

Aide Memoire
Sixth Review Mission
Secondary Education Support Programme
15 and 16 June 2006

Preamble

1. The Government of Nepal in collaboration with ADB and Denmark developed and initiated the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) 2003-2009. The programme aims to improve the quality of and access to public secondary schooling, particularly for girls, students with disabilities, poor and disadvantaged groups and districts, and to develop institutional capacity of central and local bodies and communities to sustain and deepen the school improvement process.
2. In March 2006 the Government of Nepal and the partners successfully concluded the Mid Term Review (MTR) with a view to improving the execution of the programme. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Department of Education (MoES and DoE), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Denmark carried out a joint Review Mission of the SESP in Kathmandu on June 15 and 16 2006. This Joint Review Mission (JRM) was intended to build on the MTR work and follow up on any unresolved issues or actions. The MoES/DoE chaired the mission proceedings and a list of participants is attached in Annex A.

Objectives

3. The objectives of the Review Mission were:
 - a) To assess the programme progress against the ASIP/AWPB for the fiscal year 2005/2006.
 - b) To review the progress made after the SESP MTR held in March 2006.
 - c) To review the financial progress.
 - d) To agree on ASIP/AWPB 2006/07.

Methodology

4. The Review Mission was planned and prepared by the MOES/DOE which also arranged for the chairing of the meetings.
5. This Aide Memoire was drafted and agreed to by the three partners to SESP. It should be read in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding of the MTR.

Status Report and Programme Progress

6. MOES/DoE presented the final draft of the ASIP/AWPB for the fiscal year 2006/07. Participants had already had a full briefing on this at the Education for All Review Mission held in the three days before the SESP meetings were held.

7. The MoES/DoE presented a status report on the SESP implementation in a progress update on the post Mid-Term Review in 2006. This report was provided in a helpful matrix version which is attached as Annex B. It outlines the actions taken by relevant agencies in response to the Agreed Recommendations for Action from the Mid-Term Review of SESP held in March 2006.
8. Physical improvements completed, in hand or planned:
 - a) 60 schools in four programme-intensive districts have had classrooms, multi-purpose halls and toilets for boys and girls almost completed
 - b) 90 schools in six programme-intensive districts will have the same facilities completed in FY 2006-07
 - c) Nearly 200 schools outside the Programme Intensive Districts will be provided with a double classroom unit. 114 (228 classrooms) of these have been chosen and will be completed in FY 2006-07, the remaining will be selected shortly
 - d) Lead resource centres to be provided in 46 districts: the programme for these is behind schedule
 - e) Of the ten hostels for female teachers in training, seven have been completed, and three will be completed in FY 2006-07
 - f) There is a provision for seven mountain hostels for students living away from home while attending school.

The completion of the above will mean that all districts will benefit from SESP support. Partners in welcoming this progress asked that in every relevant case a quality learning environment was provided.

9. Partners expressed concern at the continuing delay of the National Curriculum Framework, which had still not been finally approved. They asked for this to be dealt with as a matter of urgency, since several of the SESP activities rely on its approval before they can be taken forward
10. Key issues relating to NCED, CDC, OCE are as follows:
 - a) Operating costs are included in the national budget
 - b) Financing for equipment and materials need to be calculated
 - c) A framework costing for the NCED Capacity Building Plan needs to be worked out including TA and institutional linkages
11. Linkage plans for funding from Danish Direct Funding as well as other sources are in preparation.
12. The JRM appreciated that the DOE had initiated the implementation of the scholarship management and monitoring action plan presented at the MTR. However the JRM reiterated that urgent action is required to (a) track scholarships to ensure that the appropriate amount of scholarships reach the right beneficiaries and (b) monitor the performance of the scholarship programme.

13. At the MTR in March the following was agreed as a scholarships monitoring scheme (MTR MOU paragraph 27 (f)).

“On the basis of the Aide Memoire 27-30 November 2005 and the DoE submission of 9 December 2005, DoE will take adequate steps to implement the revised scholarship management programme, allowing for 60,000 students, of whom two-thirds will be girls in addition to 2,560 scholarships for children with disabilities, Chepang, Raute, Mushahar and scholarships for hostel students. The further implication of the scholarship provision will be discussed at the SESP monthly meetings.”

Development partners asked for implementation of the plan. While there had been helpful awareness-raising, more needs to be done to ensure that scholarships reach the intended beneficiaries. A further need for scholarships for all dalits was brought to the attention of the JRM. Implications of any extension to the scholarship scheme would need to be carefully considered. Justification would be a basic requirement.

14. As a follow-up to the DoE's assessment on improving the engineering oversight of civil work, the JRM requested concrete action to ensure quality of the civil work and asked for the decisions made to be shared with partners. In view of the difficulties faced by a shortage in remote areas of civil engineers, DoE will implement a new strategy which will be provided for development partners at the beginning of FY 2006-07.
15. On condition that the quality of civil works can be ensured, the JRM agreed to changes in the funds for overseeing. Any further budget line changes will only be made following consultation and agreement with development partners.
16. The partners warmly support the ongoing process to develop the education sector, which includes the EFA goals and will ensure a coherent school system integrating grades one to twelve. It was understood that linkages with vocational training and tertiary education will be retained. The funding modalities for this approach will be worked out as the process develops, including the modalities for EFA.
17. The steps and timing for this process as specified in the MTR MoU are still valid. The first steps were addressed in the JRM, the remaining steps are envisaged as follows: partners will receive a concept paper on the policy process and associated pilots, outlining the future programme, to be presented for the consultative meetings of EFA and SESP in December 2006. A preliminary MoES/DoE paper with milestones to June 2008 was tabled for partners (see Annex C).
18. The need for TA to support this process will be brought to the local donor meetings for discussion. Full partnership under government leadership will be ensured throughout this process.
19. The MOES/DoE presented a report on spending on SESP up to March 15 2006. The funds for SESP came from the following sources:

FY 2005-06		Million US\$
	Total Annual Budget	20.25
Funding sources	Government of Nepal	3.94
	Denmark - Grant	7.22
	Denmark – Direct Funding	.38
	ADB - Loan	8.71

20. Development partners noted that financial spending was in general lower than planned. Accelerated progress is expected in the third trimester. The question of overall monitoring of expenditure was again brought up, and it was reiterated that direct funding is to be included in a separate column in future spending reports.
21. The JRM agreed in principle to fund flexible learning where students who have not been able to attend regular school need this. Equivalence of this provision will be ensured.
22. It was noted that schools taking initiatives towards better performance should have better acknowledgement, and members asked for objective means of selecting these schools to be developed. The DOE agreed to prepare an appropriate scheme and the instrument to address this will be the SIP.
23. The requirement for major expenditure in IT was presented, justified and endorsed for funding under the component for Institutional Management and Capacity Building. This will require significant investment in the next financial year, which the JRM approved, on the understanding that across the whole programme period the percentage devoted to this component will be as agreed in the MTR.
24. The JRM agreed to endorse the ASIP/AWPB on the understanding that any adjustments required will be addressed during SESP regular meetings.
25. The next SESP review is planned for December 2006 in Kathmandu in conjunction with the EFA consultative meeting. Documentation for this will be forwarded to partners no later than 20 November 2006.

Attachments

Annex A: Participants

Annex B: Follow-up Action for SESP, from the MTR Memorandum of Understanding, para: 27

Annex C: Mechanisms for Partnership and Key Milestones: Preparation and Transition for the School Sector Approach