Classroom Construction Initiative (Phase 1)

AidWorks Initiative Number INK346

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COMPLETION REVIEW

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> Final Report 31 May 2014

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name					
AidWorks initiative number	INK346				
Commencement date	15 December 2011 Completion date 30 June 2014				
Total Australian \$	A\$45,500,000.00 million (A\$20million – CCI Phase 1)				
Total other \$					
Delivery organisation(s)	Cardno Emerging Markets – Managing Contractor				
Implementing Partner(s)	Department of Education				
Country/Region	Philippines				
Primary Sector	Education				

Acknowledgments

The review team wishes to thank all the stakeholders who willingly participated in discussing the progress and implementation of the Classroom Construction Initiative and provided suggestions for future programs of assistance and the ongoing construction of school buildings in DepEd schools.

The ICR Team would also like to acknowledge the logistical support provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australian Aid program, Manila Post, the Philippines Department of Education, Office of Planning Services and the Classroom Construction Initiative Managing Contractor – Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) Manila office personnel, for their assistance with the in-country mission.

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Acronyms

ASDS	Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
AUD	Australian Dollar
BAC	Bids and Awards Committee
BESRA	Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda
BEST	Australian Aid Basic Education Sector Transformation
BIR	Bureau of Internal Revenue
CAF	Certificate of Availability of Funds
CCI	Classroom Construction Initiative
CCS	Classroom Construction Study
CPES	Constructors' Performance Evaluation System
DepEd	Department of Education
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DO	DepEd Order
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EAO	Engineering Administrative and Operations budget
EBEIS	Enhanced Basic Education Information System
ES	Elementary School
FFCCCII	The Federation of Filipino-Chinese chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAA	Government Appropriations Act
GAD	Gender and Development
GOP	Government of the Philippines
ICR	Independent Completion Review
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IP	Indigenous People
LGU	Local Government Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOOE	Maintenance Operating and Other Expenses
NHS	National High School
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPS	Office of Planning Services
PAGCOR	Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation
PBSP	Philippines Business for Social Progress
PCC	Project Coordinating Committee
PTCA	Parent Teacher Community Association

PDP	Philippines Development Plan
PDED	Program Development and Evaluation Division
PFC	Physical Facilities Coordinator
PFSED	Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division
PhilGEPS	Philippines Government Electronic Procurement System
Php	Philippines Peso
PIPES	Project Implementation Performance and Evaluation System
PMU-B	Project Management Unit -B
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSS	Partnership Scoping Study
PWD	Person With Disabilities
RSD	Research and Statistics Division
SBP4BE	School Building Program for Basic Education
SDS	Schools Division Superintendent
SIS	School Information System
SPED	Special Education
SPHERE	Support to Philippines Basic Education Reforms
SY	School Year
ТА	Technical Assistance
TLE	Technology and Livelihood Education
TSU	Technical Services Unit
TWG	Technical Working Group
VAT	Value-added Tax

Executive Summary

The Classroom Construction Initiative (CCI) is designed with two Phases with the initial phase of 2 years aiming to: i) bridge the classroom construction gap in Australia's support while awaiting approval of the BEST program, and; ii) to address the institutional capacity needs to deliver an efficient, effective and sustainable school building program. In this regard the primary purpose of the CCI Phase 1 is to strengthen the procurement, project and financial management systems of the DepEd, while building a significant but small number of classrooms. A secondary purpose, and intended to the second phase, was the conduct of research to develop a strategy for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to classroom construction based on the evaluative analysis of various delivery mechanisms and modalities.

The CCI adopted a learning by doing approach by providing direct and embedded technical assistance to support the DepEd Procurement, Planning and Physical Facilities Divisions personnel to manage and quality assure school building programs. For this program the emphasis was on building classrooms in highly congested schools within the growth corridors in the regions closest to Metro Manila, with the intent that the successful program outcomes maybe replicated nationally.

Through a consultative inquiry model the Independent Completion Review (ICR) team investigated, assessed and has made recommendations to inform the Philippines Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian aid program in terms of the ongoing institutionalisation of the CCI processes and strategies within the context of the DepEd Rationalisation Plan implementation and for the soon to be commenced Australian Aid Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) program inception and implementation planning.

Overall Findings

Relevance

The program objectives were and remain highly relevant to both the Government of the Philippines and Government of Australia in terms of their shared goal of improving access to, and the quality of, education for all Filipino learners through the provision of quality educational facilities. The current classroom gap across regions is being reduced but still requires significant efforts to meet the needs of an expanding K to 12 system. The CCI has demonstrated a model for supporting the DepEd to continue to effectively monitor and quality assure all school building programs, via different funding and project management modalities, including: government (e.g. DPWH) and nongovernment funded, donor funded and others funded through public-private partnerships. This ICR found that the CCI modality of embedded technical assistance provides an appropriate mechanism to strengthen governance and specifically, procurement and financial management systems. The ICR recognises both the clarity of the objectives of the initiative as an intervention, and the informed targeting of the assistance to relevant beneficiaries.

Effectiveness

The ICR found the CCI - SBP4BE constructed classrooms to be of a high quality and conformant with the DepEd design standards and specifications. The improvements in quality of the classroom construction can be attributed to the increased knowledge and vigilance of the CCI-SBP4BE project managers as well as by the increased ownership of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The CCI has supported DepEd to clearly document and make more transparent the implementation requirements, procedures and protocols of the government procurement law (RA9184). The related and accompanying training and capacity building programs developed through CCI were very well received in the sites visited for this ICR and are being adopted by DepEd for national rollout. The research program has completed the Partnership Scoping Study (PSS), and an initial draft of the Classroom Construction Study (CSS), with the former making clear recommendations that should, when combined with those of the to be finalised CCS, provide a sound basis for the development of a comprehensive strategy and sustainable approach to classroom construction.

Efficiency

Enabling supply of quality classrooms requires strategic use of the available human and financial resources and effective quality assurance and control mechanisms. The CCI -TSU with the PMU-B

provided DepEd with a *quasi- regulatory* mechanism for quality control, including independence in the delivery of technical advice and conduct of monitoring and program audits. Intensive monitoring assisted in on-time and on-budget construction of classrooms. This ICR highlights the following efficiency gains and outcomes of the CCI-SBP4BE:

- *Comparable cost* with other school buildings of equivalent specifications;
- *Savings* in the overall operational costs due to the competitive bidding process ensuring realistic market pricing;
- *Value for money:* conformant with standards; lack of contract variation, cost overruns, most built within 120days, comparable costs but increased quality
- *Risk management* planning: "knowing what is expected to occur, where and when."
- *Capacity development through capacity assessment* targeted TA and capacity building program design and resources.
- *Managing fiduciary risk* through independent review of the bid Evaluation reports; increased capacity and reduced bid failures.

However, this ICR also noted that the site selection process for the CCI-SBP4BE initially suffered from a lack of up-to-date and comprehensive school site data, resulting in some delays and miscommunication. The review team proposes that this process could be made more efficient for all school building programs if more comprehensive information (plans to scale, topography, disaster risk rating, geo hazards, drainage, electricity and water presence, roads and access points) was available for each school in the form of a school development plan. The ICR suggests that this more comprehensive data for each school could be included in the EBEIS or related systems and required to be updated on a quarterly basis and validated by the Division.

Sustainability

There is strong evidence of sustainable gains derived from the initial CCI investment in capacity building. The respondents to this ICR all indicated that the training had been extremely beneficial and was a major contributor to making the SBP4BE procurement and construction processes more effective and efficient. Many school level personnel indicated that the learning was being used for other procurement and construction activities. The CCI - SBP4BE used government procurement procedures and guidelines with some enhancements to the process, namely, increased training, bid reviews, increased inspections, use of test samples, technical and process audits. This review team and the DepEd respondents to this ICR, has validated these as being essential elements for the construction of quality and sustainable school buildings. However, the ICR notes some risk to sustainability of the observed benefits and outcomes across all levels of DepEd due to the commenced restructure of offices as part of the implementation of the rationalisation plan. The ICR highlights the importance of DFAT supporting the transitioning of the CCI to the BEST program and advocates succession planning to feature in the inception and implementation planning of the BEST program, particularly for areas targeting capacity development and concerned with strengthening governance and service delivery systems from the central to field level and during the initial implementation of the restructure

Gender equity

The TSU-PMU developed a Gender and Disability Awareness Strategy that included, orientation of implementing unit and partners of 'mainstreaming GAD and disability agenda' in all phases of the school building program, participation of women and men in program management, and engagement with schools and communities. Clear direction appears to have been provided by CCI to all levels of the DepEd and there is evidence that the classrooms and facilities, as designed, considered the basic gender-related needs of learners through the provision of separate toilets for female and male learners in both floors (for 2-storey buildings) and a third toilet on the first floor for disabled learners. The CCI-SBP4BE design, for single-storey buildings, with separate toilets attached to school buildings is considered superior to those specified by DPWH and in other regular DepEd procured Programs of Works, as the provision of toilets is dependent on a separate budget. Unlike the visible access to the toilets in the CCI single-storey design, the designed blind hallway to the toilets in multi-storey school buildings need to be revisited.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

Technical Assistance

- 1. THAT DFAT approves the proposed extension, using the savings of the CCI program to ensure support to DepEd and to keep the momentum for the system reforms:
 - to fast track the national roll out of the capacity building program for the Physical Facilities personnel of all Regional and Divisional offices, in the quality assurance procedures to be applied to all school building programs, as per the DepEd School Building Standard Implementation Manual and accompanying training videos developed through the CCI.
 - for the construction of the additional classrooms in the identified sites using program savings; and,
 - to commence the process of establishing the quality assurance system, as per the TSU-PMU model, and per the revised function and mandate of the rationalised Division of Education Facilities and to develop a plan for continued utilization of TA through BEST.
- THAT DFAT through BEST supports the DepEd to establish the restructured Procurement Services and Education Facilities Division (PFSED) to replicate the TSU-PMU model for Quality Assurance for all school building programs to ensure conformance and compliance with the DepEd minimum design, technical and safety standards.
- 3. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST to engage TA to assist with the necessary capacity development and documentation of protocols and procedures for the conduct of quality assurance from the level of the Division to schools. Including:
 - development of the protocols and procedures for the hiring of engineers by the Division office.
 - job descriptions for the Division engineers and with an initial assessment made of the current Contract of Service for potential to be hired
- 4. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST to build on the TSU-PMU experience to define and document for all school building modalities the respective responsibilities and accountabilities for planning, procurement, minimum design standards, construction and quality assurance.
- 5. THAT the modality of embedded technical assistance as applied through the CCI is adopted in future DFAT programs of assistance aimed at strengthening governance capacities of existing structures and systems.

Capacity building

- 6. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST for the Schools Divisions to rollout the School Building monitoring program of training to all School Heads and community officials and as part of this training develops and provides a School Building Maintenance Manual describing and illustrating the minimum requirements to prolong the lifespan of school buildings.
- 7. THAT DFAT ensures that future school building programs adopt the CCI approach to provide comprehensive information in the training, briefings and documentation relating to on-site safety for workers, and highlights the DFAT child protection policy and child labour safeguards in terms of all construction in schools.
- 8. THAT, DFAT, in future programs and when using the government procurement law (RA9184) ensures that the Agency Bid Cost (ABC) reflects the real cost of production and delivery to the intended locations and as necessary and allowed within the law, modifies the

cost and/or processes for the intended nature, purpose and location of the procurement activities within the supply chain.

Research

- 9. THAT the findings of this ICR are used by DFAT as the basis for a review of the regular classroom design standards as per the areas listed in 2.2.15, in this report and as a minimum in Education Facilities constructed through BEST, ensures
 - appropriate locations of the male, female & disabled toilets and non-secluded access;
 - adoption of the lever-type doorknob in the specifications and supply of furniture appropriate for left and right handed learners; and,
 - size of classroom seats, desks, and armchairs (K to12 curriculum demands; senior high school & increased use of ICT)
- 10. THAT DFAT through BEST conducts further research to examine links between provision and design of classrooms for decongesting schools, improving access, learning quality, and safety in varied locations. The research design to be informed by curriculum, learning and teaching policies, and consider:
 - Integration of ICT in teaching and learning in regular classrooms
 - Specialist classrooms to support implementation of K to 12 & the four (4) main academic tracks in senior high school including for Science, Technical and Vocational Education, Computer Science, and for mainstreaming of Special Education learners, etc.
 - Local design, development and maintenance of educational facilities in far flung and remote communities targeting Indigenous Peoples' Education and Muslim Education.
- 11. THAT DFAT through BEST supports DepEd to develop comprehensive School Site Development plans as part of the support to the DepEd Unified Information System and integrated with existing systems e.g. the Basic Education Information System. Site development plans to include:
 - standardised design and scaled drawings,
 - physical geographic features and environmental hazards and conditions that affect construction,
 - maintenance and sustainability of buildings,
 - disability access and entry points in relation the main roads,
 - rate the sites in relation to buildable space versus catchment area.

Refer to Annex 8: for the mapping of the recommendations for CCI Phase II implementation through BEST.

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

Evaluation Criteria ¹	Rating (1-6)	Explanation
Relevance	6	The program objectives were and remain highly relevant to both the Government of the Philippines and Government of Australia in terms of their shared goal of improving access to and the quality of education for all Filipino learners through the provision of quality educational facilities. The current classroom gap across regions is being reduced but still requires significant efforts to meet the needs of an expanding K to 12 system. The CCI has demonstrated a model for supporting the DepEd to continue to effectively monitor and quality assure all school building programs. The CCI modality of supporting classroom construction through DepEd's SBP4BE' program, with embedded technical assistance (TSU-PMU) has provided a sound model and mechanism for strengthening the core functions of offices using the government structures and systems while maintaining service delivery. The research component has provided a sound evidence base for refinement of the educational facilities policy implementation and the capacity building component demonstrates how effective policy implementation may be achieved at the sub-national level. The CCI provides a replicable model for the DepEd to commence implementation of the newly Rationalised structure and function of the Education Facilities Division as the division responsible for policy, standards, planning and quality assurance of all school building programs under the office of Undersecretary for Finance and Administration.
Effectiveness	5	Sound theory of change enabling capacity development to occur through a design and implement approach with strong emphasis on learning by doing. However, 20 months is insufficient time for transfer of learning beyond those partners and beneficiaries that were directly involved. Many of the Engineers engaged at the level of the Division were either hired by CCI or by the Division Contract of Service, which may reduce the level of assurance of effectiveness beyond the implementation of the program. However, evidence gained during this ICR suggests that the knowledge and capacity that has been developed through the SBP4BE program supported by the CCI will be retained within the regions and divisions that have commenced the restructure. There is evidence of the quality of the technical assistance and training provided through CCI to DepEd by the overwhelmingly positive responses of ICR respondents and demonstrated application of learning. For example, Principals expressing empowerment to act on issues, BAC members acknowledging the reduction in failed bids, engineers being clear on the application of the standards and all stakeholders commenting on the superior quality of the CCI- SBP4BE buildings and consideration of the different needs of learners e.g. access for students with disabilities. In addition, DepEd intends to continue the rollout of the capacity building programs to all regions and divisions and to adopt and adapt the TSU-PMU model for ongoing quality assurance of school building programs and as part of the rationalisation plan implementation.
Efficiency	5	The program has operated well within budget and achieved

¹ If impact is included, a rating is not expected to be applied.

		operational savings, which have been able to be transferred to the program outputs (more classrooms). Program implementation management was found to be strong and the strategic and operational planning appropriate with high quality technical assistance engaged to support achievement of quality outputs and outcomes. Delays in procurement or construction were related to either - capacity issues within procurement (lack of personnel, misinterpretation of the procurement law) or weather conditions stopping the program of works. In either case, the issues were addressed in a timely fashion and the majority of sites were completed within the allowed 120-days. Procuring the classroom furniture at the level of the Region for all schools involved in the CCI-SBP4BE achieved savings due to <i>economies of scale.</i> However, it seems that these savings in some instances compromised quality gains as some of the delivered furniture for Batch-1 classrooms did not comply with the standards and needed to be replaced. Given the delayed start to the CCI program (actual commencement Nov 2012 vis-a vis 2011), the proposed extension of the CCI is justified and enables the DepEd to commence the rollout of the training in QA and site inspection and monitoring to all Regions and Divisions for all school building programs.
Sustainability	5	The Physical Facilities office within DepEd has commenced revising the SBP4BE School Building Implementation Manual to cover all school building programs managed and or to be quality assured by DepEd. It is likely that the capacities gained in the areas of procurement, project and financial management, will be retained by the personnel that participated directly in the CCI-SBP4BE. With the restructure of the central office and Regional offices and soon to follow the restructure of the Schools Divisions, as per the rationalisation plan implementation, there is likely to be some movement of personnel within and between offices. However, these skills and expertise in project and financial management and monitoring and evaluation are highly transferable and should prove valuable in other DepEd management and operations contexts. In addition, the ICR found the TSU-PMU model for quality assurance and quality control of school building programs to be well aligned with the intended functions of the new offices under the rationalisation plan and the recent shift from DepEd as Manager (now DPWH for regular building) to Quality Assurer of all school buildings. The model is replicable and it is proposed by DepEd to be implemented under the rationalisation plan with further assistance for capacity development being requested by DepEd as part of the Australian government BEST program.
Gender equality	4	The CCI produced a Gender and Disability Awareness Strategy that included, orientation of implementing units and partners in the 'mainstreaming of gender and development and the disability agenda' in all phases of the school building program. However, there is little traction of gender mainstreaming through CCI, beyond the provision of separate toilets for males and females, which PFSED considers as the mark of 'gender-sensitive classroom.' The CCI-SBP4BE pre procurement and construction conferences included gender and disability awareness raising components in relation to classroom construction. The training included safeguards for prevention of child labour (particularly male) as well as safety, while the standards and specifications included

	separate toilets for male and female learners in both single-storey and multi-storey buildings. There is a need, however, to rethink the design in terms of the secluded hallway leading to the toilets in the multi-storey construction. However, the M&E system appears to not have directly collected
	sex disaggregated data, for example, of training participants.

Rating scale

Satisfactory		Less than satisfactory	
6	Very high quality	3	Less than adequate quality
5	Good quality	2	Poor quality
4	Adequate quality	1	Very poor quality

1. Introduction

1.1 Initiative Background

Education is the Philippine Government's priority for development. Its objective is to improve boys' and girls' access to quality education. The main vehicle is through the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Program, which now includes mandatory Kindergarten and additional two years (Senior High School). This is by far, the most significant education reform in the country as it is changing the entire basic education curriculum, training of teachers and increasing the demand for education resources. While the budget for education has been steadily increasing and new policies are in place, there remain many technical and resourcing challenges, including shortage in classrooms resulting in overcrowding in densely populated areas.

A number of factors are contributing to the classroom shortage. High population growth has created a "youth bulge" that will continue to put pressure on the education system long-term. The intensification of DepEd's campaign to enroll all school age children in school, to mandate preschool education and the K to 12 curriculum is putting even more pressure on the system. The situation is further exacerbated by natural disasters, including typhoons, floods and landslides, which regularly damage and/or destroy classrooms. These shortages in resources present a lot of challenges in providing learning spaces for children and encouraging them to stay in school. Given the extent of the classroom congestion and the classroom construction.

The Classroom Construction Initiative 2011-17 (CCI) is an investment identified in the Australian Government Education Delivery Strategy 2013-23, supporting Australia and the Philippines shared commitment to promote prosperity, reduce poverty and enhance political stability through partnerships in education reforms, as one objective. Specifically, the CCI is aligned with the Australian government's commitment to improve education through strengthened governance and service delivery systems, more effective schools and teachers, and to reduce disparities in educational outcomes.²

The CCI is designed with two Phases. The initial phase of 2 years was designed to: i) bridge the classroom construction gap in Australia's support while awaiting approval of the next program of Australian government support to Philippines Basic Education, the Australia-Philippines Basic Education Sector Transformation (Aus-Phil BEST) program, and; ii) to address the institutional capacity needs to deliver an efficient, effective and sustainable school building program. This second aspect of support in Phase 1 is a direct response to the findings and recommendations of program reviews involving school building and classroom construction and from the conduct of a capacity assessment of DepEd's procurement and financial management systems.³

As a design requirement, AusAID commissioned a review of DepEd financial management and procurement practices with respect to the utilization of Government of Australia (GOA) funds. The review revealed that DepEd practices need to be improved if the CCI is to be implemented efficiently and effectively and the fiduciary risk to the utilization of GOA funds through the School building Program for Basic Education (SBP4BE) minimized. Based on these findings AusAID has phased the implementation of CCI around a *design and implement* approach

In this context the CCI grant aimed to:

• provide immediate support (**Phase 1**) and make an initial contribution to alleviating the classroom shortage and a start to addressing the institutional development and capacity building for classroom construction planning and procurement; while

² 2014, Philippines Program, Education Delivery Strategy 2013-2023

³ Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda, 2005-2012 -Review Missions 2009-2011 and the Support to Philippines Basic Education Reforms (SPHERE) Progress Reviews relating to the Principal-Led approach to classroom construction and the World Bank-AusAID 2010 Philippines Basic Education Resources Review. AusAID 2010 Procurement and Financial Assessment

 scoping the development of a more comprehensive and cost effective and efficient approach to classroom construction with DepEd (that is integrated within a broader process of educational system reform) and its program partners backed by the full resources of BEST program for implementation as CCI Phase 2.

The first phase of the CCI commenced in November 2012⁴ and is due to be completed in June 2014⁵. To ensure Australia's response has broad geographic coverage, the CCI supported two existing, complementary Philippine's Government classroom construction programs. These are:

- The DepEd's School Building Project for Basic Education (SBP4BE) which constructs classrooms in highest-need public schools in urban areas through a principal-led procurement approach targeting Region III (Luzon) and Region IV-A Calabarzon; and,
- The Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Project (KALAHI-CIDSS) program delivered through a Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in rural areas.

The principal **objectives** of CCI Phase 1 are:

- 1. Increased access to education in priority areas by constructing approximately 800 1000 classrooms in public schools to provide an additional 90,000 places for students;
- 2. Strengthened procurement and financial management systems of DepEd and commenced building of institutional capacity for the efficient and effective management of SBP4E through assistance from the Technical Services Unit (TSU);
- 3. Reviewed the capacity of other agencies (DSWD, private sector, Local Government Unit (LGU's) and Non-Government Organisation (NGOs) to complement DepEd's national School Building Program (SBP); and
- 4. Provided DepEd with options for delivering a cost effective and efficient School Building Program through partnerships with other government, private sector and Non-Government Organisation service providers.

The CCI Phase 1 comprises two components:

Component 1: Implementation of the SBP4BE program

SBP4BE was designed to provide for the construction of approximately 180/200 one or two-storey four-classroom buildings (up to 800 classrooms). The classrooms are being constructed on sites at existing schools in DepEd Schools Divisions in the provinces and cities of:

- Region 3 (Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Angeles City, San Fernando City, San Jose del Monte, Tarlac City, Tarlac, and Zambales); and,
- Region 4-A (Batangas, Batangas City, Tanauan City, Lipa City, Cavite, Laguna, Antipolo, Rizal, Quezon).

Component 2: Research and Policy Studies (RAPS)⁶

The objective of the CCI RAPS work-stream is to 'inform the on-going discussion on development of DepEd strategy for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to classroom construction. The RAPS input is comprised of two inter-linked studies covering research and evaluation of various organisational modalities and different types of construction models. That is:

 The Partnership Scoping Study (PSS) – this initial study is an analysis and assessment of the various classroom construction development partnerships and different organizational

4 The original commencement date as per the AusAID Final Scope of Service document was July 2011-June 2014 for Phase 1. But the actual engagement of the Managing Contractor did not commence until November 2012.

5 At the time this ICR was commenced, a no cost extension for Phase 1 completion, closure and transition to the Phase 2 from July to December 2014 has been requested by the CCI -TSU/DepEd for approval by National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australian Embassy, Manila.

⁶ At the time of this ICR only the *Partnership Scoping Study* was completed and made available to the review team. The ICR team was also provided with the preliminary Classroom Construction Study comparative cost only.

modalities currently functioning in the Philippines and in regional countries.

• The *Classroom Construction Study* (CCS) is the second study focused on the physical aspects of classroom construction: i.e. design, building methods, the construction materials and costs and location.

From these two studies it is intended that a third *Strategy Paper* is developed for the DepEd describing a comprehensible and sustainable approach to classroom construction based on the evaluative analysis of various delivery mechanisms and modalities.

1.2 Review Purpose and Questions

This Independent Completion Review is designed to evaluate the CCI Phase 1 implementation using the following criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Gender Equity, with a particular emphasis on Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. Refer to Annex 1 for the Terms of Reference.

The primary purpose of the ICR is to through a consultative inquiry model to investigate, assess and make recommendations to inform the DepEd and DFAT in terms of the ongoing institutionalisation of the CCI processes and strategies within the context of the DepEd Rationalisation Plan implementation and the proposed transition of the CCI Phase 2 to the AP-BEST program inception and implementation planning.

Specifically, the ICR addressed the following questions:

1. Was the design of the CCI appropriate in terms of achieving the shared objectives of the Australian government and DepEd to;

- improve access to basic education for all learners (girls, boys, students with disabilities, marginalized groups) (classrooms)
- strengthen procurement & financial management systems (capacity building)
- strengthen research capacity to inform policy development (research)

2. To what extent is the Theory of Change relevant and the modality of embedded technical assistance appropriate for achieving the aim of strengthening governance of existing DepEd structures and systems?

3. What evidence is there that the CCI effectively improved processes and achieved quality and efficiency gains at all stages of the SBP4BE implementation?

4. How effective and sustainable is the investment in capacity building for more systemic development of capacity in the areas of:

- Procurement, Project and Financial Management
- Establishment and documentation of procedures and protocols?
- Quality assurance and quality control?
- Training program design and delivery?

5. How sustainable is the investment in relation to DFAT's continued support and assistance via the BEST program to support the DepEd Rationalisation plan and K to12 curriculum implementation?

1.3 Review Scope and Methods

The ICR team was composed of independent specialist consultants, DepEd Office of Planning Service (OPS) planning and monitoring and evaluation officials and the designated DFAT program implementation management personnel. The ICR fieldwork included in depth analysis and review of the CCI documentation and program activities. Site visits were conducted with at least two ICR team members and included meetings and discussions with the Region and Schools Division Bids

and Awards Committee (BAC) and the Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) personnel, as well as school site physical construction and furnishing inspections. Key informant interviews were conducted with Division engineers, Principals and school Physical /facilities personnel, the Parent and Teachers Committee Association (PTCA) and local government officials, e.g. Barangay captains. Focus group discussions were also conducted with groups of teachers and students.

The team visited 21 schools (5 Elementary, 16 High Schools), the Region III and IVA offices and 14 schools division offices from Regions III and IVA. Interviews were also conducted with senior officials in DepEd, including, Assistant Secretaries, as well as, Directors of offices responsible for different aspects of CCI planning, implementation and monitoring, including the Technical Services Unit (TSU) team, the DepEd Project Management Unit – B team (PMU-B). Members of OPS-PFSED, OPS-PDED participated in the ICR team.

Finally, meetings were conducted with the Managing Contractor Team and senior officials of the DFAT Australian Aid Program in Manila.

Refer to: Annex 2 for the Evaluation plan and Annex 3, for the final list of sites visited and respondents.

Methodology

Phase 1: Desk Review

A rapid desk review of relevant documents focussing on the two components of the CCI Phase 1 and includes the review of the design and appraisal documents, six-monthly progress and periodic monitoring reports (Inception, Implementation planning plans and manuals, DFAT (AusAID) internal periodic Reports e.g. Quality At Entry (QAE), Quality At Implementation (QAI), other reports as relevant and recommended via DepEd or DFAT; preparation of an Evaluation Plan and preparation of evaluation instruments.

Phase 2: Preparation of Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan was developed by the Evaluation team and in relation to the ICR Terms of Reference (Annex 1) as provided by the DFAT- Australian Aid Philippines Education Program. The evaluation plan was also discussed with and informed by the meetings that were conducted with the DepEd Senior Management personnel.

Phase 3: Field visits

The field visits and consultations comprised:

In depth analysis and review of the CCI documentation and program activities. Individual and group structured interviews with key informants will be conducted to identify good practices and lessons learnt. The ICR team also conducted a visual technical assessment of school classrooms and the facilities, furniture and equipment.

The sampling methodology for site selection, the number of sites and location is included in in the Evaluation plan (Annex 2)

Site visits were conducted with at least two team members. The School Infrastructure Specialist visited all sites in the review sample. The site visits included:

- Site physical construction and furnishing inspections: Visual inspection of sample classrooms and inspection of procurement and construction records.
- Key Informant Interviews: (KII) interviews with purposively selected, informed individuals which enabled triangulation of stakeholder issues and perspectives regarding the achievement of CCI.
- Focus Group Discussions: (FGD) were used to facilitate discussions with similar classes of stakeholders (parents, teachers or students), to identify diversity of views about the program, to address cross cutting issues such as achievements in gender equality, and to validate findings of the CCI research and policy studies as relevant.

A Field Review Kit, Appendix 2 was provided to all ICR Team members and contained:

- 1. The Evaluation plan
- 2. A guide for the conduct of field work
- 3. CCI -ICR Matrix Interview Questions Guide
- 4. Key Informant/Focus Group Discussion Questions instrument
- 5. Matrix of SBP4BE Sites to be visited
- 6. ICR-CCI-Field Investigation Instrument

Phase 4: Analysis, Feedback and Reporting

The comprehensive Field Investigation Instrument captured the data for the complete sample of schools visited for the CCI-ICR and the completed CCI Infrastructure Technical report is contained in Annex 4. The key findings and recommendations are discussed in the main body of this report. (Section 2) The review team members compiled their own notes of interviews and discussions and team meetings were conducted throughout the fieldwork phase to assimilate the emerging trends against the key review questions.

The review team formed conclusions in relation to the review questions and considered and synthesised the views of the various stakeholders using a consensus process to develop the report conclusions and recommendations.

The reporting of the ICR findings has involved three key steps:

- Review Mission Aide Memoire: at the completion of the fieldwork phase the review team presented the preliminary findings on 21st, 25th, 29th April, 2014 to key review stakeholders for the purposes of validation and refinement. The final Aide Memoire was submitted on 28th April 2014.
- 2. **Draft report:** following the fieldwork phase, the review team applied content analysis methods to synthesise findings from the field. A draft report was prepared and submitted by 2 May, 2014.
- 3. **Final report:** with this final report to be produced by 5 May, 2014 for stakeholder comment and peer review with the final report submission on the 30th May 2014.

1.4 Limitations

Conduct of ICR prior to handover/use of the constructed and furnished classrooms and facilities.

The CCI ICR field visits were conducted from the 14-28 March 2014. At this time, only a small number of classrooms had been fully handed over to the beneficiaries or were being used for the intended purpose. The ICR team was only able to see two completed classrooms while they were in use.

This certainly limited the review in terms of evaluating the constructed classrooms in terms of effectiveness as a learning space and conduciveness for teaching and learning.

Assumptions

Key DepED personnel are available, especially key officials and implementers, and are willing to share information openly with the Review Team

Key informants are accessible, given that the ICR is being conducted towards the end of the school year (graduation ceremonies) and the ICR coincides with the Easter holidays.

Scope of the review

This ICR only evaluated the CCI – SBP4BE modality and research findings. It was not intended and it did not evaluate the modality used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Project (KALAHI-CIDSS) program delivered through a Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in rural areas⁷.

⁷ The Kalahi-CIDDS activity has been moved under the DFAT - Social Protection Initiative and all reviews will be undertaken in the context of that initiative.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Relevance

Rating: 6

2.1.1 The CCI is a timely and relevant initiative contributing to the Government of the Philippines (GOP) efforts to reduce classroom shortage and improve access to learning by closing the classroom gap. In the target school sites the CCI has assisted in reducing the level of congestion and provided quality and structurally sound classrooms conducive to teaching and learning. For example, in Pedro Guevarra National High School (NHS), the Principal expected that in School Year (SY) 2014-15, that the school would experience single shift for the first time since 1970's and was targeting a class size equivalent or below the 45:1 pupil-to-classroom ratio. In San Francisco Xavier High School, the CCI has helped to address the classroom shortage, albeit only temporarily as enrolments continue to grow.

While the CCI alone is not responsible for these improved situations, with the major ongoing constructions managed by the Department of Works and Public Highways (DPWH) and Local Government Unit (LGU) supported constructions contributing, it has positively assisted these schools to be less congested by providing classrooms. As the Principal from Pedro Guevarra NHS noted, the SBP4BE has helped reduce the safety and security issues associated with double shift classes, specifically, the need for students to travel to or from school in the dark. In contrast the congestion is still a major issue for schools like Marciano del Rosario Memorial NHS. It was reported to the ICR Team that the current enrolment is approximately 1800 students (about 49% male and 51% female). With the CCI-SBP4BE there are now 22 classrooms resulting in a ratio of 81.8 students per classroom, while only a marginal decrease from the 2012-13, ratio of 96.3 per classroom (18 classrooms), it is in the right direction. Obviously, with this pupil to classroom ratio the school still requires double shifts for all grades and learning areas. Reportedly, only the special science sections have classes conducted within the usual class hours and with small class sizes well under 45:1.

This latter point raises further access issues in terms of equitable allocation of resources for students in the "mainstream" versus the students in selective "specialised" streams. In this case, it seems the school is well respected for its "Special science program" and therefore attracts students from further afield. While it is important that these programs are available it is somewhat problematic if this is to the detriment of other local students educational opportunities. This is unlikely to be an isolated case and one that is perhaps likely to become more of an issue for theDepEd as schools, especially at the secondary level, expand and begin to offer Senior High school programs and course specialisations. It is an area that will hopefully be addressed through the collection of more comprehensive data utilising integrated information systems within DepEd⁸ and other government agencies, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). With improved and integrated information systems there is an opportunity for the data analysis to include, in addition to the usual student population and enrolment data, the actual and more predicative modelling of catchment demographics, in relation to the current and needed education program offerings and the nature of the associated human, financial and physical resources.

2.1.2 While CCI only built a small number of classrooms, it did so in Schools Divisions registering some of the highest levels of congestion within DepEd and in dire need of more classrooms. It was recognised from the outset that the CCI would only make a small contribution to assuaging the actual classroom need, with the primary focus of the initiative to strengthen DepEd's capacity in procurement, project and financial management, quality assurance and quality control in relation to its school building program⁹.

⁸ DepEd Unified Information Systems includes the Enhanced Basic Education Information System and Learner Information Systems, School Information Mapping.

⁹ CCI Final Program Design Document, August 2011, p4.

However, the needs persist and especially in areas such as regions III and IV-A in Luzon¹⁰. The proximity of these regions to greater Manila ensures ongoing population growth and demand for schools. Core factors relating to the classroom shortage include: the national need for classrooms, estimated at around 35,000 (Php15.1 Billion) and 43,183 classroom repairs (Php37.7 Billion)¹¹. This need is the result of a combination of factors, including: i) the persistent national population growth rate (~2.36 percent)¹², ii) ongoing rural-peri-urban migration by families for work iii) government relocation initiatives - families from highly congested urban slums of Manila and or for families that have been displaced following natural disasters (typhoons and floods) as part of disaster risk management programs¹³, as well as iv) recent policies of mandatory Kindergarten and the v) expansion of the basic education program to include two years of senior high school¹⁴.

With appreciation of the task of supplying adequate education facilities, the Government of the Philippines has increased the education budget allocation annually since 2011 and in January 2013 transferred the major responsibility for school building to the DPWH.¹⁵, It has also nurtured existing and established new public-private partnerships¹⁶ and revised the core functions of the DepEd offices, as part of the implementation of Republic Act 9155, Rationalisation plan, to focus on policy development and implementation planning, standards setting, quality assurance and quality control of all school building programs¹⁷.

2.1.3 In this context, the CCI modality provides an appropriate mechanism to strengthen procurement and financial management systems. The CCI provided Technical Assistance (TA) to the DepEd Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) by establishing a team of specialist technical advisers to work with the PFSED Project Management Unit-B (PMU-B) within Central Office and within the Region and Division PFSED teams. Over a period of 16 months the program has demonstrated significant gains in the quality of the DepEd classroom construction. These gains can be attributed to the enhanced capacity of all personnel involved in the process to consistently apply the standards, specifications and procedures as described in the Republic Act 9184¹⁸. The CCI through training workshops, consultative meetings and the production of operations manuals enhanced the capacities of the DepEd Regions and Schools Division Bids and Awards Committees (BAC) to better understand the government procurement procedures and to more efficiently manage the process. It also supported the capacity development of the Division PFSED engineers to project manage the program of works and for the School Principals and local community to play an active role in monitoring and regularly report on the on site progress of construction¹⁹.

2.1.4 To this end, the CCI has modelled an effective approach for quality assurance of classroom construction. The investment has commenced the process of strengthening business processes, documentation and communication of standards, procurement and financial management practices. The CCI, through the implementation of the SBP4BE has effectively modelled, a strategy for directly managing and or assuring the quality of all buildings constructed in

15 LBRMO, 2013, 'The proposed FY 2014 national expenditure program: Its composition, distribution, and financing' http://www.senate.gov.ph/publications/LBRMO%200913%20Budget%20Facts.pdf Legislative budget Research and Monitoring Office, budget Facts and Figures, Vol.1, Issue 3, July-September 2013.

16 CCI, 2014, Partnership Scoping Study.

17 2013, DepEd Rationalisation Plan, Approved November 2013. www.deped.gov.ph

18 Republic Act 9184, 2003, An Act Providing For The Modernization, Standardization And Regulation Of The Procurement Activities Of The Government And For Other Purposes.

¹⁹ DepEd Memo 208, s 2013 Capacity Development Component of the Classroom Construction Initiative (CCI) under the School building Program for Basic Education (SBP4BE) included training in Records Management, Project Management using MS Project software and Leadership Management

¹⁰ Serafica, R, 2013, 'Classroom shortage to be addressed in 2013' Based on DepEd data - Region III ranked 2nd and Region IV-A 7th out of all regions, in terms of classroom need. #BudgetWatch www.rappler.com

¹¹ DepEd Memo, No.1 s 2014, Disseminating Information on Classroom Construction Initiatives for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-2014

^{12 2014,} National Statistics Office, www.census.gov.ph

¹³ Tirona, M. A. 2013, Philippine Statement to the 46th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, 22-26 April 2013. New York

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/pdf/commission/2013/country/Agenda%20item%204/Philippines_Ite m4.pdf

¹⁴ Republic Act, 10533. May 15, 2013 "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013."

DepEd schools in terms of conformance and compliance with the minimum design and technical standards of the DepEd.

The model could be used for:

- DepEd managed procurement, construction and quality assurance of classrooms and furniture using donor funds.
- Quality assurance of regular classroom construction being managed by Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to ensure conformance and compliance with the DepEd minimum standards and specifications,
- Quality assurance of other modalities of construction of classrooms and other education facilities through Public Private Partnerships (PPP), the Philippines Business for Social Progress (PBSP), Local Government Unit (LGU) etc, and;
- Design, procurement, project management and quality assurance of the construction of specialised classrooms for K to 12 curriculum delivery (science labs, Technical and Vocational education, administration buildings etc.) and for the local construction of educational facilities in remote areas.

2.1.5 Targeted and embedded technical assistance has proven to be a relevant modality. This ICR recognises both the clarity of the objectives of the initiative as an intervention, and the informed targeting of the assistance to relevant beneficiaries.

2.2 Effectiveness

Rating: 5

2.2.1 The CCI Phase 1 identified and resolved classroom procurement issues. The primary purpose of the CCI Phase 1 is to strengthen the procurement, project management and financial management systems of the DepEd, while building a significant but small number of classrooms. The CCI adopted a learning by doing approach by providing direct and embedded technical assistance to support the DepEd Procurement, Planning and Physical Facilities Divisions personnel to manage and quality assure school building programs. For this program the emphasis was on building classrooms in highly congested schools within the growth corridors in the regions closest to metro Manila, with the intent that the successful program outcomes maybe replicated nationally.

This ICR notes that the intended outcomes of the program have been achieved with the three key measures of success described in the CCI Program Design Document²⁰ discussed further here.

2.2.2 Success measure 1: The PFSED SBP4BE program managers will have acquired planning, financial management and procurement skills, which progressively improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SPP4BE service delivery.

2.2.3 Evidence of strengthening of DepEd technical and financial management systems. The central office PFSED-PMU-B managed the implementation of the SBP4BE. The DepEd PFSED-PMU-B Unit head managed daily operations. Regular meetings were conducted with the TSU and PMU to resolve issues arising in the field and to adjust plans and schedules as required. The TSU functioned as a pro-active support for the implementation of the program by DepEd, with the capacity to do so maximised by being located within the office of the PFSED.

2.2.4 Quality improvements in classroom construction can be achieved through increased knowledge and vigilance of project managers as well as by the increased ownership of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The SBP4BE applied RA 9184²¹ processes and procedures and used DepEd's standard designs with minimal changes to the specifications. The improved quality evident in the constructed classrooms may be attributed to enhanced capacity of the Division

²⁰ CCI Program Design Document, p7.

²¹ Republic Act 9184, Government Procurement Reform Act.

Engineers to project manage the process and for the stakeholders and beneficiaries to play an active role in monitoring, inspecting, documenting progress and reporting on concerns. This practice alerted the Division Engineers of issues as they arose enabling them to prioritise and adjust schedules to follow up on the most urgent. The importance of the role of the School Head as "home owner", in terms of the quality assurance system and as witnessed in the majority of sites visited for this ICR, is perhaps best expressed by the statement by one Principal that, "for CCI, I actively participated on a daily basis in monitoring the construction, whereas in the past I would just let them (the buildings) grow." (School Principal San Francisco Xavier NHS).

2.2.5 Community involvement has been strengthened under the CCI project. The CCI engaged the school community at various stages of the process. Commitment by female and male members and leaders of the community and the PTCA were secured early on, not only for the site of the construction crew office, but, more importantly, for the operation and maintenance of classrooms and facilities. For example, providing more electric fans per classroom²². Moreover, Barangay and PTCA Officials were also reported to be involved in construction monitoring.

2.2.6 Learning by doing. Principals identified that the learning gained through the CCI formal training and the actual *'on the job learning'* from their role as site monitors and the practice of maintaining a logbook, were key elements of ensuring improved quality outcomes for the SBP4BE. For many, when the same process was applied to other concurrent constructions at the school they were able to demonstrate improvements in site safety, increased conformance and compliance with standards resulting in overall improvement in the quality of the buildings constructed. (E.g. Marciano del Rosario Memorial National High School and San Francisco Xavier National High School). The Division BAC and Division Engineers similarly expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the training received and in many instances had adopted the site inspection and monitoring procedures for other buildings (Division of Cabanatuan City). This training could perhaps be extended to involve members of the PTCA and as relevant Civil Society Organisation's.

2.2.7 Success measure 2: The constructed classrooms meet the specified standards for quality and provide an environment conducive for learning? The classrooms are built according to design and SBP4BE specifications.

2.2.8 As part of the ICR a major technical review of the infrastructure was completed. The report of the findings is contained in Annex 4, with the summarised findings discussed below. The majority of the classrooms from the first and second batches of the construction program (93 sites 390 classrooms) have been completed or will be completed in time for school opening in June 2014, with the remainder of Batch 2 and the additional 4 sites derived from program savings, to be completed on or before December 2014, as part of the proposed no cost program extension. In all the CCI will build a total of 660 classrooms²³. Refer to Annex 6.

2.2.9 Strict compliance to the process of identifying sites qualified for classroom construction prior to the approval of recipient sites proved that no recipient site for SBP4BE was changed or removed compared to other school constructions as reported at Region IV-A. This procedure should be included for all school building site selection and as part of the site selection process for the DPWH managed constructions.

2.2.10 Conformance to the DepEd design standards and specifications results in the construction of quality classrooms. The classroom construction component of the initiative has significantly achieved the required levels of quality for the classrooms constructed. Tables 1-3, below, present the summarised results of the findings of the ICR on the level of conformance of the investigated school buildings with regards to structural, architectural, and the facilities and utilities requirements of the DepEd.

Schools personnel consulted for this ICR indicated a high degree of appreciation and preference

²² In many of the schools visited, homeroom parents' associations provided the electric fans in the regular classrooms, and helped with the upkeep of the school buildings and grounds.

²³ Initial target was for 800-1000 classrooms in phase 1, but due to the lack of space in schools for building construction there was a need to build more two storey than 1 storey buildings on the selected sites.

for the design specifications of the SBP4BE classrooms. Specific mention was made of the following: size and space, increased natural lighting and ventilation, the provision of grills, accessible door furnishings, and the fire hydrants and fire alarms.

2.2.11 Safety and social safeguards were established during pre-construction conference with the winning bidder by the CCI-TSU, with the principal, the Division Office BAC and PFC, CCI-TSU, and PFSED in attendance. Agreements were reached regarding on-site security and provision by the school/community for the construction-crew office, accessibility and provision of separate toilets. The conferences also covered social safeguards against the employment of child labour, and no-overtime on schooldays. The TSU engineer monitored conformance to the safeguards during the regular site monitoring. None of the schools visited reported any incidence of child labour practice. Out of the nine on-going sites, six were observed to have proper fencing. Of those with none, two reported pulling-out the fence since they were already de-mobilising, while one did not have a fence since the site is far from the main buildings of the school.

Table 1. Conformance to Structural Standards	and Specifications
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Conformance to Structural Standards and Specifications (Completed & On-going Construction Sites)				
Item	No. of Observations	Observed Conforming Sites		
		Number	Percentage	
Materials Testing Reports	17	17	100%	
Earthfill (compaction)	2	2	100%	
Foundations (dimensions)	5	5	100%	
Foundations (steel reinforcements)	1	1	100%	
Ground Floor Columns (dimensions)	16	15	94%	
Ground Floor Columns (steel reinforcements)	6	6	100%	
Second Floor Columns (dimensions)	12	12	100%	
Second Floor Columns (steel reinforcements)	2	2	100%	
Floor Beam (dimensions, width)	5	5	100%	
Floor Beam (dimensions, height)	13	13	100%	
Floor Beam (steel reinforcement)	4	4	100%	
Roof Beam (dimensions, width and height)	1	1	100%	
Floor Slab (dimensions, thickness)	2	2	100%	
Floor Slab (steel reinforcements)	2	2	100%	
Concrete Hollow Blocks (thickness)	13	13	100%	
Concrete Hollow Blocks (steel reinforcements)	2	2	100%	
Roof Truss (dimensions)	1	1	100%	
Roof Truss (anchorage)	1	1	100%	
Roof Sheathing (materials and fasteners)	11	11	100%	

Table 2. Conformance to Architectural Standards and Specifications

Conformance to Architectural Standards and Specifications (Completed & On-going Construction Sites)

Item	No. of Observations	Observed Complying Sites	
		Number	Percentage
Doors (dimensions, height & width)	12	12	100%
Door (materials)	10	10	100%
Windows (dimensions, height & width)	12	12	100%
Windows (materials)	10	10	100%
Interior Ceiling (materials)	11	10	91%
Eaves Ceiling (materials)	10	10	100%
Eaves Ceiling Vent (extent)	7	3	43%
Adequate Natural Lighting	11	11	100%
Adequate Natural Ventilation	11	11	100%

completed & on-going construction ones)				
ltem	No. of Observations	Observed Complying Sites		
		Number	Percentage	
Male Toilet	11	11	100%	
Female Toilet	11	11	100%	
Handicapped Toilet	11	11	100%	
Ramp for the Disabled	11	11	100%	
Potable Water (functional in the toilets)	10	5	50%	
Electricity (functional in the building)	10	9	90%	
Three-chambered Septic Tank	11	11	100%	

Conformance to Required Facilities and Utilities (Completed & On-going Construction Sites)

2.2.12 Classrooms and facilities, as designed, considered the basic needs of persons with disabilities (PWD)²⁴. There was a separate toilet on the first floor for PWDs. There were two other PWD-friendly features of the CCI classrooms that are not found in regular classrooms: (a) the lever-type doorknob, and (b) provision of two left-handed armchairs per CCI classroom. Moreover, panoramic blackboards minimize glare, facilitating learning and preventing eyestrain. Table 4, below, presents the level of conformance of investigated school buildings with regard to required facilities for persons with disabilities.

Table 4. Conformance to Facilities for Persons with Disabilities

Conformance to Facilities for PWDs (Completed & On-going Construction Sites)					
Item	No. of Observations	Observed Complying Sites			
		Number	Percentage		
Disabled Toilet					
Grab bars	8	8	100%		
Wide doors	10	10	100%		
Ramp					
Grab rails	10	10	100%		
Appropriate slope	11	11	100%		

Both the learners and teachers appreciated the left-handed armchairs provided for the CCI-SBP4BE classrooms. Generally, left-handed students have to adjust to the standard issue, unless their parents decide to fund the needed modifications. DepEd Physical Facilities personnel, acknowledged the need to include left-handed armchairs in regular furniture procurements. This could be either as a regular issue for all allotments of two per classroom or based on accurate analysis of the need within the sites prior to procurement.

2.2.13 However, Persons With Disability (PWD) inclusive facilities in buildings (such as ramps) are not enough. The SBP4BE design calls for a ramp to the building, but the construction specifications do not include site development to allow disabled students' access to the site from the gate. The CCI - TSU raised this concern during the site appraisal, but the SBP4BE classroom budget did not cover site development. In the context of future donor funded school building programs, the DepEd may consider using the opportunity to determine the likely costs of such site development for consideration as part of the specifications for all school buildings.

2.2.14 Present-generation learners in national high schools are probably bulkier, if not taller and bigger, than those of previous generations. Although problems of malnutrition and stunting persist to this day, there is evidence from national nutrition surveys of improvements in terms of the percentage of adolescents (11-19 years old) with *normal* ratio of body mass index to age. Since

²⁴ Based on data from one schools division visited, there were 1,569 students (59% male) with disabilities, or 1.3% of the total enrolment in all its secondary schools in 2013-2014. Of these, some 3.5% (55 students, also mostly male [71%]) are 'orthopedically disabled.' The provision of the ramps is hoped to make CCI schools more accessible to other young people who have mobility problems.

2005, this was noted equally for males and females. A 19.5-percentage point increase was reported, from 61.1% (62.0% among the males and 66.4% among the females) in 2005 to 80.6% (78.4% vs. 83.1%) in 2011.²⁵ It came as no surprise that high school students interviewed complained of the fact that the armchairs procured for classrooms were too small for them. Following the "design for all principle," ²⁶ the furniture standard used by DepEd should be upgraded to comfortably sit the bigger-sized Filipino adolescents.

2.2.15 Achieving quality is a process of continuous improvement and as with all designs standards and specifications there is always room for improvement. This ICR identified the following as areas for review:

- Including in the program of works for all regular classrooms: access to potable water, electricity and adequate drainage. Including rainwater catchment facilities for schools that do not have access to water supply system.
- Ensuring that the ground floor line is elevated above historical flood levels.
- Increasing the number of fixed ceiling fans to five (5) or to an appropriate number considering the typical climate where the school is located and the capacity of the school to pay electricity.
- Reconsideration of the proximity and/or placement of the male and female toilets to maintain hygiene and the privacy and safety of students
- Ensuring that disabled access is provided from school gate to the classroom ramp.
- Installation of materials to improve the acoustics within the classroom. .
- Providing secure but accessible built-in cabinets to store the fire extinguishers •
- Increasing the number of electricity points (minimum of 4) and circuitry capacity in • consideration of increased and regular use of ICT in all classrooms.
- Providing assistance to schools in their preparation of site development plans to ensure the proper placement of future school buildings and facilities and observance of the minimum of 7sqm □per student in the school.

2.2.16 The importance of effective communication and coordination cannot be overstated to ensure timely delivery of quality furniture and supplies when the procurement processes are conducted separately and by different offices.

The CCI program conducted procurement of the classroom construction at the Division level and procurement of the classroom furniture from the Region. The TSU-PMU-B produced Guidelines on Furniture Procurement as part of the bidding documentation. As with all DepEd classroom procurement, the Office of Procurement Services provided orientation on furniture procurement during the pre procurement training and conferences. The process followed the regular government procurement guidelines and as is the usual practice is conducted separately from the classroom construction procurement. While it is understood that procuring furniture from the regional level for all furniture per batch of classrooms being constructed will usually ensure benefits derived from the economies of scale, this practice also requires exceptional coordination between the region, the division office and the schools as well as the resources to check /monitor the suppliers production (pre, during and post delivery) in terms of adherence to the minimum quality standards for all units supplied.

2.2.17 Added value of the CCI to the furniture procurement process. For the CCI SBP4BE, the strict enforcement of the procurement processes and procedures, and the intensive monitoring

²⁵Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology, "FNRI Facts and Figures" for 2005 and 2011, http://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph/files/fnri%20files/facts2005/content.pdf, and

http://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph/images/stories/8thNNS/fnri_facts%26figures2011.pdf. Accessed 21 April 2014. ²⁶ Novabos, Charles Ruel G. and Ronald Aaron U. Po, "The Application of Filipino Anthropometric Data in the Design of House Rooms and Furniture,"

http://www.academia.edu/2128517/The Application of Filipino Anthropometric Data in the Design of House Rooms and Furniture

by TSU-PMU assured that the Regional Offices conducted the requisite furniture plant inspections and paid attention the details. This enhanced monitoring in the case of Region III resulted in the rejection of the delivery made by a contractor for Batch 1 to three schools due to the poor quality of the furniture supplied in contrast to the required standards and the level of deviation from the quality of the samples provided during the awarding of contracts. This situation transpired despite the precautions taken by the Regional Office—samples shown were found to be acceptable, and the visit to the plant that was named in the bid document did not note any deviation from the sample. The contractor, evidently, made the deliveries to the schools without notifying the Regional Office who would have checked as part of the quality assurance of the SBP4BE. Complaints from the Principals to the region III Physical Facilities Coordinator resulted in an inspection with part of the deliveries found to be defective. The Regional Office asked the contractor to replace the defective deliveries, which it did.

The breakdown in the quality control process may be attributed to the failure of the contractor to inspect all furniture production plants involved in the manufacture of the furniture²⁷. During the orientation for the Batch II furniture procurement, the Regional Office increased emphasis on the importance of the Contractors also checking the quality and craftsmanship of all the production plants of their suppliers.

However, the ICR notes that part of the problem stems from lack of coordination between personnel in the region due to a lack of handover from one Physical Facilities Coordinator to another as well as the expressed concern of the suppliers that the required levels of monitoring is an added cost. It may be that the DepEd procurement services needs to review pricing based on the requirements of the Contractors to assure and control the quality of supplies.

2.2.18 Capacity Assessment informed the design and the delivery of technical assistance and capacity building program. The inception report indicates that the most significant weakness identified through the capacity assessment related to the divisional level's capacity to carry out appropriate quality assurance of contractor performance during construction for the quantity of classrooms being constructed at any one time within the Division. This ICR validated this issue and also found that:

- a) most Division Engineers are engaged through Contracts of Service, and are therefore unsure of continuous employment;
- b) some have experienced significant delays in payment of salaries;
- c) in some instances, engineers are being appointed directly rather than through a selection process due to the urgent need and/or political influence, and that,
- d) a lack of available transport for the conduct of site visits are all factors contributing to the reduced capacity of the Divisions to manage the classroom construction workload and to adequately monitor construction.

These resourcing issues also reduce the capacity of the DepEd to enforce accountabilities and will, if not addressed, continue to expose DepEd to significant procurement and fiduciary risks.

2.2.19 Progress and outcomes monitoring. The CCI Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework included both progress and outcomes monitoring and evaluation. It identifies key project milestones for regular monitoring and reporting with descriptions of expected conditions and indicators of emerging risks (red flags). The plan also describes nine (9) core monitoring and evaluation activities and identified the personnel responsible and the frequency of the event. The progress and findings of the M&E events is included as part of the TSU-PFSED monthly planning meetings, the quarterly full regional team meetings, documented in the six (6) month progress reports and reported on during the Project Coordination Committee meetings.

2.2.20 Risk management planning is key to successful program implementation. As part of

²⁷ In some instances a contract for furniture may involve one contracted supplier with multiple production plants, e.g. as part of a cooperative.

the inception planning the trigger points for the key risks that could adversely impact on the SBP4BE progress were identified as a set of "red flags". From the review of the progress reports and related documentation, it seems that explicit description contained in the Matrix of Red Flags for Emerging Risks ("What we expect to occur", the red flag condition and proposed remedial action) has increased the level of transparency in the progress reporting and resulted in more effective project management.

CCI reviewed and adopted the two evaluation tools being implemented by PFSED – the Project Implementation and Evaluation System or PIPES, which is a performance evaluation system of classroom construction implementers on the aspects of project planning, procurement, project execution, and project closure, and the Constructors' Performance Evaluation System (CPES), which is a third party-initiated evaluation of the contractors implementing classroom construction. These tools are incorporated into the Standard Operating Manual.

2.2.21 Success measure 3: DepEd enhances its capacity to deliver a sustainable school building program by partnering with other government, private sector and NGO service providers.

2.2.22 "One size does not fit all" - Enabling supply of quality classrooms requires strategic use of the available human and financial resources and effective quality assurance and control mechanisms. Given the scale and nature of school building construction, initiated and managed by various organisations, both public and private (e.g. DPWH, DSWD, PBSB, PPP and other donors), it is difficult for DepEd (CO, Region, Division, School personnel) to enforce the standards and requirements to ensure the construction of safe, high quality school buildings that are conducive to learning. In the current context the TSU with the PMU-B provided DepEd with a *quasi-regulatory* mechanism for quality control, including independence in the delivery of technical advice and conduct of monitoring and program audits.

With the bulk of the Government Appropriations Act (GAA) budget now assigned to DPWH²⁸, it will be important that a constructive partnership with DepEd can be achieved including the provision of at least an equal share of the Engineering Administrative and Operations (EAO) budget to use for hiring of engineers as support for the monitoring and quality assurance across the DepEd/DPWH construction sites. The DepEd Memo No 53 s. 2013, *Guidelines on the implementation of the special Provision no. 4 on the provision of Basic Educational Facilities Funds under fiscal year 2013 budget of the DPWH,* has commenced this process and clearly describes that the DepEd is responsible for i) the identification of sites for school building construction and repair, ii) designs and minimum standards, and iii) oversight of the program of works by the DepEd Schools Division. However, in terms of quality assurance it is currently the DPWH that provides its own QA Engineers reducing the level of transparency within the process.

With the DepEd now more focussed and responsible for the planning, specifications and quality assurance²⁹ rather than management of construction, the Schools Division engineers should be freed up to manage the level of monitoring and inspection required across all construction sites in all schools and more able to focus on planning, coordination of monitoring and inspection and the design for future classroom construction needs.

2.2.23 The conditions and requirements for achieving the desired level of quality in school building programs has been tangibly demonstrated through three related but distinct mechanisms. These mechanisms could be further exploited by the DepEd to fulfill its revised core mandate as quality assurer of school building construction, rather than project manager of all regular classroom construction. This realignment is consistent with the shift of budget and project management for regular school building to DPWH and in accordance with the Republic Act 9155

²⁸ PNoy lauds DepEd, DPWH's commitment to deliver 66,813 classrooms http://www.deped.gov.ph/index.php/newsupdates/updates/partners-updates/479-pnoy-lauds-deped-dpwh-s-commitment-to-deliver-66-813-classrooms. 29 The approved 2013 Rationalisation Plan inline with the 2001 Republic Act 9155 Governance of Basic Education, clearly articulates the role of the DepEd offices responsible for Procurement, Planning and Education facilities to set policy and standards and to assure quality of policy implementation from the central office through the regions to the Divisions and the schools.

and implementation of the rationalization plan³⁰.

The *first mechanism* is that of the 660 classrooms constructed in the SBP4BE program, whereby, the construction of these facilities over a period of 16-24 months³¹, conformant with DepEd standards has been achieved by increasing the Division capacity to carry out the required number of on site inspections for each stage of the construction. This increased capacity has been achieved through training and the hiring of additional engineers to ensure more regular inspection of construction activities. The ICR team validated the need for hiring additional engineers under the CCI to achieve the desired levels of quality. It was provided with evidence that on average there is a ratio of one engineer to 30-40 concurrent constructions within the Division. This scale of activity precludes the DepEd engineer from being able visit and inspect the program of work for each site more than once per month and exposes DepEd to significant risks and liabilities. This same situation occurred with the procurement of the classroom furniture as discussed in section 2.2.17 above.

The second mechanism is provided by the key findings of the *Partnerships Scoping Study* (PPS)³². This study, through an analysis and assessment of the various classroom construction development partnerships and different organisational modalities demonstrates:

- a) the scale of demand,
- b) the multi-sectoral nature of the business of school building; and,
- c) the necessity for the DepEd classroom construction policies, standards and organisational arrangements to support achievement of quality in the construction of education facilities in DepEd schools regardless of the procurement and management modality.

The *third mechanism* is the Technical Services Unit (TSU). The TSU in the SBP4BE provided independent technical assistance and advice, monitoring support and conducted regular technical and financial audits. This core role and function as modelled by the TSU-PMU in CCI, should be considered as integral component and core function of the new Education Facilities Division of the Office of Undersecretary for Finance and Administration given the role of DepEd as the government agency responsible for quality assurance of all school building and educational facilities programs. Specifically, *"to support the efficient and effective delivery of basic education services through the formulation of policies, standards and guidelines, effective and efficient programs and projects implementation for the provision of appropriate educational facilities and environments most conducive to teaching and learning activities³³." With significant attention to alignment of functions and coordination with other offices such as Procurement Services, Planning Services and the School Effectiveness Division to ensure policies, standards and guidelines for school facilities are properly planned and implemented.*

2.3 Efficiency

Rating: 6

2.3.1 The construction of classrooms in public schools has provided additional places for students. The original target for the CCI was for 800-1000 classrooms to be built providing up to 45,000 additional places for students in the selected schools. The actual number of classrooms to be achieved is 660,³⁴ which will accommodate 37,160 students based on the DepEd standards of

³² The CCI program included a Research and Policy Studies component, comprising i) Partnerships Scoping Study, ii) the Classroom Construction Study, with the findings of both studies to inform a final Strategy Paper. At the time of the ICR only the PPS was completed.

³³ 2013 Rationalisation Plan Education Facilities Division Core function.

³⁴ CCI 26 March 2014 TSU-Forecast completions and outturn. (Annex 6)

³⁰ Since SY 2013-2014 the budget for school buildings construction is managed by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) with the DepEd to remain responsible for identifying sites, policy and planning, design standards and quality assurance.

 $^{^{31}}$ The CCI commenced in November 2012, contractually but actual classroom construction activities commencing with site selection didn't commence until April 2013. A no cost extension should ensure all 660 classrooms are completed by Dec 2014. (Annex 6)

45:1 pupils per classroom. The ICR found that the variation in the intended versus the actual might be attributed to the following factors.

- Lapse of time between the program design and forecast budget (August 2011) and targets versus actual market price at the time of procurement implementation (April 2013). Costs of materials and actual onsite preparation cost have attributed to the difference in planned and actual as a result of the lapse in time between the initial cost estimate in 2010-2011 versus the actual in 2013-14.
- Lack of accurate data in relation to the school site at the time of initial program implementation planning.

An initial list of school sites were included with the program design documentation, however this data was based 2009-10 school building assessments and needed to be updated and validated using the more current data contained in the DepEd Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) at the time of program commencement. However, this data contained some inaccuracies. Data need to be validated after being entered for the first time by all schools as part of the national rollout of the system. Also, the information gathered does not include data on site capacity for development in terms of actual versus committed space, titling, environmental or geo-hazard data. At this stage this information needs to be gathered through an actual site inspection and validation assessment, which takes time.

 Lack of building space in the selected congested schools. In addition, during the actual site inspection for selection it was determined that in many of the highly populated schools, situated in growth corridors (new planned development and provincial-urban migration), that the available land would not be able to accommodate the single-storey four-classroom design. Therefore, either a double storey four-classroom building was proposed which costs proportionally more or another site had to be selected for the SBP4BE program. (Refer Appendix 3 and 4 CCI-SBP4BE plans)

As such this combination of factors have militated to reduce the overall number of classrooms able to built within the time frame and budget.

2.3.2 The actual cost per classroom of the SBP4BE is reported as Php850,000 in the single storey, four-classroom construction and Php1.3million for the two storey four-classroom building including toilets and access ramps. Refer to Annex 5, for the comparative cost analysis of different modalities of school building and the SBP4BE cost conducted as part of the Classroom Construction Study (CCS). This research indicates that the SBP4BE cost compares favourably with other constructions³⁵.

2.3.3 Savings. The CCI was able to realise savings in the overall operational costs, due to the competitive bidding process ensuring realistic market prices and the actual cost being lower than the original budgeted costs. Delays also realized some savings through accumulation of interest. The savings generated as of 31 March 2014, of approximately Php 50.1M, has resulted in eight (8) additional sites being added to the program (Php46.8 M) with Php3.3M being allocated to the commemorative marker. DepEd Financial Regulations require that Certificates of Availability of Funds (CAFs) can only be issued when underspends are actually realised. Hence these additional sites could not be added until all sites in Batch 1 had been contracted. The total savings from competitive bidding and reduced project management costs (contingency, travel and security) amounted to \$200,000AUD. These savings are to be utilized as part of the proposed no cost extension until December 2014³⁶. The extension aims to complete all construction work and support the national rollout of training on project management and quality assurance of school building programs to all Region and Division Procurement and Physical Facilities personnel by December 2014.

³⁵ Preliminary findings of the Classroom Construction Models – Indicative Comparative costs as part of the Classroom Construction Study (April 4, 2014) Included as Annex C.

³⁶ At the time of this ICR approval for the DepEd proposed extension is with the Australian Embassy, Manila having been agreed by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA).

2.3.4 Success measure 4: Australian government funds have been well managed and satisfactorily acquitted by DepEd.

2.3.5 In keeping with the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, DFAT intended to disburse CCI funds directly to DepEd, however, the fiduciary and procurement risk assessments of DepEd systems and procedures undertaken by AusAID during the design of the program identified a range of issues that needed to be addressed for the DepEd to be given direct responsibility for the management of GOA funds. The DepEd Direct Funding Agreement (DFA)³⁷ stipulated the adoption of supplementary financial and procurement measures by PFSED to strengthen Partner Government Systems (PGS) in the management of SBP4BE and the appointment of an AusAID funded Technical Support Unit (TSU) managed by the Managing Contractor to assist the PFSED to comply with the provisions of the DFA and to strengthen its capacity to deliver its classroom construction targets under SBP4BE.

2.3.6 Managing Fiduciary Risk. It was reported to this ICR that the introduction of the independent review of the Bid Evaluation Report for each contract has resulted in the rebidding of 19 contracts due to wrongful disqualification and in 7 cases the Division BAC documentation did not meet the requirements. The Procurement Audits, conducted by the TSU, attributed cause to the lack of experience and detailed understanding by the Divisional BAC of the procurement rules and regulations. Although through this process fiduciary obligations appear to be as required, the implication of this lack of capacity is delays in the program of works and a potential for selected sites to be transferred to other programs of works. In this regard, the importance of comprehensive training for all BAC members in procurement processes, rules and regulations cannot be over emphasised.

2.3.7 Intensive monitoring assisted in on-time and on-budget construction of classrooms.

This modality with embedded technical assistance driving the implementation approach has been highly effective in increasing the capacity of the DepEd Procurement and Physical Facilities personnel directly involved in the program. However, the transfer of learning with central office to all Procurement and Physical facilities personnel is only just being considered as part of the implementation of the rationalisation plan. Regardless, this ICR has determined that the CCI has achieved the major objective of increasing effectiveness and efficiency through building capacity of the DepEd personnel within the current system.

The constant monitoring by the TSU/PMU-B reduced the delays and assured a more timely response to issues as they arose in the program of works. Construction technical inspections and management meetings were and continue to be conducted mostly once a week as presented in Table 5. Overall the delays encountered were found to be due to:

- insufficient understanding of the procurement law,
- conflicting workload demands of the Division BAC and PFSED,
- site realignment due to a selected site being utilised by another construction provider, e.g. PPP
- the need to first demolish an existing building that will be replaced by the new one,
- unavailability of construction materials in the market,
- bad weather conditions,
- community objections to site selection; and,
- retraction of donated land.

³⁷ 2013 CCI Final Program Design Document.

Frequency of Technical Inspections & Management Meetings ¹					
Frequency	Technical Inspections		Management Meetings		
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Once a week	8	47%	8	47%	
Twice a week	3	18%	3	18%	
Two times a month	2	12%	5	29%	
Others	4 ²	24%	1 ³	6%	
Number of observations	17	100%	17	100%	

Table 5. Frequency of Technical Inspections and Management Meetings

Notes:

1. There are no required frequency/ number of technical inspections and management meetings. The former are scheduled by the construction team according to the 15 inspection points while the latter should be done as necessary especially when problems arise at the jobsite(s).

2.Three times per week

3. Only as needed

2.3.8 Timely transmission of documentation and communications is crucial for procurement efficiency gains. The government procurement law and guidelines requires the issuance of a no objection letter from the central office Procurement Services, which under usual circumstances triggers the release of the Department of Budget and Management Sub-Allotment Release Orders (DBM-SARO). This process has often caused delays in procurement of goods and services³⁸. In the CCI program this risk was mitigated by the central office TSU-PMU issuing the letter, resulting in more timely commencement of the contract for the delivery of the furniture.

2.3.9 Comprehensive understanding of the application of the procurement law should realise efficiency gains and enhance quality. While it is clear that the close monitoring practices of the CCI SBP4BE increased the level of efficiency in relation to the procurement of the furniture, the model used in the CCI deviated from the usual DepEd procurement processes. This use of a modified process for the CCI, demonstrates that under the current Procurement Law, that different processes can be applied by DepEd and according to the nature and purpose of the procurement. In this regard the following areas are highlighted for capacity and process review:

- a) The preparation of the Agency Bid Cost (ABC) by DepEd Central office is not always reflective of the real cost of production and delivery in a locality and with the practice of the lowest cost as the basis for awarding of the contract, lower cost is sometimes at the expense of quality. However, the ICR noted that, where the BAC ensured adherence to the specified standards, that the costs actually reflected realistic market prices, suggesting that provided that the ABC does reflect the market in terms of location, that the issue is one of capacity to apply the procurement guidelines rather than a problem with the guidelines themselves. The recommendation is therefore for the DepEd to review the preparation of context specific ABC estimates such that a unit cost reflects that procurement and delivery locations not just that of Manila suppliers and respects that costs may need to be different in more provincial and remote areas.
- b) Regular procurements are often much larger and purposively concern bulk orders covering more buildings and schools. Again, the ABC per unit should reflect the size and scale of the procurement and the associated cost of delivery and distribution based on locations.
- c) It was reported to the ICR team that for non-CCI furniture procurement, that the contracted suppliers apply 'top-down' practices. That is, the final assembly of the furniture is done on site, thereby, negating the need for production plant inspections, which could be replaced by an inspection of the Suppliers source of materials. Again, this appears to be an issue of capacity and willingness for the DepEd processes to be modified according to the circumstances and nature of the procurement rather than the procurement law.

³⁸ 2013, ICR SPHERE program and AusAID, 2010 Education Program Resources Review, Phase 1 Report.

d) In the current non-CCI furniture procurement processes there is no requirement for the Division physical Facilities personnel to pursue production-site inspections. In this regard the implementation of the rationalisation plan, is timely and provides an opportunity for the DepEd to review processes and practices in line with the proposed changes to the structure and functions of the offices responsible for Procurement and Physical Facilities at all levels of the department.

2.3.10 The site selection process could be more efficient if more comprehensive data was available for each school in the form of a school development plan. The initial list of sites included for the CCI SBP4BE included a long list of the most congested schools in the Divisions of Regions III and IV. However, as sites were inspected as part of the selection process it was found that many had either no buildable space or the space available could only accommodate two storey 4 classroom, not the single storey 4 classroom, or that classrooms were already being constructed as part of other school building initiatives. Refer to Annex 7, for a sample of the current school development plans.

An up to date school site development plan that includes plans to scale, topography, disaster risk rating, geo hazards, (such as flooding), drainage, electricity and water presence, roads and access points as well as space committed or undergoing construction, would serve to make the site selection process more efficient by eliminating the need to visit every site to determine what space is available. This more comprehensive data about the schools could be included in the EBEIS or related systems and required to be updated on a quarterly basis and validated by the Division.

2.3.11 Taxation and donor funded procurement programs. There is a Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Philippines that aims to ensure that all Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) is used directly for the intended purpose of the development assistance. However, the allowable exemption from the local value-added tax (VAT)³⁹, is not automatically granted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and is determined on a case by case basis. Schools Divisions from the start of the SBP4BE program have withheld funds for VAT payment. At this stage the clarification on VAT exemption applicability is being discussed. The withheld funds, if returned, will be used as part of the proposed extension.

2.3.12 Value for money of the CCI and the modality is best demonstrated by the following efficiency measures. DepEd personnel interviewed for this ICR identified that the emphasis on orientation and training for the different stages of procurement and construction ensured quality improvements without increasing costs.

- The overall quality of the facilities is high, with all those investigated found to be conformant with the minimum standards.
- A lack of contract variations or cost overruns for the construction of the 660 classrooms involving 160 projects and 21 Management Teams.
- Mostly constructions were achieved within the 120-day limit with delays due mainly to bad weather conditions and where site preparations had not been appropriately managed. (Table 6)
- Comparison of the cost for the SBP4BE construction using comparable designs of classrooms constructed via other modalities has demonstrated that the CCI cost is comparable but in many instances achieves higher levels of quality. E.g. in one school in Cabanatuan City Division, that had two buildings at the same stage of construction typhoon Santi (Nari) raised the roofs from non-SBP4BE constructions but not the CCI construction. (Annex 5, contains a list of the Cost comparison Analysis conducted for the Classroom Construction Study)

³⁹ http://www.bir.gov.ph/taxinfo/tax_vat.htm

Table 6. On-time and on-budget construction

On-time and on-budget construction					
Delays/Variation Orders	No. of observations	Number Reporting			
		Number	Percentage		
Delays in construction	17	9	53%		
With Variation Orders (VO)*	17	1	6%		
Notes: *No cost VO					

2.4 Sustainability

Rating: 5

2.4.1 Investing in comprehensive and targeted programs of capacity building can realise long-term sustainable gains. There is strong evidence of sustainable gains derived from the initial CCI investment in capacity building. The respondents to this ICR all indicated that the training had been extremely beneficial and was a major contributor to making the SBP4BE procurement and construction processes more effective and efficient. Many also indicated that the learning was being used for other procurement and construction activities. All SBP4BE program participants indicated that the combination of training with the comprehensive guidance manuals, the use of the logbooks for monitoring and inspection and the attention to project plan schedules were the key ingredients to assure improved efficiency and quality. Division personnel were keen to continue the training to all schools and indicated that using the revised School Building Implementation Manual and video along with an appropriate budget that they would be able to deliver the training to all schools40.

2.4.2 Succession planning is crucial for change management in learning organisations. Time bound interventions targeting capacity development and concerned with strengthening governance and service delivery systems will inevitably be compromised by the inevitable changes in personnel, unless succession planning is considered in the design of the training schedule and the implementation of the interventions from the outset. The planned annual change in the BAC personnel at the Region and Division level is designed and seems to serve its primary purpose as a procurement and fiduciary risk mitigation strategy. Although, respondents indicated that training is conducted for each new BAC, some said they had not attended due to conflict of activities and others indicated that it even though they had attended that the training was too general. The CCI required for the SBP4BE, that all BAC members were trained on the procurement process as per RA9184 procurement law and procedures prior to the commencement of the procurement for the classroom construction. This practice should be continued prior to the commencement of all procurement activities.

2.4.3 The SBP4BE used government procurement procedures and guidelines with the following enhancements to the process, which this ICR has validated as being essential elements for the construction of quality and sustainable school buildings. These are:

- a) Posting of invitation to bid in a newspaper of national distribution and in PhilGEPS
- b) Issuance of the Notice to Proceed, following the review, by the TSU-PMU-B, of the bid and award process for all contracts within the SBP4BE program prior to the PFSED awarding the contract to the selected contractor. With similar issuance by central office PFSED to the Region of the No-Objection Letter following review of the bidding documents for the furniture procurement.
- c) Introduction of the SBP4BE Standard Implementation Manual with a Schedule of 15 Inspection points and checklist for construction monitoring and reporting by Division Engineers and School Heads. And reinforced by the introduction of the Construction Inspection logbook - used to record the date and result of each inspection as it takes place.

⁴⁰ The DepEd PFSED is continuing to expand the capacity building program to all Regions and Divisions Procurement and Physical Facilities personnel and with the assistance of the TSU is creating a video to support further training and ongoing use of the Implementation Manual and Logbooks and these levels.

- d) Testing samples of construction materials (e.g. steel bars) before using in the construction.
- e) Requirement for Contractors to provide and leave samples of materials to be used in the construction at the site for inspection checks and to provide samples of the furniture.
- f) Training of all Region and Division Engineers and Bids and Awards Committee members and School Heads of the SBP4BE recipient schools in the process and inspection checking.
- g) Conduct of plant inspection by the Division Office of the winning bidder for the classroom furniture during the production of the furniture.
- h) Hired extra engineers to conduct site inspections at a ratio of 1:15 as agreed by the Project Coordinating Committee. (PCC)

The ICR Principal respondents from all 21 sites visited identified that the direct training on the 15 inspection points and the provision of the manual with illustrated and explicit details of all stages of the process has enabled the involved personnel to continue to learn as they participated in the process.

2.4.4 Ensuring durable school buildings and good-quality furniture. Improved construction management, monitoring and supervisory capacities at various levels, such as central office, Division and Schools, resulted in school buildings built according to required specifications. The Technical Site Appraisal and Validation Reports also provided opportunities to identify geo-hazard risks, such as flooding, earthquake faults, etc., before procurement for contractors commence. All sites investigated by the Review Team reported that the Division Physical Facilities Engineer, the Division Physical Facilities Coordinator and the TSU Engineer conducted the site validations and inspections jointly, before construction started.

Similarly, the enhanced monitoring and inspection of the classroom furniture both during production and on delivery ensured supply of higher quality furniture.

2.4.5 Maintaining and sustaining investments. While maintenance of the school buildings is the responsibility of the School Head and is achieved through use of the MOOE, Brigada Eskwela, and ongoing PTCA resource mobilization activities, these efforts may well be enhanced by the provision by DepEd PFSED of a Schools Maintenance Manual. This might assist schools to plan and budget in advance for maintenance costs.

2.5 Gender Equality

Rating: 4

2.5.1 The TSU-PMU developed a Gender and Disability Awareness Strategy that included, among others, orientation of implementing unit and partners of 'mainstreaming GAD (gender and development) and disability agenda' in all phases of the school building program, participation of women and men in program management, and engagement with schools and communities. Pre-Construction Conferences covered gender, disability, safety and child labour issues. The CCI also monitored project implementation using the Philippine Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines, but neither the TSU nor PMU tracked the gender of participants in meetings since they felt responsible only for physical facilities. The attention to gender in this regard along with data on the specific roles of individuals and area of expertise can be useful in the design of training and the documentation of operational procedures. Finally, the traction of CCI with gender mainstreaming seems to be mainly with PFSED in connection with the requirement of separate toilets for male and female learners. in multi-storey school buildings for DPWH and DepEd regularly procured classrooms.

2.5.2 There is evidence that the classrooms and facilities, as designed, considered the basic gender-related needs of learners. There were separate toilets for female and male learners in both floors (for 2-storey buildings) and a third toilet on the first floor for PWDs. In CCI one-storey buildings, there were three separate toilets. This design is considered superior by PFSED to the DPHW or DepEd procured classrooms, as toilets are part of a separate budget (health sanitation). However, as noted above, what seems to be the main issue is the supply of potable water, which is critical for hygiene and especially for girls post puberty.

2.5.3. There is some awareness within PFSED of the need for gender-sensitive facilities. The Review team was informed of discussions around whether or not to return to the design of classrooms with their own (internal) toilets, as requested by some teachers. This would facilitate toilet maintenance, as the teacher will be responsible for ensuring that the classroom (including the toilet) is clean. In designs, such as the CCI, with shared toilet facilities, cleaning and general maintenance is organised by the principal. Weighed against this concern is the need for increased privacy of learners during and post puberty hence, PFSED proposes that such designs would only be for kindergarten through Grade IV.

2.5.4 Feedback processes could have introduced design revisions to mitigate social issues. During the course of the ICR, issues around the blind hallway leading to the toilets were raised in DepED-approved design for two-storey buildings. The seclusion of the toilets prevents the school's supervision or surveillance of student behaviour in school premises, and blind hallways could pose risks in terms of bullying, robberies, sexual harassment, and the like. Moreover one of the four principals interviewed (completed construction sites) strongly objected to the seclusion (blind hallway) leading to the toilets on the ground that this design may aggravate the ever-present problem of teenage pregnancy in schools.⁴¹

Although, there was no reported actual incident, the principal offered to lodge a formal request with the Division Office for the classroom designs to be modified to reduce the risks. She was told that this was not necessary, as the design could not be changed for various reasons, including the need for contract variation. To avert "any untoward incident," the principal has resorted to assigning a teacher (who has no class) to monitor the student traffic to the toilets. The review team recommends that the issues raised here should be shared with PFSED and considered in future DepEd design specifications for classrooms. Furthermore, that the monitoring and quality assurance processes for school building programs provide an appropriate mechanism for feedback to be captured and responded to as required.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The CCI has proven to be a relevant and effective program of development assistance and has successfully modelled an appropriate modality for the implementation of future funding programs targeting strengthening of partner government systems. It has supported the DepEd to identify an appropriate model for the ongoing quality assurance of all school building programs in all DepEd schools.

While the level of capacity development has been constrained to building capacity of the personnel directly involved or the direct beneficiaries in the implementation of the initiative, the model has been well received and the quality of the training, related documentation and the actual quality assurance process is held in high regard by all participants interviewed for this ICR. In addition, beneficiaries identified that the CCI –SBP4BE classrooms achieved a higher quality than other constructions using other modalities and believed that the standards and processes could be transferred to the other construction activities.

The key lessons from the implementation of the Phase 1 CCI include the need for technical assistance to be embedded within the daily functions and responsibilities of the concerned offices and personnel and allow for learning by doing supported by direct access to experts and or comprehensive illustrated annotated and descriptive guidance documentation. The design of the capacity building approach and the training should be based on assessment of capacity of the target personnel in relation to the intended competencies to be achieved with ongoing coaching and mentoring as new competencies are put into practice.

Capacity issues relating to project and financial management within the DepEd appear to be due mostly to the lack of resources for the volume of work and the lack of investment in training and

⁴¹ The Philippines has a high adolescent fertility rate at 46.5 births per 1000 live births. This is much higher than that reported for Thailand (37.0), Indonesia (42.3), and the average for East Asia and the Pacific (18.5 (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World.* New York: UNDP, 2013. <u>http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013_en_complete.pdf).</u>

succession planning, resulting in personnel implementing instructions without a comprehensive knowledge of the policy and limited opportunity to understand the context for policy implementation.

The SBP4BE standards are generally of a high quality and as with all standards and specifications pertaining to the procurement of goods and services should be regularly reviewed and informed by feedback derived from project monitoring and evaluation. The CCI program has assisted the DepEd to develop a replicable model for ongoing quality assurance of all school building programs and identified areas for enhanced data collection and overall process improvement that may be supported through the phase 2 of the CCI as part of the 2014-19 Australia-Philippines Basic Education Sector Transformation program.

Recommendations

It is recommended:

Technical Assistance

- 1. THAT DFAT approves the proposed extension, using the savings of the CCI program to ensure support to DepEd and to keep the momentum for the system reforms:
 - to fast track the national roll out of the capacity building program for the Physical Facilities personnel of all Regional and Divisional offices, in the quality assurance procedures to be applied to all school building programs, as per the DepEd School Building Standard Implementation Manual and accompanying training videos developed through the CCI.
 - for the construction of the additional classrooms in the identified sites using program savings; and,
 - to commence the process of establishing the quality assurance system, as per the TSU-PMU model, and per the revised function and mandate of the rationalised Division of Education Facilities and to develop a plan for continued utilization of TA through BEST.
- 2. THAT DFAT through BEST supports the DepEd to establish the restructured Procurement Services and Education Facilities Division (PFSED) to replicate the TSU-PMU model for Quality Assurance for all school building programs to ensure conformance and compliance with the DepEd minimum design, technical and safety standards.
- 3. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST to engage TA to assist with the necessary capacity development and documentation of protocols and procedures for the conduct of quality assurance from the level of the Division to schools. Including:
 - development of the protocols and procedures for the hiring of engineers by the Division office.
 - job descriptions for the Division engineers and with an initial assessment made of the current Contract of Service for potential to be hired
- 4. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST to build on the TSU-PMU experience to define and document for all school building modalities the respective responsibilities and accountabilities for planning, procurement, minimum design standards, construction and quality assurance.
- 5. THAT the modality of embedded technical assistance as applied through the CCI is adopted in future DFAT programs of assistance aimed at strengthening governance capacities of existing structures and systems.

Capacity building

6. THAT DFAT supports DepEd through BEST for the Schools Divisions to rollout the School Building monitoring program of training to all School Heads and community officials and as part of this training develops and provides a School Building

Maintenance Manual describing and illustrating the minimum requirements to prolong the lifespan of school buildings.

- 7. THAT DFAT ensures that future school building programs adopt the CCI approach to provide comprehensive information in the training, briefings and documentation relating to on-site safety for workers, and highlights the DFAT child protection policy and child labour safeguards in terms of all construction in schools.
- 8. THAT, DFAT, in future programs and when using the government procurement law (RA9184) ensures that the Agency Bid Cost (ABC) reflects the real cost of production and delivery to the intended locations and as necessary and allowed within the law, modifies the cost and/or processes for the intended nature, purpose and location of the procurement activities within the supply chain.

Research

- 9. THAT the findings of this ICR are used by DFAT as the basis for a review of the regular classroom design standards as per the areas listed in 2.2.15, in this report and as a minimum in Education Facilities constructed through BEST, ensures
- appropriate locations of the male, female & disabled toilets and non-secluded access;
- adoption of the lever-type doorknob in the specifications and supply of furniture appropriate for left and right handed learners; and,
- size of classroom seats, desks, and armchairs (K to12 curriculum demands; senior high school & increased use of ICT)
- 10. THAT DFAT through BEST conducts further research to examine links between provision and design of classrooms for decongesting schools, improving access, learning quality, and safety in varied locations. The research design to be informed by curriculum, learning and teaching policies, and consider:
- Integration of ICT in teaching and learning in regular classrooms
- Specialist classrooms to support implementation of K to 12 & the four (4) main academic tracks in senior high school including for Science, Technical and Vocational Education, Computer Science, and for mainstreaming of Special Education learners, etc.
- Local design, development and maintenance of educational facilities in far-flung and remote communities targeting Indigenous Peoples' Education and Muslim Education.
- 11. THAT DFAT through BEST supports DepEd to develop comprehensive School Site Development plans as part of the support to the DepEd Unified Information System and integrated with existing systems e.g. the Basic Education Information System. Site development plans to include:
- standardised design and scaled drawings,
- physical geographic features and environmental hazards and conditions that affect construction,
- maintenance and sustainability of buildings,
- disability access and entry points in relation the main roads,
- rate the sites in relation to buildable space versus catchment area.

Refer to Annex 8: for the mapping of the recommendations for CCI Phase II implementation through BEST.

ANNEXURES

- Annex 1. Terms of Reference
- Annex 2. Evaluation plan
- Annex 3. Site visits and respondents
- Annex 4. Classroom Construction Infrastructure Technical Inspection Report
- Annex 5 Classroom Construction Models -comparative cost analysis
- Annex 6 CCI TSU-Forecast completions and outturn
- **Annex 7: School Site Development Plans**

Annex 8: Recommendations and CCI Phase II through BEST

Appendices:

- 1. ICR Aide Memoire
- 2. ICR Evaluation Field Review Kit
- 3. SB4BE 2STY_4CL-FINAL Plans 05-21-2013
- 4. SBP4BE_1STY_4CL- FINAL Plans 05-21-2013