Review Instrument 1

Question Framework

Support to Philippine Basic Education Reforms (SPHERE)

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SPHERE Component 1: Translation of system level policies into action

1.1. **Short-term TA for policy to planning and for capacity development**
(a) to what extent has TA supported by SPHERE supported the BESRA reform agenda? Could that support be provided in areas of greater relevance to BESRA reforms?
(b) How has funding provided for TA been used? In what ways has TA enhanced DepEd capacity to translate policies into plans? How has the TA support enhanced the capacity of TWGs and addressed specific recommendations regarding interlinkages between TWGs?

(c) to what extent has TA led to changes to DepEd policies, procedures, decisions to achieve the key expected results of the SPHERE;
(d) has TA support affected decision making processes (especially in terms of timeliness and equity) at central, regional, divisional, school levels?

(e) To what extent has the Sphere supported TA enhanced the effectiveness of TWGs in ensuring necessary capacity building in DepED to manage the change processes required under BESRA?
(f) What is the current status of TWG Action Plans – to what extent have these been embedded in the units with responsibility for implementation?

(g) Has a decision been reached regarding which unit in DepED will oversee BESRA reform implementation? Is there a BESRA policy "champion" who will initiate, lead and manage these reforms?
(h) To what extent have previous reviews of the BESRA reforms suggest that are not being easily subsumed / embedded into the regular work of the different Dep Ed units and so becoming a part of an "internally-driven reform movement". The TWGs were engaging in Implementation activities which fosters the perception that BESRA was still being perceived as a project rather than a reform agenda. Is that still the case, or have the TWG action plans now been shifted to DepED organizational (organic) units at the various levels?
(i) The elections on May 10, 2010 may bring a number of changes in administration, including in the DepED and impact the BESRA reform programme. Do you anticipate any impact and what measures exist to ensure the sustainability of reform efforts beyond May, 2010
(j) What processes are now in place for monitoring of TWG decisions? What processes have been established to track implementation of policies and to provide feedback to organisational units in DepEd responsible for implementation
(k) How have linkages been strengthened between TWGs and regional and divisional decision-making processes?
(l) How have gaps or delays in implementation of policy been addressed and how have processes been developed to reduce or minimise delays/enhance policy implementation?
(m) In what ways might those processes be enhanced to improve timeliness and action consistent with agreed reform priorities in BESRA?
(n) did any of the TA supported by SPHERE explicitly seek to address the inclusiveness and participation objectives of BESRA, particularly related to gender and/or disabilities and/or disadvantaged groups? Is so, in what specific ways was TA utilised

1.2 Capacity development of regional offices

(a) What QA processes are in place as a consequence in whole or part due to SPHERE funding
(b) Who implements QA processes and are they carried out regularly; if irregularly, what initiates them;

(c) have QA processes led to discernable improvements in polices and procedures? Are these changes sustainable? Could these changes be expected to lead to improvements in education indicators ?

(d) Is there any evidence that the training was effective in building capacity of regional offices?

(e) what key lessons have been learnt about how to ensure effectiveness of training

(f) what key lessons have been learnt about the support for implementation which may be required by those who have been trained(eg funding, staff capacity, varying degrees of interest by school heads and/or school communities)?

(g) how do regions, divisions and schools work together in QA? Provide examples of improvements to policies and procedures which have been recommended and the status of implementation

(h) What training or preparative have DepEd central, regional, division, and district level officials/ managers/technical staff received to develop appreciation, understanding, and application of gender and development (GAD) to policies, guidelines, and programs?

(i) What feedback on training programmes was obtained and to what extent were improvements made in subsequent training programmes?

(j) How is the 'change agent' role understood, and applied, by regional managers?

(k) To what extent are change agent responsibilities built into the specification of roles and responsibilities of regional managers

(l) In what practical ways are senior managers supported to discharge their responsibilities as 'change agents' ?

(m) What progress has been made regarding the recommendations to enhance the gender awareness of the BIAP (see the list of recommendations below)?

(n) What BIES access and outcome indicators are sex-disaggregated? How have DepEd officials/ managers at central, regional, division, district levels used these information to draw up policies, plans or programs?

(o) What steps been taken to improve gender responsiveness of SPHERE implementation (using the Philippines Harmonized Gender and Development [GAD] Guidelines)?

(p) How have DepEd regional, division and district officials/managers/technical staff applied GAD concepts to policies, guidelines, and programs (DORP, QA/LRDMS, TED/SBM/NCBTS, enhanced BIAP)?

(q) How have regional/division/district influenced central DepEd analysis of gender equality concerns?

(r) For regional managers in particular:

    (i)   What level of training / capacity building activities have taken place in your region in the following areas:
- a. training of school managers and community leaders on SBM,
- b. training of school or cluster heads to implement SBM,
- c. training of school and division staff in financial accountability and use of basic education information data,
- d. training of teachers, school heads, and education managers to improve quality in basic education,
- e. training on the application of competency standards for teachers
- f. training on sector monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance.

1.3 Funding for construction of resource centres, managed by regions

(a) What criteria were used to determine locations for LRC's?

(b) Is there a "Quality Standard" met for all construction under SPHERE regardless of geographic location?

(c) Who manages LRC's? How are decisions made regarding focus, training, assessment and resourcing of training programmes for managers? To what extent is training outsourced, and if so, to whom?

(d) How are QA processes managed to ensure effective and efficient training?

(e) What provisions have been made provide for ongoing operational and maintenance costs, including replacement ?

(f) What processes have been established to ensure relevance, inclusiveness and effectiveness of training materials

(g) How many schools, teachers, children have benefited so far?   In what specific ways have they benefitted?

(h) Do schools, teachers, children see the material as beneficial?

(i) For LRCs with ICT facilities - What percentage of teachers are able to use technology to enhance both their teaching and their administrative tasks?

(j) What evidence is there that construction/refurbishment of Centres increases DepED capacity to build Q&A capacity?

2   Support for SBM through grants programme

(a) To what extent has the provision of grants to accelerate SBM in schools that already have the basic elements of SBM been successful? How was the money used? What criteria were used to based on "demonstrated performance"?

(b) What training did schools receive in the processes needed for application for and utilization of SBM funding?

(c) Are the administrative process used to move grants to schools efficient? What improvements are suggested to improve both the school selection process and the speed and efficiency with which SBM grants are moved to schools, especially in the most difficult situations

(d) What challenges exist in schools to the timely utilization of funds provided with SPEHERE support

(e) How many schools receiving grants receive less than the amount expected? If so, why?

(f) Does the grant process show any gender/disability/ethnic/religious/other biases?

(g) To what extent have grants awarded provided the basis for additional funds mobilization?

(h) To what extent do division superintendents, regional managers and school heads work together to ensure that school grants are effective?

(i) What improvements to policies and procedures regarding SBM and school grants are recommended and how would they be implemented?

(j) How do school heads view the SBM grants and the processes required of them?

(k) To what extent did the SBM lead to improvements school-community relationships?

(l) How have the SPHERE school grants affected access of girls and boys to basic education?

(m) How has SBM involved women and men in decision-making processes? What contributions have women and men made?

3   Classroom construction in high need locations in Southern Philippines

(a) How many classrooms have been constructed using SPHERE funds? What were the criteria in the selection of priority recipient schools under SPHERE?

(b) What were the decision making processes used in determining the nature and extent of support for school construction or refurbishment?

(c) What can be learnt from the experiences in construction of SPHERE-SUPPORTED schools experienced to date? What are the reasons for delays? Are the processes for construction yielding the greatest efficiencies in quality, construction costs, completions and local-level ownership?

(d) What improvements are recommended to improve the selection and construction processes to ensure that the physical targets are met?

(e) To what extent do the school selection processes applied complement other SPHERE objectives to increase transparency and accountability?

(f) In what ways has school classroom design taken account of access issues (based on gender, disability, special needs and ethnicity) and safety consideration in SPHERE supported schools.

(g) What QA process were followed in construction of SPHERE supports schools?

(h) How extensive is the implementation of reform for a "principal-led" school building construction and repair programme?

(i) How were decisions made to determine type of construction supported? Were options for most effective use of school space (eg:multi-shift options) considered?

(j) How are multi-grade classes provided for in classroom construction? What improvements to policies, procedures, use of standard design documents/specifications regarding classroom construction are recommended and how would they be implemented?

(k) What were the results of the construction refurbishment programme in terms of student per classroom ratios in selected schools?

(l)   should school construction remain a priority of SPHERE?

Specific technical questions may be asked under Component 3 as follows:

Identification Or Selection Process;

Site Appraisal Works of Identified Recipient Schools. Since standard plans and specification are used.

- Was site adaptation works carried out in various recipient schools to determine the viability of the standard design such as soil condition, the topography of the building location, safety, sanitary and ethnic design consideration, accessibility and road condition of the site (hauling of materials).
- Is the necessary work items determine during the site adaptation works included in the preparation of estimates or "Approved Budget for Contract"?
- What were the criteria in the selection of a standard school building design for a specific school site? Where there modifications done on the standard designs to improve its conduciveness to learning? If yes, what where these modifications?
- What was the basis in determining the number of toilet fixtures to be constructed under SPHERE?

I.   Procurement Process
- What were the criteria for the selection of contractors?
- Is there a set time frame required for various processes   i.e from Invitation to Opening of Bids, Opening of bids to Awarding of Contract?
- Was this set time frame followed in the actual execution?
- What are the hindering or facilitating factors in the compliance of the set of time frame?

II. Actual Construction:
- Was the contract requirements such as quality and time complied by the Contractor?
- Who handles material testing requirement?
- Was local labor (from the community) used during the construction of the school buildings?
- What are the hindering or facilitating factors in meeting the contract requirements?
- What were the payment terms under the construction contract? Where they followed? If not, why were they not met?
- What quality assurance monitoring system was used during the construction phase?

III. Maintenance
- What maintenance system is planned under SPHERE?
- How was this introduced to the School Officials and Community?
- What were the results during the advocacy on proper school building maintenance? How was it taken by the community?

4   On Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

(a) Do formal and informal monitoring processes achieve results in terms of timely attention to agreed recommendations for improvement? How effective and efficient is the SPHERE implementation management set-up? What refinements are recommended to improve the monitoring and supervision within DepED? Within AusAID?

5   Other overall questions to be addressed:

(a) How well was the SPHERE design based on previous learning and analysis?
(b) To what extent have observations and recommendations from semi-annual/other relevant reviews, been integrated into the implementation process?

(c) What lessons from SPHERE should be incorporated into further AusAID support for the GoP reforms in the education sector

(d) Is the SPHERE programme still relevant? If so, in what specific ways has it contributed to achievement of BESRA strategic objectives?

(e) Do the components of support under SPHERE remain appropriate/ relevant? Does the approach (partnership with the WBank) remain appropriate?

(f) To what extent have risk management provisions/strategies worked to maintain effectiveness and efficiency of SPHERE?

(g) How are the different levels of DepED using performance 'data', how are Ausaid and WB using it? To what extent is it being used for program management? i.e. in informing work plans, risk management plans, decisions on program directions?

(h) how should AusAID/DepED approach partnership engagements? what are the possible entry points and challenges for pursuing reforms, especially for the education sector to maximise opportunities for strategic influence.