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*Article*

## **Challenges to Provincial Education Strategic Plan Preparation in Cambodia**

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### **Abstract**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) has been reforming the education system through strengthening educational planning and management at national level and provincial level since 1999. In 2006, MOEYS encouraged Provincial of Education offices (POEs) to formulate the provincial of the education strategic plans (PESP) 2007–2009 with the aim of strengthening the quality of education and management in the education sector. In 2014, MOEYS encouraged the POEs to formulate provincial education strategic plans (PESP 2015–2017) again. However, this strategy still has some challenges, such as the limited capacity development of officers specialized in aspect of planning and statistic at POEs, poor knowledge and skills in education sector diagnosis (ESD) analysis and a lack of technical support from the national level. Thus, it is very important to improve the process of the PESP preparation at the provincial level in order to be effective. This study was made to (1) identify the procedures for ESP preparation at the provincial level in Cambodia; (2) identify the challenges of ESP preparation at provincial

level in Cambodia; and (3) formulate strategies to address the challenges of ESP preparation at provincial level in Cambodia.

The findings of this study show that the challenges to the education strategic plan (ESP) preparation process at provincial level are related to (a) a lack of knowledge of the procedures for how to prepare an ESP, (b) a lack of technical support provided from the national level, (c) planning officers having limited capacity in the use of planning concepts and statistics, (d) limited participation from stakeholders involved in ESP preparation (joint steering committee, technical working groups (officers in each offices at POEs) and development partners (NGOs at the local level), (d) frequent staff turnover, (e) some data are not reliable for minority groups, especially in the plateau and mountain areas

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## **Introduction**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) has been reforming the education sector since 1999 with ESP 2001–2005, the first plan formulated under, initiated and led by the Minister of Education and Secretary of State. The process has involved extensive internal consultations within MOEYS through four policy task forces, ongoing consultations with the Ministries of Economy and Finance, Planning and the Interior as well as the Public Administrative Reform Council (PAR). In addition to this, MOEYS formulated the Education for All (EFA) Plan of Cambodia in 2003–2015 and ESPs for 2006–2010; 2009–2013 and 2014–018 on the national level with the purpose of strengthening the quality of education and education management in order to respond to the country’s changing labor market and social economic needs.

In 2008, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) established a Royal Decree of the National Committee for Democratic Development (NCDD) to coordinate and lead the implementation of a decentralization and de-concentration policy. It has also established a National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (NP-SNDD) in 2010 that transfers the decision-making power concerning education and development from national to local levels (communities and the private

sector). The MOEYS has been encouraging the provincial of education offices (POEs) to prepare their own education strategic plan (ESP), budget strategic plan (BSP) and annual operational plan (AOP), with the aim of improving the quality of education, responding to the national ESP 2014–2018, the National Strategy Development Plan (NSDP) 2014–2018 and achieving the Government’s Rectangular Strategy.

According to the report of the Formulation Mission on Basic Legislation for Decentralized Commune Councils (Roome 1998), the transfer of decision-making about education and development from a centralized government body to the provincial groups’ involves (i) financial decentralization through according substantial budgetary autonomy (including the means to generate revenue internally) to intermediate and local levels; (ii) administrative decentralization, comprising the dispersal of decision-making power to lower levels; and (iii) political decentralization, comprising the transfer of policy and legislative powers from the central government to democratically elected, autonomous, sub-national assemblies. Decisions will be made much more quickly when they do not need to go through a long bureaucratic process (for example, from an individual school through several intermediary offices to the central level) but can be made at a level close to the school (Roome 1998: 10).

MOEYS is responsible for overseeing the technical aspects of ESP implementation and monitoring. The Minister and MOEYS senior management meet regularly at the Program Management Committee (PMC) to review the sector’s progress and present an annual report to the Education Congress. The report to the congress may propose changes to the ESP monitoring framework.

Throughout 1999 and 2000, MOEYS also mobilized consultative processes with provincial and district education staff and community representatives on policy priorities. This process included discussions with the National Parents Association Forum (NPAF) in late 2000 and regular consultations with development partners. MOEYS has also encouraged Provincial of Education Offices (POEs) to contribute to the formulation of the ESP 2015–2017. In this regard, MOEYS has prepared three-year rolling BSPs and AOPs since 2008 for the national level, AOPs for POEs since 2011 and AOPs for District of Education Offices (DOEs) in 2014.

MOEYS is committed to speeding up education reform with the

help of development partners such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the EU, Sweden, Sida, Save the Children, and the NGO Education Partnership (NEP). The ministry recognizes the importance of well-planned and genuine participation of provincial and district authorities, school staff, parents, community groups, and the private sector for participation in education reform.

The Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018 for the national level has been officially announced for implementation. ESP 2014–2018 identified a need to develop provincial ESPs, reflecting the priorities and interventions needed at the national level, including setting indicators and targets.

According to the guideline for provincial ESP preparation in 2014 (MOEYS 2014c:1) and the framework of the government's process reforms (including the programs for public financial management reform, democratic development reform, and public administrative reform), the education sector is required to establish a framework that clearly delineates the responsibilities at the national and provincial level with the purpose of identifying (1) support requirements and participation for all stakeholders in this process, and (2) The funds required for management, implementation and monitoring. Based on the national result and preparation of Provincial of the Education Strategic Plans (PESP) 2015–2017, the BSP will include all expenditures at the provincial level and will be a tool for reflecting the relationship between strategic policies and targets at the national level and their transformation into programmatic feasibility and management.

This study was made to (1) identify the procedures for PESP preparation process; (2) identify the challenges of PESP preparation process; and (3) to formulate the strategies to address the challenges of PESP preparation process in Cambodia.

### **Key concepts in education policy analysis (education policy analysis)**

In the process of education policy development, various documents are produced. Operational policy documents can be briefly described as follows: (i) a national education policy establishes the main goals and priority issues so that specific aspects such as access, quality and teachers can be developed to achieve the objectives; (ii) a strategy specifies how the policy objectives are to be achieved; and (iii) a plan defines the targets, programs and activities to be implemented and the timeline,

responsibilities and resources required to realize the policy and strategy (Yano 2013). Before the start of a policy cycle, a strategic intent, often called a “vision,” is formed. The education policy cycle has four steps. Step 1 focuses on an analysis of the situation and general background, while Step 2 involves preparing a plan and identifies priority issues, an implementation strategy, program and activities, and a budget for implementation. In Step 3, planned and budgeted activities are implemented to achieve the targets according to the agreed timeline and responsibilities. Step 4 is the evaluation stage, where the activities are regularly monitored and reviewed and adjustments are made when necessary (Yano 2013).

### **Conceptual framework for education policy analysis**

There are two essential dimensions of policymaking: who does it (the actors) and how it is done (the process). C. Lindblom and D. K. Cohen (1979) laid out the differences between the synoptic and incremental methods of policy-making. The synoptic method involves one single central planning authority for the whole society and combines the political and social economic domains into one integrated planning process. The incremental method, in contrast, relies less on interaction than on a complete analysis of the situation to solve the challenges. The incremental approach is also focused on policy options based on highly uncertain and fluid knowledge and in response to a dynamic situation. It assumes (a) that the problem at hand does not go beyond man’s cognitive capacities, (b) there exist agreed criteria (rather than social conflict on values) by which solutions can be judged and (c) that the problem-solvers have adequate incentives to stay with synoptic analysis until it is completed (rather than ‘regress’ to using incremental planning). G. T. Allison (1971) developed two alternative models to the commonly assumed model of the unitary rational policy-maker: (a) the organizational process model and (b) the governmental politics model (Haddad & Demky 1995).

Education policy analysis framework consists of seven policy-planning processes, the first four of which deal with policy-making, the fifth with planning, and the sixth and seventh with policy adjustment (Haddad & Demky 1995). The conceptual framework for education policy analysis focuses on formulation, evaluation, adoption, implementation, assessing impact, adjustment, and the new policy cycle. This framework for the education policy analysis process considers national priorities, the education sector, and the social political structure as part of the situation analysis, research, induction, negotiation, ad hoc opinions, and value

judgments in order to develop policy options for implementation that will solve the problems faced.

### **Principles for the effective preparation of an education sector plan**

According to the GPE/UNESCO IIEP Guideline for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal (GPE/UNESCO IIEP 2012:7), there are three essential elements of the plan preparation process: (1) a participatory process; (2) a well-organized process; and (3) a capacity-development process. A participatory process is a process to design the education sector plan based on political will and technical expertise that can identify the balance between political ambitions and technical constraints in order to raise awareness and gain the commitment of education stakeholders. The process should involve participation from the relevant ministries, especially the Ministry of Finance, and development partners. A well-organized process should design a structure for education sector preparation and organize the roles and responsibilities of actors to coordinate the process with a steering committee, planning committee, and technical working groups. A capacity development process should improve the capacity for educational planning and the motivation of all education planners at all levels to strengthen education sector plan preparation (GPE/UNESCO IIEP 2012: 7).

According to the GPE/UNESCO IIEP guideline for education sector plan preparation and appraisal (GPE/UNESCO IIEP 2012: 9), education sector plan preparation is an iterative planning process. Targets can be revised after they are tested in a simulation model. Strategies can be set through the program's activities and resources. The education sector plan preparation process should involve consultation with education administration personnel and development partners.

In the preparation phase, the contextual, political, capacity and financial factors should be considered. The education sector plan preparation process should take around 12 to 24 months, according to whether data are available or not. The main phases of education sector plan development process have to consider the education sector's situation analysis, develop priorities and targets for policy and strategy, design programs and activities, estimate costing and financing, develop an action plan, and finance and design a monitoring and evaluation framework (GPE/UNESCO IIEP 2012: 9).

### **Structure of the educational planning and management in Cambodia**

MOEYS has a vision to establish and develop human resources of the very highest quality and ethics in order to develop a knowledge-based society within Cambodia. In order to achieve this vision, MOEYS has the mission to lead, manage and develop the Education, Youth and Sport sub-sectors in Cambodia in response to the socioeconomic and cultural development needs of its people and the reality of regionalization and globalization. One of MOEYS' long-term objectives is to achieve the holistic development of Cambodia's young people. In addition to this, the Ministry wants to engender a sense of national and civic pride and ensure its citizens have high moral and ethical standards. MOEYS has a strong belief in young people's responsibility for the country and its citizens (MOEYS 2013: 12).

Educational planning in Cambodia has been formulated at the national level since 1999, primarily through the ESP. Provincial plans are based on the national plan. In ESP 2014–2018, the MOEYS required the POEs to produce the provincial of the Education Strategic Plan 2015-2017, Provincial of the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) by 2011; and MOEYS requires DOEs to produce the District of the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) by 2014.

The National Program for Sub-National Development (NP-SNDD), led by the National Committee for Democratic Development (NCDD) provides the framework for the decentralization and de-concentration activities. During the ESP 2014–2018 period, sub-national change accelerated, with further transfer of management and cross-sectorial functions to the provincial, municipal, district, community, and school levels.

In 2014 there will be pilots in a number of provinces and districts to transfer several functions to local governments. These pilots will assess how the decentralization process can be best implemented countrywide during the following years (ESP 2014-2018:14).

The administrative structure of MOEYS is as follows: the national level is divided into six Directorate General departments comprised of 31 technical departments. MOEYS administration distinguishes these into three types at the national level, at the central, sub-sector, and technical department level. At the central level, MOEYS has responsibility for and oversight of the technical aspects of ESP implementation and monitoring. The Minister and MOEYS senior management meet regularly at the

Program Management Committee (PMC) to review the sector's progress and present an annual report to the Education Congress. The report to the Congress may propose changes to the ESP and to the monitoring framework. At the sub-sector level, each of the sub-sectors is accountable to a Secretary of State or an Undersecretary of State. The Secretary or Undersecretary of State is supported by a contact point who is a Director General or Deputy Director General. The sub-sector is operated through a sub-sector working group that includes all of the technical departments that are instrumental in the implementation of the policy and strategic frameworks. The organization and roles within the sub-sector may change depending on the ESP implementation experience. Each working group will prepare terms of reference. They will prepare a multi-year and annual operational plan. The Department of Planning will act as a formal facilitator of the sub-sectors' organization. At the technical department level, the role of the technical department is to provide support to the provincial and district staff in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the ESP programs and in the preparation of the provincial ESP.

At the provincial level, there are 25 provincial and municipal education services. MOEYS administration distinguishes these into three types of provinces:

- Large provinces: There are five large provinces: Kandal, Prey Veng, Takeo, Battambang, and Phnom Penh, with a total number of education staff (teaching and non-teaching) of more than 5,000. It has many offices: administration; personnel and training; planning and aid management; accounting, materials and state asset; pre-education and primary education; lower and upper secondary education; non-formal education and vocational training; examination; youth; sport; and inspection.
- Medium provinces: There are 11 medium provinces: Kampong Cham, Tbong Khmoum, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kampot, Kampong Thom, Svay Rieng, Kratie, Pursat, Banteay Meanchey, and Siem Reap, with a total number of education staff of between 1,000 to 5,000. It has the same range of offices as the large provinces, except for the following offices: aid management, state assets, lower and upper secondary education, and examination.
- Small provinces: There are nine small provinces: Sihanouk, Kep, Pailin, Koh Kong, Steung Treng, Mondulakiri, Rattanakiri, Preah



Vihea and Oddar Meanchey, with a total number of education staff of less than 1,000. It has the same range of offices as the medium provinces. At the district level, there are 197 districts and precincts education services. MOEYS administration does not distinguish between the different numbers of offices in each district/precinct. It has the following offices: pre-education and primary education; non-formal education and vocational training; youth and sport; and administration, personnel and accounting sections.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of this study was conducted using a qualitative method which was classified into four categories: in-depth interviews, observation method, document review and focus group interviews with policy-makers, education strategic plan developers and the main stakeholders who are in charge of the provincial education strategic plan preparation process. This study is descriptive. It is a qualitative study using both primary and secondary data.

The study employed qualitative research techniques and analysis as “it attempts to explore and describe, explain and predict” (McQueen and Knussen, 2002, 27). Qualitative studies are used to learn about people and events in their own context (Weiss, 1998, 252). This type of study can capture stories and perceptions of people involved in the thematic context, not just looking at numbers. Descriptive data reflects the experiences and ideas of people that lie at the center of a qualitative research (Patton, 2002, 4–5). While qualitative methods are often considered as less rigorous than quantitative approaches, qualitative studies provide different rigors of their own and should not be disregarded (Flyvbjerg, 2007, 398).

Primary data was acquired through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and observation. Secondary data were collected from MOEYS and POEs. To review the guidelines on PESP preparation at the national and provincial levels; and to review the reports on the progress and challenges for preparing education strategic plan at the provincial level.

### **Findings and suggestions**

The interviews and discussions with DoP and officers in charge of planning at POEs about the challenges in PESP preparation process were analyzed. The findings of the study illustrated that the process of education strategic plan preparation at the provincial level still has some challenges. Of the 25 provinces in Cambodia, only eight provinces are able to prepare a PESP well (Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kompong Cham,

Kandal, Prey Veng, Kampot, and Preash Vihear provinces), with the remaining 17 provinces still facing challenges with the PESP preparation process as following;

**(1) Lack of knowledge of procedures for how to prepare PESP:**

In 2014 MOEYS issued a legislation letter, clearly outlining the framework and guidelines for PESP preparation for POEs, which the POEs were able to use as references for PESP preparation at the provincial level. As part of the framework and guidelines for the PESP preparation process, MOEYS created the PESP Task Force (TF), with clear roles and responsibilities for the PESP preparation process. The PESP TF is led by the director of the POE and its members are the PEO's senior manager, planning and aid management officer, technical officers and representatives from development partners (DPs). The PESP TF is in charge of decision-making on all content in the PESP as well as managing and orienting the PESP preparation process and mobilizing the resources to support the process. The PESP TF has a secretariat which runs all of the processes of PESP preparation. The secretariat is led by the deputy director of the POE, some technical officers, planning and aid management officer and representatives from development partners. The secretariat has the responsibility of drafting the PESP document plan, conducting and coordinating the consultation workshop and other meetings, preparing reports regularly for the technical or sub-sector working group, and coordinating with the central level concerning the technical requirements of the PESP preparation process.

In the PESP preparation process, POEs followed MOEYS' PESP preparation guideline. POEs formulated the PESP task force and sub-sector working group in 2014 as the framework provided by MoEYS in order to develop their PESP. The PEO sub-sector working group used the PESP guidelines to review and discuss the prioritization of policy strategies and indicators. The PESP task force also is responsible for (i) preparing budget requirements and (ii) conducting consultation workshop with DOEs and schools to collect inputs to revise the first and final drafts of the PESP for approval from PEO directors, and (iii) for publishing and implementation the plan.

POEs have to design the structure of the education sector preparation and organize the roles and responsibilities of the technical or sub-sector working groups to coordinate the process as a steering committee, planning committee, and technical working groups to focus on the sub-sector as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the financial

requirements and resources in order for the PESP preparation process to run smoothly. However, POEs staff lack understanding about the procedures for ESP preparation process. The PESP task forces are not well organized. In order to perform well, the PESP TF should design an action plan, timeframe, meetings, encourage stakeholder participation, and obtain technical support from the national level to help prepare the PESP TF meet its responsibilities.

PESP TFs should select planning officers who have a background in educational planning and management to improve and ensure the PESP preparation process will run smoothly. In addition to this, POEs should motivate and upgrade staff by providing opportunities to attend local and international training courses in educational planning and management. POEs also can use the Provincial Joint Technical Working Group (PJTWG) for support and consultation in the PESP preparation process because the PJTWG is a significant actor in educational planning and management, budgeting, implementation and reporting tasks. The POE should also enhance the partnership between the government and DPs in term of resource mobilization and increased funds for the education sector.

**(2). Lack of technical support from the national level.** Technical support from the national level should be provided in response to the challenges faced at the provincial level. The main issue is coordination and support between the national and provincial levels, which needs to be strengthened. The national and provincial levels did not set up a common timeframe for participating in and supporting the PESP preparation process and there was not enough mentoring and coaching provided to the POE staff who are in charge of planning preparation process. MOEYS should provide a clear framework and guidelines for the PESP preparation process at the provincial level. It should conduct more orientation workshops on how to prepare the PESP. MOEYS should review the mechanism, supporting process and coordination of how they respond to the needs of PEOs in terms of the educational planning process and PESP preparation process at the provincial level.

In terms of coordination, consultation and providing support, technical departments and POEs should set a common timeframe for participation and support where MOEYS on the national level consults on the PESP preparation process and assist with some techniques in the PESP process. MOEYS should provide technical support in educational planning

to help the POEs through providing workshop training, orientation and consultations and conducting meetings with PESP teams to improve the quality of the PESP.

MOEYS should review the mechanism, guidelines and framework for providing technical support to assist POEs strengthen their plans at the provincial level. Moreover, MOEYS and POEs should set a schedule and action plan for workshops and/or orientations as well as mentoring, coaching and meeting to discuss the PESP preparation process and any challenges that have been faced in the process.

**(3) Planning officers have limited capacity in the use of planning concepts and statistics:** POE staff are key for the smooth operations of the PESP preparation process. MOEYS has set up the Capacity Development Master Plan 2011–2015, 2014–2018 (CD Master Plan) with support from the CDPF fund with the objective of strengthening the capacity of officers at all levels. However, there is not yet any CD Master Plan at the POE level for strengthening the capacity development of POE officers. MOEYS and the Department of Planning provided workshop trainings on the educational planning and management to focus on education sector diagnosis (ESD) and statistic and education indicators. The training workshop included content relevant to the analysis and interpretation of the indicators of education statistics, analyzing access to education, internal and external efficiency, quality, and simulation models as designed for the Cambodian context (Cambodia Analysis and Projection CANPRO). The Department of Planning provided orientation to the POE officers in charge of planning and stakeholders involved in education sector at the provincial level on how to prepare the PESP, the AOP, and the BSP for the POEs. However, its officers still have limited capacity in specialized aspects of educational planning and education statistic because of frequent staff turnover, meaning that new staff are often starting while other officers are leaving. Hence, MOEYS and POEs should set up a system for developing human resources to focus on their analysis capacity, educational planning, monitoring and evaluation at the PEO level and develop a comprehensive capacity development master plan for the ministry and provincial levels.

MOEYS should establish an institute for educational planning or develop or upgrade the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the Royal of University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) to be institutes of educational planning to provide academic credits for learners, to improve and strengthen the capacity of officers in educational planning, and to increase

the numbers of officers who have a background in education planning. MOEYS should delegate that NIE or RUPP provide the educational program related to educational planning and management in terms of academic study so that officers can achieve credits to gain a certificate in the field of educational planning and management. DOP should take the roles and responsibilities to conduct further orientation workshop on how to prepare the PESP, AOP, and BSP in actual practice to help POEs to improve their skill and plans. MOEYS has to provide technical support for the Department of Planning to help POEs.

In reality, POEs have a shortage of officers specialized in aspects of the educational planning and management, thus POEs need to improve the capacity of officers to address these challenges by providing workshops, training and orientation on educational planning, statistics and management. For example, in education sector diagnosis (ESD) of Module 4, IIEP 2014/2015 and CANPRO model to assist in the PESP preparation process.

**(4). Limited participation from stakeholders involved in ESP preparation: the joint steering committee, the technical working group (officers in each office at POEs) and development partners (NGOs at the local level):** The lack of participation and responsibility from stakeholders involved in ESP preparation is a challenge faced in the PESP preparation process. All stakeholders, such as the joint steering committee, technical working groups, officers in each office at POEs, and development partners (NGOs at the local level) are not fully participating in the ESP preparation process. They have other tasks to do that are more interesting. Sometimes, all stakeholders attend meetings but they have no ideas or comments on improving the plan. The secretariat of the POE invited the focal point of the ESP working group to attending a meeting on ESP preparation, but the line technical departments sent other people instead. MOEYS and POEs should motivate staff through awards or incentives to attend the ESP preparation and explain to them the value of ESP for implementation and its links with the budget. Moreover, POEs should encourage development partners at the sub-national level to participate and discuss the issues faced in the education sector.

**(5). Frequent turnover of planning officers and a shortage of time for preparation:** Staff turnover is a key challenge faced by POEs in the PESP preparation. Every year, staff at POEs move to new places for their work. According to the law on civil service, all public civil servants can change their workplace to other seats. Sometime, staff are moved to

other POE offices or moved to other departments, while others move out of the MOEYS. POEs did not well followed the norm of teacher deployment. MOEYS should consider the mechanisms and procedures in place for staff deployment and should establish a policy and guidelines on staff and teacher deployment. POEs should prepare a procedure for improving the capacity of officers in educational planning to replace the staff that now work elsewhere. POEs should allow staff to sign contracts of employment and follow the civil service law of Cambodia.

**(6). Some data are not reliable for minorities group (especially in the plateau and mountain areas) and there is a low capacity to undertake an education sector diagnosis:** Some data are not reliable in the high land, plateau and mountain areas. The mechanism of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) department to collect data and information from schools in remote areas, especially in the high land, plateau and mountain, still faces challenges. POEs seem to not fully cooperate with DOEs and schools for data-gathering, in particular from schools in disadvantaged areas. Therefore, MOEYS should strengthen and review the mechanism of collecting data and information from schools. POEs should ensure they cooperate with DOEs and schools to collect information and data to place in the system and submit to the EMIS department. POEs should make a strong commitment to collect data and information from schools in disadvantaged areas. POEs, DOEs and schools should follow the Article 1 of Cambodia's statistics law states that this law aimed at the management which relating to the collection, processing, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical data. This law pertains to the whole country, as Article 3 of statistic law states that the statistical development is based on the principles of accuracy, independence, objectivity, reliability, relevance and timeliness.

### **Conclusion**

The ESP development at the provincial level largely followed the guidelines provided by MOEYS, such as PESP, BSP, AOP, and Program Budgeting (PB) for the provincial level. All of these plans must be linked to achieve the policy objectives of the national ESP 2014–2018 and the national strategic development plan (NSDP 2014–2018). However, POEs face challenges in developing these plans. Therefore, POEs need to create a task force and secretariat for PESP preparation, and all staff that are in charge of planning should be trained and oriented on PESP preparation

processes such as Education Sector Diagnosis (ESD) data collection, and the use of the CANPRO simulation model.

MOEYS has encouraged POEs to formulate the PESP at provincial level since 2014 to strengthen the quality of education and administration, to respond to the national ESP 2014–2018, and the NSDP 2014–2018, and to achieve government policy. Therefore, POEs should consider how to prepare their PESPs to run smoothly and to be effective. However, POEs still are concerned about their knowledge concerning the procedure for preparing the education strategic plan at the provincial level, the capacity of planning officers in specialized aspects of planning and statistics, the technical support received from the national level, that some data is not reliable in high land, plateau and mountain areas, and the frequency of staff turnover.

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