MYANMAR EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MY-EQIP)

Start date: March 2017   **End Date:** March 2021

Total proposed funding allocation: $20 million

Quality Assurance (QA) Completed:

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARF	Adviser Remuneration Framework
AUD	Australian Dollars
CapEd	Capacity Development for Education Programme
CESR	Comprehensive Education Sector Review
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DERPT	Department of Education Research, Planning and Training
DP	Development Partner
ECB	Evaluation Capacity Building
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EoPO	End-of-Program Outcome
EQIP FUND	Education Quality Fund
EQIS	Education Quality Improvement System
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HRIS	Human Resource Information System
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IDD	Investment Design Document
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
KPP	Knowledge to Policy to Practice
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MC	Managing Contractor
MQAS	Ministry Quality Assurance System
MoE	Ministry of Education (Myanmar)
My-EQIP	Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program
NAQAC	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee
NEPC	National Education Policy Commission

NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NLD	National League for Democracy
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
OM	Operations Manager
PD	Program Director
QA	Quality Assurance
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TA	Technical Assistance
T&L	Teaching and Learning
TEMIS	Township Education Management Information System
TEIP	Township Education Improvement Plans
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollars

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Investment Design Document (IDD) sets out how Australia's support, under the Myanmar Education Quality Improvement Program (My-EQIP), will be implemented to improve the quality of education policy, planning, management and teaching through strengthened monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance. Fostering critical analysis of timely and relevant information will improve decision making and drive the efficient and effective use of increased government funding to the sector. This design was jointly prepared with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and is aligned with the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP).

There are approximately 8.9 million students[1] and 323,000 teachers (83 per cent female) in over 45,000 government schools in Myanmar. Decades of neglect have resulted in under-resourced schools with under-paid and under-trained teachers using ineffective methods, out-dated curricula and teaching materials. Teaching methods tend to rely on rote learning, group chanting and repetition and teachers do not routinely assess students learning. The Government of Myanmar is the largest provider of education services in Myanmar accounting for more than 80 per cent of Union spending in the sector.

The Government of Myanmar is committed to significant education reforms to improve education outcomes in Myanmar. However, it does not have the capacity and access to expertise in-country to develop and maintain the systems to test the effectiveness of these reforms. There is a real concern that the opportunity offered by the new government will be wasted if the government is unable to track the performance and impact of the reforms and more broadly of education services in Myanmar.

Australia places a high importance on investing in education. Investing in knowledge and skills that enable young people to participate in the economy and contribute productively to society. An investment of AUD20 million over four years beginning in March2017 is proposed. This investment will support the leadership of the Education Minister, Permanent Secretary, Director Generals, their departments and the education integrity bodies. My-EQIP will enable through advisory services and targeted support the development of a Education Quality Improvement system for the Ministry of Education that strengthens MoE's capability in quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation, and research. Each department will ultimately be responsible for implementing and leveraging the system. My-EQIP will also provide support to inform the nascent integrity bodies, if requested.

My-EQIP will be a Myanmar government owned and led program. A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia) (DFAT) contracted Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Specialist and a separately contracted managing contractor will provide capacity building guidance and inputs as required. My-EQIP will be delivered using a phased approach to enable on going refinements to its design. The program will have the flexibility to adapt to changes in the sector as it matures and adapt to changes in the political, economic and social context.

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[1] Primary 5,191,162; Middle 3,157,226; Secondary 507,153 (MoE, August 2015)

ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

MYANMAR'S EDUCATION CONTEXT

There are approximately 8.9 million students[2] and 323,000 teachers (83 per cent female) in over 45,000 government schools in Myanmar. Decades of neglect have resulted in under-resourced schools with under-paid and under-trained teachers using ineffective methods, out-dated curricula and teaching materials. Teachers also do not routinely assess students' learning.

Primary net enrolments are improving[3] but are still low at 86.4 per cent average[4]. Drop-out rates are very high, with approximately only 460,000 out of 1.2 million students starting in grade one making it to grade 11 – and of those, only 33-36 per cent pass5. While there is gender parity on aggregate[6], there are economic, regional, and urban-rural disparities. For example, roughly 93 per cent and 80 per cent of urban youth complete primary and middle school with little discrepancy between boys or girls (except in high school where girls overtake by a sizeable margin). In contrast, in poor households, 71% of girls complete primary school, compared with 77 per cent boys, and fewer transitions to middle school (64 per cent of girls and 69 per cent boys respectively). Shan State has the lowest female literacy rate among young women, at 59.4 per cent and in Rakhine State more than half of 10-15 year olds are out of school (57% girls and 49% boys). [7] Data suggests retention is influenced by a combination of demand-side factors (direct and indirect costs and a reported "lack of interest") and supply-side factors (gaps in school networks in some areas and perceived issues of quality and/or relevance to economic opportunities).[8] There is a need for more data/information to explore patterns and underlying causes of gender, socio-economic and geographical differences.

The Government of Myanmar is the largest provider of education services in Myanmar accounting for 83 per cent of Union (national) spending in the sector.[9] There is also a sizable non-government sector delivering education services. This includes monastic schools and ethnic groups. The monastic school system, the second largest provider of basic education in Myanmar, operates in over 1,500 schools catering for almost 297,000 children (often from the poorest communities). Different ethnic groups provide education services to over 300,000 children (in total) outside the state system, with well-established systems operating in Karen, Mon, Kachin, and Kayah states.

There are substantial differences between the government system and ethnic systems, most of which have their own policies, management, curricula, learner assessment frameworks, and teacher recruitment and development procedures. The National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), between the

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[2] Primary 5,184,041; Middle 2,795,607; Secondary 873,832 (NESP, 2016)

[3] Seeking MoE data

[4] NESP 2016

[5] *Myanmar Public Expenditure Review 2015: Realigning the Union Budget to Myanmar's Development Priorities,* The World Bank Group, September 2015

[6] Percentage of female students in Primary, Middle and High school were 49.4, 49.8 and 51.8 per cent respectively in 2009. *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*, 2016, Asian Development Bank, United National Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. https://openaccess.adb.org

[7] Based on 2009-2010 data analysed in *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*, 2016, Asian Development Bank, United National Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. https://openaccess.adb.org

[8] *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*, 2016,

[9] The remaining 17 per cent is managed by fourteen other ministries providing vocational and higher education services with their own budgets. For example, the Ministry of Health runs and finances health related universities. For a full breakdown see page 43 of *Myanmar Public Expenditure Review 2015: Realigning the Union Budget to Myanmar's Development Priorities,* The World Bank Group, September 2015

Myanmar Government and eight ethnic armed organisations[10], has initiated a political dialogue aimed at resolving a number of issues, including decentralization of services to sub-national levels.

THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION AGENDA

The new National League for Democracy (NLD)-led Government took power in April 2016. While the new government is still establishing its agenda, there is reasonable amount of clarity on policy direction in the education sector. The new Minister – a former Director General within the Ministry – has outlined a clear vision for education reform, including a commitment to maintain government funding levels to the sector[11]. Education is a priority in the NLD Election Manifesto, noting "the NLD will strive to establish opportunities for lifelong learning and obtaining of a beneficial and valuable education". The manifesto includes the following:

- Work to ensure the effective, efficient and transparent allocation and use of finances, drawing on state funding, private funding and other domestic and international sources of education funding;
- Develop effective educational reforms and management and monitoring programs based on accurate information and data.

From 2012 to 2015, the Ministry undertook a Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR)[12], which recommended wide-ranging changes across the board and provided the technical basis for a draft NESP. Building on the work already undertaken, the new government has revised the Plan. State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has approved the NESP Handbook (a 60 page summary of the Plan) and the National Education Policy Commission has reviewed and endorsed the Plan. The Ministry intends to launch the NESP in early 2017.

The Government is in the process of applying to join the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which supports countries in the drafting and implementation of quality sector plans. In line with GPE requirements, the MoE and development partners have commissioned an independent appraisal of the NESP. The appraisal will assess its strengths and identify areas that can be improved through NESP annual implementation plans and MoE programs going forward. GPE has a particular focus on equity, learning and efficiency which will be reflected in recommendations for action.

Myanmar has also committed itself to the Sustainable Development (SDG) goals of which Goal 4 is to provide "inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" with the key associated target that by 2030 "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes".

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The education sector legislat80ive framework was updated in 2014 – the first time in over 40 years. The National Education Law (2014) and the Law Amending the National Education Law (2015) set out a

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[10] While several influential ethnic armed organisations chose not to sign at the time, most of these groups have endorsed the text of the agreement.

[11] Government investment in education was 2.1 per cent of GDP in 2013-14, a substantial increase from 0.7 per cent in 2010/11 but is still low compared to the region. For example, Malaysia and Vietnam spent 6.3 per cent in 2013 and 2012 respectively; Laos PDR 4.2 per cent in 2014; and Indonesia 3.4 per cent in 2013 (see *World Bank data on Government expenditure on education as per cent of GDP,* http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS).

[12] A wide range of Development Partners (UN, multilateral, bilateral, non-governmental and civil society organisations) provided financial, technical and coordination support for the CESR.

unifying vision to strengthen coordination, management structures and systems of education. The new laws include important steps towards a more inclusive quality education for all, including: recognising the rights of all citizens to a free, compulsory education at the primary level; support for the learning of ethnic languages and culture; greater decentralisation within the education system; and recognition of the right of parents and community members in school management. The new laws act as umbrella laws for a number of sub-sector laws currently being drafted, including basic education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), private education and higher education.

The Law also establishes the National Education Policy Commission and the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee to guide education reform in Myanmar and describes a new approach to quality assurance based on systematic measurement against national quality standards. The National Education Policy Commission was formed in October 2016 to set, review and give guidance on national education objectives, policies, and planning. The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee was established in January 2017. Its role includes setting the national education standard framework, identifying standards and setting up quality assurance systems. Both the NEPC and the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC) are independent of the MoE.

Both the Houses of Parliament have Education Promotion Committees comprised of Members of Parliament, whose role is to advise the Union government in enacting educational laws, coordinate in adopting educational policies, and provide guidance in implementing programs.

The role of NEPC committees, vis-à-vis the Ministry and Parliamentary education committees, is still being determined.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Key functions of the MoE are to administer basic education (kindergarten and grades 1-11)[13]; develop policy; undertakes planning and training; monitor service delivery; run the national matriculation exam; and manage public universities through the Department of Higher Education.[14] Fourteen other ministries provide vocational and tertiary education through their universities with their own budgets. The 163 higher education institutions (HEIs) are overseen by eight ministries including 66 which are under the Ministry of Education[15].

In August 2016, MoE underwent a restructure. The new structure merges MoE with the Ministry of Science and Technology; establishes a new Department of Alternative Education; merges the Department of Education Research into a new Department of Education Research, Planning and Training (DERPT); and abolishes the Department of Teacher Education and Training – the responsibilities of which will be split between DERPT and Higher Education. Under the new structure the Ministry has:

- Two Permanent Secretaries: one for education and one for science and technology, who report to the Union Minister;

- Nine departments – five related to education, four to science and technology – each headed by a Director General; and

- Two new high-level Monitoring and Evaluation Units – one for basic education and one for science and technology, led by the Permanent Secretary for education and a Director General respectively.

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13 *There is a plan to add Year 12 in 20XX.*

14 *Myanmar Public Expenditure Review 2015: Realigning the Union Budget to Myanmar's Development Priorities,* The World Bank Group, September 2015

15 *NESP, 2016*

Under the proposed new structure, the Ministry has an estimated 800,000 positions, of which 600,000 are filled. The proposed new structure is at **Figure 1.**

[insert Ministry structure]

In addition to the restructure, the NESP proposes additional structures and units, including:

- An NESP Secretariat under the Office of the Union Minister to oversee NESP implementation and provide on-demand support to the Minister and technical support to departments

- An NESP Coordination Committee to strengthen coordination, sequencing and implementation of NESP strategies and programs; and

- Program Management Teams in each of MoE's departments to coordinate implementation of NESP programs and components, including addressing challenges to implementation.

At present there is a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities between the various existing and proposed structures, which may persist for the immediate future. The current MoE restructure follows a previous restructure in April 2015, which brought about major shifts in departmental responsibilities and considerable redeployment and relocation of staff. The latest restructure and launch of the NESP will necessitate more changes for MoE staff which, based on experience, may take some time to become fully operational.

THE SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

Centrally funded MoE officials manage education at the state/region[16], district and township level. There are seven states and seven regions and 67 districts, however, it is at the township level that many key functions of government take place. The 330 Township Education Offices have the most direct contact with schools. District level education offices[17] were introduced for the first time in mid-2012 to bring education into line with other sectors of government.

There have been steps to decentralise decision-making to the sub-national level. For example, states and regions can now recruit and redeploy their own teachers; township and district education officers have increased responsibility for implementing and managing parts of the recurrent and capital budget. Through the joint MoE-World Bank-Australia Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project, schools receive and control some of their non-wage recurrent expenditure as grants through a local school grants committee. Nonetheless, with the exception of non-government schools, sub-national authorities do not own or operate any schools, universities, or training centres etc.

DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM/ISSUE ANALYSIS

While reforms over the past few years have been impressive[18], the transition to a quality education system is still nascent and a number of substantial challenges remain. The Government of Myanmar is investing significantly in major reforms to address these challenges, yet does not have the systems and

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[16] There is no state/region level minister of education. Instead education, along with health, is overseen by the state Minister for Social Affairs. This differs from most other government sectors, where there are state/regional level ministers as well as union level ministers

[17] District officers are expected to link the township to the state/regional offices, and take charge of middle schools (secondary schools being the responsibility of the states/regions and primary schools the responsibility of Townships) but they are not yet fully functional

[18] Funding for education has improved, new education legislation enacted, new curriculum for Kindergarten and Grade 1 has been developed; 72,000 teachers have been recruited, teacher remuneration has increased; and an evidence-based National Education Strategic Plan has been developed.

capacity to assess how these new reforms are working and whether they are the best use of limited resources. The Amendment to the National Education Law (2015) provides for the establishment of an external and internal quality assurance system. The draft NESP states the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee will be responsible for the external quality assurance system. The Ministry of Education will establish an internal Ministry Quality Assurance System (MQAS), which includes the development of standards-based sub-sector quality assurance systems for preschool and kindergarten, basic education, alternative education, TVET, and Higher Education. The NESP identifies the MQAS, in addition to improved monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and capacity, as a catalyst for change and envisages managers using evidence from these systems as one of the nine transformational shifts required to achieve the overall strategic goal of the Education sector. If the Government is to succeed in delivering effective reform, it will need to set standards, assure quality of education services, monitor and analyse all aspects of its program, learn from experience and use this to drive improvements.

SECTORAL CHALLENGES

Current oversight of education institutions and MoE information systems are **weak and focused on administrative** matters such as numbers of teachers and students rather than learning outcomes. As yet, there are **no established education standards or frameworks** to help education managers, teachers, parents and communities assess education quality[19]. To date, teachers and institutions have been defining education quality themselves, leading to a fragmented and inconsistent approach across the country. This is true across the sub-sectors from pre-school through to higher education. There are no benchmarks or regulation of teacher performance and promotion is primarily based on experience. MoE has made important progress recently in developing a draft Teacher Competency Standards Framework but this has yet to be operationalised[20]. MoE, in partnership with the World Bank and Australia, has introduced early grade assessments in selected townships, with plans to go national by 2021. Also to some reform of Grade 5 assessment to have a greater focus on critical thinking, but otherwise, there is currently very little quality assurance directed at learning outcomes. There is also an urgent need to develop TVET, Higher Education and Alternative Education quality assurance systems due to a lack of standards, limited curricula and weak mechanisms for certifying individuals and accrediting courses.

There is a **very rudimentary system of school inspection**, which entails regular visits to schools by Assistant Township Education Officers - dependent on the availability of funds for transportation. The process is largely concerned with mechanical checklist-based supervision of administrative matters. The assessment of learning against standards has been largely neglected, apart from the assessment of individual students through public examinations at grade nine and grade eleven. Nor is there an internal evaluation system to guide schools in assessing and improving their own quality. Some schools lack the capacity to know how to assess and address quality education, while others are focusing on issues that will have a limited impact on teaching and learning (T&L) in their school, such as school administration.[21]

There is **an elaborate system of compiling education data but due to the predominantly paper-based system, information is rarely analysed and used for planning and management.** Information is broken down by grade, gender, nationality and religion – but not ethnicity and disability. The system currently

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[19] CESR Phase Two reports

[20] Under the Australian-funded *Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar,* MoE and UNESCO have developed a draft Teacher Competency Standards Framework that outlines the key characteristics and attributes of good teaching.,which is currently in the process of being validated through stakeholder consultations at the time of writing.

[21] NESP Quality Assurance and Management Sub-sector report – July 2015, pg 26.

lacks the ability to interrogate data sets for useful information and interpret and use this information for management purposes. The system lacks the capacity to triangulate information from the Education Information Management System (EMIS) data collection and information from school inspections, so while there is basic quantitative data on enrolments and teachers there is very little qualitative information on teaching and learning. It also lacks mechanisms for assessing the quality and value for money of its management and administrative processes. MoE, in partnership with UNESCO, are in the process of developing a comprehensive and integrated computerised EMIS[22] for early childhood, basic and higher education and redevelopment of the Human Resources Information System[23] (see development landscape section below).

There are a number of monitoring and evaluation activities taking place at project level providing a rich source of data. However, there is no integrated system that pulls the information together at a central level that tracks progress and change over time.

Other challenges include i**nformation not reaching national-level planning and budgeting,** with weak linkages between MoE and institutions such as the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Ministry of Planning and Finance. This means crucial information is not informing budget allocation decisions. **Education quality institutional structures have not been established** as yet. A number of committees have been identified in the National Education Law and the NESP, but members and staff have not been appointed nor roles and responsibilities clarified. There are **particular quality assurance and management issues in higher education**, which set it apart from the rest of the sector, in part due to achieving a balance between greater autonomy for higher education and compliance with national standards.

After years of military rule, the system is upwardly focused and accountable. Education was tightly managed from the highest levels of government and MoE personnel seldom made decisions on education policy and service delivery. This has led to a **culture where officials are risk averse and wary of actions that would expose themselves to criticism**, stifling initiative to bring about change.   Many senior managers at central level have not yet fully embraced the concept of delegation and local empowerment. While senior and middle ranking MoE staff are in mostly competent and highly committed to reform, much of this talent remains latent. For example, while Township Education Offices are part of a well-established administrative structure, they are often under-resourced and have little delegated authority. Their primary role has been to administer and supervise schools, to record educational data and to pass to higher levels of the administration.

Many **staff feel they don't have knowledge and skills to meet the requirements** of the new reform agenda – with planning, budgeting, M&E and computer skills all considered areas for strengthening. Monitoring and evaluation is not well understood or institutionalised. A recent capacity gap assessment found that the function of M&E across the Ministry as a whole was largely nascent, most offices have no dedicated M&E staff members and no staff members have ever received M&E training. [24] About 200,000 of the 800,000 positions are vacant and there is limited physical space to accommodate new staff. Even where good data is available, staff in place may need support to make the best educational decisions for improvements and ways forward based

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[22] EMIS refers to all systems and sub-systems operated by MoE that are responsible for recording and reporting education data.

[23] Development of the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) commenced in 2012 and managed the personnel data of over 415,000 teaching and non-teaching staff, including transfers and promotions at the sub-national levels. Usage of the original HRIS ceased at the end of December 2o14. The Department of Basic Education started development of a separate web-based HRIS in 2015 which is not integrated with the original.

[24] *FINAL REPORT Multi-Level MoE Capacity Gap Assessment and Initial Targeted Capacity Building in Myanmar,* UNICEF Contract No. 43289700 On behalf of The Myanmar Ministry of Education and the Quality Basic Education Programme, October 2016.

SECTORAL STRENGTHS

Notwithstanding the absence of any systematic assessment of teaching and learning, the **basis for management information systems exists**. Even though these processes are labour-intensive and the information collected may not be as relevant or as useful as it might be, the habit of data collection is well established. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the **education data recorded is reasonably reliable**, despite the lack of incentives to maintain accuracy. The planned reforms to EMIS with UNESCO support will improve the collection of data by gender and ethnicity, including capturing aggregated numbers by gender and grade for ethnicity and disability and by gender for age, grade and other parameters such as dropout, repetition, etc. For Higher Education/TVET, the new system will capture these attributes for the individual student. The Human Resource Information System has potential as an HR tool for recruitment and deployment. All these initiatives provide an opportunity to draw together the existing M& E approaches in a strategic way and ensure that an evaluation culture is built at the outset of the reform process.

Furthermore the Myanmar government outlined a number of its M&E expectations in the NESP including that DERPT will develop and implement an annual M&E plan. MoE will approve the budget to deliver the annual M&E plan and all departments will be required to cost their M&E activities. NESP implementing departments will be expected to report on their progress against NESP programs and components (NESP, p. 224). The NESP annual M&E Plan is expected to use a Mixed Methods (use both quantitative and qualitative approaches) approach, to list all planned M&E activities in the coming year, include the definitions of KPIs, list data collection methods and tools, specify who will do what and when, and outline how data will be analysed and reported (NESP, p.224). The NESP includes a mid-term NESP evaluation at the completion of year 3 (i.e. 2018—19) and will focus on progress towards achieving the NESP goals and is expected to inform the development of NESP 2 and an end of plan evaluation at completion of year 5 (i.e. April or May of the 2021—22 financial year).

DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE

There are a number of other donors active in the areas of quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation and, education management:

- UNESCO supports MoE in the following activities:
  - development of the **EMIS database/Education Portal:** MoE's data collection and reporting systems have been analysed; data capture forms have been revised and piloted and the Myanmar EMIS design has been completed. Software development, installation and training is due to take place in 2017.
  - **geospatial mapping of all basic education schools** under MoE (completed) and integration of school-mapping with EMIS and population data (forthcoming), mapping of schools outside of MoE's management
  - Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapEd) Support to Sector-wide policies and planning for Myanmar

- UNICEF supports MoE in the following activities:

- o **Township Education Management Information Systems** (TEMIS) piloted in 15 townships[25] to build capacity in specific areas of planning and monitoring. However, the system relied on newly recruited computer operators to manually input data from 19 different forms which proved too burdensome and data finalisation was problematic. Support for TEMIS will not continue, however, MoE, UNESCO and UNICEF are currently discussing how to incorporate lessons learned and TEMIS data into EMIS.
- o **Multi-level MoE Capacity Gap Assessment**[26] (October 2016) assessed MoE capacity at all levels of the structure across nine priority issues, including monitoring and evaluation. UNICEF is currently undertaking follow-up training[27] at sub-national level in the areas of planning; financial management and budgeting; and human resource development planning from January to June 2017. Additional funding for future training is being sought.
- o **Township Education Improvement Plans (TEIP)** introduced in 25 townships as key instrument for decentralisation of education planning and management in Myanmar. TEIP initiated the practice of planning at the township level and changed attitudes of MoE staff in recognising the importance of collecting and using valid data for planning at school and township levels.[28] UNICEF plans to continue support to TEIP and is reviewing and revising the existing TEIP module and facilitator's guide with MoE, based on the findings of a 2016 evaluation.

- The World Bank and Australia are helping MoE strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of basic education through the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project[29], which covers school grants, student stipends, early grade assessments, and from 2017, teacher mentoring. Current and future activities include strengthening MoE's M&E capacity at central and sub-national levels; increasing coverage of early grade reading and maths assessments; continued learning and improvement of program design and implementation through MoE M&E Working Groups; school and household surveys; classroom observations; randomized experiments; and intensive qualitative assessments.

- The Myanmar Education Consortium[30] help strengthen monastic and ethnic education systems, including in the areas of information management, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.

While there are a number of activities strengthening parts of the system, there are many significant gaps where there is no quality assurance or only very limited monitoring or evaluation. Moreover, no donor is supporting MoE to build a coherent system that draws together and uses the information to track progress and inform policy, planning, budgeting and management. My-EQIP is a flexible, iterative design which will not only help address these gaps, but help MoE build a system that better uses the information available (for example, through EMIS, school and household surveys and other

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[25] Funded by Australia, Denmark, European Union, Norway, United Kingdom and UNICEF as part of the Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) from 2013 to June 2016.

[26] Funded by Australia, Denmark, European Union, Norway, United Kingdom and UNICEF as part of the Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP) from 2013 to June 2016.

[27] Funded by Denmark and European Union as part of the Building on QBEP programme

[28] *Township Education Improvement Plan End of Project Evaluation Report,* September 2015 to January 2016 by Montrose, Commissioned by: UNICEF Myanmar, Re-submitted 13 May 2016.

[29] The Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project is an MoE implemented activity funded by MoE, World Bank IDA loan and an Australian aid grant. The Project provides timely and reliable grants to nearly 48,000 schools and stipends to nearly 150,000 poor students to help keep them in school, as well as support for Early Grade Reading Assessments. Additional Financing due to start in early 2017 will include a new teacher mentoring

[30] MEC is a multi-donor fund to strengthen monastic and ethnic education systems. Australia, with the United Kingdom and Denmark fund MEC.

assessments). Australia will need to work with UNESCO and UNICEF to ensure synergies between My-EQIP and their education activities.

Australia has close and constructive relationships with these key donors in the sub-sector. Australia is one of the largest donors in education and co-chair of joint Government-development partner (DP) sector working group. While DPs coordinate around MoE priorities and have a strong relationship with the Ministry; the Government and DPs are currently strengthening coordination mechanisms to better focus on implementation and monitoring the NESP, addressing policy and implementation issues, and helping Myanmar successfully access GPE funds, including ensuring broad civil society engagement. As part of this process, the Government and DPs are introducing sub-sector working groups that are chaired by the relevant Director Generals to strengthen coordination at the sub-sector level. Australia, UNESCO and UNICEF are in discussions with the Director General, DERPT, on establishing an Education Management, Capacity Development and Quality Assurance Sub-Sector Working Group over the coming months. This would help ensure coordinated support to deliver on the NESP transformation shift that "education managers at all levels apply evidence-based decision making and demand accountability for improved teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions". All Development Partners working in the sub-sector will be encouraged to join.

STRATEGIC SETTING AND RATIONALE FOR AUSTRALIAN ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC SETTING

Australia places a high importance on investing in education for all. Investing in knowledge and skills that enable young men and women to participate in the economy and contribute productively to society. Australia's development policy[31] identifies better quality education as a priority. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) education strategy[32] states Australia will take a systems-based approach, recognising that interdependencies between the different policies and activities at different levels of the system enable or constrain change. A strong quality assurance system supported by strong monitoring and evaluation is crucial and to improve systemic capacities to deliver effective and efficient services.

DFAT's Aid Investment Plan Myanmar 2015-2020 identifies education as the flagship of Australia's aid program in Myanmar[33]. At approximately AU$ 27 million per year[34], education makes up nearly 40 per cent of Australia's total aid contributions to Myanmar. Australia's education strategy in Myanmar[35] aims to improve access, completion and learning for students in Myanmar by contributing to the following outcomes:

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

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[31] Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability, 2014

[32] Strategy for Australia's aid investments in education 2015-2020

[33] The Aid Investment Plan Myanmar 2015-2020

[34] Including Australia Awards

[35] DFAT Myanmar Education Sector Investment Plan , 25 June 2015

4. Non-government school systems are strengthened, leading towards equivalency and convergence with government provision

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.

This investment directly responds to the fifth outcome. Strengthened monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and quality assurance systems will help the government improve education policy, planning and management, leading to better allocation of resources, greater education reach and equity, and increased accountability for teaching and learning outcomes. Information will also provide a feedback loop to drive initiatives in support of improved schools, teaching as well as greater inclusivity. Therefore, while this investment directly responds to the fifth outcome, over time, it should make a significant contribution to all outcomes and improve effectiveness of Australia's programs.

Equity is a cross-cutting issue that underpins all of Australia's development policies and strategies and is particularly relevant to Myanmar. Ensuring all girls and boys in Myanmar have access to a quality education is a key priority of the new NLD Government. As Myanmar develops and grows, it will be critical that education systems keep pace with society demands and provide learning opportunities for all, including the disadvantaged and those with a disability. Ensuring all children have access to a quality education will require an understanding of the nature of exclusion in Myanmar as well as a supportive policy framework and systems to measure policy turns into practice.

DFAT also promotes innovation in development, which can drive efficiencies and effectiveness, advancements in strategic M&E for the Ministry, as well as encouraging solutions to problems faced by the Ministry in addressing education quality and responding to bottlenecks. Information and Communication Technologies can also drastically reduce the cost of accessing and sharing information.[36] There is an opportunity to explore creative, innovative solutions to empower education managers to access information in real-time and make the most of what Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can offer.

RATIONALE FOR AUSTRALIAN ENGAGEMENT

The Government of Myanmar is at a critical juncture of its reform process, yet, it does not have systems in place to know whether or not the reforms are delivering the desired changes. A lack of reliable evidence informing the government on what is, or isn't working and why, could result in misdirected reforms. The MoE is aware of the problem but lacks capacity and access to expertise to address the problem.

Better data to inform the government's reform agenda is a key part of the NLD's election manifesto and has been a recurring message from senior ministry officials. Quality assurance is enshrined in the National Education Law (2014) and the Amendment to the National Education Law (2015) and features strongly in the NESP. The government has also directly requested Australia's assistance in establishing the systems identified in the NESP, including systems for assuring quality of institutions and teachers from pre-school to higher education and systems to improve information flow.[37] As outlined above, there is no other donor currently supporting (or planning to support) the MoE to strengthen its quality assurance systems to improve education quality.

[3636] Innovation for Development: A discussion of the issues and an overview of work of the OECD Director for Science, Technology and Industry, OECD, May 2012

[37] Minister for Education, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, confirmed he is seeking Australia's support to strengthening systems to monitor education reforms under the new government during his meeting with the Australian Ambassador on 27 April 2016. He also confirmed his support for the design during a briefing on 13 September 2016.

The government has already taken a number of practical steps to demonstrate its commitment to strengthening quality assurance, including allocating dedicated M&E positions in line departments and township offices – the front-line of service delivery. These positions are particularly important in helping integrate quality assurance into the management system. The Ministry has also committed funding and human resources to reforming EMIS as well as demonstrating strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation through the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project.

Myanmar has a strong basis on which to build. The institutional infrastructure exists in the form of basic data gathering and a reporting, but this needs to be strengthened and reoriented, to ensure relevant data is being collected to improve planning and management. Current practices could be made more efficient through relatively mundane changes: simplified monitoring and reporting procedures, the revision of data collection formats and the intelligent use ICT. Moreover, Myanmar is still in the early stages of reform. There is a unique opportunity to inculcate an 'evaluation culture' and evidence-informed planning early in the reform process.

The investment also complements a push for better use of data across government. President, U Htin Kyaw, is a champion for better statistics and evidence-informed policy and planning. A new Statistics Law has been drafted and will be considered by Parliament; a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and statistics policy brief are being developed and six NSDS cluster groups have been established to coordinate the provision of accurate and timely statistics across government.[38] The World Bank is currently developing a program of support to help the Government strengthen data collection and analysis at the central level, in particular through support to the Central Statistics Office. Better statistics at the central level, such as household and poverty data, when combined with education data, would allow for a much deeper analysis of the education sector within context, providing information on access and barriers to participation.

Lastly, investing in quality assurance which provides clear evidence for policy setting and allocation of resources increases transparency and accountability in a country in transition, contributing to improved stakeholder confidence and trust in the government.

INNOVATION AND PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

In the development sphere, innovation is frequently equated with ICT. The rapid expansion of mobile telephony and the emergence of wireless and satellite-based solutions for low-cost internet significantly increase the potential of using ICT for development. The spread of mobile platforms also provides new tools to collect data. Mobile phones and other mobile devices for data management have been used in the education sector for school mapping, to monitor improvements in education quality and produce school census data. Myanmar can potentially learn from the experience of other countries who are also exploring greater use of ICT and innovation in data collection and analysis and user-generated content continues to grow.

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[38] Speech by Deputy Minister of Planning and Finance at consultation meeting for the Myanmar Living Conditions Survey on 14 June 2016.

EVIDENCE-BASE/LESSONS LEARNED

M&E AND QA ARE KEY ENABLERS OF GOOD LEARNING OUTCOMES

There is a sizeable body of evidence from countries at a similar stage of development to Myanmar[39], which states that attaining societal benefits depends on people acquiring knowledge and skills through education and that attendance at school does not necessarily translate into learning. The quality of education matters for economic growth and development outcomes.

A key factor is the capacity of the education system to formulate, implement and measure policy. Quality assurance and M&E has a crucial role to play in all stages of the process. A strong quality assurance and M&E system helps to:

- inform relevant and evidence-based policy development and planning
- ensure policies are implemented on the ground as intended
- detect bottlenecks and inform adjustments needed to enhance capacities and achieve intended results; and
- review policy relevance, effectiveness and efficiency to inform further reform.[40]

Without quality assurance and M&E systems that provide reliable and timely information, these reforms would not be effective (or in some cases possible). For example, parents need reliable and timely information to hold schools accountable. Improved quality assurance and M&E create incentives for enhancing data quality, promote better-informed decision-making and encourage experimentation. With timely access to information and tight feedback mechanisms, education managers can make real-time changes.[41]

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CAN DELIVER

When Australia and the World Bank invested in the USD200 million government-led and implemented Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project in 2014, government capacity was unknown. Two years into implementation of the original four-year program, the Government has exceeded expectations and achieved nine of the 12 results-based progress indicators – demonstrating its capacity to implement complex programs at scale and on time. MoE officials have not only demonstrated a great deal of commitment; a capacity to solve problems; and public service ethic to deliver the Project, but they have wholly embraced M&E as a tool to inform project improvement. MoE officials actively use the M&E information to improve project planning and implementation - the value of which has led, in part, to MoE's request for Australian support to strengthen M&E across Myanmar's education system.

While the Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project is the most significant donor-funded project using government systems, other donor supported activities demonstrate the government's commitment, ownership and responsiveness. For example, the Australian-funded *Strengthening Teacher Education in Myanmar* is building an understanding of teacher education policy, curriculum, pedagogy and

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[39] See Hanushek and Kimko (200), Barro (2001), Hanushek and Woessmann (2008, 2012), Hanushek et al. (2010), Jamison et al. (2007), Laurini and de Carvalho Andrade (2012), UNESCO (2011) cited in Masino and Nino-Zarazua, *What works to improve the quality of learning in developing countries*, 2015; Wessal A, Wescott, C and Espíndola, C., *Delivering Better Outomes in Education: The World Bank's Experience*, IPMN Conference Paper, 2015

[40] Segone, *From Policies to Results: Developing Capacity for Country Monitoring and Evaluation Systems,* UNICEF Evaluation Working Papers, 2007

[41] Wessal, A, Wescott, C and Espindola, C , *Delivering Better Outcomes in Education: The World Bank's Experience*, IPMN Confernce Paper, 2015.

management, which has helped catalyse significant reforms to strengthen pre-service teacher education in Myanmar. Implementation has not been without its challenges. Transitioning to a new government has caused delays and capacity within the MoE to take on evidence-based education reforms remains low. However, inclusive processes and allowing time to ensure government understanding, decision-making and ownership has allowed significant progress to be made against STEM outcomes.[42]

APPROACHES THAT WILL WORK

Research indicates that **national ownership is the best strategy to ensure policy relevance** and use of evidence-based decision-making. Partner countries should own and lead the development of their own education monitoring and evaluation system, while donors and international organisations should support sustainable national monitoring and evaluation capacity development[43]. It is not only a practical requirement for success but is important on a more fundamental level – local actors know what they need, how it can best be developed and what support they need from development partners to achieve it.[44]

Donor efforts to assist in building national or system-level M&E capacity have increased over the last twenty years.[45] There is a remarkable consistency of lessons learnt, with the utilisation of M&E information central to the performance and sustainability of all M&E systems. An M&E system must produce information and evaluation findings which are valuable to key stakeholders, and are used to address practical problems and improve government performance. Better interaction between evidence providers and evidence users in policy and practice and creating strong incentives for M&E to be done well and for M&E information to be used are important elements of the demand side. It is also important to build reliable ministry data systems to ensure the data is credible, timely, and consistent.[46]

Strategies need to be comprehensive and integrated, addressing both technical and political elements.[47] Capacity development goes beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills at the individual level to include organisations, sectors, systems and the broader enabling environment. To be sustained, a comprehensive capacity development response must draw from relevant national reforms; link to national and local plans, processes, budgets and systems; and engage with multiple stakeholders.[48] Many factors that influence capacity development are hidden, informal or poorly understood, including relationships, structures, patterns of authority, resources, cultures, and politics. Understanding the country context, and the political economy, including use of in-country resources and linkages and relationships between different levels of the organisations will strengthen capacity development outcomes.[49]

Most capacity-building strategies continue to place considerable emphasis on the provision of training and technical assistance (TA) to develop capacity. However, evidence shows that technical back-

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[42] Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project Progress Report September 2015-November 2016, UNESCO

[43] Segone, M. *Country-led Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: Better Evidence, Better Policies, Better Development Results,* UNICEF Evaluation Working Papers, 2009

[44] Pearson 2011a, p. 8; 2011b, p. 16 in GSCRC Helpdesk Report, *Current Thinking on Capacity Development,* Lucas B, 2013

[45] Mackay, Keith, *How to Build M&E Systems to Support Better Government*, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2007

[46] Segone,.,*Country-led Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: Better Evidence, Better Policies, Better Development Results,* UNICEF Evaluation Working Papers, 2009; Mackay, Keith, *How to Build M&E Systems to Support Better Government*, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2007.

[47] Pearson, 2011a, p.12 in GSGRC Helpdesk Report, *Current Thinking on Capacity Development* (compiled by Lucas B, 2013),

[48]Segone, *From policies to results: developing capacities for country monitoring and evaluations systems*, UNICEF Evaluation Working Papers, 2007

Mackay, S. (2011), How to build M&E systems to better support government. World Bank

[49] Baser and Morgan, 2008, p 20-12 in GSCRC Helpdesk Report, *Current Thinking on Capacity Development,* Lucas B, 2013.

stopping to fill gaps or training alone does not always produce the desired result. It is essential that TA provide advice and support, with a focus on knowledge management, coaching and mentoring through feedback, and on-the-job skills development.[50] A blend of approaches which include TA, joint projects, and exposure to what works such as the use of M&E tools in other contexts, is needed for effective capacity development.

There is increasing recognition that capacity development in complex systems, including fragile and conflict affected contexts, can be better guided by adaptation and communication. Big, complex strategies are achieving limited results[51] and **experts suggest starting small and building on functioning expertise** where it exists, rather than setting up entirely new structures. [52] With many changes happening in the Myanmar's education sector simultaneously, taking an incremental problem-driven approach is more likely to be adopted and be effective than the imposition of an external ready-made system. 'Learning initiatives' designed to respond to particular problems can generate general lessons that can be integrated into program implementation. An iterative approach also provides the flexibility to respond to contextual changes and build on lessons learned to continually improve.

INVESTMENT DESCRIPTION

The NESP establishes that for students to achieve good learning outcomes, schools and educational institutions must deliver quality education. The NESP proposes that for this to happen MoE must have monitoring, evaluation, quality assurance and research capability, including policies, systems, procedures, capacity and practices to achieve, maintain and continue to improve the quality of education services in Myanmar. The NESP also recognises the education focused integrity bodies, the NEPC and the NAQAC, which provide independent assurance to Parliament of MoE's performance.

This investment proposes to support the design and development of an education quality improvement system (EQIS) that strengthens quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research capability within MoE. We describe these key terms below and outline what an EQIS system in MoE might look like. If requested, the investment would also provide support to the NEPC and NAQAC in their functions. The nature of the support would be determined in the first six months of implementation.

Quality Assurance - is a process to assure the quality of education services against pre-determined education quality standards. The NESP provides some detail in relation to establishing a Ministry of Education Quality Assurance System (MQAS) which would have policies, procedures and practices to achieve, maintain and continue to improve the quality of education services across the sub-sector areas. In particular, the NESP seeks to establish separate quality assurance systems for preschool, alternative, basic, higher and TVET education, including establishing a national school-based quality assurance system, competency standards for teachers, and a Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency and National Qualifications Framework.

Monitoring – is a continuous process to track progress of an activity or service against planned results using quantitative and qualitative indicators. Monitoring is used to improve the performance of an activity during implementation and is usually the responsibility of the agency implementing the activity. Monitoring can occur at activity, sub-sector and sector level. For example, monitoring would also include measuring progress against departmental or national plans, which would draw data from a

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[51]UNDP 2012, p 32 in GSCRC Helpdesk Report, *Capacity Development at the National Level in Fragile and Conflict Affected States,* Lucas, B, 2014.

[52] Baser, 2011a, pg 21; Petersen & Engbert-Pdersen, 2013, pg 9 in GSCRC Helpdesk Report, *Capacity Development at the National Level in Fragile and Conflict Affected States,* Lucas, B, 2014

range of sources including quality assurance systems, activity monitoring and/or EMIS. The monitoring data would be disaggregated by gender, disability, ethnicity, location etc. to provide a nuanced understanding of performance.

Evaluation – is a periodic and systematic review to make judgements on the overall impact, relevance, efficiency and/or effectiveness of an activity or service. Evaluation is often used to inform policy and planning decisions, including "are we doing the right thing?" or in making adjustments to the current system. . Since it is periodic, evaluation is also suited to review the social impacts of a program, such as access and outcomes by sex, disability, origin or other demographic. Evaluations are usually led by an evaluator independent of the staff implementing the activity. Evaluations can occur at activity, sub-sector and sector level and draw on existing monitoring and quality assurance data, in addition to data from the evaluation itself by means of surveys, interviews, and other data collection techniques.

Research - refers to a rigorous and systematic investigation to establish facts and reach new conclusions in a particular area of interest, often to solve a problem or influence practice. Research fills prioritised knowledge gaps and can be used to inform policy, planning and management decisions. Research can be undertaken internally or commissioned externally. Examples include baseline studies, the identification of relevant best practice, demographic studies or an investigation in any aspect of education, such as teaching methods, student learning, community views, or barriers to universal access to education and to good learning outcomes for all.

The objective of developing an EQIS within the Ministry of Education would be to assess the performance and quality of education services against education performance expectations and quality standards, fill knowledge gaps and provide recommendations to improve the quality of education. The EQIS would also produce outputs to inform decision making, to enable learning, and support improvements to the sector.

The EQIS would be structured in line with the NESP and the education sector's different levels of decision making and influence, primarily at the national sector and sub-sector levels and the sub-national levels (state/region, district, township, cluster, school, community). Stakeholders at each level would have different information needs and roles in an education quality improvement system. For example what a teacher would do with comparative data on student/school/region performance is different to what a departmental manager would do with the same data. Figure one outlines current key stakeholders in the system and the potential role they would undertake in an EQIS. While this investment primarily focuses on building the capability of stakeholders within the Ministry of Education, stakeholders in Parliament, other Ministries, or community level are included as they play an important role in setting directions and holding the Ministry of Education to account for effective and inclusive service delivery.
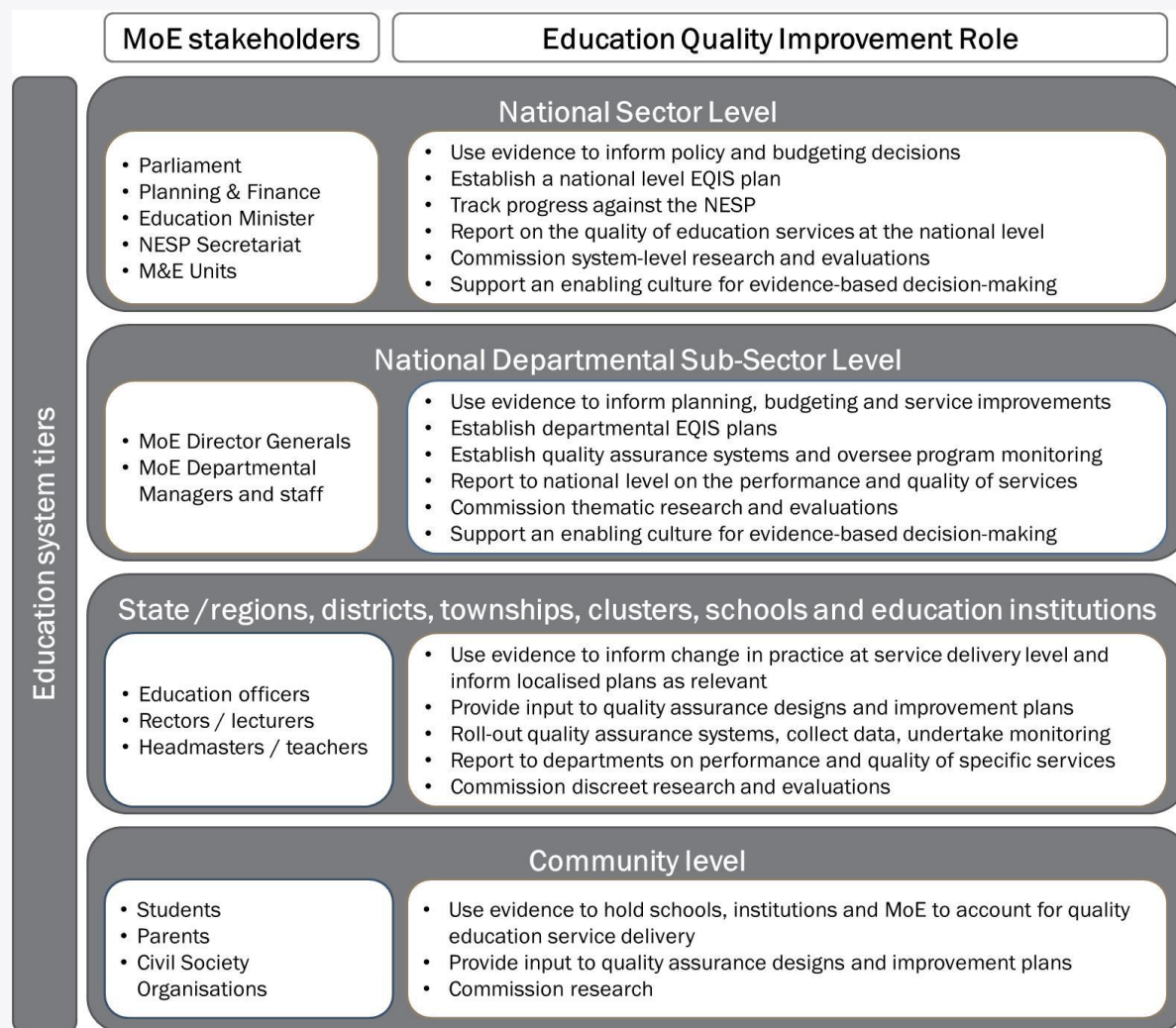
MoE stakeholders	Education Quality Improvement Role
National Sector Level	
• Parliament • Planning & Finance • Education Minister • NESP Secretariat • M&E Units	• Use evidence to inform policy and budgeting decisions • Establish a national level EQIS plan • Track progress against the NESP • Report on the quality of education services at the national level • Commission system-level research and evaluations • Support an enabling culture for evidence-based decision-making
National Departmental Sub-Sector Level	
• MoE Director Generals • MoE Departmental Managers and staff	• Use evidence to inform planning, budgeting and service improvements • Establish departmental EQIS plans • Establish quality assurance systems and oversee program monitoring • Report to national level on the performance and quality of services • Commission thematic research and evaluations • Support an enabling culture for evidence-based decision-making
State / regions, districts, townships, clusters, schools and education institutions	
• Education officers • Rectors / lecturers • Headmasters / teachers	• Use evidence to inform change in practice at service delivery level and inform localised plans as relevant • Provide input to quality assurance designs and improvement plans • Roll-out quality assurance systems, collect data, undertake monitoring • Report to departments on performance and quality of specific services • Commission discreet research and evaluations
Community level	
• Students • Parents • Civil Society Organisations	• Use evidence to hold schools, institutions and MoE to account for quality education service delivery • Provide input to quality assurance designs and improvement plans • Commission research

(Left vertical label: Education system tiers)

Figure 1. Education stakeholders and their potential role in an education quality improvement system

WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

In four years it is envisaged that MOE would have anational education quality improvement system in place, which is owned by key stakeholders, with sufficient capacity to maintain and sustain its use. EQIS institutional and management structures would be in place with clear roles and responsibilities. A national EQIS Plan would be established that outlined a shared vision, performance objectives and national strategies to build system capacity to undertake quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research in line with NESP. The Plan would guide departmental EQIS plans, which would outline how departments would contribute to relevant national performance objectives and respond to each department's own unique information needs.

The departmental plans would in turn inform localized plans (as relevant) and data collection processes and reporting at the sub-national level. At each level, data would be aggregated and relevant staff would have capacity to analyse and report on progress at that level, eventually culminating in national-level analysis on progress against the NESP and other departmental performance objectives. Managers at their respective levels would increasingly use the information generated from the system to inform

policy, planning, budgeting, program and/or service delivery improvements, directing resources to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Managers would support an enabling culture, creating demand for information and empowering officials at lower-levels to use information to make changes to improve in teaching and learning for all boys and girls, irrespective of backgrounds, disability or location.

It is further expected that at least one department would have designed, developed and implemented a sub-sector quality assurance system, including: developing standards in consultation with key sub-national and community stakeholders; developing guidelines to pilot and roll-out the system; using monitoring to inform system improvements; and taking it to scale. Depending on MoE demand and resources, other departments may have progressed the design and implementation of their quality assurance systems.

The education integrity bodies, NEPC and NAQAC, would play a constructive external quality assurance role in strengthening the quality of education in Myanmar.

THE INVESTMENT - MY-EQIP

My-EQIP is a government program that aims to *improve education policy, planning, budgeting and management* by building an effective EQIS that MoE has the capacity to maintain and use. The program will provide high level strategic **advice** to MoE leadership on the design, implementation and improvement of an EQIS. It will **support** to staff and other stakeholders to develop and implement the EQIS plans and activities. MoE staff will ultimately be responsible for implementing their EQIS plans and for using the EQIS outputs (results and recommendations). My-EQIP will also **engage** with the Minister and other relevant stakeholders to agree on EQIS institutional and management structures; and engage with NEPC and NAQAC to agree and determine nature of My-EQIP support in strengthening external quality assurance.

The advisory function of My-EQIP will include:

- Advising on the scope, purpose and approach for sector and departmental EQIS plans

- Advising on implementing the EQIS plans

- Advising on using EQIS outputs (results, findings, etc.), including management and use of data disaggregated by gender, disability, origin or other characteristics.

- Advising on how to transition from the current quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research effort to an EQIS

- Advising on the scope, role and functions of the EQIS institutional and management structures

- Advising NEPC and NAQAC on external quality assurance, if requested.

The support function of My-EQIP will include:

- Support for EQIS planning at all levels

- Support to the M&E Units, NESP Secretariat, Departments and other relevant ministerial staff to clarify their scope of work and role in relation to the EQIS

- Support to develop and implement EQIS plans, including providing technical assistance to design and implement quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research systems and activities; funding pilots and study tours, and other support as required.

- Support to the NEPC and NAQAC to strengthen external quality assurance, if requested.

IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

My-EQIP will be guided by the following principles:

- Strengths-based - the program will build on existing systems, processes and practices where they exist, rather than setting up new structures

- Demand and problem driven – the program will be guided by the needs of the Ministry and focus on locally defined problems to ensure relevance and ownership

- Innovative– the program will seek to use locally-appropriate innovative solutions to deliver an effective and efficient EQIS that can help Myanmar make up lost ground

- Experiential – the program will seek to foster a learning culture where local solutions are tried and supported by real-time monitoring to inform constant improvement

- Systems-based – the program will link to national and local reforms, plans, processes, budgets and systems; as well as seek to strengthen and create vertical and horizontal synergies to improve teaching and learning within the education system itself

- Adaptive and agile – the program will adjust as necessary to the varying levels of EQIS maturity and staff capability and capacity across the education sector

- Participatory – the program will engage a wide range of stakeholders to ensure relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and to ensure that the program benefits all users of the education services including women, men, boys, girls, people living with disabilities and ethnic groups

- Internationally benchmarked – the program will stay current with global education quality improvement developments (including models, debates and digital approaches) to ensure Myanmar's systems are modern, holistic and manageable

- Iterative – the program will regularly review its short and medium term outcomes, focus, priorities and activities to manage for and take advantage of political, social, economic, technological and any other relevant changes

PROGRAM LOGIC NARRATIVE

My-EQIP aims **to *improve education policy, planning, budgeting, and management*** by achieving the following three **outcomes**:

1. MoE has improved education quality improvement systems at all levels
2. MoE has improved capacity (sufficient capable staff) to maintain and use the EQIS
3. MoE has an improved culture of learning where more decision makers at all levels are empowered and use EQIS information to make decisions

My-EQIP argues that **if** the MoE has improved education quality improvement systems to produce relevant and timely information **and** has improved capacity (sufficient capable staff) to maintain and use the system **and** MoE has a culture of learning **where** decision makers are empowered and use this information to make decisions **then** MoE will experience improvements in the quality of education policy, management, planning, and budgeting. It is expected these outcomes **will contribute** to

improved education service delivery and teaching and subsequently improved access, completion and learning outcomes for all boys and girls across Myanmar.

PHASED PROGRAM APPROACH

My-EQIP has been designed to enable on-going refinements to its design to maintain flexibility and react to the political, economic and social context. My-EQIP will be a phased program, delivered over three phases. Rather than map out a full program logic where the activities and causal pathways are clearly defined, program logic for a phased program articulates the broader goals, end of program outcomes (EOPO), and the activities and outcomes of the first phase. These are the elements that are known, more predictable and have a strong rationale. Subsequent phases are more loosely defined, with broad outcome statements that describe the likely outcomes. After each phase is completed, the program logic for the next phase will be reviewed and redefined. Given that My-EQIP is a four year program and the rapidly evolving political and policy context, three phases are proposed.

Phase 1

Phase 1 is an inception phase to establish the program team, conduct an in-depth political-economy analysis of the sub-sector and to build relationships with MoE and other key stakeholders. These two activities will lead to:

1) High quality and useful knowledge outputs including:
    a. a detailed understanding of existing institutions, systems, practices, stakeholders and decision makers related to education quality improvements
    b. a good understanding of the preferred governance arrangements for My-EQIP
    c. a good understanding of social-demographics and stakeholder interest and regard for inclusion aspects of the program
    d. clarity on the entry points to strengthen the EQIS based on the government's priorities and the incentives and barriers to change
    e. reviewed program logic (including end of program outcomes)
    f. identified investment criteria to assist My-EQIP in prioritising its effort, including consideration of how to promote inclusion or equity
    g. prioritised government requests for assistance from My-EQIP
    h. an understanding of the role of NEPC and NAQAC and their perceived role of My-EQIP

2) More education officials are informed about and understand the role and value of My-EQIP

These activities are expected to build broader awareness, credibility and buy-in with relevant stakeholders about My-EQIP and its value; and inform the development of a strategic and practical My-EQIP Phase 2 plan. It is expected that DGs and other relevant departmental and MoE staff will be involved in My-EQIP planning for Phase 2 and, likewise, will involve My-EQIP in relevant education sector planning and projects.

At the end of Phase 1, it is expected that My-EQIP governance arrangements (including roles, responsibilities, governance processes, decision making powers, how these fit into MoE) will be confirmed and established and a My-EQIP implementation plan for Phase 2 will be agreed with MoE senior management. The implementation plan will outline how to develop an EQIS that strengthens

quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research capability within MoE to improve education policy, planning, budgeting and management. It will include:

- Rapid socio-demographic analysis or GIS mapping that provides advice on how the Eqis can track equity and exclusion issues

- a capacity development plan (identifying staff and key knowledge areas and skills)

- a strategy to develop an EQIS that clarifies roles and responsibilities of the relevant institutions, identifies focus areas within the sector, and prioritises EQIS components to be developed

- revised My-EQIP program logic (if applicable), including a review of priority areas, activities, outputs, performance expectations, timelines, resources and governance arrangements, as well as clarification on the role and scale of My-EQIP support to the NEPC and/or NESQC.

Ideally during Phase 1, senior management will agree on EQIS institutional and management arrangements more broadly. However, given a number of new institutional structures proposed in the NESP have not been formed yet (eg NESP Secretariat or Program Management Teams) or roles and responsibilities of structures established under the new structure have not been clarified (eg new M&E Units), it may take longer than the first phase for Government to achieve this. At a minimum, however, appropriate governance arrangements for My-EQIP will be determined during Phase 1. These will need to be sufficiently flexible to evolve with the political, economic and social context.

In line with the My-EQIP's implementation principles, the program will be demand driven and focus its resources in the areas within MoE that are either most receptive to change; and/or have existing elements that can be built on; and/or are most in need; and/or likely to have the most benefits. Criteria to guide My-EQIP activities will be developed during this first phase.

Phase 1 is expected to last six months. If the program steering committee (SC), however, determines more time is needed to ensure government ownership and buy-in, then it will be possible to extend the phase as needed.

The theory of change for Phase 1 rests on two key assumptions:

- that MoE and DERPT will follow through on its commitment to My-EQIP, including providing a Program Director (PD), staff time, supporting staff and funds
- that the government appointed director for My-EQIP will be sufficiently influential to broker key relationships with education stakeholders.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will focus primarily on working with departments in developing and implementing EQIS plans; and working with EQIS champions to design and pilot new and/or improved EQIS components and activities. This phase will be important in establishing a strong My-EQIP reputation and for growing MoE interest and commitment to EQIS across the sector. MY-EQIP may also support NEPC and NAQAC to undertake external quality assurance activities during this phase. Key activities in this phase are expected to include:

- Targeted engagement with Government officials and DGs to ensure continued commitment to resourcing My-EQIP and support agreed EQIS institutional arrangements
- Targeted technical support to MoE to assist with national and departmental level EQIS planning
- Targeted capacity development (knowledge and skills) of government officials and employees

- Technical and funding support for prioritised EQIS projects
- Research pilots to investigate factors underpinning poorer access or learning outcomes for specific groups.

These activities would lead to MoE continuing to resource (people and funds) the development of EQIS; support DGs to develop and maintain their drive and commitment to the EQIS planning process and ensure that prioritised and requested projects are delivered. The exposure of government officials and employees to either the capacity building, planning or delivery of prioritised/requested projects would increase their interest (understanding and use for EQIS outputs) and skills (including commissioning, planning, data collection, analysis, reporting and use of EQIS outputs) in EQIS.

At the end of Phase 2, it is expected that EQIS institutional and management arrangements are in place and have strong leadership; and the supply and demand for EQIS outputs (data, results, recommendations, research reports, etc.) would have increased. It is expected that this will happen because of the increased quantity, quality and usefulness of EQIS outputs and more government officials and employees having access to and use for EQIS outputs. Even a small improvement to the supply and demand for EQIS outputs would demonstrate a significant capacity and cultural shift.

In line with the My-EQIP's design principles the program will be iterative, inclusive, demand driven and adaptive.

Phase 2 is expected to last 18 months. If the program steering committee, however, determines more time is needed, then it will be possible to extend the phase as needed.

The theory of change for this phase rests on the following assumptions:

- that the Phase 1 was effective in building good working relationships between My-EQIP and relevant staff in at least some departments

- that MoE dedicates resources (staff and funds) to EQIS design, implementation and capacity building

- that direction provided from the top (Minister, DGs and other relevant senior management staff) is executed throughout the layers of government management

- that technical assistance with the right skills and the ability to work effectively in the Myanmar context can be contracted

- that the managing contractor will be able to access and deploy appropriate and effective technical assistance in a timely fashion.

Phase 3

Phase 3 will build on the gains and lessons from Phase 2 and seek to reach more of the education sector by rolling out tested EQIS activities. My-EQIP proposes to use similar approaches to activating change as in Phase 2. These include strategic engagement, facilitated planning, capacity building activities, requesting and managing technical assistance, undertaking and reporting on EQIS activities, and responding to government requests. In line with the My-EQIP's design principles, the program will be iterative, inclusive, demand driven and adaptive.

Phase 3 is expected to last 2 years. If the program steering committee, however, determines more time is needed, then it will be possible to extend the phase as needed.

The theory of change for this phase rests on the following assumptions:

- that My-EQIP has been sufficiently agile to evolve with the education sector and any contextual changes
- that My-EQIP was able to demonstrate value to key influencers in the education sector
- that My-EQIP is able to access relevant and appropriate expertise in a timely way
- that sufficient influential stakeholders in the education sector remain interested in the EQIS.
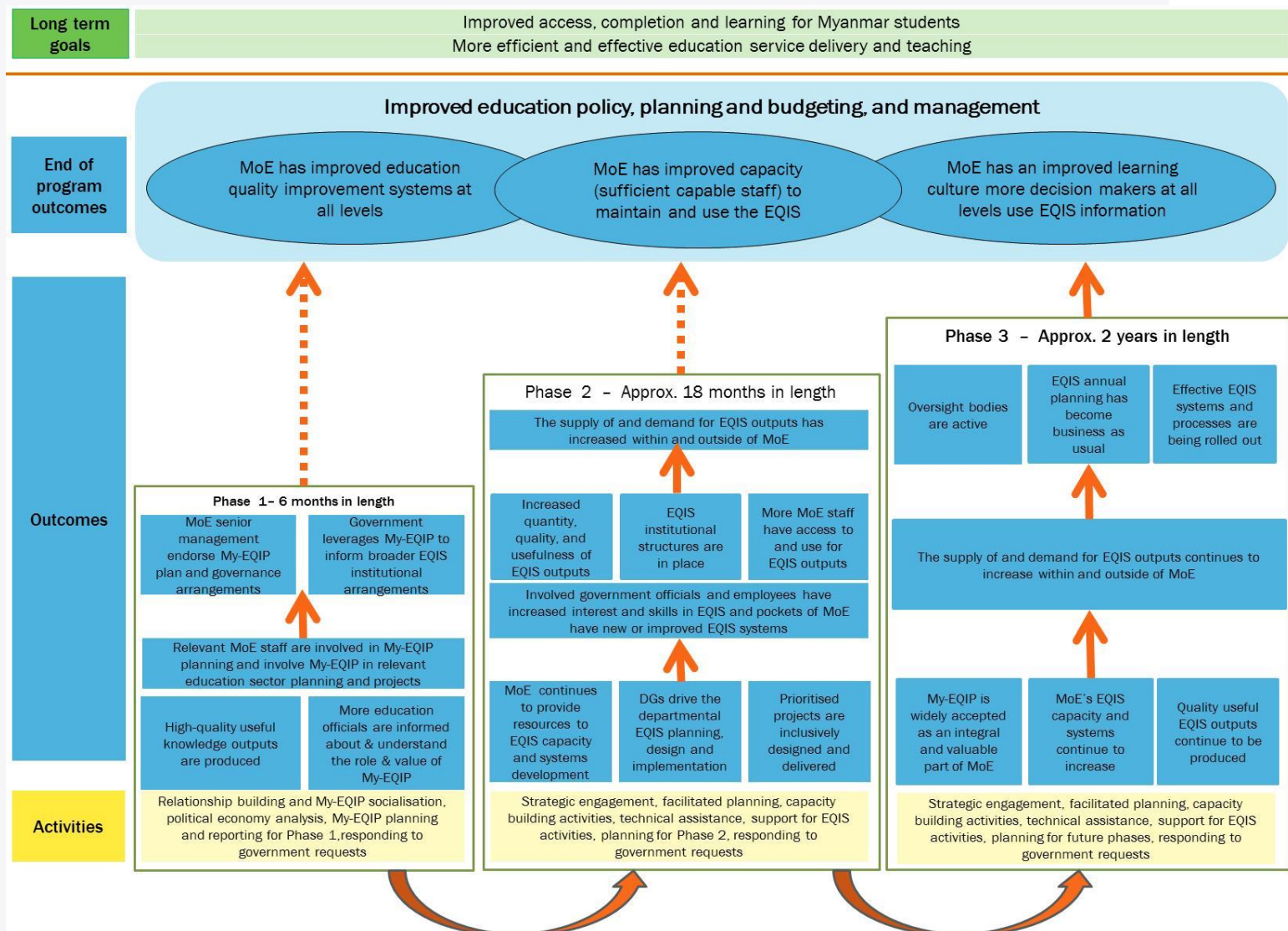
Program Logic

Long term goals	Improved access, completion and learning for Myanmar students More efficient and effective education service delivery and teaching

End of program outcomes

Improved education policy, planning and budgeting, and management

- MoE has improved education quality improvement systems at all levels
- MoE has improved capacity (sufficient capable staff) to maintain and use the EQIS
- MoE has an improved learning culture more decision makers at all levels use EQIS information

Outcomes

Phase 1– 6 months in length

- MoE senior management endorse My-EQIP plan and governance arrangements
- Government leverages My-EQIP to inform broader EQIS institutional arrangements

Relevant MoE staff are involved in My-EQIP planning and involve My-EQIP in relevant education sector planning and projects

- High-quality useful knowledge outputs are produced
- More education officials are informed about & understand the role & value of My-EQIP

Phase 2 – Approx. 18 months in length

The supply of and demand for EQIS outputs has increased within and outside of MoE

- Increased quantity, quality, and usefulness of EQIS outputs
- EQIS institutional structures are in place
- More MoE staff have access to and use for EQIS outputs

Involved government officials and employees have increased interest and skills in EQIS and pockets of MoE have new or improved EQIS systems

- MoE continues to provide resources to EQIS capacity and systems development
- DGs drive the departmental EQIS planning, design and implementation
- Prioritised projects are inclusively designed and delivered

Phase 3 – Approx. 2 years in length

- Oversight bodies are active
- EQIS annual planning has become business as usual
- Effective EQIS systems and processes are being rolled out

The supply of and demand for EQIS outputs continues to increase within and outside of MoE

- My-EQIP is widely accepted as an integral and valuable part of MoE
- MoE's EQIS capacity and systems continue to increase
- Quality useful EQIS outputs continue to be produced

Activities

Relationship building and My-EQIP socialisation, political economy analysis, My-EQIP planning and reporting for Phase 1,responding to government requests

Strategic engagement, facilitated planning, capacity building activities, technical assistance, support for EQIS activities, planning for Phase 2, responding to government requests

Strategic engagement, facilitated planning, capacity building activities, technical assistance, support for EQIS activities, planning for future phases, responding to government requests

Figure 2. My-EQIP program logic model

DELIVERY APPROACH

MODALITIES

The following ranges of modalities were considered to deliver My-EQIP.

Use of partner government systems

While using partner government systems is one of the most sustainable and effective modalities in delivering aid in certain contexts, it is not a suitable modality for My-EQIP at this point in time:

- MoE's quality assurance systems are in a very early stage of development, with key tools essential to using government systems are not yet in place. For example, the sector strategic plan is yet to be approved, the institutional and management arrangements are still under being established; and capacity is weak.

- My-EQIP will require a large amount of procurement. A recent procurement risk assessment identified a number weaknesses including: the absence of a national Procurement Law; limited procurement experience; a lack of transparency, integrity and consistency in the tendering process; and poorly coordinated procurement plan and budget cycles. The World Bank is considering undertaking a deeper fiduciary risk assessment and providing some public financial management support over 2017, which along with the appropriate level risk controls in place, may make it possible to explore use of government systems in future years.

- MoE 's plans to build an education quality improvement system that covers a wide-range of sub-sectors – from early childhood to higher education. Different sub-sectors will require different types of quality assurance, and subsequently, very different types of technical support. The range of expertise needed includes the many different types of specialisations within education, but also includes the different specialisations within the field of monitoring and evaluation, organisational development, and cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion and conflict sensitivity. This need for disparate types of assistance does not lend itself to using Myanmar's government systems. Rather, the focus should be on strengthening MoE's capacity to build and use its quality assurance systems, not in procuring the relevant expertise required to do so.

Using a multilateral partner

There are three primary reasons Australia is not using a multilateral to deliver My-EQIP:

- Outside of the World Bank, there are no multilateral partners that have the capacity or willingness to deliver the program. UNESCO is the only partner working in the sub-sector through its small-scale assistance to develop the Education Management Information System, however, it doesn't have the capacity to provide the breadth or depth of assistance required to deliver My-EQIP. While UNICEF has provided support for information systems at township level, performance issues preclude them as a viable option. The Asian Development Bank is focused on secondary and TVET education.

- Using the World Bank could initially be seen as a viable option since they are already successfully delivering Australia's largest education program in Myanmar. However, at 50 per cent of the education budget, there is a need to spread the risk through diversification.

- Multilaterals typically have quite cumbersome contracting procedures, making them less nimble in providing the flexible and timely type of support My-EQIP requires.

Government implementation with bilateral support

The Government of Myanmar will own and drive My-EQIP, including identifying priorities and implementing activities. To support this, DFAT will directly contract an Evaluation Capacity Building Specialist to be co-located in the MoE to build capacity and foster ownership of My-EQIP. In addition, DFAT will procure a managing contractor to provide support services and timely, high-quality and relevant inputs as directed by the Program Director. Further information on roles and responsibilities are provided below.

DFAT will contract the ECB specialist in early 2017 to start implementation of My-EQIP, while DFAT tenders for and negotiates with a managing contractor. This approach is in response to MoE's request to start My-EQIP as soon as practical. It is expected there will be up to a maximum of six months between the ECB specialist and managing contractor start dates. Phase 1 has been designed so MoE and the ECB specialist can implement My-EQIP without additional technical support.

This model is proposed for the following reasons:

- Holding the government to account for program delivery, while holding the ECB specialist and managing contractor to account for improved capacity and appropriate delivery of high-quality inputs will strengthen MoE's ownership and program sustainability.

- Providing bilateral support in such a cross-cutting and critical sub-sector will strengthen Australia's standing as a lead donor in the sector. It will also provide better and real-time information on a range of sector issues to inform our broader education program and help identify new entry points to strengthen our relationship with government.

- Given MoE's capacity, a co-located ECB specialist will be able to provide responsive support as well as an on-going coaching and mentoring to MoE officials. Embedding the ECB specialist will also strengthen their relationships with MoE counterparts and understanding of the political-economy, both of which will be essential to effectively support the program.

- Managing contractors are a low-risk and effective modality in providing flexible and responsive support services, including timely and relevant procurement and administrative oversight of technical expertise; program financial management and logistical support. In an iterative program, the ability to procure relevant assistance of sufficient quality in a timely manner is extremely important. Moreover, fiduciary risks are low.

- Engaging the ECB Specialist and managing contractor under separate contracts enables the ECB specialist to support the Program Director to demand high-quality and relevant inputs without a conflict of interest. It will also provide Australia with more direct influence over the quality of the program.

RESOURCES

The total budget for the program is AUD 20 million over four years (approximately USD 14.3 million[53]), including costs associated with the ECB Specialist. Program costs will largely be expended through the Innovation Fund.

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[53] Based on DFAT Budget Exchange Rate 2016-17

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that the Government of Myanmar will contribute significant resources (both human and financial) to implement My-EQIP. The Minister of Education has confirmed the appointment of a Program Director from DERPT, who has subsequently appointed a Program Manager and two additional staff to help implement Phase 1 of My-EQIP. Senior management and other MoE staff are expected to participate in the planning processes identified in Phase 1 and Phase 2, through which joint budgets and resource plans will be developed clarifying both MoE and My-EQIP expenditure. Given this, the timing of the planning processes will align with MoE's budget processes so as to ensure MoE can incorporate EQIS activities into their budget.

As DFAT's first bilateral investment with the Ministry of Education, Australia will be heavily engaged in the initial years of implementation. DFAT and DERPT have agreed DFAT will hire a local engaged staff to be based in Nay Pyi Taw who will play a support role to the ECB specialist, including translation and other support as required. It is expected the DFAT LE staff member would spend up to 50 per cent of their time on My-EQIP and the other 50 per cent on monitoring Australia's other programs, deepening Australia's relationship with the MoE and strengthening education sector coordination – all of which complement and strengthen each other. Australia's First Secretary (Education) in Yangon will play an oversight role with weekly trips to Nay Pyi Taw, as well as join My-EQIP meetings with senior management and attend My-EQIP workshops as relevant. Australia's First Secretary will sit on the Technical Working Group and Australia's Counsellor (Economic and Development) will sit on the program Steering Committee. DFAT staff will draw on its education, M&E, gender equality and social inclusion advisers, as appropriate, for technical advice on outputs, for support to demonstration models, and in undertaking monitoring missions and reviews. DFAT will also ensure that it convenes regular exchange between My-EQIP and its other programs, including discrete aspects such as developments in M&E and inclusion.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Government of Myanmar will own and implement My-EQIP. My-EQIP will be led by an influential MoE Program Director who is accountable to a Government-led Steering Committee. Departments will be responsible for identifying and implementing My-EQIP activities, in line with planning processes. International support will be focused on building MoE's capacity to effectively plan and implement My-EQIP activities.

The agreement underpinning this investment will be a Subsidiary Arrangement under the existing *Australia-Myanmar Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Development Cooperation*. This will be agreed before the Program begins. It is expected to broadly define the purposes of the support, set out its main objectives and priorities, the financial commitment, and outline the management and governance arrangements.

The proposed governance and management arrangements are summarised below. These arrangements will be finalised during Program inception to ensure they align with the priorities of both Governments and the evolving institutional framework associated with the MoE restructure, the NESP, the NEPC and its committees.

The management arrangements for My-EQIP are as follows:

1. The MoE-appointed My-EQIP Program Director (Deputy Director General) is accountable for effective program delivery and reports to the program Steering Committee (including DFAT).

2. The directly contracted ECB specialist is accountable for building MoE capacity for effective program delivery and fostering ownership to the My-EQIP Program. The ECB specialist reports to the Program Director and DFAT. DFAT, in consultation with the Program Director, will manage the performance of the ECB specialist and hold her/him to account for effective delivery of responsibilities.

3. The directly contracted managing contractor is accountable for timely, relevant and high-quality support services and inputs and reports to the My-EQIP Program Director and DFAT. DFAT, in consultation with the Program Director, will manage the performance of the managing contractor and hold her/him to account for effective delivery of responsibilities.

The governance arrangements are outlined in Figure 3. Orange arrows reflect the reporting lines, dashed arrows reflect engagement in a capacity building role and black arrows reflect the flow of through to departments, M&E units and the sub-national level.
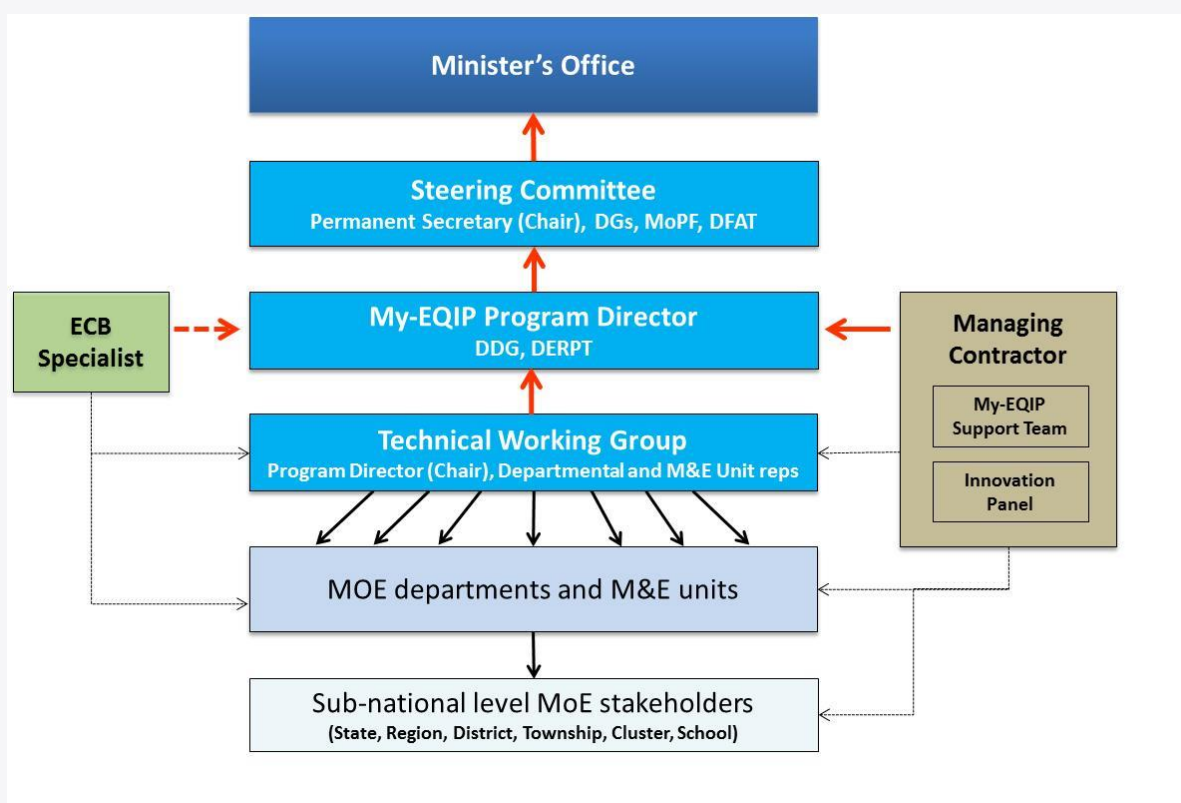

Figure 3. My-EQIP governance model

The respective roles and responsibilities of the key governance structures and players are as follows:

Education Quality Steering Committee

It is proposed that a joint steering committee (SC) will lead My-EQIP. The SC will be chaired by the MoE Permanent Secretary, or his delegate. SC members will include the Directors General of the

relevant Departments receiving My-EQIP support, relevant senior MoE officials leading education reform, and senior representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and DFAT. The SC should convene twice a year, at times which fit the MoE planning and budget cycle, most likely in May and November. The My-EQIP reporting calendar will be aligned with SC Meetings, so that draft Annual Reports and EQIS Plans can be tabled and discussed at these meetings.

The functions of SC related to My-EQIP will include:

- Strategic direction setting and leadership of My-EQIP
- Approval of activities funded through the Innovation Fund, including as reflected in the departmental EQIS Plans and budgets to ensure they align to Myanmar's education reform priorities
- Tracking of progress and results against activities in the EQIS Plans, including recognising achievements and identifying challenges and necessary follow-up
- Approval of changes to implementation
- Decision-making regarding emergent issues and drawdowns of unallocated amounts from the Innovation Fund
- Representation and advocacy of My-EQIP to key stakeholders.

My-EQIP Program Director

DERPT, which has the lead coordinating role for quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research throughout the Ministry, has nominated a Deputy Director General to take on the role of My-EQIP Program Director. The Program Director will be accountable for effective program delivery in line with Steering Committee decisions. A key Program Director role will be relationship building, liaising with all stakeholders, fostering linkages with key institutional structures (eg NESP Secretariat, M&E Units), and Departmental Directors-General to support coordination and implementation of My-EQIP funded activities. They will ensure that My-EQIP principles and Theory of Change underpins all activities to the greatest extent possible, and will anticipate and manage risk. They will also chair the Technical Working Group; coordinate submission of departmental EQIS plans to the SC; prepare meeting papers and Annual Reports to the SC (with the support of the ECB); and support the Chair in the running of the SC (e.g. coordination of the agenda, briefing ECB).

Technical Working Group

The Steering Committee will appoint a Technical Working Group (TWG), chaired by the My-EQIP Program Director, and comprising the ECB specialist and representatives of MoE departments, DFAT and the managing contractor. TWG members will operate at working level to ensure that My-EQIP is implemented in accordance with agreed plans, values and standards. The group should be focused and decisive. Meetings will be quarterly (or more often if required). Each member should nominate an alternate, who can be briefed to represent them at meetings, should members be absent.

Functions of the TWG will include: ensuring Steering Committee decisions are implemented; overseeing Program progress including drawdowns from Innovation Fund; troubleshooting any issues; analysis of specific My-EQIP research findings and innovations for presentation to the Steering Committee; and keeping the SC informed of major issues or risks.

The Managing Contractor will provide secretariat services to the TWG.

Evaluation Capacity Building Specialist

The ECB specialist will provide a support and mentoring role, helping build MoE capacity and fostering ownership of My-EQIP. The ECB specialist will support the Program Director and MoE to deliver an effective program in line with Steering Committee decisions, including helping the Program Director coordinate departmental EQIS plans, prepare meeting documents, My-EQIP reporting and provide leadership to the SC. Key activities will be guided by outcomes in the theory of change and likely include: support MoE senior management in clarifying EQIS institutional roles and responsibilities (as appropriate); run inception workshops; help the Program Director and DERPT establish and implement a process to assess current quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and research processes and data systems; support departments in developing their EQIS plans; act as an adviser/mentor to the Program Director and MoE senior management; and support ongoing capacity development within the Ministry. They will also have responsibility for building ownership on inclusion and equity in EQIP (supported by the MC in this function). They will ensure that My-EQIP principles and Theory of Change underpin all activities to the greatest extent possible and in conjunction with the Program Director and managing contractor, will anticipate and manage risk.

The ECB specialist will be a full-time consultant, contracted by DFAT, based in or near the Program Directors' office in MoE in Nay Pyi Taw. The DFAT Yangon Post will advertise the role, and together with senior MoE staff, select the candidate. The intention is to mobilise the ECB specialist in March 2017 to start Phase 1 implementation.

Managing Contractor

The MC will provide a range of high quality management and technical services to assist MoE deliver My-EQIP activities. The Managing Contractor (MC) will determine their staffing profile and nominate a **My-EQIP support team** through the tender process. This team will provide regular and ongoing support for the life of the program, be agreed upfront, and funded separately to the Innovation Fund (see below). Responsibilities will include leading on My-EQIP M&E; providing secretariat support for high level meetings; financial management, provision of IT systems and support, ongoing advice on how to measure and build ownership on equity and inclusion issues. When selecting personnel, the Managing Contractor should consider "soft skills" as well as technical excellence to ensure respectful relationships are created across the Program.

The Managing Contractor, under the direction of the Program Director, will also manage the **Innovation Fund.** MoE Departments and Units (and NEPC/NAQAC if appropriate) will identify activities to be funded through the Innovation Fund in the annual EQIS plans, which will go to the Steering Committee for approval. The Managing Contractor will work closely with Program Director, the TWG and the ECB specialist in determining the nature and scope of support which may include contracting high-quality and relevant technical support and research; procuring equipment organisation of events, meetings, study tours etc. Innovation and experimentation that encourages the development of locally appropriate strategies to address data and evidence needs will be encouraged. For example, the Innovation Fund could support testing of new data gathering techniques and instruments, identifying problems for which data and information are needed and developing and field testing instruments and approaches. In close consultation with Program Director, the managing contractor will prepare the Innovation Fund operating procedures. These will align with Australia's Commonwealth Procurement Rules which set out mandatory standards for Australian payments, in accordance with seven recommended principles[54]:

1. robust planning and design;

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[54] Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants/ and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/procurement-policy-and-guidance/commonwealth-procurement-rules/ for other payment types.

2. collaboration and partnership;

3. proportionality;

4. an outcomes orientation;

5. achieving value with relevant money;

6. governance and accountability; and

7. probity and transparency.

Following Phase 1, it is proposed, the managing contractor establishes a panel to access skills and expertise in areas that will be required regularly. The pre-selected and briefed Panel would make the appointment of short-term advisers more efficient, requiring a simpler letter of engagement or service order. Preference would be given to consultants who could offer continuity in relationships and advice, and be available for multiple assignments. The panel would be funded from the Innovation Fund and therefore provide practical, locally-appropriate innovative solutions in the development and implementation of a new EQIS. It could comprise a mix of local and international individual experts and small-medium enterprises providing specialised services. Panel members would be expected to engage fully with MoE partners to jointly conduct the specific tasking in line with the My-EQIP implementation principles. Managing Contractors' ideas for the Innovation Fund and panel will comprise a key part of the tender appraisal process.

The MC will be contracted by DFAT following a tender process, with DFAT and MoE jointly selecting the preferred tenderer. The tender for the MC will take place as early as possible, so mobilisation will be no longer than six months after the ECB is appointed.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The initial duration of My-EQIP will four years from March 2017 to March 2021. The appointment of the ECB specialist will initiate the program and support the Program Director to implement Phase 1 of the program. The recruitment of an MC will initiate establishment of the My-EQIP support team, office and systems, and start providing support from Phase 2.

A key focus during the early months will be for the Program Director, ECB specialist, DFAT, the MC and others in MoE to build strong working relationships. While DERPT will have a leading technical role in directing and overseeing the EQIS system, the new M&E Units and other departments will have a significant number of staff who will be involved in implementing changes to the system. A particular effort will be needed to establish relationships across the departments and establish a network of M&E Officers, nationally and sub-nationally. A number of workshops will be held to introduce the objectives of the Program to senior and middle managers and create awareness of My-EQIP in preparation for the development of EQIS plans in Phase 2. These consultations and workshops will help inform the outputs from Phase 1 – the political-economy analysis, the Capacity Development Plan, the EQIS Strategy and revised My-EQIP program logic.

Early tasks for the PD and ECB will be to confirm governance arrangements, formally, establish the roles and responsibilities of the SC and TWG including oversight of the Innovation Fund, plan meeting schedules and a standing meeting agenda for each body. It is proposed that an SC Inception Meeting be convened by month 4 (July 2017), where the PD can report on progress in the initial three months and the SC can agree on the strategy for preparing activity budgets in time for the Myanmar fiscal year[55].

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[55] Myanmar's fiscal year runs from 1 April to 31 March. MoE's usually starts budget planning in July and holds budget discussions with MoPF in December and January.

Procurement Arrangements

DFAT will manage a two-step procurement for My-EQIP. The first stage will seek technical proposals, allowing both small and large organisations to submit proposals. Stage 2 will seek management capacity and pricing proposals from shortlisted bidders. Consortia that include shortlisted bidders will be permitted. This two-step tender process is an attempt to attract technical proposals from a wide range of bidders yet ensure that the successful bidder will have the necessary systems in place and head office support that DFAT requires.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This section is concerned with the M&E of My-EQIP[56]. The scope for the My-EQIP M&E framework is the entire My-EQIP program, including the DFAT funded components, and is for the four years of the program. The primary audience, or users of the M&E outputs, for the M&E framework are MoE, DFAT, and the My-EQIP team (including the M&E coordinator). The secondary audience or those that we want to keep informed are all MoE and departmental staff that have M&E responsibilities, all education staff, civil society and the Australian public.

The purpose of the M&E framework is three fold:

1. Program performance and continuous improvement

2. Accountability to the funder

3. Learning

• Areas of specific interest for M&E include the capacity building activities and whether MoE is taking ownership of My-EQIP.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

We propose two different types of key evaluation questions (KEQs), descriptive and evaluative questions. Evaluative questions seek to pass a value judgment on the program, whereas descriptive monitoring questions describe the work undertaken by the program, its reach, its impacts (changes resulting from the program activities) and explores which impacts are sustainable (continue without further assistance from the program).

Key My-EQIP evaluative questions are:

1. **How relevant is My-EQIP to Myanmar?** This question will look at whether the program continues to respond to an actual need (To what extent does EQIS remain a gap in the Myanmar education system?) and demand from the

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[56] DFAT has a number of relevant strategies and M&E frameworks in place or in development that the My-EQIP Program will need to align to and support reporting on. These include Australia's Aid Investment plan for Myanmar[56] the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy 2016, Development for all 2015-20 and the Australian Aid Policy (Making Performance Count: Enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid 2014). DFAT also has an M&E standard to which the My-EQIP program will need to align to.

Myanmar government (To what extent does MoE still want Australia to support their EQIS?).

2. **How effective has My-EQIP been in achieving its end of program outcomes?**
This question will look at the reach and impact of My-EQIP, whether the intermediate outcomes are being achieved as a result of program activities to determine how well the program is progressing towards the achievement of end of program outcomes including meeting the aid quality criteria and the quality of the MC activities, in particular the TA. This question would also look at identifying the key success criteria of the program.

- Key My-EQIP descriptive monitoring questions are:

3. What has My-EQIP done with what resources?

4. **Who has My-EQIP reached** – considering access to the benefits of the program, and outcomes by gender, disability, location or other characteristics?

5. What impacts has the program had?

6. What are the sustainable achievements of the program?

Aside from answering these questions, the M&E framework will also need to collect ongoing reflections and feedback from stakeholders within MoE and the departments directly involved that can be used to inform program decision-making to ensure the program remains relevant and performs to a high standard. At a minimum, the M&E framework will be disaggregated by gender, disability and location, to capture the inclusiveness of the program.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The program has no targets but instead will use a number of indicators to assist in tracking program performance against expected outcomes. Suggested indicators are outlined below in Table 2 but will need to be reviewed during each phase of the program.

Table 1. My-EQIP performance indicators

Performance area	Indicator
Quality of the relationship between MoE stakeholders and My-EQIP: breadth, trust, involvement, ownership of My-EQIP by MoE	• Attendance at key My-EQIP meetings and activities per program phase – disaggregated by government level, department • Number and type of requests from MoE, disaggregated by government level, department and type of requests (involvement in strategic activities, flagship projects, funds or TA request etc.) • Commitment in funds and resources by MoE to EQIS activities per program phase disaggregated by department.
Quality of TA and capacity building activities	• Proportion of TA doing capacity building activities as opposed to capacity substitution (doing the work rather than training a local staff to do the work) activities as a total of TA activities. Per program phase. • Satisfaction rate of MoE counterparts with TA • That TA reflects the breadth of the program's objectives, including

	equity and universal access
Reach of My-EQIP	• Increase in the representation of MoE officials and employees across the three levels of government and the five departments and the oversight bodies interacting with My-EQIP per program phase – disaggregated by gender, disability and origin • Increase in number of MoE officials and employees who have engaged in some way with My-EQIP per program phase – disaggregated by gender, disability and origin • Number of participants in capacity building activities per program phase – disaggregated by gender, disability and origin
Monitoring, evaluation, quality assurance, and research capacity of staff	• Number of new EQIS roles and/or roles with additional EQIS responsibilities per program phase – disaggregated by level of government and department. • Assessment of MoE counterpart M&E, QA and research skills by TA (individuals and/or teams) per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department • Decreasing number of TA with general expertise and increasing number of TA with specialised expertise per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department
EQIS systems	• Assessment of EQIS systems by TA per program phase disaggregated by government level and department • Number of pilots per program phase disaggregated by government level and department • Number of piloted systems rolled out per program phase disaggregated by government level and department • Quality of EQIS reports per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department
Learning culture	• Regularity of reflection activities per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department • Instances of evidenced adjustments made to existing services, projects, systems and processes per program phase
EQIS informed decision making	• Instances of evidenced decision making per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department • Demand for EQIS outputs (data, results, etc.) by decision makers per program phase – disaggregated by government level and department
Sustainability of My-EQIP impacts	• Instances of My-EQIP introduced activities which no longer require My-EQIP support and have become 'business as usual' activities – disaggregated by government level and department

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

• The approach to M&E for My-EQIP will need to be:

- **Light and quick** to reduce further burden on the My-EQIP team and MoE and to inform phase 1 and phase 2 planning.

- **Phased and scalable** to grow with the program as it evolves through its phased approach.

- **Agile** to enable both a quick description of the entire program's performance (breadth) and to capture the diversity and depth of the impacts of the program.

- **Participatory** in its development and implementation to be of meaning to a diverse audience

- **Inclusive** to meet DFAT's twin track policy priorities of gender equality and disability inclusiveness, at a minimum, and support universal access to education

- **Responsive** to changing political, economic, social and environmental context both in Myanmar and in Australia.

- **Evaluative:** the evaluations of the program must enable a judgement on the program's performance.

APPROACH

The approach for the M&E of My-EQIP is light touch and uses mixed methods, theory-based and iterative approaches to respond to the KEQs and fit in with the nature of the program and the complex environment. The M&E activities for My-EQIP need to produce on going results, findings and recommendations that can feed into and/or inform the program and:

- the planned mid-term NESP evaluation at the completion of year 3 (i.e. 2018—19) and will focus on progress towards achieving the NESP goals and is expected to inform the development of NESP 2
- the end of NESP plan evaluation at completion of year 5 (i.e. April or May of the 2021—22 financial year)
- the internal DFAT reporting including annual Aid Quality Checks
- the planning of My-EQIP phase 2 and phase 3 planning.

MONITORING

The monitoring for My-EQIP focuses on the four descriptive KEQs and the relevant performance indicators. The methods rely on the regular and consistent collection of observations from the My-EQIP team and reporting from TA.

The data collection methods have been chosen to minimise the need for additional stakeholder engagement under the program. The proposed monitoring methods include observations, TA reporting and reflection workshops. These are listed in table 2 against the monitoring questions.

Table 1. Monitoring methods against descriptive KEQs

Descriptive monitoring questions	Methods
- **What has**	- Log of inputs into My-EQIP including allocation of funds

My-EQIP done with what resources?	• Log of all activities by type, include timing and who these were delivered to (government level and department)
• **Who has My-EQIP reached?**	• Log of individuals engaged through the program broken down by type of activity, phase, level of government and department – to be kept by the My-EQIP team, TA and MC
• **What impacts has the program had?**	• Log of observed instances of change from the My-EQIP team perspective • Monitoring visits of TA by MC to ascertain the quality of the TA performance at MoE • Observations from TA (as part of TA regular reporting and mid and end of assignment reports)
• **What are the sustainable achievements of the program?**	• Log of observed sustained instances of change from the My-EQIP team perspective

It is also expected that the MC will conduct on going quality, efficiency and effectiveness monitoring of the TA and other MC managed activities (satisfaction and follow up surveying of MoE staff engaged through the program MC activities).

Regular reflection workshops (of 2 to 3 hours) with key MoE and DFAT representatives should be held to consider the impact of the program, identify what is working and not working, what is sustainable and to draw recommendations for on-going improvements to the program and for subsequent My-EQIP program phases. These should be conducted regularly throughout each phase (the frequency may vary depending on the needs of each program phase – these more regular workshops may just be attended by the My-EQIP program team and the MC) and at the end of phase 1, at the mid and end points of phase 2 and 3. The reflection workshops at the mid and end point of each phase should result in brief progress reports to MoE and DFAT.

EVALUATION

The evaluation for My-EQIP will focus on responding to KEQs 1 (relevance) and 2 (effectiveness and quality). DFAT will conduct two evaluations, a mid term evaluation at the end of phase 2 and a final evaluation at the end of phase 3. My-EQIP's progress on DFAT's policy priorities of gender equality and disability inclusion will be an integral component of any evaluation. Both evaluations will draw on the monitoring data collected by the MC and the My-EQIP team and will require additional data collection, analysis and synthesis activities. The additional data collection should seek to draw on new data sources and use new data collection methods to enable triangulation and the capture of unexpected outcomes. The MC should work to ensure that the evaluation findings, recommendations and outputs are known (consider engagement and communication throughout) and are usable (consider use when planning the evaluation format, language etc.) by relevant stakeholders.

SUSTAINABILITY

This investment is supporting the establishment of a government program. It has been designed to maximise sustainability including through the following features:

- The design is aligned with the Government's National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and is in response to MoE's request for support

- The governance arrangements ensure MoE senior management are making program decisions, including joint budgets reflecting both MoE and My-EQIP forecast expenditure. When approving activities, resources required to maintain and sustain the system will be considered.

- The Program Director is a senior MoE staff member and will be accountable for program delivery and reporting to the Steering Committee on progress

- MoE staff will be responsible for the design and implementation of activities – including providing resources, developing and implementing tools, M&E, analysis, reporting etc. Most capacity building will be provided by officials to assist other officials in the use of the tools, templates and reporting formats that will facilitate the mainstreaming of QA into the management system.

- The My-EQIP principles aim to ensure implementation builds capacity – not supplant capacity – by building on existing systems, working in areas where there is demand, facilitating approaches to find locally-driven solutions, and encouraging experimentation and learning.   A systems-based approach increases synergies between the parts and can help identify gaps – increasing impact on teaching and learning outcomes.

- TA will primarily be held account for building capacity and fostering ownership, rather than the quality of outputs.

- The end-of-program outcomes don't just focus on improved capacity (a key component of sustainability) but improved use of information at all levels of the system. If information is not used, the EQIS is not sustainable.

- There is a strong investment in My-EQIP M&E aimed at providing real-time information with tight feedback loops to inform improvements and ensure My-EQIP is on track to achieve end of program outcomes

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS

The limited data on differences in access to education and learning outcome levels (e.g. when disaggregated by gender, disability or origin) in the present information systems, and the very limited use that is made of the data that is available is an important justification for the Innovation Fund. The initiative will lend active support to the Ministry's information base on all dimensions of equity and inclusion, including by gender, disability, remote location, poverty or ethnic identity. The initiative will also provide the tools and skills strengthening for the Ministry to analyse and utilise

this data, and tailor plans to realise Myanmar's commitment to universal access to education. This disaggregated data will also provide powerful evidence to the Ministry on educational patterns throughout the country, and a potential performance measure for itself and its regional offices. DFAT has official policies on gender equality and disability inclusive development, and a twin-track approach to their achievement. It is expected that these policies apply to the internal staffing profile of My-EQIP, and the program is expected to ensure that any adults who benefits from the program (e.g. financial or skills support) reflect a reasonable mix by gender, people with disability and origin.

Approval criteria will also ensure that applications for funding from the Innovation Fund will be favoured if they specifically relate to of the promotion of equity or inclusion. The Ministry will be encouraged to identify, wherever possible, candidates for M&E officer or M&E Focal Point who represent women or marginalised groups.

Gender and social inclusion has been mainstreamed throughout the design, in particular through analysis of the limited data in the strategic context, inclusion of gender equality and social inclusion intermediate outcomes in the program logic and therefore also integrated in the M&E, including sex disaggregated data. It has also been identified as a key performance indicator for the ECB Specialist, and the managing contractor.

Gender equality and social inclusiveness will also be included as a selection criteria for assessing the tender documents for a managing contractor.

PRIVATE SECTOR

In strengthening quality assurance systems, My-EQIP will contribute to improvements in education which over time will lead to graduates with more job-relevant skills. In sectors such as TVET, it will be essential to engage private sector early to ensure standards consider market needs.

As a traditional growth engine for accelerating innovation, My-EQIP will draw on the capacity of the private sector to identify locally appropriate innovative solutions to key program challenges. The Innovation Fund has the flexibility to use local and international private sector actors to help the government explore new and interesting interfaces that have the potential to deliver better and faster outcomes. A key aspect of the tender appraisal process will be how the Innovation Fund can be used to harness the strengths of different actors and organisations, including private sector, to deliver My-EQIP.

The two step tender process – as outlined above - is specifically aimed at attracting both small and specialised private companies as well as the larger actors that have more organisational capacity. Step One will focus on technical merit to ensure a range of private sector actors have the opportunity to contribute to My-EQIP.

SAFEGUARDS

The activities of My-EQIP are not expected to raise any safeguard issues related to child protection as most work will be conducted in government offices. While some field travel will occur, contact with children at schools is likely to be very rare. However, if a trip to a school or other activity is necessary, DFAT's child protection policy will be followed. Exposure to children will occur where it is required for the nature of the work and with other adults present to the extent possible. Due

Diligence of the ECB Specialist will be undertaken and all other positions will include a requirement for working with children check.

Given the focus of the program is primarily capacity building, and does not involve infrastructure, irrigation, land use or activity in natural resources, there are no risks of displacement and resettlement and very low risk to the environment.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table3 below outlines key risks associated with this investment and recommended treatments. A more detailed risk assessment will be conducted during Phase 1.

Table 2: Key Risks

Key Risks	Mitigation strategies
External	
The education reform process and NESP implementation is delayed	Improvements in the MoE's ability to monitor and evaluate its programs are necessary steps in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of education management, regardless of political developments. Their value would be greatly enhanced if they were linked to reform priorities, but the rationale for them is not dependent on the reforms or the NESP.
On-going or renewed conflict could affect the ability of My-EQIP to commence work in some locations or disrupt Program activities	The SC will seek advice, if required, when making decisions regarding selection of Townships to benefit from My-EQIP. A conflict specialist, who can provide advice if required to inform decision-making regarding working sensitively in conflicted affected areas, can be procurement through the managing contractor. It is expected that the MC will have security and risk management plans in place and will update these regularly. The MC will brief personnel on security when they commence with My-EQIP and prior to travelling into at-risk locations. The ECB and MC will be guided by DFAT's policies and latest travel advice regarding security.
Budget cuts to Australian aid may affect future commitments to My-EQIP over its 4-year duration	Flexibility is built into the My-EQIP design through the rolling annual planning process. If necessary, the proportion of the budget spent on activities could be reduced.
Internal	
Key EQIS institutions don't engage on My-EQIP and establish competing structures	The Political Economy Analysis will help inform the best entry points for My-EQIP to catalyse change. The program will continue to think and work politically in Phase 2 and Phase 3, including working with key partners at different levels of the value of change.
The Program Director does not	The PD has indicated he will appoint an MoE team to deal

fully engage due to other commitments	with operational aspects of My-EQIP implementation while he keeps his focus on strategic issues. The ECB Specialist can mentor the PD on balancing operational versus strategic issues and provide support where appropriate. My-EQIP will be implemented in line with the capacity of MoE.
SC members and MoE senior management don't fully engage in My-EQIP due to other commitments and priorities	My-EQIP has been designed to align with MoE's priorities and the annual planning process allows the program to realign if necessary to remain relevant and therefore supportive of SC members' deliverables on EQIS. The PD and ECB Specialist will support the functioning of the SC so that members' time commitments are minimised and focused on high level issues requiring their strategic vision and authority.
The NESP is not finalised by My-EQIP start-up, so the results framework is not available to provide the basis for quality assurance standards and targets.	Assisting senior MoE managers with development of departmental EQIS Plans is a key focus of My-EQIP. Some assumptions may have to be made and interim standards developed by the PD and ECB in consultation with the NESP team. These Plans can be adjusted once the NESP QA standards and targets are finalised. The need for constant review and adjustment is one of the principal reasons that the approach for this investment will be gradual and iterative.
Improvement in the availability of information does not necessarily mean that it will be used to make better-informed management decisions.	My-EQIP's Communication Strategy will ensure that managers at different levels, principals and teachers in targeted areas are: i) kept informed of the changes that the new EQIS arrangements entail; ii) They understand their roles in managing these arrangements and using the products of EQIS iii) They are required to use information to meet the revised reporting requirements of their jobs. The aim will be to create an enabling climate or organisational culture in which the use of information is routinely expected at all levels of the administration. The Program will encourage leading by example to create demand for evidence as well as supply. It is also recognised that many (particularly, political) factors influence management decisions and that expecting "evidence" to be the basis of all decisions is a simplistic approach.
Program funds cannot be accounted for. Financial mismanagement in the management Innovation Fund may occur through either lack of competence, or in the worst	The MC will prepare Fund guidelines and a financial management manual and train relevant staff in correct procedures. The MC is expected to adopt DFAT's zero tolerance to fraud and monitor the Innovation Fund expenditure with vigilance. If fraud is suspected, the MC will have a clear procedure to follow, where the MC immediately alerts DFAT and organises an audit of the

case, fraud.	affected transactions.
Low level of interest or effective resistance to focus on inclusion	The ECB Specialist is endowed with the responsibility to build appreciation and ownership of inclusion and equity dimensions of My-EQIP, with the support of the MC. It is possible that proactivity or demonstration activities are required. At a minimum, it will need to be an active component of the ECB Specialist and MC workplan.