BEQUAL Mid-Term Review Management Response

Recommendation	Response	Action Plan	Responsibility
1. DFAT must clarify the continuing purpose of BEQUAL and in so doing address the emerging tension between national-level engagements that benefit all learners, versus targeted engagements focussed on closing the gap in educational outcomes among disadvantaged communities.	Agree	BEQUAL will continue to support national-level reforms critical for improved education outcomes including in disadvantaged communities. The program will be more deliberate about how and where it supports change, and will be clear on the scope of support for disadvantaged districts: ➢ Revisit BEQUAL's Theory of Change to clarify its purpose and articulate the causal relations between national-level reforms and sustainable improvements in education service delivery for disadvantaged communities; **(Completed)** ➢ BEQUAL will draft a Targeting Strategy (to reconfirm target districts and integrate activities to increase the impact of BEQUAL-funded activities). **(Underway)**	DFAT to work with BEQUAL and MoES By August 2018 By September 2018
2. DFAT, MoES and BEQUAL should open good faith discussions about the implications of continuing with a full national curriculum rollout on the current timeline. The aim of these discussions should be to streamline and refocus BEQUAL support towards meeting the program Goal and End-of-Program-Outcomes by slowing the pace of national curriculum development, and refocussing resources in targeted districts.	Partially agree	BEQUAL will continue to support national curriculum reform, including development of national in-service training modules and materials for the new curriculum. DFAT/BEQUAL will undertake the following actions: ➢ DFAT to agree with MoES to rollout the new primary curriculum in 2019; **(Completed)** ➢ Provide additional resources to help MoES improve the quality of Grade 1 teaching and learning materials; **(Completed)** ➢ Help MoES develop an approach to national in-service training that provides essential training and training modules for the new curriculum; **(Underway)** ➢ Agree a rollout strategy and a geographic footprint for BEQUAL-supported implementation of in-service training to assure quality, manage risk, and support disadvantaged groups. **(Underway)**	DFAT and BEQUAL and MOES By December 2018 By December 2018

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3. BEQUAL should prioritise improving teacher quality in the most disadvantaged districts to ensure that teachers are able to effectively use the new curriculum resources, and to supplement these with locally appropriate and affordable classroom resources.	Agree	BEQUAL is developing a new approach to in-service teacher training that will refocus BEQUAL resources in disadvantaged districts. BEQUAL will support development of a national framework and materials for training on the new curriculum, but will focus support for implementation of this framework in BEQUAL target districts. These actions will be underpinned by: ➤ Revisit BEQUAL's Theory of Change to clarify its purpose and articulate the causal relations between national-level reforms and sustainable improvements in education service delivery for disadvantaged communities; **(Completed)** ➤ BEQUAL Targeting Strategy identifying targets for supplementary support. **(Underway)**	BEQUAL and MoES By August 2018 By September 2018
4. BEQUAL should review the Key Result Area (KRA) 2 modality and activities to extract value for the program from BEQUAL NGO Consortium expertise and experience. KRA 1 and KRA 2 should collaborate to identify viable strategies to trigger household demand for education at scale.	Agree	BEQUAL will continue to support demand for education but will work to link this with core activities of curriculum development and teacher training. ➤ DFAT, in consultation with MoES, will undertake a rapid review of the BEQUAL NGO Consortium activities which reflects progress to date, considers examples of successful approaches to triggering demand at scale and recommends a way forward; **(Completed)** ➤ Draw on the experience and expertise extracted from KRA2 to inform Targeting Strategy; **(Underway)** ➤ Collaboration between KRA1 and KRA2 on demand for education will be discussed as part of BEQUAL's Theory of Change process. **(Completed)**	DFAT, MoES and BEQUAL By July 2018 By September 2018
5. DFAT should commission a review of BEQUAL targeting in order to establish a rationale for the scope, scale and depth	Partially Agree	DFAT has already undertaken a review of BEQUAL targeting. ➤ BEQUAL will develop a Targeting Strategy which links to targeting of the ESDP and the 8th NSEDP to reconfirm target districts and	BEQUAL and MoES

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of BEQUAL engagements, and to inform an integration strategy		integrate activities to increase the impact of BEQUAL-funded activities. **(Underway)**	By September 2018
6. BEQUAL should proactively work to improve the integration and coherence of program activities in target districts, including deploying Technical Advisers at regional level to the extent possible.	Agree	➢ BEQUAL will draft a Targeting Strategy (to reconfirm target districts and integrate activities to increase the impact of BEQUAL-funded activities). Interventions will be progressively modified in accordance with the strategy; **(Underway)** ➢ BEQUAL will develop a new Organisational Structure which will support more bottom-up planning and decision-making (making use of and supporting existing Lao Government provincial and district level planning) and enable the program to provide more differentiated/tailored support to target Provinces and Districts. **(Completed)**	BEQUAL By September 2018 By August 2018
7. DFAT and BEQUAL should liaise with MoES and key provincial government stakeholders to reach agreement on how to optimally resolve the conflicting expectations of Ethnic Teacher Scholarships Program stakeholders.	Agree	➢ DFAT and BEQUAL will work with MoES and relevant Provincial Education and Sports Services and District Education and Sports Bureaus to find a solution for deploying BEQUAL-supported teacher trainees. **(Underway)**	DFAT, BEQUAL and MoES By September 2018
8. The contractor and DFAT should work together to clarify the leadership skill-set, style and structure most appropriate as the program transitions through the mid-term of Phase 1.	Agree	➢ DFAT and the contractor will develop a new Terms of Reference for the BEQUAL Team Leader; **(Completed)** ➢ The contractor will review leadership structure within the new Organisational Structure. **(Completed)**	DFAT and BEQUAL By July 2018
9. The contractor (in consultation with DFAT) should consider engaging specialist organisational effectiveness	Agree	➢ BEQUAL will develop a new Organisational Structure which will account for high level interface and policy dialogue and	BEQUAL By July 2018

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advice in relation to a structure that is optimally aligned with the strategy, and operationalises the principles of a decentralised program.		coordination with national counterparts at the central and sub-national level. **(Completed)**	
10. BEQUAL and DFAT should explore practical ways to enable strategic/reflective discussions about the BEQUAL strategic horizon, and systematically track decisions/actions agreed.	Agree	➤ DFAT and BEQUAL will agree on and implement a new meeting structure including monthly strategic meeting and quarterly Technical Steering Committee meetings with MoES. **(Completed)**	DFAT and BEQUAL By August 2018
11. DFAT should consider the most effective ways to ensure that education sector stakeholders are briefed on learning and progress within BEQUAL.	Agree	BEQUAL will consult with MoES to ensure reporting and sharing of implementation progress using the Government structures such as through Education Sector Working Group and Focal Group. ➤ Revisit/revitalise Governance structure. Ensure Targeting Strategy for BEQUAL integrates subnational consultation; **(Underway)** ➤ Consult with MoES to ensure the most appropriate Government mechanism is used to disseminate program related information to development partner stakeholders; **(Underway)** ➤ Continue to support refinement of the ESWG and Focal Group Structure, and make greater use of these structures for sharing progress and learning. **(Ongoing)**	DFAT, MoES and BEQUAL By September 2018 By September 2018

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12. DFAT and BEQUAL should reposition the program's significant investments as 'smart subsidies' to leverage education reforms and improve performance. Such an approach could accompany a stronger focus on capacity strengthening and a more modest emphasis on program-delivered outputs.	Partially agree	DFAT/BEQUAL in consultation with MoES will examine how to incentivise reform rather than deliver outputs towards reform. Any outcomes-based aid/performance based aid would need to be introduced gradually and be appropriate for the governance and political economy settings in Laos. ➤ Ensure Targeting Strategy for BEQUAL considers how BEQUAL is best placed to incentivise reform, within the context of Lao governance institutions; **(Underway)** ➤ Ensure the Theory of Change articulates where and how BEQUAL could incentivise reform. **(Completed)**	DFAT, MOES and BEQUAL By September 2018 By August 2018
13. DFAT should commission a review of the theory of change and M&E plan and have these products updated to reflect the decentralisation and refocussing of the program on target school performance. Such a review should also examine the mechanisms and incentives to drive learning across the program and the adequacy of the M&E resources over the remaining life-of-program.	Agree	BEQUAL's M&E plan will require revision following the new Theory of Change, which is also an opportunity to improve internal learning and adaptation and linking this in better with the governance structure. Revisit BEQUAL's Theory of Change to clarify its purpose and articulate the causal relations between national-level reforms and sustainable improvements in education service delivery for disadvantaged communities; ➤ BEQUAL to revise the M&E Plan to reflect revised outcomes and results, to document agreed criteria and standards, and to recommend MEL resource requirements; **(Underway)** ➤ Revisit the MEL roles of MoES counterparts and increase cross-Ministry learning from BEQUAL-supported pilots and reform initiatives. **(Underway)**	DFAT and BEQUAL By December 2018 By December 2018
14. BEQUAL should prepare a management response to all major	Agree	➤ BEQUAL/DFAT will respond to major reviews and studies DFAT will ensure that documentation of responses to major reviews and	DFAT, MoES with BEQUAL

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reviews or studies undertaken by LADLF/TAF.		studies is included in new management and learning protocols. **(Ongoing)**	
15. BEQUAL should appoint a full time Education, Participation and Community Engagement Specialist or GEDSI Adviser based in Lao PDR, to work with and ultimately be replaced by a national team member.	Agree	➢ BEQUAL will appoint a full time GEDSI Adviser. **(Underway)**	DFAT with BEQUAL

By January 2018 |
| 16. The above specialist should be engaged to review the GEDSI checklist (2016) and the Inclusive Education Guidelines (2016) in order to set work priorities. This should include ensuring that M&E and reporting adequately capture cross-cutting results and issues (especially child safe content, diverse disabilities and the intersection of gender and disability). It can be a collaborative process with partners, but is for the specialist to lead. | Agree | ➢ BEQUAL to include review of GEDSI checklist and ensure that M&E and reporting capture cross-cutting results in the GEDSI specialist's work plan. **(Underway)** | BEQUAL

By October 2018 |