 as reference to ensure continuity and comparability.

Strategy 2: Strengthening student learning assessment

Key activities

- Develop and improve systems, legislation, and tools for continuous measurement.

- Strengthen the capacity of provincial, district and cluster PA and teachers in continuous assessment;
- Monitor, inspect and evaluate the implementation of continuous promotion and analyze the evaluation results to improve the measurement and evaluation;
- Based on the assessment's finding, improve teaching and learning.

Strategy 3: Teacher Guides will be provided to enhance assessment practices.

Key activities:

- Teacher Guides will be revised to include simple and practical assessment rubrics that teachers can use in the classroom;
- A costed action plan to train all teachers to apply improved assessment techniques will be developed and implemented.

Strategy 4: Grade 9 exams are standardised to provide comparable assessments

Key activities:

- National standards for setting of M4 (Grade 9) exams are established.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

Strategy 1: Review the current approach to expanding access to lower secondary, including the current 5+4+3 structure.

Key activities:

- Effectively coordinate with all stakeholders to appraise and agree the most effective and efficient means of realigning lower secondary education in order to enable financially sustainable expansion up to universal coverage.
- Feasibility study on the reform of general education structure 6+3+3.

Strategy 2: Expansion of inclusive WASH facilities, promote health and nutrition program at lower secondary level (See IO 6.3.5)

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key activities:

- Develop a costed expansion plan for provision of inclusive WASH facilities in all lower secondary schools;
- Provide clean water (reservoirs, groundwater, wells, and drinking water) to schools;
- Inspect, monitor and evaluate schools based on water and sanitation standards;
- Strengthen school health and nutrition promotion;
- Maintain toilets for boys and girls.

Strategy 3: Improve lower secondary school environment to align with Fundamental Quality Standards

Key activities:

- Construct and expand standardized schools and classrooms;
- Construct and expand dormitories, toilets (male and female separated) with enough clean water system, and provide necessary facilities based on real situation;
- Conduct training on clean and safe school environment standards for PESS, DESB and schools, including adolescent and youth safe behaviours.

Strategy 4: Provide incentives to poor student in remote schools to improve enrolment rate

Key activities:

- Provide scholarships and stipend to disadvantaged and poor students;
- Expand school meal program to remote and disadvantaged lower secondary schools;
- Encourage school nutrition (school gardens to grow vegetables and raise livestock) and provide monitoring and training;
- Strengthen the existing ethnic boarding schools and expand the new ones in other districts.

Strategy 5: Improve current lower secondary education services in all schools

Key activities:

- Provide regular teaching support including PA support;
- Use the Grade 9 ASLO (2019) evidence to further improve teaching-learning practices in lower secondary;
- Strengthen school ownership and VEDC leadership in education development;
- Strengthen school management on providing support to low performed students and disadvantaged students;
- Create and develop a mechanism to monitor student's learning and teacher's teaching and use it to evaluate student's learning outcomes and teacher's performance;
- Organise remedial classes for students of special needs and low learning performance;
- Complete all teaching and learning program assigned by MoES;
- Monitor and inspect work performance of in-service teachers, PAs and academic entitled teachers;
- Monitor and collect data on numbers of teachers and teaching-learning activities in each school;
- Allocate teachers based on subject areas and qualification; and complete teaching assignment as set in the curriculum;
- Conduct a training on the application of science experimental lab and workshop equipment;
- Promote teaching and learning foreign languages.

Strategy 6: Establish a qualifications framework linking formal and non-formal school-level education qualifications

Key Activities:

- Review non-formal equivalency school programs to enable a qualifications framework to link formal and non-formal school-level education to be drafted.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.5)

Strategy 1: Prioritise improving Lower secondary education services in disadvantaged areas

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key Activities:

- Prioritize the provision of facilities such as teaching and learning materials, building a small dormitory with toilet and clean water in primary schools, providing scholarships for needy students and other resources, across the 40 target districts;
- Establish and expand school clusters across the 40 target districts aiming to share resources and support each other in teaching and learning;
- Monitor, support and provide training on school cluster management including teaching and learning;
- Develop and produce teaching-learning materials as well as provide sufficient equipment and facilities to school clusters.

2.3.2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment, (Part I, High Level Outcome 2)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The ESSDP is based on the formulation and implementation of a holistic and strategic approach to the development of the education profession with a stronger focus on development of teaching standards and a teacher performance assessment tool linked to these standards and principals at school level, with support from PAs.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthened capacity of teachers to implement the new school curricula through support from clusters and PAs (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.1)

Strategy 1: Establish school cluster to be the focal point for continuous professional teacher development and exchange the lesson learned

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Disseminate legislations related to school cluster development to DESB and schools so that they understand about the purpose of school cluster establishment;
- Strengthen the capacity of school cluster’s steering committee to ensure the effectiveness of the school cluster implementation;
- Develop standard for model school and model cluster school;
- Strengthen capacity of internal and external PAs.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Secondary pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula is enhanced and implemented to align with the new school curricula and teaching standards. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

Responsibility for teacher professional development is with the Department of Teacher Education. Priorities for the lower secondary sub-sector are as follows:

Strategy 1: Realign secondary pre-service teacher training curricula to the new curriculum and teacher professional development strategies.

Strategy 2: Review Lower secondary in-service teacher training programmes using the teacher performance assessment and teacher standards framework

Strategy 3: Conduct national in-service teacher training for implementation of the new secondary curriculum

Strategy 4: Strengthen Lower secondary PAs to reduce disparities in education performance at all levels

Intermediate Outcome 3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system with: updated performance assessment tools linked to teaching standards; and implemented to identify priority teacher training needs for primary level (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

The Department of Teacher Education will be the lead for achieving this intermediate outcome. IFEAD will be responsible for management training of school principals. Priorities for the lower secondary sub-sector are as follows:

Strategy 1: Develop teaching standards for lower secondary education as the basis for assessment of teacher performance at all levels.

Key activities

- Develop standards for teaching at the lower secondary school;
- Pilot the teaching standards of the lower secondary school;

- Disseminate teaching standards to lower secondary school teachers, school principals, DESB and PESS;
- Strengthen the of schools' principals, staff at DESB and PESS in the use of teaching standards, the use of ICT to check examinations' result and monitoring the implementation of sub-sector plan.

Strategy 2: Establish the institutional structure and procedures for the national teacher and principals' performance assessment system, taking into account the perceived over-emphasis on lesson planning

Key activities

- Develop and update monitoring and evaluation tools on performance of teachers, PAs and academic entitled teachers;
- Draft a report on evaluation outcomes and submit it to concerned authorities for further action to improve teacher quality;
- Develop a monitoring mechanism to monitor and evaluate the student's learning outcomes and teacher's performance.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement the national teacher and principals' performance assessment system

2.3.3. All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity (Part I, High Level Outcome 3)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. All lower secondary schools require a basic level of resources and capacity with which to function effectively and provide an acceptable quality of education, based on FQS and professional standards.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Establishment of a sustainable school management and self-evaluation and development planning process (using FQS) that informs district level planning and targeting of support, including teacher and learning materials allocation. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.2)

ESQAC will work with DGE to develop FQS for the lower secondary sub-sector

Strategy 1: FQS for secondary education are developed and established

Key activities:

- Building on the framework for primary FQS, FQS for secondary schools are developed, reviewed and approved;
- FQS-self assessment tools are developed and piloted for secondary education;
- Legislation and operational guidelines for secondary education, DESB and PESS level supporting the introduction of the FQS are developed and approved;
- Costed implementation, training and dissemination plan for secondary education FQS is developed and approved;
- Secondary education FQS are rolled-out as a pilot, assessed and revised;
- Secondary education FQS are rolled out nationally in accordance with the implementation, training and dissemination plan;
- implementation of secondary FQS is monitored and assessed.

Strategy 2: An action plan for the use of secondary FQS information at the DESB level is developed approved and support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity

Key activities:

- Conduct capacity building for DESB in planning processes based on prioritising the attainment of FQS;
- Monitor, encourage and support districts in prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparities.

Strategy 3: Support the implementation of improved School Based Management

Key activities:

- Support the dissemination of the school management policy that will define the school level roles and responsibilities, and the supporting roles of DESB, PESS; outline the long-term approach to ensuring all principals are fully capable of implementing their SBM duties;
- Identify more cost-effective approaches (for example via clusters) to support capacity strengthening of VEDCs and school principals;
- Strengthen the capacity of school principals in SBG management;
- Monitor and inspect the efficiency of SBG expenditure;
- Strengthening data collection at school level.

Strategy 4: Develop and implement a simple sustainable school level assessment system for the lower secondary FQS that promote community engagement and informs the DESB prioritisation and planning process to reduce disparity and including a quality assurance mechanism

Key activities:

- Develop a simple sustainable school level assessment system for the lower secondary FQS that promote community engagement.

Intermediate Outcome 2: School Block Grants (SBG) (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.3)

DoF has responsibility for school block grants and will work with DGE to review how grants are determined for the lower secondary sub-sector. The priority for the primary sub-sector are:

Strategy 1: Ensure SBG funding levels and eligible expenditures are more responsive to the needs of each school

Intermediate Outcome 3: Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.4)

Responsibility for teacher allocation is under the Teacher Allocation Committee with support from DoOP, PESS and DESBs. Priorities for the lower secondary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Reduce disparity in teacher supply in lower secondary schools

Intermediate Outcome 4: Textbook and Teacher guide allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.5)

Responsibility for allocation of textbooks and other teaching/learning materials is under the Planning and Budgeting Committee with support from the Assets Management Division of DoF, PESS and DESB. Priorities for the lower secondary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Reduce disparity in textbook and teacher guide supply and allocation in primary schools.

Intermediate Outcome 5: All schools are supported in attaining the minimum level of (1-star or above) inclusive WASH facilities. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.6. See also High-Level Outcome 3, IO 1.3)

Responsibility for oversight and management of the school WASH programme will be assigned to DoF. Priorities for the lower secondary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Expansion of inclusive WASH facilities and program at lower secondary level (See IO 6.3.5)

IV. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Other key achievements include: The Department of General Education is piloting the provision of vocational education classes at ethnic boarding schools; creating specialist upper secondary PAs in 11 provinces across the country; and providing laboratory equipment and training has been provided to 18 Provincial Model Schools.

Table 16: Comparison of indicators of upper secondary education from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
No. of classroom (Public and private)	5,178	5,586	5,925	6,037	5,994	
No. of classes (Public schools)	5,027	5,413	5,734	5,840	5,772	
Total students (Public and Private)	204,304	218,035	223,307	205,574	205,574	
Total students (Public)	199,664	213,004	217,909	211,686	199,821	
Transition rate to grade 10	91.3	86.0	81.7	79.4	74.9	
NER (%)	47.8	51.4	53.3	54.8	54.8	
Gross intake rate (GIR) in grade 12	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	44.9	52.0	52.1	
	Female	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	43.1	49.4	49.2
	Male	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	46.6	54.5	54.9
GIR G12 GPI	N/A in EMIS	N/A in EMIS	0.93	0.90	0.90	

Source: MOES EMIS

Table 17: Comparison of internal efficiency for upper secondary education

Indicator	2016-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Upper secondary Drop-out rate (%)	5.4	5.8	7.1	8.0	8.8	
	Female	5.3	5.7	7.0	7.7	8.7
	Male	5.6	5.8	7.1	8.3	8.8
GPI for drop-out Rate	0.94	0.98	0.98	0.93	0.99	
Upper secondary Repetition rate (%)	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	
Cohort survival rate M1 to M7 (%)	87.5	86.6	83.1	81.0	78.7	
Cohort completion rate (%)	85.2	84.3	81.0	78.3	76.1	

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. The key challenge is additional finance for infrastructure, high quality staff and specialist materials to teach mathematics, science subjects, IT and foreign languages as well as to provide reading rooms/libraries for student and teacher research. There is a notable gender bias against females in respect to entry into the final grade 12 of upper secondary level. This does not appear to be due to drop-out rates which are close to equitable and so appears to result from lower levels of entry into upper secondary. This may be partly due to the need for boarding away from home and early marriage.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance across the sector and in particular in the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.

A review of the upper secondary curriculum will be implemented to determine the feasibility of implementing a dual stream curriculum; one for natural sciences and one for social sciences. A costed plan to place priority on expanding upper secondary service delivery across the 40 priority districts will need to be developed.

- 2) To provide enhanced post-basic education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSEDP.

Separating the upper secondary curriculum into two streams will enable students to study in more depth across fewer numbers of subjects leading to greater content knowledge.

2.2. Targets:

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Transition rate from M4 to M5 is 78%
- 2) Cohort survival rate from M1 to M7 is 80%
- 3) Gross intake rate to grade 12 (M7) is 60%
- 4) GPI for Gross intake Rate to grade 12 is equitable (0.97 to 1.03)
- 5) Mixed general and vocational upper secondary implemented in 11 ethnic boarding schools
- 6) The number of disadvantaged districts with transition rate from M4 to M5 greater than 70% with 30 districts
- 7) One model upper secondary school is established in each of the 18 provinces

2.3. Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from upper secondary, with improved learning outcomes, particularly life skill, ICT skill but also basic vocational skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I: High-Level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. Upper secondary learning outcomes remain inadequate and cohort completion rates are lower than required, given the investment in students to reach upper secondary level. The current upper curriculum requires all students to study all 15 subjects. Dividing the upper secondary curriculum into two streams (social and natural sciences) will provide students with more opportunities to study their preferred and stronger subjects in greater depth.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased intake and progression rates at upper secondary level leading to increased graduation rates. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

There is a high rate of dropout in secondary schools. Male students are often more likely to drop out than female students especially in the north due to attraction to the unskilled labor market.

Strategy 1: Encourage lower secondary graduates with high academic performance to continue to upper secondary

Key activities:

- Develop legislation on the promotion of LSE students to further their study in different paths;
- Ensure the quality of accommodation, restrooms, incentives and facilities aimed at remote students, underprivileged, disadvantaged children are provided;
- Collaborate with local authority to encourage students to continue their study to complete the cycle of upper secondary school.

Strategy 2: Provide interventions to reduce drop-out rate in upper secondary education

Key activities

- Abolish school fees for students from poorer families who are more likely to drop out;
- Construct dormitories and provide incentives and facilities to students from remote areas;

- Provide scholarships to upper secondary students coming from low-income families;
- Provide remedial support for weaker students;
- Provide sufficient textbooks to allow one set per student.

Strategy 3: Develop an action plan to enable the efficient effective and sustainable targeted expansion of upper secondary education.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Feasibility on the expansion of upper secondary and complete secondary schools to ensure the quality and efficiency of secondary education service.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improved student learning outcomes at M6. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.2)

Assessment of learning outcomes in the final year of upper secondary is too late for any remedial support since few students can pass the M7 exam. It is therefore proposed to undertake the assessment at M 6 when most students will be aged 16 years

Strategy 1: Develop a follow-up plan to monitor the learning outcome of M6 student.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities

- Develop an assessment tool for natural sciences, Lao language and mathematics suitable for students at M6 level;
- Collect data on good performed and low performed schools (in remote areas, ethnicities) in order to monitor and provide support at least once a year.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.5)

Strategy 1: Provide scholarships for upper secondary students from 40 priority districts

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities

- Collect data on poor students;
- Develop a plan for scholarship priority to students in 40 priority districts.
- Provide scholarships for upper secondary students from 40 priority districts

Strategy 2: Provide more TA support

Key activities

- Use ESG to advocate for development partners to prioritize technical and financial support to the 40 MoES priority districts.
- Strengthen district-level PAs so that they can perform their task on a regular basis.
- Develop a plan for the needs of PAs;
- Provide facilities for PAs;
- Strengthen the capacity of PAs within the school cluster.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training to develop skills for students to complete upper secondary school. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.4)

A pilot of mixed general (60%) and vocational (40%) upper secondary has been implemented in three ethnic boarding schools of three provinces with positive results. Vocational subjects are taught at TVET

institutions with a curriculum that is different to TVET and using specially trained upper secondary teachers.

Strategy 1: Provide vocational upper secondary training at ethnic boarding schools using existing TVET facilities

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities

- Expand general-vocational course to ethnic and boarding schools to meet the requirements of each area;
- Develop and improve general-vocational curricula as needed;
- Train vocational class teachers and monitor teachers' teaching;
- Strengthen village education development committees to involve entrepreneurs and institutions in accepting students for internships;
- Monitor, inspect and evaluate schools that implement general-vocational courses.

Strategy 2: Further expansion of upper secondary vocational education.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities

- Undertake a feasibility study for further expansion of upper secondary vocational education;
- Expand agreements between upper secondary schools and TVET institutions in eight more provinces to allow use of TVET facilities and training of upper secondary teachers by local TVET staff;
- Monitor quality of vocational training implemented to upper secondary students.

2.3.2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 2)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The likelihood that upper secondary education will be reformed to offer two streams will require improved teacher training, for both content knowledge and pedagogical skills, particularly at upper secondary level.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Upper secondary pre-service teacher training curricula is revised to align with the new school curricula. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

The Department of Teacher Education has responsibility to revise the pre-service teacher training curriculum, in consultation with DGE. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Improve the quality of teaching and learning to meet the need of the labor market and higher education

Intermediate Outcome 2: Teaching standards for upper secondary are developed and approved. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

The Department of Teacher Education has responsibility to revise the pre-service teacher training curriculum, in consultation with DGE. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Develop upper secondary teaching standards appropriate to the Lao context, that can be used as the basis for teacher performance assessment, including teacher ethics

Intermediate Outcome 3: Teacher performance assessment instruments for upper secondary are updated to link to upper secondary teaching standards and used to guide the professional development needs of teachers. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

The Department of Teacher Education has responsibility to revise the pre-service teacher training curriculum, in consultation with DGE. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Assessment of teachers who teach upper secondary subjects are assessed on a regular basis

Intermediate Outcome 4: Upper secondary in-service teacher training programs prioritise teachers of natural sciences, Lao language, mathematics and English language (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

The Department of Teacher Education has responsibility to manage the in-service teacher training curriculum, in consultation with DGE. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Upper secondary in-service teacher training programmes are reviewed using the teacher performance assessment and teacher standards framework

Intermediate Outcome 5: Upper secondary school principals have strengthened school management capacity linked to the updated core management duties (seven tasks). (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.5)

IFEAD has responsibility to build capacity of school principals. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Standards are developed for upper secondary principals

2.3.3. All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity to improve learning outcomes. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3).

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The school principal is the key person to provide quality assurance of teaching in upper secondary schools and more training for school principals is required to strengthen this quality assurance monitoring point of service delivery.

Intermediate Outcome 1: School Block Grants (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to upper secondary school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to the FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.3)

Responsibility for school block grants is under DoF. Priorities for upper secondary include:

Strategy 1: Monitor SBG expenditure to ensure an alignment with ESSDP 2021-25 priorities.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Teacher allocation is more responsive to upper secondary school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to the FQS. (Part I High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.4)

Responsibility for teacher allocation is under the Teacher Allocation Committee with support from DoOP, PESS and DESBs. Priorities for the upper secondary sub-sector include:

Strategy 1: Implementation of the new teacher allocation guidelines is monitored for compliance using accurate data, impact and efficiency

2.3.4. The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering the world of work, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status. (Part I Outcome 5)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The 9th NSEDP requires more quality graduates in the natural sciences from upper secondary education. Dividing the upper secondary curriculum into two streams should improve overall student learning outcomes as students will be able focus on their areas of academic strength. However, this will require more in-depth subject knowledge from teachers. Consequently, ensuring that teachers are assigned to teach their core subject will be critical.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching and learning to meet the need of the labour market and higher education (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.1)

The Department of Teacher Education has responsibility to revise the pre-service teacher training curriculum, in consultation with DGE. Priorities for Upper Secondary include:

Strategy 1: Conduct feasibility study on development of upper secondary school into two streams: natural science and social science

Strategy 2: Coordinate with DTE upgrade the unqualified teachers and those who never receive the in-service training.

Strategy 3: Utilize ICT in teaching and learning process

Strategy 4: Coordinate with DTE strengthen external and internal pedagogical support

Intermediate Outcome 2: There are Model upper secondary schools in each province. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.1)

Strategy 1: Strengthening complete schools to become Model schools.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop criteria/standards for model school;
- Conduct feasibility study on the school to be developed into model schools;
- Strengthen model schools in the area of weakness;
- Revise and develop legislations to enable Provincial ICT center to merge with complete secondary school where it is located aiming to become provincial model school.
- Provide necessary facility and learning materials to model schools.

V. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Key achievements include:

- Increasing literacy rates for people aged 6-14 and 15-40 who missed the opportunity to access formal education. This has been delivered through the provision of adult literacy program for adults aged 15-50 years old with participation of 30,195 people compared to the target of 30,000; primary equivalency programs for adults aged 15-40 years with participation of 43,414 people compared to the target of 20,000 people; and the Grade 5 equivalency course for children aged 6-14 years old, serving 11,397 participants compared to the set target of 15,000 people.
- For lower and upper secondary equivalency programs, the work has been on-going for the target groups aged 15-35 years old at village clusters or in accessible communities. Overall, there has been participation of 182,820 people achieving only 61% of the target. For upper secondary equivalency programs, there were 8,241 participants compared to the set target of 15,000 people.
- Regarding basic skill enhancement, training courses were conducted for interested youth and adults nationwide including the people in the 3-builds villages with 14,682 participants compared to the set target of 20,000 people. The trainings were conducted in vocational fields related to the way of life of the local people. In addition, the necessary equipment was provided and vocational training was provided to the trainers in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, carpentry, services and hospitality;
- In parallel to enhancement of access to education, non-formal education quality has also been improved by developing non-formal education standards consisting of 7 benchmark and 28 indicators as a measurement and evaluation tool.

Table 18: Comparison of indicators of non-formal education from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Provincial non-formal education centres	16	17	17	17	17
District non-formal education centres	20	27	31	36	36
CLCs	317	335	342	342	342
Staff	506	521	597	528	
Volunteers (Teaching in NFE courses)	8,762	10,619	11,006	11,161	
Enrolments in literacy programs (15-40 years old)	9,157	9,201	11,828		
Enrolments in primary equivalency programs (15-40 years old)	11,097	10,630	15,763	5,924	
Enrolments in primary equivalency programs (6-14 years old)	1,986	3,873	3,773	1,765	
Enrolments in lower secondary equivalency programs	65,618	67,712	19,425	30,065	
Enrolments in upper secondary equivalency programs	2,486	1,864	1,747	2,144	
Enrolments in vocational training	3,250	4,201	2,926	4,305	5,138

Source: MOES DNFE

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. Key challenges are as follows:

- Limited access to education and vocational skills for disadvantaged groups;
- Limited awareness, understanding and participation of local authorities and communities in NFE;
- Regulations for management of non-formal education are inconsistent, rigorous and lack a mechanism for continuous implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Lack of experience on teaching adult resulting in low quality and efficiency of adult education;
- Unclear regulation on the management of Non-formal education centres and Non-formal education Community Centres, insufficient operating budget and insufficient facilities;
- The non-formal education statistics system is not clear, lacks thorough analysis and is not integrated into the education and sports statistics system (EMIS).

2. Priority for 2021-2025

For 2021-25, disadvantaged districts are those included in the official MoES list of 40 districts.

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) Expansion of equivalent secondary education must be more affordable and realistic but benefits of access to lower secondary will not occur until equivalent primary graduates have much improved literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Increase the literacy rate and continue to provide upper secondary equivalent programmes until 2030 for the target group of non-formal education;
 - Promote access to universal, equal, quality education and lifelong learning for all.
- 2) Realign the skills and competencies of MoES staff in order to more effectively meet the current and foreseen needs of the system. (doing more with the same through improved HR systems).
 - Strengthen non-formal education personnel by developing the capacity and skills on administration and management and planning;
- 3) Provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DEBS, clusters and schools to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through realigning their mandates, roles and responsibilities; clarifying Job Descriptions and Specifications; establishing systems to provide that allocate human and financial resources according to needs.
 - Improve the role of non-formal education centers in accordance with the realities of the development of non-formal education, including the appropriate strengthening of teachers and vocational trainers;
 - To promote and develop non-formal education centers into learning centers;
 - Strengthen non-formal education personnel at the provincial, district and non-formal education centers at all levels to understand and effectively implement the Declaration on Lifelong Learning.
- 4) To reduce disparities in learning outcome in NFE through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance across the sector and in particular in the 40 most disadvantaged districts, as identified by MoES.
 - To promote independent learning and vocational skills training through online learning and creating opportunities for target groups to access a wide range of resources.
- 5) To provide enhanced post-basic education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSED.
 - Promote diversity of vocational training and the develop vocational skills that cover labor skills and life skills in line with the needs of the labor market.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Life-long Learning Committee is established.
- 2) Literacy rates of population 15-24 years old.
Male 88%
Female 94%
- 3) Number of graduates from NFE equivalency programmes is 266,000.

2.3. Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from NFE program, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I, High-Level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The non-formal education sub-sector focuses on promoting the provision of equitable access to quality education to disadvantaged population groups which is a priority mandate of the education and sports sector. In addition, the number of people relapsing to illiteracy and innumeracy is still significantly high, covering one-third of the target group.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased intake and progression rates in NFE programs leading to improved graduation rates at all levels. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

Strategy 1: Expand non-formal education to remote areas, create conditions for disadvantaged groups to receive equal and equitable education

Key activities:

- Improve community learning centers, non-formal education centers, as well as teaching and learning facilities for the target group to have access to equitable and quality education;
- Provide education for the target group of children in the age group of 6-14 years who do not have access to formal education so that they can be integrated into school education;
- Provide education for the population in the age group of 15-40 years who do not have access to education so that they can receive a comprehensive, equal and quality education;
- Increase opportunities for ethnic women and people with disabilities to have greater access to non-formal education;
- Provide basic vocational training along with the teaching-learning curriculum for adults and adolescents, especially in remote areas;
- Encourage and promote the community, social organizations, local authorities and other parties to take the lead in the development of non-formal education activities widely and comprehensively;
- Promote learning through a variety of electronic media that are diverse and up-to-date, tailored to local conditions and learner conditions.

Strategy 2: Promote Lifelong Learning for all

Key activities:

- Promote and encourage Lifelong Learning through social communities;
- Promote and encourage continue education and lifelong learning through multiple channels such as Flexible learning, informal education, distance learning and other types of learning;
- Develop a quality standard, indicators and tools for evaluation of Lifelong Learning quality.

Strategy 3: Develop short and flexible training courses that cover literacy and job skills in the local community using video training on YouTube or other leaning channels, depending on the availability of communities, local target groups and learners.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key activities:

- Create and develop non-formal education short online vocational training course online (multiple media channels) based on the need of target groups and labour market;
- Promote teaching and learning media for non-formal education programmes and short vocational and skill training courses for local target groups;
- Disseminate and advertise the non-formal education short courses videos using online tools as well as offline mode focusing on literacy programmes, vocational and labour skill training for local people in target group;
- Develop teaching and learning tools using online application to facilitate and better access for target groups;
- Strengthen capacity building for NFE staffs and teachers on teaching and learning using online videos and existed application.

2.3.2. Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities related to gender, poverty, ethnicity, disability and location (Part I, High-Level Outcome 4)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. It is important to monitor youth literacy rates due to the significant numbers of school dropouts from primary and lower secondary levels where assessed student learning outcomes are low. Literacy programs are not integrated into life-long learning approaches. Therefore, the non-formal education sector must pay attention to improving and providing education to this target group as a whole and as well as creating all conditions to promote literacy and ensure equality in all aspects and forms of education.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increase literacy rates prioritising 15 to 40 year olds to reduce gender disparities to be developed and implemented. (Part I High-Level Outcome 4, IO 4.1)

Strategy 1: Conduct literacy programmes prioritising 15 to 40-year olds.

Key activities:

- Encourage the community, social organizations, local authorities and other parties to take the lead in organizing the teaching and learning to eradicate illiteracy;
- Encourage and support the target group to receive education and training to eradicate illiteracy by gender, ethnicity, economic status and geographical location equally;
- Develop an action plan for the eradication of illiteracy among 15-40 year olds.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Monitoring of NFE literacy programmes is conducted to assess the long-term impact on functional literacy of the youths. (Part I High-Level Outcome 4, IO 4.2)

Strategy 1: Develop assessment mechanisms for literacy and upgrading education programmes

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop a database system and monitoring tools to assess the rate of non-formal and informal graduates by gender, sex, economic status and geographical location;
- Collect enrollment statistics and graduates each year using the tools and mechanisms for monitoring, monitoring and evaluation of non-formal education;
- Develop and use tools and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure and evaluate the literacy rate and the completion rate of primary education;
- Build the capacity of NFE personnel to use monitoring tools.

Intermediate Outcome 3: DNFE structures have contributed to increased adult literacy rates and are well established at village and district level (DNFEC and CLC) (Part I High-Level Outcome 4, IO 4.3)

Strategy 1: Improve the quality of NFE centers and CLC

Key activities:

- Restructure the non-formal education development center into a non-formal education institution;
- Improve the administration and service regulations of non-formal education centers at all levels so that they are easily accessible to the community and society;
- Strengthen the administration and management of non-formal education personnel.

Strategy 2: Develop a quality non-formal education center to become a learning center for all.

Key activities

- Develop policies, regulations and standards for transforming non-formal education centers into learning centers;
- Create and improve non-formal educational institutions as a source of services and provide learning information to the community and society;
- Develop regulations and mechanisms on teaching-learning management, eradicate illiteracy, and improve education through the Community Learning Center of Non-Formal Education;
- Develop regulations and mechanisms for establishing centers as a source of effective vocational training and skills for the labor market;
- Create facilities and equipment for teaching and learning, vocational training, and improve the environment of non-formal education centers.

2.3.3. The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering the world of work, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. An analysis of the labour force conducted in 2017 shows that large numbers of people are employed in the informal sector. Thus, basic vocational training is still required in addition to C1 and C2 levels of existing TVET program provision.

Intermediate Outcome 1: National Qualification Framework includes linkage of non-formal and TVET qualifications and is aligned with the ASEAN QF. Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.9)

Strategy 1: Develop mechanisms and regulations for non-formal education within the National Education Framework.

Key activities:

- Create and develop non-formal vocational education curricula in the equivalent, transfer of vocational skills and competencies in order to integrate the national education qualification framework;
- Develop regulations to integrate non-formal education in line with the National Education Framework;
- Develop basic vocational quality assurance in collaboration with the Education Quality Assurance Center and other stakeholders;
- Strengthen the professional skills of basic vocational trainers and vocational skills in various fields in order to be able to provide training in accordance with the national education qualification standards;

Strategy 2: Review and update the National Qualification Framework as necessary to ensure alignment with ASEAN Qualifications Framework

Key activities:

- Develop non-formal and informal education vocational skill standards in line with National Qualification Frameworks relevant to Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) which integrate with ASEAN Qualification Reference Frameworks;
- Develop an action plan on the promotion of non-formal education vocational skill training so that employment can aligns with IR 4.0 labour market for non-formal target groups;
- Develop skilled labour force using the Recognize, Validate and Accredite framework and based on strengthening national social and economic growth and regional integration.

Strategy 3: Create projects and develop models for basic vocational promotion.

Key activities

- Develop projects and develop basic vocational promotion models related to rural development in order to improve the quality of life of people of all ethnic groups;
- Develop and promote vocational training to diversify the professional field and have a variety of training methods that can be adjusted according to the needs of the target group and the conditions of society;
- Provide equipment for basic vocational training and advanced vocational skills training.

2.3.4. Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance (Part I, High-Level Outcome 6)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthened MoES operational committees (TAC and PBC) at central, and sub-national levels use evidence from ASCEPs. Learning outcomes assessments and integrated EMIS to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies. (Part I High-Level Outcome 6, IO 6.3)

Strategy 1: Develop an efficient and effective non-formal education statistical information system.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Conduct a survey of the target group of students who have dropped out of general education (to be used as baseline data);
- Develop an action plan for the development of modern data collection methods and the calculation of literacy rates for adolescents and adults in illiteracy eradication and primary education equivalent programmes;

- Develop an online non-formal education statistics management system to integrate with the Ministry of Education and Sports database in coordination with the Education and Sports Statistics Center.

Strategy 2: Build the capacity of NFE personnel to use statistical data as a basis for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategies.

Key activities:

- Strengthen the capacity of personnel responsible for inspection, monitoring and evaluation for non-formal education activities at the central and local levels;
- Strengthen personnel in the use of ICT tools to collect and manage statistical information for non-formal education.

Strategy 3: Integrate NFE monitoring systems into the annual EMIS reporting systems

Key activities:

- Establish and develop a data collection system using ICT to be able to integrate with the monitoring and evaluation system to evaluate the results of the implementation of non-formal education activities in line with the annual electronic information reporting system (EMIS);
- Develop a plan to integrate the database system with the annual Electronic Statistical Information Reporting System (EMIS);
- Strengthen the personnel responsible for statistical work on non-formal education in data collection, data entry, use and maintenance of the database system;
- Evaluate the results of monitoring and evaluation of the use of the database system in connection with the system of the Statistics Center of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

VI. TEACHER EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provides more details of achievements. Key achievements include:

Outstanding achievements in the teacher education sub sector can be seen in the improvement and upgrading of the quality of educators in teacher education institutions. Teachers are qualified according to the set standards, have received professional training, have received academic titles, and have been supported in the continuous development of the teaching profession. Many teacher education institutions have been certified as development centers for certain subject in the teacher education curriculum. Improving the quality of the continuous teacher professional development system focuses on building the capacity of teachers and staff in teacher education institutions to train professional teachers at all levels, in all subjects and at all levels.

The achievements can be seen in the summarized tables 19 and 20 below:

Table 19: Comparison of indicators of teacher education from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Pre-school teacher trainees	1,803	1,601	624	527	441
Primary education teacher trainees	1,607	552	336	429	388
Secondary education teacher trainees	1,960	1,904	1,861	1,707	575
Physical education teacher trainees	218	236	166	131	156
Art teacher trainees	154	137	172	151	154

Source: MOES DTE

Table 20: Graduates from Teacher Education Institutions from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
ECE graduates	1,746	1,445	1,245	439	660
Primary teacher graduates	1,704	622	480	117	501
Secondary teacher graduates	3,378	3,515	2,247	1,294	767
Physical teacher graduates	270	115	196	130	139
Art teacher graduates	164	154	159	155	133

Source: MOES DTE

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provides more details of challenges. Key challenges include:

There is a learning crisis, particularly at primary level for literacy and numeracy and that such poor learning performance has flow-on effects at higher levels of learning. Key causes identified included: poor teacher ethics and responsibilities; lack of subject and pedagogical knowledge, including multi-grade teaching skills, on the part of teachers and principals; misunderstanding about implementation of the progressive promotion policy; weak teacher monitoring system; inadequate classroom assessment; poor teacher performance assessment and management; lack of alignment between pre-service curricula and school curricula; poor quality of TTC practicum experiences; lack of systematic approach to in-service training; lack of appropriate pedagogical support due to budget limitations; lack of professional development of pedagogical advisors (PAs); and lack of cluster/school-based professional development support. Other challenges include aligning the teacher training plan with teacher recruitment quota to supply teachers for some subjects that lack teachers; developing a school-based in-service teacher training system; developing a teacher and school career network to collaborate in the development of teaching and learning quality through exchanges; developing a quality assurance system and training of TTC staff in its implementation; and further capacity building for TTC staff. Although teacher standards were approved in 2015, they do not meet the ASEAN requirements and further revision is required.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

For 2021-25, disadvantaged districts are those included in the official MoES list of 40 districts.

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) Prioritise primary education to improve content knowledge and pedagogical skills of primary teachers. This will require a significant budget from Government of Laos (GoL) and development partners. Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) will become and serve as professional development centres for both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Appropriate teaching standards will be systematically implemented and used as basis for primary teacher performance evaluation.
- 2) Expansion of lower secondary must be more affordable and realistic. Teachers will need to be trained to become experts of more than one subject. To facilitate this, TTCs will be upgraded to serve this expanded role of producing multi-subject lower secondary teachers.
- 3) Continue to implement the MoES Teachers and Personnel Development Strategy Plan in order to realign and reinforce the skills and competencies of MoES staff to more effectively meet the current and foreseen needs of the system (doing more with the same through improved HR systems). The Department of Teacher Education (DTE) plays an instrumental role in streamlining and coordinating the work among DTE, DGE, RIES and TTCs and relevant partners for the following areas:
 - Development of an efficient teacher education curriculum across the various programs and in-service teacher training with focus on enhancement of school and cluster-based training;
 - Provision of support to multi-grade teachers;
 - Revision of secondary in-service teacher training programme based on teacher Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) and use teacher assessment outcomes.

Furthermore, Early Childhood Education (ECE), primary and secondary teaching standards will be reviewed and/or developed in accordance with the current situation to serve as a basic document for assessing teaching performance.

- 4) To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities in particular in the 40 most disadvantaged districts. The core function of teacher education is to strengthen the content and pedagogical knowledge and other skills. Monitoring of supply and demand of teachers at all levels is essential to ensure teachers are appropriately and efficiently deployed.
- 5) Teacher training institutions are responsible for providing technical services, research, analysis and preparation of teachers with basic skills and abilities, especially STEM skills and life skill.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table), Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula for all levels and streams are reviewed and revised.
- 2) All TTCs introducing a new teacher training curriculum.
- 3) Percentage of teachers who received in-service training: 20% at each level.
- 4) Teaching standards are approved for implementation at all levels.
- 5) At least 70% of teacher educators in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), including in natural science, are assessed and approved to be at standard level.
- 6) 3 TTCs to be upgraded to be Teacher Development Institutes.

2.3. Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a stand-alone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level

outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

The teacher education sub-sector plan aims to achieve three main high-level outcomes outlined in Part I. The correspondent intermediate outcomes are strategically categorized into two priority areas as follows:

- 1) Strengthening relevant capacities to ensure the quality of teaching force at all levels; and
- 2) Enhancing policies, legal infrastructure and standards for quality teacher development programmes.

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from ECE to upper secondary including NFE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills but also other 21st Century skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I, High-Level Outcome 1)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. As outlined above, learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy are at crisis point with poor performance at primary level flowing through to impact negatively at higher levels.

Strategic Area I: Strengthening Teaching Quality

Intermediate Outcome 1: Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M6 (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.2)

Strategy 1: A coordination plan for the national in-service teacher training for implementation of the new curriculum is developed and implemented

Key activities:

- Provide training on new textbooks aligned with the new curricula for general education teachers;
- Provide training on Lao language teaching for teachers of ethnolinguistic children;
- Provide training on inclusive education including gender equality for teacher of all streams;
- Provide training on learning outcomes assessment for teachers of all streams.

Strategy 2: Improved support is provided for multi-grade teachers to enhance teaching and learning in multi-grade classes at primary education level

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key activities:

- Conduct training on multi-grade teaching for primary teachers;
- Monitor and evaluate multi-grade teaching in primary schools.
- Review legislation related to multi-grade teaching

2.3.2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the professional standards. These standards are used to regularly assess their performance and inform their professional development with regular performance assessment. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 2)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale. TTCs will be supported to become professional development centres for all pre-service and in-service training of teachers and for PA training, using a range of modalities, including a stronger focus on supporting the continuous professional development of teachers and principals at school and local level.

Strategic Area I: Improving Teaching Quality

Intermediate Outcome 1: Pre-primary, primary and secondary pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula are enhanced and implemented to align with the new school curricula and teaching standards. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.2)

Strategy 1: Review and revise pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula

Key Activities:

- Improve the coordination mechanism from the central to the local level involved for in-service teacher training
- Review the assessment results of teacher's performance and utilize them in developing the in-service training curricula;
- Revise pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula to be aligned with new pre-primary, primary and secondary curricula;
- Develop the appropriate guidelines for implementation of the new curricula and provide training for staff and officials with responsibility for the curricula.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Strengthened in-service teacher pedagogical support system to be more systematic, effective and affordable (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.1 and 2.4)

Strategy 1: Review and revise the structure of pedagogical support from clusters and DESBs, both internal and external PAs.

Key Activities:

- Establish an affordable and sustainable model to provide pedagogical advisory support to teachers in collaboration with TTCs, PTDC, DESB, school clusters, schools and school principals with definitions of roles to be played by each stakeholders/institution;
- Strengthen the structural support for the continuous professional development of PAs;
- Strengthen school/cluster-based pedagogical advisory support system and capacity.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Pre-primary, primary and secondary pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes are enhanced and implemented across the country. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.1 and 2.2)

Strategy 1: Review and revise in-service teacher training programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers using the new training curricula

Key Activities:

- Revisit and revise short-term in-service teacher training programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers to ensure they are aligned with the new curricula;
- Pilot the short-term in-service teacher training programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary education teachers;
- Finalize the in-service teacher training programmes and conduct training nationwide.

Strategy 2: Review and revise the pre-service teacher education programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers using the new curricula

Key Activities:

- Revise pre-service teacher education programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers to ensure they are aligned with the new school curricula;
- Pilot the pre-service teacher education programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary education teachers;
- Finalize the pre-service teacher education programmes and conduct training nationwide.

Strategy 3: Strengthen capacity of Provincial Teacher Development Centres (PTDCs) to provide in-service training for teachers

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key Activities:

- Improve and revise the mandate of Provincial Teacher Development Centres;
- Provide relevant training to staff of Provincial Teacher Development Centres to enhance their technical capacity;
- Improve teacher training database.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) are upgraded to professional development centres (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.4)

Strategy 1: Develop and regularly use teaching standards in performance assessment for teacher educators in TEIs

Key activities:

- Develop performance assessment tools for teacher educators that are linked with TEIs professional standards for educators;
- Strictly enforce the use of these assessment tools in assessing teacher educators;
- Improve and ensure a progressive teaching career development system for TEIs educators.

Strategy 2: Design and implement systematic training programme for teacher educators

Key Activities:

- Design the training programme for teacher educators based on results from performance assessment;
- Conduct training to enhance capacity of teacher educators.

Strategy 3: Strengthen linkages between TTCs and university Faculties of Education, where both exist in the same provincial capital form Teacher Development Institutes and to improve synergy

Key Activities:

- Develop a proposal on how to form Teacher Development Institutes in a cost-effective and efficient manner, including need for a pilot in one or two provinces;
- Draft legislation and regulatory framework to support establishment of Teacher Development Institutes.

Strategic Area II: Policies, Legal Systems and Standards for Quality Teacher Development

Intermediate Outcome 5: Teaching standards for ECE, primary and secondary teachers are developed, approved and implemented. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

Strategy 1: Develop the institutional and technical capacities to implement and monitor teaching standards, taking into account the perceived over-emphasis on lesson planning, and a focus on student learning outcomes

Key Activities:

- Review existing practices and develop/review teaching standards for ECE, primary and secondary teachers;
- Develop the appropriate guidelines for implementation;

- Provide training for staff with responsibility for development, implementation and monitoring of teaching standards;
- Improve and implement legislation on the issuance of teaching certificates and the issuance of teaching licenses.

Intermediate Outcome 6: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system with updated performance assessment tools for ECE, primary and secondary teachers linked to the teaching standards. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.3)

Strategy 1: Develop and endorse assessment tools for ECE, primary and secondary teachers' performance, with a focus on student learning outcomes

Key Activities:

- Draft the tools to assess teacher's performance;
- Pilot the utilization of the tools to assess teacher's performance;
- Finalize and approve the tools.

Strategy 2: Systematically conduct teacher's performance assessment using the newly developed tools. Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key Activities:

- Conduct training on the use of tools to assess teacher's performance;
- Utilize the tools to assess teacher's performance;
- Analyse assessment results of teacher's performance and utilize them in developing in-service training programmes.

Intermediate Outcome 7: Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) serving as professional development centres for all pre-service, in-service (ECE, primary and secondary), and Pedagogical Adviser (PA) training. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.4)

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive teacher education and professional development³² policy to improve the recruitment, management, deployment, training, remuneration, continuous professional development and working conditions of teachers

Key activities:

- Conduct a mapping and situation analysis of relevant legislative frameworks, policies and strategies concerning the teaching force;
- Develop a comprehensive teacher policy based on the results of the mapping and situation analysis and national consultations using a participatory approach;
- Process policy approval and adoption;
- Conduct organizational capacity development for implementing the approved national teacher policy.

Strategy 2: Strengthen TTCs to be professional development centre and the centre of excellence in certain subject.

Key Activities:

- Develop frameworks, policies and strategies related to teaching practice;
- Develop a strategic plan for teacher training institutions to become centers for teacher professional development;
- Conduct evaluations within teacher education institutions using frameworks, policies, and strategies related to teacher education;
- Develop and approve legislation necessary to further enhance the implementation of the role of teacher education institutions;

³² This includes TTCs, PTDCs, PESS, DESBs and PAs.

- Improve tools to assess teacher education institutions as centers of excellence in certain subjects;
- Improve the management system of teacher education institutions and teacher training in the newly established national teacher education institution.

Strategy 3: Train TTC staff and provide necessary resources (human, technical, and financial) to carry out their expanded roles as professional development centres

Key Activities:

- Conduct relevant training for TTC staff;
- Provide the resources (human, technical and financial) needed;
- Conduct evaluation of TTCs to assess their performance as professional development centres.

Strategy 4: Strengthen capacity of TTC demonstration schools to provide opportunities of teaching practicum and lesson observation inside classroom for TTC students, TTC lecturers, trainer and PA

Key activities

- Construct classroom of demonstration schools;
- Provide facilities, equipment and teaching learning material;
- Development plan of demonstration school including human and financial resources allocation;
- Provide capacity development of teachers and principal in demonstration school;

Intermediate Outcome 8: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning in their schools. (Part I High-Level Outcome 2, IO 2.5)

IFEAD will be responsible for building capacity of school principals to implement the seven core tasks of school leadership. However, the Department of Teacher Education and TTCs will take the lead in training school principals to provide teaching quality assurance within schools and academic leadership. Strategic activities and targets to be achieved for the Department of Teacher Education to fulfil the above-mentioned intermediate outcome are as follows:

Strategy 1: Develop and implement academic leadership skills of principals to support them in performing their required roles and responsibilities

Key Activities:

- Develop academic leadership standards for school principals and the appropriate guidelines to support its implementation;
- Develop a principal's handbook/guide to assist them in performing teaching quality assurance within schools;
- Conduct capacity development sessions for all principals on instructional leadership and academic management;
- Conduct training for PESS and DESB staff in assessing principal's performance on teaching quality assurance in the school.

2.3.3. The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering the world of work, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status. (Part I, High Level Outcome 5)

➤ **Rationale**

See Part I for a detailed rationale, Promotion of natural sciences subject at higher education and teacher education sub-sectors is an important factor for quality human resources outputs. Increasing number and strengthening the quality of natural science teachers will reinforce and align the objectives of 9th NSEDP.

Strategic Area I: Improving Teaching Quality

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher graduates at TTCs leading to improved natural science teaching and learning at secondary level. (Part I Outcome 5, IO 5.2 and 5.3)

Strategy 1: Strengthen the implementation of natural sciences curriculum in pre-service teacher education

Key Activities:

- Review and analyse the implementation of natural sciences curriculum and use the results in revising the natural science curriculum programmes offerings;
- Undertake a mapping study to project teacher's supply and demand in private and public formal school system;
- Develop and improve content of subjects in pre-service teacher training curriculum by promoting natural sciences subject.

Strategy 2: Expand and prioritize admission of teacher trainees for training at TEIs specializing in natural sciences subject, both males and females, covering both public and private

Key Activities:

- Create a policy that sets and prioritizes the target number of teacher trainees of natural sciences at TTCs and Faculty of Education;
- Revisit and improve admission criteria for natural sciences programs;
- Expand natural sciences programme and STEM related topics of training.

Strategy 3: Prioritize budget allocation for natural sciences program facilities and provision of equipment

Key Activities:

- Coordinate with development partners on budget allocation to improve natural sciences facilities and equipment;
- Identify and procure the relevant facilities, teaching and learning materials needed;
- Prioritize the crucial facilities, teaching and learning materials needed and secure funding necessary from other sources.

Strategy 4: Launch an advocacy campaign to promote natural sciences and mathematics subjects

Key Activities:

- Collaborate with the Department of General Education and other relevant parties to promote natural science selection in upper secondary education;
- Collaborate with the Department of General Education and other stakeholders to strengthen teachers in the provision of STEM Education in the general education curriculum.

Strategy 5: Strengthening TTC and Faculty of education in order to upgrade to Teacher Education Institution

Key Activities:

- Upgrade TTC to be teacher education institute;
- Considering merging TTCs with Faculty of Education in Champassak University, Souphanouvong University and Savannakhet University.

VII. TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Important Note: The Department of TVET, in consultation with development partners has developed a comprehensive TVET development plan for the period 2021-25. The sub-sector plan in ESSDP is a summary of this more comprehensive plan. Readers are advised to contact DTVET to obtain a copy of the more detailed plan.

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Key achievements include:

The implementation of education development plan in general and the technical vocational education and training in specific is the implementation of the 10th Party Resolution as well as the 8th 5 years of National Socio-Economic Development Plan of the government and strategic plan for poverty reduction in order to elevate the country from the least developed countries status by the year 2020 and orient towards industrialisation and modernisation step by step.

The development of TVET in the Lao PDR has many supporting factors such as: the country is peaceful, the economic growth is continuously increased with the rate of more than 6%, the big scale industry development projects such as the electricity power, mining, highspeed railways, highway, special economic development zones and others are well implemented and moving forwards. The promotion of small and medium sized enterprises has been increased, the development of human resources, the use and the development of technology have been broadly undertaken and infrastructure has been developed and expanded continuously in both quantity and quality. The essential factor is that the Party and the government have the right policy to meet the need and strength of the local areas and always give the importance to the TVET.

Currently approximately 4% of basic education (graduates from primary and lower secondary education) enrol in TVET courses of the MOES at the levels 1,2,3 (C1, C2, C3) levels and of these, about 30% are female. In line with the GoL Development Plan the sub-sector has been expanding the service during the life of the ESDP 2016 – 2020 through establishment of vocational training centres in the largest districts. It is now conducting a survey to identify the need for vocational centres in smaller and more remote districts to increase access for those from disadvantaged groups. It is envisaged that participation in TVET including in public, private and other line ministries will rise to approximately 60% (for TVET under TVED is 20%) of upper secondary education graduates by 2020 with an expected increase in the current 43% who are female. The TVET schools and colleges offers various training courses with different certification levels to attract young people from rural and remote areas to be able to learn and can get jobs in their districts or communities or to improve their knowledge and skills to support their families. To encourage participation from those in rural and remote areas the TVET department has offered courses in animal husbandry, crop production and other related subjects in addition to the C1, C2 and C3 courses that have been implemented.

To expand access to TVET, stipend and voucher programs have been introduced and implemented through several projects. In addition, provision of dormitories is another factor contributing to increased enrolment, particularly female students from rural and ethnic communities. TVET education facilities have been upgraded and more equipment is provided through projects. With this support, TVET enrolment has significantly increased from 15,222 students in the school year 2015-16 to 18,335 students in school year 2017-18, but it has decreased slightly to 15,707 students in school year 2019-20 which have several causes of factors.

Table 21: Comparison of indicators of TVET from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total number of staff and teachers	2,145	2,191	2,158	2,178	2,179
Intake of new trainees					
Bachelor' Degree continuous ³³		64	59	86	124
Higher Diploma including continuous program (12+3 and 12+2+1,5)		4,771	6,156	5,436	5,510
Diploma (12+2)	6,396	8,406	8,976	7,331	6,446
Diploma (9+3)	8,463	1,783	1,817	1,735	1,781
Certificate 3 (or 9+2)			622	285	130
Certificate 2			206	279	415
Certificate 1	343	457	499	634	1,390
Short courses	20	138	20	46	110
Total enrolments	15,222	15,619	18,355	15,828	15,707

Source: TVED/MOES (only TVET under MOES)

Table 22: Graduates from TVET from 2016-2020

Indicator	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
	Total	Fem,	Total	Fem,	Total	Fem,	Total	Fem,	Total	Fem,
Bachelor's Degree³⁴	212	22	0	0	64	15	60	23	N/a	N/a
Higher Diploma	4,901	2,128	5,200	2,345	6,856	2,899	6,698	3,204	N/a	N/a
Diploma (12+2)	5,870	2,589	6,723	3,001	6,375	2,531	6,723	2,623	N/a	N/a
Diploma (9+3)	2,068	812	1,139	434	853	253	1028	311	N/a	N/a
Certificate C1, C2, C3	184	59	851	390	1318	700	912	391	N/a	N/a
Short courses	32	28	30	22	0	0	204	134	N/a	N/a
Total	13,267	5,638	13,943	6,192	15,466	6,398	15,625	6,686	N/a	N/a

Source: TVED/MOES (only TVET under MOES)

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. Key challenges include:

The development of TVET internally and externally is still facing many difficulties and challenges such as: the quality of TVET graduates do not fully response to the need of employers, TVET teachers are not fully trained to deliver the technical content of the new courses and understand how to use the new equipment and professional resources. In addition, the rapid change of technology and of economic structure of the country and the region will have an impact on the implementation of TVET Development Plan. The TVET department will need to pro-actively manage a rolling program of training and upgrading to ensure that the quality of teaching is in line with national, regional and where possible, international standards, supported by the international partners.

Another key, related, challenge is to effectively analysed and synthesised the employability of graduates as well as employer satisfaction and use the results as a basis for policy formulations. Therefore, there is a need to develop guidelines for TVET institutions on how to conduct effective tracer studies and use the results as the basis for considering the policy formulation. However, it is often a challenge to find suitable work placements for students to gain practical experience as part of their studies. Therefore, TVET institutions should maintain a strong network with local employers to support students' on-the-job training.

³⁴Only TVET teachers at VEDI

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) To provide enhanced post-basic education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSEDP.
 - To develop a TVET system to create labour force to be equipped with good quality, moral and fair value, patriotism, honest, good discipline, good health and good behaviour, love of lifelong learning, national culture and traditions, advanced knowledge with scientific perspectives to become a quality driving force in line with labour market demand as well as demand for the country's national economic growth and be ready to cooperate and compete with the countries in the region.
 - To develop and improve TVET curricula to be aligned to the need of the country's socio-economic development and regional and international integration; with focus on high demand sectors, namely: construction, machinery repair, tourism and hospitality, electricity, furniture, automobile and agriculture. Comprehensive sexuality education should also be included.
- 2) To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources.
 - To increase student enrolment and adjust entrant's quota in TVET programmes with a special focus on female and disadvantaged groups.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) Number of students graduating from programs closely linked to agriculture, industry and services is at least 80,000 during the period of 5 years provided by 25 strengthened schools and centers with increased positive perception from employers
- 2) number of curricula prepared, improved is at least 25 curricula and the minimum number of teachers developed is 1,500 people.
- 3) Quality of TVET is strengthened with the assessment of at least 15 TVET institutions, 150 partnerships with companies, 10 management and financing regulations under TVET Law, at least 5 TVET schools improved income generations and financing

2.3. Overall High-Level Outcomes.

The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering the world of work, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5)

➤ Rationale

See Part I for a detailed rationale. The TVET development plan 2021-2025 must be based on the results of the past development plan, the expected targets for 2021-2025 following the priority of the labor market, the present capacity and context of the TVET institutions, the present and planned financial and technical support.

At the local level, the school advisory committee composed of representatives of the business units can play a decisive role in supporting the preparation and monitoring of the school development plans in coherence with TVET national Development Plan.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased number of graduates from agriculture, industry and service programs with improved learning outcomes from suitable TVET institutions capacities. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5, IO5.3)

Strategy 1: Improve the TVET access.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key activities:

- Strengthen the facilities and environment of existing TVET institutions/training centers based on the target groups and requirements of labor market;
- Upgrade technical-vocational schools to the status of Technical-Vocational College;
- Establish new technical-vocational schools or branches of existing TVET institutions in provinces, districts and areas that have potential.

Strategy 2: Improve the relevance of the TVET provisions, in consultation with the private sector

Key activities:

- Identify needs of skills and TVET provision;
- Improve the relevance between the expected career and needed jobs;
- Consolidate and expand Dual Cooperative Training;
- Consolidate and expand Competency Based Training;
- Include the vocational education disciplines in general secondary education.

Intermediate outcome 2: Improved quality of teaching at all levels (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.5)

Strategy 1: Improve the quality of the TVET provision

Key activities:

- Support the implementation of NQF;
- Improve, develop and endorse occupational standards;
- Review content and learning modalities of various curricula;
- Implement curricula at different levels, using various learning modalities and updated content;
- Support vocational skills competitions;
- Implement quality assurance system in TVET institution.

Strategy 2: Develop TVET teachers

Key activities:

- Implement the standards of TVET teachers;
- Implement, monitor and evaluate the pre-service teachers training;
- Implement, monitor and evaluate the in-service teachers' professional development;
- Strengthen Vocational Education Development Institute (VEDI).

Intermediate outcome 3: Improved quality of TVET management through new regulations, increased monitoring and partnership (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.7)

Strategy 1: Promote the cooperation of TVET at national and local levels with the public, private and international organizations

Key activities:

- Support the cooperation between TVET institutions and companies at the local level (PPP); for creation of more job opportunities;
- Develop cooperation activities with international education institutions at international level;
- Strengthen National Training Council (NTC) and Trade Working Groups (TWG);
- Develop entrepreneurship concept.

Strategy 2: Strengthen TVET management

Key activities:

- Improve TVET management system;
- Improve TVET management tools.

Strategy 3: Develop financing capacities of TVET

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Strengthen TVET financing policy;
- Support the TVET development fund implementation;
- Develop income generations activities in TVET schools.

VIII. HIGHER EDUCATION SUB SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Key achievements include: Investing in the infrastructure of the four public universities including a policy to promote public and private providers due to high demand. At the same time, attention is being paid to improving the quality of teaching and learning in both public and private institutions, particularly in STEM-related courses.

In addition to technical skills and knowledge, students also need the 'soft' or transferable skills which lead to increased employability. These include, for example: problem solving ability, creativity, good interpersonal skills and reliability. A new complimentary curriculum is being developed to enable universities to teach such skills. It is planned to be delivered in 2019. Many government staff and students studying abroad receiving support from the government, development partners and international organizations. These human resources are being upgraded with the knowledge, ability and professional skills to bring about the socio-economic development of the nation from time to time. Ongoing support to these students remains one of the human resource development priorities for the sector. Alongside this there is still a need for students to gain meaningful work experience as part of their studies. The gradual introduction of program level quality assurance systems, aligned to ASEAN standards, will have a fundamental and positive impact on the quality of provision provided that it is accompanied by a transparent accreditation structure.

Table 23: Comparison of indicators of higher education (four public universities) from 2016-2020

Indicators	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
NUOL total enrolments	29,138	20,542	22,310	23,144	23,481
Natural sciences and technology programs	6,625	6,324	6,914	7,269	6,508
Other programs	22,513	14,218	15,396	15,875	16,868
Champassak University	3,952	4,489	4,694	4,787	5,579
Natural sciences and technology programs	1,496	1,078	1,275	1,285	936
Other programs	2,456	3,411	3,419	3,502	4,646
Souphanouvong University	2,949	4,639	5,565	5,839	3,128
Natural sciences and technology programs	868	942	970	998	1188
Other programs	2,081	3,697	4,595	4,841	1,856
Savannakhet University	3,951	3,937	3,893	3,612	3,956
Natural sciences and technology programs	897	873	939	1,052	1232
Other programs	3,054	3,064	2,954	2,560	2,724
Total - All University	39,990	33,607	36,462	37,382	36,144
Natural sciences and technology programs	9,886	9,217	10,098	10,604	9,864
Other programs	30,104	24,390	26,364	26,778	26,280

Source: MoES EMIS

In respect to graduate numbers.

Table 24: Comparison of indicators of graduates from higher education (four public universities) from 2016-2020

Indicators	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
NUOL total enrolments	6,134	6,495	6,573	6,273	5,871
Natural sciences and technology programs	1,656	1,581	1,729	1,817	1,627
Other programs	4,478	4,914	4,844	4,456	4,244
Champassak University	891	1,262	1,490	1,490	1,394
Natural sciences and technology programs	374	270	319	321	234
Other programs	517	992	1,171	1,169	1,160
Souphanouvong University	679	960	920	920	782
Natural sciences and technology programs	217	236	243	250	297
Other programs	462	724	677	670	485
Savannakhet University	829	1,076	992	972	989
Natural sciences and technology programs	224	218	235	263	308
Other programs	605	858	757	709	681
Total - All University	8,533	9,793	9,975	9,655	9,036
Natural sciences and technology programs	2,472	2,304	2,525	2,651	2,466
Other programs	6,061	7,489	7,450	7,004	6,570

Source: MoES EMIS

Apart from the number of students studying in the domestic universities, there are lot of students studying abroad. See annex 7.

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. High quality STEM graduates require improved foundation skills at least in the lower and upper secondary schools, skilled teachers and appropriate learning resources. The quality, skills and knowledge of HE staff is also a key challenge. Development of Quality Assurance systems at program and institutional level is challenging. However, it is an essential element for the sub-sector to become a competitive member of the ASEAN regional network of Universities and offer opportunities for student mobility.

In addition, the student affairs department has some issues that need to be addressed, such as the management of scholarships for staff-students to study abroad has not been centralized, the development of human resources abroad of some specialized fields is not yet in line with the national socio-economic development plan.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy Objectives

- 1) To enhanced higher education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSEDP.
- 2) To promote and develop technology related programmes, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) study programs for university students, especially those undertaking natural sciences program so that the number of natural sciences students increases;
- 3) To strengthen Centres of Excellence in both public and private universities;

- 4) To conduct regular tracer studies to identify employability of graduates;
- 5) To strengthen the quality of lecturers, especially lecturers in natural sciences programs;
- 6) To develop the university scholarship budget allocation formula; and develop a framework to prioritize scholarships to students for further studies in foreign countries in line with the country's socio-economic development.
- 7) To provide science research, technology development and innovation for the nation.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) The number of STEM graduates (Bachelors or Higher) from public Universities reaches 4,000 by 2025;
- 2) The GPI for the number of graduates (Bachelors or Higher) from public Universities reaches at least 0.90 by 2025;
- 3) A feasibility study to establish an Institute of Technology is conducted;
- 4) University natural sciences students increased 50 percent compared to other students and teaching and learning quality improved;
- 5) Four Centres of Excellence are appraised;
- 6) A graduate employment tracing team in each faculty is established;
- 7) Internal quality assessment conducted once a year assessment every 5 years at all 4 public universities;
- 8) A pilot of university autonomy in financial management is conducted at NUOL;
- 9) Academic titles of higher education institutions teachers are conferred based on quality and standards stipulated in the Decree on Teacher Academic Titles no. 03.

2.3. High-Level Outcomes.

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector.

2.3.1 The quality and number of university graduates entering the world of work, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 5)

➤ Rationale

A detailed rationale is in Part I. Alongside improvement in lecturer quality, new, more stringent student selection criteria have been approved. Strengthening the selection criteria for new entrants will produce graduates with skills that more closely meet the needs of the developing economy.

Both internal and external Quality Assurance standards at institutional level have been approved. All Universities are required to complete an annual self-assessment report and return it to the quality assurance office of ESQAC and Department of Higher Education.

Intermediate Outcome 1: The Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme in NUOL is strengthened alongside expanded enrolment and graduates. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10)

Strategy 1: NUOL strengthens AI programme and capacity strengthening within its medium-term plan

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this strategy.

Key activities:

- Organise consultation meetings on the establishment of AI Committee at NUOL level;
- Organise competition event on AI in concerned departments and participate in AI contest at regional and international levels;
- Disseminate AI achievements and protect intellectual assets of students;
- Establish an AI center and engage the entrepreneurship for innovation;
- Improve ICT infrastructure and related facilities;
- Promote and manage intellectual property.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Improved natural sciences and technology facilities and teaching and learning materials at universities. Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10)

Strategy 1: Undertake a feasibility study to establish a separate Institute of Technology

Key activities:

- Feasibility study to establish an Institute of Technology through coordination with a development partner;
- Draft legislation and regulatory framework for a new Institute of Technology;
- Develop a costed implementation plan to establish the Institute of Technology.

Strategy 2: Improve infrastructure and facilities at Faculty of Engineering of NUOL

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Conduct surveys to identify required upgrades to infrastructure, facilities, equipment and staff upgrading;
- Develop a plan to improve the infrastructure and upgrade the technical staff of teachers within the Faculty of Engineering;
- Implement the plan to improve the infrastructure and upgrade the technical staff of teachers within the Faculty of Engineering;
- Provide science and technology laboratory equipment.

Strategy 3: Review and analysis of natural sciences provision at upper secondary level, with recommendations for increasing student participation in natural sciences, particularly among females

Key activities:

- Set up a Needs Assessment Team at MoES level to assess the real requirement of facilities and teaching manuals for natural sciences;
- Organise a national selection test to select students for natural sciences with a high proportion of female based on gender equality policy;
- Allocate government budget and internal and external budget support to be sufficient in accordance with real need assessment.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Increased number of natural sciences and technology graduates at University within the country and abroad, with improved learning outcomes. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10)

Strategy 1: Higher Education funding formula includes additional funds for natural sciences students

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop Higher Education funding formula for natural sciences student manuals;
- Develop rules and regulations for natural sciences student selection at national level.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Centres of excellence are strengthened in all public universities and student service centre, to ensure alignment with the needs of 9th NESDP. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10 & 5.11)

Strategy 1: Conduct an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of existing and potential centres of excellence and their linkage to the 9th NESDP priorities

Key activities:

- Promote the establishment of centres of excellence for four public universities;
- Establish the Student Service Centre;
- Monitor the implementation of centres of excellence to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness as well as their alignment to the country's 9th NESDP;
- Provide equipment and facilities for the Center of Excellence in 4 universities;
- Develop assessment tools and conduct evaluation of four excellence centers;
- Provide training to teachers and students on entrepreneurship in higher education institutions.

Intermediate Outcome 5: Conduct regular, effective tracer studies to identify employability of University graduates and satisfaction of employers. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5. IO 5.11)

Strategy: 1: Post-secondary focal group to issue guidance for universities on how to conduct effective tracer studies and use the results as a basis for future decision making on curriculum and programmes

Key activities:

- Establish a database and tracer study tool for tracing university graduates;
- Promote higher institutions student alumni for experience sharing between former and new students;
- Conduct academic meetings on curriculum development to share experience among stakeholders.

Strategy 2: Conduct annual tracer studies for both in country and abroad graduates, and results reported to MoES Annual Conference and ESWG

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Annual report is prepared and presented to MoES Annual Conference and ESWG;
- Lessons learned from tracking graduates at 4 universities.

Intermediate Outcome 6: Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments, with external assessments conducted every 5 year. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO5.11)

Strategy 1: Quality Assurance Unit in each public universities implement best practice in conducting annual self-assessments

Key activities:

- Set up an internal quality assurance team in NUOL to assist other inexperienced universities in internal and external assessment;
- Department of Higher Education in collaboration with ESQAC to conduct trainings for 3 new universities;
- Develop a database of all streamlined services work for effective and efficient management in higher education institutions;
- Develop and update quality inspection manuals;
- Encourage universities to have quality assurance at the regional level or in collaboration with international organizations.

Strategy 2: Strengthened quality assurance of higher education

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop curriculum quality assurance manuals for higher education institutions;
- Conduct external evaluations of higher education institutions and accreditation;
- Develop basic standards of curriculum in higher education institutions;
- Carry out capacity building for curriculum quality development for higher education institutions;
- Conduct quality assessment of curricula and quality assurance;
- Strengthen internal and external quality assurance, international cooperation

Intermediate Outcome 7: The quality of lecturing staff in Higher Education Institutions is strengthened and supported by regular staff performance assessment, with particular focus on natural sciences and technology subjects. (Part I High-Level Outcome 6, IO 5.11)

Strategy 1: Teaching standards for university level lecturers are developed and implemented

Key activities:

- Develop standards and requirements of university lecturers;
- Upgrading teachers and exchanging technical lessons with foreign universities;
- Provide teacher training for staff, teachers who do not pass the teacher training;
- Develop and update teachers 'manuals on teachers' needs and decrees in accordance with higher education (EPF);
- Improve and develop management mechanisms, good services and modernize the University.

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a performance assessment instrument and approach for university level lecturers

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Develop teaching manuals for university natural sciences lecturer;
- Conduct professional training of natural sciences to lecturers at four public universities;
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of teachers in higher education institutions;
- Develop and improve assessment methods for the survey of teachers and administrators in the field of study;
- Develop a system for monitoring and managing teachers by subject under the structure of Laos University Management System (LUMS).

Intermediate Outcome 8: University level education expands in a more cost-effective way. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.12)

Strategy 1: Develop a proposal for conducting a feasibility study on financial autonomy for public universities

Key activities:

- Implement a pilot of financial autonomy at NUOL;
- Strengthen the capacity of planning and budgeting staff;
- Strengthen the financial system of the university.

Strategy 2: Develop a regulatory framework for mixed-mode (distance and local) education and on-line learning (ASEAN Cyber University) to provide university-level programs

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Conduct an assessment/analysis on mixed-mode and on-line learning potential to provide university-level programs;
- Develop mixed-mode (distance and local) learning programs;
- Pilot mixed mode teaching and learning programs at university level (distance and local);
- Develop and set the rules, standards for distance learning courses as well as the management of the course;
- Establish and develop rules for learning through e-learning courses of higher education institutions;
- Develop e-learning, training and networking systems;
- Develop course archives and course information systems OER / MOOCS.

Intermediate Outcome 9: Legislation for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities are disseminated (flat rate, per student, per natural sciences, disparity-based). (Part I Outcome 5, IO 5.12)

Strategy 1: Development and modelling of a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities (flat rate, per student, per natural sciences, disparity-based)

Key activities:

- Develop a manual on scholarship provision formula for natural sciences;
- Conduct a meeting on scholarship rates between natural sciences and other students;
- Develop a regulation on natural sciences student selection process at national level.

Intermediate Outcome 10: External scholarships are prioritised to subject areas in line with the needs of the 9th NESDP. (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10)

Strategy 1: Weight scholarships allocations in favour of students who enrol in natural sciences and technology-based programs.

Key activities:

- Organize meetings to develop legislation on the management of Lao students and to provide scholarships for Lao students to study abroad (such as the decree on the Management of Scholarships and the decree on sending Lao students Abroad) and foreign students to study in Lao PDR and disseminate such legislation;
- Hold meetings to consider and discuss funding for students to study abroad in the field of science and technology;
- Establish an education fund to support disadvantaged, poor, remote and female students.

Intermediate Outcome 11: Scientific research is promoted (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.10)

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a higher education website promoting scientific research by university lecturers and develop a website to disseminate information on the activities of Lao students to study abroad and foreign students to study in Lao PDR.

Key activities:

- Conduct a capacity building on scientific research management for MoES and higher education institution units;
- Conduct a capacity building for scientific researchers at higher education institutions;
- Establish database of scientific research at higher education institutions;
- Develop a database for the management of scientific research of higher education institutions;
- Develop a database to collect data of Lao students studying abroad and foreign students studying in Lao PDR.
- Using Web site for career guidance;
- Strengthen scientific research through partnerships with both public and private organizations, both domestic and international;

- Develop Local and International Scientific Research Networking Project (LERNET / Inter-REN);
- Develop a center for scientific research and technical services.

Strategy 2: Establish the Lao Citation Index Center (LCI) to meet international standards.

In order to be able to fully implement this strategy, the mother needs the budget as set out in the financial plan in the form of "improving the quality of education" and / or foreign aid budget must focus on the implementation of this strategy.

Key activities

- Establish a committee responsible for the management of the Lao Citation Index (LCI);
- Study the feasibility of establishing a Lao Citation Index (LCI);
- Provide training on journal writing in an internationally accepted format;
- Develop a database to manage Lao journals.

Intermediate Outcome 12: Teacher academic titles at higher education institutions are promoted (Part I High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.11)

Strategy 1: A decree on teacher academic titles management and promotion at higher education institutions

Key activities:

- A decree on teacher academic titles management and promotion at higher education institutions are disseminated;
- Develop a budget allocation plan to support the teacher's work for each academic title.

IX. SPORTS-PHYSICAL EXERCISES SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Sports for All and Physical and Art Education

1.1. Background

Sports For All and Physical and Art education is one of the components identified in Human Resource Development Strategy and NSEDP as the following statement “to promote the Lao population of all sexes and ages to participate in physical exercises, physical fitness, sports activities, annual sports for all games, traditional sports events and sports for all games to celebrate important national and international days”. The aims are to create social happiness and promote the Lao people’s mental and physical strengths, sportsmen spirits and nationalism which contribute to human resource development and raise the country’s role and status as well as enhance solidarity, peace and cooperation with the countries at regional and international levels to serve the country’s two tasks: national defence and construction.

1.2. Challenges

Sports for all has expanded widely, but this expansion has not yet reached the community in remoter areas, the organizational structure in the sports for all is not yet strong; no standards, limited sport personnel, low quality, the use of infrastructure, equipment is not respond to activities of sport for all, limited investment in the development of sports for all at both central and local level and lacks of operating budget for the development of sports for all at local level.

Physical and Art education is quite strong, but not expanded as it should be because of limited budget, though the number of teacher trainees increase, but the teachers in these two subjects could not be recruited as identified in 5 years (2016-2020). In the secondary school the number of new recruitments increased every year, but art and music teachers are not enough.

1.3. Priority for 2021-2025

1.3.1. Objectives

- 1) Encourage people of all genders and ages to participate in physical exercise and promote physical and arts education;
- 2) Improve and develop sports for all, physical and arts education in the country to be strong in quantity and quality;
- 3) Organize annual sports for all and arts competition, both inside and outside the school, traditional sports and celebrate the important national and international days;
- 4) Promote the student games, sports for the disabled people in the country and participate in sports competitions abroad;
- 5) Upgrading executives, technicians, referees, coaches and talented athletes to develop their skills and set standards for athletes to participate in international sports competitions;
- 6) Encourage students to have basic knowledge of national defense and security, counter-narcotics in schools.

1.3.2. Targets:

- 1) Population regardless of gender and age participated in physical exercise on a regular basis to reach 20%;
- 2) Upgrading executives-administrators, referees, coaches at the provincial level to reach 4,410 people in 22 sports and at the international level to reach 50 people in 10 sports;
- 3) Encourage Lao people with disabilities to exercise, play sports and participate in sports and physical education for the disabled in the country and at the regional- international level to reach 5% of the number of people with disabilities throughout the country;
- 4) Develop and improve 8 legislation on sports for all and update 18 sports for all manuals;
- 5) Organizing the teaching and learning of physical education and art education to reach 93% of general education schools throughout the country;

- 6) Organize the teaching-learning of basic martial arts in upper secondary schools and the defense-security education in vocational and higher education in the public schools to reach 93% and the private schools to reach 35% or more.
- 7) Announce and certify 93% of drug-free secondary schools, 96% of primary schools, 90% of teacher training colleges and 5% of vocational schools.
- 8) Percentage of students participated in sports activities:
 - 75% of primary school students;
 - 85% of secondary school students;
 - 58% of students in vocational and higher education.
- 9) Organize the 7th National student games in 2022 and the 8th games in 2025;
- 10) Participate in regional and international student games and sports for the disabled:
 - Participates in the annual ASEAN Games and hosts the 16th ASEAN Secondary student Games in 2024;
 - Participate in ASEAN Para Game to achieve 10 sports; At the Asian level 6 times and at the (IPC) Paralympic Games level;

1.3.3. High Level Outcomes

Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international stages makes pride to all Lao people.

➤ Rationale

A detailed rationale is in Part I.

Improve the quality of sports for all, physical education and arts education so that they can be performed in accordance with the rules and regulations, young people can enjoy exercising, playing sports, being healthy and strong, having good mental and cultural heritage as well as to develop human resource based on 3 characteristics and 5 principles of national education system.

➤ Responsible Departments

Achievement of this strategic high level outcome is the joint responsibility of Department of Sports for All and Physical and Arts Education Department, Elite Sports Department and National Sports Federation.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased the number and quality of Sports Club, public and social in Village, district and province/capital level, public and private organizations, companies, factories. And develop the sport with disability to be increased in quantity, quality into international level

Strategy 1: Expand the establishment of sports clubs, public parks for sports for all activities

Key activities:

- Establish various sports clubs at the village, district and provincial levels, offices - organizations, companies, factories and organizations at all levels, both public and private;
- Support the establishment of fitness facilities and parks at the village, district and provincial levels.

Strategy 2: Sports for all is widely implemented from the center to the local level.

Key activities:

- Encourage provinces, districts, villages, offices, organizations, companies, factories and organizations at all levels, both public and private, to organize annual sports competitions, traditional sports competitions, sports competitions to celebrate important national and international days;
- Encourage districts, provinces, ministries, organizations to participate in friendly sports competitions with the provinces and districts of neighboring countries;

- Encourage Lao people with disabilities to exercise, play sports and participate in international sports competitions for people with disabilities, sports competitions to celebrate important annual national days.

Strategy 3: Management and management of sports and physical education to be strong from the center to the local level

Key activities:

- Develop decree on the standard of sports for all;
- Develop decree on the management of the business units on sports and physical exercise in the country;
- Revise the decree on the management of sports for all activities;
- Improve the legislations under the law, such as manuals, rules and regulations of sports for all;
- Monitor, evaluate and collect statistical information on sports and physical education;
- Develop qualified personnel, referees, trainers, sports scientists, and medical staff for sports for all and sports for the disabled in the country and abroad;
- Seek assistance from international and social organizations for the development of sports for all;
- Encourage and promote the Lao National Paralympic Committee and the Lao Sports Federation for the Disabled to operate regularly.

Strategy 4: Organize competitions and participate in sports for the disabled

Key activities

- Organize the 3rd National Sports Competition for the Disabled in 2021 and the 4th in 2025;
- Participate in the 10th ASEAN Para Games in 2021 in Hanoi, Vietnam, the 11th ASEAN Para Games in 2023 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and the 12th ASEAN Para Games 2025 in Chonburi, Thailand;
- Participate in the XIII Asian Para Games 2022 in Hangzhou, China and the 14th Asian Para Games 2025 in Nagoya, Japan;
- Participate in the XVI Paralympic Games 2021 in Japan and the 17th Paralympic Games 2025 in France;
- Participate in the Paralympic Games, World Championships and Qualification Events as required by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Intermediate Outcome 2: Learning-teaching physical and arts education has been widely implemented, the number of the teachers/technical personnel of physical education, the number of students attending sports competition at national, regional and international level are increased.

Strategy 1: Develop skills for technical personnel on physical education in educational institutions

Key activities:

- Continuously develop, upgrade and train the sport personnel and athletes student;
- Provide training for coaches of athletics, football, basketball, swimming, badminton, Panchak silat to prepare athletes to participate in the ASEAN Student Games;
- Training of referees for various types of sports for physical education teachers;
- Encourage students who are talented in sports to participate in training, competition and exchange experiences, both domestically and internationally.

Strategy 2: Develop infrastructure, training facilities and equipment for sports competitions in educational institutions.

Key activities:

- Collaborate with relevant parties in planning, constructing, improving the infrastructure and training facilities for physical education and sports in educational institutions;
- Encourage educational institutions to develop and produce basic learning and teaching materials according to the curriculum;

- Develop a plan to procure teaching and learning equipment for physical education and sports training in educational institutions.

Strategy 3: Encourage the establishment of sports clubs in educational institutions.

Key activities:

- Organize regular sports competitions between schools, districts and provinces;
- Promote the establishment of sports clubs in educational institutions;
- Training and provide guidance on how to plan and organize sports competitions for general education students at various levels;
- Develop a uniform handbook to guide the opening and closing of sports competitions for general education students at each level.

Strategy 4: Organize national student games, participate in competitions and host ASEAN student games

Key activities:

- Organize the 7th National student games in 2022 in Saravan Province;
- Participate in the ASEAN Student Games according to the Constitution of the ASEAN Student Games once a year;
- Organize the 16th ASEAN Student Games to be hosted by Lao PDR in 2024;

Strategy 5: Improve and upgrade physical and art education teachers.

Key activities:

- Develop curricula and teaching and learning materials in Physical Education and Arts Education Colleges;
- Create conditions for the upgrading Physical Education and Art education Colleges to be institutions;
- Upgrading teachers in Physical Education and Art education Colleges;
- Improve the effectiveness of teacher training and teacher trainees' practicum;
- Assess the quality of teacher training of the College of Physical Education and the College of Arts Education;
- Monitor and evaluate the use of physical and art education teachers in general education, vocational and higher education schools in both the public and private sectors;

Strategy 6: Implement physical education and art education curricula in educational institutions.

Key activities:

- Implementing teaching and learning of physical education, art and music in educational institutions;
- Develop learning-teaching materials, supplementary manuals for music and arts according to the general education curriculum;
- Promote and strengthen the capacity of teachers in the field of physical and art education in 8 teacher training colleges;
- Develop legislation to manage the implementation of physical and art education curriculum;
- Encourage, promote the implementation of local curricula in primary education on physical and arts education;
- Encourage, inspect, monitor, evaluate and draw lessons learnt in the implementation of physical and art education curricula.

Strategy 7: Implement the curriculum for teaching basic defense education in upper secondary school and national defense and security education in vocational education and higher education.

Key Activities:

- Improve and develop curricula, teacher's manuals, teaching-learning materials in basic defense and defense-security education;

- Open the National Defense-Security Training Center in Vientiane Capital to serve the organization of teaching-learning in vocational education and higher education;
- Implement resolutions, orders and develop legislation on national defense and security education to the local level;
- Train those in charge of national defense and security education at the central, provincial and district levels;
- Encourage, inspect, monitor, evaluate and exchange lessons learnt from the implementation of the curriculum-teaching of basic defense and defense-security education.

Strategy 8: Combat and prevent drugs and the discouragement in educational institutions.

Key activities:

- Promote educational institutions to establish drug-free model schools;
- Implement resolutions, orders and legislation on anti-drug activities in schools to the local level;
- Strengthen provincial, district and school authorities to establish drug-free schools
- Encourage, promote, inspect, monitor and evaluate the establishment of drug-free educational institutions.

Strategy 9: Improve the administration and management of physical and arts education and enhance domestic and international cooperation.

Key activities:

- Implement resolutions, orders and legislations on physical and art education, national defense-security education, anti-drug activities in schools and localities;
- Develop policies and tools for macro-management in the development of physical and arts education;
- Establish an information system for physical and arts education, set up a database to be able to integrate with the Ministry's information system;
- Strengthen physical education and art education personnel from the central to local levels;
- Liaise with neighbor countries and international organizations to mobilize technical assistance and funding for the development of physical and arts education.

2. Elite Sports

2.1. Achievements

The Party and Government consider Elite Sports one of the most important areas of physical and mental human resource development and takes steps forward in bringing to the country pride and reputation with the aims to enhance solidarity, friendship and cooperation with friendly countries in the region and the world and to serve the country's national defence and construction.

The achievements in the implementation of Elite Sports over the past years came from different areas such as 1,729 sport personnel were trained and developed in the mid-term period; completed the development of training programs for national sports personnel and referees in 7 spear-head sports categories (trainers and referees) and completed the development of spear-head sports curricula in Sport Talent School from 8 to 12 categories; and 161 students of which 51 females were graduated from Sport Talent School.

Elite Sports Department was an active partner in the establishment of Sport-Gymnastic Talent School, Faculty of Sport Sciences (NUOL); established and improved the National Sports Federation which is now composed of 43 affiliated sports federations; encouraged and promoted the National Sports Federation to train the target sportsmen to be professionals; improved 5 legislative documents; received support from international sport organizations and neighbouring countries to sponsor 8 scholarships for a long-term study in the fields of sports such as 1 scholarship for doctorate level, 3 for Master's and 4 for Bachelor's levels. Besides, the International Olympic Committee has provided financial support to 8 people to participate in the 18th Asian Games and the Olympic Games 2020.

Regarding international cooperation for development, Elite Sports Department worked in collaboration with the Lao National Olympic Committee and the National Sports Federation, dispatched 957 time/men of the national team to SEA Games, Asian Games, Olympic Games and international games. The participation in the 29th SEA Games hosted by Malaysia, Lao PDR came the 9th place of 11 countries receiving 2 golds, 3 silvers and 21 bronzes; in the 18th Asian Games hosted by Indonesia, the Lao national team received 5 medals: 2 silvers for Marshal Arts, 1 silver for Sepaktrakraw men, and 2 bronzes for Sepaktakraw (women) and Marshal Arts (men) classified 31st place of 45 participating countries.

A policy to motivate and congratulate the successful sports government agencies, enterprises, individual supporters and sport personnel has been practiced by conferring different levels of rewards under a permission and recognition of higher authorities as follows: 1 Order of Merit of Development, 1 Medal of Development, 13 Level-2 Order of Merit of Labour, 34 Level-3 Order of Merit of Labour, 62 Medal of Labour, 2 Government's Certificate of Congratulations and 256 Ministerial Certificate of Congratulations.

2.2. Challenges

The implementation of Elite Sports based on prioritized areas as identified in Education and Sports Vision 2030, Strategies of 2025 and the 8th ESSDP (2016-2020) has experienced some obstacles and challenges as follows:

1. Lack of legislation and tools to manage, promote and support the implementation of elite sports so that they can be implemented in a practical way and in line with the current and future development;
2. The development of sports personnel and athletes in our country is not yet systematic, other countries invest a lot on sports development.
3. Sending athletes to participate in sports at the international level of the National Sports Federation, especially in spearhead sports, requires a lot of budget, there is a need to provide budget appropriately
4. The use of national sports stadiums is not commensurate with the investment due to the lack of responsible agency and the lack of budget to rehabilitate them so that they can be used properly.
5. The budget provided does not response to requirement of the sports development strategy.

2.3. Priorities for 2021-2025

2.3.1. Objectives

1. Improve and develop the quality of elite sports to win medals in sports competitions at the international level with honor and prestige to the nation;
2. Upgrading the skills of executives, technicians, referees, coaches, sports scientists and talented athletes to develop their professional knowledge in accordance with international standards;
3. Strengthen elite sports service and management system throughout the country;
4. Improve the infrastructure and provide sports equipment and sports teaching-learning materials;
5. Encourage public organizations, the private sector and the people to contribute to the development of elite sports.

2.3.2. Targets

- 1) Sport managers, trainers and referees of all categories and levels are developed and upgraded based on national and international qualification levels as follows:
 - i. National qualification certificates received:
 - 300 sport managers;
 - 1,600 sport trainers;
 - 1,600 referees and judges;
 - 250 sport scientists.
 - ii. International qualification certificates:

- 200 sport trainers;
 - 30 referees and judges.
- 2) Number of sport personnel or sport-gymnastic talented students received scholarships to study at bachelor level in foreign countries is:
 - 8) 20 for bachelor's degree,
 - 9) 20 for master's degree and
 - 10) 5 for doctoral degree.
 - 3) Talented athletes and national team athletes have been systematically and continuously developed with potential equivalent to international standards:
 - 11) 500 talented athletes;
 - 12) 400 national athletes.
 - 4) Lao PDR will be ranked and won medals in participating in international sports:
 - 13) SEA Games ranked 8th to 9th in 11 participating countries, aiming for 5 or more medals;
 - 14) The ASEAN Games ranked 31st out of 45 participating countries, striving for a historic medal;
 - 15) Lao athletes can be selected to participate in three or more Olympic sports.
 - 5) Establish 8 legislation under the laws on sports;
 - 6) 10 national sports federations have a standardized management system and sports clubs at various levels have been established and operate in accordance with the standards set out in the regulations.

2.3.3. High Level Outcomes

Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international stages makes pride to all Lao people

➤ Rationale

A detailed rationale is in Part I.

This Elite Sports development plan is drafted on the basis of MoES' and Government's policy directives in line with 2030 Vision and the 8th ESSDP (2016-2020) by taking into account human resource development in sports as the first priority, especially the development of athletes and sport personnel (managers, trainers, referees and sport scientists) with the aim to participate in the international sports arena and win medals for the country's reputation and pride.

➤ Responsible parties

The success of this outcome is due to the following mutual involvement:

1. Public organizations such as the Department of elite Sports, the Department of Sports for all and Physical Education and Art Education and PESS;
2. Social sports organizations such as the Lao National Olympic Committee, the National / Provincial Sports Federation, the Provincial Sports Association and sports clubs affiliated with the sports federation.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Talented Athletes, National Athletes and Professional Athletes are equipped with Sub-Regional, Regional and International Standards

Strategy 1 Athlete Development

Key Activities

- Develop a Sustainable Athletes Development Strategic Plan (SADSP);
- Talent Identification and Development;
- Hire permanent coaches for the main sports and target sports;
- Implement Sport Hero project "Medalist Athletes from SEA Games road to 19th Asian Games";
- Implement "Road to Olympic Games 2024 project".

Strategy 2: Organize the competition and participate in the competition:

Key activities

- Organize domestic sports competitions and host sub-regional, regional and international sports competitions;
- Participate in local sports competitions and participate in sub-regional, regional and international sports competitions as follows:
 - Participate in the XXXI SEA Games in 2021 in Hanoi, Vietnam, XXXII SEA Games 2023 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and XXXIII 2025 SEA Games in Chonburi Province, Thailand;
 - Participate in the 19th Asian Games 2022 in Hangzhou, China;
 - Participate in the XXXIII Olympic Games in France in 2024;

Intermediate Outcome 4: Executives, coaches, referees and sports scientists are competent in line with international standards; maintain and utilize sports infrastructure to maximum benefit.

Strategy 1: Develop Sport Human Recourse

Key activities:

- Develop a Sustain Sport Human Recourse Development Strategic Plan (SHDSP);
- Provide short-term and long-term training programs for sports personnel;
- Provide long-term scholarship programs abroad.

Strategy 2: Establish sport educational infrastructure, and provide sports equipment:

Key activities:

- Construct infrastructure and provide teaching and learning materials for sports institutes;
- Improve the existing sports stadium into a standard training center;
- Provide training and competition equipment in accordance with the standards of international sports federations or associations;
- Rehabilitation, protection and use of existing sports stadiums to maximum benefit;
- Establishment of Lao sports museums at the central and local levels

Strategy 3: Develop sports science and technology

Key activities

- Conduct research on sports science in various fields;
- Provide test equipment and analyse the training and competition of athletes;

Intermediate Outcome 5: The management of elite sports strengthened

Strategy 1 Strengthen elite sports management:

Key activities:

- Develop a decree on professional sports;
- Develop legislation on the competition management;
- Develop regulations on the use of sports funds
- Develop legislation on sports uniforms for national team;
- Update the rules of the National Sports Federation and sports clubs;
- Revise the regulations on the organization of national sports events;
- Implement policies for those who make achievements in building a good reputation for the nation;

Strategy 2: Develop the management system of the agency responsible for elite sports:

Key activities:

- Develop Administrative Model for Elite Sport Organizations (AMESO);
- Develop Elite Sport Database System (ESDS);
- Recruit permanent personnel in the sports federations which are the main sports and spearhead sports;
- Provide operating budget for the National Sports Federation, which is a spearhead sport.

X. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SUB-SECTOR PLAN

1. Background

1.1. Achievements

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of achievements. Key achievements include: A Planning and Budgeting Committee has been established to strengthen links between planning and budgeting, utilising Annual Costed Sector Plans (ACSEPs) and a strengthened ODA database. A Teacher Allocation Committee has also been established to improve the efficiency of teacher deployment and placement together with an organisation restructure including revised mandates for departments and centres together with PESS and DESB. MoES has trained all school principals and VEDC representatives to strengthen implementation of school-based management.

1.2. Challenges

Part I (sections 2 and 3) of ESSDP 2021-25 provide more details of challenges. Key challenges include Considerable fiscal constraints will persist until 2020 and beyond, therefore the sector needs to determine how to use its limited human and financial resources more efficiently. In addition, the low share of GoL's non-wage recurrent budget makes it difficult to effectively plan programs for quality improvements and there is a need to improve the quality and efficiency in education spending.

The recent emergence of the Covid-19 virus in late 2019 will place considerable additional challenges to the sector. Not least is the anticipated reduction in growth of national GDP, tax revenues and hence budgets for public services, including education together with an impact at the household level resulting in increased levels of poverty and greater cost-barriers for student retention in education.

2. Priority for 2021-2025

2.1. Policy objectives:

- 1) To ensure the collection and management of school data and effective use of the data for planning, budgeting and systematic monitoring.
- 2) To promote inclusive education, including support to students with disabilities.
- 3) To ensure that organizational structure from central to local levels is relevant to roles, mandates and responsibilities of each sub-sector.
- 4) To coordinate external financing and facilitate alignment of external financing with the priority areas of ESSDP 2021-25.
- 5) To develop and provide effective and appropriate quality assurance mechanisms at all levels.
- 6) To ensure that education and sports sector has the evidence to inform policy making.
- 7) Improve and develop knowledge, capacity and experience of education management.

➤ Specific Objectives

- 1) Realign and enhance the skills and competencies of MoES staff in order to more effectively meet the current and foreseen needs of the system.
- 2) Provide institutional strengthening to the PESS, DEBS, clusters and schools to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.
- 3) To enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources through targeting improved education performance.

2.2. Targets

Baseline and targets for key indicators are provided in Part I, Section 8.5 (the M&E table). Core indicators and 2025 targets for this sub-sector are:

- 1) At least one cluster is established in each of the 40 disadvantaged districts.
- 2) School Based Management policy defining the school, cluster, DESB and PESS level roles and responsibilities is approved.
- 3) Revised School Block Grants formula and eligible expenditure guidelines is approved.
- 4) 10-year prioritised teacher allocation implementation plan is approved.

- 5) The institutional body responsible for oversight of the WASH programme is designated.
- 6) The EMIS, TEMIS, TVETMIS and LUMS systems are connected and integrated.
- 7) 20% of education administrators are trained on education management related topics.

2.3. High-Level Outcomes

Clarification: For each High-Level Outcome and Intermediate Outcome, a reference is given in brackets after the statement which refers to Part I of ESSDP 2021-25. This is provided to allow readers to use the sub-sector plan as a standalone plan but be able to refer to the associated policy actions, as outlined in Part I. Sub-sector plans do not necessarily address all intermediate outcomes of a high-level outcome. Some high-level outcome and Intermediate outcome statements have been modified to reflect the focus of the sub-sector

2.3.1. Increased number of graduates from ECE to US including NFE, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills but also other 21st Century skills, with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity (Part I, High-Level Outcome 1)

➤ Rationale

Part I includes a detailed rationale. Recent learning outcome assessments at primary grade 3 and lower secondary M4 have demonstrated that current levels of functional literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficient to support quality learning at higher levels.

Partnering departments

Planning and Budgeting Committee, Department of ECE, Teacher Allocation Committee, General Education Department, Inclusive Education Centre

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.3)

Strategy 1: Establish the management structures to prioritise and target expansion of the one-year pre-primary program to provide more access in more disadvantaged areas.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- The Planning and Budgeting Committee with technical support from DECE and in liaison with the Teacher Allocation Committee will be mandated to take a lead active role in establishing the priorities for the expansion of the one-year pre-primary program (or other alternative approaches);
- Legislation to empower PBC to expand its role in national and sub-national decision-making;
- The PBC with technical support from DECE, will provide advice on how to prioritise expansion across the 40 disadvantaged priority districts.

Strategy 2: Conduct a policy review of the current approach to expanding access to lower secondary, including the current 5+4+3 structure.

Key activities:

- A cross-departmental body chaired by the Minister of Education will be established to organise and appraise the current 5+4+3 structure of the education system;
- Identify the most effective and efficient means to enable financially sustainable expansion.

Strategy 3: Review and approve a sustainable (human and financial resourcing) targeted pre-primary and primary school meals strategy and action plan.

Key activities:

- A review body comprising the PBC, IEC and Department of General Education will be established to organise and appraise the targeted school meals strategy and action plan to identify sustainable approaches.

Strategy 4: Review, approve and implement an education sector disaster contingency plan, taking into account climate change.

Key activities:

- The Cabinet will appoint a task force comprising selected technical departments to: analyse disaster preparedness within the sector; and develop a sector response and plan for review and approval.

Strategy 5: Review and approve student early marriage and/or pregnancy policy for re-entry to schooling.

Key activities:

- A policy on how to facilitate the enrolment of students during pregnancy and following birth to formal education is developed for review and approval by MOES leadership.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters. (Part I High-Level Outcome 1, IO 1.5)

Strategy 1: ToRs and legislation are developed for administrative clusters across the 40 priority districts

Key activities:

- DGE and DTE will identify cost-effective approaches (additional human and financial resources and use of ICT) to establishing and using school clusters to reduce disparities;
- Identification of relationship (new and changed) roles and responsibilities between the new administrative clusters and DESBs, including necessary legislation;
- Drafting and endorsement of ToRs and staffing allocations of administrative clusters;
- Review the current teacher support system for the introduction of school clusters.

Strategy 2: Administrative clusters are established in each of the 40 priority districts and resource allocation prioritised to these districts

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Budget allocation is identified to support establishment of administrative clusters in 40 priority districts;
- The Teacher Allocation Committee will develop a plan to ensure that these 40 districts are prioritised for allocating new civil service quota positions and the Planning and Budgeting Committee ensure that operating budgets prioritise these same districts;
- The formulae for DESB operating budgets and school block grants will be reviewed with consideration given to providing a greater share to these districts.

2.3.2. All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity to enable improved student learning outcomes, (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 3)

➤ **Rationale**

Part I has a detailed rationale. A more systemic focus is required for sector planning, resource allocation, monitoring and assessments to ensure that all schools have the basic resources and capacity required to provide an acceptable quality of education services. The FQS must be linked into the national and sub-national administration and management systems that are used to guide resource

allocation. Ongoing support to the strengthening of SBM systems will assist in strengthening the planning and reporting capacity, and accountability systems at the school level.

Partnering departments

Departments of Planning, Finance, Organisation & Personnel, Early Childhood, General Education, Teacher Education, RIES, ESQAC, IFEAD and Inspection

The development of FQS, supporting guidelines, piloting and roll-out are detailed in the sub-sectoral plans for: ECE, primary and secondary. ESQAC has responsibility to work with line departments to develop FQS. Priorities are as follows:

Strategy 1: FQS system is developed and implemented for ECE and secondary education

Intermediate Outcome 1: Establishment of a sustainable school self-evaluation and development planning process (using FQS) that informs district level planning and targeting of support, including teacher and learning materials allocation (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.2).

Strategy 1: National and sub-national structures and systems are realigned to support the prioritisation of FQS attainment in all ECE, primary and secondary schools

Key activities

- Mandates and responsibilities of the PESS and DESB and staff are revised to include FQS reporting and resource prioritisation systems;
- Under the oversight of the PBC, procedures and guidelines to support central offices, PESS and DEBS in more effectively allocating resources to schools that are unable to meet FQS are developed and disseminated;
- FQS standardised assessment and verification tools for DEBS and PESS are developed;
- The strengthened LESMIS will be expanded to incorporate FQS reports;
- Baselines, indicators and targets reflecting the focus on school level resources will be developed to complement national aggregated targets for FQS attainment.

Intermediate Outcome 2: School Block Grants (formula and eligible expenditures) are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.3)

Strategy 1: SBG policy, formula and expenditure items are reviewed, revised and aligned to ESSDP 2021-25 policies

Full achievement of this strategy for increased unit costs of SBGs will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities

- The PBC will review the SBG policy, formula and eligible expenditure items to align with the policy priorities of ESSDP 2021-25;
- The PBC will review and provide a recommendation for a revision of the SBG formula and eligible expenditures in order to respond more effectively to schools’ needs;
- Develop new school and DESB guidelines and procedures corresponding to the revised SBGs;
- Endorse and implement SBG using revised formula and guidelines

Strategy 2: Review the current SGB disbursement system to improve timeliness and verification of SBG delivery and efficiency of SBG fund collection for small and remote schools

Key activities

- Review the current disbursement policy for SBG, including the use of two tranches for small and remote schools;
- Propose a more efficient disbursement policy, including monitoring, for approval by MoES and MoF;
- The PBC will oversee a verification of the bank account details of all recipients of SBGs;

- MoES and MoF will meet to discuss ways to improve the timeliness of SBG delivery and efficiency of SBG fund collection for small and/or remote schools.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.4)

Strategy 1: Management and institutional structures governing teacher allocation and redeployment will be strengthened in order to support more equitable provision

Key activities

- A legislative framework will be developed by the TAC to support implementation of the new primary teacher allocation guidelines;
- Conduct analysis of the teacher allocations protocols for all levels and provide recommendations based on feasible staff numbers to the TAC for review and approval;
- TAC will consider the feasibility of providing incentivized teacher relocation payments;
- The PBC will oversee the development of a 10-year prioritised teacher allocation implementation plan to reduce disparities;
- At the mid-term review the TAC will again review the teacher allocation formula and guidelines to assess its feasibility.

Strategy 2: Information and operational systems governing teacher allocation and redeployment will be strengthened in order to support more equitable provision

Key activities

- Develop mandate and data capture system (linked to MIS) to track teacher allocations;
- Development and approval of guidelines and a handbook to provide advice to DESBs in the implementation of an equitable teacher allocation plan, ensuring all schools have more than 80% of their staffing quota;
- Development and approval of a system to assess compliance with the new teacher allocation guidelines;
- Review and testing of potential teacher redeployment strategies and incentives to provide a feasibility assessment at the mid-term review.

Strategy 3: Establish career pathways for teaching professions including PA to motivate them

Key activities

- TAC will consider the feasibility of establish career path and professional development framework for teaching professions.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Textbook and Teacher guide allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities and linked to FQS (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.5).

Strategy 1: Textbook replenishment budget is reviewed and updated in order to ensure sustainable provision

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Analyse the current textbook attrition rates across all subjects and levels;
- Review the current replenishment policy to ensure that it is adequate across all subjects;
- Identify the required budget to maintain textbook provision in accordance with textbook policy;
- Distribute textbooks prior to the opening of the school year.

Strategy 2: Textbook management and disbursement practices at central and DESB level are strengthened to improve efficiency and reduce disparity, including development of a textbook MIS.

Key activities:

- Review the current distribution, inventory and stock control systems for delivery of textbooks from the central warehouse to schools;
- Develop and disseminate prioritisation protocols and procedures for central and DESB; distribution networks that ensure that all schools attain at least 80% of their textbook allocation in accordance with policy;
- Develop and disseminate guidelines for DESB on safe storage of textbooks, basic inventory control, and equitable and efficient textbook distribution;
- Develop and implement a prioritised plan for the supply to DESB and schools of storerooms and shelves for books;
- Conduct a capacity building workshop for the school principals and teachers on the management and the use of textbooks, including safe storage of materials at school and district level to reduce risk from damage, and textbook care by students.

Strategy 3: Strengthen the data systems currently used to support textbook ordering, prioritisation, and distribution.

Key activities:

- Conduct a comparative review of the efficiency of TMIS, and the efficiency of using EMIS as the basis for assessing school and district level textbook replenishment needs;
- Data management roles at DESB level are clarified;
- DESB are trained in basic analysis of EMIS data, particularly on trend analysis and on understanding the automated analysis to be produced by the LEMIS;
- Data entry for core enrolment data from school census is prioritised to provide the data required for textbook replenishment;
- Textbook allocations for replenishment to schools and districts includes the predicted textbook attrition rate to allow for the delay between the receipt of the textbook data and resultant textbook distribution.

Intermediate Outcome 5: All schools are supported in attaining the minimum level of inclusive WASH facilities. (Part I, High-Level Outcome 3, IO 3.6).

Strategy 1: Establish institutional and management systems required to oversee a national WASH programme across ECE, primary and secondary education.

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- MoES will review the potential for adopting the WASH programme approach on a national scale with a view to ensuring that all schools reach at least the minimum 1-star rating;
- A Ministerial decision to designate the institutional body responsible for oversight of the programme will be taken and departmental mandates revised accordingly;
- Procedures and guidelines to support central offices, PESS, DEBS and schools in more effectively allocating resources to schools to enable them to meet FQS in respect to toilet and hand washing facilities will be developed and disseminated.

2.3.3. The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering employment, both nationally and regionally is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP and graduation from Least Developed Country status, (Part 1, High-Level Outcome 5)

➤ **Rationale**

Part I has a detailed rationale. To improve alignment with the needs of the 9th NSEDP, it is necessary to improve fundamental competencies and skills of children from early childhood education onwards and also to identify required support for people with disabilities.

Intermediate Outcome 1: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET through improved facilities, teachers and learning materials (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.3)

Strategy 1: Encourage supply of TVET courses and students in priority economic sectors.

Key activities:

- Review and revise TVET funding formula to include additional funds for agriculture and industry students.

Intermediate Outcome 2: Legislations for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities are disseminated (flat rate, per student, per natural science, disparity-based), (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 5, IO 5.12)

Strategy 1: Encourage the supply of graduate courses and students in priority economic sectors and in disadvantaged areas.

Key activities:

- Review potential funding formula options for provincial Universities to align funding with key sector policies, including additional funds for agriculture and industry students, and disadvantaged areas;
- Provide costed recommendations and guidelines for Ministerial consideration and decision.

2.3.4. Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance (Part I, High-Level Outcome 6).

➤ **Rationale**

Part I has a detailed rationale. The sector needs to more efficiently use its limited human and financial resources through improved allocative efficiency within the education sector, through the development of a budget prioritisation framework. Strong coordination with development partners during their project design is needed in order to ensure that external financing is appropriate, and does not lead to unsustainable recurrent costs.

Partnering departments

Departments of Planning, Finance, Organisation & Personnel, and Inspection,

Intermediate Outcome 1: Strengthened MoES organisational structure at central, provincial and district levels to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies, including institutionalisation of SBM and role of VEDCs at school level. (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 6, IO 6.1)

Strategy 1: Review institutional mandates at central departmental, PESS, DESB, cluster (see strategy 3 below) school to ensure efficiency, complementarity and completeness, including responsibilities for School Based Management

Key activities:

- Review, revise and approve mandates and responsibilities including SBM and ESSDP managerial reforms for central departments, sub-national offices, clusters and schools for each education sub-sector;

- Develop and approve prioritised, phased, costed operational plan for roll-out of school cluster system;
- Disseminate new approved mandates and responsibilities for central departments, sub-national offices, clusters and schools for each education sub-sector.

Strategy 2: Review staffing roles and staffing allocations for central departments, PESS, DESB and schools according to revised mandates

Key activities:

- Develop and approve job descriptions and job specifications at all levels, for each education sub-sector, including school principals in line with their actual roles and responsibilities;
- Conduct situational analysis of current staffing provision of PESS and DESBs across the country;
- Review and revise staffing allocations for departments, PESS and DESB to align with differing workloads and responsibilities, reflecting population differences, and numbers of schools served across different provinces and districts;
- Disseminate new job descriptions and job specifications for central departments, sub-national offices, clusters and schools for each education sub-sector.

Strategy 3: Establish institutional base for School Based Management at all levels

Key activities:

- Develop and issue a decree to institutionalise school-based management, outlining roles and responsibilities at all levels, including DESBs and VEDCs, including use of FQS to inform district level planning and prioritisation;
- Develop approve and promulgate legislative recognition of VEDCs as an entity within the education sector;
- Draft and approve legislative framework acknowledging the cross-cutting nature of SBM, particularly at district level to support implementation of the above decree.

Strategy 4: Improve community engagement in the school management process

Key activities:

- ToRs for VEDC are updated to include supporting school principals in their development and implementation of the School Development Plan informed by FQS.

Strategy 5: Review PESS and DESB funding and resource allocations to more effectively and equitably respond to their workloads, services and support to schools in attaining FQS

Key activities:

- Conduct situational analysis of current PESS and DESBs funding allocations and recurrent requirements, particularly in respect to their role in supporting schools attaining FQS;
- Develop options for revised PESS and DESBs funding formula for presentation and consideration at ESSDP Mid-term review.

Intermediate Outcome 2: MoES Teachers and Personnel Development Strategy is implemented, including DESB and PESS staff allocated according to need and provided with appropriate capacity building to adequately implement their roles and responsibilities, as defined by job descriptions and job specifications. (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 6, IO 6.2)

Strategy 1: MoES Teachers and Personnel Development Strategy (HRDS) is approved, disseminated and used to inform the Teacher Allocation Committee (TAC) and wider sector capacity building programs

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the “enhanced quality” scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- A regulatory framework will be drafted for the HRD strategy to be used as the basis for capacity building of all staff;

- IFEAD, in consultation with key stakeholders will develop a costed action plan to implement the Teachers and Personnel Development Strategy (HRDS), to be used to inform the TAC and wider sector capacity building programs;
- HRD Division of DP study and review the implementation of current strategies and develop human resource development plan (2021-2025), as well as disseminate and build capacity for various parties in formulating human resource development plans.

Strategy 2: Develop and apply guidelines for staff allocation to PESS and DESB offices that are based on workloads.

Key activities

- Situational analysis of current staffing provision of PESS and DESBs;
- Draft guidelines to equitably allocate staff to PESS and DESB;
- Draft and implement a prioritised phased staff redeployment strategy as required.

Strategy 3: Ensure existing and redeployed staff have the competencies required to fulfil their role

Key activities

- Develop framework for conducting a prioritised training needs assessment for staff at all levels;
- Implement prioritised training needs assessment for all staff, based on the HRD strategy;
- A Ministerial Instruction is issued to ensure an allocation of time at monthly principal-DESB meetings for capacity building of principals;
- IFEAD will develop self-study manuals and training modules that can be used by DESB staff as part of their monthly meetings with principals.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Strengthened MoES operational committees (TAC and PBC) at central, and sub-national levels use evidence from ASCEPs. Learning outcomes assessments and integrated LEMIS (includes PMIS FMIS & EMIS) to facilitate the efficient delivery of all ESSDP policies and strategies. (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 6, IO 6.3)

Strategy 1: Institutional and operational base for teacher allocation and deployment is strengthened

Key activities:

- Mandate and responsibilities of the TAC are reviewed and revised in order to provide policy informing advice to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher allocation;
- Recommendations for the establishment of sub-national TACs are developed and reviewed by the TAC for approval by the Minister.

Strategy 2: Institutional and operational base for planning and budgeting is strengthened

Key activities:

- Mandate and responsibilities the PBC will be reviewed, strengthened and realigned to ensure its coordination function;
- Recommendations for the establishment of sub-national PBCs are developed and reviewed by the PBC for approval by the Minister;
- A Ministerial Instruction is drafted and issued authorising the PBC to receive and assess ACSEPs from all provinces and to validate these by using information from the improved PBMS;
- PBMS is operationalised to produce timely budget plans and timely budget execution reports for PBC review and budget prioritisation discussions;
- Guidelines and instructions are developed and issued to ensure that all budget plans are aligned with PBC recommendations.

Strategy 3: Information systems and analysis are realigned in support of more effective sector performance monitoring

Key activities:

- Implement LESMIS strategy, starting from the improvements of existing systems (EMIS and others);

- A Ministerial Instruction is issued to mandate the Statistics Centre to disaggregate education performance in disadvantaged (MoES 40 districts) and non-disadvantaged districts annually and report on trends in reducing disparity gaps;
- Guidelines for the development of annual provincial reports are developed by the Statistics Centre and provided to all PESS and DESB;
- The Statistics Centre of MoES provides each PESS with provincial education data and reporting templates to enable each PESS to report on progress to reducing disparity gaps;

Strategy 4: Learning outcomes assessments and standardised Examination bank developed and managed

Key activities:

- A general education examination bank is established and administered to support more effective and more standardised students' learning assessments;
- Develop the examination bank management mechanism to serve the general education students' learning outcomes.

Strategy 5: Establish strengthened research and education performance evaluation network
Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key activities:

- Establish a Research Ethics Committee, including ToRs and a legislative framework
- Conduct training on research and education performance evaluation;
- Develop annual research plan to align with policy development of ESSDP 2021-25;
- Conduct research and education evaluation in collaboration with educational institutions and DPs;
- A costed action plan to build capacity of CERE staff and to establish a research and education performance evaluation network will be developed;
- Provide CERE staff with training on research methodology and evaluation on research study, qualitative and quantitative data analysis using computer programme.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Monitoring and Evaluation framework for ESSDP 2021-25 is implemented on an annual basis. (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 6, IO 6.4)

Strategy 1: Establish an appropriate and feasible sector M&E framework and reporting cycle addressing ESSDP policy objectives at all levels

Key activities:

- ESSDP 2021-25 performance and progress report is presented annually to both ESWG and the MOES Annual Conference, based on the M&E Framework of ESSDP;
- Incrementally integrate performance measures from the emerging LESMIS and PBMIS systems into the M&E reporting structure;
- The ESSDP M&E framework and reports are updated at mid-term.

Strategy 2: Strengthen linkage between M&E performance assessments and subsequent planning and prioritisation at all levels

Key Activities:

- Disseminate ESSDP 2021-25 to all relevant levels of the education and sports sector, highlighting clear priority areas and targets to guide localised planning;
- Set a structure and procedures to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation outcomes are used for planning and prioritizing activities at each management level;

Strategy 3: Strengthen capacity for monitoring and evaluation, inspection and internal auditing

Full achievement of this strategy will require funding that is aligned with the "enhanced quality" scenario and/or ODA specifically targeting this intermediate outcome.

Key Activities:

- Review and develop a quality monitoring, inspection, evaluation and internal auditing in a systematic and complete manner and all levels conduct regularly and effectively;
- Provide adequate resources including ICT and up-to-date communication tools for managing, inspecting, evaluating and internal auditing;
- Awareness raising of monitoring, evaluation, inspection and internal auditing to all key stakeholders especially communities and civil society organisations;
- Strengthen capacity building for monitoring, inspection, evaluation and internal auditing staff at all levels;
- Provide capacity building for MoES staff on result-based management and evidence-based planning including the use of monitoring and evaluation outcomes, EMIS data and other database sources;
- Identify and provide necessary facilities to monitoring, inspection, evaluation and internal auditing at all levels;

Strategy 4: Review will be implemented to consider how to reconcile EMIS population data with that projected by the Lao Statistics Bureau and other surveys such as LSIS.

Key activities:

- Establish a committee to work with LSB to review differences in methodologies in collecting population data and to examine why different results are obtained.
- Develop a proposal for the Minister to consider transitioning to use of population data from LSB and how to manage implications of changes to core indicators based on population data, both for previous and future years.

Intermediate Outcome 5: Education system emergency preparedness and resilience to disasters strengthened (Part I)

Strategy 1: Review and update Education Emergency Contingency Plan

Key activities:

- Review Education Emergency Contingency Plan based on lessons learned from COVID-19 and flooding of 2018 and 2019.

Strategy 2: Integration of orientation on emergency preparedness in MoES, PESS, DESBs and school

Key activities:

- Training of central PESS and DESB staff;
- Trainings for teachers and PAs, in collaboration with the Education Cluster.

Strategy 3: Rollout of online monitoring tool for emergency response integrated to LESMIS

Key activities:

- Develop monitoring tool;
- Link monitoring tool with LESMIS.

2.3.5. Disparities are reduced through a supporting ESSDP financing plan that directly addresses relevant output targets, considering the context of real resource and capacity constraints, (Part I, High-Level Outcome 7).

➤ **Rationale**

Part I includes a detailed rationale. Most of the education budget goes to salaries and allowances. Strong Government prioritization of recurrent education spending is required if key programs to support education quality, are to be taken forward. However, the major constraint to reducing disparities is the small share of the education budget to operating budgets, particularly at district level. Increasing allocations to districts is a priority if disparities are to be addressed. This would require an

increase in the overall education sector non-wage recurrent budget as further efficiency gains are limited.

Partnering departments

Departments of Planning and Finance. In particular the Planning and Budgeting Committee.

Intermediate Outcome 1: The ESSDP financing plan includes an explicit expenditure policy that guides the central and sub-national annual budget development and revision process and reflects the need to address disparities and improve learning outcomes (Part 1 section 6.7.3. IO 7.1)

Strategy 1: Targeted financing strategies to reduce disparities in education outcomes are established

Key activities:

- An assessment is conducted of potential targeted financing strategies, existing legislation and financial disbursement and reporting mechanisms; and potential eligible expenditures that would reduce disparities in education performance;
- PBC reviews the assessment and provides recommendations at the mid-term review to update the ESSDP expenditure policy to ensure that expenditure priorities increasingly address disparities;
- Annual sub-sectors budget plans prioritise the integration of higher impact and more cost-effective interventions identified in the ESSDP and ACSEPs;
- PBC reviews the annual budget plans of sub-sectors to ensure alignment with the priorities of ESSDP and provides feedback to the sub-sectors and Ministry leadership;
- The Management and Administration Focal Group (FG#4) recommends to ESWG a preferred approach to prioritizing cost-effective interventions with priority to disadvantaged districts.

Strategy 2: ESSDP financing plan and ACSEPs are aligned to ESSDP priorities.

Key activities:

- PBC provides strategic guidance to development of ESSDP financing plan, ACSEPs and annual budget plan;
- DoP and DoF develop annual budget plan based on ESSDP financing plan;
- Annual consolidated ACSEP comprising central and sub-national components, is formally presented reviewed and endorsed by the PBC, prior to the start of the annual budget formulation;

Intermediate Outcome 2: ESWG review and endorse the updated mid-term financing plan for ESSDP. (Part 1 High-Level Outcome 7, IO 7.2)

Strategy 1: ESSDP financing plan is subject to updating at the mid-term review.

Key activities:

- ESWG work-plan is drafted and includes a review and endorsement of the compliance of the annual budget with the ESSDP financing plan and recommendations for updating the mid-term financing plan;
- ESWG Secretariat call for meeting and set agenda for PBC to report on ESSDP financing plan actual implementation on an annual basis;
- The annual review of ESSDP financing plan implementation is presented once a year at ESWG for endorsement.

Intermediate Outcome 3: Development partners provide predictable financial support aligned to ESSDP priority targets and that proposed new interventions are sustainable where partners expect MoES to take over after project completion. (Part 1 section 6.7.3. IO 7.3)

Strategy 1: Comprehensive and up to date records of ODA are maintained by the Project Management Division of DoP.

Key activities:

- ODA database system is upgraded and made more user-friendly;

- Summary details of development partners' projects and programmes are reported in the annual performance report and mid-term review.

Strategy 2: Development partners programmes take into account the recurrent financing liabilities that are created through investment and prioritise programs that are national and identified as key priorities in the ESDP, or in support of the MoES identified disadvantaged districts

Key activities:

- MoES and development partners ensure that the recurrent financing liabilities of future investment are identified and discussed as part of the investment project appraisal process;
- MoES ensures that its latest list of disadvantaged districts is shared with development partners, so they use it for their programming.

Intermediate Outcome 4: Resources mobilised through more active international cooperation, including with private philanthropic organisations.

Strategy 1: The Department of International Cooperation has an extended mandate to liaise with other potential funding organisations, including private philanthropic organisations.

Key activities:

- Identify list of new organisations for potential funding opportunities;
- Liaise with new potential funding sources.

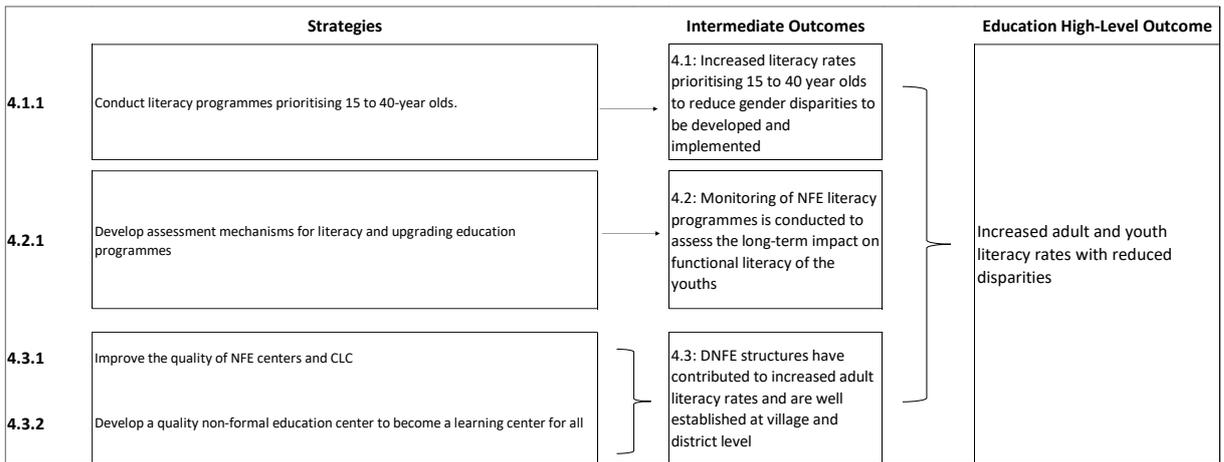
Annex 1: Result Chain

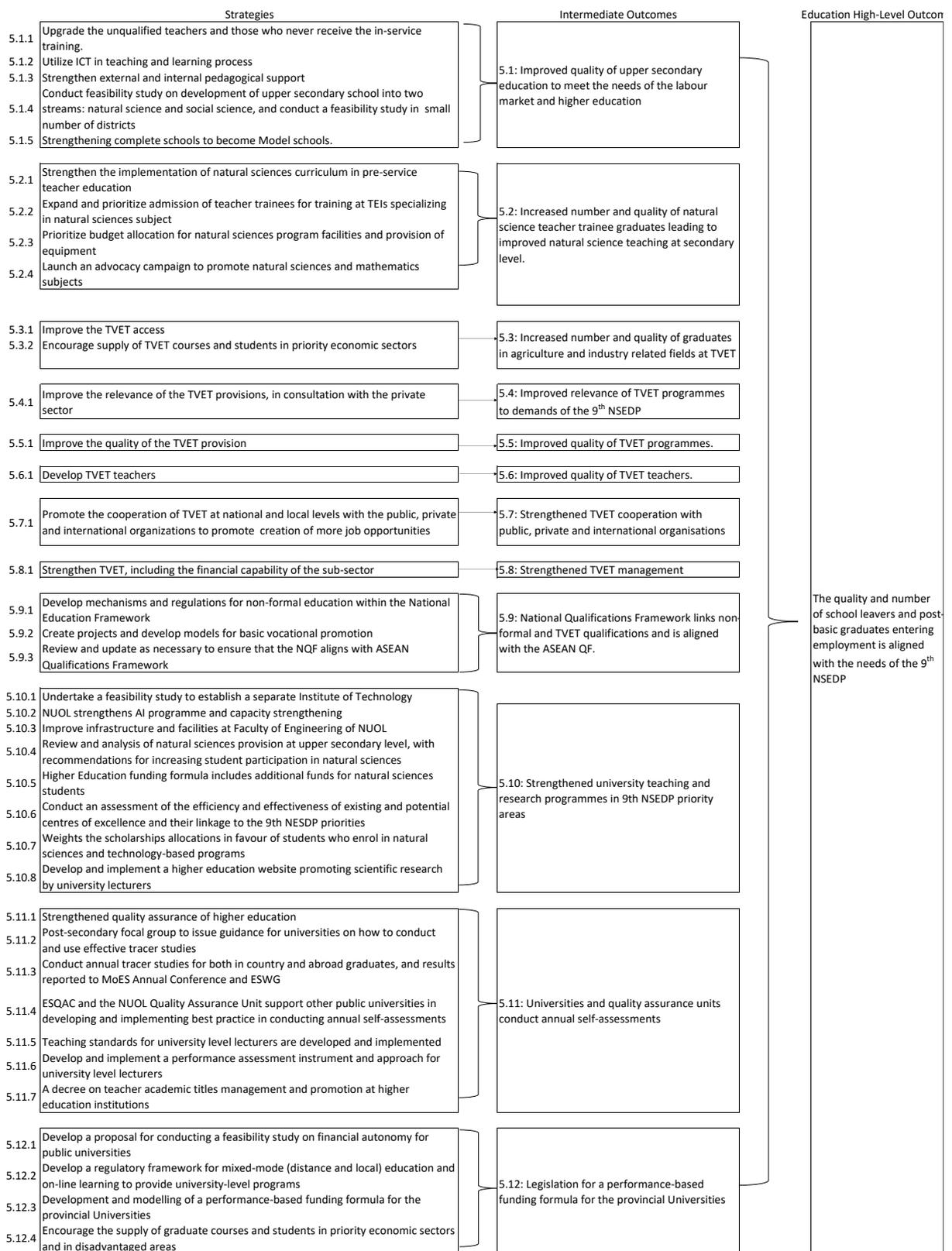
Strategies (see other pages)	IO	Education HLO	Goal
6 Strategies 7 Strategies 21 Strategies 2 Strategies 9 Strategies	1.1 Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels 1.2 Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M7 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates 1.4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training at upper secondary school 1.5: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters	HLO 1: Increased number of graduates at all levels with improved learning outcomes with special focus on	The Education Sector is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunity for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress of SDG-4
4 Strategies 7 Strategies 5 Strategies 8 Strategies 4 Strategies	2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers through support from clusters and PAs. 2.2: Pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula aligned with the new school curricula and teaching standards. 2.3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system, linked to teaching standards, to identify priority training needs. 2.4: TTCs are professional development centres for all pre-service, in-service, and PA training. 2.5: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning	HLO 2: Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards with	
4 Strategies 10 Strategies 3 Strategies 6 Strategies 6 Strategies 2 Strategies	3.1: FQS for school education forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning. 3.2: A school self-evaluation and development planning process that informs district level planning and targeting of support 3.3 School Block Grants are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities 3.4 Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities 3.5 Textbook provision is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities 3.6 All schools are supported to achieve basic WASH facilities	HLO 3: All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively alongside strengthened management to improve student	
1 Strategy 1 Strategy 2 Strategies	4.1: A targeted action plan for literacy programmes for 15 to 40-year-olds to reduce disparities 4.2: Sample monitoring of NFE literacy programmes to assess the impact on functional youth literacy. 4.3: Non-formal services (FEC and CLC) are well established and contribute to increased adult and youth literacy rates	HLO 4: Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities	
5 Strategies 4 Strategies 2 Strategies 1 Strategy 1 Strategy 1 Strategy 1 Strategy 1 Strategy 3 Strategies 8 Strategies 7 Strategies 4 Strategies	5.1: Improved quality of upper secondary education to meet the needs of the labour market and higher education 5.2: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher trainee graduates leading to improved natural science teaching at secondary level. 5.3: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET 5.4: Improved relevance of TVET programmes to demands of the 9 th NSEDP 5.5: Improved quality of TVET programmes. 5.6: Improved quality of TVET teachers. 5.7: Strengthened TVET cooperation with public, private and international organisations 5.8: Strengthened TVET management. 5.9: National Qualifications Framework links non-formal and TVET qualifications and is aligned with the ASEAN QF. 5.10: Strengthened university teaching and research programmes in 9th NSEDP priority areas, 5.11: Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments 5.12: Legislation for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities	HLO 5: The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering employment is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP	
8 Strategies 3 Strategies 5 Strategies 4 Strategies 3 Strategies	6.1: Strengthened MoES organisational structure at central, provincial and district levels including institutionalisation of SBM and role of VEDCs 6.2: HRD strategy is implemented, including DESB and PESS staff allocated according to need and provided with appropriate capacity building 6.3: Strengthened central TAC and PBC, using evidence from ASCEPs and integrated LESMIS 6.4: M&E framework for ESSDP 2021-25 is implemented on an annual basis 6.5: Education system emergency preparedness to disasters strengthened	HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently	
2 Strategies 1 Strategy 2 Strategies 1 Strategy	7.1: The ESSDP financing plan includes an explicit expenditure policy that reflects the need to address disparities and improve learning outcomes. 7.2: ESGW reviews and endorses the updated mid-term financing plan for ESSDP. 7.3: Development partners provide predictable financial support aligned to ESSDP priority targets and that proposed new interventions are sustainable 7.4: Resources mobilised through more active international cooperation, including with private philanthropic organisations	HLO 7: Disparities are reduced through a supporting ESSDP financing plan	
4 Strategies 9 Strategies 2 Strategies 3 Strategies 2 strategies	8.1. Increased the number and quality of Sports Club, public and social in Village, district and province/capital level, public and private organizations, companies, factories. And develop the sport with disability to be increased in quantity, quality into international level 8.2. Learning-teaching physical and arts education has been widely implemented, the number of the teachers/technical personnel of physical education, the number of students attending sports competition at national, regional and international level are increased 8.3. Talented Athletes, National Athletes and Professional Athletes are equipped with Sub-Regional, Regional and International Standards 8.4. Executives, coaches, referees and sports scientists are competent in line with international standards; maintain and utilize sports infrastructure to maximum benefit 8.5. The management of elite sports strengthened	HLO 8: Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international stages makes pride to all Lao people	

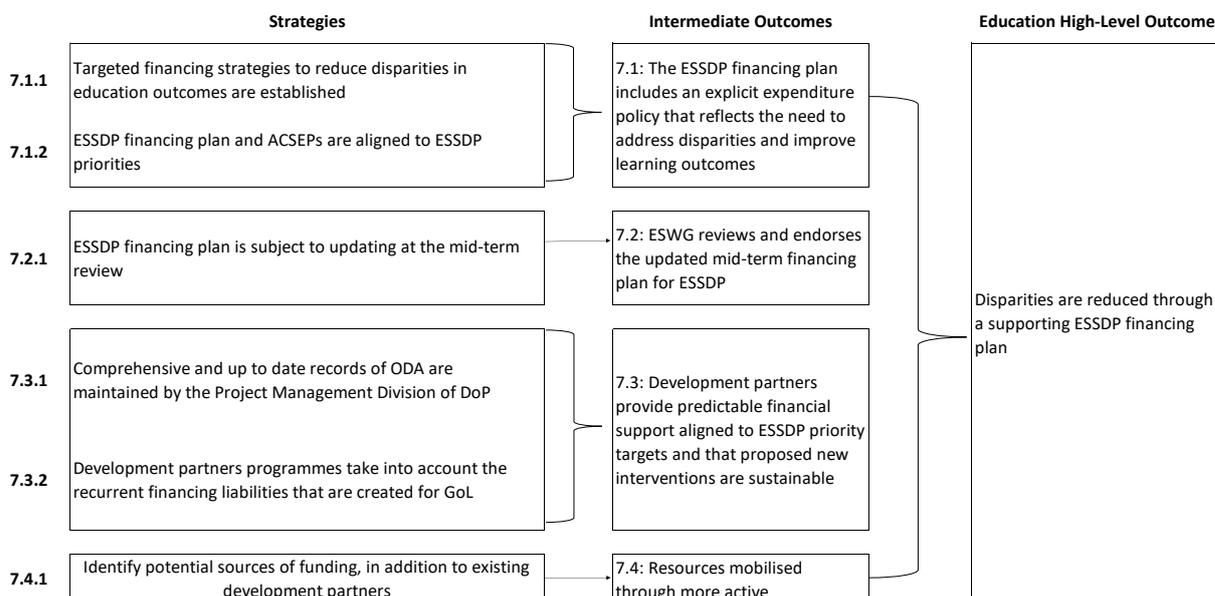
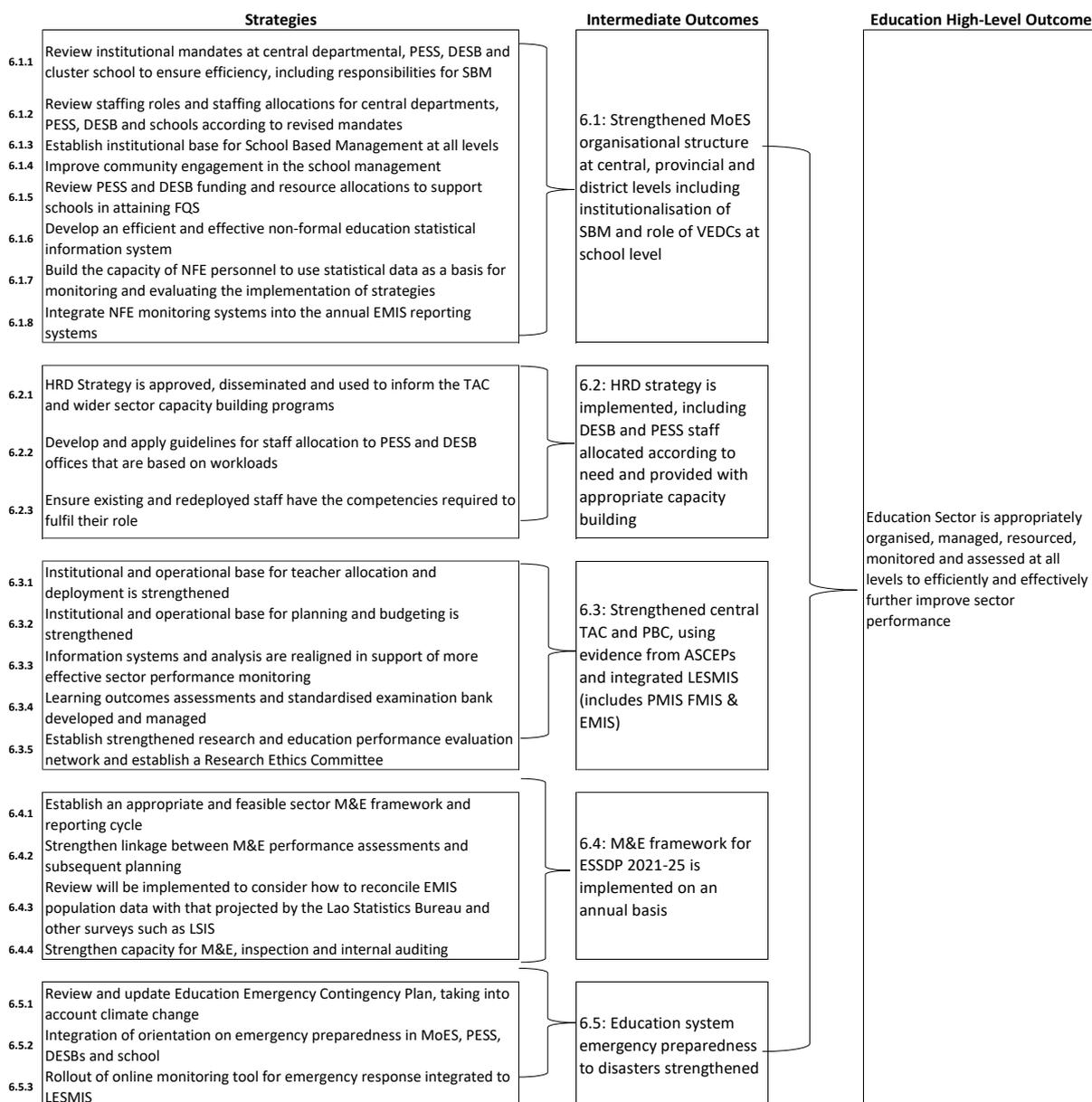
Strategies	Intermediate Outcomes	Education High-Level Outcome
1.1.1 Review of the number of subjects and their time allocation in grades 1 and 2 of primary education. 1.1.2 Improve and revise primary curriculum and ensure the contents are appropriate and inclusive for the country (Prim & LS) 1.1.3 Improve student time on task in the classroom (Prim) 1.1.4 Roll out new curricula nationwide (LS) 1.1.5 Ensure continuity between G5 and M1 school curricula. (LS) 1.1.6 A focus on classroom-based assessment across all lower secondary schools in Lao PDR	1.1 Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels	HLO 1: Increased number of graduates at all levels with improved learning outcomes with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity
1.2.1 Strengthen the primary Grade 5 and Grade 9 examination system 1.2.2 Standardised student learning assessment at G3, G5 & G9 (M4) 1.2.3 Strengthening teachers' capacities to assess student learning using formative and summative assessment practices (prim) 1.2.4 Teacher Guides will be provided to enhance assessment practices (LS) 1.2.5 Develop a follow-up plan to monitor the learning outcome of M 6 student. 1.2.6 A coordination plan for the national in-service teacher training for implementation of the new curriculum is developed and implemented 1.2.7 Improved support is provided for multi-grade teachers to enhance teaching and learning in multi-grade classes at primary education level	1.2 Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M6	
1.3.1 Prioritised and targeted expansion of the one-year pre-primary program subject to quality improvements to provide more access in remote and more disadvantaged areas 1.3.2 Scaling up of proven (more research may be needed) innovations/pilots for 3-5-year-olds such as multi-age teaching 1.3.3 Encourage individuals, organizations, local and international investors to invest in ECE development. 1.3.4 Development of a sustainable and cost-effective targeted school meals strategy and action plan (ECE and Prim) 1.3.5 Expansion of WASH facilities and programs at all level 1.3.6 Expand gender, sex education, life skills, nutrition, disaster prevention, and UXO risk programs to primary schools 1.3.7 Improve the school environment to align with FQS (Prim and LS) 1.3.8 Implement progressive promotion policy more effectively, including provision of appropriate remedial support 1.3.9 Promote Reading through provision of more age-appropriate reading materials and advocacy campaigns 1.3.10 Review the current approach to expanding access to lower secondary, including the current 5+4+3 structure. 1.3.11 Improve current lower secondary education services in all schools 1.3.12 Develop an action plan to enable the efficient effective and sustainable targeted expansion of upper secondary education (US) 1.3.13 Provide scholarships to poor student in remote schools to improve enrolment rate (LS) 1.3.14 Encourage lower secondary graduates with high academic performance to continue to upper secondary (US) 1.3.15 Provide interventions to reduce drop-out rate in upper secondary education (US) 1.3.16 Establish a qualifications framework linking formal and non-formal school-level education qualifications (LS) 1.3.17 Expand non-formal education to remote areas, create conditions for disadvantaged groups to receive equal and equitable education 1.3.18 Promote Lifelong Learning for all 1.3.19 Develop short and flexible training courses that cover literacy and job skills in the local community using video training on YouTube or other leaning channels, depending on the availability of communities, local target groups and learners 1.3.20 Review, approve and implement an education sector disaster contingency plan, taking into account climate change 1.3.21 Review and approve student early marriage and/or pregnancy policy for re-entry to schooling	1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates	
1.4.1 Provide vocational upper secondary training at ethnic boarding schools using existing TVET facilities in 11 provinces 1.4.2 Further expansion of upper secondary vocational education	1.4: Promote extension of vocational	
1.5.1 Feasibility study to progressively establish and resource primary and lower secondary school clusters in the 40 priority districts 1.5.2 Supply teachers and provide necessary incentives to students and teachers in rural and remote primary schools 1.5.3 Prioritise improving Lower secondary education services in disadvantaged areas 1.5.4 ToRs and legislation are developed for administrative clusters across the 40 priority districts 1.5.5 Administrative clusters are established in each of the 40 priority districts and resource allocation prioritised to these districts 1.5.6 Provide scholarships for upper secondary students from 40 priority districts 1.5.7 Provide more TA support 1.5.8 TAC and PBC in collaboration with IEC will develop and implement a strategy to reduce disparities in supply of teachers to rural and remote schools 1.5.9 Develop and implement mathematics and literacy "boost"-programs for all pedagogical advisors, principals, teachers, in the 40 target districts	1.5: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters	

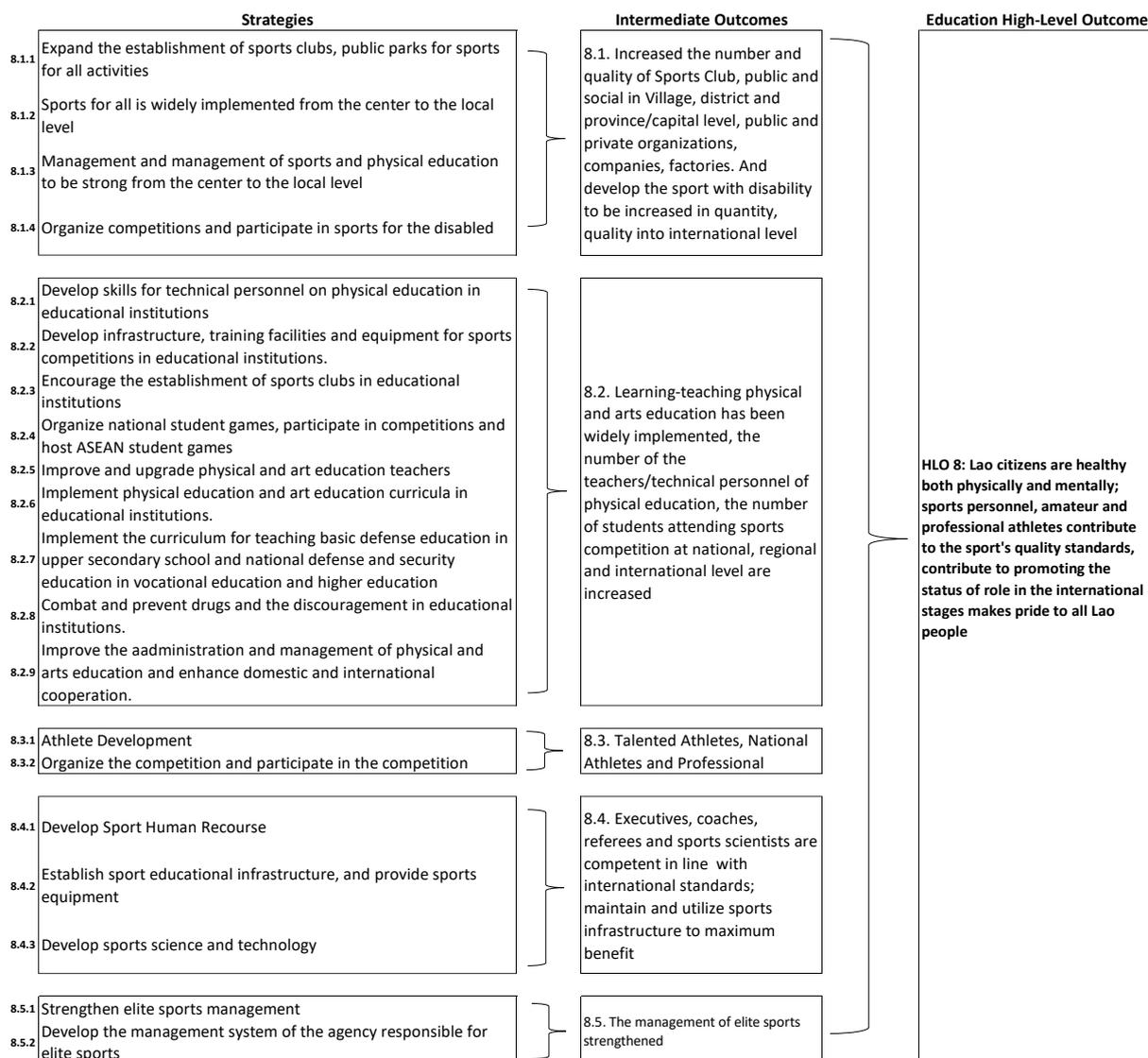


	Strategies	Intermediate Outcomes	Education High-Level Outcome
3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.3 3.1.4	<p>FQS: for schools are developed, disseminated and established as simple sustainable school level assessment system</p> <p>Develop and approve an action plan for the use of ECE FQS information at the DESB level to support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity</p> <p>Relevant units in all DESB have the capacity to identify weaknesses based on an internal quality assurance process</p> <p>PESS assesses the extent to which FQS inform District Education Development to reduce disparities</p>	3.1: FQS for ECE education forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning.	HLO 3: All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively alongside strengthened management to improve student learning outcomes
3.2.1 3.2.2 3.2.3 3.2.4 3.2.5 3.2.6 3.2.7 3.2.8 3.2.9 3.2.10	<p>FQS for ECE are established (primary FQS have already been developed)</p> <p>Implement FQS for primary education</p> <p>Develop and approve an action plan for the use of primary FQS information at the DESB level and support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity</p> <p>Support the implementation of improved School Based Management, including training of principals</p> <p>FQS for secondary education are developed and established</p> <p>An action plan for the use of secondary FQS information at the DESB level is developed</p> <p>approved and support DESB prioritisation and planning processes to reduce disparity</p> <p>Support the implementation of improved School Based Management</p> <p>Develop and implementation of a simple sustainable school level assessment system for the lower secondary FQS that promote community engagement and informs the DESB prioritisation and planning process to reduce disparity and including a quality assurance mechanism</p> <p>National and sub-national structures and systems are realigned to support the prioritisation of FQS attainment in all ECE, primary and secondary schools</p>	3.2: A school self-evaluation and development planning process based on FQS that informs district level planning and targeting of support	
3.3.1 3.3.2 3.3.3	<p>Ensure SBG funding levels and eligible expenditures are more responsive to the needs of each school, as determined by FQS</p> <p>SBG policy, formula and expenditure items are reviewed, revised and aligned to ESSDP2021-25 policies</p> <p>Review the current SGB disbursement system to improve timeliness and verification of SBG delivery and efficiency of SBG fund collection for small and remote schools</p>	3.3 School Block Grants are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	
3.4.1 3.4.2 3.4.3 3.4.4 3.4.5 3.4.6	<p>Reduce disparity in teacher supply in schools</p> <p>A review of the geographical distribution of public schools, particularly primary schools, will be undertaken to identify possible gains in efficiency of teacher allocation through consolidation of small schools closely located to other schools.</p> <p>Implementation of the new teacher allocation guidelines is monitored for 80% compliance using accurate data, impact and efficiency</p> <p>Reducing teacher absenteeism, including by a) trialling a mobile app for reporting teacher absenteeism by VEDCs and parents as part of the LESMIS strengthening; b) media campaign on the importance and role of VEDC, parents and others for reducing teacher absenteeism</p> <p>Establish career pathways for teaching professions including PA</p> <p>Management and institutional structures governing teacher allocation and redeployment will be strengthened to support more equitable provision</p>	3.4 Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	
3.5.1 3.5.2 3.5.3 3.5.4 3.5.5 3.5.6	<p>Reduce disparity in textbook and teacher guide supply and allocation in primary schools</p> <p>Develop and implement prioritisation strategy to ensure all schools attain at least 80% of their textbook and teacher guide requirements</p> <p>Determine the most cost-effective approach to monitoring textbook availability (TMIS or expanded EMIS)</p> <p>Textbook replenishment budget is reviewed and updated in order to ensure sustainable provision</p> <p>Strengthen the data systems currently used to support textbook ordering, prioritisation, and distribution</p> <p>Textbook management and disbursement practices at central and DESB level are strengthened to improve efficiency and reduce disparity, including development of a textbook MIS.</p>	3.5 Textbook provision is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	
3.6.1 3.6.2	<p>Expansion of inclusive WASH facilities and programs</p> <p>Strengthen institutional and management systems required to oversee a national WASH programme across ECE, primary and secondary education.</p>	3.6 All schools are supported to achieve basic WASH facilities	









Annex 2: ESSDP 2021-25: Consultation Process

Who	Date	Purpose
Senior Mangers MoES departments	23/8/2019	Discuss draft structure and outcomes with MoES senior managers
IEDWG	30/8/2019	Discuss structure and draft high-level outcomes with development partners
MoES line departments	23/9/2019	Discussion about format of Part II: sub-sector plans
DECE, DGE, DTVET, DNFE, DHE, DTE, TVETR	September to November 2019	Individual department meetings to discuss draft sub-sector plans
MoES and Development Partners	5/11/2019	Sub-sector plans for post-basic departments
6 PESS, 12 DESB, 24 school principals and 20 students	7-8 November 2019	Sub-national consultation in Luangprabang
4 PESS, 8 DESB, and 16 school principals	11-12 November 2019	Sub-national consultation in Pakse
MoES staff from Admin & Management group & Development partners	19/11/2019	Individual department meetings linked to the administration and management sub-sector plan to discuss draft sub-sector plans
DGE	20/11/2019	Discuss draft sub-sector plans from primary, lower and upper secondary
Executive ESWG meeting	21/11/2019	Seek feedback on policy priorities for ESSDP 2021-25
Planning and Budgeting staff from PESS + DoF and DoP staff	22-24/1/2020	ACSEP preparation for ESSDP
Representative from UNESCO, Bangkok, Faculty of Education of NOUL, JICA, BEQUAL, DTE, Depts of Planning	11/2/2020	Discuss draft sub-sector plans from Teacher Education
Focal Group 1	15/3/2020	Discuss ESSDP and ECE sub-sector plan
Technical Committee	19/5/2020	Discuss draft sub-sector plans for all sub sectors
Inclusive Education TWG (FG4)	24/6/2020	Discuss Inclusive Education aspects of ESSDP
Focal Group 4	26/6/2020	Discuss Admin & Management sub-sector plan, Financing Plan and M&E Framework
MoES Line departments	15-16 July 2020	Discuss sub-sector plans of ESSDP & Part I
4 PESS, 8 DESB, and 16 school principals	3-4 August 2020	Sub-national consultation in Oudomxay
Internal MoES discussion	6/8/2020	All departments of MoES, Vientiane
IEDWG	7/8/2020	Development partners discussion
ESWG	11/8/2020	One-day workshop of all ESWG members, including response to appraisal report
4 PESS, 8 DESB, and 16 school principals	13-14 August 2020	Sub-national consultation in Savannakhet
Executive ESWG	18/8/2020	Endorsement of final ESSDP package, including response to appraisal report by ESWG
Annual MoES conference	27-28 August 2020	Endorsement of final ESSDP package, including response to appraisal report by Annual Conference

Annex 3: List of MoES 40 priority districts – identified on basis of poor educational performance

No	Province	District
1	Vientiane Capital	1. Sangthong
2	Phongsaly	2. Samphan
3	Louangnamtha	3. Long
4	Bokeo	4. Meung
5	Oudomxay	5. Nga
		6. Houn
		7. Pakbeng
6	Louangprabang	8. Phonthong
		9. Pak Ou
7	Xayabouly	10. Saysathan
8	Xiengkhoung	11. Nonghead
9	Houaphan	12. Kouan
		13. Houamuang
		14. Xam Tai
10	Vientiane Province	15. Feuang
11	Bolikhamsay	16. Saychamphone
12	Khammouane	17. Nakay
		18. Boulapha
		19. Mahaxai
		20. Gnommarat
		21. Xaibouathong
13	Savannakhet	22. Xepone
		23. Phin
		24. Xonbouli
		25. Phalanxai
		26. Nong
14	Champassack	27. Bachingchareunsouk
		28. Khong
		29. Soukhouma
		30. Mounlapamok
15	Saravan	31. Laongam
		32. Ta Oy
		33. Lakhonpheng
16	Xekong	34. Dakcheung
		35. Lamam
		36. Kaleum
17	Attapue	37. Phouvong
		38. Sanxai
		39. Xaisettha
18	Xaysomboun	40. Longchaeng

Annex 4: Comparison of education performance: 40 priority districts and national average

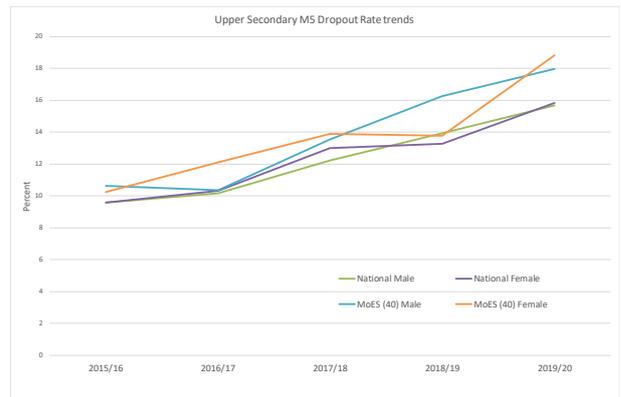
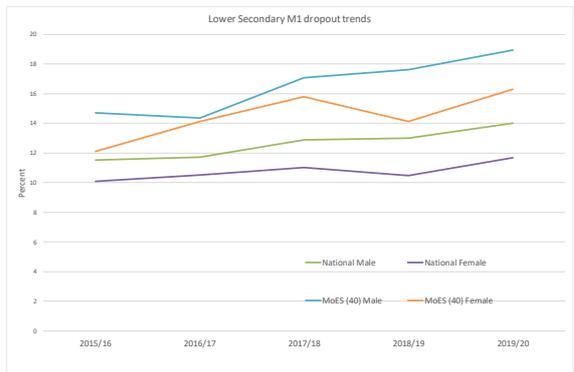
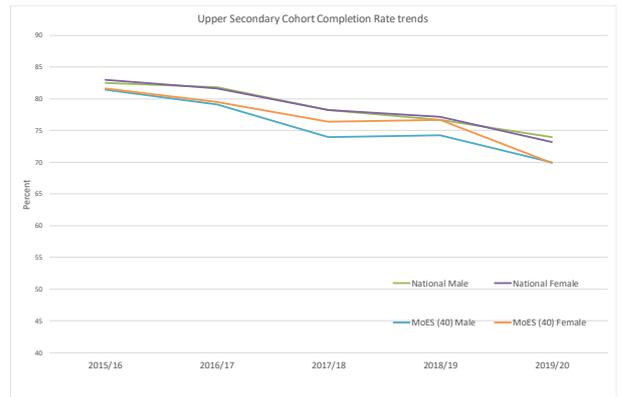
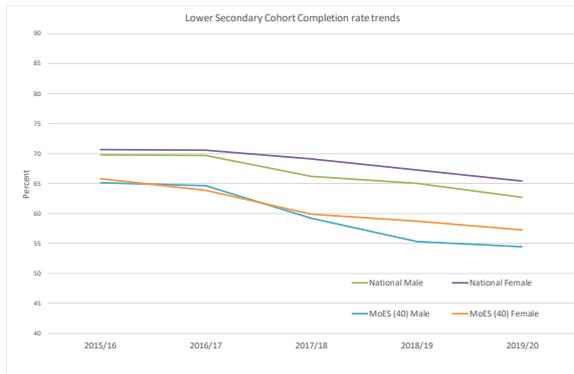
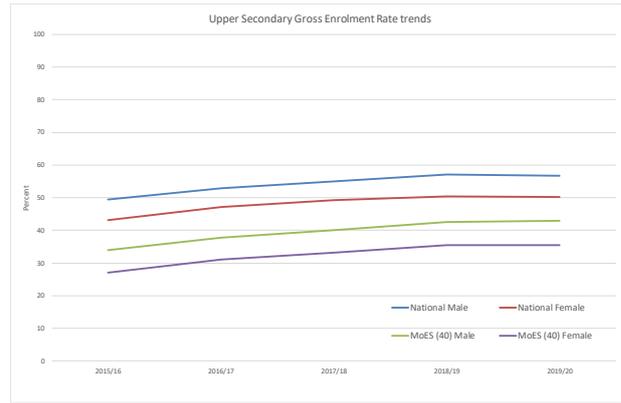
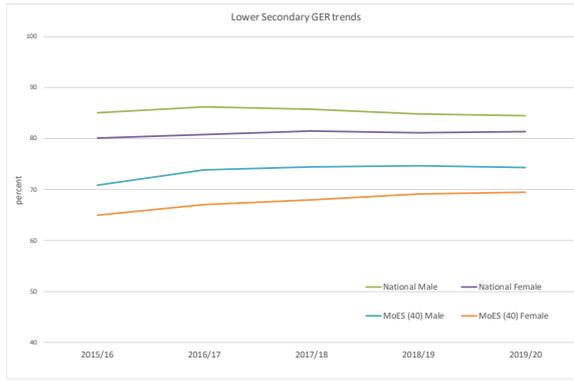
Selected indicators

Primary Education



Source: MoES EMIS

Secondary Education



Source: MoES EMIS

Annex 5: Risk and Mitigation ESSDP 2021-25

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
Financial			
<p>Sufficient government recurrent and capital budget to enable the implementation of ESSDP is not provided.</p> <p>The ESSDP highlights the need for continued advocacy from Development Partners and education sector stakeholders to support the provision of sufficient recurrent and capital budget to implement ESSDP 2021-25 and in line with government commitments of 17% of public expenditures being gradually allocated to the sector</p>	Very High	High	<p>The ESSDP expenditure policy has been developed in order to provide an advocacy tool to support MoES in securing a fair share of the State Budget for the education sector, in the context of National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) priorities and the hard budget constraint, to ensure the sustainability of the expanding education system.</p>
<p>Sufficient recurrent and capital budget to enable the implementation of even the steady-state requirements is not provided.</p> <p>The steady-state budget scenario is intended to outline the financial requirements needed to maintain the system with no improvement or deterioration. As such it is intended to provide a strong advocacy tool in support of at least maintaining this minimum threshold of financing.</p>	- High	Very High	<p>In the event that budget allocations are proposed that will fall below this level, the ESSDP expenditure policy provides the basis for determining which education sector services will need to be 'protected' and which ones will have to be cut. The clear presentation of where these cuts in services will fall will provide a final advocacy tool for presentation to the wider government.</p>
<p>Sector government budgets are not allocated in accordance with ESSDP priorities and the policy priority to primary education may not be followed at the sub-national level.</p> <p>The education sector does not have full discretion over the allocation of its budgets. Wages and allowances are determined externally. Civil service intake is capped and retrenchment of existing staff is not feasible. Many budget line allocations (such as school operating budgets) are governed by regulations, protocols and funding formula, and non-compliance with these protocols can have additional negative effects beyond the obvious reduction in resources</p>	- High	High	<p>The Planning and Budgeting Committee and the Teacher Allocation Committee mandates are strengthened.</p> <p>The ESSDP expenditure policy has been developed in order to direct and prioritise the areas of discretionary budgeting available to MoES. It has been developed and presented as a hierarchy of priorities to support the incremental funding of ESSDP priorities based on marginal budget increases over and above the steady state level.</p> <p>Under the potential conditions where the sector budget falls below even the steady state budget scenario the same expenditure policy will be used to provide the hierarchy of priorities for where budgets will be cut.</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
			At the budget operation level, under ESSDP 2021-25 the continued strengthening of the ACSEP and PBMIS systems, together with increased experience of the budget hearing process should assist in ensuring that budget line allocations and budget revisions are made in a more informed manner that reflect both central priorities and specific local conditions.
<p>External programmes of support are not aligned with ESSDP priorities.</p> <p>Through the ESWG, development partners have shown a strong commitment to align their support to sector priorities and strategies. That said DPs are accountable to their governments and organisations and are restricted to supporting the national priorities that are aligned with their own organisational remits and priorities. This has the potential to distort sector priorities.</p>	Low	Medium	The ESSDP has been developed through a long and in-depth process of consultation with DPs and reflects and integrates many of their operational constraints into the overall framework. An Executive-level ESWG meeting in November 2019 gained consensus on sector priorities during 2021-25. Moreover, moving forward the ESSDP highlights the need for development partners and other stakeholders to direct their financial support toward the ESSDP priorities outlined in the expenditure policy, and are in support of MoES identified disadvantaged districts or have national coverage.
<p>High recurrent costs legacies from externally financed interventions can compromise current and future priorities within the sector. It is anticipated and acknowledged that development partner (DPs) financial and programme support will be needed as an important contribution to implementation of the ESSDP.</p> <p>However, given the severe financial constraints faced by the sector even beneficial programmes may be beyond the scope of the sector budget. As a result, the Ministry can often be faced with the choice of closing down a relatively successful programme, or financing it at levels that compromise its effectiveness, and /or draw resources from higher priority areas.</p>	Medium	High	To mitigate against this, ESSDP 2021-25 will ensure that the ToRs of ESWG are updated to ensure that all new development partner programmes take into account and explicitly state the recurrent financing liabilities that are created through investment and development programmes before any MoU is signed.
Performance assessments			

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Assessment of sector and programme performance are not fully informed by the resource allocation provided.</p> <p>Previous ESDPs have included an overall financial framework to resource priority programmes and a set of key targets to be attained under the assumption that the resources have been provided in full. This undermines effective performance assessments.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>ESSDP 2021-25 also includes an overall financial framework, priority programmes and related key targets, but this is supplemented by an additional 'steady-state' budget that is intended to show the baseline funding required to maintain sector performance at its current level and thereby provide a form of 'baseline' by which changes in performance can be more effectively measured in relation to the level of funding provided.</p> <p>The Mid-term review will also be used to reflect upon progress and targets in light of the annual budget and external support provided.</p>
<p>The baseline 'Steady state' budget does not accurately reflect a no-change scenario.</p> <p>In general changes in performance in the education sector take a very long time to become evident through the key indicators of performance. Falling quality of services can persist for several years before students begin to drop-out or exam results begin to decline noticeably.</p> <p>The sector itself does not exist in a static state that can be fully mirrored in a steady state budget. Current student progression rates and shifts in demography mean that even if all else remains the same the number of students in each sub-sector may change.</p> <p>It is far from certain that the current level of resource provision (building numbers, teacher numbers, etc.) that has been used as the foundation of steady state budget is sufficient to maintain current performance. A key concern remains that the historic levels of under-funding to the sector have yet to fully impact on performance. In effect the assumed 'steady state' scenario may be merely sufficient to</p>	High	High	<p>To as great extent as possible the 'steady-state' budget was developed on the basis of merely maintaining the current status quo. Building can be amortised, textbooks replenished according to average lifespans and so forth. Assumptions on amortisation rates must therefore be made.</p> <p>A finance model that links budgets to student numbers (i.e. for teacher allocation, school grants, and textbooks) has been used. However, it does not cater for shifts within the system – a school with falling numbers may have to switch to multi-grading which in the absence of multi-grade teacher training (which is the case under the steady-state) is likely to result in a fall in quality. As this is the first time this approach has been developed and used the main mitigation will be through experience and reflection at the point of the mid-term review.</p> <p>,</p> <p>Technical discussions were held as to whether to base the steady-state scenario more clearly upon the current ESDP 2016-20 policies and protocols, such as the required number of pedagogical adviser visits rather than the current actual, or upon elements of the Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) which are viewed as being the</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>ensure a steady rate of decline in performance.</p>			<p>minimum requirements for a school to function effectively. However, even these very basic levels of provision would have pushed the steady-state budget requirements to a level that appears unlikely to be attainable under current circumstances. Consequently, the ‘steady state’ scenario is based on a resourcing level below that required to enable all schools to be able to function at the most basic level.</p> <p>Currently there are limited, if any, means of mitigating against this risk, though there may be some opportunity to reflect upon its potential impact at the mid-term review. The more positive aspect is that in introducing the steady-state approach ESSDP 2021-25 is establishing a foundation that can be strengthened and built upon in future years. In addition, it includes a number of priority strategies that may assist in providing a clearer view on what constitutes a ‘steady-state’ budget.</p> <p>For example, ensuring that all schools reach the basic levels required to function and to be held accountable for performance through the establishment of the FQS as a key planning, resource allocation and monitoring tool for service delivery may in the future provide a more robust basis for assessing the minimum resource requirements needed to prevent a decline in performance.</p>
<p>Sub-National Engagement</p>			
<p>There is a disjoint between national and sub-national and sub-sectoral priorities in implementing ESSDP 2021-25</p> <p>The Lao Budget Law and principles of deconcentration limit the extent to which the central level can “enforce” policy priorities at the sub-national level.</p>	<p>Low Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>During the development of the ESSDP 2021-25, extensive and iterative consultations were held at sub-national level and with stakeholders from across the sub-sectors. Major round-table presentations and discussions on key priorities and strategies provided important stick takes and direction to the process.</p> <p>At operational level, under ESSDP 2021-25 the continued strengthening of the ACSEP and PBMIS systems, together with increased experience of the budget</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
			<p>hearing process should provide assist in ensuring that budget line allocations, and budget revisions are made in a more informed manner that reflect specific local conditions. ESSDP 2021-25 is also focussing on providing more clear frameworks and guidance to assist sub-national offices and schools in allocating and reallocating their resources, though initiatives such as the FQS, teacher allocation protocols, textbook allocation protocols etc. These frameworks are to be provided alongside greater clarity on the funding formula that dictate the discretionary budget allocations to sub-national level.</p> <p>Collectively these approaches should in general ensure a greater synergy between central policies and directives and subnational needs and requirements.</p>
<p>There is a disjoint between national and sub-national priorities for teacher deployment More effective and equitable teacher allocation across the system is a critical priority. However, tensions can exist between central and sub-national priorities for teacher provision. A district that posts teachers to more remote under-staffed schools may face lower levels of teacher retention that those that post them to more urban or peri-urban schools. Political or social pressure at local levels may also skew the pattern of teacher assignment.</p>	Medium	High	<p>Sub-national feedback during the development of ESSDP strongly indicated that having much clearer and strictly applied protocol for teacher assignment would be highly welcome. welcome National roll-out of the primary teacher allocation protocols, a strengthened mandate for the Teacher Allocation Committee, enabling it to set stricter and clearer protocols governing the prioritisation of teacher allocation, and the establishment of a national target that all schools will be assured of the provision of more than 80% of their actual teacher requirement. This target will be reflected in the TAC priority framework and is to ensure that the most under-staffed and the smallest schools are prioritised ahead of larger or more marginally under-staffed schools.</p>
<p>Inefficient distribution of primary schools hampers the more equitable distribution of teachers at primary level</p> <p>Primary education in Laos is characterised by having a very large proportion of very small schools, to some extent as a result of a school</p>	High	Medium-High	<p>Merging small primary schools that are in close proximity will enable a reduction in the incidence of multi-grade teaching, improved cover for teacher absence, and potentially support a more equitable and effective distribution of the teaching force. However, school mergers are politically difficult and such a process may face</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>in every village policy. A consequence of this is that the number of teacher required is very high. Analysis of teacher distribution shows that even with extensive use of multi-grade teaching (for which there is minimal if any training) and class maximums of 50 students the national PTR of 25:1 is barely enough to meet the requirements.</p>			<p>resistance from communities, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>ESSDP 2021-25 recognises the need to conduct a review of the potential for school mergers. The evidence base will draw upon the analysis of school level staffing compliance and GPS mapping. This will allow the analysis and recommendations to be informed by local conditions. Where mergers or school consolidation is recommended advocacy tools will be developed and disseminated to enable DESB, schools and communities to understand the process and the implications. Accompanying procedures to 'recompense' merging schools, such as increased priority for new teacher allocation will be considered and developed. It is anticipated that key principles such as retaining teachers within a district will be adhered to.</p>
<p>System wide Change</p>			
<p>Access to compulsory lower secondary education does not become more equitable. The current structure and approach used in lower secondary education was designed to serve a smaller cohort of the population rather than provide a universal service. The policy decision to expand lower secondary to provide universal and equitable access was highly welcome. However, under present and foreseeable conditions the current structure and approach will not be able to provide equitable universal lower secondary education.</p> <p>The learning outcomes of primary students indicate that the present five years of primary education is insufficient to provide anything close to universal readiness for entry into lower secondary. The four years of lower secondary education is comparatively costly due to the length of time and the breadth of subjects provided. It</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Very High</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of the years of school education provided at each level, the breadth of subjects provided, whether the form of education provision should be homogenous in all areas etc. needs to be conducted in order to provide recommendations for a revised education structure that can assure universal lower secondary education in a financially feasible, fair and equitable manner.</p> <p>Such a widespread review and potential realignment of the system will inevitably generate resistance to change. This could result in 'review-paralysis' or a continuation of the status quo. It is also feasible that the resources required to transition to a new system are not made available.</p> <p>To mitigate against these risks the ESSDP 2021-25 calls upon stakeholders and partners to engage in the review process to support the sector's efforts to attain universal lower secondary education of equitable quality for all.</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>appears to be increasingly wasted on students who do not have the foundational level of learning to benefit from these services and who then drop-out.</p> <p>The envisaged impact of retaining the current system would be an eventual halt of the expansion of lower secondary services or an expansion into more rural and remote areas that was of a significantly sub-standard compared to that in urban and peri-urban areas. In summary this would effectively result in a restricted system and or a two-tier system with rural and remote areas receiving either poorer quality services or no service.</p>			<p>If, for whatever reason it is not possible to re-structure lower secondary education to meet this goal then alternative feasible approaches to the provision of more equitable lower secondary education will be reviewed.</p>
<p>Absorptive capacity of MoES is insufficient to implement radically new approaches³⁵</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Externally funded interventions that introduce new approaches; for example, LESMIS, GIS platform for disaster response and on-line learning, include sufficient support to allow relevant MoES staff additional time allocations to understand and implement the new approaches, including payment of salaries to additional local staff in the short to medium term.</p>
<p>Externalities:</p>			
<p>The impact of disasters undermines progress made in the sector.</p> <p>The education sector and the students and communities it serves are vulnerable to the impact of disasters. Periodically the sector is affected by flooding. Floods can destroy school resources such as textbooks and furniture, and undermine the physical infrastructure. It is feasible that climate change, the expansion of dams, and deforestation within</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High (In some areas)</p>	<p>. The unforeseen nature of disasters presents a serious challenge to the development of approaches and systems that mitigate this risk. An extensive review of the approaches to be adopted to mitigate against disasters will be required. That said, a critical foundation of any response system is through strengthened information systems that can identify the location, severity and impact of disasters, and where feasible provide early warning</p>

³⁵ Previous examples include BEQUAL support for a MoES e-mail system based on Microsoft Exchange and the province-wide ICT in Education Project

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Laos may affect the prevalence and severity of floods. Food insecurity exacerbated by climate or environmental change also presents a clear threat to students and communities.</p> <p>More recently it has become clear that viruses and disease (such as Covid-19) can pose significant threats to society and to the economic systems under-pinning the provision of public services</p> <p>In addition, the on-going Covid-19 disaster has brought increased focus to the necessity of ensuring that all schools provide a safe environment for students in respect to the provision of basic latrine, hand-washing and potable water facilities in all schools. If the education sector disaster contingency plan is to include disaster preventative measures as well as emergency response then it can be anticipated that this important strategy will be included.</p>			<p>and preventative as well as responsive action.</p> <p>MoES has committed to prepare an education sector disaster contingency plan including a GIS enabled platform for monitoring and planning of emergency preparedness and response and linked to the new LESMIS. Calling upon local knowledge to develop protocols and procedures for disaster response that meet national standards but also encompass the need for flexibility at local level will be important in developing such the disaster response and the protocols to be enacted at national and sub- national level.</p> <p>Ring-fencing resources that can be rapidly mobilised to respond to disasters presents a particular challenge for MoES given its current levels of under-funding and will likely depend on external financing. The disaster contingency plan will identify potential national and subnational areas for accessing resources and support. Where feasible the possibility of building in systemic stockpiles will be reviewed within the plan (one option could be textbooks at district level and such an approach could dovetail with TAC development of the protocols for prioritising textbook provision).</p>
COVID-19	Medium	Medium	<p>The on-going Covid-19 disaster has brought increased focus to the necessity of ensuring that all schools provide a safe environment for students in respect to the provision of basic latrine, hand-washing and potable water facilities in all schools. If the education sector disaster contingency plan is to include disaster preventative measures as well as emergency response then it can be anticipated that this important strategy will be included</p>
Scope of the Plan			
ESSDP 2021-25 is overly ambitious, particularly in respect to the	Very High	Debate-able	More efficient and equitable resource allocations require effective

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>administration and management reforms.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that overall the ESSDP 2021-25 may be overly ambitious, it is designed to be for pragmatic reasons. Whilst each individual policy or expansion of services may be viable in and of itself in totality the overall platform of policies may stretch the resources provided to the sector, and the capacity to reform the within the sector. In respect to the budget, the enhanced quality scenario does require a larger budget than is currently made available to the sector but when expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure the overall level of funding required is not unreasonably ambitious, particularly as this is supplemented through considerable support from development partners. The main area where there is a risk of over-stretch is in respect to the administration and management reforms and this over-ambition is a necessity.</p> <p>For a number of years the sector has been subject to persistent underfunding. This is likely to be exacerbated due to the impact of Covid-19. Recurrent budgets are unlikely to increase at the rate required to enable service improvement and poverty and food insecurity is anticipated to increase reducing the impact of current service provision particularly in poorer and remoter areas.</p> <p>All of the administration and management reforms outlined in ESSDP will not be achieved. Internal system reforms such as these are generally more challenging to achieve than an expansion of service delivery or even a change in curriculum. They will often require</p>			<p>management practices and protocols supported by reliable information systems –). There are a significant number of areas where the education sector can improve and strengthen its management practices and the ESSDP has to a great extent restricted the focus to those areas where significant improvements in the equity and efficiency of resource allocation can be most improved.</p> <p>Some external partners, may due to their own organisational priorities, be drawn to supporting management reforms that cannot be sufficiently supported through the government budget</p> <p>In summary it can be argued probably correctly that there may be ‘too many’ reforms outlined in ESSDP. However, experience shows that some will wither on the vine, whilst other take root. Most importantly in presenting these priority management reforms there is a greater likelihood of each one being taken forward and each one has the potential for improving the efficiency and equity with which resources are used. Consequently, if an over ambitious platform of reform results in even one additional reform taking place then it is a calculated risk worth taking.</p>

Risk/context	Prob-ability	Impact	Mitigation
<p>negotiation and agreement from other Ministries and parts of the government and are more likely to face internal resistance to change. Some reforms will stall completely for reasons as yet unforeseen, the positive being that this will release some capacity to take forward other reforms. Other reforms will prove less challenging than anticipated and may even attract support from other parts of the government which in turn may increase the possibility of acquiring sufficient funding to transition the system (for example reforms supporting greater fiscal probity or stronger financial reporting may attract support from Finance and Audit functions within the wider government).</p>			

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SUB-SECTOR PLAN**Table 1: Enrolment Projections for ECE**

ECED	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Enrolment of 3-5 years old	62.5%	63.6%	64.7%	65.9%	67.0%
Enrolment of 5 years old	83.3%	84.0%	84.7%	85.3%	86.0%
Number of Students (Public + Private)	240,437	248,315	256,370	264,607	273,029
Number of new teachers to be recruited	356	364	372	380	252
Number of new classrooms required (only public)	282	289	295	303	310

Table 2: Finance Projections for ECE (Million Kips)

ECED	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	328,444	341,027	353,982	367,319	381,048
Salary	300,800	312,617	324,793	337,337	350,259
Family allowance	6,618	6,810	7,005	7,204	7,406
Petrol allowance	6,013	6,187	6,364	6,545	6,728
School Block Grants	9,629	9,910	10,197	10,488	10,785
Teacher Training costs	2,068	2,128	2,189	2,251	2,314
Feeding program cost will be provided by MoES	1,595	1,595	1,595	1,595	1,595
Teaching & Learning materials	1,722	1,779	1,838	1,899	1,961
Capital	71,101	72,658	74,249	75,876	77,538
Classrooms Construction	42,290	43,297	44,325	45,375	46,448
Classrooms Replacement	12,912	13,345	13,788	14,242	14,706
Classrooms Maintenance	3,443	3,559	3,677	3,798	3,922
WASH construction	42	42	42	42	42
WASH maintenance/replacement	1,841	1,842	1,844	1,845	1,847
Feeding program cost will be provided by DPs	10,574	10,574	10,574	10,574	10,574
Total	399,546	413,685	428,231	443,195	458,586

³⁶ Steady State Scenario

Table 3: Expected external financing (kip = millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
ECE	50,638	48,855	48,969	43,036	43,036

PRIMARY EDUCATION SUBSECTOR PLAN

Table 4: Enrolment Projections in primary education

PRIMARY	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
NIR	98.6%	98.7%	98.8%	98.9%	99.0%
Repetition G 1	5.8 %	5.2 %	4.6 %	4.0 %	3.4 %
Repetition	2.8 %	2.5 %	2.2 %	1.8 %	1.5 %
Dropout G1	5.7 %	5.1 %	4.5 %	3.8 %	3.2 %
Dropout	3.9 %	3.4 %	3.0 %	2.5 %	2.1 %
Total number of students (Public and Private)	758,971	763,251	771,376	779,595	790,765
Number of new teachers required	269	499	654	663	786
Number of new classrooms required (only public)	0	0	139	142	278

Table 5: Finance Projections for primary education (Million Kips)

Primary	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	845,531	864,192	887,874	916,112	945,385
Salary	724,519	739,115	759,558	780,502	806,217
Family allowance	15,941	16,101	16,383	16,668	17,046
Petrol allowance	15,329	15,483	15,754	16,028	16,392
Scholarships	1,350	2,700	4,050	5,400	6,750
School Block Grants	49,268	49,594	50,172	50,756	51,534
Exams	7,642	7,659	7,892	7,962	8,175
Training costs	7,453	7,503	7,591	7,680	7,799
Textbooks replenishment	14,999	17,007	17,445	22,087	22,442
Feeding program of MoES	9,030	9,030	9,030	9,030	9,030

Capital	202,988	202,896	208,988	158,629	179,564
Construction	0	0	20,909	21,368	41,752
Replacement	54,439	54,375	54,584	54,798	55,215
Maintenance	14,517	14,500	14,556	14,613	14,724
Special school	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
WASH	662	662	662	662	662
WASH maintenance/ replacement	5,273	5,295	5,317	5,339	5,361
Textbooks production (new curriculum; Bequal/Jica)	14,073	13,691	13,153	0	0
Teacher training (new curricula)	52,173	52,523	37,957	0	0
Feeding program of DPs	59,850	59,850	59,850	59,850	59,850
Total	1,048,518	1,067,088	1,096,862	1,074,742	1,124,949

Table 6: Expected external financing (kip =- millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Primary education	84,669	164,527	171,606	171,901	171,901

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION SUB SECTOR PLAN

Table 7: Enrolment Projections in lower secondary education

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Transition rate of primary education graduates from grade 5 to M1 (%)	89.4%	90.8%	92.2%	93.6%	95%
Total number of students (public and private)	420,644	414,171	414,281	423,994	437,371
Number of new teacher required (public only)	Need to be redeployed	Need to be redeployed	299	770	956
Number of new classrooms required (public only)	0	0	53	452	606

Table 8: Finance Projections for lower secondary education (populated by DoP / DoF), Reflecting figures in Part 1 (Million Kips)

Lower secondary	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	860,974	856,120	863,340	890,783	926,434
Salary	772,435	767,711	775,149	800,794	833,838
Family allowance	16,536	16,272	16,267	16,639	17,154
Petrol allowance	14,425	14,159	14,154	14,528	15,047
School Block Grants	28,245	27,787	27,771	28,398	29,269
Scholarships	4,050	5,400	5,400	5,400	5,400
Exams	5,292	5,148	4,994	4,999	5,097
Training costs	5,167	5,085	5,083	5,200	5,361
Textbooks replenishment	14,823	14,557	14,522	14,826	15,270
Capital	106,151	105,314	118,075	219,502	260,315
Construction	0	0	13,285	112,879	151,622
Dorm construction	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
Replacement	43,965	43,215	42,671	42,804	43,932
Maintenance	6,914	6,827	6,849	7,029	7,272
Computer Labs	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
WASH maintenance/replacement	1,271	1,271	1,271	1,271	1,271
Textbooks production (new curriculum)	0	0	0	1,519	2,218
Total	967,124	961,434	981,415	1,110,284	1,186,749

Table 9: Expected external financing, (Combined lower and upper secondary) (kip = millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Secondary education	53,444	45,330	45,330	45,330	45,330

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION SUB SECTOR PLAN

Table 10: Enrolment Projections in upper secondary education

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Transition rate of lower secondary education graduates from M4 to M5 (%)	88.7%	88.3%	88.8%	89.4%	90%

Total number of students (public and private)	200,106	202,162	205,115	205,165	204,971
Number of new teachers to be recruited	0	218	262	127	115

Table 11: Finance Projections for upper secondary education (Million Kips)

Upper secondary	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	344,445	351,309	360,268	363,613	366,363
Salary	306,663	313,330	321,718	324,951	327,767
Family allowance	6,565	6,641	6,752	6,752	6,743
Petrol allowance	6,608	6,684	6,795	6,796	6,787
School Block Grants	13,617	13,749	13,942	13,938	13,918
Exams	3,528	3,415	3,536	3,652	3,628
Training costs	2,052	2,075	2,110	2,110	2,107
Textbooks replenishment	5,414	5,414	5,414	5,414	5,414
Capital	91,230	88,273	86,840	85,685	84,209
Dorm construction	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
Classrooms Replacement	32,095	29,545	28,311	27,315	26,042
Classrooms Maintenance	5,135	4,727	4,530	4,370	4,167
Labs Construction	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000
Total	435,676	439,582	447,108	449,298	450,572

Table 12: Expected external financing, (Combined lower and upper secondary) (kip == millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Secondary education	53,444	45,330	45,330	45,330	45,330

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION SUBSECTOR PLAN

Table 13: Enrolment Projections in non-formal education

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number enrolment in Literacy and primary program	13,200	13,200	13,200	13,200	13,200
Number enrolment in Lower Secondary Equivalency	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000

Number enrolment in Upper Secondary Equivalency	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Number enrolment in Vocational Training Equivalency	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Number of CLCs required	1	1	1	1	1

Table 14: Finance Projections for non-formal education (Million Kips)

Non Formal Education	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	32,002	32,973	33,964	34,973	36,002
Salary	21,210	22,136	23,079	24,038	25,014
Volunteer teachers allowances	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Vocational training	850	850	850	850	850
Training costs	0	0	0	0	0
Operating costs	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
SBG (for USE course)	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Textbooks production	530	562	596	632	670
Textbooks replenishment	212	225	239	253	268
Capital	1,904	1,912	1,920	1,928	1,936
Construction	300	300	300	300	300
Maintenance	1,604	1,612	1,620	1,628	1,636
Total	33,906	34,885	35,884	36,901	37,938

Table 15: Expected external financing, (Non-formal education) (kip = millions)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Non-formal education	1,404	1,404	1,404	1,404	1,404

TEACHER EDUCATION SUB SECTOR PLAN

Table 16: Enrolment Projections in teacher education (populated by DoP / DoF), Reflecting figures in Part 1

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
New enrolment (under quota)	507	530	0	0	0
New enrolment (Non-quota)	2,026	2,121	2,852	2,883	2,944
Total new enrolment	2,533	2,651	2,852	2,883	2,944

Number of ECE teacher trainees	534	606	647	687	728
Number of primary teacher trainees	563	664	753	797	841
Number of secondary teacher trainees	1,617	1,412	1,401	1,294	1,186
Number of physical education teacher trainees	174	152	151	139	127
Number of Art education teacher trainees	192	168	166	153	141
Number of Total Teacher Trainees	5,651	5,683	5,970	5,953	5,967

Table 17: Finance Projections for teacher education (Million Kips)

Teacher Education	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	102,991	106,275	109,707	113,239	101,511
Salary	66,096	68,580	70,308	72,288	59,904
Family allowance	955	966	976	992	929
Other allowances	4,776	4,830	4,881	4,962	4,992
Internship	2,993	3,075	3,216	3,276	3,399
Petrol allowance	1,242	1,256	1,269	1,290	1,208
Training costs	459	476	488	502	512
In-service teacher training (regular)	13,430	13,308	13,360	13,542	13,809
Operating costs	2,993	3,075	3,216	3,276	3,399
Scholarships	5,987	6,149	6,433	6,551	6,798
Research	360	360	360	360	360
Library books	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Teaching/learning Mat,	2,500	3,000	4,000	5,000	5,000
Capital	65,565	68,927	48,373	7,428	7,504
Maintenance	192	204	216	228	304
Lab equipment	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Workshops	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200
In-service teacher training (new curricula)	52,173	52,523	37,957	0	0
Special construction projects	8,000	11,000	5,000	2,000	2,000
Total	168,557	175,203	158,080	120,667	109,015

Table 18: Expected external financing, (Teacher education) (kip =- millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Teacher education	80,429	84,622	84,111	66,111	24,486

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Table 19: Enrolment Projections in TVET

Programs	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Bachelor ³⁷	90	90	100	100	120	500
Higher Diploma (12+2+1,5)	3,100	3,130	3,150	3,150	3,170	15,700
Diploma (9+3+2)	800	820	850	900	930	4,300
Diploma (12+3)	3,680	3,700	3,750	3,800	3,870	18,800
Diploma (12+2)	7,850	7,950	8,000	8,050	8,150	40,000
Diploma (9+3)	3,100	3,250	3,350	3,450	3,630	16,780
Certificate 3 (9+2) ³⁸	280	300	320	340	360	1,600
Certificate 3 (C3)	150	180	200	220	250	1,000
Certificate 2 (C2)	210	250	270	280	290	1,300
Certificate 1 (C1)	690	700	710	720	730	3,550
Total	19,950	20,370	20,700	21,010	21,500	103,530

Table 20: Finance Projections for TVET (Million Kips)

TVET	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	219,503	220,296	221,096	221,905	227,473
Salary	79,265	80,057	80,858	81,667	82,483
Family allowance	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,200
Other allowances	6,540	6,540	6,540	6,540	6,540
Petrol allowance	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,560
Operating costs	48,000	48,000	48,000	48,000	48,000
Scholarships	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000
Internship	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100	8,100
Teaching/learning materials	800	800	800	800	4,500
Computers	700	700	700	700	2,000
Training costs	1,090	1,090	1,090	1,090	1,090
Capital	26,300	29,516	23,212	23,100	23,100
Construction	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Maintenance	900	916	1,012	900	900
Workshop construction	12,800	12,800	9,600	9,600	9,600
Dorms construction	9,600	12,800	9,600	9,600	9,600
Total	245,803	249,812	244,308	245,005	250,573

³⁷ For TVET teacher in TVET Development Center

³⁸ Including General Vocational Courses in 11 boarding schools that will be opened from 2020-2021 onward.

Table 21: Expected external financing, (TVET) (kip =- millions)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
TVET	63,396	78,264	71,460	71,460	71,460

HIGHER EDUCATION SUB SECTOR PLAN

Table 22: Enrolment Projections in higher education

UNESCO CLASSIFICATION BY GROUP OF SUBJECTS	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
I Education	1,200	1,535	1,725	1,765	1,760
II Arts and humanities	1,447	1,407	1,412	1,472	1,492
III Social sciences, journalism and information	740	768	746	758	750
IV Business, administration and law	2,980	3,070	3,255	3,325	3,360
V Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	810	810	810	810	865
VI Information and communication technologies	160	240	240	240	275
VII Engineering, manufacturing and construction	3,226	3,505	3,818	4,121	4,405
VIII Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1,657	1,757	1,790	1,952	1,952
IX Health and welfare	-	-	-	-	-
X Services	359	359	359	359	359
TOTAL	12,579	13,451	14,155	14,802	15,218

Table 23: Finance Projections for higher education- four public institutions (Million Kips)

Higher Education	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	151,542	152,549	157,111	160,577	163,590
Salary	69,193	69,885	70,584	71,290	72,003
Family allowance	1,151	1,151	1,151	1,151	1,151
Other allowance	9,595	9,595	9,595	9,595	9,595
Petrol allowance	4,375	4,375	4,414	4,414	4,414
Training costs	960	960	960	960	960
Operating costs	28,050	28,201	30,030	31,350	32,450

Scholarships	30,600	30,764	32,760	34,200	35,400
Research budget	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Equipment	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027	2,027
Library books	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
TLM incl, computers	1,590	1,590	1,590	1,590	1,590
Capital	15,062	51,512	51,512	51,512	54,712
Construction	6,750	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Maintenance/Renovation	312	312	312	312	312
Lab construction	0	3,200	3,200	3,200	6,400
Special investment projects	8,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Total	166,604	204,061	208,623	212,089	218,302

Table 24: Expected external financing, Higher Education (kip =- millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Higher education	81,900	99,900	63,900	28,800	50,063

SPORTS

Table 25: Finance Projections for Sports Sub-sector (Million Kips)

Sport	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Recurrent	60,800	76,400	47,300	123,400	76,000
Capacity building for athletes and sportmen	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200
Capacity building for referees and trainers	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Operating costs	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Equipment	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Student Games	3,000	29,200	4,400	88,000	28,000
Special games allocation (lumpsum)	42,100	31,500	27,200	19,700	32,300
Capital	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Sport facilities construction	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total	62,800	78,400	49,300	125,400	78,000

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SUB SECTOR PLAN

Table 26 Finance Projections for administration and management (Million Kips)

Management	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
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Recurrent	628,477	635,389	643,305	652,060	657,986
Salary	305,000	310,335	315,782	321,417	324,631
Family allowance	5,281	5,373	5,468	5,565	5,621
Other Allowances	125,093	125,631	126,921	128,740	130,868
Petrol allowance	6,271	6,317	6,364	6,414	6,414
Operating costs	86,280	86,920	87,570	88,250	88,250
EMIS operation	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
PA Mission	13,149	13,149	13,149	13,149	13,149
Monitoring	830	830	830	830	830
Equipment	9,290	9,290	9,290	9,290	9,290
Training costs	20,849	20,938	21,154	21,457	21,811
System Strengthening	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
scholarships	27,435	27,606	27,777	27,949	28,123
Capital	142,244	124,331	123,500	123,500	123,500
Office maintenance	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500
ODA overheads and TA*	134,744	116,831	116,000	116,000	116,000
Total	770,720	759,720	766,805	775,560	781,486

Note: * ODA overheads and technical assistance must be included in the ESSDP costs, so as to allow for financing gap calculations, It was estimated at 20% of planned ODA, and placed under Management,

Table 27: Expected external financing, Administration and Management (kip =- millions)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Administration and Management	46,682	45,883	44,983	38,983	22,108
Scholarships	10,983	10,473	10,473	10,473	10,473
Other	171	4,896	4,896	4,896	4,896

Annex 7: Statistics of students studying overseas during 5 years (2016-2020) classified by fields.

Field of study	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		5 Year Total	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
BF00 General subjects (e.g. language preparation)	1,820	794	2,261	997	2,008	1,035	1,733	971	219	96	8,041	3,893
BF01 Education and sports	157	61	304	108	277	116	306	129	18	9	1,062	423
BF02 Arts and humanities	111	48	290	107	234	110	234	124	28	14	897	403
BF03 Social sciences, journalism and information	378	115	357	116	325	108	371	120	25	9	1,456	468
BF04 Business, administration, law and international relations	1,185	494	1,047	416	1,174	589	1,127	562	148	60	4,681	2,121
BF05 Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	128	37	177	59	178	68	143	72	14	5	640	241
BF06 Information and communication technologies	218	47	274	71	412	126	410	130	33	11	1,347	385
BF07 Engineering, manufacturing and construction	584	178	481	111	1,170	367	509	109	39	7	2,783	772
BF08 Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	97	23	85	18	131	58	129	38	5	0	447	137
BF09 Health and welfare	330	177	798	360	1,074	696	1,049	729	100	69	3,351	2,031
BF10 Services	34	18	89	38	145	80	248	132	75	37	591	305
TOTAL	5,042	1,992	6,163	2401	7,128	3,353	6,259	3,116	704	317	25,296	11,179

Note: Number of students who graduated overseas in year 2020 refers to real number of those who completed the application forms to study abroad and already completed their study within first 5 months of the year 2020 (between 1 Jan to 31 May 2020)

Information source: Department of students Affair, MoES.

Statistics of students coming back from overseas (Graduated and not graduated) between 05 years (2016-2020) classified by fields of study

Field of study	2016			2017			2018			2019			2020			Total		
	Total	Graduated	Not graduated	Total	Graduated	Not graduated	Total	Graduated	Not graduated									
BF01 Education and sports	209	208	1	228	223	5	133	131	2	248	245	3	34	34	0	852	841	11
BF02 Arts and humanities	132	129	3	118	117	1	54	54	0	104	101	3	15	13	2	423	414	9
BF03 Social sciences, journalism and information	363	360	3	414	410	4	176	174	2	224	223	1	55	54	1	1,232	1,221	11
BF04 Business, administration, law and international relations	690	687	3	557	554	3	493	493	0	1,070	1,062	8	255	252	3	3,065	3,048	17
BF05 Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	149	142	7	129	127	2	83	83	0	213	208	5	22	22	0	596	582	14
BF06 Information and communication technologies	55	53	2	62	62	0	75	75	0	239	235	4	27	27	0	458	452	6
BF07 Engineering, manufacturing and construction	143	136	7	155	150	5	117	113	4	292	287	5	49	47	2	756	733	23
BF08 Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	56	54	2	65	61	4	37	37	0	114	111	3	14	13	1	286	276	10
BF09 Health and welfare	209	207	2	296	296	0	238	238	0	392	390	2	61	61	0	1,196	1,192	4
BF10 Services	15	15	0	22	21	1	23	21	2	25	25	0	15	1	0	86	83	3
TOTAL	2,021	1,991	30	2,046	2,021	25	1,429	1,419	10	2,921	2,887	34	547	524	9	8,950	8,842	108

Note: Number of students who graduated overseas in year 2020 refers to real number of those who completed the application forms to study abroad and already completed their study within first 5 months of the year 2020 (between 1 Jan to 31 May 2020)

Information source: Department of students Affair, MoES

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