Report on Quality at Entry and Next Steps to Complete Design for Nepal School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) SWAp

A: AidWorks details   *completed by Activity Manager*

Initiative Name:	Education New Budget Measure		
AidWorks ID:	INH602	**Total Amount:**	$18.019 ($6.019 already committed)
Start Date:	1 July 2009	**End Date:**	30 June 2014

B: Appraisal Peer Review meeting details   *completed by Activity Manager*

Initial ratings prepared by:	Tara Gurung and James Jennings
Meeting date:	13 October 2009
Chair:	Octavia Borthwick
Peer reviewers providing formal comment & ratings:	– Graham Rady, Asia Programs Quality and Development Adviser – Fabia Shah, Education Adviser
Independent Appraiser:	– Program Exempted from Independent Appraisal
Other peer review participants:	– Matthew Fehre, Working in Partner Systems – Lorelle Bakker, South Asia – Nadira Mailewa, Pakistan – Sarah Boyd, Gender and Policy Coordination

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C: Quality Rating Assessment against indicators
completed by Activity Manager / Peer Reviewers / Independent Appraiser

Quality	Rating (1-6) *	Comments to support rating	Required Action (if needed)
1. Clear objectives	5	Support for SSRP is in line with Australia's global priority to prioritise education, to expand the program in South Asia and to support the achievement of MDGs 2 and 3. It is also in accordance with the draft Nepal mini country strategy.	KPIs will be monitored in accordance with the Joint Appraisal Document (JAD) and clarification over the figures will be sought.
		The objective of the SSRP is clear, concise and framed by 4 time-bound key performance indicators which are linked to the 3 key components.	
		There is also a very clear and appropriate objective of enhancing access to the disadvantaged regions, marginalised castes, ethnic minorities, women, children with special needs and other aspects of poverty in the education sector.	
		The program is implemented by the Government of Nepal through their systems and is supported by a consortium of nine donors through a pooled fund. This fully aligns with the principles of Paris and Accra.	
		There are some differences between the Key Performance Indicators in the design document and those presented to the external review team of the Fast Track Initiative. This is an issue that needs clarification as the KPIs form the baseline for monitoring and benchmarking.	
		The inclusion of TVET skills programs into mainstream schools-based SSR program must be monitored carefully and implemented cautiously. It is unclear what the links with the private sector will be and how they will be regulated. It is essential that the involvement of children in 'non-formal' apprenticeships in years 9 and 10 be carefully regulated and monitored to ensure there is no exploitation or abuse. Noted that this component is an experimental pilot program to assess feasibility and implementation issues.	

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2. Monitoring and Evaluation	5	The program places considerable emphasis on working through GON M&E and performance management systems. The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is operated by the Department of Education. Data is collected through an annual school census which was established during the Education For All program. Flash reports are prepared twice a year comparing data at the beginning and end of the school year and against baseline data.	
		In particular, the SSRP monitoring and evaluation framework will continue to build on and enhance the existing EMIS to strengthen the Program Monitoring Information System (PMIS) and to improve the dissemination of information on inputs, outputs and outcomes to relevant stakeholders.	
		As the SSRP has a number of access, quality and other interventions, the program proposes to identify four or five key pilots and assess them using rigorous impact evaluations before deciding to scale them up or refine their designs or implementation modalities. While MOE/DOE will manage their impact evaluation activities, they will collaborate with independent agencies/firms to undertake collaborative research and evaluation.	
		Intermediate indicators have been set against final KPIs for periodic monitoring of progress for most targets. Intermediate indicators need to be set for the remaining targets.	Intermediate indicators to be set for all targets.
		The Joint Annual Review and 6-monthly meetings preceded by field reviews and specialised studies is a good system in which AusAID should fully participate both for monitoring purposes and for corporate learning.	ETG, desk and post will develop an informal engagement strategy of how ETG will work with desk and post to support this program.

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3. Sustainability	5	The design offers a good analysis of the overall policy and political context. Partner policies, program and political context appear to be conducive to longer term benefits.	
		Under the previous sub-sector SWAp the GON provided approximately 66% of program funding. For the SSRP the GOB is providing around 71% of the total budget. The increasing percentage of the total resource requirements combined with an agreement to increase the education sector's share of the budget from 17% to 20%, and a significant emphasis on EFA are very positive indicators for eventual budget sustainability.	
		The GON is implementing a policy of decentralisation which includes more funding and increased management responsibilities to schools. These policies are backed by legislation and complementary policies and plans such as the national system for certification of teachers and use of school improvement plans to ensure accountability and build the capacity of schools and local education authorities to achieve minimum enabling conditions.	
		73% of the budget will be directed to recurrent basic and secondary education salaries. Given the large commitment it is possible that these recurrent costs can be sustained beyond the life of the program. However, in the absence of additional funds this may place pressure on other program costs such as capacity development, learning materials, school construction and maintenance.	

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4. Implementation & Risk Management	5	SSRP will be implemented by and through the GON system in accordance with the practices established under the EFA precursor program. It is supported by a consortium of nine pooling donors within an agreed Joint Financing Arrangement which clearly defines the functions and responsibilities of each partner, the reporting and review mechanisms, financial controls, procurement systems and procedures for dealing with issues such as non-compliance, corruption and dispute settlement.

There may be significant changes to federal and sub-national structures following the drafting of the new constitution and adequate planning by both the GON and development partners will be required to accommodate such developments over the life of the program. Regular consultations between the relevant government partners and SSRP donors will be required to anticipate these changes and ensure an effective and smooth transition to the new working arrangements.

Half yearly reviews and the development of annual workplans provide for the revision of plans based on actual performance, changes in the environment, and new information from studies and pilot initiatives. The Joint Financing Arrangement includes a Governance and Accountability Action Plan which details actions agreed by the GON to improve financial management, procurement management and social accountability tools. This will be monitored by the consortium as part of half-yearly reviews and periodic meetings with the MOE and DOE.

Approximately 0.4% of costs (US$11 million) are committed for teacher development and 0.1% (US$3 million) to capacity development. However the number of teachers with the required qualifications and training is 62% for primary and 74% for secondary. It is unclear if the allocated budgets for capacity development will be able to achieve the "100% teachers with required qualifications and training" target set for 2014. This is a critical component of the program if the quality outcomes are to be met and high repetition rates (28% for Grade 1) are to be improved. | Post to raise/clarify the issue of teacher capacity development costs with other DPs through the partner fora. |
| 5. Analysis and lessons | 5 | The documentation and analysis of lessons learned is strong and includes mitigation/redesign measures as appropriate.

The analysis of cross-cutting issues is well handled. It is clear that the program has a strong emphasis on the disadvantaged.

Inclusion is a key theme in SSRP but there are some questions about the extent to which children with disabilities are being included in the mainstream as there is emphasis on the provision of special classrooms and schools. AusAID should seek to contribute examples of good practice into the disability and child protection areas. | |

* Definitions of the Rating Scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)		Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)	
6	Very high quality; needs ongoing management & monitoring only	3	Less than adequate quality; needs to be improved in core areas
5	Good quality; needs minor work to improve in some areas	2	Poor quality; needs major work to improve
4	Adequate quality; needs some work to improve	1	Very poor quality; needs major overhaul

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D: Next Steps   *completed by Activity Manager after agreement at the Appraisal Peer Review meeting*

Provide information on all steps required to finalise the design based on *Required Actions* in "C" above, and additional actions identified in the peer review meeting	Who is responsible	Date to be done
1.		
2.		
3.		

E: Other comments or issues   *completed by Activity Manager after agreement at the APR meeting*

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F: Approval   *completed by ADG or Minister-Counsellor who chaired the peer review meeting*

On the basis of the final agreed Quality Rating assessment (C) and Next Steps (D) above:

☑ **QAE REPORT IS APPROVED**, and authorization given to proceed to:

    ○ **FINALISE** the design incorporating actions above, and proceed to implementation

or: ○ **REDESIGN** and resubmit for appraisal peer review

☐ **NOT APPROVED** for the following reason(s):

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Octavia Borthwick ADG ARB	signed:		25 /11/09

When complete:

- Copy and paste the approved ratings, explanation and actions (table C) into AidWorks
- The original signed report must be placed on a registered file

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