



## CONTEXT

Across the Asia-Pacific region, learners are navigating increasingly complex and diverse educational environments shaped by rapid technological, social, and environmental change. While many countries have expanded access to education, significant disparities in learning outcomes persist—particularly among disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

The [Asia-Pacific Education 2030: SDG 4 Midterm Review \(2024\)](#) highlights that the quality of basic education across the region continues to pose a major challenge. Gains in student learning, especially regarding the percentage of learners attaining minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, have been limited, and in several cases, performance has declined since 2015.

In this context, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), led by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat and its partners, serves as a critical regional initiative. SEA-PLM is a regional, large-scale learning assessment and capacity-building programme designed by and for Southeast Asian countries to monitor, track, and enhance student learning outcomes. One of the programme's strategic priorities post-2024 is the utilization of SEA-PLM results to advance evidence-informed policymaking and data-driven practices aimed at improving student learning outcomes in basic education systems.

In Southeast Asia, findings from the [SEA-PLM 2019 assessment](#) (2020) involving Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam, revealed wide country disparities in proficiency demonstrated in all three domains: reading, writing, and mathematics. While Malaysia and Viet Nam have large proportions of students meeting expected proficiency, most students in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines struggle across all three domains. These findings highlight urgent needs for systemic improvement in foundational learning while also developing broader competencies such as global citizenship, digital literacy, and socio-emotional skills.

Amid these evolving dynamics, the Network for Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP), coordinated by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and Office for UN Coordination for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO Bangkok), plays a vital role in promoting evidence-based approaches to improving education quality. The network contributes to the Learning and Education 2030+ (LE2030+) Networking Group, the SDG 4 regional coordination mechanism within the UN Regional Collaborative Platform, aimed at fostering full collaboration and coordination to drive systematic and transformative progress toward achieving SDG4. By bringing together experts, government agencies, research institutions, and civil society organizations, NEQMAP fosters regional cooperation in the use of student learning assessments to monitor and enhance educational outcomes. The network also emphasizes the integration of curriculum and pedagogy as key enablers of learning, recognizing their importance alongside robust assessment systems.

With support from UNESCO Bangkok and SEAMEO, on 8-9 July 2025, NEQMAP will host its Annual Meeting to review the year's activities from members and plan activities for the way forward. This

gathering serves as a unique platform for NEQMAP members to share, discuss and learn from each other's research, practices and experiences to advance the quality of learning assessment in the Asia-Pacific.

The Annual Meeting will draw on insights and momentum from a series of recent key regional and global education milestones. These include the adoption of the [UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development](#) (Nov 2023), [6th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 \(APMED 6\)](#) (September 2024) and the [2024 Global Education Meeting \(GEM\)](#) (October 2024). These events provided critical insights, innovative strategies, and collaborative opportunities that can be leveraged during the NEQMAP Annual Meeting. By building on the outcomes of these significant gatherings, NEQMAP members will be able to align their initiatives with regional and global education agendas, ensuring that their efforts contribute meaningfully to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all.

In this context, the NEQMAP Annual Meeting also acknowledges the value of complementary regional initiatives, including the SEA-PLM programme. Together with NEQMAP's focus on capacity development, knowledge sharing, and systemic improvement in learning assessment, such initiatives enrich the broader landscape of efforts to monitor and enhance education quality across the Asia-Pacific.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

**The NEQMAP 2025 annual meeting has three main objectives:**



To promote knowledge sharing between NEQMAP members on effective policies, topical case studies, regional tools including SEA-PLM, and practices in learning assessment



To further strengthen NEQMAP's capacity building and research around the key themes



To decide on the NEQMAP 2026 priority areas of work and modalities of collaboration

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- NEQMAP members identify shared capacity-building needs and agree on collaborative actions to reinforce regional expertise and innovation in learning assessment, knowledge-sharing, and research.
- Participants share and document effective policies, tools, and practices in learning assessment, particularly those informed by SEA-PLM, leading to a consolidated repository of approaches across NEQMAP member countries
- Consensus is reached on the priority areas of work for NEQMAP in 2026, providing a clear roadmap that reflects regional needs, emerging trends, and opportunities for collective impact.

## SESSIONS' CONTENT

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSIONS

In keeping with the tradition of NEQMAP's Annual Meetings being a central platform for the exchange of experiences and research between members and partners, the NEQMAP 2025 Annual Meeting will organize several knowledge-sharing sessions. For each session, the Secretariat identified emerging topics that are relevant for learning assessment in Asia-Pacific countries. NEQMAP members were invited to sign-up to share relevant research or policy experiences on the identified topics (see Box 1 for further details). Two or three presentations per topic will be selected (7 min per presentation).

The themes are:

- Digital Tools and AI for Learning Quality Monitoring
- Equitable, Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Assessment Practices
- Beyond Foundational Skills – Integrating 21st Century Competencies, Global Citizenship and ESD in Learning Quality Monitoring

### **BOX 1: CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO PRESENT AT THE KNOWLEDGE-SHARING SESSIONS**

NEQMAP members were invited to express their interest in presenting at the knowledge-sharing sessions through a call for proposals. Selected presentations will highlight compelling practices and research for NEQMAP.

The presentations (7 minutes) will be in English and may use PowerPoints and/or other visualizations.

The presentations will be featured during the meeting in alignment with NEQMAP's priorities.

## **EVIDENCE-TO-POLICY LINKAGES: Utilizing SEA-PLM data and evidence in improving foundational learning systems**

In addition to the thematic knowledge-sharing sessions, a dedicated session will focus on the strategic use of regional learning assessment data, particularly from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), to inform education policy and strengthen foundational learning systems.

This session will highlight country experiences in translating SEA-PLM data and evidence into concrete policy actions, showcasing promising practices, lessons learned, and common challenges in using large-scale assessment results to drive system-level reforms. The session aims to promote cross-country dialogue and learning on how regional tools like SEA-PLM can support evidence-based decision-making and advance more equitable and effective education outcomes across the region.

## **PRESENTATION AND PEER FEEDBACK ON INITIAL DRAFTS OF 2025 TOPICAL CASE STUDIES**

As part of this knowledge-sharing platform, selected authors of the 2025 NEQMAP Topical Case Studies on “Effective Use of Learning Assessment Data for Improved Equity in Education” will present their draft findings. These case studies aim to explore policies, strategies, and approaches that promote learning through more effective assessment practices. The session will include a collaborative feedback exchange with members and peers, further enriching the regional discourse on education quality.

## **PLANNING FOR 2026**

Building on the knowledge sharing and the discussion during the Annual Meeting, the NEQMAP 2025 Annual Meeting will define the 2026 plan of activities for the Network. Members will be invited to decide and agree on cross-cutting priority areas under NEQMAP's three pillars (knowledge-sharing,

capacity building and research). This decision-making process will take place during moderated break-out discussions and plenaries.

At the end of the Annual Meeting, NEQMAP members are invited to:

- Agree on the work plan for the year 2026.

## REGISTRATION

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://forms.office.com/e/SFAV9T4SgW?origin=lprLink>

## CONTACT

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