

# MYANMAR EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MY-EQIP) MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

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## My-EQIP Data Summary

<b>Investment Name</b>	Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program		
AidWorks initiative number	INM088		
Commencement date	16/08/2016	End date	30/06/2021
Total Australian \$	\$21,011,865.00 (\$19.5 million for Phase 2 and 3)		
Delivery organisation(s)	DFAT direct managed Phase 1 Cardno Emerging Markets for Phases 2 and 3 from 15 November, 2017 to 14 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021		
Implementing Partner(s)	Ministry of Education		
Country/Region	Myanmar		
Primary Sector	Education		

## Acknowledgments

The Mid Term Review (MTR) has involved an extensive document review and some of the insights and recommended actions expressed within this report can be traced back to work done by a range of specialists who have worked, and continue to work, on the program. The review team also consulted with a broad range of Myanmar Ministry of Education (MoE) and Government of Australia (GoA) stakeholders, as well as external stakeholders. The Review Team also had detailed discussions with short and long-term technical advisers. The Review Team wishes to thank all government personnel, as well as technical advisers, who gave freely of their time in discussing progress in My-EQIP. We also wish to express our great appreciation to Susan Atkins, Team Leader / Education Specialist provided a vast quantity of background documents and drafted the original mission schedule. We would also like to thank Thin Pyie Oo who managed a constantly changing schedule with grace, charm and efficiency.

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Disclaimer: This report reflects the views of the MTR team based upon review of the available evidence and does not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Australia or of the Government of the Myanmar.

# ACRONYMS

AIP	Aid Investment Plan
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CDRF	Capacity Development Results Framework
CSTT	Communications Strategy Task Team
DAE	Department of Alternative Education
DAIP	Department Annual Implementation Plan
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DERPT	Department of Education Research, Planning and Training
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFSP	Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program
DM&E (Edu)	Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (Education)
DM&E (Res)	Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (Research)
DTPC	Department of Technology Promotion and Coordination
DTVET	Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ECB	Evaluation Capacity Building
EOPO	End-of-program-outcome
EQIS	Education Quality Improvement System
ETVSCG	Education and TVET Sector Coordination Group
GoM	Government of Myanmar
IAQE	Inclusive Access and Quality Education Project
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
KRQ	Key Review Question
MC	Managing Contractor
MESP	My-EQIP Support Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MQAS	Ministry Quality Assurance System
MTR	Mid-Term Review
My-EQIP	Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program
NAQAC	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
OCA	Organisational Constraints Analysis
P2IP	Phase 2 Implementation Plan
PD	Program Director

PDIA	Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation
RTT	Research Task Team
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SQASF	School Quality Assurance and Standards Framework
SQSAF	School Quality Standards Assurance Framework (MoE title)
SQIP	School Quality Improvement Plan
SSWG	Sub-Sector Working Group
TA	Technical assistance
TCSF	Teacher Competency Standards Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
VE-SQASF	Vocational Education - SQASF
VSO	Volunteer Services Overseas

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Australia has invested AUD21 million over three phases (from 2017 to 2021) in the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (MY-EQIP) which was designed to support the Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve education quality improvement systems; capacity to maintain and use EQIS and the organisational culture of informed decision-making.
2. DFAT commissioned a Mid-Term Review (MTR) to assess progress towards the achievement of expected outcomes and to inform future planning for a potential Phase 3 of the program. Consequent upon an extensive desk review of documentation, mission to Myanmar from 22<sup>nd</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March, consultations with key stakeholders and triangulation of evidence, the findings of the MTR are as follows.
3. **My-EQIP support has been most effective in areas which represent NESP priorities, where GoM has already initiated work and where MC support has aligned with government structures.** In this regard, Australia's support has:
  - accelerated the rate of development and progressive implementation of a School Quality Assurance Standards Framework (SQASF) within the Department of Basic Education (Contribution to NESP Ch 6 Strategy 3); however, there are unanswered questions regarding alignment of the new SQASF /SQIP and existing MoE arrangements for the provision of school grants
  - furthered the development of the VE-SQASF (Contrib. to NESP Ch 11: Strategy 2)
  - facilitated the development of Department Annual Implementation Plans (DAIPs) and associated M&E Plans (Contribution to NESP Ch 13 Strategy 2 Component 2 Intermediate Outcome).
4. Despite the achievements, **a range of factors have seriously undermined the effective and efficient implementation of the program.** These include:
  - lack of clear, realistic and measurable outcomes and robust program logic (Review Findings: Section 1)
  - lack of a strategic and targeted approach to achieving outcomes (Review Findings: Section 2)
  - weaknesses in financial planning and management (Review Findings: Section 3)
  - lack of a coherent capacity development approach to strengthen the capacity of education managers to successfully undertake education reforms (Review Findings: Section 4)
  - M&E arrangements which do not meet DFAT standards (Review Findings: Section 5)
5. **There are areas where opportunities to improve the 'value add' Australia's contribution appear to have been missed.** This includes pursuing closer links and collaboration with the World Bank IAQE Project; closer linkages and alignment between the SQASF and the TCSF; linking with UNICEF to promote alignment between the Head Teacher Competency Framework and the SQASF; and seeking enhanced collaboration with the ADB (EYE project) and the GIZ support for TVET quality reform to ensure alignment of the VE-SQASF with these initiatives. The failure of the MC to collaborate effectively with other donors has reduced the efficiency of the investment.

6. **The MTR estimates an AUD4-5 million underspend by the end of the investment.** There have been significant deviations from budget over the lifetime of the investment. Based upon current estimates, with the current trajectory of activity, there is a projected under-expenditure of AUD2.3 million by end of May, 2021. If the MTR recommendation to reduce the scope of work in Phase 3 is accepted, the underspend is likely to be between AUD4-5 million. (Review Findings: Section 3).

7. **Improved governance may be achieved by greater alignment with government structures** The My-EQIP Joint Steering Committee does not function as a strategy forming or decision-making body as originally envisaged in the My-EQIP investment design, The Technical Working Group comprises lower level officials that are unable to commit resources or make decisions as anticipated in the arrangements set out in the Subsidiary Agreement. It is an appropriate time for the MESP to transition to the use of government structures for governance (e.g. ETVSCG and MCQSSWG) while maintaining Australia’s interests. (Review Findings: Section 6)

8. **Attention to gender equality and social inclusion in MoE does not appear to have significantly increased as a result of Australia’s support for My-EQIP.** This is despite the fact that GESI is a policy priority for both governments. Further work and dialogue is necessary to ensure that GESI is integrated into the revised outcome statements for Phase 3 and in monitoring of achievements. (Review Findings: Section 7).

9. **Education reform remains highly relevant to DFAT’s objectives in Myanmar, as well as MoE’s goals as expressed in the NESP.** Nevertheless, the findings of this MTR suggest that DFAT has two options: 1) winding down the investment and commencing a design process for a new investment or 2) implementing a scaled-down version of the program with completion of Phase 3, as intended, by May 2021.

10. The following recommendations detail how Option 2 might be operationalised.

#	Recommendation
1	That the MESP develop clear outcome statements which describe Australia’s intended contribution over Phase 3 of this investment, supported by a robust program logic (Refer Appendix E)
2	That the scope of work for Phase 3 be reshaped (Refer Appendix F) in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) phase out support for work for task teams / activities which do not represent ‘value for money’ (e.g. Communications, Research and L&amp;D)</li> <li>(ii) continue to focus on areas achieving results (e.g. SQASF and VE-SQASF)</li> <li>(iii) focus M&amp;E support within MoE where it is likely to have the greatest impact (i.e. DERPT)</li> <li>(iv) investigate ‘windows of opportunity’ to consolidate and strengthen the effectiveness of Australia’s contribution to education reform.</li> </ul>
3	That the Phase 3 budget be reduced by a minimum of AUD4-5 million and that the work plan be revised to reflect the reduced scope of work and budget.
4	That DFAT appoint an international capacity development specialist, with expertise working in the education sector in developing countries, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice to the MESP team in appropriate CD approaches to implementing selected actions during Phase 3 of the investment</li> <li>• oversee the conduct of a second organisational review of MoE and preparation of a long-term capacity development framework which may feed into a design for a follow-on investment (if any). (Refer Appendix H)</li> </ul>
5	That MESP M&E staff prepare a ‘minimum-sufficient’ M&E Plan, linked to the revised set of outcome statements and program logic for Phase 3. (Refer Appendix I)
6	That the functions of the Joint Steering Committee be progressively absorbed into the work of the ETVSCG and that the functions of the Technical Working Group be absorbed into the work of the MCQ SSWG.
7	That DFAT review the revised outcome statements, program logic work program and budget for Phase 3 to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion is adequately addressed.

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# INTRODUCTION

## INVESTMENT BACKGROUND

The jointly designed Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (My-EQIP) was intended to support the Ministry of Education to implement Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021) with specific attention on Chapter 13, which is focused on Management, Quality Assurance and Capacity. My-EQIP aims to improve education policy, budgeting and management by achieving three end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs)

- Improved education quality improvement systems
- Improved capacity to maintain and use education quality improvement systems and
- Improved organisational culture of informed decision-making.

Australia's investment is \$AUD21 million over three phases from 2017 to 2021. The program aligns with DFAT's 2015-2020 Aid Investment Plan (AIP) and Education Strategy for Myanmar.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

As articulated in the My-EQIP Investment Design, DFAT commissioned a Mid-Term Review. The full Terms of Reference (ToR) for the review are attached as Appendix A. The objectives of the Mid Term Review (MTR) were to:

1. Assess the extent to which the My-EQIP program has made progress towards the achievement of expected outcomes, with a focus on describing emerging findings and themes to inform My-EQIP implementation, program governance and related monitoring and evaluation activities and provide recommendations.
2. Assess the extent to which the current stated outcomes for the My-EQIP program are suited to context, and provide related recommendations.
3. Assess the appropriateness of the program's existing theory of change to the current context, and make recommendations on maintaining/adjusting the theory of change, informed by the review findings.
4. Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the capacity development model.
5. Inform future planning for a potential phase 3 of the program.



## REVIEW APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this review identified five areas of focus for the MTR and a total of 29 questions relating to these areas of interest. Following the Inception teleconference and a preliminary review of documentation, these Key Review Questions (KRQ) were modified as part of the MTR Plan for presentation and approval by key stakeholders. On 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 DFAT advised via email that the Plan and KRQ had been approved.

In accordance with the requirements of the ToR, and the approved MTR Plan, the approach to investigating the KRQ involved five stages:

- i. Inception Meeting
- ii. Desk Review and preparation of MTR Plan
- iii. In-country mission and consultations with key stakeholders (Mission Schedule Appendix B)
- iv. Utilisation and analysis of information generated by MY-EQIPs M&E system
- v. Analysis, Feedback and Reporting

## STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

To increase the 'readability' of this report, the order of the MTR objectives has been adjusted and responses to the KRQ have been integrated. The presentation of the findings therefore attempts to follow a logical sequence involving progressive consideration of the:

1. Theory of change, program logic and outcome statements
2. Progress towards the achievement of outcomes
3. Efficiency and value for money
4. Capacity development model
5. M&E arrangements
6. Governance and management arrangements; and
7. Gender equality and social inclusion.

In order to draw a clear line of sight between evidence and recommendations, where these are made, they are initially included in a text box below the relevant section. The recommendations are then summarised at the end of the report.

# REVIEW FINDINGS

Consequent upon an extensive desk review of relevant documentation, mission to Myanmar from 22<sup>nd</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March for consultations with key stakeholders and triangulation of evidence gathered, the following sections present the MTR team findings.

## 1. THEORY OF CHANGE, PROGRAM LOGIC AND OUTCOME STATEMENTS

### 1.1 Inadequate theory of change, program logic and outcome statements has undermined effectiveness

The original My-EQIP design program logic did not distinguish between MoE outcomes (which normally sit above the line of accountability in a DFAT program logic) and the outcomes expected from the investment of Australian taxpayers' money. In other words, it was not clear what the investment was intended to achieve. Nor was it clear how a range of outputs / activities would be aggregated to lead to IOs and EOPOs; that is, the pathways of change were not clear.

*However*, the original design consciously left these areas somewhat undefined, in the expectation that, at the end of Phase 1,<sup>1</sup> a Phase 2 Implementation Plan would be produced which would incorporate a revision of the program logic, a capacity development plan and investment criteria to assist My-EQIP in prioritising its effort thereafter.

The Phase 2 Implementation Plan (P2IP) produced in December 2017<sup>2</sup> was characterised by what it *did not* include. The P2IP:

- did not attempt to validate the key assumption underpinning the program's theory of change "*that fostering critical analysis of timely and relevant information will improve decision making and policy development*"
- did not revise the outcome statements or program logic to more clearly articulate Australia's intended contribution to the achievement of the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) outcomes and departmental priorities
- did not develop pathways of change: no attempt was made to use knowledge and experienced acquired during Phase 1 to further develop a strategic and targeted approach or to explain how and why this approach was most likely to achieve the outcomes<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My-EQIP Design document 3 Feb. 2017 pg. 26

<sup>2</sup> Phase 2 Implementation Plan (IP) My-EQIP December 2017

<sup>3</sup> Instead, the P2 IP attempted to show how the components of a theoretical EQIS lined up against the intermediate outcomes (IOs) included in the original Program Logic. This exercise did not add value to the IP since it provided no insights

- did not develop a quality capacity development framework; the limitations of the capacity development approach incorporated into P2IP are discussed in Section 4 of this report.

The failure to produce a coherent and systematic framework to underpin implementation of Phase 2 undermined the capacity of the My-EQIP support program to adopt a strategic and targeted approach to implementation, to ‘frame’ the technical assistance (TA) inputs, and to monitor the effectiveness of the investment.

In the absence of a coherent and systematic framework, a less than rigorous approach to implementation was adopted, referred to as the partner-led approach, supposedly based on problem driven, iterative adaptive principles (PDIA). The MTR investigations suggest that neither of these labels accurately describe the way in which Australia’s support for My-EQIP has been implemented.

## 1.2 ‘Partner-led’ concept confused and misapplied

Partner-led is hardly a new concept for aid and development agencies. Formal international commitment goes back to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 (and follow-on declarations); the concept underpinned sector-wide approaches to development assistance and appears, in various forms, in virtually all DFAT programs. The original My-EQIP design interpreted partner-led in three standard ways:

- Australian-funded advice and support would be provided within the context of the government’s plans and strategies (i.e. the NESP)
- My-EQIP governance arrangements would progressively align with MoE decision-making structures
- The program would progressively focus its resources in the areas within MoE that were either most receptive to change; and / or had existing elements that could be built on; were in most need; or likely to gain the greatest benefit. This would be the basis for identifying My-EQIP’s investment criteria referred to above.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Phase 1 was meant to provide My-EQIP with the contextual and operational information required to ensure that the Phase 2 program was implemented in the most strategic and targeted way to achieve maximum benefit for MoE and for the investment of taxpayers’ money. This did not occur.

Instead, the MTR investigations found that the ‘partner-led’ concept has been used as justification for a multitude of unstructured and untargeted interventions which may, in fact, respond to the expressed needs/demands of selected MoE officers (e.g. individual MoE senior officials or through task teams) but not necessarily represent strategically targeted interventions, or value for money, either for MoE or DFAT. Interviews also revealed evidence of TA’s distorting the ‘partner-led’ concept by encouraging MoE endorsement of activities / approaches pre-conceived by the support team.<sup>5</sup> This does not constitute an appropriate capacity development approach.

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into *how* any of the EQIS components / IOs were going to be achieved and how achievement of these IOs would lead to achievement of the EOPOs.

<sup>4</sup> Op.cit pg. 27

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication during interview February 2020

### 1.3 PDIA not effectively applied in My-EQIP

Substantial international experience in the application of PDIA principles demonstrates that adaptive programming *cannot* be used as a cover for not knowing what you want to do. Programs must have clear outcomes to work towards and a clear strategy if they are to be effective.<sup>6</sup> As has already been pointed out, this has not been the case in My-EQIP.

Nor is PDIA a replacement for technical expertise. Best results emerge when local and international expertise jointly evolve workable solutions to emerging challenges. While some My-EQIP TA have clearly worked effectively in this way, others have not. The MTR investigations suggest that the ‘partner-led’, PDIA mantra may, in fact, have undermined the capacity of some TA to make the most effective contribution to My-EQIP. Specifically, in the absence of clear outcomes and ToR which linked technical inputs to the achievement of those outcomes, several STAs reported being unclear about the specific contribution they were expected to make.<sup>7</sup>

The AHC advised the MC (during the last work plan discussions) that DFAT had major problems interpreting the PDIA approach as applied in My-EQIP. The AHC and MoE had also agreed that PDIA should not be treated as a replacement for technical expertise. Despite this direction, the MC appeared to have effectively applying the approach.

At least part of the problem lay with deficiencies in the My-EQIP M&E system. Adaptive programming requires the systematic, planned and intentional use of emerging knowledge and evidence to drive decisions on both the strategy and the targeting of support over time. A high-quality monitoring and evaluation system is a fundamental prerequisite for an adaptive program.

Throughout the life of My-EQIP the M&E arrangements and the quality of information products produced by the M&E system have not met DFAT standards (see discussion under Section 5 M&E). As a result, relevant evidence has not emerged and adaptation has not occurred in the manner envisaged by the theoretical PDIA model.

#### Conclusion

The failure to develop clear, realistic and measurable outcomes and a robust program logic for the MY-EQIP investment has undermined effective implementation of the program. With only 14 months to completion of the investment there is an urgent need to address this deficiency. Appendix E includes a suggested set of Outcome Statements and Program Logic for Phase 3. This appendix also reconstructs the Theory of Change. The latter may be more useful as a basis for a follow-on investment, should DFAT choose to invest further in this area.

**Recommendation 1:** That My-EQIP develop clear outcome statements which describe Australia’s intended contribution over Phase 3 of this investment, supported by a robust program logic.

<sup>6</sup> Adaptive programming and portfolio management Overseas Development Institute, December 2016

<sup>7</sup> Personal communications during interview February, 2020

## 2. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The failure of the Phase 2 Program Logic to define either Australia's intended contribution to the achievement of MoE education reform outcomes or expected 'pathways of change' to achieve those outcomes, has made it extremely difficult for the MTR to determine progress.

In order to overcome this obstacle, the MTR has attempted to isolate Australia's specific contribution to relevant strategies / outcomes of the GoM National Education Strategic Plan (2016-21) rather than to the broader, generic outcomes included in the original, and unrevised, program logic (i.e. improved systems, improved staff capacity, improved learning culture). Australia's specific contribution is hereafter referred to as the My-EQIP Support Program (MESP), to distinguish it from the general My-EQIP title which has been used to refer to *both* MoE achievements and Australia's contribution to those achievements.

The MTR's assessments of key achievements of the MESP are summarised in Appendix C and explained in the following paragraphs.

What the MTR has *not* been able to do, however, is retrospectively construct 'pathways of change' (i.e. from outputs/activities to intermediate outcomes and outcomes) which might reveal the reasons why support for some activities was considered to be strategically more important than support for others.

### **2.1 MESP has accelerated the rate of development and progressive implementation of a School Quality Assurance Standards Framework (SQASF) within the Department of Basic Education (Contribution to NESP Ch 6 Strategy 3)**

The NESP anticipated that implementing departments would have different timeframes for the establishment and institutionalization of quality assurance frameworks based upon their existing human resource capacity, previous progress and available funding, among other influencing factors. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) accounts for the largest share of the Ministry budget and has structures and systems which reach down through Region and State, District and Township Offices to schools and educational institutions.<sup>8</sup> DBE was the first department to request a task team to work on a quality assurance framework and standards. While My-EQIP support has not driven this process, the program has undoubtedly accelerated the rate of progress.

The MESP provided TA and financial support over Phases 2 and 3 to progressively develop, trial and improve the SQASF; substantial training of ATEOs, DTEOs and Cluster Principals. The Framework has now been applied in 2,973 schools and 113 DTEOs have been trained via training of the ATEO and 991 cluster principals – who then cascaded the training to schools.<sup>9</sup> As discussed in MTR Section 2. Efficiency it has not been possible to carry out even approximate calculations on the cost / benefit of Australia's contribution.

<sup>8</sup> Refer MoE Organisational graphic, NESP, Ch 13. Diagram 13.2 pg. 210

<sup>9</sup> Data provided by international TA.

## However, there are unanswered questions regarding the way in which the MESP SQASF / SQIP will align with existing MoE arrangements for quality assessment, school improvement planning and the provision of school grants

The MESP has assisted the SQASF Task Team to develop and implement a highly complex framework (6 domains; 18 Standards; 58 indicators) despite the fact that :

- advice from the My-EQIP SQASF international literature review emphasised the importance of prioritising indicators that make a difference to learning; incremental implementation, adapting to local values and contexts and realistic assessments of the capacity of staff to absorb reform<sup>10</sup>
- prior to the MESP work on the SQASF, an MoE committee had already produced a draft basic education School Quality Standards Assurance Framework (SQSAF) covering four domains<sup>11</sup> and 13 indicators within the context of the World Bank / Australia funded DFSP; this was also referred to in the MESP funded literature review<sup>12</sup>
- a key purpose of the conduct of the SQASF is to encourage schools to develop school improvement plans which can then be funded by MoE<sup>13</sup>; it appears that the budget codes used by MoE for funding of schools (and approved by the World Bank as DFSP Eligible Expenditure) are directly linked to the current MoE SQSAF, *not* to the MESP developed SQASF.<sup>14</sup>

The more extensive MESP SQASF no doubt has value in setting standards and identifying a broader range of areas for school improvement which may not require funding support by MoE. Nevertheless, there is potential for confusion about the status of the new MESP SQASF vis-a-vis the existing, simpler, MoE SQSAF and associated government guidelines for school funding . The review team understands, for example, that schools will need to convert the results of the MESP SQASF assessment back into the original MoE SQSAF domains and indicators for the purposes of developing a School Improvement Plan which can be funded using the MoE Budget Codes.<sup>15</sup> A brief review of the current MoE budget codes against the MESP SQASF suggests that there is not a direct line of sight between the former and the latter.<sup>16</sup> This may generate additional work for already overworked MoE staff, particularly school principals.

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<sup>10</sup> My-EQIP Literature Review: Use of School Quality Assurance Standards Frameworks within systems for education quality improvement 7<sup>th</sup> May 2018

<sup>11</sup> Student quality; Learning and Teaching, Management and Organisation; School and Learning Environment.

<sup>12</sup> Op.cit pg. pg. 14

<sup>13</sup> The World Bank and Australia have assisted MoE in funding school improvement plans since 2014 via the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program (DFSP). Effective commencement date 2014; Revised closing date 20 July 2021. It should be noted that the recently approved World Bank Inclusive Access and Quality Education Project (IAQE) will also use the existing MoE SQSAF and budget codes as the framework; however, it will focus on augmenting funding in respect of indicator 14, infrastructure development.

<sup>14</sup> It appears that under MESP the name originally given by MoE to the quality assurance framework, and the resultant acronym, was changed. The review team received no advice as to why this occurred

<sup>15</sup> BE-SQSAF Framework Manual 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 pg. 77

<sup>16</sup> See IDA Project Paper on proposed additional financing to the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project, Nov. 26, 2018 Table 3 Eligible Budget Codes pg. 21

**It appears that inadequate attention has been given by the MESP to monitoring the quality of the SQASF implementation.**

The standards embedded in the SQASF are a measurement against a particular indicator of quality. These indicators and standards should be regularly reviewed as new knowledge becomes available as to what is effective, new technology becomes available that may influence a standard, changes in funding that can influence the interpretation of an indicator or a standard, etc.<sup>17</sup>

In interviews with the MESP staff, it was noted that approximately 30% of the 2,973 schools from the initial implementation phase had completed the SQASF assessments. However, at the time of conduct of the MTR, there is no evidence as to the quality of the SQASF assessments. MESP intends to convene a workshop in June 2020 with the same 113 DTEOs involved in the initial phase. At this time copies of the SQASF Assessments prepared by the schools will be reviewed and, if needed, adjustments will be made to the training program. However, there is no indication that, based upon the results of the workshop in June,<sup>18</sup> adjustments will be made to the indicators, dimensions or domains of the SQASF, to the format and processes for completing the SQASF assessments or to inform preparation of SQIPs. In the coming school year (2020-2021), one-third of the 2,973 schools will be expected to prepare a SQIP, with all 2,973 schools expected to prepare a SQIP in 3 years' time.

## **2.2 MESP has supported the development of a VE-SQASF (Contrib. to NESP Ch 11: Strategy 2)**

Encouraged by the work of the SQASF, the Director General for the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTVET) decided to pursue development of a VE-SQASF for the 63 technical entities (i.e. 36 technical high schools; 27 TVET institutes). The task team (nine principals and six DTVET officials) was set up in June 2018 and was assigned support from an international advisor. They have conducted a pre-pilot in six schools to validate the framework and intend to roll-out to all schools and institutions following approval of the policy. The technical high schools and TVET institutions do not receive grants from My-EQIP for completing the VE-SQAS assessment.

**However, there are aspects of the approach which may be questioned.**

With support from an international TVET Quality Assurance Advisor, key TVET documents have been developed (e.g. the VE-SQASF; a glossary of terms; a draft operational manual; and a draft policy). At the time of conduct of the MTR, the team was advised that the majority of these documents were only in English and had not been translated into Myanmar for discussion with the Director General and the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC). Further, there are no funds allocated by MoE to continue the work on the VESQASF after completion of My-EQIP. Finally, the Trip #5 Exit Report of the Advisor notes that *"The TVET Quality Assurance Advisor did not undertake any capacity development work at this visit, given that there was insufficient time to get through all the work required"*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See for example, discussion in <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=41737&filter=all>

<sup>18</sup> During the interview with the MESP technical advisor, it was suggested that the SQASF was validated through the piloting process, thus no changes are expected to be required based on the quality of the SQAS Assessments. The review team disagrees with this argument given the early stage of implementation.

<sup>19</sup> My-EQIP TVET Quality Assurance Advisor Trip #5 Report 20/11/2019 pg. 6

The lack of a clear Theory of Change and Program Logic, as well as a coherent and systematic capacity development plan for My-EQIP as a whole, appears to have affected the focus and quality of the work of a range of advisors, including the TVET Quality Assurance Advisor.

### **2.3 MESP has supported the development of Department Annual Implementation Plans (DAIPs) and associated M&E Plans (Contribution to NESP Ch 13 Strategy 2 Component 2 Intermediate Outcome)**

The NESP advises that the Department Annual Implementation Plans (DAIPs) are the key management tool for departments to use in order to implement their funded programs listed in the NESP Annual Priorities Plan.<sup>20</sup>

In Phase 1 (July 2017) the Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Specialist worked with a Diagnostic Working Group from the Department of Education Research, Planning and Training (DERPT) and Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (Education) (DM&E) to develop, and trial a diagnostic tool for assessing M&E capacity across the Ministry. The ECB Specialist then formed an M&E Core Group, involving members from DERPT, DM&E, Department of Alternative Education (DAE), DBE, DTVET and the Department of Technology Promotion and Coordination (DTPC) to apply the diagnostic tool across the Ministry and to report back on the results. The ECB Specialist reported in September 2017 that engagement and relationship building became easier as MoE staff expectations were clarified on the basis of the conduct of the M&E Diagnostic and the anticipation of the support that would come with the commencement of the Managing Contractor (MC). In Phase 2, after commencement of the MC, the M&E Core Group (13 members from 3 departments), supported by the MESP, assisted all departments to prepare DAIPs and associated M&E Plans.

#### **The strategic intent of MESP's support for this work is not clear**

While the preparation of the DAIPs by the 11 departments is important and MESP support was appreciated, the strategic intent of Australia's support for this work in the past, as well as the proposed follow-on work in the current work plan, is difficult to ascertain.

It is difficult to identify a strategy underpinning this broad targeting of support by MESP and even more difficult to see how this approach can achieve a sustainable result given that:

- While all relevant departments are included in the M&E Core Group, it is DERPT that has responsibility for planning; it is not clear what authority the M&E Core Group and focal points have (other than informal and personal and because they represent the My-EQIP 'project') to work to improve the quality of the DAIPs over time
- neither the M&E Core Group, nor the M&E focal points, have formal legitimacy / authority within the MoE structure to improve M&E plans and performance; the structural locus of authority for M&E in MoE is yet to be determined<sup>21</sup>
- the review team understands that only one implementing department (DBE) has formally established a monitoring unit.

<sup>20</sup> NESP Ch 13 pg. 218

<sup>21</sup> In fact, the recent DERPT law absorbs the functions of DME (Research) and DME (Education) into DERPT.



Further, the review team was not able to establish whether, and to what extent, the M&E Core Group was being supported by MESP to assess the *quality* of the DAIPs and then to conduct follow-up activities with departments to strengthen the next round of DAIPs. From a capacity development perspective, this ‘follow-on’ work, involving self-conscious and collective review of the quality of the plans by MoE staff, is often more critical, in the long run, than the simple act of producing the plans in the first place.

The review team was also not able to establish whether the departmental M&E plans were quality assured. Perhaps of greater concern is the fact that the Phase 1 diagnostic analysis of M&E capacity of the departments, carried out by the M&E Core Group, does not appear to have gone anywhere. That is to say, so far as the review team could determine, this diagnostic work did not inform the way in which the Phase 2 work to produce DAIPs and M&E Plans was carried out.

#### **2.4 MESP has attempted to strengthen the capacity of education managers via the task team mechanism (Contribution to NESP Ch 13 Strategy 3)**

In the absence of a coherent capacity development strategy and framework, the use of task teams became a default capacity development mechanism based upon the assumption that by developing the knowledge and skills of individual task team members, this would lead to more broad-based organisational development in MoE. Section 4, below, provides a detailed analysis of the limitations of the MESP approach to capacity development.

In this section, the effectiveness of individual task teams – and their contribution to NESP Ch 13 is discussed. The efficiency of the task teams is discussed under Section 3 Efficiency

The review team understands that the first task team – the SQASF Task Team - was established at the request of the DG for the DBE. The M&E core team<sup>22</sup> was established by the ECB Specialist as part of the M&E diagnostics<sup>23</sup> work conducted in 2017.

As other activity areas began to emerge, the task team model appears to have been applied without considering whether or not this was the most effective and efficient mechanism for addressing the issues which were identified as needing MESP support.

All task teams, except for the VE-SQASF task team<sup>24</sup>, include members from multiple departments. The task teams require substantial commitment of MoE staff time and effort; they have an average of 15-20 members who are expected to meet for an entire day on a weekly/bi-weekly basis.<sup>25</sup> Given MoE’s overwhelming workload and increasing donor engagement and demands, this level of commitment is difficult to sustain.

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<sup>22</sup> While referred to as the M&E ‘core’ team, the team seems to function in a similar manner to the other task teams whereby participating members from different departments and units within MoE meet to address assigned tasks.

<sup>23</sup> In 2016, FHI 360 conducted an organisational assessment and prepared the “*Multi-level MoE Capacity Gap Assessment and Initial Targeted Capacity Building Project*”. This study served as the basis for the MoE M&E Diagnostics work guided by the MESP Evaluation Capacity Building Specialist in mid-2017.

<sup>24</sup> The VE-SQASF task team is the only team where the members are from one department.

<sup>25</sup> The number of members per program team were reported as: CSTT – 24; RTT – 22; M&E – 17; SI – 19; SQASF – 20; VE-SQASF – 15; SQASF Central Implementation Committee – 28.

The **SQASF and VE-SQASF task teams** and the M&E core team appear to have performed their functions effectively as demonstrated by the development and piloting of the SQASF and VE-SQASF and preparation of the DAIPs and corresponding M&E plans for MoE departments. The work of these three teams, compared to other task teams, appears to be more directly aligned with MoE and NESP priorities, is supported by senior MoE management and has the highest likelihood of being sustained. The work of these three teams has also had the highest level of funding support from the program.

By contrast, the **M&E Core Team** appears to have been a less effective mechanism for contributing to Ch 13 priorities. The set-up of the core team appears to have been an attempt to address the fact that three different departments in MoE have a mandate for aspects of M&E – the DERPT, the DME (Research) and DME (Education). As discussed in sub-section 2.3 above, the M&E Core Group has no formal authority to improve the quality of the DAIPs, or M&E plans over time.

Similarly, while the work of the **Communications Strategy Task Team** has included a significant level of activity on ICT readiness and reform, this has been embedded in a complex (and costly) program of work. This work appears to be beyond the remit of the MESP, only loosely connected to Ch 13 priorities and the members of the CSTT do not have either the position or the authority to promote implementation of the Communications Strategy across the department.<sup>26</sup>

The effectiveness of the **Research Task Team**, as discussed in sub-section 2.5 below, is limited.

**Overall, there is little evidence to suggest that the task team mechanism has strengthened the capacity of education managers to successfully undertake education reforms (NESP Ch 13, Strategy 3) or implement their NESP programmes and budgets (associated outcome)**

Both the desk review of relevant reports and interviews with task team members during the MTR mission, indicate that the individuals involved have been able to improve their capabilities via their participation in task teams. However, in the absence of a coherent capacity development approach which would link task team engagement and development with proposed education reforms (Ch13 Strategy 3) and specific NESP programmes and budgets (associated NESP outcome), there is limited evidence that the task team mechanism has generated the assumed ‘flow-on’ effects for MoE organisational development. It is doubtful that the benefits of the task team mechanism can be justified, aside from the SQASF and the VE-SQASF task teams, both of which are MoE initiatives.

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<sup>26</sup> As an example of the proposed scope of the Communications Strategy task team, the following statement is made in the most recent My-EQIP M&E report: *“To address the associated challenges and support MoE to navigate changes in the ICT landscape, the CSTT is embarking on the development of a CKIMS strategy to underpin the MoE approach to sustainable adoption of ICT to enhance the management and delivery of education services.”* (page 58)

## 2.5 My-EQIP has supported research, but the aggregate ‘value add’ to MoE appears to have been limited (Contribution to NESP Ch 13)

The MESP has worked with a Research Task Team (RTT) of 23 members, the majority from DERPT and with representatives from across all departments.<sup>27</sup> The RTT’s role was to conceive, design and implement a research agenda. My-EQIP documentation explains the intent of the research work as *“to identify knowledge and information gaps, issues for which further research is required as part of the capacity building approach to strengthening planning and M&E, QA and research systems within and across all departments and offices of the MoE – national and subnational.”*<sup>28</sup>

Despite this ambitious intent, the review team was unable to discern a targeted and strategic approach underpinning the research agenda either in the *way* in which it was developed (a capacity development approach) or in terms of the *content* of the agenda (targeting to maximise Australia’s contribution to the achievement of NESP outcomes)

### **There is no evidence of a capacity development approach being adopted by MESP in supporting research work.**

In a mature organisation, the research agenda is usually developed via the identification of an issue/challenge/problem emerging from the analysis of data produced by the M&E system. In less mature organisations, identification of these issues/challenges/problems can be strongly influenced by political imperatives and budget considerations. An effective capacity development approach would have involved the MESP supporting the MoE to ‘mature’ as an organisation to:

- (i) develop an M&E system capable of producing reliable, quality assured data
- (ii) use that evidence for developing its research agenda – evidence obtained from a functioning M&E system

Steps or milestones in this process of organisational maturation could have been pre-identified and an M&E system set up to measure progress within M&E.

As discussed in Section 4 below the MESP did not have a coherent capacity development framework or strategy. Instead, it focused on the use of the task team mechanism, based upon the assumption that the intensive support provided to individuals would build the knowledge and capacity of the staff involved *“to be able to effectively design core education quality improvement systems.”*<sup>29</sup>

This ambition was vague in all cases, but particularly so in the case of the RTT because:

- the MESP did not have a clear capacity development strategy which identified *which* capabilities were to be developed, *how* they could be developed and *how to measure* the degree to which they had been developed; in the case of the RTT, the MESP did not appear to be clear about whether the intent was to develop MoE staff capability to *manage* research or to *directly engage in research*

<sup>27</sup> The review team was unable to validate either these numbers or the constitution of the RTT via desk review or interviews.

<sup>28</sup> My-EQIP Research Agenda July 2018 pg. 1

<sup>29</sup> My-EQIP M&E Report 1 April – 30 September 2019 Annex 4 pg. 60

- Investigations carried out by the review team suggest that while individual RTT members increased their knowledge and skills, there were little or no flow-on effects at the organisational level
- Members of the RTT had neither the position nor the authority to influence future policy or decision-making based upon the results of the research.

**There is no evidence of a strategic or targeted approach to developing the research agenda.**

In the absence of a coherent capacity development approach to the development of a research agenda, it might reasonably be expected that the MESP would attempt to adopt a systematic approach to the selection of research. A reasonable approach might have included the following criteria for research:

- a. demonstrably linked to NESP strategies / outcomes
- b. aligned with / feeding into other work being supported by the MESP (i.e. increasing the likelihood of Australia's investment making an effective contribution to those outcomes)
- c. coupled with a strategy for disseminating / communicating results via existing MoE structures / systems to maximise influence; and
- d. contributing to the capacity development of staff who have both the position and authority to influence policy and decision-making in MoE

A preliminary analysis of the research carried out under the auspices of the MESP (attached as Appendix D) suggests that of the eleven pieces of research conducted:

- four can be directly linked to NESP strategies / outcomes
- in four cases it is not clear what the mechanisms are for disseminating information about results and/or who is responsible within MoE for taking the work forward.

**2.6 There are 'windows of opportunity' that deserve greater attention**

Review team investigations have revealed opportunities which may have been touched upon under Phases 1 and 2, but deserve further attention. While it is not suggested that all opportunities should be pursued, deliberation with MoE will identify priorities for MESP. These could include:

- i) Pursuing closer liaison and collaboration with the IAQE Project to ensure full alignment of the SQASF and TCSF to build on the achievements of the DFSP, including alignment with the GoM budget codes (refer discussion under Efficiency on donor harmonisation).
- ii) Ensuring close linkage and alignment between the SQASF and the TCSF.
- iii) Linking with UNICEF re: alignment with the Head Teacher Competency Framework with the TCSF and SQASF.
- iv) Seeking enhanced collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (EYE project) and the GIZ support for TVET quality reform to ensure alignment of the VE-SQASF with these initiatives.
- v) Engaging with the Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) to help ensure coherence of support to quality assurance initiatives of MoE.
- vi) Collaboration with the Danish-funded Capacity Development Fund to define areas of responsibility to avoid duplication of efforts.
- vii) Ensuring a renewed commitment and level of effort to support the preparation of the report for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

## Conclusion

The implementation of this investment has neither been strategic, nor targeted. The investment has achieved some results in areas closely aligned to the NESP priorities and where there has been strong leadership from within MoE (SQASF; VE-SQASF). However, greater focus is required to maximise gains.

There are areas of support which clearly do not represent 'value for money' for Australia or MoE (i.e. support for the Communications, Research and L&D activities). Existing research projects should be wrapped up and the three task teams phased out.

There are areas where greater progress might be achieved by working through existing MoE structures (e.g. DERPT).

There are areas where 'windows of opportunity' to improve Australia's contribution appear to have been missed.

**Recommendation 2:** That the scope of work for Phase 3 be reshaped in accordance with recommendations contained in Appendix E: Outcomes Statements, Program Logic and Scope of Work. The revised Scope of Work would:

- (i) phase out support for work for task teams / activities which do not represent 'value for money' and/or lack the capacity to influence reform in MoE
- (ii) continue to focus on areas achieving results but with a greater emphasis on quality and working through government structures
- (iii) investigate 'windows of opportunity' to consolidate and strengthen the effectiveness of Australia's contribution to education reform.

### 3. EFFICIENCY AND VALUE FOR MONEY

DFAT's current guidance on the assessment of Efficiency requires primary consideration of the extent to which an investment is making appropriate use of Australia's and our partners' time and resources to achieve outcomes.

The MTR faced a constraint in assessing Efficiency when it was not clear what outcomes Australia's investment in My-EQIP was trying to achieve or why certain activities and approaches were considered to be strategically more likely to achieve the outcomes than others.

DFAT assessment of Efficiency also requires comparison of spending versus budgets, the efficiency of the aid modality, the appropriateness of staffing levels and skills and assessment of whether or not the investment is well harmonised with the work of other donors and closely aligned with partner government systems.

While the MTR has made every effort to address these focus areas, it should also be noted that the assessment of efficiency has been made even more difficult by the MESP practice of embedding TA costs within some activity budgets, coupled with the failure to break out and monitor expenditure against specific activity budgets until October, 2018.

#### **3.1 There have been significant deviations from the budget, planned expenditure and timelines and there is a significant risk of future program under-expenditure**

There has been significant under expenditure since the commencement of the MESP. The underspend has been AUD1.3 million in FY2017/18 and AUD0.1 million in FY2018/19. It is estimated that the total program underspend to end March 2020 will be AUD 10.5 million, representing 54% of the total contract budget of AUD19.5 million. The repeated deviations from budget have been explained by the effect of the government-led modality, lower than expected MoE absorptive capacity and cheaper rates of expenditure than forecast (e.g. staff salaries and allowances, etc.)<sup>30</sup>

Data provided to the review team indicate that expenditure for activities against budget allocations in this financial year has increased; however, there are still significant deviations from budget, both up and down.<sup>31</sup> The wide variation in expenditure compared to activity budget estimates suggests that there have been challenges in either accurately determining budgets or delays in the implementation of activities – or perhaps both.<sup>32</sup>

Given previous program expenditure patterns, and current program predictions of an underspend of AUD2.3 million by the end of Phase 3, there is a significant the risk that funds may be allocated to expenditures that do not significantly contribute to end-of-program outcomes.

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<sup>30</sup> Aid Quality Check for INM088 - Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program

<sup>31</sup> `Overspends M&E Plans - 136%; Quality Assurance 166%; Learning and development 190%. Underspends: Annual Planning - 39%; Research – 16%; Communications – 17%.

<sup>32</sup> Financial data for specific categories of activities has only been available since October 2018 as expenditure by activity from November 2017 to October 2018 were not reported by activity.

### 3.2 The aid modality has not maximised efficiency in the absence of a clear program logic and capacity development framework

The efficiency of the MESP aid modality – TA and activity grants – is best assessed by analysis of:

- the contribution of TA to the achievement of intermediate outcomes and EOPOs
- the time and resources invested in activities vis-à-vis the contribution to outcomes; and
- the efficiency of the capacity development approach.

Each of these aspects is discussed in the paragraphs below.

#### 3.2.1 It is not possible to assess the efficiency of TA provided under MESP

Of the total MESP spending so far, it is estimated that at least 35% has been spent on TA<sup>33</sup>. Despite the extent of this expenditure, it has not been possible to conduct a rigorous analysis of the efficiency of this investment because:

- as discussed in sub-section 5.3 below, no efforts were made to directly link the work of TA to the achievement of intermediate outcomes and EOPOs
- no systematic measures were introduced to monitor the performance of TA
- the cost of TA is embedded in many activity budgets;<sup>34</sup> further, expenditure was not monitored against specific activity budgets until October, 2018.

#### 3.2.2 The time and resources invested in some activities does not appear to have maximised contribution to EOPOs

The review team attempted to analyse the cost-effectiveness of activities funded in order to determine the most and least efficient in contributing the EOPOs. Based upon this analysis:

the *most* efficient activities appear to be:

- VE-SQASF support
- SQASF support, if one does not consider the additional funds provided to a significantly large number of schools to conduct the SQASF assessment (see discussion below)

The *least* efficient activities appear to be:

- the research activities outsourced to ACER
- the nature of financial support to the phased implementation of the SQASF and
- support to the development of the website for MoE.

**Regarding outsourcing to ACER**, this approach may have its advantages for getting quality products produced quickly, but it is usually not a mechanism one chooses to develop capacity. The latter process takes time, needs to be flexible and responsive and requires close and consistent engagement. The contract for the work assigned to ACER has not been perceived by MoE to have had as much direct contribution to the development of monitoring, evaluation and research capacity of MoE (EOPO2) as expected. In addition, outsourcing (in the case of ACER) appears to have been at

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<sup>33</sup> Includes advisor support costs

<sup>34</sup> The MESP team advised that the costs of most short-term advisors were included as part of activity costs. This helps explain the apparent underspend in the STA budget.

a relatively high cost when compared to other program expenditures.<sup>35</sup> While the contract with ACER was intended to help develop capacity, there is limited reporting as to what capabilities and capacity have been developed. The decisions to outsource some of the research activity appears to have been driven more by the interest to ensure that quality products could be delivered on time.

**Regarding funding for SQASF preparation**, the efficiency question emerged with the decision to provide financial support for additional phases of SQASF roll-out. For the first 290 schools, My-EQIP provided support in the form of AUD 100 to each school to conduct the SQAS assessment. The next phase expanded this support to a total of 991 schools (the cluster lead schools), with plans for the third phase to reach a total of 2,930 schools by the end of the program, albeit with a slight reduction in the amount of financial support provided by MESP from AUD 100 to AUD 70 per school.

The review team queried why there was ongoing financial support from the program to schools to conduct the SQASF assessment and initiate the development of the SQIP in such a significant number of schools. The MESP support team and task team members were united in providing the argument that the conduct of the SQASF assessment was an additional cost to the school and needed to be supported by the program. When the MESP team was asked if the Ministry should be covering these additional costs, the response was affirmative, but only once the MESP concluded.

In the view of the review team, the argument for additional financing support from MESP for successive phases of SQASF assessment and SQIP development is flawed for at least two reasons. First, the schools may not need the additional funds. There is no evidence to suggest that MESP conducted an assessment of financial need; rather, the MESP offered to cover the costs for all schools involved at a flat allocation of AUD 100. It is noteworthy that the Auditor-General of the Union government, in an audit report of the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Program (DFSP) dated 29 March 2019, noted that many schools had not been able to spend the funds allocated for preparation of the SIP and to utilise the funds allocated for school grants.

Second, the additional funding provided by MESP for preparation of the SQASF assessment could be perceived as a form of ‘budget support’ which MESP was not designed to provide. In discussions with a senior ministry official, the official accepted that the costs of SQASF assessments and initial SQIP preparation should be covered by the ministry; however, the official suggested that since the program had experienced a previous under-spend of its budget, the expenditure for SQASF assessments and SQIP development in more schools could be included as part of program costs to reduce the under-spend.

**Regarding development of the MoE website**, based on information provided to the MTR team, it appears that the initial efforts utilised a programming language that was not able to be fully utilised by the MoE, resulting in a decision to re-do the work using an appropriate programming language. This resulted in time delays and additional costs. Adopting an appropriate capacity development approach to the design and conduct of the work could have prevented this situation from occurring.

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<sup>35</sup> In part, the additional costs are associated with the second application of management fees and the reliance on more expensive international technical assistance. The most recent MESP M&E Report notes that AUD 500,000 was required for the MTR of the NESP.



### 3.2.3 The efficiency of the task team mechanism has been variable

The effectiveness of the task team mechanism has already been discussed under 2.4 above. It has not been possible to gather evidence on the efficiency of the task teams from the perspective of Australia's investment because, as previously advised, the cost of the TA working with the task teams has, in most cases, been embedded in the cost of the activity; expenditure has not been tracked by activity over the lifetime of the investment, nor has the performance and quality of TA been systematically monitored.

There is evidence, however, that the benefit to MoE may not have justified the cost in some cases. All task teams, except for the VE-SQASF task team<sup>36</sup>, have included members from multiple departments. The task teams have required substantial commitment of MoE staff time and effort; task teams have had an average of 15-20 members who have been expected to meet for an entire day on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.<sup>37</sup> Sixty-three percent (63%) of task team members surveyed in October 2019 reported experiencing difficulty in meeting the time commitments of the task team model.<sup>38</sup>

The conflicting commitments of task team members was reported to the ETVSCG in January 2020 and led to a request by the MESP Director for a reduction in the time allocation required of MoE staff to participate in task team activities.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this, the evidence obtained by the review team suggests that where there have been tangible results for MoE (e.g. with the development and implementation of the SQASF and VE-SQASF) the investment of MoE staff time has been justified. The VE-SQASF task team has been assessed as the most efficient, in that the work has progressed rapidly with comparatively less support from the MESP. This higher level of efficiency may be the result of the VE-SQASF task team being from one department, strongly supported by the Director General and Deputy Director General of DTJET and with a limited number of TVET institutions to engage.

Where the task teams / activities have produced limited, or unsustainable, results, however, the cost-effectiveness from MoE's point of view has been low. For example, Research team members estimate that, based on the average number of members attending team meetings and the estimated total number of meetings conducted (usually these are all day meetings), they had collectively spent the equivalent of almost two person-years in research task team meetings.<sup>40</sup> Although individual team members may have gained some knowledge and skills via their participation in the RTT, the assessed 'value add' to MoE has been minimal. (Refer discussion sub-section 2.5 and Appendix D)

<sup>36</sup> The VE-SQASF task team is the only team where the members are from one department.

<sup>37</sup> The number of members per program team were reported as: CSTT – 24; RTT – 22; M&E – 17; SI – 19; SQASF – 20; VE-SQASF – 15; SQASF Central Implementation Committee – 28.

<sup>38</sup> My-EQIP Six Monthly M&E Report: April-September, 2019

<sup>39</sup> Conflicting schedules impeding progress on NESP SSG work are noted in the report to the 13th ETVSCG – January 6, 2020. Also, the My-EQIP M&E Report noted that "...a request was issued from the My-EQIP program director to reduce task team meetings from full-day to half-day sessions where possible to provide personnel more time to engage in other departmental works and with other programs."

<sup>40</sup> RTT team personal communication with MTR team 26/02/2020

### **3.3 Gaps in the skills and experience of the MESP team has undermined efficiency and are likely to continue to do so if not addressed**

Taken collectively, the knowledge, understanding and skill-sets required to contribute to the achievement of the MESP program outcomes have not been sufficient.

**3.3.1 The MESP has lacked adequate, specialist advice on capacity development.** Designed as a capacity development investment, the MESP began Phase 1 implementation with the support of an Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Specialist directly contracted to DFAT. The ECB Specialist was responsible for developing the initial MESP capacity development framework; this has been assessed by the review team as incomplete and inadequate (refer detailed discussion in Section 4 below).

At the beginning of Phase 2 the functions of the ECB Specialist were absorbed into the MESP support team. In retrospect, this decision appears to have resulted in a diminished level of specialist advice on capacity development than was originally intended to be provided in the MESP design. The review team observed that none of the long-term advisors contracted to the MESP seemed to have any in-depth knowledge or capabilities in relation to capacity development. Various revisions to the MESP capacity development framework over the life of the investment have demonstrated a limited understanding of capacity development in complex adaptive systems like the MoE.

Having taken over responsibility for the functions of the ECB specialist, it would have been reasonable to expect the MC to ensure that appropriate capacity development expertise was being provided to the program. This does not appear to have been the case. The MC advised that the ECB Specialist functions were to be taken on the Team Leader; however, there is conflicting information that indicates that the ECB function was to be taken up by the M&E Specialist.<sup>41</sup> The MC has experienced changes in personnel over the lifetime of the investment; representatives interviewed by the review team were unable to provide any information on whether the skill deficiency had been identified and what (if any) steps had been taken to address the deficiency.

**3.3.2 The MESP has lacked adequate, specialist advice on M&E.** Section 5 below outlines the inadequacy of the MESP M&E arrangements; DFAT's attempts to commission independent advice and support to the MESP M&E personnel; the apparent unwillingness / inability to improve the M&E arrangements during Phase 2 and the on-going failure of the MC to address these inadequacies.

The MESP was designed as a highly flexible and adaptive program which required a solid understanding of M&E principles and a simple pragmatic approach to defining what would be measured, how and why. In the absence of such an approach, the MESP M&E system has undermined efficiency in a number of ways. The M&E system does not appear to have facilitated:

- analysis of expenditure -v- results to determine which activities and 'pathways of change' were achieving best value for money (as a precursor to adapting the Theory of Change / Program Logic)
- appropriate planning and budgeting based upon results to date
- performance management of TA

<sup>41</sup> See MY-EQIP Operations – Minutes of monthly meetings May 2019

### 3.4 Inadequate collaboration with other donors has reduced efficiency

The development partner landscape in Myanmar is becoming increasingly ‘crowded’<sup>42</sup> and the ability of the Education Ministry to continue effective engagement with the MESP is already being negatively affected. This is demonstrated by decreasing level of attendance of senior ministry officials at Steering Committee and Technical Working Group meetings<sup>43</sup>, as well as conflicts reported by MESP task team members between their core responsibilities and task team work<sup>44</sup>. The MESP Program Director also reports growing challenges in acting as the focal point in DERPT for development partner assistance.

Despite these challenges, there is little evidence to suggest that the MESP has either formulated, or is implementing, a specific donor harmonisation strategy.

There are isolated reports of engagement with other development partners<sup>45</sup> and some level of coordination with UNESCO to support the validation of the Teacher Competency Standards Framework (TCSF)<sup>46</sup>

However, there is also evidence to suggest that the MESP team have disagreed with the approaches of several significant donor partners leading to an avoidance strategy.

The first area of disagreement is with the approach of the Danish-supported Capacity Development Fund (implemented through the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (Research)). This disagreement appears to have reached the point of intentional avoidance by the MESP personnel of the consultant working on the Danish-supported program.

The second area where collaboration appears to have faltered is in relation to the work of the World Bank in the education sector. The World Bank has recently approved the USD180 million Inclusive Access and Quality Education (IAQE) Project (USD100 million plus USD80 million grants). The IAQE targets inclusion, children-at-risk and systems strengthening and provides supplementary funding for infrastructure development in schools. The systems strengthening work follows on from the work of the DFSP which has been operating since 2014 with funding from Australia<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Refer My-EQIP M&E Report 1 April – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 Annex 5: Overview of development partner programs in education

<sup>43</sup> Refer My-EQIP M&E Report 1 Oct 2018 – 31 March, 2019 Annex 5: Continuity of Joint Steering Committee attendance, January to November 2018 pg. 58

<sup>44</sup> As noted above and in the My-EQIP Six Monthly Report: April-September, 2019 and in interviews with task team members during the MTR mission to Nay Pyie Taw.

<sup>45</sup> The United Kingdom Partnership for Education (MUPE) program is reported to have actively engaged with MESP during its inception period. The TVET task team is reported to have engaged with the GIZ program (TVET Reform Programme Phase II) to promote a coordinated approach to quality assurance across the TVET sector. However, the MESP could hardly claim credit for this as this task team has been strongly driven by MoE, not MESP.

<sup>46</sup> ACER, through an assignment under MESP, surveyed 5000 basic education teachers as part of the validation process.

Plans to include the Teacher Competency Standards Framework as part of the SQASF are not known.

<sup>47</sup> Inclusive Access and Quality Education, World Bank Project Appraisal Document, 5 February, 2020

The DFSP has supported MoE to provide school-based funding (school grants) which can be accessed via the preparation of a School Quality Standards and Assurance Framework [SQSAF], framed around a set of four domains and 13 indicators of school-based performance, leading to the preparation of a School Improvement Plan (SIP). The domains and indicators are aligned with specific Ministry of Finance (MoF) budget codes which enable government funds to be disbursed directly to schools to fund their School Improvement Plans. The IAQE funding has facilitated the adding of a 14<sup>th</sup> indicator, and budget code, specifically focused on larger school infrastructure.

The review team understands that, despite many attempts by World Bank personnel to explain to MESP personnel that it would be advantageous to build upon the existing MoE SQSAF / SIP framework, not the least because it is embedded in MoF budget codes, the MESP appears to have supported the development of a competitive school quality improvement system. MESP has assisted the School Quality and Standards Framework (SQSAF) task team to develop an expanded set of six domains with 58 indicators. Schools are required to assess themselves against these indicators in order to prepare a School Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP) – rather than the SIP that has been required under the DFSP. Based upon a preliminary understanding of the development context within which schools in Myanmar operate, and the capacity of MoE officials and school principals, expanding the number of indicators to 56 over six domains seems overly ambitious at this stage.<sup>48</sup>

While there appears to be comparability between the domains and indicators developed under the DFSP with those developed as part of the SQSAF, the inability to directly align the MESP-inspired SQSAF domains and indicators with the MoF budget codes assigned through the DFSP could well lead to confusion by schools and MoE at different levels. Indeed, the draft SQSAF Manual notes; *“Over time, the SQIP will gradually replace the SIP. However, there may be a transition period when some schools need to use their self-assessment findings to develop both a SIP and SQIP”*<sup>49</sup>

Review team observations indicate that the MESP team appear to view the increase in the number and form of donor support through a ‘competitive’ lens rather than a ‘collaborative’ lens. A more collaborative approach could assist the MoE to improve the coordination of development partner support and realize additional program efficiencies.

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<sup>48</sup> An undated literature review prepared by ACER for MESP entitled “Use of School Quality Assurance Standards Frameworks within systems for education quality improvement” highlights that “SQSAF indicators must reflect what matters most to student learning. The number and content of indicators must be carefully selected, and weightings applied where required. This helps focus schools on the right things, and avoids creating perverse incentives to focus on the wrong ones.”

<sup>49</sup> Draft SQSAF Manual pg. 77

## Conclusion

A range of factors have seriously undermined the extent to which this investment has maximised the use of Australian resources to achieve outcomes. Chief among these has been the lack of clarity around intended outcomes, lack of a robust program logic and capacity development framework and inadequate M&E arrangements. All of these are the necessary foundations for applying resources in a strategic and targeted manner.

Both the on-ground team and the MC appear to have lacked the knowledge and experience to address the factors undermining efficiency.

As a result, there have been significant deviations from budget over the lifetime of the investment. The review team estimates that, even with the current trajectory of activity, the likely expenditure ceiling for the final 14 months of the program would be in the range of AUD 4-5 million, creating a potential AUD 4-5 million under-expenditure. The MESP itself conservatively predicts an end-of-program surplus of AUD2.3 million for a “potential extension period”.

The proposed reduction in activity (as per Recommendation 2 above) would change the Scope of Work and technical assistance requirements in Phase 3 – likely to result in less expenditure. A suggested revision to both are included in Appendix F to this report.

Based upon the experience of the review team, an estimated budget in the range of AUD3.5 to AUD4.5 million will be required to finalise Phase 3.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Phase 3 budget be reduced by a minimum of AUD4 million and that the work plan be revised to reflect the reduced scope of work and budget.

## 4. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

### 4.1 The MESP has never had a coherent capacity development approach

MESP's inability to fully understand and apply the concepts of 'partner-led' and to appropriately apply PDIA approaches to inform adjustments to the program are addressed in Review Findings: Section 1. This section discusses one of the flow-on effects of this lack of understanding, namely, the inability to produce a coherent capacity development framework for the investment.

The design did not prescribe the capacity development approach to be taken by MESP, although it does note that MESP would be limited to the provision of 'advice' and 'support' services.<sup>50</sup> The MESP design also did not define what would be considered as 'appropriate' advice or support to achieve effective capacity development. This absence of prescription in the design can be considered to be appropriate for a program intended to be 'partner-led' and flexible and responsive in addressing the capacity development needs of the MoE.

Despite the lack of prescription, the design provided ample evidence of effective approaches and strategies to developing capacity, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluation.<sup>51</sup> Much of this evidence points to the requirement of capacity development efforts to align closely with existing and proposed government policies, systems and processes, to exercise an iterative problem-driven approach and to ensure contributions to the achievement of program outcomes.

#### **The Phase 2 Implementation Plan<sup>52</sup> did not include a coherent capacity development approach.**

The main narrative of the P2IP, submitted in December 2017, did not include any discussion of a capacity development approach.<sup>53</sup> However, Annex 2 of the P2IP, entitled "EQIS Capacity Development Framework" offered a narrow and simplistic view of capacity development.<sup>54</sup> The narrative of the framework suggests that if MESP provides consultants for MoE staff to work alongside while developing 'products', then MoE staff will 'learn-by-doing' (with training and coaching by consultants) during development of the 'products'. This limited view of capacity development, which focuses on the development of individual knowledge and skills via osmotic association with consultants, has pervaded the entire program.

An attempt was made to anchor the capacity development approach of the MESP investment on the 2009 World Bank's Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF).<sup>55</sup> Considerable effort is made in the narrative of the initial capacity development framework to explain a range of capacity development efforts and the modalities and tools that can be used to build capacity. Despite this, the MESP framework fails to give practical application to the concepts presented by:

<sup>50</sup> See pages 24 and 25 – Draft Design of the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program.

<sup>51</sup> See pages 20 and 21 – Draft Design of the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program.

<sup>52</sup> Phase 2 Implementation Plan, December 2017. Despite the date, this plan was, in fact, prepared by the Evaluation Capacity Building Specialist at the end of Phase 1.

<sup>53</sup> Reference pg. 16

<sup>54</sup> Refer statements pg. 54 and 63

<sup>55</sup> There are a number of capacity development frameworks that could have been applied to the MESP program. Some of these are referenced in the MESP design. The rationale for selection of the World Bank framework is not evident.

- i) identifying critical capacity development needs of the MoE that are aligned with attainment of the investment's objectives;
- ii) identifying, selecting and aligning development efforts to address the capacity needs identified; and
- iii) determining how changes in capacity will be monitored and measured.<sup>56</sup>

This is a remarkable oversight given that the World Bank CDRF is recognised as one of the more useful frameworks for measuring capacity development change as it provides standardised sets of capacity indicators.

**The September 2019 CD framework failed to address the oversights of the original framework.**

An attempt to refine the capacity development framework was undertaken by the MESP as part of the preparation for the second year of the P2IP. The result was the September 2019 document entitled "Approaches to achieving Program outcomes (revised capacity development framework)". The content of this document appears to attempt to simplify the original capacity development framework by removing much of the theoretical discussion, draw on lessons learned from implementation and includes a section on M&E.

Unfortunately, the revised framework still failed to identify capacity development needs, select and align capacity development efforts and to address those needs and to propose appropriate monitoring arrangements to assess capacity change.<sup>57</sup> In fact, rather than describing how change in capacity will be captured, the M&E section of the September 2019 framework is simply dedicated to analysing the advantages, disadvantages and uses of 25 different capacity development tools.

Indicative of the lack of understanding within MESP of the centrality of capacity development in achieving the investment outcomes is the following statement included in the revised framework:

*"In order to minimise the potential for mis-communication and the risk of contradictory understanding about the concept of 'capacity' this Framework minimises the use of the term where possible. Instead the Framework recognises that those involved in implementing My-EQIP are using a mix of overall approaches and applying a mix of contribution types towards the achievement of shared objectives."<sup>58</sup>*

The following sections discuss how and why the MESP failed to produce a coherent CD approach.

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<sup>56</sup> The only attempt apparent to the MTR team to identify capacity development needs was the M&E Diagnostic conducted in June 2017, which followed on from the 2016 FHI 360 "Multi-Level Capacity Gap Assessment" of MoE. There is no evidence of other diagnostic work. There is no evidence of any measurements of change in capacity being conducted by MESP.

<sup>57</sup> The updated MESP Monitoring and Evaluation System Plan (February 2020) reflects the content of the updated capacity development framework and does not address the identified oversights.

<sup>58</sup> Op.cit pg. 3

#### **4.2 The MESP team has lacked the knowledge and expertise required to develop and operationalise a systematic capacity development approach**

Both the My-EQIP design, and the Subsidiary Arrangement (SA) between the GoM and GoA for implementation of the program, envisioned a critical role for the Phase 1 ECB Specialist in building individual MoE staff capacity and fostering ownership of the program. While the ECB Specialist would appear to have been capable, and respected, for contributions to the capacity development of individual MoE staff, the discussion under 4.1 above indicates some limitations in the ability of the ECB Specialist to produce a coherent capacity development framework.

The SA also expressed the intention for the function of the ECB Specialist to be continued into Phase 2. In January 2018, however, DFAT commissioned an independent review of the MESP implementation structure, which included the ECB Specialist [contracted directly by DFAT] plus MC. Based on the review, DFAT decided to amalgamate the functions of the ECB Specialist into the functions of the MESP team, with strategic oversight and DFAT advocacy being taken on by the DFAT program manager.<sup>59</sup> In retrospect, this decision appears to have resulted in a diminished level of specialist advice on capacity development than was originally intended in the MESP design and SA. The DFAT decision also represented a lost opportunity to correct the misunderstanding of capacity development in the team and to initiate a more coherent and systematic approach.

The review team observed that none of the long-term advisors contracted to the MESP appear to have any in-depth knowledge or capabilities in relation to capacity development. This observation may help explain why the revision to the MESP capacity development framework undertaken at the end of 2019, albeit with support from an STA, continues to demonstrate a limited understanding of capacity development in complex adaptive systems like the MoE.

#### **4.3 The My-EQIP organisational review was a missed opportunity to strengthen the capacity development approach**

An organisational review (OR) of the MESP was undertaken in late 2018.<sup>60</sup> The OR was a Head Contract deliverable for the MC intended to *“to assess the extent to which it (the organisational structure) is meeting the needs of the Program”*<sup>61</sup> Surprisingly, the MC did not carry out the required assessment, opting instead for an inward-looking focus on the internal My-EQIP team structure and resourcing, rather than considering the extent to which the organisational structure was ‘fit-for-purpose’ in achieving program outcomes.

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<sup>59</sup> Three options were presented to DFAT. The option selected reduced transactional costs to DFAT by having a single contract and avoided potentially challenging changes to long-term contracts entered into by the managing contractor.

<sup>60</sup> My-EQIP Organisational Overview 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 Cardno

<sup>61</sup> Managing Contractor Head Contract Agreement Number 74025, Schedule 1, Section 6.1 (j))



The decision to limit the scope of the organisational review is difficult to understand considering that the entire program was designed to be ‘partner-led’, flexible and responsive and provide ‘advice’ and ‘support’ to MoE in developing their organisational capacity. As such, the organisational structure of MESP would need to be determined by the capacity development needs of the MoE. To limit the scope of the review to focus primarily on internal issues appears to be negligent, at best, of contractual obligations. In addition, only one person from MoE (the MESP Director) was interviewed during the organisational review – emphasising the limited scope of the review.

When these observations are taken together with the fact that the MC itself conducted the OR, concerns may well be raised as to the independence and objectivity of the review findings and recommendations. Indeed, the MC noted this point in the OR report.<sup>62</sup>

The MTR team considers that the MC failed to use the OR as an opportunity to recognise and address the flaws in the MESP capacity development approach and the weaknesses in the knowledge and expertise of the MESP team to develop and operationalise a systematic capacity development approach.

#### **4.4 The Organisational Constraints Analysis (OCA) was also unable to advance the development of a coherent capacity development approach for the MESP.**

The MESP supported the conduct of the Organisational Constraints Analysis activity in the latter part of 2019 to help MoE and MESP to better understand “...how the MoE functions and to identify what is required to turn policy objectives into actions (and) to determine what changes were required to implement three transformations set out in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP)”.<sup>63</sup>

The OCA report provides an easily understood description and basic analysis of findings, including the provision of diagrammatic representations of the magnitude or ‘perceived’ magnitude of the ‘constraints’ and ‘enablers’. The OCA also provides generic statements as to the areas for further attention to address the ‘constraints’ and support the ‘enablers’.

Nevertheless, the MTR team is concerned that the level and amount of attention by MoE, DFAT and the MESP in relation to the findings and recommendations of the OCA is unwarranted and may potentially mislead decision-makers to take action based on a limited evidentiary base and a set of disjointed and unconnected observations and recommendations. The MTR team base this assessment on the following observations:

- The OCA is based on a limited and narrow sample set of respondents (52 respondents, all engaged with MESP task teams).
- The OCA does not categorise the types of actions that are required to address constraints or support enablers, nor does the OCA identify who is responsible for and capable of taking the actions. These oversights result in a scattered piece-meal approach.

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<sup>62</sup> The Review was led by the Cardno Yangon-based corporate team, specifically: Mark Pruden (My-EQIP Contractor Representative) and Laura Tracy (My-EQIP Program Manager). The review notes “...it may be useful for subsequent Reviews to involve a more independent reviewer, to provide additional objectivity.” Pg. 1)

<sup>63</sup> The three transformational shifts that were the focus of the OCA were: Management, capacity development and quality assurance (NESP Chapter 13); basic education – access, quality and inclusion (NESP Chapter 6); and, technical and vocational education and training (NESP Chapter 11).

- The OCA does not ‘place’ the recommendations within the context of a coherent capacity development framework, thus limiting the coherent application of the recommendations and monitoring and measurement of their effect once adopted and implemented.

The design and conduct of the OCA provides another example of a missed opportunity to develop an appropriate capacity development framework for the MESP.

### Conclusion

The MESP has never had an appropriate capacity development framework or personnel with the level of knowledge and experience required to strengthen the MoE and MESP team’s understanding, development and application of an appropriate capacity development approach.

As a second organisational review is now due, this is an appropriate time to conduct a more comprehensive and objective organisational review of MoE as a basis for ensuring that Australia’s capacity development support in Phase 3 is both strategic and targeted in order to make the maximum contribution to MoE organisational reforms. Appendix H suggests how this might be done.

The inadequate attention to this issue by the MC over the lifetime of this investment suggests that DFAT may be best served by commissioning independent technical advice to improve capacity development approaches during Phase 3 and potentially to carry out pre-commissioned action-research to feed into a full design process in respect of any follow-on investment. A preliminary example of potential approaches is included as Annex G:

**Recommendation 4:** That DFAT appoint an international capacity development specialist, with expertise working in the education sector in developing countries, to:

- Provide advice to the MESP team in appropriate capacity development approaches to implementing selected actions during Phase 3 of the investment
- oversee the conduct of a second organisational review of MoE and preparation of a long-term capacity development framework which may feed into a design for a follow-on investment (if any).

## 5. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE M&E ARRANGEMENTS

### 5.1 MESP M&E arrangements do not meet DFAT standards

DFAT's M&E Standards require an M&E Plan to articulate end-of-program outcomes which reflect the intent of Australia's investment and reflect a robust program logic<sup>64</sup>. Articulating outcomes, as well as strategies for achieving those outcomes (change pathways) does not preclude adaptive programming. In fact, it is the *combination* of clear outcomes and a clear program logic, coupled with an effective M&E system which can facilitate adaptive programming. As the M&E system provides important contextual information, performance information and analyses, the program may adjust the proposed outcomes and/or strategies to achieve those outcomes.

Without clear outcomes and change pathways, however, there is essentially nothing to 'frame' the M&E plan and systems. The latest iteration of the My-EQIP M&E System Plan,<sup>65</sup> despite incorporating a plethora of matrices, progress markers, performance rubrics, tools and templates, is still unable to resolve this core problem. The MESP has never successfully specified:

- What Australia's investment is trying to achieve? (end-of-program-outcomes)
- How it expects to achieve the desired results? (strategies connecting the outputs to intermediate outcomes and the IOs to EOPOs)

While a lot of *information* has been collected over time, the MESP reports demonstrate an inherent and continuing failure to be able to use this information as *evidence* to demonstrate the way in which activities, are contributing, through intermediate outcomes, to the achievement of EOPOs.

While the M&E System Plan was developed with the assistance of DFAT and an independent M&E consultant commissioned, weaknesses in implementation of the plan formally noted in early 2018<sup>66</sup>. Despite the conduct of workshops by the independent M&E consultant during that year and the provision of remote support to the MESP to improve the M&E arrangements, staff were either unable or unwilling to bring the M&E arrangements up to an appropriate standard.<sup>67</sup> The MC does not appear to have taken adequate steps to address this deficiency.

As a result, the MESP reports have also been weak in reporting the contribution of achievements to realise the program outcomes. The primary purpose of six-monthly reports is to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of EOPOs. An independent review of the April to September 2018 report noted that the report met DFAT progress reporting standards. However, a review of the October to March 2019 Report noted that, despite the presentation of a lot of information, "*The link between a program logic and performance is difficult to establish*"<sup>68</sup> The 1 April to 30 September, 2019 report has made considerable efforts to improve on this but, in the absence of clear EOPOs and strategies for achieving those EOPOs, the information is presented in a conceptual vacuum.

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<sup>64</sup> DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards March 2020 pg. 14

<sup>65</sup> My-EQIP Monitoring and Evaluation System Plan Updated: February 2020

<sup>66</sup> Review of M&E for My-EQIP, Clear Horizons Report 29/11/2016

<sup>67</sup> Personal communication, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

<sup>68</sup> Review of My-EQIP M&E Report 1 October-31 March 2019 Clear Horizons 20/5/2019 pg. 2

The current MESP M&E staff appear to be competent and committed. However, even they admitted to the review team that they had great difficulty linking activities to intermediate outcomes and EOPOs in the current (sic) program logic.

## 5.2 Baseline data is not adequate

DFAT M&E Standards note that a baseline is not a broad needs assessment, but tightly focussed on the outcomes intended to be affected by the investment.<sup>69</sup> In other words, baseline data facilitates routine checking and reporting on progress towards the achievement of outcomes.

The MTR report has already discussed the flow-on effects of not having clear outcomes regarding the expected results of Australia's investment in supporting MoE reforms. The flow-on effects are also evident in relation to the lack of clarity around what baseline data is required.

The MESP M&E documentation has regularly misconstrued and obfuscated the function of baseline data by linking it to the implementation principles and iterative, partner-led approach. The MESP has also argued that the so-called mini-baseline data studies have been an integral part of the capacity development strategy, informing systems strengthening and development. In fact, the MESP documentation variously refers to the same studies as 'Mini-baselines' and in other places as simply 'research'.

This broad and loose interpretation of the concept of baseline data has resulted in the production of a heterogeneous package of data which does not facilitate checking progress against program outcomes. Further, and despite assertions to the contrary, it is not clear how the data analysis has informed adaptation of program strategies and targeting.

The most recent MESP M&E System Plan<sup>70</sup> presents a list of 'mini-baseline' studies. The review team has analysed this list to determine whether this work:

- a) constitutes baseline data according to the DFAT M&E Standards interpretation of the concept; that is, it has been / can be used to report on progress towards the achievement of outcomes; and
- b) How the results of this data has influenced the strategies and/or targeting of MESP efforts.

The results (presented in Appendix G) suggest that none of the 'mini baseline' studies have facilitated reporting against the EOPOs. Few of the studies appear to have influenced on-going strategies and/or targeting of MESP efforts.

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<sup>69</sup> DFAT M&E Standards March 2020 Section 2.13

<sup>70</sup> My-EQIP M&E System Plan Updated February 2020 Section 4.2 pg.18

### 5.3 TA performance and quality has not been adequately monitored

The MESP aid modality is TA plus activity funding, with a strong focus on capacity development. The use of this modality necessitates the establishment of a system for joint monitoring of the quality of the technical inputs. Where a decision is made that TA is required, the intended results of that TA should be defined prior to engagement and performance monitored in two ways:

- (i) by clearly delineating the area of MoE's work that the TA is expected to contribute to, in what way, with what expected results; this should include specification of the expected capacity development results
- (ii) by clearly delineating how the TA contributes to Australia's contribution to the achievement of MoE reform outcomes; in other words, specifically linking the TA to the MESP intermediate outcomes / EOPOs.

Review team investigations suggest that performance monitoring of TA has been deficient in both of these ways. While requests for TA come through formal channels and ToR are prepared, interviews with relevant MoE staff indicate that no mechanism for joint assessment of performance has been established. Indeed, the Program Director advised that she had not been involved in any assessments of the quality of TA performance, nor does she receive the exit reports of TA.<sup>71</sup>

Further, the MESP does not appear to have attempted to 'place' the work of TA within the context of the (albeit inadequate) program logic. Interviews with a range of TA, particularly short term TA, suggest that while they no doubt applied energy and professionalism to their inputs, they did not necessarily 'see the big picture' either in terms of the way in which their work was contributing to the achievement of the EOPOs or, indeed, what capacity development results they might be expected to achieve.

Finally, interviews with MC staff indicate that while performance assessments of TA are informally carried out, there does not appear to be a transparent, systematic and rigorous approach for assessing performance.

#### Conclusion

The MESP M&E arrangements have never met DFAT standards and, despite substantial efforts on DFAT's part, continue to be inadequate. Reporting consequently suffers. Consequent upon clarification of the outcome statements and program logic for Phase 3, it will be much easier for current M&E staff to construct a simple M&E Plan which links activities / outputs to intermediate outcomes and contributions to the achievement of EOPOs. Appendix I presents an example of a 'minimum-sufficient' M&E Plan for Phase 3.

**Recommendation 5:** That MESP M&E staff prepare a 'minimum-sufficient' M&E Plan, linked to the revised set of outcome statements and program logic for Phase 3.

<sup>71</sup> Personal communication with My-EQIP Program Director 26/02/20

## 6. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

### 6.1 Improved governance may be achieved by greater alignment with government structures

Investigations during the MTR indicate that the My-EQIP Steering Committee does not function as a strategy forming or decision-making body as originally envisaged.<sup>72</sup> There is a perceived low level of importance given by senior MoE officials to My-EQIP and a decreasing level of attendance at Steering Committee meetings. Many decisions appear to be made out of session with the Steering Committee serving as a ‘rubber-stamp’.

Further, while the Subsidiary Agreement anticipated the Technical Working Group (TWG) guiding implementation, the group is working in quite a different way. MoE has placed lower level officials on the TWG due to human resource constraints and the lack of availability of higher-level officials to participate. These officials may participate in the TWG but then must go away to consult with higher level officials before confirming their views and decisions back to the next TWG meeting. Feedback provided during the review mission indicates that the TWG meetings are too infrequent, and the consultation / feedback process is too slow, to guide implementation.

As discussed in sub-section 3.4 above, there are an increasing number of development partners competing for the attention of MoE, each demanding their own form of ‘Steering Committee’ and/or ‘Technical Working Group.’<sup>73</sup> In this ‘crowded’ environment, it should not be surprising to Australia that the intended roles of the My-EQIP Steering Committee and Technical Working Group are not functioning as well as envisioned by the language of the Subsidiary Arrangement.

By contrast, the review team took note of the commitment and attention that the ministry was giving to the governance and oversight structures of the NESP, particularly the Education and TVET Sector Coordination Group (ETVSCG) and the Sub-Sector Working Groups (SSWGs) which are aligned directly with the various requirements of the NESP.

As an alternative to continuing a separate MESP governance structure – which requires time, effort and the attention of over-extended ministry officials, there is an opportunity to increasingly link MESP governance structures with the NESP governance structures. This suggestion implies that the My-EQIP Steering Committee functions may be achieved more effectively through increasing the alignment of these functions with the ETVSCG and the My-EQIP Technical Working Group functions may be achieved more effectively through increasing alignment with the Management, Capacity Development and Quality Assurance SSWG. This improved alignment should be relatively straightforward since the GoA is a co-facilitator of the ETVSCG and the MESP Director is from the DERPT – the department leading the Management, Capacity Development and Quality Assurance SSWG.

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<sup>72</sup> The Subsidiary Agreement for the My-EQIP program identifies the need for a Steering Committee “...responsible for Activity oversight and approve (sic) Activity plans, budgets and reports” and a Technical Working Group that “...will ensure the activity is implemented in accordance with mutually decided plans and implementation principles” (Clause 4.3, page 2).

<sup>73</sup> Development partners in education other than Australia include: World Bank (IAQE); European Union (Enhancing Education Skills); Denmark (Capacity Development Fund); Asian Development Bank (Employing Youth for Employment); Japan International Cooperation Agency (CREATE); UNESCO (STEM, EMIS, SDG, TCSF, GPE); UNICEF (Strategic Planning, OOSC/OOSY); DFID UK (MUPE); GIZ (TVET Reform); VSO (QA).

## 6.2 MC must give greater attention to improving program performance

Ultimately, the MC is responsible to DFAT for the efficient, effective, economical and ethical delivery of the program and the Head Contract is quite specific about these responsibilities.<sup>74</sup>

This MTR report has detailed a range of areas where the MC appears to have failed to look beyond the strict requirements of contract deliverables to consider what would be required to improve program performance. This includes:

- inadequate attention to the quality of capacity development expertise made available to the program once the ECB functions were absorbed at the beginning of phase 2
- inadequate resolution of on-going issues and problems raised by DFAT and (it is understood) by the team leader with the poor quality of the M&E arrangements for the program
- failure to adequately monitor the performance and quality of TA overall.

Deficiencies in the performance of personnel are not uncommon over the life of a program, but it is incumbent upon the MC to identify deficiencies before they become a problem for the program and to act expeditiously to address them. This may involve head office providing technical backstopping for a team and/or implementing processes to strengthen and / or replace individual TA.

Rather than performing this support / strengthening function for the MESP team, however, the review team observed tension between the in-country team and the MC. The in-country team appears to feel isolated and unsupported, perceiving the MC to make demands rather than assisting them to solve problems. The review team was unable to assess the underlying issues or validity of these perceptions, save to say that if these perceptions are permitted to continue, they may negatively affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

### Conclusion

The My-EQIP Joint Steering Committee does not function as a strategy forming or decision-making body as originally envisaged in the My-EQIP investment design. The Technical Working Committee comprises lower level officials that are unable to commit resources or make decisions as anticipated in the arrangements set out in the Subsidiary Agreement. It is an appropriate time for the MESP to transition to the use of government structures for governance, while maintaining Australia's interests.

**Recommendation 6:** That the functions of the Joint Steering Committee be progressively absorbed into the work of the ETVSCG and that the functions of the Technical Working Group be absorbed into the work of the MCQ SSWG.

<sup>74</sup> See Head Contract Section 1.16 "The functions of the Contractor related to the My-EQIP will include: (inter alia) (d) managing the performance of technical assistance and other inputs...;(e) providing all necessary resources to deliver the services to implement the contract; (g) development and delivering My-EQIP M&E under the direction of the TWG and SC

## 7. GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 7.1 Attention to gender equality and social inclusion in MoE does not appear to have significantly increased as a result of My-EQIP's interventions

The MESP has carried out a range of discrete activities to incorporate gender equity and social inclusion. These include the development of inclusion indicators and the application of inclusion checklists for SQASF, VE-SQASF and the MoE DAIP and M&E Plans. For SQASF, an application matrix and training has also been provided. A guidance note, glossary and information package have also been developed. In addition, responding to a request from the Program Director in early 2019 to assist MoE prepare a progress report on the 2016 CEDAW findings, MESP engaged ACER to undertake a Gender and Ethnicity Study. The initial stage of the study has resulted in the development of an 'inclusive' research taxonomy that will not only guide the study itself, but can be used to inform other research activities of the MESP.

Aside from these discrete activities, however, there is no evidence to indicate that the MESP has had a strategy to assist the MoE to develop policies, strategies, plans or activities that specifically address gender equality or social inclusion issues in education.

The Social Inclusion Focal Persons (SIFP), selected from each of the task teams, indicated to the review team that they do not feel as if social inclusion is viewed as a priority by the MESP or by the MoE. Nor do they feel supported or valued by the MESP or by MoE. Aside from the significant reduction in budget (see below), the other reason the SIFP feel undervalued is the decision by MoE and MESP not to establish a separate task team for SI. The SIFP and SI TA believe that as a task team SI would have a visible identity within the MESP and could be more proactive in advocating for and supporting SI initiatives.<sup>75</sup>

While structures and mechanisms to promote SI within the MoE are not visibly apparent, including within the NESP, it was reported by DFAT that there are internal efforts to advance SI within the MoE. An observation was made by the SIFP that social inclusion efforts were being driven primarily by the SIFP and the Technical Working Group, but not by other task teams or by MoE departments.<sup>76</sup>

The SIFP noted the absence of a specific office/unit within the MoE to advocate for, and advance, issues related to gender equality and social inclusion. When asked where they believed a unit would best be located within the MoE, there was agreement that DERPT would be the most appropriate.

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<sup>75</sup> During the review team interview with the SIFP, there were few positive responses and the mood during the interview gave the impression that the SIFP had 'given up'.

<sup>76</sup> The My-EQIP TWG in July 2019 defined a possible vision for social inclusion for MoE which included two objectives for the 2019-2020 work plan: i) 80% of schools with SQASF/SQIP by September 2020 have a SQIP with inclusion-related actions; and ii) social inclusion resources have been developed and used in the work of each My-EQIP Task Team.



## **7.2 There are different perspectives as to what should be done to advance gender equality and social inclusion.**

The review team observed that there were a number of different definitions of social inclusion operating within the MESP, as well as differing perspectives as to how to best proceed in relation to advancing gender equality and social inclusion. These differing definitions and perspectives emerged from review team discussions with the senior management of My-EQIP, the My-EQIP Social Inclusion Specialist, DFAT and selected members of the My-EQIP SIFP.

These differing definitions and perspectives appear to be impeding the development of a consistent, unified and coordinated approach by MESP. The difference in views primarily centres around whether to pursue more of a 'mainstreaming' approach by integrating inclusion in the work of others or more of a 'targeted' approach which provides direct training and coaching in relation to inclusion.

The updated Social Inclusion Strategy (September 2019 updating of the original May 2018 version) provides useful definitions of social inclusion and inclusive education as well as promoting a 'twin-track' approach (combination of 'mainstreaming' and 'targeted' efforts). Nevertheless, it still does not provide clarity as to what the MESP will do and how. DFAT critical feedback noted these deficiencies and also expressed concern with respect to the two major risks identified in the updated strategy: i) that SIFPs were interested but have no time to take on the SI agenda; and that ii) SI is perceived by many to be beyond the scope of MESP.<sup>77</sup>

This feedback does not appear to have resulted in any adjustments to the SI strategy.

## **7.3 Recent budget reductions have disproportionately affected support to social inclusion activities.**

Budget reductions in the 2019-2020 DFAT fiscal year significantly affected the provision of TA to all activity areas, but disproportionately affected social inclusion activities given that the budget was already small. An estimated 40% budget reduction has resulted in a decreased level of support from both national and international advisors. The budget reduction appears to have negatively affected the morale of the SIFP and that of the advisors.

Budget reductions have also affected progress on the ACER-supported work on the Gender and Ethnicity Study to inform the progress report on the 2016 CEDAW findings. The application of budget reductions to this important work is confounding, particularly since the support of MESP was requested from MoE rather than being driven by the program. Other reasons cited for slowing the rate of progress on the study have included the slower than expected contributions of the Research task team and the task team's request to be involved in the analysis of data. These reasons, taken from another perspective, could provide a legitimate argument for increasing the budget allocation to ensure the desired capacity development of the task team and DERPT.

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<sup>77</sup> Feedback from DFAT on the 2019-2020 My-EQIP workplan noted that some of the details expected in the updated SI strategy were provided for in the workplan. In particular the inclusion of a column for SI in the Activity Plan where SI will be integrated and the addition of a new section (Section 11) which lists targeted SI activities. However, these inclusions appear to be more as 'add-ons' rather than as integration with activities.

## Conclusion

The work on gender equality and social inclusion within the MESP appears to lack clarity and coherence. Both of these are required to consistently guide and advance what is a high priority Australian policy agenda. The MTR team is of the view that these issues might best be addressed by integrating into a coherent Capacity Development approach, an example of which is provided in Appendix H.

**Recommendation 7:** That the DFAT Senior Gender Equality and Social Development Advisor be requested to review the revised outcome statements, program logic work program and budget for Phase 3 to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion is adequately addressed.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## CONCLUSION

The evidence considered by the review team in conduct of this MTR demonstrates inadequate performance and quality across all DFAT quality criteria. Despite the challenges of the development context, this is not a justification for the poor performance demonstrated in the implementation of this investment. In fact, as noted in a recent political economy analysis: *“This situation calls for well-designed combinations of development and political engagement strategies...”*<sup>78</sup>

Education reform remains highly relevant to DFAT’s objectives in Myanmar, as well as MoE’s goals as expressed in the NESP. Given this fact, and the seriousness of the conclusions of the MTR, it would appear that DFAT is faced with two options.

- Option 1: Wind down the investment as soon as possible and start the process to carry out a design for a new investment.  
The *advantage* of this approach is to minimise the potential for further waste of resources.  
The *disadvantage* is that there may be a significant gap in time before a follow-on investment is able to be implemented resulting in the loss of momentum and potential damage to relationships between DFAT and MoE.
- Option 2: Implement a scaled-down version of the My-EQIP program with completion of Phase 3, as intended by May 2021.  
The *advantage* of this approach is that activities which achieved some success may be completed (albeit with improved strategies and targeting). Relationships will also be maintained.  
The *disadvantage* may be some resistance from the MC to the proposed reshaping of the strategic focus of the program.

The following recommendations detail how Option 2 might be operationalised if this is DFAT’s preferred option. The details of proposed reductions to the Scope of Work and technical assistance requirements are included in Appendix F to this report.

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<sup>78</sup> Myanmar: A Political Economy Analysis Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2018

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly unusual to refer to external factors when finalising MTR recommendations. Nevertheless, the global and local effects of, and responses to, the current COVID-19 pandemic are likely to have significant effects on the MESP investment over the coming weeks and months. One immediate result, no doubt, will be a significant reduction in the number of international TA working on the program.

While this represents a constraint, it does not necessarily follow that all activities will need to cease. In fact, the current situation may assist DFAT in consideration which activities should be completed by the end of the contract in May 2021 and how they should be implemented.

Subject to appropriate care and attention being paid to the occupational health and safety of national consultants, a number of the recommendations included in this report may, in fact, be successfully implemented by national advisors and staff, with remote support from international TA, if required. Indeed, there is an excellent precedent in the Australian aid program of an education reform program in the Philippines being wholly implemented by national consultants and achieving high ratings for performance and quality.<sup>79</sup>

The MTR team commends the following recommendations to the attention of DFAT:

**Recommendation 1:** That the MESP develop clear outcome statements which describe Australia's intended contribution over Phase 3 of this investment, supported by a robust program logic. (Refer Appendix E)

**Recommendation 2:** That the scope of work for Phase 3 be reshaped in order to:

- (v) phase out support for work for task teams / activities which do not represent 'value for money' (e.g. Communications, Research and L&D)
- (vi) continue to focus on areas achieving results (e.g. SQASF and VE-SQASF)
- (vii) focus M&E support within MoE where it is likely to have the greatest impact (i.e. DERPT)
- (viii) investigate 'windows of opportunity' to consolidate and strengthen the effectiveness of Australia's contribution to education reform.

(Refer Appendix F)

**Recommendation 3:** That the Phase 3 budget be reduced by a minimum of AUD4 million and that the work plan be revised to reflect the reduced scope of work and budget.

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<sup>79</sup> STRIVE 2 was implemented by national consultants who had been engaged in the implementation of STRIVE 1. The performance and quality ratings awarded by an Independent Completion Report for STRIVE 2 included Effectiveness: 6; Efficiency: 6; Sustainability: 5; M&E: 6.

**Recommendation 4:** That DFAT appoint an international capacity development specialist, with expertise working in the education sector in developing countries, to:

- Provide advice to the MESP team in appropriate CD approaches to implementing selected actions during Phase 3 of the investment
- oversee the conduct of a second organisational review of MoE and preparation of a long-term capacity development framework which may feed into a design for a follow-on investment (if any).

(Refer Appendix H)

**Recommendation 5:** That MESP M&E staff prepare a 'minimum-sufficient' M&E Plan, linked to the revised set of outcome statements and program logic for Phase 3. (Refer Appendix I)

**Recommendation 6:** That the functions of the Joint Steering Committee be progressively absorbed into the work of the ETVSCG and that the functions of the Technical Working Group be absorbed into the work of the MCQ SSWG.

**Recommendation 7:** That DFAT review the revised outcome statements, program logic work program and budget for Phase 3 to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion is adequately addressed.

# APPENDICES

[Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review of My-EQIP](#)

[Appendix B: Mission Schedule and list of persons met](#)

[Appendix C: Summary of MESP Support to MoE Education Reform Outcomes](#)

[Appendix D: Summary of research carried out under the auspices of the MESP](#)

[Appendix E: Suggested Outcome statements, program logic for Phase 3](#)

[Appendix F: Suggested Scope of Work and Technical Assistance requirements Phase 3](#)

[Appendix G: Analysis of baseline studies and links to EOPOs](#)

[Appendix H: Suggested capacity development approach for Phase 3 and beyond](#)

[Appendix I: Example 'Minimum-Sufficient M&E Framework for Phase 3](#)

# APPENDIX A: MY-EQIP MID TERM REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

November 2019 (as approved by DFAT and Government of Myanmar)

## Introduction

Education is the flagship sector for Australia's aid program in Myanmar. In the 2017/18 financial year, Australia spent \$16.4m, 39% of the total bilateral aid spend.

Australia's education strategy in Myanmar has the following four aims:

1. Government schools are adequately resourced to meet minimum service standards;
2. Affordable and sustainable strategies for supporting school improvement and teaching are adopted by government;
3. Disadvantaged children gain access to more educational opportunities
4. Non-government school systems are strengthened, leading towards equivalency and convergence with the government system;
5. Evaluation, education sector oversight and quality assurance are embedded in the Ministry of Education and informing policy and management decisions at each level of the system.

In 2017, Australia launched the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (My-EQIP). The Program is a \$20m investment from 2017- 2021 aimed at supporting the Government of Myanmar to strengthen its policy and planning capability. The program provides capacity building support to the Ministry of Education to assist them with the implementation of Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021). It therefore contributes to the fifth objective of Australia's education strategy for Myanmar.

At this mid-point in the program's lifespan, and as articulated in the My-EQIP Investment Design, DFAT would like to commission a mid-term review to inform planning for Phase 3 and beyond. The purpose of the review is to:

- Assess the extent to which the My-EQIP program has made progress towards the expected objectives and outcomes, with a focus on describing emerging findings and themes to inform My-EQIP implementation, program governance and related monitoring and evaluation activities and provide recommendations.
- Assess the extent to which the current stated objectives and outcomes for the My-EQIP program are suited to context, and provide related recommendations.
- Assess the appropriateness of the program's existing theory of change to the current context, and make recommendations on maintaining/adjusting the theory of change, informed by the review findings.
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the capacity development model.
- Inform future planning for a potential phase 3 of the program.

## 1. Background

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### 1.1. Context

#### Education in Myanmar

In previous decades, the education system in Myanmar suffered from neglect and under funding, resulting in under-resourced schools, with under-paid and under-trained teachers. Following the start of democratic reforms in 2011, the Government of Myanmar began an education system reform process. Funding for education has increased from 5.7 percent of public expenditure in 2012-13 to 8.5 in 2017-18, supporting improvements in education access. The primary net enrolment rate increased from 88% in 2009-10 to 93 percent in 2014-15.

Completion rates at a pre-primary level have grown from roughly 1 in 20 children enrolled in 2008 to nearly 1 in 4 enrolled in 2014. Primary level completion rates have improved from 2016 where they were 87.1%, to 2017 where they jumped to 96.4%. There is gender disparity in completion rates (87% for girls and 96% for boys), when looking at national aggregates. Disparities exist when considering gender and ethnicity together. At a lower secondary level, completion rates have been steadily improving from 45.1% in 2010, to 49.9% in 2016 to 54.7% in 2016. Children with disabilities aged 5 to 13 years are three times more likely to never attend school, as compared with peers without disabilities. (Myanmar population and Housing Census Thematic Report on Disability (2014)).

Following a Comprehensive Education Sector Review, in 2016 the Government of Myanmar launched its National Education Strategic Plan (NESP). The NESP is accompanied by a multi-year workplan and monitoring and evaluation framework. The NESP focuses on improving the quality, inclusion and equity of Myanmar's education system. It outlines a commitment to leaving no one behind, to expanding the basic education system and to support the use of ethnic languages in education. (Global Partnership for Education, 2018)

The NESP is complemented by the passing of the National Education Law in 2014, and a subsequent amendment in 2015, which provides for the establishment of an internal and external quality assurance process.

The My-EQIP design notes that the NESP identifies the Ministry Quality Assurance System (MQAS) and improved monitoring and evaluation capacity as a catalyst for change and envisages managers using information from these systems as one of the nine transformational shifts required to achieve the overall strategic goal of the education sector.

There are a number of donors supporting education in Myanmar in addition to DFAT, including the World Bank; the Global Partnership for Education; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Kingdom government's Department for International Development (DFID), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Denmark (particularly through the Capacity Development Fund); the Asian Development Bank and the European Union (budget support). Donor coordination is through the Education and Technical Vocational Sector Coordination Group chaired by the Minister for Education and seven (7) sub-sector working groups. Australia is currently co-facilitator of the Coordination Group.

#### The My-EQIP Program

The Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (My-EQIP) was jointly designed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and DFAT. The Ministry of Education leads implementation, supported by Cardno, My-EQIP Support Team and their partners, including the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) and Catalpa.

By the end of the program in 2021, the design intends that an education quality improvement system for the Ministry of Education will be in place, which strengthens its quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research capabilities. It is intended to support the Government of Myanmar to assess



the effectiveness of the NESP reform agenda and whether its efforts represent the best use of its resources. (DFAT, 2017)

My-EQIP's aim is to improve education policy, planning, budgeting and management by achieving three outcomes:

1. MoE has improved education quality improvement systems, including reaching sub-national levels where relevant;
2. MoE has improved capacity to maintain and use the education quality improvement system;
3. MoE has an improved organisational culture of informed decision-making, and managers are empowered to make decisions.

My-EQIP's work plans align with the NESP Chapter 13 Management, Capacity Development and Quality Assurance priorities, and are designed to accommodate MoE leadership in the process of strengthening and establishing systems for those areas.

The approach being utilised by My-EQIP, through task teams, is to support MoE priorities by building on and strengthening existing systems and practices. The program aims to apply the Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach to support MoE priorities, by building on and strengthening existing systems and practices. By adopting systems thinking and a systems-based approach to capacity development at the individual, organisational and institutional levels, the My-EQIP approach is intended to facilitate learning and affect long-term, sustainable systemic change. My-EQIP is also supporting the MoE to clarify and operationalise its NESP and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commitments to social inclusion and leaving no one behind.

My-EQIP works directly with MoE colleagues to build capacity using a 'learning-by-doing' mechanism to develop capacities and create demand for improved strategic planning, M&E, and quality assurance systems. In some cases, staff are also developing skills to facilitate capacity development of their peers. Adherence and implementation of MoE-led principles throughout all My-EQIP support is intended to ensure system development and long-term sustainability.

The Program was designed to be implemented in three phases. The first phase (6 months) was for program inception and scoping the workplan. The second phase (18 months, with possibility of extension) has a focus on working with Departments to develop and implement EQIS plans, to pilot EQIS components and activities, and to put in place the education quality improvement system. In the third phase (2 years), the program focus is to roll out the piloted EQIS activities. My-EQIP is currently in its second phase. The extension of phases is possible under contract provisions as agreed by DFAT and MoE.

The governance of My-EQIP is led by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) which comprises 22 senior representatives of MoE, DFAT and UNESCO and meets bi-annually. The JSC provides strategic leadership of My-EQIP and has decision-making and approval powers. The Technical Working Group (TWG) is a larger body of approximately 40 people from the 11 Departments and the Ministers Office, which meets bi-monthly. It advises the JSC and implements JSC decisions, in addition to monitoring and implementation oversight. The My-EQIP Support Team provides secretariat support.

To implement the different workplan areas, a series of task teams have been established, comprising MoE and My-EQIP Technical Team. The MoE task team members are focal points for the activity and the task teams develop and implement strategies and workplans, and collect and analyse data for M&E purposes.

### **The My-EQIP M&E System**

The M&E system for My-EQIP, finalised in October 2018, is focused on providing information to track progress against outcomes, for accountability purposes and to support ongoing program

improvement. It is guided by ten principles which outline a commitment to a lean and focused M&E system, which uses a strengths-based approach and is adaptive and responsive, consistent with the nature of the My-EQIP investment.

The M&E plan has five key evaluation questions, divided into primary and secondary questions. The primary questions are expected to be fully answered by the M&E plan, while the data collection and strength of evidence is expected to be less for the secondary questions.

#### Primary questions

1. How effective has My-EQIP been in achieving planned outcomes? (effectiveness)
2. To what extent has My-EQIP demonstrated efficient use of resources? (efficiency)
3. How has My-EQIP influenced MoE's social inclusion awareness and practice? (inclusion)

#### Secondary questions

4. How relevant is My-EQIP to Myanmar's development strategies and Australia's national interest? (relevance)
5. To what extent are the achievements of the program likely to be sustainable? (sustainability)

The M&E system plan has processes to test both the efficacy of the capacity development model My-EQIP has adopted and the results in terms of changed individual, organisational and institutional capacities, according to a rubric. The plan notes that this is intended to lead to both ongoing improvement of My-EQIP-supported capacity development and documentation of the model for potential adaptation elsewhere.

### **My-EQIP Implementation to Date**

The program has achieved most of the major outputs and targets expected by this point in implementation and is achieving well in terms of outcomes relating to gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment. The strong emphasis on building MoE capacity has meant that implementation has been slow, however, is intended to result in longer term sustainability gains.

## 2. Scope of Review

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### 2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this mid-term review is to:

- Assess the extent to which the My-EQIP program has made progress towards the expected institutional outcomes for the Ministry of Education, with a focus on describing emerging findings and themes to inform My-EQIP implementation, program governance and related monitoring and evaluation activities, and provide recommendations.
- Assess the extent to which the current stated objectives and outcomes for the My-EQIP program are suited to context, and provide related recommendations.
- Assess the appropriateness of the program's existing theory of change to the current context, and make recommendations on maintaining/adjusting the theory of change, informed by the review findings.
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the capacity development model.
- Inform future planning for a potential phase 3 of the program.

### 3.2 Audience

The review will be mindful of the following audiences and the respective needs of each audience:

- Ministry of Education (MoE) – who are interested in understanding the appropriateness and relevance of the model, and understanding what improvements can be made to the program to strengthen the capacity of MoE to lead program activities.
- DFAT Myanmar – interested in understanding the progress of My- EQIP, what barriers and enablers there have been to implementation, and how DFAT Myanmar can support My-EQIP to strengthen program delivery.
- DFAT Canberra and other relevant DFAT Posts – interested in knowledge generation and understanding the key challenges and opportunities for investing in education to support human development and applying relevant lessons to other DFAT education and/or adaptive programs in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere.
- Other donors – interested in knowledge generation and understanding the key challenges and opportunities involved in strengthening the education sector in Myanmar and the potential for application elsewhere.

## 2.2. Key Review Questions

Criteria	Key Review Questions
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the program being implemented in line with its principles?</li> <li>• Is the current model relevant to MoE?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is it meeting the needs of MoE?</li> <li>○ Is it contributing to improved monitoring of education standards?</li> <li>○ What contributions are being made to systems reform?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is the model relevant to the education sector in Myanmar?</li> <li>• To what extent does the My-EQIP support and align with MoE's objectives in education and the objectives outlined in the NESP strategy?</li> <li>• Considering alternative modalities, is My-EQIP the most appropriate modality to achieve the desired outcomes?</li> <li>• What is the contribution of the My-EQIP program towards the goals of the DFAT Myanmar education strategy?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's working and what's not working in relation to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Planning and M&amp;E</li> <li>○ Quality Assurance</li> <li>○ Research</li> <li>○ Communication Knowledge and Information Management System</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How are principles contributing to effectiveness?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What outcomes are observable in the MOE because of the My-EQIP project? Is it likely that these outcomes are sustainable or will lead to longer-term outcomes?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How effective has My-EQIP been in engaging MoE staff? What kinds of changes can be made to the project so that MoE are more effectively engaged in the project?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can efficiency be understood within the context of the implementation principles?</li> <li>• Is the modality of this program cost effective when taking into consideration the longer-term nature of the program outcomes?</li> <li>• Has the program made effective and efficient use of resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can M&amp;E be strengthened so that it has greater alignment with the program principles?</li> <li>• Is the current M&amp;E system fit for purpose?</li> <li>• How effective is the current My-EQIP M&amp;E strategy, and how does it support program performance?</li> <li>• How effective has the M&amp;E plan in relation to measuring contribution to longer-term outcomes?</li> <li>• How accurately does the current theory of change reflect the kinds of changes that can be observed within the first five years of the program?</li> </ul>
<b>Gender and social inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How appropriate is My-EQIP's definition and approach to gender and social inclusion in its partnership with MoE?</li> <li>• Do the systems developed by My-EQIP enable decision making to ensure 'no one is left behind' in education (considering sex/gender, disability and ethnicity and other pertinent characteristics) at both national and sub-national levels?</li> <li>• What challenges does My-EQIP face in building support and capacity for social inclusion within the department?</li> <li>• Is there scope for My-EQIP to be more effective in promoting understanding and decision making on social inclusion?</li> </ul>

#### **Phase one: planning**

*Inception meeting* (remote / telecom if consultant is based o/s)

Expected consultant input: 0.5 day

An inception meeting will be held with stakeholders from DFAT Myanmar and MoE in Nay Pyi Taw. My-EQIP Support Team input will be welcomed. At this workshop, the group will: review the key evaluation questions and finalise the review methods; determine documents for desktop review; develop list of people who need to be consulted as part of this review; and review and confirm the products that need to be delivered.

*Desktop review and Review plan*

Expected consultant input: 5 days

**A desktop review** will be undertaken to inform the development of the evaluation plan. The purpose of the desktop review is to: collate information about the performance of My-EQIP, understand the educational context of Myanmar.

An initial list of documents will be provided by DFAT and My-EQIP.

**A review plan** will be developed that captures the key outputs of the workshop. This review plan will outline key activities and timelines, include the updated questions and methods, propose evaluation tools and interview questions and propose the structure of the final report. It is expected that a draft plan be delivered one week after the inception meeting and this draft will be reviewed using the DFAT monitoring and evaluation standards to inform assessment.

#### **Phase two: data collection and Phase three: sense-making**

*In-country mission, Summit Workshop, and Preliminary findings briefing*

Expected consultant input: 14 days

**An in-country mission** will be undertaken in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. The exact schedule will be informed by the review plan, but it is expected at a minimum that the consulting team will conduct interviews with key stakeholders. This mission will also provide the consultant with an opportunity to review any additional documents.

**A one-day summit workshop** will be developed and facilitated by the contractor to conduct sense-making of the data. This will be an opportunity to present preliminary findings to DFAT and MoE. My-EQIP Support Team inputs will be welcomed. The contractor's summit facilitation plan will be reviewed and agreed by DFAT one week prior to the Summit Workshop. It is expected that this workshop will be conducted in Nay Pyi Taw.

The consultant will then conduct **a two-hour preliminary finding** briefing with DFAT representatives to present the key findings and recommendations. At this briefing, the consultant will also propose a structure for the aide memoire and final report, which will be approved by DFAT. It is expected that this briefing will be conducted via teleconference or in person in Yangon.

#### **Phase four: reporting**

Expected consultant input: 10 days

The consultant will be expected to deliver two products: the first being an aide memoire and the second being a review report.

The review report will be developed first, and will be written according to the structure determined by the consultant and DFAT at the preliminary findings briefing. A draft report will be provided for review before a final report is produced. The draft report will be reviewed using the DFAT monitoring and evaluation standards to inform assessment.

It is expected that this final report should not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes).

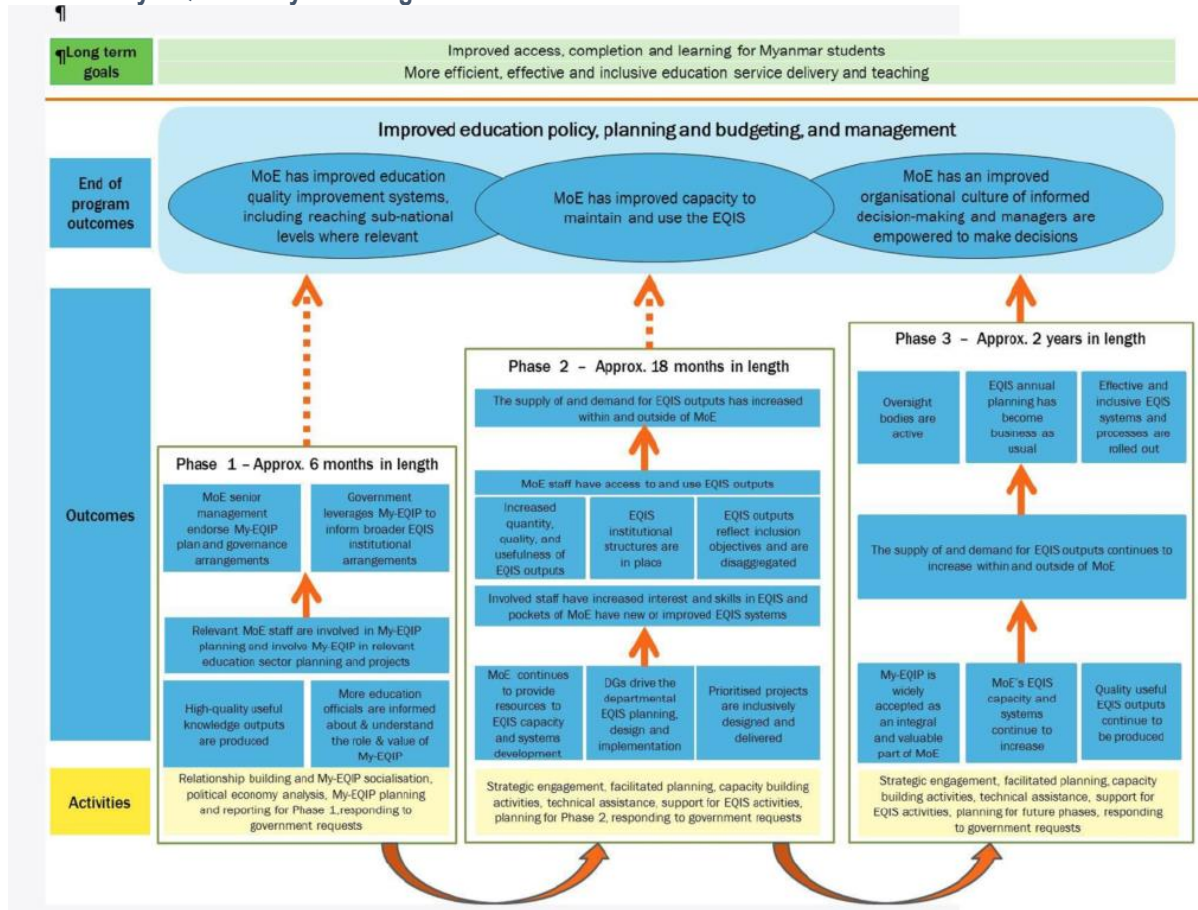
Once the final report is produced, the consultant will also produce a 5-page aide memoire, which summarises findings from the report. The key audience for this document will be the Ministry of Education. Again, a draft aide memoire will be produced before a final aide memoire is produced.

4 days additional at discretion of DFAT and MoE.

## 4. Key deliverables

1. Facilitate inception meeting
2. Review plan, including findings from desktop review
3. Facilitate sense-making workshop
4. Facilitate preliminary findings meeting
5. Draft and final report
6. Draft and final aide memoire

### Annex 1: My-EQIP Theory of Change



## **Annex 2: 2019 My-EQIP Organisational Review**

In early 2019, as per the My-EQIP contract conditions, Cardno conducted a review of the My-EQIP organisational structure. The purpose of the review was to assess the extent to which the organisational structure is meeting the needs of the program and propose necessary changes. The Organisational Review focused primarily on internal My EQIP team structure and resourcing, rather than broader program design issues (i.e. governance arrangements, technical approaches / methodologies to implementing My EQIP activities, or engagement with the MoE or other education partners).

The review found that while there had been some changes to the overall structure of the My-EQIP team, the structure remained broadly fit-for purpose. It found that while there had been a scale up in resources for the M&E and evaluation capacity building work of the program, these teams were still under resourced. The review therefore recommended the recruitment of a specialist M&E expert to oversee My-EQIP M&E while the international Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Specialist transition to short-term specialist while a Myanmar national take over as manager of the ECB team.

There was found to be a lack of management support at the start of the program. To address this, a Deputy Team Leader had been recruited. The review found that this role, while only 4 months old, had led to an improvement in the quality of work delivered and greater accessibility for the My-EQIP team to management, although some issues remained around access to the Team Leader to receive strategic management support. The review documented the need for a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities between the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader roles and greater delegation.

The review found that there was a need for a proper management team to be created to allow for input by staff to strategic decision making and the consideration of different views. It recommended a number of changes to the My-EQIP management structures.

The review found that there was mixed engagement with My-EQIP activities by senior level MoE staff and variable engagement across the different MoE teams, with MoE staff sometimes viewing their My-EQIP responsibilities as different to their day-to-day responsibilities. The review recommended some joint meetings between My-EQIP and DFAT to discuss mechanisms for MoE engagement and determine any changes that are needed.

The Organisational Review will be made available to the MTR Team.

### **Annex 3: References**

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## APPENDIX B: MISSION SCHEDULE AND LIST OF PERSONS MET

Time	Meeting	Venue	Remark
<b>Monday 24 February 2020 - Yangon</b>			
0830 - 0900	Travel time	Lotte to Embassy <i>Embassy address: #623, Vantage Tower, Pyay Road, Kamayut Tsp., Yangon</i>	Embassy car: - Car No. CD 16/12 (Toyota Previa) - Driver: Saw Polo - Mobile: 09421113394
0900 -1100	Meeting with Thin Pyie and Esther	Embassy Room: Sydney/Melbourne, Level 12	<i>Entry pass for Kaye and Nelson has been already requested – please tell your names at the reception when you arrive at the Vantage Tower</i>
1200 - 1330	Brownbag lunch with Tim Vistarini, Counsellor Dev and Economics	Embassy Room: Sydney/Melbourne, Level 12	
1400-1500	Mia Urbano, DFAT Senior Gender Equality & Social Development Adviser	Embassy Room: One of the working rooms available, Level 14	Telecon
1500-1545	Travel time	Embassy to Cardno Office <i>Cardo address: No. 34L/A, San Yae Twin street, Thathana Yeik Thar Ward, Yangon</i>	Embassy car: - Car No. CD 16/12 (Toyota Previa) - Driver: Saw Polo - Mobile: 09421113394
1600-1700	Kerri Amos, POC, Cardno Myanmar	Cardno Office	
1700-1800	Travel time	Cardno Office - Lotte	Embassy car: - Car No. CD 16/12 (Toyota Previa) - Driver: Saw Polo - Mobile: 09421113394
PM evening	Free		
<b>Tuesday 25 February 2020 – Nay Pyi Taw</b>			<b>Accommodation</b>
0545-0610	Hotel to Airport		Hotel car
0700-0800	Flying to Nay Pyi Taw		
0800-0845	Airport to My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13, Nay Pyi Taw		-
09.00-10.00	My-EQIP Executive:  Susan Atkins, Team Leader Karin Gellatly, Deputy Team Leader	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13, Nay Pyi Taw	

Time	Meeting	Venue	Remark
1000 – 1100	Daw Aye Aye Mon Oo, Director, DERPT, My-EQIP Program Director)	PD Office, Building 13	Simultaneous interpreter provided by DFAT
11.00 -12.00	My-EQIP Executive (cont):  Susan Atkins, Team Leader Karin Gellatly, Deputy Team Leader	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13, Nay Pyi Taw	
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Local restaurant near MoE	Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit

			- Mobile: 09420750665 <i>Travelling time – 10 mins each way</i>
13.30 – 15.00	Investment M&E: Katie Spillenkoten (M&E Specialist), Shandan Raw (M&E Specialist), Karin (DTL/AM).	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13, Nay Pyi Taw	
15.00-16.00	Dr Aye Myint, DG, DTVET and MoE Permanent Secretary	Dr Aye Myint's Office, MoE Office Building 21	Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit - Mobile: 09420750665  <i>Simultaneous interpreter can be provided if needed</i>
1630-1730	U Aung Than, Director, Union Minister's Office ( <i>My-EQIP Organisational Constraints Analysis Reference Group Member</i> )	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	<i>My-EQIP staff (Susan and Tun Tun) will work in other office this time</i>
1730-1800	MoE Office 13 to M Gallery Hotel		Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit - Mobile: 09420750665
<b>Wednesday 26 February 2020 – Nay Pyi Taw</b>			
0815-0845	M Gallery Hotel to My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13		Embassy car - Car No. 3Q/9218 (Nissan Black) - Driver: Tun Yin - Mobile: 09442112711
0900 – 10.00*	Deb Thomas, My-EQIP Social Inclusion Specialist	Skype: dthomashome My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	
10.00 – 11.00*	VE-SQASF team	Building 21	Simultaneous interpreter provided by DFAT
10.30 – 11.30	M&E Core Team	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	<i>Interpreter</i>

Time	Meeting	Venue	Remark
12.00-13.00	Lunch – provided at the My-EQIP Office		
1300-1400	FGD My-EQIP Technical Team leads (TA's)	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13, Nay Pyi Taw	<i>Interpreter</i>
1400-1500	My EQIP Operations and Finance Managers; Kyaw San Win; Moet Moet Aung, Paul Terry.	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	<i>My-EQIP staff (Susan and Tun Tun) will work in other office this time</i>
1500-1600	U Ko Lay Win, DG, DBE (former My-EQIP Program Director, who involved in the design process of My-EQIP)	U Ko Lay Win's Office, MoE Office 13	<i>Only 5 mins walk</i>
1530-1630	SQASF Task team	DBE – Small meeting room ground floor.	Interpreter

17.00-17.30	MoE Office 13 to M Gallery		Embassy car - Car No. 3Q/9218 (Nissan Black) - Driver: Tun Yin - Mobile: 09442112711
17.30-18.30 or dinner?	<i>Neville Highett, SQASF Specialist/Adviser</i>	M-Gallery Hotel	My-EQIP to help organise
PM evening	<i>Free</i>		
<b>Thursday 27 February 2020 – Nay Pyi Taw</b>			
0815-0845	M Gallery Hotel to MoE Office 13		Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit - Mobile: 09420750665
09.00 – 1000*	Social Inclusion Focal Persons	My-EQIP Meeting Room	<i>Simultaneous interpreter provided by DFAT</i>
10.30 – 11.30*	Communications Strategy Task Team	My-EQIP Meeting	<i>Simultaneous interpreter provided by DFAT</i>
10.30 – 11.30*	Research Task Team	DERPT Meeting room	<i>Simultaneous interpreter provided by DFAT</i>
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Local restaurant near MoE Office 13	My-EQIP car  <i>Travelling time – 10 mins each way</i>
14.00-15.00	Dr Win Tun, DG, DERPT	Dr Win Tun's Office, MoE Office 13	Confirmed
15.30-16.30*	Dr Nyein Wai, Director, Union Minister's Office (My-EQIP Communication and ICT Task Team Lead)	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	<i>My-EQIP staff (Susan and Tun Tun) will work in other office this time</i>
16.30-17.30	Dr Tun Tun Oo, Government Liaison, My-EQIP	My-EQIP Office, MoE Office 13	
17.30-18.00	MoE Office 13 to M Gallery		-
<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>Friday 28 February 2020 – Nay Pyi Taw (morning), Yangon (afternoon)</b>			
0815-0845	M Gallery Hotel to MoE Office 13		Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit - Mobile: 09420750665
0900-1130	½ day workshop with My-EQIP Team, TWG members and PD (as per MTR ToR)	Meeting room (TBC)	<i>Interpreter provided by DFAT Formal invitation in process</i>
1130-1200	MoE Office 13 to airport		Embassy car - Car No. 7E/2828 (Crown White) - Driver: Zaw Chit - Mobile: 09420750665
1200-1230	Lunch at the airport		
1300-1400	Flying from Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon		

1430	Meeting with NAQAC (National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee) Dr Maung Maung Wint, Chairman		-
1530-1630	Debrief with Tim, Esther and Thin Pyie	Embassy Room: Yangon, Level 14	
1630-1730	Embassy to Lotte Hotel		Embassy car: - Car No. CD 16/12 (Toyota Previa) - Driver: Saw Polo - Mobile: 09421113394
PM evening	<i>Free</i>		
<b>Saturday 29 February 2020 – Yangon</b>			
1545-1635	Nelson's departure: From Lotte to Airport	Flight PG 704 ETD 1835	Hotel car
<b>Sunday 1 March 2020 – Yangon</b>			
0845-0930	Kaye's departure: From Lotte to Airport	Flight QF 5182 ETD 1130	Hotel car

\*Indicates simultaneous meetings for MTR team, so may need two interpreters.

## REMOTE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED POST-MISSION

Mia Urbano, DFAT Senior Gender Equality & Social Development Adviser 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Cardno representatives: 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Camilla Woeldike, Research Specialist, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

Mar Mar Thwin, Education Specialist, World Bank 12<sup>th</sup> March

Byron Pakula, M&E Specialist (formerly with Clear Horizons) 12<sup>th</sup> March

## APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF MESP SUPPORT TO MOE EDUCATION REFORM OUTCOMES 2016 to 2020

Original design outcome	NESP Chapter and Strategy	Relevant NESP outcome or intermediate outcome <sup>80</sup>	My-EQIP Support Program (MESP) Contribution	Comments
1. MoE has improved education quality improvement systems (EQIS) at all levels.	Ch. 6 Strategy 3: <b><i>“Improve school quality through a national school-based quality assurance system”</i></b>	C1: Component outcome: <i>“Development of a national School Quality Standards Assurance Framework (SQSAF)”</i>	Australian support has accelerated the rate of development and progressive implementation of a School Quality Assurance Standards Framework (SQSAF) within the Department of Basic Education (DBE).	Not clear how the new SQSAF will build on MoE’s existing SQSAF, school improvement planning and school funding arrangements.  Inadequate attention has been given to monitoring the quality of SQSAF implementation
	Ch 11: Strategy 2: <b><i>‘Strengthening the quality and relevance of TVET’</i></b>	C5: Component outcome: <i>“Establish a quality assurance system”</i>	My-EQIP has supported the development of a VE-SQSAF	To date, only one document appears to have been translated into English – the Environmental Scan.
	Ch 13 Strategy 2: <b><i>‘Strengthen education sector management structures, systems and tools’</i></b>	C2: Intermediate outcome: <i>“DAIPs developed, approved and funded”</i>	My-EQIP supported the development DAIPs and associated M&E Plans across all departments.	The strategic intent – and change pathway – envisaged in supporting this work is not clear.
2. MoE has improved capacity (sufficient capable staff) to maintain and use the EQIS	Ch 13 Strategy 3: <b><i>‘Strengthen the capacity of education managers to successfully undertake education reforms.’</i></b>	Outcome: Improvement among education managers in terms of knowledge and skills to successfully implement their NESP programmes and budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and/or support of staff members engaged in a range of Task Teams (SQSAF; VESQSAF; M&amp;E Core Group; Communications Strategy Task Team; Research; Learning and Development)</li> <li>• Study tours</li> </ul>	Overall, there is little evidence to suggest that the task team mechanism has strengthened the capacity of education managers to successfully undertake reforms or implement their NESP programmes and budgets.

<sup>80</sup> Each NESP Strategy has a series of component outcomes and intermediate outcomes associated with it. These outcome/intermediate outcome statements have been taken from the Results Frameworks at the end of each relevant chapter of the NESP[

Original design outcome	NESP Chapter and Strategy	Relevant NESP outcome or intermediate outcome <sup>81</sup>	My-EQIP Support Program (MESP) Contribution	Comments
3. MoE has an improved learning culture; more decision makers at all levels use EQIS information	This outcome is described in NESP Ch 13 as a required ' <b>Transformational Shift</b> ', namely, that: ' <i>Education managers at all levels apply evidence-based decision making and demand accountability for improved teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions</i> '	This will be achieved via Strategies 2 & 3 and associated outcomes / intermediate outcomes (above) and Strategy 1: " <b>Strengthen and sustain sector-wide, sub-sector and sub-national coordination mechanisms</b>	Development and implementation of research agenda.	Research not strategic or targeted; mechanisms for using results to influence policy and decision-making unclear.

<sup>81</sup> Each NESP Strategy has a series of component outcomes and intermediate outcomes associated with it. These outcome/intermediate outcome statements have been taken from the Results Frameworks at the end of each relevant chapter of the NESP[

## APPENDIX D: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH CARRIED OUT UNDER AUSPICES OF MESP

Item	Status	Links with NESP strategies / dept. workplans	Mechanism for distributing results to influence policy and decision-making
Socio-demographic study – snapshot desktop study of MoE systems for policy and planning.	Complete	Links to NESP not clear	Not clear
Literature review of validation studies of teacher competency standards	Complete	Snr. Management request; linked to NESP Ch 9 Strategy 1: <i>“Strengthen teacher quality assurance and management”</i>	Evidence for the further improvement of standards and indicators for effective teaching in Myanmar
Teacher survey to validate Teachers Competency Standards Framework	Report in preparation		The validation study will provide evidence for the further improvement of standards and indicators for effective teaching in Myanmar. The study will also provide insights on how to best assess the practice of effective teaching.
Social Inclusion Stakeholder Mapping study (Central)	Completed	This was initiated by the MESP to decide where and how SI support should be focused.	Dissemination workshop  With MESP SI budgets cut, presumably this work is not being used.
CEDAW Baseline Study	Data analysis underway	Request from Gender Focal Person DERPT to fulfil international CEDAW obligation	Level of request may have come from too low a level in the MoE structure. Not clear how this will be progressed.
Literature review of international experience in the use of School Quality Assurance Standards Frameworks.	Completed	Ch 6 Strategy 3	Disseminated in SQASF Task Team
SQASF Baseline Study	Data analysis underway	Ch 6 Strategy 3	Disseminated by ACER via SQASF Task Team
Data taxonomy	Complete	Links to NESP not clear	Disseminated via RTT
MoE Research Situational Analysis	Scoping done	-	-
ICT Readiness Study	Completed	Not really dealt with in NESP	
Communications situation analysis	Completed	Initiated by MESP & Communications Task Team	There is no designated department to take this forward.
Study on new curriculum implementation	Not progressed	Request by ATDS to support	
School geo-location and catchment population study	On request		

# APPENDIX E: SUGGESTED OUTCOME STATEMENTS, PROGRAM LOGIC FOR PHASE 3

## The My-EQIP Support Team theory of change

A retrospective construction of the My-EQIP Support Program (MESP) Theory of Change (ToC) by the MTR team suggests the following:

*With adequate political imperative for education reform and a sufficiently functioning bureaucracy to lead, manage and deliver the reform, targeted and strategic support to key elements of reform (policy, systems, processes and organisational capacity to continuously improve) will enhance the quality and equitable delivery of education services resulting in improved learning outcomes for all.*

## Starting Assumptions

There are two main assumptions that make the theory of change possible, which are drawn from the experience of education reform worldwide.

1. That **effective political leadership is necessary to drive fundamental reform**. Political commitment is a prerequisite for significant public sector reform.
2. That **the bureaucracy can, with the right assistance, deliver that reform**. The bureaucracy must be sufficiently well functioning to lead, manage and deliver reform

**Assumption 1 validated:** As demonstrated by the National Education Strategic Plan 2016-21, NESP, the GoM has made clear its commitment to significant education reform. A key part of the plan is a transformational shift in the processes of management, capacity development and quality assurance (MCQ) in the Ministry of Education (MoE).

The political commitment to reform the education system provides a window of opportunity for Australia (and other donors) to provide support to Myanmar for strengthening and advancing education reforms in Myanmar.

While the NESP II is currently being formulated, the MTR team was not privy to any discussions about the form it might take. However, there are suggestions that it will include important elements missing from NESP I (e.g. ICT and M&E) while not changing the overall commitment to reform via the nine transformational shifts.

**Assumption 2 challenged:** The state of the MoE has presented challenges to the assumption that, with the right support, the bureaucracy can deliver the desired education reforms. Most oft cited challenges include the siloed nature of work of specific departments across the Ministry; unclear mandate in certain areas (e.g. where several departments have M&E responsibilities); on-going influence of the top-down culture affecting both the nature and pace of decision-making and implementation of reforms. Few internal coordination mechanisms exist outside of the NESP mechanisms (EVTSCG and SSWGs). There appears to be competition for resources given the relatively low level of national budget allocated to education. While decentralization is recognised as an



appropriate strategy to improve the quality and delivery of educational services to meet different populations and contexts, there is little evidence to indicate that decision-making is being decentralised.

The implications of the above are that while a window of opportunity for support exists, the MESP targeting strategy must be based upon a realistic understanding of the 'state of the MoE' and the MESP must also be opportunistic in capitalizing on any signs that parts of the bureaucracy are likely to be more open to support than others.

## **Targeted and strategic support – What happened in Phases 1 and 2?**

It is important to clearly locate the MESP role within the broader education reform agenda, recognising firstly that the MESP's scope is a subset of the overall education reform agenda, and secondly that MESP necessarily plays an advisory and facilitation role, whereas it is Government that is ultimately responsible for delivering reform.<sup>82</sup>

The ToC / Program logic formulated in the My-EQIP Design Document (and not modified since) includes outcome statements which do not distinguish between MoE's role in education reform and the MESP role in supporting the reform process. This has created on-going difficulties in identifying the strategic support required and then targeting that support to maximise effectiveness and efficiency. While the MTR found evidence of achievement in some areas, overall, the MESP suffered from a failure to directly link TA inputs and grants to the achievement of intermediate and end-of-program outcomes. The MESP was unable to demonstrate progress towards the achievement of outcomes. These issues are discussed at length in the Review Findings.

## **Providing targeted and strategic support in Phase 3**

Based upon the findings of the MTR mission, the review team has recommended (main report Recommendation 2) that the strategy for implementation of Phase 3 involve the following:

- (ix) phase out support for work for task teams / activities which do not represent 'value for money' (e.g. Communications, Research and L&D)
- (x) continue to focus on areas achieving results (e.g. SQASF and VE-SQASF)
- (xi) focus M&E support within MoE where it is likely to have the greatest impact (i.e. DERPT)
- (xii) investigate 'windows of opportunity' to consolidate and strengthen the effectiveness of Australia's contribution to education reform.

Table E1, below, presents the Program Logic which gives practical expression to this strategy.

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<sup>82</sup> Note: it is important to distinguish this perspective from the notion that day-to-day operations are 'partner-led'. For discussion of this concept and the evidence identified during the MTR, refer main report: Review Findings – Section 1

Table E1: MY-EQIP SUPPORT PROGRAM (MESP) – SUGGESTED PHASE 3 PROGRAM LOGIC (March 2020)

<b>NESP Goal:</b>	<b>Improved teaching and learning, vocational education and training, research and innovation leading to measurable improvements in student achievement in all schools and educational institutions and educational institutions.</b>
<b>Theory of Change</b>	<i>With adequate <u>political imperative</u> for education reform and a sufficiently <u>functioning bureaucracy</u> to lead, manage and deliver the reform, <u>targeted and strategic support</u> to key elements of reform (policy, systems, processes and organisational capacity to continuously improve) will <u>enhance the quality and equitable delivery of education services</u> resulting in improved learning outcomes for all.</i>
<b>Transformational shift (Ch 13): Management, Capacity and Quality Assurance</b>	Education managers at all levels <b>apply evidence-based decision making and demand accountability</b> for improved teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions.

<b>Proposed End-of-Program Outcomes – 2020-2021</b>	EOPO 1: Effective contribution* to the <b>institutionalization of inclusive quality assurance frameworks and systems</b> in selected departments and entities.	EOPO 2: Effective contribution* to the collection, analysis and use of data/information for <b>inclusive performance monitoring and evidence-based planning and decision-making</b> in selected departments and entities.
<b>Intermediate Outcomes:</b>  <i>* This denotes the requirement for the M&amp;E system to measure the degree to which the aid modality (TA and grants for activities) has been effective in achieving the desired results.  ** This will require the M&amp;E system to measure <b>both</b> the progress (results) within selected departments of MoE <b>and</b> the contribution MESP has made to the achievement of this progress (results).</i>	IO1.1 Demonstrated contribution** to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of SQASF policies, systems and processes (DBE and DERPT)	IO2.1 Demonstrated contribution** to the effective functioning of the MoE-mandated department to lead and quality assure planning and performance M&E (DERPT) (process-owner)
	IO1.2 Demonstrated contribution** to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of VE-SQASF policies, systems and processes. (DTVET and DERPT)	IO2.2 Demonstrated contribution** to the institutionalization of ministry annual planning and performance monitoring systems and processes in relevant units in selected departments (DERPT, DBE, DTVET and DHE). (process-users)
	IO1.3 Demonstrated contribution** to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of HE-QASF policies, systems and processes. (DHE and DERPT)	IO2.3 Demonstrated contribution** to ministry efforts to identify the need for and develop systems and processes for the efficient collection, storage, analysis and use of data/ information for management decision-making in targeted departments and entities.
	IO1.4 Demonstrated contribution** to the institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of quality assurance oversight policies, systems and processes (e.g. DEREPT and NAQAC)	

Systematic and evidence-based policy dialogue to support achievement of all End-of-Investment Outcomes

## APPENDIX F: SUGGESTED MESP SCOPE OF WORK AND TA REQUIREMENTS PHASE 3

Recommendations 2 and 3 of this report suggest strategic and targeted reduction in the scope of work for MESP Phase 3 with a reduced budget to reflect the reduced scope of work.

### **Suggested scope of work for Phase 3**

Potential reduction and refinements in the scope of work identified by the review team include:

- a. Confine SQASF activities to: i) the engagement of the 113 DTEOs/ATEOs and 2,973 schools involved in Phase 1. Focus efforts on building the capacity of MoE to determine the quality of the SQASF assessments, make adjustments to the SQASF, assessment processes and training programs based on the evidence derived from the quality of the SQASF assessments. Strengthen the capacity of the 113 DTEOs/ATEOs to assist the targeted 30% of the 2,973 schools to apply their assessments in the preparation of their SQIPs in the next school year.
- b. Proactively engage with the World Bank and MoE officials responsible for the implementation of the IAQE project to improve the alignment and phased implementation of the SQASF with the existing frameworks and processes that have been supported through the DFSP.
- c. Continue with the VE-SQASF work, however a stronger focus is required to help build the capacity of the DTVET to effectively utilize the framework and to make adjustments to continuously improve the framework and the application of the corresponding quality assurance processes.
- d. Collaborate directly with the DERPT to strengthen the capacity to develop and refine quality assurance frameworks and processes for the continuous improvement of the DAIPs and their corresponding M&E plans.
- e. Dedicate specific attention to the capacity development of the NAQAC as an oversight body for assuring quality in the education sector. One area that appears to require attention for which MESP may be well positioned to support is the strengthening the coordination mechanisms between the NAQAC with the MoE department(s) responsible for overseeing the development and refinement of quality assurance frameworks (The review team suggests, based on an understanding of the mandates of different departments within MoE that this department should be the DERPT).
- f. Highlight and focus the attention of the investment to effectively integrate gender equality and social inclusion in ALL activities – including governance meetings and through focused policy dialogue.

- g. Phase out support to L&D and Communications activity areas. Discontinue the task teams for these activities. No new activities should be implemented without a strong rationale provided by MoE and approval by the relevant NESP SSWG and the ETVSCG.
- h. Limit research activities to completion of the SQASF baseline, validation of the TCSF and the completion of the research to support the reporting to CEDAW. Disband the research task team and shift MESP engagement directly with the appropriate units in DERPT.

### **Suggested technical assistance functions required for MESP Phase 3**

Should DFAT and MoE agree to shift the MESP in the directions proposed, the review team suggests that specialised technical assistance functions will be required in a selected number of areas. The level of advisor support required to perform these functions will depend on the final program logic and change pathways and the assessed absorptive capacity of the MoE. Five areas for technical assistance are highlighted as follows:

- Organisation/capacity development. The type and nature of assistance to be provided will require successful experiences in a developing country context, ideally with an understanding of the unique attributes of centralised education system. The centrality of this technical assistance function will directly inform and guide the work of other technical assistance inputs to ensure priority is given to the development of capacity.
- Monitoring and evaluation. The technical assistance to be provided will require specialist knowledge and skills with successful experiences supporting the effective monitoring and evaluation of flexible and adaptive program investments.
- Quality assurance in education systems. The technical assistance to be provided is to be informed by successful experiences in similar developing country contexts. Specific knowledge in the adaptation of school and TVET quality systems to meet the needs of different contexts is highly desirable.
- Education systems-level policy and planning. The technical assistance required will demonstrate successful experiences in systems-level policy development and planning, ideally at the senior levels of government and in a developing country context.
- Partnership/development partner collaboration. The technical assistance required will draw on successful experiences in senior level donor coordination and collaboration, ideally in an education setting in a developing country context.

## APPENDIX G: ANALYSIS OF MESP BASELINE DATA STUDIES AND LINKS TO EOPOS

	NESP Chapter and Strategy	My-EQIP Support Program (MESP) Contribution	MESP studies referred to as Mini-Baseline data <sup>83</sup>	How did the data influence strategic targeting of MESP	Was the data adequate to report against EOPOs?
SYSTEMS	Ch. 6 Strategy 3: <i>‘Improve school quality through a national school-based quality assurance system’</i>	Australian support has accelerated the rate of development and progressive implementation of a School Quality Assurance Standards Framework (SQASF) within the Department of Basic Education (DBE).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQASF Literature Review</li> <li>• Governance of schools and decentralisation</li> <li>• SQASF Pilot trial</li> <li>• SQASF baseline and case studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catalogue of QA tools developed; findings did not appear to fully inform development of SQASF</li> <li>• Not clear</li> <li>• Pilot led to modification of SQASF</li> <li>• ACER implemented; still underway</li> </ul>	No  No N/A (not baseline) -
	Ch 11: Strategy 2: <i>‘Strengthening the quality and relevance of TVET’</i>	My-EQIP has supported the development of a VE-SQASF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review of the quality assurance of TVET</li> <li>• VESQASF harvesting of QA tools (2019)</li> <li>• VESQASF pilot</li> <li>• Organisation Constraints Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents not sighted by review team or mentioned during consultations</li> </ul>	No No No No (see below)
	Ch 13 Strategy 2: <i>‘Strengthen education sector management structures, systems and tools’</i>	My-EQIP supported the development DAIPs and associated M&E Plans across all departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M&amp;E Diagnostics Study (Phase 1)</li> <li>• 2018 review and catalogue of existing systems, tools, guidelines in MoE</li> <li>• Communications Situational Analysis</li> <li>• ICT Readiness Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence that this work influenced Phase 2 work on DAIPs and associated M&amp;E Plans</li> <li>• Use of taxonomy by MoE Departments asserted but no evidence provided.</li> <li>• Not sighted by review team.</li> <li>• Fed into ICT Forum but no evidence that it led to any response from MESP</li> </ul>	No  No  No  No

<sup>83</sup> My-EQIP M&E System Plan Updated February 2020 Section 4.2 pg.18

	NESP Chapter and Strategy	My-EQIP Support Program (MESP) Contribution	MESP studies referred to as Mini-Baseline data <sup>84</sup>	How did the data influence strategic targeting of MESP	Was the data adequate to report against EOPOs?
CAPACITY	Ch 13 Strategy 3: <i>‘Strengthen the capacity of education managers to successfully undertake education reforms.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and/or support of staff members engaged in a range of Task Teams (SQASF; VESQASF; M&amp;E Core Group; Communications Strategy Task Team, Research; Learning and Development)</li> <li>Study tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Constraints Analysis</li> </ul>	<p>OCA was methodologically flawed; it was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>based on a limited and narrow sample set of respondents (52 respondents, all engaged with MESP task teams).</li> <li>did not categorise the types of actions that are required to address constraints or support enablers, nor does the OCA identify who is responsible for and capable of taking the actions. These oversights result in a scattered piecemeal approach.</li> <li>did not ‘place’ the recommendations within the context of a coherent capacity development framework, thus limiting the coherent application of the recommendations and monitoring and measurement of their effect once adopted and implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> </ul>
CULTURE	This outcome is described in NESP Ch 13 as a required <b>‘Transformational Shift’</b> , namely, that: <i>‘Education managers at all levels apply evidence-based decision making and demand accountability for improved teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions’</i>	<p>Establishment and support of a Research Task Team and implementation of various research activities.</p> <p>CSST and L&amp;D Task Teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Constraints Analysis</li> <li>CEDAW study</li> <li>Social Inclusion Stakeholder Mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrow and unrepresentative sample of respondents; no clear recommendations within the context of a CD Framework</li> <li>Still underway and progress has slowed</li> <li>Reported to have been used to develop SI Strategy but on-going funding to implement strategy cut.</li> </ul>	<p>No</p> <p>Could be; not there yet</p> <p>No</p>

<sup>84</sup> My-EQIP M&E System Plan Updated February 2020 Section 4.2 pg.18

## APPENDIX H: SUGGESTED CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH – PHASE 3 AND BEYOND

Due to the rapidly changing context within Myanmar and the corresponding rate of change within its education system, it was prudent for the initial MESP design not to prescribe a particular capacity development approach or to specify what particular capacity in the MoE needed to be developed and how to go about developing the capacity identified. Instead, the design sensibly called for the application of key concepts to be applied and practiced. The design appropriately advocated for the investment to be ‘partner-led’, to use tools like the PDIA to help ensure flexibility and responsiveness in addressing challenges faced by the MoE, and to focus on the crucial importance of developing individual and organisational capacity. Taken collectively, the application of these key concepts should have resulted in the preparation of a coherent and strategic capacity development approach to guide investment decisions. While attempts were made by MESP to do so, these attempts were not well informed and have failed to provide a useful capacity development framework. The main report’s Review Findings: Section 4, discusses these matters in detail.

Despite the inadequacies of the capacity development frameworks adopted for, and later revised during, Phase 2, the MTR team does not believe it is too late to redefine the MESP’s approach to capacity development and that this redefinition can occur relatively quickly with expert guidance and willingness of the MoE and the MESP to engage. This MTR can provide the necessary incentive for doing so.

### **Suggested capacity development approached required for MESP Phase 3**

The MTR team proposes immediate replacement of the existing MESP capacity development framework that will ensure that MoE takes the lead in approving and directing:

- Activities that will identify the critical capacity development needs of the MoE at individual and organisational levels that are aligned with the attainment of the My-EQIP objectives;
- The identification, selection and alignment of appropriate capacity development efforts to address the individual and organisational capacity development needs of the MoE; and
- The monitoring, measurement and evaluation of change in individual and organisational capacities.

To better align the capacity development efforts of MESP with government structures and build upon the successes of Phase 1 and 2, the MESP will need to:

- i) Consult and confirm with the MoE which department(s) and unit(s) within department(s) are responsible for:
  - the quality assurance of the DAIPs
  - the quality assurance of the corresponding M&E plans of the DAIPs
  - the quality assurance frameworks for schools and TVET institutions.

Based up on the review team’s understanding of the functions of different departments within the MoE and the passage of the Education Research, Planning and Training Law on 17 September 2019, the DERPT presents as the department that would be expected to act as the ‘process-owner’ for quality assurance processes. ‘Users’ of quality assurance processes will vary, depending on the application. For example, all departments would be expected to ‘use’ the DAIP and corresponding M&E plans; the DBE would be the primary ‘user’ of the SQASF and the DTVET the primary ‘user’ of the VE-SQASF.

- ii) Work with the identified government structures (department(s) and unit(s)) responsible for the quality assurance of the DAIPs and associated M&E plans and the quality assurance of schools and TVET institutions to assess current capacity to perform their mandated and assigned functions. This assessment should be the focus of the second organisational review noted in the Head Contract between DFAT and the MC – a review that is now overdue. The assessment will subsequently lead to the supported development of appropriate capacity development plans.

### **Suggested approach for a longer-term focus on capacity development in MoE**

There are a few critical elements to designing an effective capacity development approach. Some of these elements are found in the World Bank's Capacity Development Results Framework, while other elements are found in foundational research on capacity development, such as the 2008 "Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report" of the European Centre for Development Policy Management.<sup>85</sup>

For relative ease of use, considering the nature of the My-EQIP, the MTR team suggests anchoring the future capacity development framework of the MESP on the guidance provided in the 2008 study report of the European Centre for Development Policy Management. Frequently referred to as the '5Cs', The report identifies five capabilities, often referred to as the '5Cs', along with identified corresponding abilities that were required to effect change in organisational capacity and performance, particularly in complex, adaptive systems (such as education systems).

The focus of the '5Cs' are captured in the headline statements below:

- The capability to commit and engage
- The capability to carry out technical service delivery and logistic tasks
- The capability to relate to others and attract resources and support
- The capability to adapt and self-renew
- The capability to balance diversity and coherence

These five capabilities, and the actions required to strengthen these capabilities cannot be considered in isolation of the context within which the individuals and the organisation function. The context may warrant that additional attention may be needed (or is possible) in developing a particular capability at a particular time, circumstance and/or place. Accordingly, application of the '5Cs' model for capacity building advocates a contextualized development approach that is 'fit for purpose'.

The MTR team has proposed, in table format (see Table H1 below), how the elements of an effective capacity development framework, based on the '5Cs' model, might be organised to guide future work of the MESP. The sample end-of-program-outcomes provided is intended for demonstration purposes only **and is not intended to be definitive or complete**. However, once there is agreement on the outcomes for the remaining period of the MESP investment, this sample may be useful to inform and guide discussions between DFAT, MoE and the MESP team in determining an appropriate capacity development approach for the remainder of the investment.

To provide immediate guidance to the processes outlined above and to avoid delays and possible further misunderstanding of the technical assistance that is required, the MTR team recommends that DFAT appoint and contract directly (utilising the available MESP budget underspend) an international capacity development specialist, with expertise working in the education sector in developing countries to:

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<sup>85</sup> 2008, Baser, H. and Morgan, P. 'Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report', European Centre for Development Policy Management. Discussion Paper No 59B, April 2008.



- Provide advice to the MESP team in appropriate capacity development approaches to implementing selected actions during Phase 3 of the investment;
- Oversee the conduct of a second organisational review (as required in the Head Contract between DFAT and the MC); and
- Contribute to the development of a longer-term capacity development framework which may inform the design of a follow-on investment (if any).

Table H1: Application of the '5Cs' to a sample EOPO to demonstrate how the '5Cs' may be used to inform a coherent and strategic capacity development approach

Sample MESP OUTCOME: EOPO 1: Contribution to the consolidation of quality assurance frameworks and systems in selected departments and entities					
Capabilities to develop (The '5Cs')	To commit and engage	To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks	To relate and attract resources and support	Adapt and self-renew	Balance diversity and coherence
What are the general abilities of MoE to be developed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ownership and determination of MoE departments, units and staff to lead and manage quality assurance (QA) initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate quality assurance initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy and networking with others (internal and external) to influence support (politically or financially) for QA initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjustment of QA frameworks and systems based on evidence from implementation and promising practices in similar contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine an appropriate balance between national QA standards and requirement to meet GESI imperatives and needs of different contexts.</li> </ul>
What are general indicators of MoE abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QA functions are initiated, managed and performed by appropriate MoE departments, units and staff.</li> <li>Demonstration of individual and organisational commitment and support by senior officials.</li> <li>Assignment and participation of relevant and qualified staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality and degree of application of the quality assurance initiatives.</li> <li>Efficiency of implementation of the QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audiences with senior MoE officials.</li> <li>Preparation and acceptance of proposals for QA initiatives to MoE, relevant NESP SSWGs and development partners</li> <li>Preparation and acceptance of MoE budget estimates for QA initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection and analysis of evidence obtained from implementation of the QA frameworks and systems.</li> <li>Application of the evidence to inform QA policy and systems adjustments and future planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of appropriate balance between national QA standards and requirements to meet GESI imperatives and the needs of different contexts.</li> </ul>
What is the current assessment of MoE ability? (Only four QA initiatives are provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQASF – <b>High</b></li> <li>VE-SQASF – <b>High</b></li> <li>NAQAC – <b>Not known</b></li> <li>DAIP/M&amp;E – <b>Not known</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQASF – Medium</li> <li>VE-SQASF – Medium</li> <li>NAQAC – Not known</li> <li>DAIP/M&amp;E – Not known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQASF – Low/Medium</li> <li>VE-SQASF – Not known</li> <li>NAQAC – Not known</li> <li>DAIP/M&amp;E – Not known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQASF – <b>Not known</b></li> <li>VE-SQASF – <b>Not known</b></li> <li>NAQAC – <b>Not known</b></li> <li>DAIP/M&amp;E – <b>Not known</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQASF – <b>Low</b></li> <li>VE-SQASF – <b>Not known</b></li> <li>NAQAC – <b>Not Known</b></li> <li>DAIP/M&amp;E - <b>Low</b></li> </ul>

Sample MESP OUTCOME: EOPO 1: Contribution to the consolidation of quality assurance frameworks and systems in selected departments and entities					
Capabilities to develop (The '5Cs')	To commit and engage	To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks	To relate and attract resources and support	Adapt and self-renew	Balance diversity and coherence
What will be done to develop MoE abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA/coaching to key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Analysis and presentation of research/policy briefs on the importance of QA.</li> <li>• Demonstrating, documenting and advocating the benefits of applying QA systems.</li> <li>• Analysis and presentation of evidence from the application of QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA and targeted training of managers and senior staff responsible for QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Application of evidence from monitoring and evaluation to improve the performance management of staff engaged in QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Application of evidence by managers and key officials to identify and address knowledge, skills gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA/coaching to key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Presentation of research/policy briefs on the importance of QA to internal and external audiences.</li> <li>• Advocating the benefits of applying QA systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA/coaching to key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Analysis and presentation of evidence from monitoring and evaluation of implementation of QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Demonstrating and supporting the application of evidence by managers and key officials to inform adjustments to the QA frameworks and systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of TA/coaching to key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives to integrate GESI and respond to the needs of different contexts.</li> <li>• Analyses and presentation of evidence to demonstrate the benefits of integrating GESI and flexibility in meeting the needs of those in different contexts.</li> </ul>

Sample MESP OUTCOME: EOPO 1: Contribution to the consolidation of quality assurance frameworks and systems in selected departments and entities					
Capabilities to develop (The '5Cs')	To commit and engage	To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks	To relate and attract resources and support	Adapt and self-renew	Balance diversity and coherence
How will change of MoE capacity be measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance and participation in QA development, implementation and assessment activities.</li> <li>• Performance measurement of QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Assessment of changes in performance of managers and staff assigned to QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type and quality of engagement with senior MoE officials.</li> <li>• Quality of proposals for support.</li> <li>• Understanding of others (internal and external) of the importance of QA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability and application of evidence to inform policy and decision-making and adjustments to the QA frameworks and systems.</li> <li>• KII and FGD interviews with key officials, change agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection of GESI integration and flexibility to address different contexts in the application of QA frameworks and systems. (e.g. checklists?)</li> <li>• Surveys, FGD and KII with those involved with</li> </ul>

**Sample MESP OUTCOME: EOPO 1: Contribution to the consolidation of quality assurance frameworks and systems in selected departments and entities**

Capabilities to develop (The '5Cs')	To commit and engage	To carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks	To relate and attract resources and support	Adapt and self-renew	Balance diversity and coherence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy of decision-making.</li> <li>• Assessment of quality of staff assigned to work on QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Socio-emotional assessment of those engaged with QA initiatives.</li> <li>• KII and FGD interviews with key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined QA process flows with assigned responsibilities.</li> <li>• Knowledge and skills surveys.</li> <li>• KII and FGD with key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional GoM resources (personnel, time or budget) to apply to QA initiatives.</li> <li>• Additional development partner support for QA initiatives.</li> <li>• KII and FGD interviews with key officials, change agents and managers responsible for QA initiatives as well as external stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>and managers responsible for QA initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative capture of change events – e.g. Most Significant Change technique.</li> </ul>	<p>advocating for GESI and those from different contexts.</p>

## APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE 'MINIMUM-SUFFICIENT' M&E FRAMEWORK FOR PHASE 3

Recommendation 5 of the main report suggests that MESP M&E staff prepare a 'minimum-sufficient' M&E Framework, linked to the revised set of outcome statements and program logic for Phase 3. The defining features of this plan should be:

1. Measurement of **progress towards the achievement of the proposed, revised Phase 3 outcomes.** (Refer Appendix E: Suggested Phase 3 Program Logic). In practice, this means measuring the extent to which the aid modality (TA and grants) has been effective and efficient.
2. Determining **Australia's contribution to MoE reform outcomes.** This will require the M&E system to measure *both* the progress (results) within selected departments of MoE *and* the contribution that the MESP has made to the achievement of results.

The program's approach to assessing contribution should be through the principle of *plausible association*. Taking MoE's NESP outcomes as the starting point, and isolating the strategies to which the MESP work contributes, the MESP M&E system should be able to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to identify a plausible association between Australia's contribution and MoE reform outcomes.

3. Wherever possible, **existing data and data collection arrangements should be re-purposed in the MESP M&E system** so as not to waste the work that has been done to date, but to organise the collected data to demonstrate contributions to achieving either or both points 1 and 2 above.

It should be noted that a great deal of data collection and analysis outlined in the latest M&E Matrix<sup>86</sup> will be surplus to requirements in a MESP Phase 3 that will have a reduced scope of work and budget. **The MESP should cease implementation of unnecessary data collection methods and tools in Phase 3.**

Table I1 (below) provides an example of what a simplified M&E Matrix could look like. Wherever possible existing data collection methods and tools have been referred to. However, cross-referencing has not been possible due to the fact that the current MESP M&E Matrix has not attached codes to the methods and tools which it has used.

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<sup>86</sup> My-EQIP Monitoring and Evaluation System Plan Updated: February 2020 Annex 5: M&E Matrix

**Table 11: Suggested 'Minimum Sufficient' M&E Framework for My-EQIP Phase 3**

<b>NESP Goal:</b>	<b>Improved teaching and learning, vocational education and training, research and innovation leading to measurable improvements in student achievement in all schools and educational institutions and educational institutions.</b>
<b>Theory of Change</b>	<i>With adequate <u>political imperative</u> for education reform and a sufficiently <u>functioning bureaucracy</u> to lead, manage and deliver the reform, <u>targeted and strategic support</u> to key elements of reform (policy, systems, processes and organisational capacity to continuously improve) will <u>enhance the quality and equitable delivery of education services.</u></i>
<b>Transformational shift (Ch 13): Management, Capacity and Quality Assurance</b>	Education managers at all levels <b>apply evidence-based decision making and demand accountability</b> for improved teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions.

<b>Proposed End-of-Program Outcome 1</b>	Effective contribution to the <b>institutionalization of inclusive quality assurance frameworks and systems</b> in selected departments and entities.			
<b>Intermediate outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Assumptions / Risks</b>	<b>Uses of data</b>
IO1.1 Demonstrated contribution to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of SQASF policies, systems and processes (DBE and DERPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated improvements in DBE capacity to use – and DERPT/DBE capacity to continuously improve - the SQASF.</li> <li>• Progress versus targets (quantitative)</li> <li>• % SQASF /SQIPs meeting quality standards.</li> <li>• 'Plausible association': MESP TA / financial contributions v-v other contributors to MoE progress.</li> <li>• Quality assessments of TA performance.</li> <li>• Adjustments to SQASF based on evidence from implementation.</li> <li>• Integration of GESI.</li> <li>• Responsiveness to different contexts.</li> <li>• Alignment of SQASF with MoE/WB SQSAF system and funding budget codes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQASF Baseline Study (ACER)</li> <li>Rapid DERPT and DBE Capacity Baselines required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SQASF baseline study includes relevant indicators.</li> <li>• That rapid baseline assessments can be conducted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to DFAT</li> <li>• Reporting to MoE</li> <li>• Reporting to NAQAC</li> </ul>

Proposed End-of-Program Outcome 1	Effective contribution to the <b>institutionalization of inclusive quality assurance frameworks and systems</b> in selected departments and entities.			
Intermediate outcome	Indicators	Baseline	Assumptions / Risks	Uses of data
IO1.2 Demonstrated contribution to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of VE-SQASF policies, systems and processes. (DTVET and DERPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated improvements in DTVET capacity to use – and DERPT/DTVET to continuously improve - the VE-SQASF.</li> <li>• ‘Plausible association’: MESP contribution to observed progress.</li> <li>• Adjustments to SQASF based on evidence from implementation.</li> <li>• Integration of GESI.</li> <li>• Responsiveness to different contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid VE-SQASF Baseline Study required</li> <li>• Rapid DERPT and DTVET Capacity baseline assessments required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That rapid baseline assessments, addressing critical indicators, can be conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to DFAT</li> <li>• Reporting to MoE</li> <li>• Reporting to NAQAC</li> </ul>
IO1.3 Demonstrated contribution to institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of HE-QASF policies, systems and processes. (DHE and DERPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated improvements in DHE and NAQAC capacity to use – and continuously improve - the HE-QASF.</li> <li>• ‘Plausible association’: MESP contribution to observed progress.</li> <li>• Adjustments to SQASF based on evidence from implementation.</li> <li>• Integration of GESI.</li> <li>• Responsiveness to different contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid HE-QASF Baseline Study required.</li> <li>• Rapid DERPT and DHE Capacity baseline assessments required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That rapid baselines, addressing critical indicators, can be conducted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to DFAT</li> <li>• Reporting to MoE</li> <li>• Reporting to NAQAC</li> </ul>
IO1.4 Demonstrated contribution to the institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of quality assurance oversight policies, systems and processes (e.g. DERPT and NAQAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated contribution to the institutionalization and continuous quality improvement of quality assurance oversight policies, systems and processes (e.g. DERPT and NAQAC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated capacity improvements within NAQAC for overseeing the development and refinement of QA frameworks across the ministry.</li> <li>• ‘Plausible association’: between MESP TA/grants contributions and demonstrated capacity improvements in NAQAC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid NAQAC Capacity Baseline Study required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That a rapid baseline, addressing critical indicators, can be conducted.</li> </ul>

Proposed End-of-Program Outcome 2	Effective contribution to the collection, analysis and use of data/information for <b>inclusive performance monitoring and evidence-based planning and decision-making</b> in selected departments and entities.			
Intermediate outcome	Indicators	Baseline	Assumptions / Risks	Uses of data
IO2.1 Demonstrated contribution to the effective functioning of the MoE-mandated department to lead and quality assure planning and performance M&E (DERPT) <i>(process-owner)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated capacity improvements within DERPT for development and refinement of DAIPs / M&amp;E Plans.</li> <li>• 'Plausible association': MESP TA /grants contribution to demonstrated capacity improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid DERPT Capacity Baselines required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DERPT does not accept assigned mandate. Rapid baseline of DERPT capacity is conducted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFAT</li> <li>• MoE</li> <li>• DERPT</li> </ul>
IO2.2 Demonstrated contribution to the institutionalization of ministry annual planning and performance monitoring systems and processes in relevant units in selected departments (DERPT, DBE, DTVET and DHE). <i>(process-users)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress versus targets in annual 'refreshment' of DAIPs &amp; M&amp;E Plans (quantitative)</li> <li>• % DAIPs / M&amp;E Plans meeting quality standards</li> <li>• 'Plausible association' between MESP TA/grants contributions and quality / continuous improvement of DAIPs/M&amp;E Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid Assessment of DAIP and DAIP M&amp;E Plans</li> </ul>	Assessments conducted by MESP/MoE are completed and address relevant quality criteria – including GESI and context-specific requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFAT</li> <li>• MoE</li> <li>• DERPT</li> <li>• DBE</li> <li>• DTVET</li> <li>• DHE</li> </ul>
IO2.3 Demonstrated contribution to ministry efforts to identify the need for and develop systems and processes for the efficient collection, storage, analysis and use of data/ information for management decision-making in targeted departments and entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress versus targets in development of EMIS reforms.</li> <li>• MESP contribution (this may be minor given other major donors operating in the space)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of EMIS status</li> </ul>	Assessments conducted by MESP/MoE are completed and address relevant quality criteria – including GESI and context-specific requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFAT</li> <li>• MoE</li> <li>• DERPT</li> </ul>