



# Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (SESLOAF)

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## 1.0 Gaps and Needs Analysis in Assessments:

- 1.1. The **National Education Policy, NEP (2009)** emphasizes the capacity deficit of the system in offering high quality school based assessments. The NEP 2009 and the major reports on assessments particularly, highlight the consistent assessment of “Low cognitive skills, the persistence of the dilemma of ‘rote memorization’ and the capacity deficit of Education System in implementing multiple forms of assessments and the procedures for quality and standardized assessment development, administration, marking, results analysis and reporting”. Thus, leading to the various un- professional practices and also mal-practices encountered pre-during and post assessments.
- 1.2 The **Education Policy 2009** particularly highlights the following for Improving Student Assessment and Assessment Systems;
- 1.3 Assessment systems are considered as quality measures that cater to a number of requirements of the education system. These can be used to measure overall system efficiency as well as individual students’ performance for movement in the education system. A comprehensive assessment design would provide feedback for improvements at all tiers starting from changes in the classroom to improvements in the national systems.
- 1.4 Assessment mechanism should be such that analytical thinking, creativity and critical reflections are tapped and encouraged.
- 1.5 The recent work of the National Education Assessment System shall be continued and further in reforming the system across the country.
- 1.6 Various reports highlight that the system **lacks a comprehensive design and framework for assessment** including summative, continuous, benchmark and authentic assessment, hence; 1) The broad functions of assessment that is provision of varied opportunities to acquire and demonstrate authentic learning outcomes according to the performance standards outlined in the curriculum is not present. 2) The formative function of assessment that is use of assessment data for improved outcomes of students learning and improved system is not evidenced at any level.
- 1.7 The assessment systems at the macro-levels; including National and Provincial Assessments and micro-levels; including classroom and schools based assessments in the country continues to be sub-standard and present an overall low capacity of the system in leading, planning, developing, administering, marking and reporting standardized and high quality school based and large scale assessments.
- 1.8 School based assessments mostly require students to regurgitate content from the textbook – not analyse, evaluate or create something new. The textbooks are often viewed as the real curriculum. The textbooks generally contain few if any high order thinking tasks. Teachers are not rewarded for innovative teaching which promotes high order thinking skills because higher order thinking is not required for most assessments.
- 1.9 The assessment system continues to exist with the following major deficiencies:
  - Both validity and reliability of our tests have been seriously compromised.
  - Validity is never established, no assessment framework is available. If not others, content validity is a must for any assessment system. Without validity in assessment/valid assessment any claim to quality learning is self-falsified.

- In the absence of question banks inter-item reliability and content validity both are at stake.
  - Scoring has no inter or intra-marker reliability as marking guidelines, rubrics and checking hints are not available.
  - Studies show that manual marking of objective type test can introduce error up to 20%, e-marking system is not used by any large scale assessment system.
  - All valuable large scale assessment data go waste after results reporting. As no feedback to students, parents, teachers, schools, paper setters, moderators, curriculum developers, instruction material developers for students and supervisory personnel is provided improvement textbook writers & reviewers and policy makers is provided for improvement.
  - Development and Intervention work and research for improvement can be done, if the data is made available to academia, researchers and development sector, leading to future reforms.
  - Curriculum/textbook evaluation and improvement is never performed based on data, in spite of the availability of such a valuable and voluminous data.
- 1.10 The provincial and national tests of comparisons (e.g. PEACe, SAT, ASER, NEAS) consistently present low achievement of students in the domains of **mathematics, science and english** thus portraying a dismal picture of students' learning outcomes assessment and feedback in these key domains at school levels.
- 1.11 The recently approved **School Education Standards and Curriculum Act** proposes the conduct of students' achievement tests at grade 3, 5 and 8 and the implementation of continuous assessment approaches to assess students learning across all school levels.
- 1.12 **Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP)** emphasizes the development of an assessment policy, framework, procedures and the need to promote the effective use of assessment data at all levels. SESP also proposes the development of the capacity of key institutions in better assessment practices and to develop strong linkages and collaboration among organizations working on curriculum, textbook and assessment. SESP also recommends the development of **Sindh Examination Commission** for standardization of assessments, the need to strengthen the research unit and its functions in assessment improvement and post assessment analysis and review to feedback into the system for improvement.
- 1.13 **Sindh Curriculum Implementation Framework (CIF)** highlights the issue of the "Alignment of examination level (school assessment – internal and external) to assess the achievement of standards and student learning outcomes".

**CIF** outlines the following indicators of aligned system: A) Key institutional partners oriented in assessment based on curriculum framework; B) Textbook authors, paper setters, teachers, supervisory personnel trained for improving the assessment practices as per curriculum framework; C) Improved internal and external assessment are practiced to assess student learning outcomes as specified in the curriculum; D) Uniform assessment system is introduced at classes V and VIII in each district and E)

Assessment results are used for school performance evaluation and / or reviewing the textbooks, curriculum and instruction material.

- 1.14. The school based and large scale assessments at all levels, is resulting in the low standard of education. In-consistent and non-standardized assessment practices throughout Sindh Pakistan, requires a multipronged approach hence a comprehensive policy framework, new assessment structures, improved governance, improved linkages among the key organizations, capacity building of key implementers, research, use of technology and SOPs along with phased plan and appropriate resources for systems capacity building for improved learning outcomes and improved assessment system.

**The above Gap Analyses from multiple sources require the following policy actions to bring improvement in Assessment:**

**Policy Actions:**

1. Student performance shall be based on assessing competence in a specialised area that requires a given skill set.
2. Multiple assessment tools in addition to tests shall be explored, to ensure the right balance between the uses of formative assessment approaches combined with the summative approaches of assessments.
3. There shall be periodic reviews of the assessment system.
4. National standards shall be developed to reduce the differences in quality across regions.
5. A quality management cycle shall link the various systems of assessment and institutions involved in the implementation of assessment (classroom and school based assessments, Provincial and Standardized assessments, PEACe) to provide feedback to curriculum development, textbooks development, school system improvement, teacher education and continuous professional development programs.

## **2.0 Preamble**

The Government of Sindh is committed to providing quality education to all and has undertaken various reform initiatives in curriculum, textbook, teacher recruitment and teacher education. The importance of standards-referenced and standardized assessment system for improved learning outcomes has been realized by the Sindh Government. The Education and Literacy Department, through the Reform Support Unit has implemented a number of educational reforms including the capacity building of PEACe, the introduction of diagnostic assessment in grade 4 & 8, Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) in grade 4 and Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) in grade 5 and 8 to build the system's capacity to offer high quality and standardized assessments. Besides these large scale initiatives in testing, Sindh is also ahead in devising Sindh Education Students' Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (SESLOAF).

The **Sindh Education Students' Learning Outcomes Assessment Framework (SESLOAF)** aims at providing a standards-referenced approach to assessment. The framework suggests the use of formative, continuous, authentic and standardized approaches to summative assessments with an emphasis on the alignment of assessment with students' learning outcomes outlined in the curriculum.

### 3.0 Objective

“The Sindh Education Students' Learning Outcome Assessment Framework (SESLOAF) will bring about improved learning outcomes and assessment systems through a quality and standards -referenced framework on students learning outcomes both at classroom and system level.

### 4.0 Purpose

The purpose of Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Framework (SESLOAF) is to:

- (i) Provide a comprehensive assessment framework, principles, procedures and plans for standards-based and outcomes assessment, to ensure a systematic and on-going cycle of assessment.
- (ii) Establish a mechanism for students learning outcomes to be assessed on appropriate standards, benchmarks and outcomes to help students in the attainment of the standards outlined in the assessment framework; as such assessment is crucial to the continuous understanding and improvement of student learning.
- (iii) Ensure that upon successful completion of a developmental level student will be able to demonstrate learning on the benchmarks and standards outlined in the assessment framework in alignment with the curriculum.
- (iv) Define and guide quality students learning outcomes based assessment items, tasks, tools and rubrics for development of continuous, performance and external assessment.
- (v) Establish mechanisms to use assessment data to inform and guide the teaching, learning, textbook, curriculum, teacher education, teacher performance, improvement, continuous professional development and management systems based on assessment framework.

### 5.0 Principles

5.1. All assessment shall adopt **Standards-referenced assessment** approach in order to align its assessment system with the content and performance standards outlined in the

curriculum. This is to ensure that the assessment of the student (authentic) learning outcomes and feedback on these measured outcomes is used to for improved learning outcomes and systems reform.

- 5.2. All assessment shall apply **SESLOAF** that guides a standardized and standards-referenced approach.
- 5.3. These standards shall be set by standard setting procedures to develop attainment levels in alignment with the **SESLOAF**.
- 5.4. The frequency, form and nature of assessment have an effect on the learning outcomes. Hence, assessment shall be considered as **an integral part of teaching and learning process** to allow feedback into the teaching and learning process for improved and authentic learning outcomes.
- 5.5. Various forms and methods of assessments; **continuous, formative, summative, performance assessment, tests, portfolio, observation, oral and multiple methods** shall be applied to provide opportunities to the learner to demonstrate and enhance learning outcomes.
- 5.6. **Authentic assessment** shall constitute an important component in school based assessments conducted through projects at school levels or by external assessment units in alignment with the performance assessment outlined in the SESLOAF through moderation of teacher's assessment of school based projects.
- 5.7. All assessments shall ensure its **content and construct validity** for positive backwash effect of assessments on the processes of teaching and learning.
- 5.8. All the assessments shall ensure **validity** through alignment with the curriculum standards and students learning outcome through the **scheme of assessment and assessment specification** as outlined in SESLOAF.
- 5.9. Scale/Band shall be developed on measurable standards to reduce differentials across the districts/regions through a research based practice.
- 5.10. Assessment data dissemination to stakeholders shall be ensured to provide **feedback for improvement** based on evidence.

## 6.0 Assessment Nature and Purpose

The decision to apply an assessment method should be determined by the purpose the assessment is made to serve and the aim of the particular unit and stakeholder. The aim of the school is to facilitate and enhance student learning. The teacher requires constant information on students learning to feedback into the teaching and learning processes to realize this aim, hence a continuous and formative system of assessment. In contrast to this the educational managers and policy planners require data on large numbers of students (such as the already available achievement data from SAT, PEACe) to inform the education policy, resourcing and planning new steps for improved systems. There is general agreement that large scale packaged tests will not solve the problem of what teachers need to know about student learning on a daily basis. This requires the use of assessment(s) that fits the purpose. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment system is required to meet the various functions of assessment.

## **6.1 Policy Actions**

6.1.1. A comprehensive, systematic and on-going cycle of assessment shall be planned and implemented with reference to the SESLOAF.

6.1.2. Various forms of assessments; formative, continuous/internal and external summative, performance assessment shall be implemented.

6.1.3. Formative assessment for feedback and performance assessment for authentic and improved learning outcomes shall be institutionalized through the development of assessment systems, educational, academic plans, scheme of work, teaching learning and assessment plans, tasks, rubrics, performance assessment plans to be implemented by PEACe.

6.1.4. Quality and standardized external assessments shall be undertaken at developmental levels 3, 5 and 8) by districts levels working with PEACe.

6.1.5. PEACe to be developed by working in collaboration with a third party to undertake the functions of assessments based on SESLOAF for benchmarking, progression, accountability, certification and diagnostic purposes.

6.1.6. All student achievement data from standardized external assessments shall be provided to relevant institutions, policy makers and planning departments for evidenced based planning.

## **7.0 Assessment Development**

The results of assessment at the individual level; informs and effects learning progression, achievements, certification and improvements in learning. At a system levels it provides a score card for comparison, accountability, rewards, policy and planning. The confidence in the results of any form of assessment depends on the assessment framework and quality methods used in the development of the assessment and test. The confidence in assessments and test are determined by two core aspects validity and reliability.

### **7.1 Policy Actions**

7.1.1. All continuous/internal and external assessment and examinations shall be aligned with the curriculum: content, skills, attitudes, performance standards, benchmarks and students learning outcomes outlined in the SESLOAF for improved content validity.

7.1.2. The large scale assessments at the developmental levels of grade 3, 5, 8, 10 and 12 shall employ the contemporary approaches and techniques in assessments, technology and research.

7.1.3. All assessments systems shall develop Question-banks comprising of Multiple Choice type items, Constructed Response Questions, Extended Response Questions items to provide a pool of items for actual test paper development.

7.1.4. All assessment systems shall develop item profiles and adopt e-marking for increased validity, reliability, transparency, fairness and efficiency.

- 7.1.5. The assessment at the grade 3, 5 and 8, 10 and 12 shall employ the contemporary approaches in assessments and develop provincial norms/attainment scale in collaboration with PEACe.
- 7.1.6. The SESLOAF shall be applied for all types of student's assessments, classroom based, and continuous, external achievement testing for increased validity, reliability, transparency, fairness and comparability.
- 7.1.7. The overall measures to ensure transparency, validity, reliability, reduced systemic errors & elimination of malpractices in school based and external assessments shall be implemented to enhance the quality of assessment and lead to improved student learning outcome.
- 7.1.8. All assessments shall apply procedures for quality assessment development including paper specification, scheme of assessment, paper structure, SLO based assessment items according to quality criteria, marking schemes, result analysis and feedback as per the assessment framework.
- 7.1.9. All assessment items, questions, tasks shall be developed and reviewed by or under the supervision of a board comprising content specialists and qualified assessment professionals and data analyst.

## **8.0 Assessment Administration.**

The administration is one of biggest challenge in large scale testing in Pakistan. The test administration requires adequate planning, training of test administrators and monitoring by key officials in partnership with a third party.

### **8.1 Policy Actions**

- 8.1.1. An external/ third party shall be involved in test administration for quality of test administration and to address malpractices and cheating.
- 8.1.2. PEACe in collaboration with other assessment units shall develop and administer school based assessments and tests at 3, 5 and 8 based on SESLOAF.

## **9.0 Assessment Analysis, Reporting and Feedback.**

The key purpose of any assessment is to report students learning outcomes through multiple methods; including marks, averages, grades, percentiles, scales and comments for use by different stakeholders including schools, parents, students and the managers and policy planners.

The SESLOAF outlines the key learning areas through SLO categorization, scheme of assessments and specifications. In order to reduce differentials across the systems of schooling and to align assessment to the curriculum, the SLO based assessment framework should remain at the core of any such assessment design and reporting of learning.

### **9.1 Policy Actions:**

- 9.1.1. The assessments results shall be based on the assessment framework. Results analysis shall be undertaken to provide feedback to the parents, teachers, district education managers, curriculum bureau, textbook boards, teacher education and PEACe.
- 9.1.2. Feedback to school systems and teachers based on the assessed SLOs and Achievement scale shall be provided.
- 9.1.3. Results shall be developed according to strands, standards and SLOs for feedback.
- 9.1.4. Linkages shall be developed among the various educational functions based on the SLOs based Assessment framework for improved learning outcomes.
- 9.1.5. The assessment policy and framework shall be applied by Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research, Sindh Textbook Board, teacher education institutions, PEACe, district education systems, developmental projects to promote the effective use of outcomes and assessment data to inform systems reform.

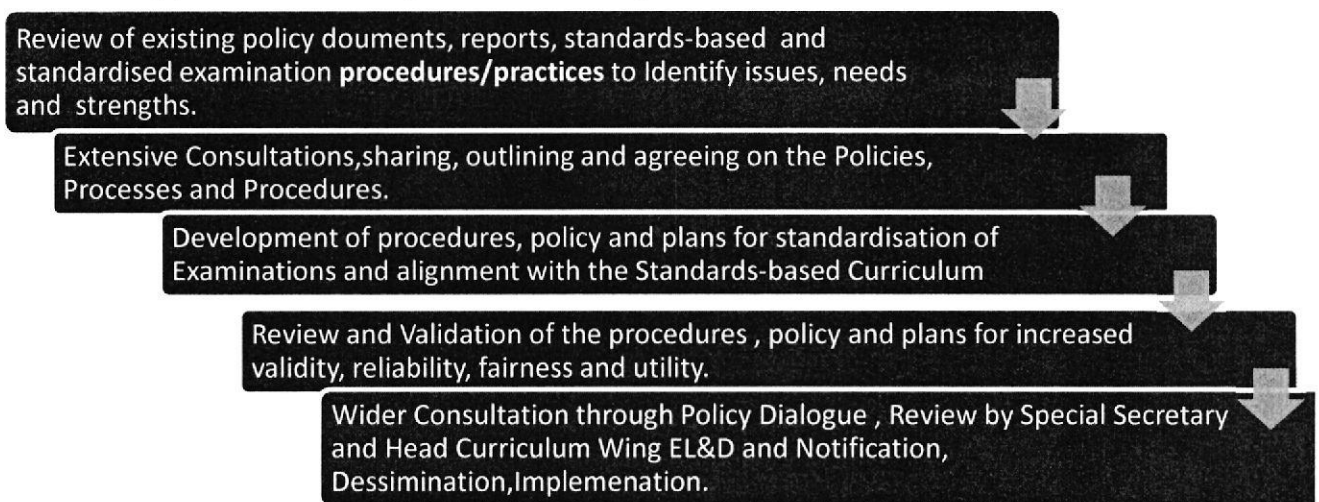
## **10.0 History**

The SESLOAF is developed through an evidence based policy development cycle that involves multiple processes and consultations with multi-stakeholders. The multi-stakeholders included in the process are; Director of the Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research, Coordinator , leadership and team of PEACe, Director General Public and private schools and colleges, Chairmen of Examination Boards in Sindh, Provincial and National IBCC, Controllers and key members of all examination boards in Sindh, policy makers, education, assessment and examination experts, researchers, academics, managers and advisors, public and private sector institutions, key assessment specialists and the assessment teams paper setters, moderators, markers, subject based experts, curriculum reviewers and developers, textbook developers, teachers, teacher educators and students.

The Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Framework was developed through an evidence based policy development process. This entailed multiple consultations; a detailed work on Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Framework was completed with PEACe, the affiliated schools, Teacher Training Institutions, private schools, key professional associations and examination boards. Eleven SESLOAFs each in subjects of English, Urdu, Sindhi, Science and Mathematics, Social Studies were developed through the design and peer review workshops. Later a Policy Dialogue was convened through a participatory approach that included stakeholders from public private educational institutions and systems.

The approach to this SESLOAF construction entails, identification of issues and needs through document reviews, intensive and extensive consultations with key leadership, wider consultation at all levels from the policy makers to the implementers and the key stakeholder the student, to identify strengths/weaknesses, good practices and gaps, development and review of policy for enrichment and validation (by wider audience) in a through a policy dialogue, incorporation of review comments from the members of the policy dialogue, review by special secretary and head curriculum wing and finalization for notification by the Secretary Education..

The following processes were adopted for the development of SESLOAF



**Figure 1.1.** Processes of the Development of the Policy Framework

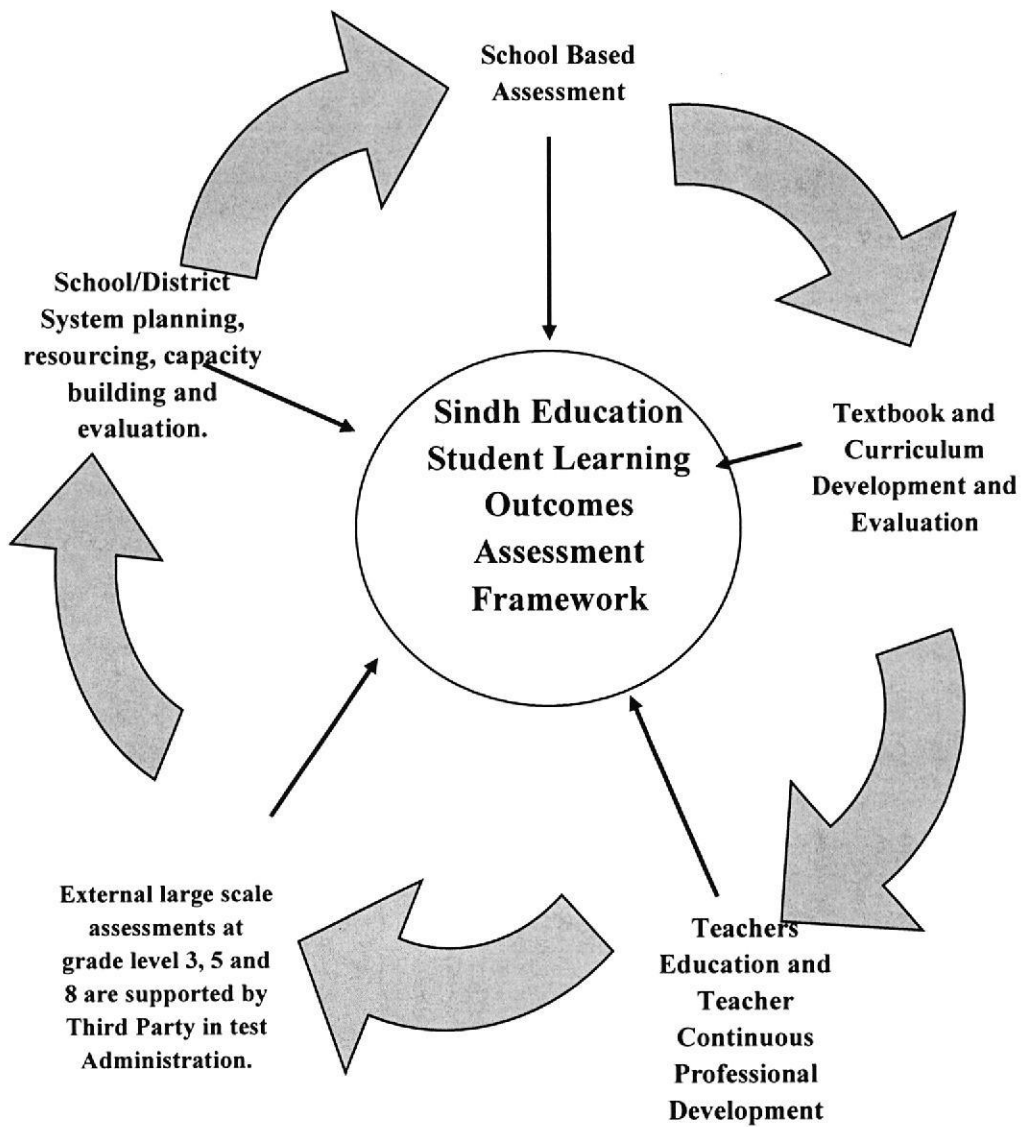
## **11.0 Procedures for Implementation of SESLOAF**

Sindh Education and Literacy Department proposes the following Guidelines to plan and implement SESLOAF

The Assessment Guidelines are proposed and linked with the already approved policies and legislative initiatives taken by the Government of Sindh and Education & Literacy Department as an initiative towards improving the education system in Sindh. These include Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act, Curriculum Implementation Framework, Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP 2014-2018), and Sindh Textbooks and Material development policy.

The following linkages and steps are required to ensure a smooth implementation of the suggestive SESLOAF. These actions have been drawn from the approved provincial documents on Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act, Sindh Education Sector Plan and Curriculum Implementation Framework.

**The Proposed Linkages for Implementation of Sindh Education Students' Learning Outcome Assessment Framework are presented below.**



**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

Target	Action required	Institutions responsible	Key Personnel's involved	Time lines	Monitoring
Policy on Sindh Education Student Learning Outcome Assessment Frame work (SESLOAF)	Notified Policy uploaded on E&LD website and Directorate Curriculum ,Assessment and Research (DCAR) Website Peace WEBSITE	E&LD  DCAR  PEACe	Head Curriculum Wing  Director (DCAR)  Coordinator PEACe	September 2015	RSU Programme Manager Assessment
Formation of a Task Force	<b>Task Force comprising of policy makers, planners, practitioners, academicians , and researchers (From public/private) on Assessment Reforms notified.</b>	RSU &E&LD	CPM-RSU Head Curriculum Wing	October 2015	RSU Programme Manager Assessment
Assessment items and tasks based on SESLOAF developed & review and shared with all stake holders.	PEACe) to develop a plan on subject and grade wise item construction workshops by engaging teacher educator s, practicing teachers ( public /private)	PEACe, DCAR	PEACe and Subject Specialist , ITEs (Private / Public ) School systems (Private / Public	January – June 2016 Continues	Head Curriculum Wing.

	Items reviewed and finalized to be upload on the PEACe website .				
Proposal for Sindh Examination Commission Developed (SEC)	Develop Proposals and plans for establishment of SEC.	PEACe DCAR	Coordinator PEACe Director DCAR CPM-RSU	2015-2016	CPM –RSU
Linkages for Improved outcomes based on the framework (SESLOAF) established.	Sindh Examination Commission notified. Provincial based working groups notified District based working group on assessment notified.	E&LD  RSU	Special Secretary School Education  CPM-RSU	June 2016	Programme Manager RSU
Research Based District capacity building	Proposals developed for base line and intervention strategies based on assessments findings conducted in Sindh	PEACe  PITE  Public Private Universities	Coordinator PEACe  DG – PITE  STEDA	June 2016 December 2017	RSU- Programme Manager TPM Head Curriculum Wing
Institutional capacity building in assessment for improved assessment system.	Capacity building of all concerned institutions for Curriculum Text books and Assessment development and implementation	PEACe  PITE  Public Private Universities	Coordinator PEACe  DG – PITE  STEDA	June 2016 December 2017	RSU- Programme Manager TPM Head Curriculum Wing