

NEQMAP's 2020 Steering Group Meeting

Date: Monday 23rd November 2020 | **Time:** 13:00-14:15hrs. Bangkok Time | **Platform:** Microsoft Teams

Meeting notes and discussion points

The NEQMAP Secretariat together with the NEQMAP Steering Group (SG) met online to discuss NEQMAP's current and future activities (2020~) as well as to brainstorm ideas and discuss the preparation of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

1. General feedback and comments on NEQMAP's 2020 activities

The Secretariat provided a quick recap of the 2020 activities, across its three pillars: Capacity Building, Research and Analysis, and Knowledge Sharing. The SG members provided some questions and feedback to this, including:

- The SG would like to see more engagement from UNESCO country/field offices in NEQMAP activities or with NEQMAP members. This would be one way to strengthen the network's capacity building efforts, as well as strengthening education quality initiatives at national level. One good example is the inclusion of UNESCO field office staff from Afghanistan & Uzbekistan working with the national teams in the NEQMAP-ACER online course.
- The SG offered to help to connecting and engaging stakeholders/partners/members in their regions with UNESCO Field Offices. For example, Dr. Esther Sui Chu Ho offered to assist in targeting more experts (scholars, researchers) from mainland China (Beijing, Shanghai).
- The SG and Secretariat agreed that NEQMAP activities should continue to be open to people outside of the network (as applicable), and not exclusively for NEQMAP members.
- The Secretariat noted the current state of funding for the network activities. GPE's funding to NEQMAP ended December 31, 2020. There will be no external funding yet for the year 2021 and for the near future, placing an emphasis on the need for in-kind contributions.

2. NEQMAP's 2020 Annual Meeting preparation

The Secretariat prepared tentative agenda that included sessions, times, suggested topics and themes, breakout discussion plans and the guiding questions for the network members to discuss in groups. Day 1-2 included sessions on updates from the Secretariat, presenting the 2020 thematic reviews, updates from network members and the group discussions. The guiding questions for Day 1 focused on how members experienced and responded to the challenges of COVID-19 and Day 2 focused on suggestions and activities of the network. The following were the suggestions and key discussion outcomes:

- Overall meeting arrangement
 - The SG discussed and agreed that i) the fundamental value of NEQMAP is networking so time should be allocated more for group discussions, ii) presentations should be concise and not exceed the agreed time limit, and iii) NEQMAP Secretariat keeps in mind potential technological issues in the breakout rooms and prepare backup solutions.

- The SG and Secretariat agreed to pre-identify moderators and facilitators to assist and lead in the breakout group discussions, ensure the appropriate time of presentations and discussions, and ensure that all participants engage in the group discussions.
- Following the SG meeting, the Secretariat prepared the guidance for facilitators and moderators etc. and organized a preparation session (test-run) with the moderators.
- Discussion topics:
 - The SG agreed on the overall theme, 'Challenges in Monitoring Education Quality in Time of Emergencies' and proposed sessions in the agenda.
 - The SG discussed the guiding questions for the breakout group discussions and suggested to simplify these with clearer and more specific guiding questions to ensure meaningful discussions for the network members and participants.
 - The SG also agreed to share the guiding questions in advance so that participants could prepare their discussion points and share experiences accordingly.

3. NEQMAP's membership matters

- The Secretariat contacted all members to update focal points and contact information in early 2020. Only 47% of the members responded. The Secretariat will continue to contact members for this updated data in 2021, since it is important for the network to strengthen engagement and collaboration.
- The SG members volunteered to assist in following up with the member updates with any relevant colleagues/ institutes in their countries or sub-region.
- One of the SG members from Malaysia, Dr. Nordin Abd Razak, asked whether he should step down due his retirement. The Secretariat will need to look into the process in announcing the call for SG member in 2021.
- The SG noted that the current SG members (6 persons) do not have a government representative (i.e. MOE). It was agreed to try to include these stakeholders with the new SG members.