Advancing Higher Education in Maldives Through
E-learning Development

6.3 - Policy dialog and recommendations

AMED

Policy dialog and recommendations

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Abstract:	This document, as part of WP6, presents the AMED **Policy dialog and recommendations**. It describes the policy dialogue events conducted and the outcomes and recommendations that resulted from the events.
Key words	Policy, Dialogue

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P2	MNU	The Maldives National University, Maldives	MV
P3	CARNET	Croatian Academic and Research Network	HR
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Summary

This document is the deliverable " D6.3 - Policy dialog and recommendations' ' of the project AMED – Advancing higher Education in the Maldives through E-learning Development (hereinafter also referred to as "AMED").

AMED project is targeted to address two main challenges observed in the Maldives in delivering quality higher education programs to the disadvantaged communities and expanding higher education access across the Maldives. The challenges are; (1) a need for an e-learning system to solve distance and transportation problems and (2) need to improve teacher education. The main aims of the project is to support the modernization, accessibility and internationalization of higher education in the Maldives, by improving the level of competencies and skills of university Teachers by developing new and innovative education programmes in the field of e-learning.

The specific objectives of the project are; co-creation and piloting of a new study programme for professional development focusing on the use of ICT in Education, establishing infrastructure framework for e-learning at The Maldives National University by training of staff, improving IT infrastructure and (re) organization of departments to provide support to e-learning, promotion of new forms of teaching and learning in the Maldives, notably strategic use of open and flexible learning, lifelong learning, virtual mobility, open educational resources and better exploitation of the ICT potential by raising awareness , supporting leadership and engaging early adopters and developing a community of practice.

This document reports the outcomes and recommendations informed by the policy dialogue events conducted with the relevant stakeholders,

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the Project

This document is the deliverable "D 6.1 – Dissemination Plan" of the project AMED – Advancing higher Education in the Maldives through E-learning Development (hereinafter also referred to as "AMED").

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2. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENTS

Five Policy Dialogue events were planned with the purpose to inform and engage the key relevant stakeholders. Consequently, policy dialogue events were planned with the Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Maldives Qualification Authority(MQA), Faculty of Education of the Maldives National University. The main objective of the events were to disseminate information about the project and to discuss how the project results can be used in a sustainable way with the support of the aforementioned stakeholders. Within the project time period, the project team was able to conduct six of the planned policy dialogue events. The policy dialogue event planned with the MQA did not materialize due to unforeseen circumstances.

2.1. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT 1, Ministry of Higher Education

The primary purpose of this event was to meet the policy level staff at the Ministry of Higher Education to disseminate information related to the project activities and how it intends to support E-learning at MNU and in the Maldives in general.

On 25th February, 2020 AMED project team from The Maldives National University met with officials from the Ministry of Higher Education to discuss the project. Ms. Aishath Shaheen Ismail, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, Head of the Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (CETE), and Ms. Fathimath Nasiha, AMED project Manager from CETE from MNU joined this

policy dialogue event. From the Ministry of Higher Education, Fathimath Hilmy, Permanent Secretary, Dr. Abdul Raheem, Director General, Ibrahim Ali, and Moahmed Arif, Assistant Directors joined the session. During the discussions, general information about the project, project outcomes and expectations for the sustainability of the project were the main ideas shared and discussed.

Event: Policy Dialogue Event with Ministry of Higher Education, Maldives

Date: 25th February 2020

Time: 12:00 - 13:00 Hrs.

Attending Members from Ministry of Education:

1. Fathimath Hilmy, Permanent Secretary,
2. Dr. Abdul Raheem, Director General,
3. Ibrahim Ali, Assistant Director
4. Mohamed Arif, Assistant Director

Attending Members from The Maldives National University:

1. Ms. Aishath Shaheen Ismail, *Deputy Vice Chancellor* (Academic)
2. Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, *Head of Centre* , Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (AMED Project Manager
3. Ms. Nasiha Abdul Muhaimin, *Lead Instructional Designer,* Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence

Agenda:

- AMED project
- E-learning Roadmap
- Study program sustainability plan
- Study program and professional development of teachers in the area of e-learning

Outcomes and Recommendations:

- Amed project information was disseminated
- Short term and long term benefits of the project in relation to to E-learning development was discussed

2.2. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT 2, Ministry of Higher Education

AMED project team from The Maldives National University was invited by the State Minister of Higher

Education, Ms. Khadeeja Adam to further discuss the project on 4th March, 2020.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education Aishath Shafina also joined the session. From The Maldives National University, Ms. Aishath Shaheen Ismail, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, Head of the Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (CETE), and Ms. Fathimath Nasiha Abdul Muhaimin, AMED project Manager from CETE from MNU joined this policy meeting.

The project outcomes, long term and short-term benefits to MNU and Maldives were the main points discussed. Future collaborations in E-learning Development in the higher education sector was also discussed.

The following provides the event details

Event: Policy Dialogue Event with Ministry of Higher Education, Maldives

Date: 4thth March 2020

Time: 12:00 - 13:00 Hrs.

Attending Members from Ministry of Education:

5.   Fathimath Hilmy, Permanent Secretary,
6.   Dr. Abdul Raheem, Director General,
7.   Ibrahim Ali, Assistant Director
8.   Mohamed Arif, Assistant Director

Attending Members from The Maldives National University:

4. Ms. Aishath Shaheen Ismail, *Deputy Vice Chancellor* (Academic)
5. Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, *Head of Centre* , Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (AMED Project Manager
6. Ms. Nasiha Abdul Muhaimin, *Lead Instructional Designer,* Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence

Agenda:

- AMED project
- E-learning Roadmap
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Outcomes and Recommendations:

- Amed project information disseminated
- Short term and long term benefits of the project in relation to to E-learning development was discussed

- Possible collaborations in the area of e-learning development in the Maldives were discussed

2.3. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT 3, Ministry of Education

The main area of discussion was on the study program developed within the AMED project and to explore the possibilities of integrating the modules of the study programm into in-service teacher education programs/trainings conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE). Other areas discussed included the following.

1. Developing the E-learning infrastructure at MNU(e-studio, e-training room, e-classes at all campuses and outreach centre development)
2. Developing an E-learning policy/ E-learning roadmap
3. Training of staff for E-learning
4. Develop an E-learning study program.
5. Sustainability Plan

The following provides the event details

Event: Policy Dialogue Event with Ministry of Education, Maldives

Date: 27th June 2021

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 Hrs.

Attending Members from Ministry of Education:

1. Dr. Abdulla Rasheed, *Minister of State for Education*
2. Mrs. Shuhudha Rizuwan, *Education development officer, coordinator*

Attending Members from The Maldives National University:

1. Ms. Aishath Shaheen Ismail, *Deputy Vice Chancellor* (Academic)
2. Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, *Head of Centre* , Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence (AMED Project Manager
3. Mr. Ibrahim Adam, *Lead Instructional Technologist*, Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence
4. Ms. Fathimath Mumthaz, *Lead Instructional Designer,* Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence
5. Ms. Aminath Zifna, *Lead Trainer,* Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence
6. Mr. Hamid Ali, *Lead Researcher,* Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence
7. Mr. Ahmed Shareef, *Multimedia Specialistt*, Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence

Outcomes and Recommendations:

- Amed project information disseminated
- Possible collaborations in the area of e-learning training discussed

2.4. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT 4, Faculty of Education, the Maldives National University

The discussion was focused on the different pathways to integrate the content of the AMED project study program content into the existing and new teacher training programs offered by the Faculty of Education, The Maldives National University. The aim was to reach an agreement on key actions that will support the sustainability of the program. During the meeting curriculum committee members of the Faculty proposed several possible pathways to support the integration of the content of the study program.

The following provides the event details

Event: Policy Dialogue Event with the Dean and Curriculum Committee of Faculty of Education, The Maldives National University

Date: 2nd March 2021

Time: 11:00 - 12:00 Hrs.

Members:

1. Ms. Shimna Shakeeb, Head of Centre , Centre for Educational Technology and Excellence

Faculty of Education Curriculum Committee Members
1. Ms. Mariyam Fizana, Rashyd, Dean (Faculty of Education)
2. Dr. Hawwa Neena Ali
3. Maumoona Abdulla
4. Hameeza Afeef
5. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed
6. Dr.Aminath Shiyama
7. Dr.Aminath Shafiya Adam
8. Fathimath Gaushiya,
9. Maurifa Hassan

 Outcomes and Recommendations:

The following are the agreed actions highlighted during the meeting. These actions will allow the integration of the study program content into the different teacher training programs.

1. Integrating the study program as a subject (15 credit points) into all Bachelors level teaching programs in 2022
2. Integrating a *Dhivehi* language (our own Language) version of the subject (15 credit points) into *Dhivehi* medium teacher training programs in 2022
3. Integrating the study program as an online self-paced learning a subject (0 credit unit), into Masters program
4. Integrating the study program as a subject (20 credit points) into Master *of Teaching* courses in 2022
5. Integrating the Course into *Post graduate Diploma in Teaching in Higher Education* course 2021

Note: The above recommended actions were later modified by the Faculty and the following are the new actions proposed. The rationale for the new proposed actions is based on the experience of the AMED study programme pilot. These new actions were proposed on 2nd March 2022

1. Integrate relevant content from the AMED project study programme into EST535 and revise the content
2. Integrate the relevant content from the AMED study programme into the undergraduate subject,Multimedia technology for education

2.5. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENT 5, Maldives Qualification Authority

The event was canceled due to unavoidable circumstances. No further meetings were possible. However, since MQA is established within the Ministry of Higher Education and the first Policy Dialogue event conducted with the ministry consists of the policy level people,it is believed that the information about the project must have reached MQA.

2.6. POLICY DIALOGUE EVENTS 6 and 7

Within the Final Conference that was organized by all partners and hosted by the Maldives National University on May 14-19, 2022 two policy dialogue events were held with the participants from partner institutions and the stakeholders from the MNU and Maldives:

May 16, 2022 - Advancing e-learning through good practice sharing; included experts' panel: Lourdes Guàrdia, UOC, Igor Balaban, FOI, Dragana Kupres, CARNET and Shimna Shakeeb, MNU. The participants of the event were invited to explore the main results of the AMED project in order to discuss the possible future development of e-learning practices and policy in the Maldives. The study program was recognized as a solid development platform for not only to already established teachers but more important one stop development point for all future higher education teachers in the Maldives.

May 17, 2022 - Strategic Planning for E-learning Development based on the Roadmap; included experts' panel: Marcelo Fabián Maina, UOC, Neven Vrček, FOI, Dragana Kupres, CARNET and moderator: Shimna Shakeeb, MNU

The main target audience of the round table were the decision makers and academic leaders of MNU. The main aims of this session was to engage MNU decision makers and academic leaders in a strategically focused, in- depth conversation around the significance of the e-learning roadmap as a strategic document for MNU in its effort to enhance innovation in teaching and learning, to raise awareness of the key policy measures specified in the roadmap, to develop understanding of the strategies used to plan for e-learning development and finally to identify the challenges involved in strategic planning for e-learning planning and implementation. This session also enabled the participants from MNU to develop a broader understanding of the key areas they need to focus on when planning for e-learning and when operationalizing the activities specified in the roadmap.

6. CONCLUSION

This document highlighted the details of the Policy Dialogue Events conducted within the AMED project to engage the different relevant stakeholders and to disseminate information about the project and its benefits. It also identifies actions and future collaborations that would encourage sustainability of the AMED study programme and future strategic development of e-learning in Maldives.