

**Guidelines for**

**Appraisal of the Primary Education**

**Component of an Education Sector Plan**

**EFA FTI Secretariat**

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Note: These guidelines are intended as an aid to the teams conducting the appraisal, and should obviously be adapted as needed to suit country conditions. As experience is gained in conducting the appraisals, it is hoped that users' feedback will provide the basis for improving future versions of these guidelines.



## Introduction

1. The technical appraisal is conducted or commissioned by the local donors in the country.<sup>1</sup> It has a dual purpose: (a) to provide evidence that a positive policy environment exists for productive investments in the education sector, and that capacity constraints are being addressed to facilitate policy implementation; and (b) to guide the donors in coordinating their support and providing their endorsement that the country's sector plan is credible and sustainable. Although the focus is on primary education, the technical appraisal takes a sector-wide approach where appropriate (e.g. on the financing aspects), so that the issues relating to this level of education are put in their proper context. Below are a set of guidelines for consideration during the appraisal process. Their main purpose is to make sure that the key issues are addressed; the specific tables and appraisal tools presented below (e.g. simulation model) should thus be treated as examples to be adapted to suit country specific situations.

## Expected Product of the Appraisal

2. The expected product is a straightforward document that minimizes demand on officials and local donors, while attempting to ensure consistency in the rigor of the appraisal across countries; it is not intended to replicate the process of preparing the education sector plan itself or to create a parallel appraisal process. It therefore takes stock of a country's sector development plan, reflects on its quality according to objective criteria and, if the plan is already being implemented, evaluates the experience to date.

3. The expectation is that the document will make recommendations for donor action in the following four specific areas:

(a) *The estimated volume of external resources* required over the next three years to finance the country's plan to achieve universal primary education completion, based on a high case scenario (excellent strategic direction and action plan), a middle case scenario (with an indication of issues remaining), and a base-case scenario (with an indication of key problems undermining the plan's potential for success). Recommendations should include the nature of external support required (breakdown of expected recurrent and investment expenditures), the choice of lending instruments, and absorptive capacity constraints, in particular at the service delivery level;

(b) *The monitoring process*, including indicators to track progress on inputs, outputs and outcomes. The document could suggest themes for review during annual joint supervisions, as well as a process for assessing donor support and overall coordination;

(c) *Critical knowledge or data gaps*, as well as suggested arrangements to close them; and

(d) *Capacity-development issues* with donor-specific recommendations for coordinating a response.

In order to ensure that its conclusions and recommendations are built on a systematic consideration of the available evidence, the appraisal team might follow the practical steps elaborated below in organizing its work.

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<sup>1</sup> The name and affiliation of the members of the technical evaluation team should be included in the appraisal report.

## Practical Steps for Conducting the Appraisal

4. Because universalizing primary education completion, for girls and boys alike, will require considerable resources—internal and external—as well as capacity to scale up service delivery and management, the appraisal will need to scrutinize the proposed plan’s fiscal viability as well as the likelihood that it will produce the desired results on the ground. The following six-step protocol serves as a systematic process toward reaching a well-informed conclusion in this regard.

5. Step 1. List the Main Documents Available for the Appraisal (including HIV/AIDS and gender strategy for the sector). Table 1 provides a sample matrix. The purpose here is to confirm that documentation is available to support the technical appraisal and to encourage sharing of technical documents among all partners. This exercise will also permit an appraisal of whether the underlying knowledge base is up-to-date and has sufficient government ownership.

6. Step 2. Distill Baseline Education Indicators from the Available Documents. The intention here is to summarize as succinctly as possible the essential background information so that all partners have a common basis for appreciating the conclusions of the appraisal; as far as possible, trend data and data disaggregated by gender or other relevant population groups, should be provided (see Tables 2A and 2B for sample baselines that could be adapted to specific country circumstances). The technical appraisal should take note of gaps or possible data inaccuracies and use this information to inform its recommendations on future data or analytical work.

7. Step 3. Evaluate the Proposed Long-Term Strategic Direction for Sector Development. The main task here is to assess the soundness of the country’s strategic policy directions toward universalizing primary education completion and gender equality by 2015 (i.e. the education MDG). For this purpose, it is appropriate to take a long-term horizon (say over a period of 10 years), and ask four fundamental questions: (a) what tradeoffs are envisaged to reach the stated goal in a manner that is fiscally realistic and that accommodates other claims on public resources, including claims by other sub-sectors of the education system; (b) what structural policies are being adopted to ensure that student learning continues to improve in a context of rapid expansion; (c) what policies are being adopted to meet challenges to the system such as HIV/ AIDS and conflict; and (d) what specific policies are being adopted to meet the challenges of gender inequality in relation to enrolment, retention, completion and learning outcomes in a context of rapid expansion?

8. A cost and finance simulation model is an appropriate tool, among others, that can be used to help answer the foregoing questions. Table 3B shows an example of selected simulation results that are pertinent to the discussion here. Notice that although primary education is the focus of the present appraisal, some of the simulation results pertain to post-primary education in order to help place the development of primary education in a sector-wide framework. The table also shows the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative benchmarks, the country’s initial conditions, the targets for educational outcomes and service delivery assumed in alternative simulation scenarios and the corresponding cost and financing implications. Typically, one would show a status quo scenario (presumably the first one) and a final scenario (the one the government has adopted), and one or two alternative options to illustrate the tradeoffs made in arriving at the final scenario.

9. Making use of the data and comparing them with the EFA FTI benchmarks as appropriate, the evaluation team can address the following questions regarding the soundness of the country's strategic directions:

(a) *Globally for the education sector as a whole*, what is the magnitude of the investment cost? Are the projected aggregate recurrent costs in 2015 realistic and feasible to finance? What is the assumed level of domestic funding for education, and what is the implied size of the funding gap? What share of the recurrent cost funding gap is for teacher salaries, in primary education and in other levels of education? Does the costing respond to the projected impact of AIDS? The information in Table 3 can help answer these questions.

(b) *Within primary education*, what tradeoffs are proposed to manage the cost of universalizing primary education completion while promoting quality? (Is the projected unit cost realistic in light of the need to reach the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized groups?) Are the costs of classroom investments reasonable?

(c) *Pressures to expand secondary education* can be expected to rise with increasing numbers of school leavers who will seek a place in secondary school. What policies are envisaged to manage this pressure and to keep secondary education affordable (e.g. increased private sector role; reduction in teacher specialization to promote better use of teacher time; introduction of selection criteria for access to secondary education, etc.)?

(d) *Coverage and costs of post-secondary education (and other education services, including vocational and non-formal education, early child development)* are important parameters in the country's overall strategic direction. The appraisal should review the targets for coverage and the unit costs of these services to ensure that they do not undermine the overall fiscal viability of the sector development plan (e.g. is the projected coverage of publicly-financed higher education reasonable in light of the likely demand for highly educated labor? Are unit costs excessive relative to patterns in other low-income countries?).

10. Step 4. Assess the 3-5-year Action Plan and Identify Capacity Constraints. Here the focus is on the implementation plan for the immediate future. The appraisal team may organize its review around such issues as the following:

(a) *Overview of budgets and magnitude of scaling up in the plan.* It may be useful to begin by extracting from the simulation model the three- to five-year projections of students, teachers, aggregate costs, and so on, and adding other data, as appropriate, to complete the picture (example provided in table 4A). Some of the pertinent questions include: Are the annual budgets for education in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework consistent with the country's longer-term strategic direction for sector development and with country priorities as defined in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy (or equivalent)? Is the scale of expansion—in the projected increase in student numbers and teacher recruitment—realistic given experience in the recent past? Does the simulation include projections of the impact of AIDS? Is the aggregate volume of classroom construction, textbook acquisition on a scale that can in fact be implemented in light of recent experience in this regard? One relevant piece of information for this part of the evaluation is recent implementation experience in donor-financed projects; an example is provided in Table 4B).

(b) *Readiness of the action plan for implementation.* Questions to ask include the following: does the action plan have a time-table for the envisaged activities, a disbursement schedule, and a clear division of responsibility among the central- and local-level units that will implement its various components? Is the financial management system adequate to handle the expected volume of financial flows and to ensure that resources reach decentralized levels, including individual schools? Is there sufficient accountability to ensure that the resources actually reach the intended destination?

(c) *Capacity development to improve implementation for results.* Universalizing primary education completion and achieving gender parity will require increased capacity to reach populations that are currently under-served (e.g. those living in remote areas, orphans, girls, children affected by AIDS, children with disability, and the poor). The education system will also require the capacity to scale up teacher recruitment and training (including action to compensate for the impact of AIDS on the teaching force), classroom construction/renovation and textbook procurement. At the same time, in order to promote learning outcomes and improve administration of an increasingly large education system, capacity will be needed in the area of student appraisal and curriculum development, system administration at decentralized levels, and data collection. Finally, in some settings successful sector reform will require that new laws be enacted and new administrative regulations be put into place. Table 4C offers a template for identifying and assessing the potential capacity constraints that could undermine implementation of the action plan.

(d) *Preparation of the groundwork for longer-term system reform.* The key issue here is whether or not the action plan contains activities that pave the way toward realizing the country's longer-term strategy for the education sector. For example, if the strategy envisions increased use of multi-grade teaching or community teachers in primary education, it will be important to prepare for scaling up in these areas by testing practical models for implementing multi-grade classes and recruiting and training the new teachers. As another example, if the strategy foresees broadening teacher competency across subjects or simplifying an overly burdensome school curriculum, work must be started on redesigning the teacher training program as well as the curricula and textbooks. As a third example, if the long-term strategy is to shift public spending in favor of primary education by reducing unit costs in higher education, it will be important to lay the groundwork by, for example, reforming the system of student finance in higher education and by creating incentives for increased efficiency in higher education institutions. As a last example, if the long term strategy requires dealing with significant gender inequality issues, interventions designed at addressing these through promoting girls' education should be sufficiently comprehensive in scope, coherent and well sequenced, addressing the key supply and demand side barriers to equality.

11. Step 5. Assess the Consultation Process. Table 5 provides a suggested matrix for addressing issues relating to the consultation process. The main purpose here is to ascertain the degree of ownership of the proposed sector plan, both in its broad strategic direction as well as in the short-run action plan. The technical appraisal should thus document the consultations with various branches of government, civil society, stakeholders and donors and comment on their quality. This should include the National AIDS Authority. There should be clear evidence of endorsement of the financing plan by the Ministry of Finance. The appraisal should also review the extent to which stakeholders will continue to be involved during the implementation process.

12. Step 6. Consolidate and Summarize the Appraisal Results. To complete its work, the appraisal might prepare a summary table such as the one in Table 6 and use it to prepare its recommendations for donor action in the four areas indicated at the start of this document, viz.: (a) resources to support the country's plan to universalize primary education completion; (b) arrangements to monitor progress; (c) support to close identified knowledge and data gaps in critical areas; and (d) help with capacity development to facilitate implementation of the country's sector development plan, particularly as it relates to primary education. It should further be noted that the assessment needs to include a gender perspective in all four areas.

**Table 1 (for Step 1):  
Catalogue of Main Documents for the Technical Appraisal**

Document	Date of draft/ Base Year Data	Authorship/ sponsorship	Document Length
Education Sector Plan			
10-year strategic directions for whole sector			
3-year implementation action plan			
Education Cost and Finance Simulation Model			
List relevant education sector analyses			
a) Gender analysis of the sector			
b) Social analysis of the sector			
c) Economic analysis of the sector			
d) Etc.			

**Table 2A (for Step 2):  
Population and Education Indicators Selected from the Appraisal Documents**

Domain/Indicator	Year	Year	Year	Latest available year
<b>Selected population characteristics</b>				
Total size (Total/females)				
% of population below the poverty line (Total/females)				
HIV prevalence rates among adults (Total/females)				
% orphans among children ages 7-14 (Total/females)				
<b>Gross enrollment ratios (%)</b>				
Primary (Total/females)				
Secondary (Total/females)				
Higher (Total/females)				
<b>Primary education enrollments and student flow</b>				
Total enrollments (Total/females)				
% in privately financed and managed schools (Total/females)				
Net Enrolment Ratio (Total/females)				
Net enrolment ratio of the poorest quintile (Total/females)				
Entry rate to Grade 1 (%) (Total/females)				
Cross-sectional measure (Total/females)				
Cohort measure (Total/females)				
Primary education completion rate (%) (Total/females)				

Cross-sectional measure (Total/females)							
Cohort measure (Total/females)							
Repeaters as % of enrollments (Total/females)							
Girls as % of total enrollments/completions (Total/females)							
<b>Primary student learning outcomes</b>							
Average national score on an international student assessment							
Percent correct answers on national standardized tests							

<b>Table 2A (continued)</b>				
<b>Domain/Indicator</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>L.A.Y.</b>
<b>Govt. primary school service delivery indicators</b>				
Years in cycle				
Pupil-teacher ratio (overall)				
In rural schools				
Pupil-classroom ratio (overall)				
In rural schools				
Pupil-textbook ratio (math & language books)				
Number of teachers (Total/females)				
Civil servants as % of total (Total/females)				
Average annual wage bill per teacher (including benefits) as a % of GDP per capita				
Civil servants				
Non-civil service teachers				
Instructional hours and teaching loads				
Annual instructional hours for pupils				
Average pupils' instructional hours per week				
Average teachers' teaching load per week (hours)				
<b>Public spending on education</b>				
Public expenditure on education as a share of total public expenditure				
Recurrent spending on education (all levels) as % of GDP				
Primary education's share of total education recurrent spending				
Share of recurrent primary education spending used on inputs other than teachers (%)				
Share of expenditure received by the poorest quintile				
Average recurrent cost per student (as % of GDP)				
Primary				
Secondary				
Higher				

**Table 2B (for Step 2):  
Education Indicators for disadvantaged groups as relevant (Last available year)**

Group	Gross enrolment ratios			Primary education						
	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Total enrollments	Net Enrolment ratio	Entry rate to Grade 1	Completion rate	% of Repeaters	Learning achievement scores	
<b>Total</b>										
Boys										
Girls										
Urban (Total/Females)										
Rural (Total/Females)										
Richest quintile (Total/Females)										
Poorest quintile (Total/Females)										
Best performing region: (Total/Females)										
Worst performing region: (Total/Females)										
Disabled children (Total/Females)										
Indigenous groups (Total/Females)										

**Table 3A (for Step 3):  
Overall Sector Priority Objectives and Strategies**

Sector Priority Objectives and Strategies for  
Universalising Primary Education

Sector Priority Objectives and Strategies for  
Promoting Gender Equality

**Table 3B (for Step 3):  
Selected Cost and Financing Simulation Results for Assessing Strategic Directions**

Indicator	EFA FTI Indicative benchmark	Country's base year position	Targets/Outcomes in 2015 under Alternative Policy Scenarios			
			A	B	C	D
<b>a. Student flow indicators</b>						
% of age-group entering first grade in primary cycle <sup>(a)</sup> (Total/Girls)	100					
% of age-group completing 6 in primary cycle <sup>(b)</sup> (Total/Girls)	100					
% repeaters among primary school pupils (Total/Girls)	10 or less					
Enrollments in post-primary education						
Total students in secondary (Total/Girls)						
Total students in higher education (Total/Girls)						

Gross enrollment ratio in secondary education (Total/Girls)						
<b>b. Service delivery indicators in publicly-financed primary schools</b>						
Pupil-teacher ratio <sup>(c)</sup>	40:1					
Average annual wage bill per teacher: <sup>(d)</sup>						
Existing teachers (Total/Girls)						
New teachers (Total/Girls)						
Weighted average of existing & new teachers	3.5					
Spending on school inputs other than teachers as % of total recurrent spending on primary education <sup>(e)</sup>	33					
Annual instructional hours for pupils <sup>(f)</sup>	850 --1000					
% of pupils enrolled in privately-financed primary schools	10 or less					
Cost to construct, furnish & equip a primary classroom (US\$)	8,000 <sup>(i)</sup>					
<b>c. Additional costs of HIV and AIDS response</b>						
Prevention (life skills based education etc)						
Teachers (replacement/substitution/code of practice etc)						
Children affected by HIV/AIDS						
<b>d. Additional specific costs of addressing gender inequality</b>						
Demand Side interventions (advocacy and community awareness raising; double capitation grants to schools for girls etc)						
Supply side interventions (in-service teacher training in gender and education issues; positive action measures for female teacher recruitment; 'second chance' opportunities; implementation of sexual harassment policies in schools; elimination of gender bias and stereotyping in textbooks etc)						
<b>e. Actual/Projected Recurrent Costs (as% of GDP)</b>						
Primary education						
Post-primary						
Total						
Share of primary education in overall spending <sup>(g)</sup>	42-64					
<b>f. Projected Capital Costs of Classroom Construction</b>						
Costs of providing water and sanitation (with separate sanitation facilities provided for boys and girls)						
Aggregate costs in US\$						
<b>g. Actual/Projected Domestic Resource Mobilization</b>						
Domestically-generated government revenues as % of GDP	14-18					
Public recurrent resources for education						
As % of domestically-generated revenues <sup>(h)</sup>	20					
As % of GDP	2.8-3.6					
<b>h. Shortfall in domestic recurrent resources</b>						
For primary education						
For post-primary education						
% of shortfall comprising primary school teachers' salaries						

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- a/ Defined as non-repeaters in grade 1 as a percentage of the population cohort at the official age of entry to first grade.
- b/ If data on students completing are not available, use non-repeaters in final grade as a percentage of the population cohort of the official graduation age.
- c/ Denominator includes only teachers with teaching duties; publicly-financed schools refer to those whose teachers are fully paid by the government, either directly or indirectly.
- d/ Refers to teacher remuneration at mid-career; remuneration includes salary and cash value benefits (i.e. pension, health services, transport, housing and other items paid for by the state).
- e/ Spending on items other than teacher remuneration include: (i) the remuneration of non-teaching staff in schools, as well as staff at the district, regional or central levels; (ii) spending on pedagogical materials, maintenance and other running costs, (iii) in-service teacher training; (iv) running costs of student assessments and examinations; and (v) student subsidies, school feeding and other services included under demand-side financing.
- f/ Indicate average, not maximum.
- g/ Includes spending through ministries providing primary and secondary schooling, vocational/technical education and higher education; the target “indicative” benchmark by 2015 should be calibrated to the length of the first cycle of schooling, i.e. 5 years, 42% if it is 5 years, 50%, if 6 years, 58% if 7 years, and 64% if 8 years).
- h/ Discretionary spending is defined as public spending from all sources less debt service (interest payment only).
- i/. US\$8,000 was the average value used in the World Bank simulations to cost the education MDG.

**Table 4A (for Step 4):  
Selected Quantitative Targets in the 3 to 5 Year Action Plan**

	Base year	Projections			
		2006	2007	2008	Cumulative 2006-08
Number of students in government schools Primary (Total/Females) Secondary (Total/Females)					
Number of new teachers in government schools Primary (Total/Females) Secondary (Total/Females)					
Number of textbooks to be procured & distributed Primary grades Secondary grades					
Number of new classrooms to be built Primary schools Secondary schools Number of new latrines (Total/Females)					
Gender Strategy Number of new teachers/headteachers trained in gender issues Textbooks revised from a gender perspective (e.g. to remove gender stereotyping) Number of awareness campaigns for girls' education					
Aggregate recurrent budget Primary education Secondary Higher education Other					
Aggregate budget for capital investments Primary & secondary education Higher education					

**Table 4B (for Step 4):  
Performance and Disbursement of Externally Funded Primary Projects/Programs**

Multilateral/ Bilateral Funded Project <sup>a/</sup>	Performance status <sup>b/</sup>		Commitment (US\$ Million)	Disbursement (US\$ Million)		
	DO	IP		2000	2001	2002

a/ Indicate implementation period and provide a brief description of the project.

b/ Indicated whether the project's performance is satisfactory or unsatisfactory in terms of its development objectives (DO) and its implementation progress (IP).

Including NAC funding for education

**Table 4C (for Step 4):  
Capacity Constraints and Plans to Overcome Them**

Domain	Note nature of capacity constraints, if any	Describe the proposed plan to strengthen capacity
<b>Teacher recruitment, support and development</b> Pre-service training (Total/females) In-service training (Total/females) Recruitment (Total/females) Teacher evaluation School inspection Managing the impact of HIV/AIDS on the teaching force		
<b>Student assessment and curriculum development</b> Standardized testing Test banks for diagnostic testing Curriculum development (incl. HIV/AIDS and gender aspect)		
<b>Data for better management</b> Education Management Information System Expenditure tracking Systems for gender - disaggregated data collection and analysis		
<b>Procurement/Contracting Systems</b> Distribution of instructional materials School construction		
<b>Promotion of schooling among target populations</b> School mapping to improve accessibility of schools School design (including water, sanitation...) Design of demand-side financing interventions (including children orphaned by AIDS and other causes)		
<b>Administration and Management</b>		
National-level budgeting and financial management		
Sub-national government administration Capacity and structures for mainstreaming gender		
<b>Legal/Institutional Framework</b>		
Enactment of laws to facilitate EFA FTI implementation		
Removal of legal impediments to primary education Enactment of laws on discrimination and equal opportunities (gender, HIV etc)		
<b>School-level capacity</b> School head leadership Parent-Teacher Association		

**Table 5 (for Step 5):  
Consultation with Stakeholders**

Stakeholders	Date (s) of past or planned consultation	Format/duration of consultation	Comment on quality of consultation and any issues raised
<b>Government</b> Legislature Finance ministry Ministry of Gender/ Women’s Affairs Other line ministries Regional govt. Local governments			
<b>Civil Society</b> Civic and/or indigenous groups NGOs (incl. HIV Girls’ edu Network) Key women’s organisations/ networks			
<b>Stakeholders</b> Principals Teachers Administrators/ Inspectors Parents/Students/Local Community			
<b>Bilateral agencies (list all involved)</b>			
<b>Multilateral Agencies</b>			
<b>International NGOs</b>			

**Table 6 (for Step 6):  
Summary of Technical Appraisal**

Domain of evaluation	Summary comment	Score <sup>a/</sup>
<b>1. Knowledge base underpinning the sector plan</b> What is its quality, judging from the available documentation? What critical gaps in the data and analysis remain?		
<b>2. Content of the sector plan in terms of strategic long-term direction</b> To what extent is it fiscally viable? How sound are the tradeoffs it makes in coverage & service delivery?		
<b>3. Content of the short-term action plan</b> Are budget allocations in the METF consistent with the plan’s ambition? How feasible are the plans for scaling up? How ready is the plan for implementation? How well will the most important capacity constraints be addressed?		
<b>4. Consultation with stakeholders</b> How strongly has the plan been endorsed by other parts of government, esp. the Ministry of Finance? How acceptable is the plan to key stakeholders in the education system? How acceptable is the plan to members of civil society? How strongly has the plan been endorsed by the donor community?		
<b>Overall Appraisal</b>		

a/ Using a scoring system (e.g. from 1 – very poor– to 4 –very good) has the virtue of collapsing a large amount of information into a single number. While this makes it easier to gauge where the country comes out, the scores are obviously not intended to be used mechanically.