Solomon Islands

Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools

Final Draft

23rd of September 2010
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARTTLe</td>
<td>Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Curriculum Development Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEA</td>
<td>Church Education Authority</td>
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<td>CHS</td>
<td>Community High Schools</td>
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<td>CNURA</td>
<td>Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Education Authority</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EGR(N)A</td>
<td>Early Grade Reading (or Numeracy) Assessment</td>
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<td>MEHRD</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development</td>
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<td>NEAB</td>
<td>National Examinations and Assessment Board</td>
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<td>NEAP</td>
<td>National Education Action Plan</td>
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<td>NESU</td>
<td>National Examination and Standards Unit</td>
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<td>PAF</td>
<td>Performance Assessment Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCRU</td>
<td>Planning Coordination and Research Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSSC</td>
<td>Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (Year 12 equivalent)</td>
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<td>SBA</td>
<td>School-Based Assessment</td>
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<td>SIEMIS</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Education Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIF3</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Form Three (Year 9 Examination)</td>
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<td>SISC</td>
<td>Solomon Islands School Certificate (Year 11 Examination)</td>
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<td>SISE</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance (Year 6 Examination)</td>
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<td>SISTA</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Standardized Test of Achievement</td>
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<td>SOE</td>
<td>School of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPBEA</td>
<td>South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment</td>
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<td>TTDD</td>
<td>Teacher Training Development Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>USP</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
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Glossary

**Accountability:** The responsibility for implementing a process or procedure, for justifying decisions made, and for results or outcomes produced. Teachers are often said to be accountable for their students' learning in the assigned subject area, within the limits of the students' abilities and the time and resources available.

**Action research:** Generally, research for action. In this case: practical studies done in schools and classrooms by teachers and other workers in the school to ascertain effectiveness (and quality) of the teaching and learning process in a school. It will include actions to improve impact of teaching and learning.

**Affective learning outcomes:** Learning outcomes which are not concerned with knowledge and comprehension but which measure feelings, values, ideals, likes and dislikes.

**ARTTle:** Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning. A remedial assessment tool which helps teachers to address specific problem areas in the teaching and learning based on the key curriculum learning outcomes. It assists teachers in their formative assessment in the classroom. It enables teachers to find out which students are achieving the outcomes and to provide timely feedback.

**Assessment (Learning) alternatives:** Alternative assessment methods used to measure learning other than traditional methods such as individual assessments using paper and pencil, standardized tests etc. Alternative assessments are: Group assessments, classroom observation, action research for instance, reading assessments, projects etc. Also assessments to measure motivation, learning process and styles are examples of alternative assessments.

**Assessment to improve the learning process:** See also Formative assessment. Assessment to improve learning refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their learners in assessing themselves and evaluating the impact of learning. This can include observing, describing, recording, measuring, evaluating and interpreting learning with the aim to improve learning. This type of assessment provides information to modify the teaching and learning activities. It ideally occurs throughout the learning process.

**Assessment to measure learning outcomes:** See also Summative assessment. Assessment that is accompanied by a number or letter, grade (summative), which compares the learner's achievement with agreed standards. Assessment to measure learning outcomes is mostly used for selection or placement of students to higher levels of education or jobs. It mostly occurs at the end of the learning unit or year.

**Benchmarking:** An ongoing, systematic process for measuring and comparing the performance and work processes of one organisation to those of another...."the goal of
benchmarking is to provide an objective standard for measuring the quality and cost of activities and to help identify where opportunities for improvement may reside\textsuperscript{1}

**Classroom assessment:** Any assessment which takes place in the classroom. In most cases; internal formative and diagnostic assessments initiated by the teacher.

**Diagnostic assessment:** Formative assessment that is designed to identify prior knowledge (what has been and not been learned), or how well a learner can perform a certain set of skills related to a particular subject or group of subjects or what learning style is used by the learner so that remedial tasks can be designed. It is often used at the beginning of a unit of study.

**Early Grade Reading (or Numeracy) Assessment:** An assessment developed to measure reading or numeracy skills through individual interviews or tests with students in the early years of Primary Education. It is adapted to the local education context and local standards. The results of EGR(N)A can be used to refine and improve curriculum, curriculum materials and ways of instruction.

**Essay test:** A test where a student is required to provide responses, brief or extended and in writing about a subject matter.

**Evaluation:** A qualitative or quantitative description and value judgment of a prescribed and desired learning, behaviour or process.

**Examination:** A set of questions, exercises or practical tasks set to test or evaluate a candidate’s knowledge and skills. This is a form of assessment whereby a learner is required to undertake a specified assessment task within a specified limited period of time. The location of the examination and access to external assistance are normally also regulated. Access to resource materials is normally prohibited.

**Home work assessment:** A given set of tasks, activities etc. to be done by the student(s) normally after school hours, or in the daily school breaks which also could be utilised by the teacher to measure the learning progress of the student(s).

**Formative assessment:** Ongoing observation process that allows teachers to determine the degree to which students know or are able to perform or not perform prescribed learning tasks and outcomes with the aim of bringing about improvement in knowledge or performance. It ideally occurs during the course of a unit of study and is regularly done. Teachers can use the formative results for their own self-evaluation and reflection on teaching.

**Life-skills:** Knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours embedded in the local (and embracing the global) context which empower and individual to improve and sustain suitable quality of life in their community and beyond.\textsuperscript{2}

**Ministry:** The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

\textsuperscript{1} Cited from ‘Benchmarking Education systems for results, concept note, 26\textsuperscript{th} of November 2008, World Bank
\textsuperscript{2} Pacific definition for life-skills, 2006.
**Norm:** The norm is a performance against which others can be compared with.

**Outcome:** A measurable goal or product or performance (expressed in terms of knowledge, skills or attitudes) of the teaching learning process within the national school curriculum.

**Portfolio:** Learners’ records that can be used to keep track of the learners’ progress or development.

**Project:** A complex assignment which includes several types of activities. A combination of evidence from diverse sources (observation, reports, designs and other forms or written work).³

**Reliability:** The extent to which assessment provides an accurate measurement of each student’s performance.⁴ Reliability of a test refers to the extent to which it consistently measures what it is supposed to measure⁵. Simply put, the method of assessment used will yield/produce similar results if it is repeated.

**Remedial teaching:** Type of teaching that uses the assessment results for individual learners or group of learners and that aims to continuously improving learning outcomes and addressing gaps in knowledge, skills or problems with attitudes.

**School:** An institution that is registered with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development to provide education following the rules and regulations that governs the Solomon Islands education system. Any registered institution or place at which any secular instruction (whether with or without religious instructions) is regularly given to 10 or more pupils or students outside their own homes. This now includes; ECE-centres, Primary and Secondary schools, Rural Training Centres and Special Education Centres.⁶

**School Based Assessment:** Any assessment that is carried out or done in schools. This includes summative, formative or diagnostic approaches in conducting assessments. Currently, the **Solomon Islands School Certificate** (SISC) has its SBA component regarded as internal/continuous assessment (more summative in nature).

**School Management:** Comprises of school committee or board members who are head teachers and principals and other representatives from the teachers, parents, community members and students.

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⁵ Ibid.
**Self assessment or Assessment to reflect on learning.** Learners are actively involved in (self) assessment of their own learning process and become aware of the goals of instruction, expected learning outcomes and the criteria for performance. It includes individual goal-setting, monitoring the learning progress and reflecting on results. This can be with or without the assistance from teachers. It occurs throughout the learning process.

**Selection tests:** Assessments formally designed to select students for higher levels of education, further study or placement into specific jobs.

**Standardised test:** Assessment administered, scored and interpreted in a consistent (standard) way. It provides information for making comparative evaluation of a student’s aptitude, achievement, or competency against set learning outcomes.

**Standards:** Established and agreed values used to measure performance.

**Summative assessment:** An assessment process for evaluating and marking or grading the learning that has occurred often at the end of a course or unit of study.

**Validity:** An assessment has validity if it can measure what it was designed to measure.
1. Introduction

This Policy Statement supports 'student-centred' learning. It aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is an important goal in the Solomon Islands National Education Action Plan (NEAP), 2010-2012. The reviews in 2009 of the NEAP, 2007-2009 and the Sector Wide Approach, 2004-2009 have indicated that after the successes in terms of increased enrolment in the education sector, now also progress needs to be made in the area of quality and data management. This Policy Statement supports the goals of Education For All (EFA) and stresses the importance of quality learning that will help to increase attendance and completion rates at schools. The introduction of a comprehensive assessment system\(^7\) is an important tool to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

The Policy Statement fits in the EFA\(^8\)-goals and in particular will help to:

‘Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all’

‘Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes’

2. Vision

This policy is to be read along with other relevant documents (see Annex 1) such as the National Education Action Plan, 2010-2012.

To develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system for learners in all sub-sectors of education (ECE, Basic, Secondary, TVET and Tertiary education) and for all subjects and years which will help to measure learners' progress towards achieving the outcomes of the National Curriculum. Assessment must also generally aim to support and improve learning, to engage learners, teachers, parents and communities regardless of gender, age, geographical location, ethnicity, language and disabilities. It must be fair, relevant, valid and manageable. The assessment system needs to be fully integrated in all pre-and in-service training for teachers.

\(^7\) An assessment system that encompasses a wider approach to assessment (not just examination) that involves assessment to improve learning (diagnostic & formative) and to measure learning outcomes (summative but may include formative). Thus, this policy is about the comprehensive approach to assessment or the national learners’ assessment system that focus more on individualise learning.

\(^8\) World Education Forum, Education for all and Dakar Framework for action, 2000
3. Rationale

3.1 The introduction of quality assessment of learning and teaching is important because education planners need to make decisions that are information based, reliable and objective;

3.2 A comprehensive assessment system is needed in the Solomon Islands that has validity and that could guide and enhance achievement of learning outcomes. This system will also give information about the effectiveness of teaching, which is one of the main factors that influence the process of learning;

3.3 The current national\(^9\) examinations are mainly used for certification, placement, promotion or selection. However, a comprehensive assessment system is encouraging a combination of examinations and other types of assessments. In this way assessment of learners at schools will become more meaningful, valued by teachers and it will enable better teaching, learning and feedback;

3.4 Examination results are considered final scores. There is generally no feedback from teachers or use of remedial teaching to assist individual learners.

3.5 A majority of teachers concentrate on the preparation of learners for the national examinations. Generally, less attention is given to other non-examination subjects and progress in numeracy and literacy. This sometimes results in learners being promoted to higher levels of education without full development of basic skills such as literacy, numeracy or life-skills.

3.6 A comprehensive assessment system will also include assessment of life skills. There are concerns that the formal education system is providing students with little livelihood skills, psychosocial skills and cultural skills. In general, teaching and learning is biased towards academic skills. However there are equally essential skills for example, personal hygiene and well-being, social, interpersonal and technical skills.

3.7 Apart from the implementation of the Solomon Islands Standardized Test of Achievement (SISTA\(^{10}\)) for literacy and numeracy (Years 4 & 6), no systematic assessment tests have been implemented to improve the quality of learning in the Solomon Islands;

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\(^9\) Solomon Islands Secondary Entrance (SISE), Solomon Islands Form Three (SIF3) and the Solomon Islands School Certificate (SISC);

\(^{10}\) Data from the SISTA in 2005 and 2006 for literacy and numeracy in Year 4 and Year 6 of selected schools were worrying, in particular for literacy the majority of the students did underachieve. The majority scored higher for numeracy, but large numbers of students did not match the standards in both years, in particular in Year 6.
3.8 Assessment tools need to be (re-)introduced to monitor and to improve the learning process in the whole education sector and to see to what extent the expected learning outcomes of the National School Curriculum are achieved;

3.9 Assessment is inseparable from teaching. It is an ongoing process. Therefore, the teacher must continuously assess his or her students;

3.10 School based individual learners’ or group (self) assessments to improve the learning process will be strengthened and expanded alongside the summative examinations.

4. Authority

The Authority of the National Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools is derived from laws, rules and regulations including the following:

- The Education Act 1978.
- Regulations of the National Examinations and Assessment Board governing the SISC and SIF3 National examinations, amalgamation draft 1 2007.
- Legal Notice No. 9 (Under review).

5. Application

The Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools applies to:

- All registered Education Authorities.
- All registered schools and training centres within Solomon Islands.
- All teachers, instructors under the establishment of the Ministry.

6. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools is to:

a) inform all stakeholders about the Solomon Islands’ Policy and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools;
b) set the strategic direction for learners’ assessment in Solomon Islands;
c) prioritise the main issues that help to realise the effective and efficient planning, development, management, implementation and monitoring of learners’ assessment at schools in the Solomon Islands;
d) achieve the Education For All goals on the relevancy and quality of teaching and learning (see Annex 2) and
e) explain the organisation, management and monitoring of learners’ assessment at schools.
7. Policy Objectives

General
1. To measure if students meet the learning outcomes of the national curriculum;
2. To improve the teaching and learning process in the classroom;
3. To ensure equitable access to learners’ assessment for all children and students;

Quality assurance
4. To establish clear and fair regulations, procedures and learners’ assessment processes including for feedback to learners;
5. To ensure that all learners’ assessments are relevant, reliable, valid and appropriate to local settings and language(s);

Methodology
6. To introduce and promote a variety of assessment tools which are summative, formative, practical, individual or group assessments and internal or external assessments;
7. To promote transparency, which includes giving timely and measurable feedback to all learners on their learning progress.

Capacity building
8. To develop continuous professional support and training to all actors involved in assessments such as staff from the National Examination and Standards Unit (NESU), Inspectors, Education Authorities, teacher trainers from School of Education (SOE), principals, head teachers, teachers etc.;
9. To fully integrate learners’ assessment into pre- and in service teacher training and in professional development for all teachers;

Community involvement
10. To actively involve parents in the monitoring of their children’s’ progress at school by encouraging mentoring support to their children in the learning process;
11. To involve the community in creating a safe and friendly learning and assessment environment at school and also where possible at home;

Manageability and affordability
12. To ensure that the assessment system is cost-effective, manageable, realistic and regulated.

8. Policy Priorities

The priorities in this National Policy Statement and Guidelines for Learners’ Assessment in Schools include:

1. To develop a national assessment system that includes assessment tools to improve the learning process and to measure the learning outcomes of the national school curriculum. This system will include a balanced and manageable combination of
diagnostic, formative and summative assessments in which as much as possible learners actively participate in (self)assessment of their learning process.

2. To administer the current SISTA for literacy and numeracy in schools every three years. SISTA will be gradually extended to more schools and subjects, firstly within the early years of Primary Education;

3. To develop national life-skills benchmarks and monitoring instruments (based on the National School Curriculum). The outcome will highlight gaps where teachers need to develop life-skills intervention strategies, thus improving the total well-being of individuals to live in harmony with others and the society as a whole.

4. On the basis of available human and financial resources, other assessment tools in particular for the early years of Primary Education can be gradually introduced along with SISTA, e.g. Early Grade Reading or Numeracy Assessment, (EGR(N)A) which is now piloted in some countries in the Pacific region;

5. The Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning (ARTTLe), as a tool for intervention, will be disseminated and used throughout Primary Education;

6. School-Based Assessment (SBA) will become a feature of the National Learners’ Assessment system; that means that head teachers, principals and chairpersons of school committees will be responsible for holding regular assessments of the learning process according to regulations set by this policy and the National Examination and Assessment Board (NEAB);

7. To participate in regional discussions on the benchmarking of education systems\textsuperscript{11} and to develop a learners’ assessment system that enables comparison with regional benchmarks and standards;

8. To regularly evaluate all national learners’ assessment instruments by external, independent audits on the quality terms of validity and reliability;

9. To continuously build capacity for all actors involved in learners’ assessment (for e.g; teachers, Education Authorities, Ministry staff, SOE) to improve learning and teaching and to update all stakeholders with the newest development in learners’ assessment.

\textsuperscript{11} The countries in the South Pacific are engaged in a dialogue on the regional benchmarking of the quality of education.
9. Guidelines

Improving access to learners’ assessment

9.1 All school age learners in Solomon Islands regardless of gender, age, geographical location, ethnicity, language and disabilities should have access to learners’ assessments of good quality.

Improving quality

9.2 Developing, improving, monitoring the national system of learners’ assessment will be a prescribed skill for education officials charged with different responsibilities in the area of enhancement of teaching and learning (Section 12);

9.3 The design of learners’ assessment systems will be carried out with full participation of national education officers and if necessary technically and financially supported by agencies or consultants that work on the basis of specific national demands and terms of references;

9.4 There will be regular capacity building of teachers, teacher trainers, Education Authorities and Ministry-staff in how to develop, implement, monitor and report on a national assessment system;

9.5 Teachers, teacher trainers, inspectors will have to implement regular formative assessment that help to improve the learning process. This type of assessments will go along with summative assessments that are mainly utilized to measure learning outcomes of the national school curriculum (e.g. SISE, SIF3 and SISC);

9.6 Equally important is to respond to these formative assessments with remedial programmes for the individual learner or groups of learners. ARTTLe could assist teachers with the adaptation of teaching styles and to improve the impact of teaching;

9.7 Learners’ assessment tools introduced in the education sector will be regularly and externally reviewed (every three years) to evaluate appropriateness (social, cultural, language etc. bias) and validity (e.g; ARTTLe);

9.8 All national learners’ assessment tools introduced to the education sector must be subjected to trials/pilots, analysis and reporting to ensure validity and reliability;

9.9 The cultural sensitivity within the national learners’ assessment system is imperative;

9.10 The planned trials/pilots for the implementation of the Language in Education policy will include recommendations for specific learners’ assessments in vernacular;
Improving management and coordination

9.11 The government will adequately resource the national learners’ assessment system and prioritise quality learners assessment tools for the early years of Primary Education (Section 14);

9.12 The procurement of learners’ assessment tools and if necessary specific expertise in this matter will be the responsibility of the Government and Education Authorities;

9.13 Within the development of a national learners’ assessment system at schools, the Ministry must guarantee strong coordination and cohesion of different assessment systems such as introduced by NESU, Inspectorate, Teacher Training Development Division (TTDD), SOE for teachers and students;

9.14 Effective communication must be in place to establish an efficient and effective learners’ assessment system;

9.15 Clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.(Section 12) is necessary;

9.16 The monitoring and evaluation of the national learners’ assessment system, its quality, its regular use and outcomes is the responsibility of the Ministry (Section 13).

10. Principles

10.1 Learners’ assessment at schools is carried out to provide feedback, facilitate and improve learning. Assessment must be based on a nationally approved and prescribed curriculum with expected learning outcomes. Learners’ assessment therefore should be:

- Fair
- Good quality
- Objective
- Relevant
- Valid
- Fitting to the learning, living and language environment
- Manageable (Affordable)
- Regularly engage learners and communities
- Open and transparent in its reporting
- Comprehensive in the sense that an assessment approach is utilised that combines:
  - assessment to improve the learning process (diagnostic and formative),
  - assessment to measure learning outcomes (summative) and
  - (self) assessment to reflect on the learning.
The national learners’ assessment system therefore has the following additional principles:

10.2 Related School Based Assessment (SBA) of learners’ progress should be a daily task of a teacher. The teacher asks children and students in the class whether or not they understand and appreciate what is being and has been taught and the responses provide an indication of the teaching results;

10.3 SBA or internal assessment in the schools will play a stronger role in the individual learners’ assessment. The Ministry will develop procedures to integrate the SBA(s) in the total individual assessment of students. This will include results of national examinations and also formative assessments;

10.4 The Ministry will develop detailed guidelines, standards for SBA(s) for the different subjects and Years in the National School Curriculum, but prioritise the early years of primary education;

10.5 To facilitate effective and comprehensive SBA(s) the teachers must develop and maintain individual learners’ files which are recording results of the different assessments done in schools. The Ministry will develop clear guidelines and capacity building for these learners’ files;

10.6 Assessment should be diverse and assess full range of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It could be therefore verbal questioning, reading and answering or a paper and pencil exercise. It can be diagnostic, formative or summative, internal or external;

10.7 The results of assessments need to be openly shared among teachers and learners in order that teachers can improve their teaching and introduce specific teaching styles or programmes and in order that students can improve their learning.

11. Functions and types of assessment

Based on these principles (Section 10) the Ministry will develop, strengthen and utilise the following functions and types of assessment in the national assessment system. See also Annex 3 and 4.

I. Formative and diagnostic assessments

11.1 Formative and diagnostic assessments will be developed and (re)introduced. These will be used for diagnosis and remedial purposes to identify learning difficulties, where individual help is needed and to improve the teaching and learning process. This may include multi-mode assessment tasks (for example:
ARTTLe tests, SISTA, EGR(N)A, coursework, practical activities, class observation or group work);

11.2 The results of these assessments will help to monitor the performance of learners, to improve pedagogical strategies and to develop child oriented teaching;

11.3 Formative and diagnostic assessment will also help to reduce the strong focus of teachers on summative assessments of learning outcomes of the national school curriculum through national examinations. They will help to underline the importance of other assessment tools that assist in improving teaching and learning;

11.4 Initially this will mean that the Ministry will continue to implement SISTA for numeracy and literacy, in particular for the early years in Primary Education. SISTA will be gradually extended to other subjects and Years (e.g., Year 8). Other types of diagnostic and formative assessment, such as EGR(N)A and for life-skills in the early years in Primary Education will be piloted and developed as well;

11.5 ARTTLe will be utilised by teachers for assessment of the teaching process and learning progress of children and students. It has been designed to help teachers recognise the results of teaching or the weaknesses in the teaching and learning process. When regularly used, ARTTLe helps to enhance teaching results;

11.6 The Ministry will promote and help to implement the concept of remedial teaching. Teachers must develop specific teaching plans to support the learning of individuals. In principle every learner must be assisted to meet the standards and learning outcomes of the subjects in the National School Curriculum;

11.7 Teachers must ensure corrections are made to his/her way of teaching. Where students have not responded correctly or not demonstrated required skills, solutions or new techniques must be provided, explained or shown;

11.8 Teachers must do regular assessments of homework or (group) classroom exercises or tasks which are important tools to measure the learning process of individual learners or groups.

II. Summative assessments

11.9 Summative assessments are mainly used for ranking, selection or certification. They measure the achievement of learners towards the expected learning outcomes of the National School Curriculum, mostly at the end of the school year;

11.10 The examinations for the University of South Pacific (USP) Foundation (Year 13), Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC, Year 12), the SISC (Year 11), SIF3
(Year 9), SISE (Year 6) are all examples of regional and national examinations and (summative, external in nature) assessments;

11.11 It is expected that the national learners’ assessment system will accommodate the gradual phasing out of SISE by 2015;

11.12 The Ministry will develop a national examination for Year 12 which will replace the PSSC by 2015.

III. National and regional benchmarking

11.13 The results of formative and summative assessments will be also used to monitor the general educational progress within the formal education system or within the schools;

11.14 SISTA, EGR(N)A or specific assessments for Life-skills will help to indicate individual learning outcomes. However, the Ministry will use these tools also for national benchmarking and monitoring of standards.

IV. Self assessment or Assessment to reflect on learning

11.15 Teachers are encouraged to make learners aware of the importance of self-assessment, reflection and self-evaluation of their own learning process;

11.16 The teacher is expected to make the learners aware about what will be assessed, the reasons for the assessment(s) and after the assessment to what extent they have met the requirements and why or why not;

11.17 Learners therefore need to be fully aware of learning outcomes in the national curriculum and know about assessment criteria or expectations used by the teacher;

11.18 The reporting to the learners’ needs to be positive in terms of what has been achieved and what can be improved and should not be negative or criticizing;

11.19 Assessment results should be also shared with the parents or caretakers of the learner in order to encourage extra support or interest for learning at home.

V. Learners’ assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE)

11.20 Learning outcomes are not assessed by using paper and pencil tests (only) or any formal examinations. Regular class observations are a more suitable tool;

11.21 Assessment should be based on multiple methods. For example, use of narratives, anecdotal or diary writing by teachers, event recording, display and assessment of children’s work, portfolios and classroom observation;
11.22 Assessment of children in ECE is based on the teacher-child relationships where the teacher and the learner work closely together.

VI. Learners’ assessment in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

11.23 Assessment in TVET must be competency based\textsuperscript{12} and related to the National Qualifications Framework (under development);

11.24 National skills will be assessed in recognized institutions for three levels; Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced level;

11.25 The National Trade Testing will be maintained for certain courses and skills. Learners must be able to demonstrate the skills required by recognized institutions for qualification and accreditation in certain fields such as plumbing, electrical, building and carpentry;

11.26 Further assessment of other trade skills shall be determined by the National Qualifications Framework.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

I. National Government

12.1 The National Government will recognise the high importance of learners’ assessment at schools and measuring the quality of teaching and learning at schools. It will therefore allocate an adequate share of the recurrent education budget to the implementation of this learners’ assessment policy;

12.2 The development, organisation and management of a national learners’ assessment system at schools is also dependent on provision of good infrastructure including an effective communication system.

II. Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

A. National Examination & Standards Unit (NESU)

12.3 To promote, develop, manage, monitor, evaluate learners’ assessment and report about developments in learners’ assessments at least once a year;

12.4 To improve the quality of learners’ assessment;

12.5 To regulate the learners’ assessment process and tools;

\textsuperscript{12} The ability to perform actions/procedures effectively (Reece & Walker, 2004)
12.6 To ensure that national examination papers and any other external assessment tasks are delivered to schools on schedule;

12.7 To ensure that an adequate budget is prepared to implement and to maintain this policy;

12.8 To ensure that directors, teacher-trainers and instructors in the School of Education, Vanga Teacher College and Rural Training Centres understand this policy and integrate this policy in their pre-and in-service programmes for teachers or instructors.

B. Curriculum Development Division (CDD)

12.9 To monitor and ensure that learners’ assessment is based on the learning outcomes of the approved National School Curriculum;

12.10 To continuously exchange information with NESU, the Inspectorate, teachers and schools on the curriculum materials development and publishing of textbooks and teacher guides and what is expected in terms of specific assessment for all subjects in the National School Curriculum;

12.11 To assist NESU in developing specific assessment tools for the expected outcomes of learning, per year and per subject in ECE, Basic and Senior Secondary education.

C. Inspectorate Division

12.12 To lead the implementation of the Inspectorate review. This focuses more on the quality of teaching and the learning process. Monitoring of and reporting about (the results of) learners’ assessment will be an important task;

12.13 To continuously advise schools, teachers, school committee/board chairpersons and Education Authorities (EA) that school based learners’ assessment must be regularly conducted in the appropriate language for all subjects in all sub-sectors; ECE, Basic Education, Senior Secondary and TVET;

12.14 To include specific reporting about learners’ assessment and the quality of teaching and learning in the whole school evaluation process and reporting;

12.15 To encourage that practical follow up such as remedial teaching takes place on the assessment outcomes and to report to EA’s where that has not happened.

D. Early Childhood Education Division

12.16 The ECE-division will inform NESU, CDD, Inspectorate about any new development in specific assessment for children in ECE;
12.17 The ECE-division will promote regular assessment of children’s development and self-assessment by teachers in kindies.

E. Technical Vocational and Education Training Division (TVET)

12.18 The TVET-division will inform all stakeholders about the development of National Qualifications Framework and the implications for learners’ assessment;

12.19 The TVET-division will develop specific assessment tools and approaches for all skills training in the country.

F. Teacher Training Development Division (TTDD)

12.20 TTDD will in close collaboration with School of Education (SOE\(^{13}\)), NESU, Inspectorate, ECE, Primary and Secondary Education division and TVET-division to organise or facilitate relevant in-service training for all teachers and EAs on learners’ assessment;

12.21 TTDD will strongly promote the integration of learners’ assessment tools and approaches in the pre-service training for all teachers organised at SOE and Vanga Teachers College.

G. Planning, Coordination and Research Unit (PCRU)

12.22 In close collaboration with NESU, PCRU will develop specific indicators, minimum standards and targets for measuring the quality of teaching and learning (for example on numeracy and literacy) and integrate these in the Performance Assessment Framework. The Solomon Islands Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) needs to be compatible with some specific data collection on the quality of teaching and learning and learners’ assessments;

12.23 In close collaboration with NESU, PCRU will regularly initiate research for action on the quality of teaching and learning in Solomon Islands and recommend practical improvements for the teaching and learning process based on this research.

III. Education Authorities

12.24 To promote, monitor and assist in the training of teachers and instructors in the use of assessment tools, as prescribed by the Ministry and thereby enhance the teaching and learning in the provinces;

12.25 In close co-ordination with TTDD and NESU to provide adequate technical support and guidance to teachers and learners in the area of assessment;

\(^{13}\) SOE, part of SICHE
To assist schools to develop and implement a learners’ assessment system which will include the development of learners’ portfolios corresponding with the national policy and guidelines.

**IV. School management**

12.27 To support all initiatives taken by EAs and the Ministry to promote, to introduce, to develop, to implement and regularly monitor and evaluate School Based Assessments;

12.28 This means that school or classroom based diagnostic and formative assessment need to take place regularly to identify successes and problems with learning and to develop remedial programs where necessary to assist all learners to meet the expected learning outcomes;

12.29 Generally to ensure that all teachers adhere to and implement the national policy on learners’ assessment.

12.30 The School management to inform parents/guardians (see Section 11.19) in order for them to understand the assessment results and monitor the learning progress of their children as well as providing relevant support.

**V. School of Education (SOE)

12.31 SOE must integrate this policy in the pre-service training for teachers for ECE, primary and secondary education and in close collaboration with NESU prepare all teacher-trainees on all the aspects of learners’ assessment and train them in the necessary skills;

12.32 SOE must also integrate this assessment policy and its implications for newly required skills in any in-service training for teachers which it is organizing.

**VI. Other stakeholders**

12.33 Other stakeholders such as other education providers (e.g. University of South Pacific [USP], Open University of Papua New Guinea) are expected to also utilise and develop assessment tools and processes as promoted by this policy.

**13. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is teamwork. Although, mostly done at school level or by the Ministry, parents/guardians are also encouraged to play their part.

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14 SOE (part of SICHE)
13.1 Generally, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the formal education sector throughout the country will be part of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) of the Ministry;

13.2 The Ministry will regularly report about assessment results and comparable standards of attainment across the country, provinces and EAs. Data will be collected for example from specific assessment tools such as SISTA, EGR(N)A, ARTTLe or for Life Skills;

13.3 Monitoring of numeracy and literacy outcomes is important but not sufficient. Monitoring of learning processes and outcomes for all other subjects in Basic Education is equally important.

13.4 Class observation and other tools for example specific research are needed to collect a more comprehensive understanding about learning outcomes and the factors that are determining these outcomes;

13.5 The Ministry will ensure that after publication of data on the quality of the teaching and learning process, there must be a review and action plan to improve the learning outcomes at all levels of education.

13.6 The early years of primary education will be prioritized. The Technical Working Group on Assessment is a good forum to develop such specific planning for improving the quality of education;

13.7 More specifically, the following indicators will be used to measure progress in the quality of teaching and learning:

- the availability and distribution ratio of curriculum materials in the school
- the attendance rate of teachers and students
- assessment of he intended curriculum learning outcomes (by SISTA 1 & 2 or ARTTLe)
- examination success rates (pass rates)\textsuperscript{15}
- by subject mean performances compared to national mean and standard deviation
- completion rate
- number of self-assessments done by teachers, head teachers and principals
- school inspectors’ report(s)

13.8 There needs to be a regular external audit of all assessment instruments that are used at schools, which will assist to improve the quality in terms of validity and reliability of all national learners’ assessment instruments.

\textsuperscript{15} The current norm referencing (pre-determine allocations) reporting of National Examination results (achievement represented by a single grade/mark) does not truly measure a student’s ability/performance other than ranking students based on relative scores
14. Finance

14.1 Funding must be secured for the following essential components of the national assessment system:
- the management and administration of the National Examinations;
- the development and promotion of a school based learners’ assessment system including SISTA, EGR(N)A or ARTTL, and an assessment system for life skills;
- the necessary capacity building in learners’ assessment of teachers and administrators at national, provincial and school level;

14.2 The Ministry will develop a detailed and cost-effective plan for this policy through its Policy Framework and Strategic Action Plan. See Annex 4;

14.3 The National examinations will require candidates to enter with a fee as determined by NEAB;

14.4 The Ministry will negotiate with the Development Partners and Regional Organisations (such as SPBEA) to provide both technical and financial support for this policy implementation; particularly, when the national Government budgetary support is inadequate and limited technical support is available.
Annex 1. Relevant documents

- The Government policy on education as outlined in the *Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement, CNURA Policy Framework, 2008-2010*
- The *Education Strategic Framework 2007 – 2015, June 2007*
- The *National Education Action Plan, 2010-2012, August 2009*
- The *Public Expenditure Review Report, 2007-2009, July 2009*
- The *Review of the Sector Wide Approach, 2004-2009, October 2009*
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Education for living, approved policy on Technical, Vocational Education and Training, March 2005*
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *National Curriculum Statement, 28th of September 2009 (Final draft)*
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, *Policy statement and guidelines for Basic Education in Solomon Islands, November 2009*
- *Benchmarking Education systems for results, concept note, 26th of November 2008, World Bank*
- *Timor Leste, An analysis of Early Grade Reading Acquisition, World Bank, 2010*
Annex 2. World Education Forum, Education for All

Dakar Framework for Action, 2000

**Goal 1**
Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

**Goal 2**
Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

**Goal 3**
Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

**Goal 4**
Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

**Goal 5**
Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

**Goal 6**
Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
Assessment to improve the learning process

- Diagnostic and formative assessment
  - Assessment to measure learning outcomes
    - SISEE
    - SIF3
    - SISC
  - Assessment to improve the learning process
    - System
      - for example
        - SISTA
        - EGR(N)A
    - School
      - ARTTLe
  - Homework Assessment
  - Classroom Assessment

Assessment by Function

- Summative assessment
  - Assessment to measure learning outcomes
    - SPFSC
    - PSSC
### Annex 4. Policy Framework and Strategic Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Policy Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>To develop a national assessment system that includes assessment tools to improve the learning process and to measure the learning outcomes of the national school curriculum. This system will include a balanced and manageable combination of summative, diagnostic and formative assessments in which as much as possible learners actively participate in (self) assessment of their learning process.</td>
<td>Develop assessment instruments such as SISTA, ARTTLe, Life-skills or EGR(N)A for all subjects in Basic Education to start with literacy and numeracy. Development of tools for the early years of Primary Education will be prioritized. Develop a comprehensive learners’ assessment system and strategic action plan to gradually introduce new assessment tools and approaches, including for life skills (see 9.3) Organise awareness raising and training workshops on school based learners’ assessment for teachers and EA’s, firstly in the early years of Primary Education</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA, TTDD, Inspectorate, Primary Education Division and SOE.</td>
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<td>9.2</td>
<td>To administer the current SISTA for literacy and numeracy in schools every three years. SISTA will be gradually extended to other subjects, firstly within the early years of Primary Education.</td>
<td>Administer SISTA every three years to start with literacy and numeracy at selected years in Primary Education Develop and expand SISTA 1 (Year 4) with 1 more subject in Primary Education every year for selected years of schooling and in the medium term also for Junior Secondary Education</td>
<td>2010. Next one will be in 2013 onwards</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
<td>To develop national life-skills benchmarks and monitoring instruments for Years 4, 6 and 8. The outcome will highlight gaps where teachers need to develop life-skills intervention</td>
<td>Instrumentation of life-skills Piloting</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA</td>
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strategies, thus improving the total well-being of individuals to live in harmony with others and the society as a whole.

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<td>9.4</td>
<td>On the basis of available human and financial resources, other assessment tools in particular for the early years of Primary Education can be gradually introduced along with SISTA, e.g. Early Grade Reading or Numeracy Assessment, (EGR(N)A) which is now piloted in some countries in the Pacific region</td>
<td>Participate in workshops in the Pacific region on the development of EGR(N)A</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Develop and implement pilots for EGR(N)A in selected schools in primary education</td>
<td>2011/12</td>
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<td>Implement an evaluation of the EGR(N)A-pilot</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Formulate an action plan for the way forward.</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>9.5</td>
<td>The Assessment Resource Tool for Teaching and Learning (ARTTLe), as a tool for intervention, will be disseminated and used throughout Primary Education</td>
<td>Develop ARTTLe Booklets and expand its use at the Primary schools</td>
<td>2010-2012</td>
<td>NESU</td>
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<td>ARTTLe evaluation (spot check/verification)</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>NESU (&amp; schools)</td>
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<td>9.6</td>
<td>School-Based Assessment (SBA) will become a feature of the National Learners’ Assessment system; that means that head teachers, principals and chairpersons of school committees will be responsible for holding regular assessments of the learning process according to regulations set by this policy and National Examination and Assessment Board (NEAB)</td>
<td>School Based Assessment at the primary level encompasses whatever formative or diagnostic classroom- based assessments activities (or Nationally controlled). The SBA will feature prominently when the new curriculum approach to teaching and learning comes into effect especially in terms of outcome based reporting (progressive achievement- levels) School Based Assessment (Internal assessment) at the senior secondary level will be expanded and strengthen to ease the pressure on high-stakes assessments. A balance between formative and summative tasks.</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>NESU, CDD, TTDD, Inspectorate, SOE, SPBEA, EAs</td>
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<td>2011-2015</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA, CDD</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>To participate in regional discussions on the benchmarking of education systems and to develop a learners’ assessment system that enables comparison with regional benchmarks and standards;</td>
<td>Review all Examinations prescriptions and develop guidelines for different assessments.</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>NESU, SPBEA with support from DPs</td>
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<td>9.8</td>
<td>To regularly evaluate all national learners’ assessment instruments by external, independent audits on the quality, validity and reliability and disseminate improvements and review of the assessment tools through the whole education system</td>
<td>Develop ToRs for audits of assessment instruments and assessment process Identify organizations or consultants that could implement external audits of the national learners’ assessment system Monitor regular exchange on assessment systems between the different Ministerial divisions and organisations involved in assessment</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>NESU, CDD, TTDD, Inspectorate, Primary and Secondary Education division and TVET, ECE and (international and local) TA US Professional</td>
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<td>9.9</td>
<td>To continuously build capacity for all actors involved in learners’ assessment (teachers, Education Authorities, Ministry staff, SOE) to improve learning and teaching and to update all stakeholders with the newest development in learners’ assessment.</td>
<td>Develop in collaboration with TTDD a comprehensive training system (pre-and in-service training) for all EAs, teachers on the introduction, development, implementation, maintenance of the national learners’ assessment system</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>NESU, TTDD, SOE, Primary and Secondary Education division, ECE, TVET, Inspectorate</td>
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