



OPEN- Policy Roadmap for the implementation of strategies on the internationalisation of Laos HE

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List of Acronyms



AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan 2016-20
ESQAC	Education Quality Assurance Centre
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EU	European Union
G3	Primary grade 3
G5	Primary grade 5
HEI	Higher Education Institution (also HEIs)
HLO	High Level Outcome
HRD	Human Resource Development
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IRO	International Relations Office
IT	Information Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LES MIS	Laos Education and Sports Management Information System
M4	Mathayom 4 – last grade of lower secondary schooling

M6	Mathayom 6 – middle grade of upper secondary schooling
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NA	National Assembly
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NUOL	National University of Laos
PA	Pedagogical Advisor
PBC	Planning and Budgeting Committee
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Service
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal/s
SBG	School Block Grant
STEM/STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics
TAC	Teacher Allocation Committee
TICA	Thailand International Cooperation Agency
TTC	Teacher Training College (also TTCs)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VEDC V	illage Education Development Committee (also VEDCs)
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Introduction

Background and objective the document

This document aligns with the OPEN project **Task 2.4. “Policy Roadmap for the implementation of strategies on the internationalisation of Laos HE”** (OPEN Policy Roadmap) that aims at facilitating partners members’ progress towards the implementation of strategies for the Internationalisation of Laos Higher Education (HE) through enhanced analysis and monitoring of partner’s policies in the framework of the MoES legislation, providing assistance, and streamlining its governance and reporting. These activities will support OPEN partners’ policy reform to help reach the goals set in the MoES policy reform.

The OPEN Policy Roadmap is comprehended within the framework of **Work Package 2: Institutional Policy & Planning**, focused on articulating the necessary policy change at institutional level to foster internationalization activity at HE level in Lao PDR.

This document also supports the achievement of **The Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2021-2025)** (ESSDP 2021-2025) overall goal to ensure that *“the Education and Sports Sector in Lao PDR is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunities for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and sports and to contribute to, and benefit from socio-economic development and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress towards attainment of SDG-4 (MoES 2020)”*.

The ESSDP 2021-2025, defines **Policy Objectives** for the HE Subsector Plan as follows:

1. To enhance higher education contributing to and supporting the social and economic priorities of the 9th NSEDP.

2. To promote and develop technology related programmes, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) study programmes for university students, especially those undertaking science, technology, engineering and mathematics STEM programmes so that the number of students within this field increases;
3. To strengthen Centers of Excellence in both public and private universities;
4. To conduct regular tracer studies to identify employability of graduates;
5. To reinforce the quality of lecturers, especially lecturers in natural sciences programmes;
6. To develop the university scholarship budget allocation formula; and develop a framework to prioritize scholarships to students for further studies in foreign countries in line with the country's socio-economic development.
7. To provide science research, technology development and innovation for the nation.

The policy objectives materialise on these baseline targets and indicators for the HE sector:

1. Number of STEM graduates (Bachelors or Higher) from public Universities reaches 20,000 by 2025;
2. The Gender Parity Index for the number of graduates (Bachelors or Higher) from public Universities reaches at least 0.90 by 2025;
3. A feasibility study to establish an Institute of Technology is conducted;
4. Students enrolled in STEM programmes increases by 50 percent compared and teaching and learning quality in this field is improved;
5. Four Centers of Excellence are appraised;
6. A graduate employment tracing team in each faculty is established;
7. Internal Quality Assessment conducted once a year, assess every 5 years all 4 public universities;
8. A pilot of university autonomy in financial management is conducted at NUOL;

9. Academic titles of higher education institutions teachers are conferred based on quality and standards stipulated in the Decree on Teacher Academic Titles no. 03.

To accomplish these targets, ESDDP 2021-2025 develops the following **strategies** (MoES 2020):

1. A feasibility study will be implemented to establish a new Institute of Technology, including an Artificial Intelligence Centre. This study will outline the staffing allocation and recurrent budget needs and an action plan for expansion over the 5 years of the sector plan.
2. Agreement will be reached on ToRs for an independent appraisal of all four Centres of Excellences. These ToRs will focus on identifying processes to strengthen these four centres, particularly to improve linkages to 9th NESDP priorities.
3. Department of Higher Education and the Scholarship Office of the Department of Student Affairs will develop a proposal to weight the scholarships allocations in favour of students who enroll in priority programmes and disadvantaged students. The approved proposal will be discussed at ESWG to gain endorsement by development partners to ensure alignment of their scholarship programmes to government priorities.
4. NUOL will lead the development and implementation of a higher education website promoting scientific research by university lecturers and post-graduate students.
5. Ministerial instructions to prioritize natural science infrastructure and gender-responsive teaching materials at TTCs and universities for budget priority utilization are approved and disseminated.
6. Agreement with prospective donors concerning upgrading of the Faculty of Engineering. Priority is given to students entering and continuing to study in natural sciences programmes. A Ministerial instruction will mandate this priority.
7. The policy for scholarships will be updated to prioritize natural science students.

8. The Joint Technical Working Group (MoES, Ministry of Labour Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, private sector and development partners) under the Post-Secondary Focal Group will issue guidance for universities and TVET institutions on how and when to conduct effective tracer studies and use the results as a basis for future decision making on curricula enhancement. Education Sector Working Group will endorse this guidance.
9. The NUOL Quality Assurance Unit is mandated to support other public universities in developing and implementing best practice in conducting annual self-assessments.
10. A Ministerial Instruction will direct all public universities to conduct these assessments with reports submitted to the Minister and the Education Senior Administrators Annual Conferences.
11. A teaching performance assessment framework for higher education lecturers at differing levels of qualifications and experience is developed and endorsed.
12. A Ministerial Instruction will direct all higher education institutions to undertake such teaching assessments on a regular basis.
13. A Ministerial instruction and regulatory framework will be issued to manage lecturer academic titles at higher education institutions.
14. Ministerial approval will be provided to develop a proposal for development and modelling of a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities (flat rate, per student, per natural science, disparity-based). The proposal will provide recommendations and guidelines for Ministerial consideration.

2. Different scenarios for driving a knowledge-based society through the internationalization of HE in Lao PDR

The Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2021-2025) promulgated by the MoES sets the foundation for the comprehensive policy action within the field of Education and Sports in Lao PDR, defining Higher Education as sub sector. The ESSDP is set under the overarching 9th Five-Year National Socio-economic Development Plan (2020-2030) 9th NSEDP. However, the current ESSDP 2021-2025 is based upon Lao National Development Priorities, discussed in consultations with different stakeholders as well as the lessons learnt from the previous ESSDP 2016-2020 (MoPI 2016).

The ESSDP 2021-2025 acknowledges that the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector will come from an exacerbation of the scarcity of public resources to provide financial support for the education sector and from the reduced capacity from poorer families to afford the economic cost of keeping children and youth enrolled in education programmes. Therefore, the ESSDP 2021-2025 is based upon 2 different scenarios defined as follows:

“**Steady state scenario**” provides the basis for merely maintaining the current level of quality and service provision with no improvements in performance. It articulates strategy (Intermediate outcomes) by delineating only the ‘budget floor’ to achieve these sector requirements. Nonetheless and considering the impact of the COVID-19 in Lao PDR and its compounded macroeconomic vulnerabilities, the achievement of this scenario may be even unfeasible.

“**Enhanced quality scenario**” will be only achieved if the national budget allocation and international donors’ resources to the education sector are substantially increased. The strategy is framed (High-level outcomes) under the assumption of higher levels of funding for the sector. However, the eco-

nomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic makes funding of the “enhanced quality” scenario unlikely in the earlier years of the 2021-25 period.

This differentiation between the divergent scenarios and its corresponding outcomes is illustrated in the following table extracted from the ESSDP 2021-2025:

EDUCATION AND SPORTS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2021-2025)		
1 GOAL		
The Education Sector is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunity for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress of SDG-4		
8 HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES (Enhanced quality scenario)		
HLO 1: Increased number of graduates at all levels with improved learning outcomes with special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity	HLO 2: Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards with regular performance assessment	HLO 3: All schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively alongside strengthened management to improve student learning outcomes
HLO 4: Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities.	HLO 5: The quality and number of school leavers and post-basic graduates entering employment is aligned with the needs of the 9th NSEDP	HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance
HLO 7: Disparities are reduced through a supporting ESSDP financing plan	HLO 8: Lao citizens are healthy both physically and mentally; sports personnel, amateur and professional athletes contribute to the sport's quality standards, contribute to promoting the status of role in the international stages	
44 INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (Steady state scenario)		
IO 1.1 Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels	IO 1.2 Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G3, G5, M4 and M7	IO 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates

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IO 1.4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training at upper secondary school	IO 1.5: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters	IO 2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers through support from clusters and PAs.
IO 2.2: Pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula aligned with the new school curricula and teaching standards.	IO 2.3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system, linked to teaching standards, to identify priority training needs.	IO 2.4: TTCs are professional development centres for all pre-service, in-service, and PA training.
IO 2.5: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning	IO 3.1: FQS for school education forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning.	IO 3.2: A school self-evaluation and development planning process that informs district level planning and targeting of support
IO 3.3 School Block Grants are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	IO 3.4 Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	IO 3.5 Textbook provision is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities
IO 3.6 All schools are supported to achieve basic WASH facilities	IO 4.1: A targeted action plan for literacy programmes for 15 to 40-year-olds to reduce disparities	IO 4.2: Sample monitoring of NFE literacy programmes to assess the impact on functional youth literacy.
IO 4.3: Non-formal services (FEC and CLC) are well established and contribute to increased adult and youth literacy rates	IO 5.1: Improved quality of upper secondary education to meet the needs of the labour market and higher education	IO 5.2: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher trainee graduates leading to improved natural science teaching at secondary level
IO 5.3: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET	IO 5.4: Improved relevance of TVET programmes to demands of the 9th NSEDP	IO 5.5: Improved quality of TVET programmes.
IO 5.6: Improved quality of TVET teachers.	IO 5.7: Strengthened TVET cooperation with public, private and international organisations	IO 5.8: Strengthened TVET management.

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IO 5.9: National Qualifications Framework links non-formal and TVET qualifications	IO 5.10: Strengthened university teaching and research programmes in 9th NSEDP priority areas	IO 5.11: Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments
IO 5.12: Legislation for a performance-based funding formula for the provincial Universities	IO 6.1: Strengthened MoES organisational structure at central, provincial and district levels including institutionalisation of SBM and role of VEDCs	IO 6.2: HRD strategy is implemented, including DESB and PESS staff allocated according to need and provided with appropriate capacity building
IO 6.3: Strengthened central TAC and PBC, using evidence from ASCEPs and integrated LESMIS	IO 6.4: M&E framework for ESSDP 2021-25 is implemented on an annual basis	IO 6.5: Education system emergency preparedness to disasters strengthened
IO 7.1: The ESSDP financing plan includes an explicit expenditure policy that reflects the need to address disparities and improve learning outcomes.	IO 7.2: ESWG reviews and endorses the updated mid-term financing plan for ESSDP.	IO 7.3: Development partners provide predictable financial support aligned to ESSDP priority targets and that proposed new interventions are sustainable
IO 7.4: Resources mobilised through more active international cooperation, including with private philanthropic Organisations	IO 8.1. Increased the number and quality of Sports Club, public and social in Village, district and province/capital level, public and private organizations, companies, factories. And develop the sport with disability to be increased in quantity, quality into international level maintain and utilize sports infrastructure to maximum	IO 8.2. Learning-teaching physical and arts education has been widely implemented, the number of the teachers/technical personnel of physical education, the number of students attending sports competition at national, regional and international level are increased
IO 8.3. Talented Athletes, National Athletes and Professional Athletes are equipped with Sub-Regional, Regional and International Standards	IO 8.4. Executives, coaches, referees and sports scientists are competent in line with international standards; maintain and utilize sports infrastructure to maximum	

3. General Challenges of the Lao PDR Higher Education

The needs analysis performed in the framework of Task 2.2, helped indentifying the main challenges for the HE system in Lao PDR, which undermine the capacity of the HE System to increase its capacity to conduct internationalization actions:

1. Limited infrastructure: facilities, equipment and laboratory.
2. Constrained resource allocation for public Higher Education.
3. Insufficient capacities and skills of teaching, academic and administrative staff.
4. Evolving but immature national and institutional HE Quality Assurance systems.
5. Outdated curricula programme design.
6. Curricula not coordinated with labour market needs and absence of university-industry cooperation.
7. Lack of funding and capacity for research activities.

Moreover, the international scenario at HE level is characterized by the following recurrent problems:

1. Weak capacity among students and academic staff in foreign languages, especially English.
2. Lack of comprehensive and homogeneous credit recognition and transfer system.
3. Low Internationalisation standards and financial support schemes for student and staff mobility.
4. Imbalance between inbound & outbound students flows.
5. Lack of awareness on international funding sources for research.

In light of all the above, the OPEN partners have defined a Policy Roadmap for the implementation of strategies on the internationalization of the Laos Higher Education as whole to overcome the current challenges and barriers that hinder the effective Internationalization of the Universities of Lao PDR.

4. Policy Roadmap for the implementation of strategies on the internationalisation of Laos HE

The OPEN Policy Roadmap will support the ESSDP, with specific actions defined to achieve an Education Sector that is appropriately structured, managed and resourced to create opportunity for all Lao citizens to have equitable access to quality education and support Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Country status by 2025 and support progress of SDG-4.

The OPEN Policy Roadmap has been structured according to the PRIORITIES FOR ACTION identified in the framework of Task 2.2:

1. Enhancement of institutional, infrastructure and human capacities of the International Relationships Offices
2. Intensification of engagement with national and international stakeholders
3. Reinforcement of the international dimension of the specific actions foreseen on ESSDP 2021-2025 – Higher Education Subsector Plan

For these 3 Priorities for Action, Key Performance Targets and Indicators have been defined as well as the strategies and activities to achieve them. Moreover, the priorities have been divided between those focusing on the 3 different basic pillars of the Higher Education Sector: Institutions, People and System.

This non-legally binding document aims however at facilitating the implementation of strategies on the internationalisation of Laos HE. The tables below show the proposed actions and target timing for addressing the above-mentioned priorities.

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Key Performance Target	Key Performance Indicator	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	FOCUS PILLAR	RELATED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO) OR HIGH-LEVEL OUTCOME (HLO)	CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXAMPLES OF ONGOING PROJECTS, BEST PRACTICE	TARGET YEAR
PRIORITY FOR ACTION 100- Enhancement of institutional, infrastructure and human capacities of the International Relationships Offices:							
110. Improvement of English language proficiency across the whole University community, prioritizing IRO and academic staff.	KPI 1.1.1 Number of IRO staff enrolled in English language courses	1.1. Search, apply for and enroll in English language courses (especially online) offered by international institutions (ASEAN, British Council, other HEIs cooperation programmes, etc.). Apply for volunteers (both onsite and remote) to teach English (Australian Volunteers..)	Training courses for the IRO staff in order to provide them with an advanced level of professional English.	PEOPLE	IO 1.1 Improved and more inclusive curricula is implemented at all levels	CHALLENGE: Funding for Education; Motivation/inspiration; Limited Time RECOMMENDATION: Develop short term and long-term training plans; Budgeting and search of new sources of funding; Build motivation and policy EXAMPLE: NUOL received support for long-term training (6 month) to improve English at the Institute of Foreign Affairs; A volunteer as an English teacher short term for staff and students via online by Australian Institute and Embassy of the United States for 4 universities.	2024
	KPI 1.1.2 Number of academics enrolled in English language courses		Training courses for academics in order to provide them with an advanced level of professional English.		IO 2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers through support from clusters and PAs.		2025
120. Development of project management and fundraising skills for IRO personnel.	KPI 1.2.1 Number of people enrolled in fund raising courses	1.2. Engagement with international cooperation capacity building programmes (ASEAN, Erasmus+, other international cooperation agencies, etc)	Training courses for principals and IRO staff in related to fundraising and work methodologies for international cooperation within their own region and at international level.	PEOPLE	IO 2.5: Strengthened capacity of principals for improving teaching and learning	CHALLENGES: Still limited of skills Project management and fundraising expertise; Limited networking; They do not have relevant experience fundraising skill RECOMMENDATIONS: Capacity building for personnel, including principals, through relevant training; Dissemination regarding fundraising practice.	2025
	KPI 1.2.2 Number of people enrolled in proposal writing and project management courses		Training courses and capacity building activities for the IRO personnel on proposal drafting, programme execution and reporting		IO 1.2 Improved student learning outcomes measurement at G5, M4 and M7	EXAMPLE: Training and knowledge exchange through lessons exchange plans between institutions and other appropriate sectors; Some institutes received training about fundraising from the Hongkong University	2023

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130. Consolidate planning, legitimacy and coordination of the IROs within the institution.	KPI 1.3.1 Official endorsement and approval from the institution of the Strategic Plan for IROs	1.3. Establishment of a service within the University as an autonomous framework for the IRO services, to attract funding and engage with other stakeholders.	Development of a tailor-made international Strategic Plan for each one of the IROs of the OPEN consortium to organize, coordinate and systemize international activities at HEI level.	SYSTEM	IO 3.3 School Block Grants are more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	CHALLENGES: Lack of experience in management, insufficient process development and autonomy at the University; Too many procedures but no guidelines or regulation about internationalisation; Limited links among universities, inadequate coordination and English and leadership skills RECOMMENDATIONS: Provide procedure and guideline related to international standards; Improve English skills and IROs staff capacity, training or exchange program; Clear policy implementation EXAMPLE: Erasmus+ Program	2023
140. Consolidate planning, legitimacy and coordination of the IROs beyond the institution.	KPI 1.3.1 Official endorsement and approval from the institution of the Strategic Plan for IROs	1.4. Coordination between the IROs from the public Universities and the MoES - DG for Higher Education to guarantee a coherent approach to international cooperation actions.	Development of a tailor-made international Strategic Plan for each one of the IROs of the OPEN consortium to organize, coordinate and systemize international activities at HEI level.		IO 3.1: FQS for school education forms the basis for school self-evaluation and development planning.	CHALLENGES: Communication is not done widely enough; Too many steps and procedures; Limited access to international collaboration RECOMMENDATIONS: Improve decree to address real situation; Provide budget EXAMPLE: Erasmus+; KOICA; KOFIH	2023
150. Upgrade facilities and equipment and endowment of each of the IROs.	KPI 1.3.1 Official endorsement and approval from the institution of the Strategic Plan for IROs	1.5. Guarantee that IROs upgrade infrastructure operations of the international endeavors. Improving Internet connectivity and substituting outdated equipment is mandatory to engage with international stakeholders	Development of a tailor-made international Strategic Plan for each one of the IROs of the OPEN consortium to organize, coordinate and systemize international activities at HEI level.		IO 3.2: A school self-evaluation and development planning process that informs district level planning and targeting of support	CHALLENGES: Infrastructures are still inadequate and need to be improved in several aspects RECOMMENDATIONS: Performe needs analysis and stablish assessment and monitoring periods	2023

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160. Provide resources, soft skills and digital competences to teachers and principals to pave the way to digitalisation	KPI 1.61 Number of new IT equipments (software and hardware) available for academics and administrative staff		Software and hardware purchase/renovation/upgrades for academics and administrative staff	SYSTEM	IO 3.4 Teacher Allocation is more responsive to school level needs to reduce disparities	<p>2026</p> <p>CHALLENGES: Lack of human resources with sufficient knowledge about information technology; Insufficient infrastructure provided by university; Limited budget to encourage fundamental system regarding skills for human resource, infrastructure to support internationalisation in HE; Limited communication, leadership and collaboration skill; Limited access to technology</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: Training for human resource about: ICT, internationalisation standards, use of technology devices and internet, and policy system; Disseminate ICT related policy system internally in the HE and also relate to the international agenda; Provide guidelines about policy system and indicators and targets to be achieved; Upgrade website in each university</p> <p>EXAMPLE: SSHEP Training activities already conducted among university (ICT)</p>	2025	2024
	KPI 1.6.2 Number of academics, administrative staff and principals enrolled in soft skills courses	1.6 Enhance the competences of academics, administrative staff and principals and improve IT resources of the HE to pave the way to digitalization	Organisation of courses and seminars on soft skills and competences *	PEOPLE	HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively improve sector performance			
	KPI 1.6.3 Number of academics, administrative staff and principals enrolled in digital competences training				IO 2.3: Enhanced teacher performance assessment system, linked to teaching standards, to identify priority training needs			

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170. Pave the way to incorporate internationalisation in the HE curricula ***	KPI 1.7.1 Number of pre-services and in-services aligned to new curricula and teaching standards	1.7 Training Curricula adapted to new school curricula and international teaching standards	Organisation of seminar on new school curricula and best national and international teaching standards	PEOPLE	IO 2.2: Pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula aligned with the new school curricula and teaching standards.	<p>CHALLENGES: Limited curriculum on international standard; no decree for credits transfer; Lack of personnel with expertise in internationalisation; Inadequate infrastructure for facilitation: classroom, dormitory, library, internet and toilet; No recognition regulation related to HE internationalisation</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: Develop regulation system about credits transfer within HE in Laos and External; Develop regulation about recognition; Develop capacity of the staff and develop international courses collaboration in the international sector; Provide budget allocation and priority plan</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Training similar courses in universities abroad; Students exchange programs; Getting grants for students' mobility program from abroad</p>	2027
180. Increase the number of graduated students in Lao PDR	KPI 1.8.1 Number of intake and graduated students increase	1.8 Improve the intake and progression of students leading to a higher number of graduates	Provision of scholarships to study in HE including for stays abroad	PEOPLE	IO 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates *	<p>CHALLENGES: Previously, academic curriculum did not meet market needs (no market needs analysis; Still limited information about curriculum; Limited autonomy budget; Limited scholarships; Unemployment of graduates or limited access to labour market)</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: Academic curriculum assessment based on regulation and indicator (collaboration with appropriate employers, business sector); Develop orientation plan for universities; Using social media for dissemination information; Build loan scholarship for Education (Exchange with experienced stakeholders)</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Scholarships from companies and partial scholarship with government; Dissemi-nation standard curriculum</p>	2025

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PRIORITY FOR ACTION 200. Intensification of engagement with national and international stakeholders							CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXAMPLES OF ONGOING PROJECTS, BEST PRACTICE	TARGET YEAR
Key Performance Target	Key Performance Indicator	STRATEGY	ACTIVITIES	FOCUS PILLAR	RELATED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME (IO) OR HIGH-LEVEL OUTCOME (HLO)			
2210. Convergence with Higher Education System within ASEAN region	KPI 2.1.1 Number of new joint initiatives and programs offered by ASEAN where OPEN partners are participating	2.1. IROs will reinforce their engagement with the different programmes and initiatives offered by ASEAN and other partners working in the same region.	Conduct of seminar on main ASEAN initiatives and programs	INSTITUTIONS	IO 7.4: Resources mobilised through more active international cooperation, including with private philanthropic Organisations	CHALLENGES: English proficiency; Coordination; Communication between government staff and Academic sector and at internal level RECOMMENDATIONS: Improve English skills for government; enhance coordination or communication skills with practice; support staff training and study exchanges abroad.	2026	
	2220. Engagement and familiarization with other international donors in the field of Higher Education (UNESCO, EU & other national coop. agencies)	KPI 2.2.1 Number of MoUs signed with high-level international partners	2.2. Increase partnerships with relevant international donors among Lao PDR. While some experiences and partnerships with other international organisations have been conducted in the past (KOICA, JICA, Asian Development Bank, TICA, ASEAN, IROs must intensify & diversify their international actions to become more attractive partners for these institutions		Conduct of seminar on main international funding agents and donors.	HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance	CHALLENGES: English Skills; Budgeting; Capacity building for Coordination; No strategy and procedure for Coordination; Insufficient networking RECOMMENDATIONS: Internet quality improvement; Enhance training skill for IRO staff; Support capacity building, English skills; Increase Staff opportunity to attend workshops, conferences and other relevant events to find new partners or networking EXAMPLES: -Panacea (Erasmus Mundus program) -Erasmus+ Program -EU-SHARE - SEMEO-RIHED -ASEAN Plus Three	2026

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230. Engagement with other key education actors	KPI 2.3.1 Number of new training offered to adults	2.3 Reinforce literacy rates for adults and young people and link with other key actors in Education, Training and Vocational Education and Training at national and international level	Inclusion of new courses devoted to increase literacy of adults and youth	PEOPLE	IO 4.1: A targeted action plan for literacy programs for 15 to 40-yr-old to reduce disparities	CHALLENGES: Lack of budget allocation to involve all stakeholders concerned; Limited collaboration with partners; Lack of collaboration among universities; Appropriate regulation regarding collaboration not well known by university members; There was no roadmap with indicators to be achieved; Lack of human resource capacity building; Budgeting	2024	
					IO 4.2: Sample monitoring of NFE literacy programmes to assess the impact on functional youth literacy.			
	IO 4.3: Non-formal services well established and contribute to increased adult & youth literacy rates							
	HLO 4: Increased adult and youth literacy rates with reduced disparities.							
	KPI 2.3.2 Number of visits of upper secondary schools organized to partner Units	Creation of a cluster that incorporates all areas in LAO PDR and all levels (secondary schools, HEI and TVET)	IO 1.4: Promote extension of vocational classroom training at upper secondary school	RECOMMENDATIONS: Budget allocation plan and clear target solutions; Enhance activities for integration; Training; Improve policy system and clearer regulation	2024			
			IO 1.5: Reduced gap in education performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas through establishing school clusters					
	IO 3.6 All schools are supported to achieve basic WASH facilities							
	IO 2.1: Strengthened capacity of teachers through support from clusters and PAs.							
KPI 1.5.1 First meeting of the school cluster	SYSTEM						EXAMPLE: Arrangement exclusive manager education and council university; Annual meeting at the universities with partners such as colleges, institutions, local offices.	2028
								2030
						2025		

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Key Performance Target	Key Performance Indicator	Strategy	Activities	Focus Pillar	Related Intermediate Outcome (IO) or High-Level Outcome (HLO)	Challenges, Recommendations and Examples of Ongoing Projects, Best Practice	Target Year
PRIORITY FOR ACTION 300. Reinforcement of the international dimension of the specific actions foreseen on ESSDP 2021-2025 – Higher Education Sub-sector Plan							
310. Improve research capacity	KP1 3.1.1 Number of new research collaborative projects with other Universities	3.1 facilitate the exploration of partnerships with other international HEIs and companies from the private sector which may be interested in bridging academics and applied research in the field of AI	Undertake a feasibility study to establish a separate Institute of Technology	INSTITUTIONS	IO 5.1: Improved quality of upper secondary education to meet the needs of the labour market and higher education +	CHALLENGES: Capacity building in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Sector; English level for teachers and lectures; Funding	2025
	KP1 3.1.1 Number of new collaboration agreements and research collaborative projects with AI industrial partners or research centres		Draft an Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme and capacity strengthening agenda ++		IO 5.2: Increased number and quality of natural science teacher trainee graduates leading to improved natural science teaching at secondary level	RECOMMENDATIONS: Provide resources from international and government for human resource development; Teachers, researchers and lectures should improve English skills	2026

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320. Improve infrastructure and facilities for STEM studies (STEM + ARTS)	KPI 3.2.1 (%) Increase in students enrolled in Natural Science related courses	3.2 IRO from NUOL expedites the access of NUOL to the necessary resources and funding to undertake this process of enhancement.	Review and analysis of natural sciences provision at upper secondary level, with recommendations for increasing student participation in natural sciences.	INSTITUTIONS	IO 5.3: Increased number and quality of graduates in agriculture and industry related fields at TVET	CHALLENGES: No specific decree to promote STEM studies; Limited number of scholarship and funding support; Promoting and linking university to industry; Capacity building, teaching and learning; Science and technology laboratory equipment; Limited budget and infrastructure support, lab, audio virtual and education aid and others; Limited human resources; Lack of expertise related with STEM; No supporting decree or regulation about STEM; Ability to conduct appropriate research limited; Excellence centre; Limited policy framework to support Artificial Intelligence (AI);	2023
	KPI 3.2.2 (%) Increase funds available for natural science		Preparation of a Higher Education funding formula that includes a specific section devoted to raising funds for natural sciences students.		IO 5.4: Improved relevance of TVET programmes to demands of the 9th NSEDP		2025
	KPI 3.2.3 (%) Increase in students enrolled with a scholarship		Higher scholarships allocations in favour of students who enroll in natural sciences and technology-based programmes		IO 5.5: Improved quality of TVET programmes.		2025
	KPI 3.3.1 Number of outreach activities organised	3.3 Prioritisation of STEM teaching and learning at Higher Education level in Lao PDR in order to respond to the demands of the workforce and the internal economy	Outreach and dissemination activities organised at secondary schools to foster vocation in STEAM in prospective students		HLO 6: Education Sector is appropriately organised, managed, resourced, monitored and assessed at all levels to efficiently and effectively further improve sector performance		2024

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330. Effective engagement with international donors	KPI 3.3.2 Number of participants in the information session	3.3. IROs must engage with international donors that share this interest for funding on the field of natural sciences and technology-based programmes. Additionally, IROs should channel the coordination and organization of scholarships for international mobility and student exchange, prioritizing this type of studies	Organise information session on funding and/or scholarships available for students in the field of STEM	INSTITUTIONS	IO 5.6: Improved quality of TVET teachers.	<p>EXAMPLE: Increased number students, studies and provide some scholarships for students who study STEM; Training lectures, lab and facilities by JICA Project in faculty of civil engineering; Development human resource</p> <p>CHALLENGES: Pressure due to high responsibility; Limited skills for coordination; Lack of information sources and access to these stakeholders; English level; Limited abilities for negotiation</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: To put in place monitoring and responsible personnel; Building capacity of staff; English, management and leadership skills</p>	2023
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340. Develop and implement a higher education website promoting scientific research by university lecturers.	KPI 3.4.1 Number of visits of the website once launched	3.4. In order to boost attractiveness and competitiveness of this portfolio website for Lao PDR researchers at Higher Education level, IROs must ensure that institutional website content is offered in English. This website should be linked to their own institutional website.	Development of a website to boost researchers' collaboration	INSTITUTIONS	IO 5.7: Strengthened TVET cooperation with public, private and international organisations	<p>CHALLENGES: Limited role of ICT centre responsible, no clear regulation – decree; Financial limits; Limited ICT capacity of staff; Infrastructures, management and planning; English skills, HE website not available, budget needed for developing it</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: improve role of ICT centre; Allocate a budget; Training of teachers in this type of innovative teaching; Improve capacity staff</p> <p>EXAMPLE: Develop a system for monitoring and managing teachers by subject under the structure of LUMS (Lao University Management System) to improve technical skill, development software, website, university and university can link together; Strengthen the financial system of the university and financial autonomy; ASEAN Cyber University</p>	2023
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350. Strengthen Quality Assurance of higher education.	KPI 3.5.1 Best practice guidelines for self-assessment available for all public universities	3.5. Accreditation and Quality Assurance National Agencies worldwide are promoting international engagement and cooperation on these issues. IROs can harness this international interest towards channeling expertise, funding and alliance with Lao PDR HEIs in order to further consolidate its incipient Quality Assurance framework. Within this domain, ASEAN and the EU have positioned on top of their international agenda promotion and enhancement of Quality Assurance frameworks for convergence with other Higher Education systems worldwide	ESOAC and the NUOL Quality Assurance Unit support other public universities in developing and implementing best practice in conducting annual self-assessments	SYSTEM	IO 5.8: Strengthened TVET management	<p>CHALLENGE: Quality assurance not well integrated by universities; Assessment guidance for teacher not ready; Research results not used in the teaching and learning process; Curriculum standard in the HE varies; Internal and external QA standard not agreed in each university; NO final policy for internal QA and External QA; No recognition or decree that can be adopted; Tools limited.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: System must be clear enough to facilitate implementation; Graduate students assessment; Expert team work with the appropriate guidance for each universities; Dissemination of regulation about QA and mechanisms for its implementation; Collaboration with partners from abroad. This action is a continuous task and requires long-term development</p> <p>EXAMPLE: ASEAN university network; QA and NQF; AQNE</p>	2023
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360. Teaching standards for university level lecturers are developed and implemented.	KPI 3.5.1 Best practice guidelines for self-assessment available for all public universities		ESQAC and the NUOL Quality Assurance Unit support other public universities in developing and implementing best practice in conducting annual self-assessments	SYSTEM	IO 5.8: Strengthened TVET management	CHALLENGE: The laboratory still limited; Learning background that lecturers have to teaches doesn't match with his/her education background; To guild curriculum for school not wide and not sustain; The implementation of ratio 1-6-3) standard of higher education has not yet been achieved RECOMMENDATION: Need the decree; Training, and exchange with external stakeholder; Improve human resource capacity building EXAMPLE: Teachers with Bachelor and Master degrees; The pedagogy training program for teachers; Pedagogy learning teaching strategies	2023
	KPI 3.6.1 Accreditaion achieved		Facilitation of the implementation of a quality management system for education in the Universities		IO 5.10: Strengthened university teaching and research programmes in 9th NSEDP priority areas		
			Post-secondary focal group to issue guidance for universities on how to conduct and use effective tracer studies				

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370. Higher employability rates and adaptation of competences to labor market needs	KPI 3.7.1 Accreditaion achieved	STRATEGY 3.6. Employability and links with job market still is a serious challenge for the Higher Education system in Lao PDR. IROs should contribute to this issue by engaging with programmes and international donors that work within this field.	Develop a regulatory framework for mixed-mode (distance and local) education and on-line learning to provide university-level programmes.	SYSTEM	IO 5.11: Universities and quality assurance units conduct annual self-assessments	<p>CHALLENGES: Lack of competitive skills of graduate student to compete in the labour market; Limited communication skill and collaboration ability; Teaching and learning in university too theoretical; Academic curriculum doesn't meet market needs; Limited collaboration with private sector also with industry and universities; There is no continuity to conduct traceability study of graduate students; Inadequate quality for teaching and learning</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Curricula and learning materials development with employer to meet employer requirement; Improve quality of teaching and learning; Conduct labour market survey; Promote collaboration with ASEAN members; International cooperation for joint research</p> <p>EXAMPLE: SSHEP traceability study of graduate students; Improve curricula to meet national curricula standard and the national qualification framework</p>	2023
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* N/A for UHS IRO due to human resource and budget

** N/A for UHS IRO due to lack of budget

*** N/A for UHS due to insufficient human resource and budget

**** UHS is in medical field and its partners curricula, implementation conditional to a number of factors

+ N/A for IRO of UHS due to interference with upper secondary school.

++ N/A for UHS.



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