

**Education for All
Annual Review Meeting
25-29 April 2005**

Aide Memoire

Background

1. An annual review meeting of the Education for All 04-09 between development partners took place on 25-29 April 2005. All partners reiterated their full support to the EFA plan and commended that the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) 2005/06 is consistently targeting the six EFA objectives as specified in the Dakar Framework. The plan also refers the 10th. Plan and the Millennium Development Goals.
2. The meeting reviewed Ministry of Education and Sport documents with particular attention to the ASIP and with reference to activities in preparation for the review. A list of the participants is found in Annex A.
3. As part of the preparation for the review, an independent assessment of the implementation of the EFA plan was carried out through an external technical review and a supplementary review commissioned by development partners. In the future, all documents for the review meeting will be distributed by
4. The findings of pre-review field visits, 19-21 April 2005, planned and carried out by all development partners, were referred to in discussions of various items of the review agenda. Key observations from these field visits are attached as Annex B.
5. Briefings were held with the Honourable Minister of Education and Sports and the Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission. It was confirmed that primary education will retain its Priority One status, thus ensuring consistent government financing for the sub-sector which for the fiscal year 2005/06 is tentatively set at 16.9% of the national budget. A sector-wide approach to educational development will be promoted. Implementation will be closely monitored by HMG/N.
6. This Aide Memoire records the proceedings of the annual review meeting, drafted and agreed to by the partners. The agenda for the annual meeting is attached as Annex C.
7. The review did not refer directly to earlier review Aide Memoires. In future reviews, links will be established between the reviews. Connection between ASIPs will also be ensured. For the purpose of information, an updated action plan for follow-up to the consultative meeting in December 2004 is attached as Annex D.

Education in circumstances of conflict

8. A document, prepared by MoES, outlining an approach to the conflict was welcomed. Given the long-term nature of the conflict, it was urged to take an even more strategic view with respect to the

dynamics of the conflict by seeking to understand not only how the sector can function in a conflict situation, but also how the sector influences the cause of the conflict.

9. The impact of conflict and the implications of conflict on implementation of plans will need to be addressed as a cross-cutting issue. Further, the MoES was recommended to consider flexible contingency planning at central, regional and district levels, peace education and other modalities for conflict mitigation as soon as practicable.

10. A series of concerns with regard to the impact of conflict were raised. Attention was given to the considerable loss of school days and instructional hours; difficulties in maintaining lines of internal communication; and problems accessing schools. The latter would apply to public as well as private schools. A further concern was raised with regard to vehicles, meant for education offices, being used by security forces. The Minister of Education and Sports ensured that immediate action would be taken to rectify this situation.

11. Development partners urged MoES to operationalise the concept of schools as “zones of peace”.

12. It was also noted that as civil society seems to be able to reach remote and conflict affected schools in rural areas, the review recommended that the MoES current steps should be taken further forward so the district education administration takes on a more strategic and proactive view with regard to getting access, building capacity and monitoring of activities by working with NGOs, CBOs, Human Rights Groups, media etc.

13. The emergence of internally displaced people (IDP) is increasingly putting strains on primary schools, among others. MoES had recently announced the introduction of new measures to manage overcrowding, caused by the conflict and internally displaced people. Measures include additional recruitment and redeployment of teachers, supply of educational materials, more school facilities, and a review of internal administrative constraints. Progress on these will be shared in meetings between partners.

Structure of the ASIP

14. The presentations relating to ASIP 2005/06 were very well organised and structured around the key priorities. In particular, the review recorded the efforts to link national strategies to activities and budget allocations for districts. It was commended that the ASIP 2005/06 had been developed as a participatory bottom-up process as far as the current situation allowed. It was welcomed that the ASIP 2005/06 is innovative and referring to partnerships with the civil society in a more comprehensive manner than has previously been the case.

15. Addressing principles of educational planning, the review expressed a wish for the ASIP to become even more strategic, more concise, and hence shorter. This could partly be achieved by omitting repetitions from the Core Document. It was recommended that the ASIP becomes more conflict sensitive in choice of strategies. It is further recommended to ensure that the ASIP 2005/06 be connected with the “Education Business Plan” and thus with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. In the future, it would also be useful to connect and compare the current year’s ASIP with that of previous year to ensure continuity, to systematically address bottlenecks encountered, and address issues not resolved during the course of the preceding plan period.

16. The format of the ASIP should include an executive summary, possibly structured on the “power point presentations”. It is also recommended to reflect the district ASIPs, and key indicators applied at that level in the national ASIP. Summarising key financial implications is essential to make the ASIP more readable. The ASIP must also address the feasibility of expending the very large budget increase for primary education as in the case of the forecast for 2005/06.

17. In the ASIPs, priorities for capacity building should be focused on establishing practical partnerships with civil society and support to district administration and planning.

18. A revised budget for the ASIP 2005/06 reflecting changes recommended during the review will be presented to the monthly partners’ meeting in May 2005.

Thematic issues and recommendations for action

19. The MoES presented the themes and key issues for review and discussion structured on the six EFA objectives as specified in the Dakar Framework for Action. The issues were linked to the ASIP and discussed in groups.

20. MoES gave an overview of its “early childhood development” (ECD) strategy paper that had been developed in a participatory manner. While endorsing the overall strategy, the review mission recognised that two modalities for ECD are in operation, but both with the ultimate aim and responsibility to ensure cognitive and healthy development in children. The future of the ECD programme will have to be discussed together with the discussion on inclusive education.

21. Some gaps were noted between the proposed annual plan of Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) and the ASIP 2005/06 with regard to activities related to adult literacy. Activities such as “out-of-school” targeting school dropouts and the importance of women’s literacy for promoting girls’ access to and retention in education are not reflected in the text of the present ASIP. To provide a more comprehensive picture of activities in the area of non-formal education, it will be necessary to map existing activities, run by MoES, other ministries, INGOs, NGOs and other providers. These aspects should be adequately reflected in the ASIP for 2006/07.

22. In order to establish a fuller picture of the capacity for ensuring access to education, the ASIP targets for enrolment should incorporate the enrolment of private schools.

The Block Grant facility should be simplified and concentrated on fewer key criteria for calculation of the funds. This would cover the provision for textbooks and other educational materials, and scholarships for girls and Dalits. At the same time, funding relating to the School Improvement Plan should be scaled up faster than originally anticipated. This would, moreover, require the strengthening of the capacity of local administrations and School Management Committees. Significant delays in release of funds and with regard to formation of School Management Committees (SMCs) were reported. In view of the central role of SMCs, the review urged that immediate steps be taken to rectify these aspects. DoE will share progress on these issues to the partners’ meeting in May 2005.

23. Using EMIS 2003 data, MoES has calculated a deficit in availability of classrooms, as well as sanitary facilities. In view of this need, the existing scheme for construction of facilities for Resource

Centres and district office buildings should be reconsidered with a view to reallocating funds for construction of additional, and rehabilitation of existing, classrooms and toilet facilities, including separate toilets for girls.

24. With regard to water supply for schools in the Terai belt, the risks associated with arsenic poisoning of water wells was pointed out, as has been the case in previous reviews as well. Reference was also made to earlier submissions of two reports on this issue. Surveys have identified contaminated wells and subsequently proposed treatment plans. Yet, the execution of the treatment plans is still lagging behind. MoES was requested to implement and monitor the “Environmental Management plan” without further delay.

25. A strategy on inclusive education is being developed together with a sequenced plan of implementation. The review mission expressed their strong support for this development, which would also be expected to further specify the characteristics of the target groups. It was noted that special needs education for children with disabilities and barriers to learning is an integral and important part of the larger framework of inclusive education. The recently introduced “Welcome to School” (WTS) initiative, which is a community based school enrolment drive aimed at girls and disadvantaged children, was seen as connected with the strategy on inclusion. It is recommended that distribution of scholarships also be linked with the annual WTS initiative.

26. MoES tabled a need to clear the backlog for scholarships for the school year 2004/05 by including this provision in the ASIP 2005/06 alongside scholarships for the school year 2006/07. It was noted that Denmark cleared the backlog for the school year 2003/04.

27. The efficacy, targeting and timing of the current provision of scholarship was questioned as international experience suggests that an annual scholarship that meets only 40% of direct costs neither serves an effective poverty reduction measure nor retains children in schools. It was suggested to conduct a social impact study of the current scholarship policy, taking into account earlier studies. MoES agreed to return to the issue of funding of scholarships at the partners’ meeting in May 2005.

28. The inclusion in the ASIP of issues relating to HIV/Aids was highly commended. The need to ensure consistent follow-up was stated.

29. Plans to enhance development of quality of education were presented. Systematically collected and analysed data on learning achievement and outcome, including completion rates, are, however, not yet available. A simple mechanism to document the number of instructional hours was requested. Improved management within the education system was identified as another requirement for provision of education of a good quality in all schools across the country. The need to consistently support and train teachers was underlined. Reference was also made to the technical institutions within the education system, which should be included in institutional capacity development schemes and commissioned to carry out research aimed at facilitating further quality improvement in education. The policy of hiring RPs by school clusters, as considered by MoES, was welcomed as a move that can help improve access of RPs to schools to provide on-the-job support to teachers and head teachers. Implementation of these and other initiatives aimed at quality improvement will require a holistic approach to planning for technical and institutional capacity development, incorporating effective utilisation of available provisions for technical assistance (TA).

The above list of issues demonstrates the complexity in addressing quality education. It is recommended that steps be taken in these respects in the nearest possible future.

30. Dissemination of the newly developed primary curriculum is addressed in the ASIP as well as preparation for local curriculum development. Currently, trial textbooks and curriculum in 10 districts are being piloted. It was recommended that the ASIP should address how to meet the learning needs of all in a strategic manner and in particular include specific targets for bi-lingual education.

31. Information on gender parity is available, but girls' education is addressed primarily through the means of scholarship provision. A national strategy and district plans responsive to gender to parity and equality with adequate budget allocations are still to be prepared and rolled out. Development partners congratulated the MoES on the increase of female District Education Officers.

32. A UN interagency "EFA group" has been formed to promote stronger coordination and harmonisation. The review recommended that the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) broaden the current WTS coalition – INGOs, NGOs, media, CBOs and Human Rights groups – to include the stakeholders, in order to accelerate progress in girls education.

Sector planning and technical assistance

33. The review supports MoES's initiative to develop a coordinated plan for school education covering grades 1 – 12, based on the principles of a sector-wide approach. Assistance is provided by ADB. A seminar on this initiative with participation of all partners to the sector was recommended.

34. TA had not been fully and effectively utilised, and ownership by MoES had not always been ensured. Development partners expressed support to MoES initiative to harmonise TA within the government's monitoring framework.

Monitoring of activities and funds

35. The need for improvement in the monitoring mechanisms was recognised and emphasised, especially with regard to the districts, the community level and the schools, and the current conflict situation.

36. At the moment, the scope of the independent Technical Review needs to be enhanced. It is recommended that a working group be established to address and detail these requirements.

Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA)

37. The budget for ASIP 2005/06 was reviewed. The pro rata share, as indicated for joint financing, was endorsed.

38. Financial Monitoring Reports (FMR) have been received for the first two trimesters of the fiscal year 2004/05. The FMR for the first trimester, which broadly meets the JFA requirements, needs to be submitted with a bank reconciliation statement issued by Nepal Rastra Bank. DoE is expected to submit the FMR for the second trimester, due May 1st. 2005, by the end of the first week of May. The second trimester FMR is based on reporting from 52 districts only. The DoE will make efforts

to get reporting from all districts for the third trimester FMR. A replenishment request will be processed following a satisfactory submission of FMRs for the first two trimesters.

39. Concerns about the findings of the last two annual reports of the Office of the Auditor General of Nepal were raised and the need to improve procedures so that misappropriations of funds are reduced, was recognised.

40. There was a discussion on the feasibility of the current system of budget heads. It is not clear what they include, and it was therefore recommended that steps be taken to revisit the system of budgeting for allocation of joint financing for EFA.

41. Outputs reports (Annex 4) of the FMR are incomplete due to the fact that these reports can not be generated based on the FCGO information. The DoE has compiled output reports for 12 districts based on information collected through the MoES channel. Consistent with the aim of sector-wide approach of harmonising all EFA reporting procedures with the existing Government system, it was agreed to split the EFA budget head 65-3-804 so that reporting on grants to schools and scholarships are available from the FCGO system effective from the fiscal year 2005/06. Annex 4 will be adjusted accordingly.

Next steps

42. An EFA 2004-09 consultative meeting for all partners is scheduled to take place in Kathmandu in the period 5-9 December 2005. The consultation will be linked with the SESP review.

43. The review recorded that the submission of supporting documents for the mission did not comply with the stipulated deadlines of the JFA. Consequently, it was agreed that the Terms of Reference for the consultation, a programme for the meeting and drafts of supporting documents will be forwarded to the partners no later than 15. November 2005. Final versions of the supporting documents, in accordance with the JFA, are to be forwarded to partners no later than 14 days before the consultations starts.

Annex A: Review participants

Annex B: Key observations from field visits

Annex C: Agenda for the semi-annual review

Annex D: Updated action plan for follow-up to the consultative meeting in December 2004

EFA Mission
Field Visit
 19 – 21 April

S.No.	Sectors	Districts	Mission Members	Vehicle
1. 1.	Birat Nagar	Sunsari Morang	JICA – Krishna Lamsal, Kenichiri Kobayashi Norway – Svein MOES– Ganesh Dhakal	Unicef
2. 2.	Bhairahawa	Kapilbastu Rupandehi Nawal Parasi	Unicef- Sabina Finland – Juho MOES – Laxman Khanal	Finland
3.	Pokhara	Kaski Tanahu	World Bank – Gajendra DFID - Andrew Unicef – Suman MOES– Sovit Ram Bista	ESAT
4.	Nepalgunj	Banke Bardiya	Denmark – Kishore and Else Finland - Tor MOES – Mahashram Sharma	Unicef
5.	Janakpur	Dhanusa Mahottari	DFID - ? JICA - ? MOES - Shitaram Koirala	?
6.	Dhangardhi	Kailali Kanchanpur	Norway – Kikkan Unesco – Tapraj Panta Unicef - Samphe MOES – Prahlad Aryal	?
7.	Kathmandu	Nuwakot Rasuwa Lalitpur	World Bank – Rajendra Unesco– Sohe Lee MOES – Gopal Bhandari	World Bank