

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY ON THE SDGs

# Lao PDR



## Respondent Profile

### Some details on the respondent:

A representative from the Ministry of Education and Sports accomplished the ARC9 survey. The respondent is involved in the priority setting, drafting, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. Based on their self-evaluation, their knowledge of SDG-related concepts varies from Intermediate to Expert levels. On the other hand, their knowledge of existing higher education policies aimed at contributing to the SDGs is at the Expert level.

## Understanding the National Context

### Who do you expect to be most responsible in pushing forward the implementation of the SDGs in higher education in your country? Is there a department/agency in-charge of such efforts and what are the priorities?

- By order of responsibility, the higher education institutions (HEIs) are seen as the primary actor responsible in pushing forward SDG-related efforts, followed by civil society.
- Government's primary role in the implementation of the SDGs in higher education is establishing a common vision and strategy. By order of importance given by the respondent, this is followed by enforcing regulations, building capacity, providing reputational incentives, and providing funding opportunities.
  1. Establish a common vision and strategy
  2. Enforce regulations (e.g. accreditation requirements, audits, non-binding policy statements)
  3. Build capacity (special units advising, tools for self-assessment, optional institutional reviews, guidelines)
  4. Provide reputational incentives (e.g. national ranking, labels, awards)
  5. Provide funding opportunities
- There is a department/agency responsible for implementing the SDGs in higher education at the national level which is the Ministry of Education and Sport's Department of Higher Education.

### Are there policy documents for higher education's response to the SDGs? What are some obstacles faced by HEIs in contributing to the SDGs?

The Ministry is currently developing a policy document to serve as guide in directing higher education's response to the SDGs in the country.

In terms of obstacles faced by universities, they are mostly strategic (lack of or unclear strategy on the SDGs) and structural (lack of time, funding, human resources, infrastructure) in nature. They also encounter perception issues that may reflect lack of interest and limited view of the SDGs, as well as knowledge issues stemming from lack of information, awareness, or knowledge of the SDGs and the UN 2030 Agenda.

### What are the top 5 SDG priorities for higher education in your country?

- The Ministry's top 5 SDG priorities in higher education are SDG4: Quality Education, SDG5: Gender Equality, SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG3: Good Health and Wellbeing.

Priority 1	SDG 4	Quality Education
Priority 2	SDG 5	Gender Equality
Priority 3	SDG 9	Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
Priority 4	SDG 8	Decent Work and Economic Growth

Priority 5 | SDG3 Good Health and Wellbeing

## Policy Tools

**What policy tools are used to encourage HEIs to address the SDGs in your country? What specific higher education area do they target?**

- The Ministry employs a number of policy tools to encourage universities to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs primarily in the area of campus operations and governance. These policy tools are:
  - **Financial support or budget allocation**
  - **Access to facilities and infrastructure**
  - **Special units advising and guidelines**
  - **Legal obligations**

	Education & Teaching	Research	Campus Operations & Governance	Partnerships and Societal Engagement
Financial support or budget allocation			x	
National rankings, labels and awards				
Access to facilities and infrastructure			x	
Special units advising and guidelines			x	
Tools for self-assessment				
Optional institutional reviews				
Legal obligations			x	
Accreditation requirements				
Audit, monitoring, or evaluation				

- No specific example was given on the Ministry’s use of policy tools to encourage HEI contributions to the SDGs. No applicable inputs were also provided on the SDGs targeted by specific types of policy tools in place in Lao PDR’s higher education sector.

## Contextualising Higher Education Policies for SDGs

**What steps has your country taken to contextualize the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in its higher education context? Which partners were involved in these steps?**

- To contextualise SDG-related policies, the Ministry has partnered with fellow central/national government authorities in taking the following policy steps: undertaking multi-stakeholder consultations, reviewing national plans and strategies, mapping, prioritising, and adapting targets, mainstreaming concepts into existing or new strategies, evaluation of the implementation or impact

of policies, and establishing monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up to the SDGs.

- Established governance and coordination mechanisms
  - Undertook multi-stakeholder consultations
  - Reviewed national plans and strategies
  - Mapped targets
  - Prioritized and adapted targets
  - Mainstreamed into existing or new strategies
  - Assessing interlinkages, synergies, and tradeoffs
  - Evaluated the implementation or impact of policies
  - Established monitoring arrangements for reporting and follow-up to the SDGs
- The Ministry has involved central/national government authorities in all of the steps above.
- For certain steps, the Ministry **worked with HEIs and think-tanks**. These steps are establishing governance and coordination mechanisms and assessing interlinkages, synergies, and tradeoffs.

## Sources

The information was provided by the **Ministry of Education and Sports**, as of 26 October 2022.

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