



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity



Ministry of Education

Education Quality Assurance Strategic Plan for 2011-2020

Vientiane, May 2010



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Prime Minister's Office

No: / PMO

Vientiane Capital, date.....

Decree

on endorsement and promulgation of the Education Quality Assurance Strategic Plan

- In reference to the Law on the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, No.02/LNA, dated May 6, 2003
- In reference to the Education Law of Lao PDR, No. 04/LNA, dated July 3, 2007 (amended version)
- In reference to the Decree on Organization and Activities of the Ministry of Education, No. 62/PM, dated April 7, 2008.
- In reference to the Decree on approval and promulgation of the National Education Strategic Plan, No. 84/PM, dated March 1, 2007.
- In reference to the proposal made by the Minister of Ministry of Education, No...., dated.....2010.

The Prime Minister issues the following decree to:

- Article 1:** Endorse and promulgate the Education Quality Assurance Strategic Plan 2011-2020.
- Article 2:** Assign the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with agencies concerned, to take the lead on disseminating and implementing of the Education Quality Assurance Strategic Plan, and periodically report to the government.
- Article 3:** Ministry, ministry equivalents, provincial and Capital offices and other organizations to be aware of, collaborate with and strictly implement this Decree.
- Article 4:** This decree shall take effect from the date of signature.

Prime Minister of Lao PDR

FOREWORD

The 8th Central Party Congress of March 2006 set a target for removing the Lao PDR from the group of Least Developed Countries by 2020 by achieving fundamental factors for industrialization and modernization.

In order to achieve this target, the 8th Resolution specifically identified education as a central factor in human resource development for the years 2006 – 2010 and specified national education system reform to gradually improve quality to meet the regional and international standards.

This strategy of quality assurance will be based on and a direction for concerned sectors to develop standard for education quality at all levels. Also develop the system and mechanism for education quality assessment to both public and private more efficient and relevant to the national education system reform strategy plan. With the strategy, education will be developed with quality and national standard in nationwide level.

This strategy is to be formulated through various literature and study visits in the field of education quality assurance to foreign countries within the region and internationally. This includes deliberate and comprehensive studies and examination in collaboration with neighboring Asian countries. Moreover, this education quality assurance strategy has been repeatedly and comprehensively studied in collaboration with concerned sectors and development partners.

This education quality assurance strategic plan has identified the objectives, targets, principles and roles of quality assurance and outputs including seven sub-strategies and two periods of action plans 2011-2015 and 2016-2020.

The overall direction of education quality assurance has been developed as a mechanism to assess, improve and accredit the quality of education. With the quality factors assessment according to specific identified standards, and supporting to improve the under-standard factors, to reach the criteria and be accredited from the National Committee for Education Quality Accreditation.

Education quality standards identifying in all sections conform to the national plan for education system reform and regional and international standards emphasizing to main factors of quality such as the teachers, educators, learning and teaching process, learning achievements, curricula, learning facilities and etc.

Quality Accreditation in a quality assurance system is a trust building scheme for quality in education as well as a necessary prerequisite to help Lao education to develop. It aims at improving the national education system for firmness and all-round development with improved quality, gradually rising to regional and international standards that can actively contribute to national socio-economic development from now to the year 2020.

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PART I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Article 4 of the revised education law on education policy specifies that “the state sees education as central to the development of human resources, attaches importance to the areas of morality, human-view and world-view, science and progressive...”, “The state and society should actively undertake national education development to raise quality and comprehensively provide all with the chance to an education, especially those residing in remote areas, women and children, and disadvantaged people...”. Article 5 specifies the following principles of education: (1) Education must take place according to socialism, nationalism, popular, science and modern; (2) Education must be closely linked to vocations; (3) Education in schools must go hand-in-hand with education within the family, society, and outside of school; (4) Education must be both theoretical and practical, learning must go hand-in-hand with practice, and education must be closely linked to the performance of labor; (5) Education must respond to the demands of each phase of socio-economic development; (6) National education must be in line with regional and international systems.

At the same time, the Strategic National Education System Reform Plan for 2006-2015 was created with the aim of improving the national education system so that it is robust, expands in every area, is of a higher quality, and comes gradually into line with international standards step by step, contributes as a part of the Socio-Economic Development Plan from now until 2010, 2015, and 2020.

Over the last twenty years or so, the education sector has expanded in many areas in terms of both quantity and quality. Net primary school enrolment rates have risen from 63% in 1990 to approximately 92% in the academic year of 2008-2009. Total lower-secondary school enrolment rates have risen from 30% in 1990 to 63% and upper-secondary school enrolment rates have risen rapidly from 26% in 2003 to 37% in the academic year of 2008-2009. Vocational colleges have expanded into all provinces of the country. The ratio of those enrolled in higher education is 2,000 students per 100,000 people, a dramatic rise when compared to 650 students in 2004. Private investment has increased significantly right from kindergarten all the way to higher education. The development and training of teachers has undergone ongoing expansion in order to respond to the demand at kindergarten, primary, and secondary levels. Non-formal education has helped the population, increasing literacy rates from 76% in 2004 to 84% in the 15-40 years old target group.

1.2 Challenges

Together with the achievements, there remain obstacles and weak points. At primary school level, there is a repetition rate of 16%, a dropout rate of approximately 8%, and a primary completion rate of just 64%. The repetition rate for Primary Grade 1 is 31%, with the 33% gap from 47% for province with highest repetition rate and 14% the province with the lowest rate. The repetition rate at secondary school level is not all that high but the dropout rate for the lower secondary is 11% and for the upper secondary is 10%. From these figures, a significant gap can be found between urban and rural areas.

The quality of education is still low, still fails to meet the demands of society and the labor market, and still fails to match international standards.

The eradication of illiteracy is taking place according to the trends, quality is still not high and there is still a lack of the necessary regulations to recognize and transfer from non-formal into formal education system. Private education sector still lacks tight and strict management.

Quality assurance systems, which are a mechanism to monitor and assessment education quality, are yet to be comprehensively implemented. Universal quality standards for each level are still needed in order to have benchmarks for nationwide implementation.

1.3 Rational

The revised education law in Articles 68-72 details the inspection and assessment of education in order to manage education so that it meets the quality standards and is carried out correctly and transparently.

In order to adhere to the law and overcome the challenges outlined above, quality assurance systems are necessary for each level and each area of education and are made up of universal quality standards for use nationwide, mechanisms for self-assessment, internal assessment and external assessment in order to improve quality and move towards to quality accreditation.

Due to the fact that quality is a challenge relating to numerous sectors, the education quality assurance processes are the duty of all sectors involved in the development of the strategic plan. This is therefore necessary in order that all sectors may be aware of the direction for development and of their own responsibilities, including the guaranteeing of budgets and staffs, so that operations may yield real results.

PART II

EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 Overall Objectives

- Improve national education quality so that learners receive education services which meets the national education standards no matter where in the country they may reside
- Make learners, parents, and all relevant parties of society confident in the quality of the country's education
- Create conditions which are conducive to the raising of education quality to regional and international standards.

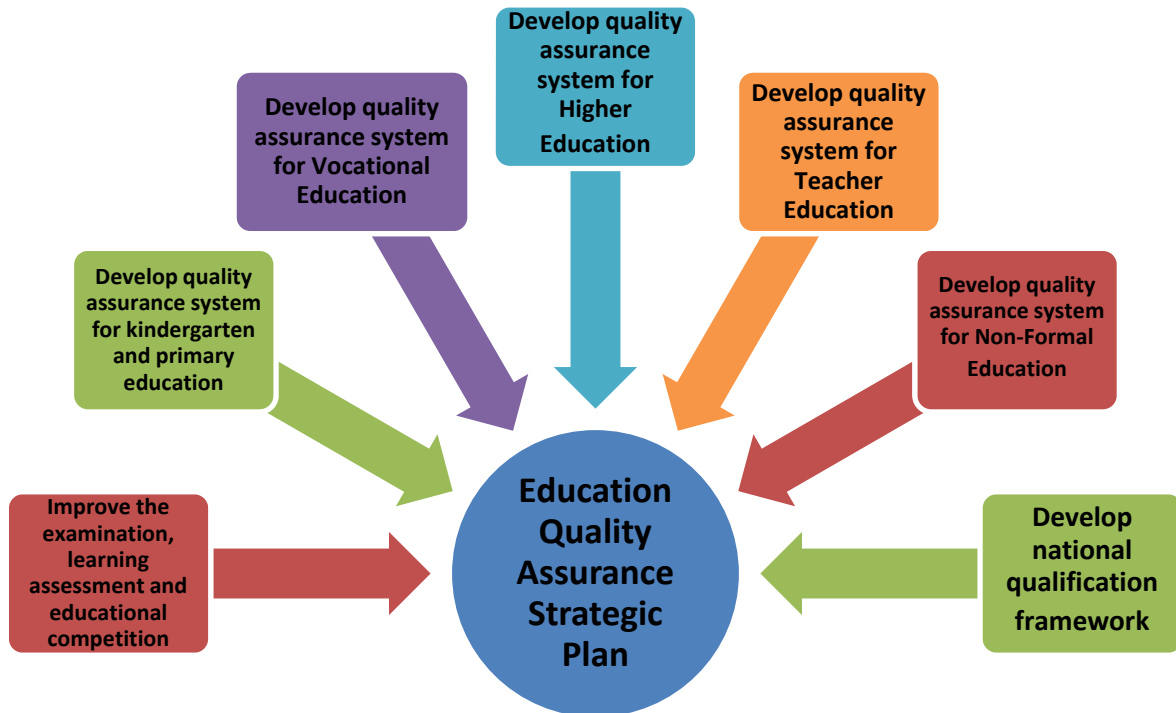
2.2 Overall Goals

- (1) Improve the system of examinations, learning outcome assessments and educational competition according to learning achievement standards at each level. Develop standards for the examination paper structure and content. Make the examinations system of general education relevant and ongoing at primary level, lower-secondary level, upper-secondary level, and for public institution entrance examinations. Make the examinations system transparent and fair. Create conditions conducive for students to focus on their studies consistently. Raise the standards of educational competition step by step in order to get closer to regional and international standards.
- (2) Develop quality assurance systems for primary and kindergarten education so that they have quality standards, self-assessment mechanisms for school themselves, internal assessment of parental units such as the District Education Bureaus and the Provincial Education Services, and external assessment by the education quality accreditation sector. Together with mechanisms to assuring the budgets for the quality development plan to create conditions which are conducive to ongoing quality improvement. Quality standards should be defined up from the main factors involved in education quality, which is inputs, processes, and outcomes, such as: teachers; administrators, learning and teaching materials, learning and teaching processes, learners, and learning outcomes. The teaching and learning processes should be based on active learning or child-centred teaching. Learners must be educated in the following 5 areas: moral education, academic education, physical education, art education, and vocational education.

- (3) Develop the quality assurance systems for vocational education, including quality standards for institution, mechanism for institution quality self assessment; the internal assessment by Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training, and the external assessment from the quality accreditation sector. Quality standards must create conditions which are conducive for educational institutes to develop human resources so that they meet the demands of socio-economic development and result in technical expertise and professional standards.
- (4) Develop the quality assurance systems for higher education, including minimum institutional standards used for the institution audit and are connected with the institution open license approval. Also the quality standards for programs with mechanisms of assessment, such as self assessment of colleges or individual faculties of universities; the internal assessment by the Higher Education Department or by the universities; and the external assessment from quality accreditation sector. Quality standards for higher education must create conditions which are conducive for colleges and universities to develop human resources into specialists, scientists, and researchers so that institutes are able to produce research results which can be used in society.
- (5) Develop the quality assurance systems for teacher education institution so that they have standards for each teacher training system, including the faculty of education in the university, have the mechanisms for self assessment, internal assessment by Department of Teacher Education, and external assessment from the quality accreditation sector. Develop standards for teacher training programs and registration system for the efficient management; and so it is possible to transfer training courses to credits in teacher education institution programs.
- (6) Develop the quality assurance systems for non-formal education so that it has standards for training curricula in order to assess and manage quality. Have a system in place for the equivalence from training courses of the non-formal education sector to formal education.
- (7) Develop national qualifications framework by covering basic education, the training courses, vocational education, and higher education. Have standards for each level of qualifications in order that credits may be recognized and transferred with regional and international qualifications.

2.3 Content of strategic plan

In order to attain the overall goals, the strategic plan consists of 7 main components. Each component has guiding principles for the basic thinking behind each strategy. It is a reference point for those involved in the easier implementation of each strategy and the movement towards universality.



2.3.1 Improve the examination, learning assessment and educational competition

- Develop standard for learning achievements in each level
- Develop structure of exam papers for examination, learning assessment and educational competition
- Develop item banks and mechanism to collect items
- Review examination rules for graduations and entrances
- Review the purpose and processes of learning assessment in primary (Grade3, 5)
- Develop the learning assessment for secondary education (Grade 9, 12)
- Promote the educational competition

2.3.2 Develop quality assurance system for kindergarten and primary education

- Develop Quality standard for kindergarten
- Review Quality standard for primary
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment
- Develop regulation to provide budgets to school for quality improvement
- Develop regulation to accredit school quality for primary and kindergarten

2.3.3 Develop quality assurance system for Vocational Education

- Develop Quality standard for TVET institutions
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for TVET institutions
- Develop regulation accredit quality of institution for TVET

- 2.3.4 Develop quality assurance system for Higher Education
 - Develop minimum institutional standard for higher education
 - Develop regulation for institution audit and license approval
 - Develop quality standard for program in higher education
 - Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for higher education
 - Develop regulation accredit quality of program in higher education institutions

- 2.3.5 Develop quality assurance system for Teacher Education
 - Develop quality standard for program in teacher education institutions and faculties of education
 - Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for teacher education
 - Develop standard for teacher training programs
 - Develop training registration system
 - Develop regulation for credits transferring in teacher education

- 2.3.6 Develop quality assurance system for Non-Formal Education
 - Develop standard for training programs in non-formal education
 - Develop regulation for admission to formal education

- 2.3.7 Develop national qualification framework
 - Develop national qualification framework
 - Develop regulation for credits recognizing and transferring

PART III

ACTION PLAN ON EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

The action plan to implement the education quality assurance strategy plan has been set by two periods: first for 2011-2015 and second for 2016-2020. The priorities are set by the urgent of problem, human resource capacity, funding capacity and etc.

Table 3.1 Concerned parties in each strategy

No	Strategy	Concerned parties	Partners
1	To improve the examination, learning assessment and educational competition	DPE, DSE, RIES, DHE, DVET, ESQAC	
2	To develop quality assurance system for kindergarten and primary education	DPE, DSE, ESQAC, PES, DEB	
3	To develop quality assurance system for Vocational Education and Training	DVET, ESQAC, TVET institutions	UNESCO ADB
4	To develop quality assurance system for Higher Education	DHE, DPEM, ESQAC, Universities, Colleges	ADB
5	To develop quality assurance system for Teacher Education	DTE, ESQAC, TTEIs, Faculty of Education	
6	To develop quality assurance system for Non-Formal Education	DNE, DPE, DSE, RIES, ESQAC	
7	To develop national qualification framework	D. Personnel, DHE, DVET, ESQAC, MoLSF	

Table 3.2 The periods of action plan¹

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-2020
S.1	—————→					- - - - - →
S.2	—————→					- - - - - →
S.3	—————→					
S.4		—————→					
S.5			—————→				- - - - - →
S.6					—————→		
S.7						—————→	- - - - - →

¹ Dotted line: Some done, full line: first period, dashed line: second period

Targets:

- To have standard of learning achievements for some main subject. These will be referred for development of test paper structure, items and item banks to support examinations, learning assessment and educational competition.
- To have testing regulation systematically for primary graduation, secondary graduation and post basic entrance.
- To improve learning assessment method accurately, promptly, simply and meet purposes. The implementation on Grade 3, and secondary has been added.
- To have quality standard for kindergarten and primary education and mechanism for quality assessment, quality improvement and quality accreditation.
- To have quality standard for vocational education and training, including mechanism for quality assessment, quality improvement and quality accreditation.
- To have minimum institutional standard for higher education and mechanism to audit and license approval.
- To have quality standard for programs teaching in higher education, including mechanism for quality assessment, quality improvement and quality accreditation.
- To have standard for teacher education institutions and education faculty, including mechanism for quality assessment, quality improvement and quality accreditation.
- To have standard for teacher training program and mechanism of credit transferring.
- To have standard for non-formal training program, rules of equivalence and admission to formal education.
- To have national qualification framework for credit recognition and transferring.

Program 1: Improvement of Examinations, learning assessments and competitions

Main activities

- Develop standard for learning achievements for each subjects in primary
- Develop standard for learning achievements for each subjects in secondary (2nd)
- Develop structure of exam paper for graduation and entrance
- Develop structure of test paper for learning assessment Grade 3, 5 and Grade 9
- Develop structure of test paper for learning assessment Grade 12 (2nd)
- Develop item banks for some main subjects
- Review examination rule for primary/secondary graduation and entrance
- Review learning assessment in primary
- Develop learning assessment in secondary (2nd)
- Promote educational competition at primary and secondary in nation-wide
- Organize lesson-learned exchange about regional and international competition

Program 2: To develop quality assurance system for kindergarten and primary education

Main activities

- Develop Quality standard for kindergarten
- Develop Quality standard for primary education
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment
- Strengthen school in self assessment and quality improvement planning
- Strengthen Village education development committee in school quality monitoring and improvement conducting
- Improve responsibilities of PES and DEB in internal quality assessment for kindergarten and primary school
- Establish council for kindergarten and primary school quality accreditation (2nd)

Program 3: Develop quality assurance system for Vocational Education and Training

Main activities

- Develop Quality standard for TVET institutions
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for TVET institutions
- Establish Quality Assurance unit in TVET institutions
- Strengthen self assessment capacity for TVET institutions
- Organize internal assessment by team of assessors formed from TVET directors and DVET
- Establish council for TVET institution quality accreditation with ESQAC working for secretariat
- Organize external assessors training
- Organize external assessment

Program 4: Develop quality assurance system for Higher Education

Main activities

- Develop minimum institutional standard for higher education
- Develop regulation, mechanism for institution audit and license approval
- Develop quality standard for programs teaching in higher education
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for higher education institutions
- Establish Quality Assurance unit in higher education institutions such as college and faculty level in university
- Strengthen self assessment capacity for higher education institutions
- Organize internal assessment with assessors team formed from others college or faculty

- Establish council for higher education programs quality accreditation with ESQAC working for secretariat
- Organize higher education external assessors training
- Organize higher education external assessment

Program 5: Develop quality assurance system for Teacher Education

Main activities

- Develop quality standard for teacher education institution and education faculty
- Develop mechanism for quality self assessment, internal assessment and external assessment for teacher education
- Establish Quality Assurance unit in teacher education institutions and faculty of education in university
- Strengthen self assessment capacity in teacher education
- Organize internal assessment with assessors team formed from teacher education institutions and education faculty
- Develop standard for teacher training program/module
- Develop training program/module registration system for efficiency management
- Develop rules for credit transferring from training to teacher education program
- Establish council for teacher education institution quality accreditation (2nd)
- Organize teacher education external assessors training (2nd)
- Organize teacher education external assessment (2nd)

Program 6: Develop quality assurance system for Non-Formal Education

Main activities

- Develop standard for non-formal training program
- Develop rules for certificates transferring and admission to formal system

Program 7: Develop national qualification framework

Main activities

- Develop national qualification framework
- Develop regulation for credit recognition and transferring (2nd)
- Develop regulation for certificate/degree recognition (2nd)

PART IV

IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the directions and outputs identified in the strategic plan and action plan for education quality assurance, all parties concerned must firmly collaborate and decentralize responsibilities as below:

1. The Educational Standards and Quality Assurance Centre (ESQAC) collaborate with parties concerned to draft an implementation guideline, disseminating the order and guideline on implementation of the strategic plan.
2. Departments and related centers under the Ministry of Education, Provincial Education Services, Capital Education Service, and District Education Bureaus in both public and private education sectors are assigned to carry out the tasks of developing this strategic development plan and plan of action into detailed work plans at their own level in accordance with their duties and authority.
3. Public and private education institutions have the role of formulating school development plans to improve their own education quality in accordance with the mechanism for internal quality assurance and allowing for external assessments in order to acquire accreditation.
4. The Ministry of Education collaborates with the Ministry of Information and Culture in the dissemination of legislation, regulations and principles as well as information and documents related to this strategic plan, ensuring social recognition and acceptance of the real contexts and methods of national education quality assurance.
5. The Ministry of Education has the role of guiding, monitoring, inspecting and assessing the implementation of the strategic plan for education quality assurance to promote and show appreciation to those organizations, education institutes and individuals who show outstanding achievements.
6. Funds for the implementation of strategic plans and action plans for education quality assurance are to be sourced from state budget, technical income in quality assurance, contributions from the private sector, community, international organizations, and grant aid from abroad.