

# MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FUND (EPDF) STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Moscow, March 14, 2006

1. **Participants:** Olav Seim (Norway); Desmond Bermingham, Halima Begum, Digby Swift (UK); Maire Matthews (Ireland); Ewa Werner-Dahlin, Anders Frankenberg and Kaviraj Appadu (Sweden) and Ruth Kagia (World Bank and chairperson).
2. **Observers:** Ronald Siebes, Rebekka van Roemburg (the Netherlands); Andrei Volkov, Valeria Sakharova (Russia); Kris Panneels, Philippe Gerald, Nadine Dusepulchre (Belgium); Abhimanyu Singh, Khawla Shaheen, Hilaire Mputu, Keith Hinchliffe (UNESCO); Scott Walter (Canada); Kristian K. Edinger (Denmark); Jose A. Valente, Denis Baresch, Renata Russell (European Commission); Sandrine Boucher (France); Jussi Karakoski (Finland); Temby Caprio, Claudia Pragua, Susanne Schroth, Rudiger Blumor (Germany); Teresa Savanella (Italy); Taeko Okitsu (Japan); H.E Minister Haja Razafinjatovo (Madagascar); Maria Dolores M. Villalba, Mari Cruz del Saso (Spain); Dina Craissati (UNICEF); Joseph Carney (USAID); Jean-Louis Sarbib, Mercy Tembon (World Bank).
3. **In attendance:** Robert Prouty, Kouassi Soman, Abigail Spring, Anna Triponel, Michelle Mesen (FTI Secretariat); Jee-Peng Tan, Christopher Thomas, Maureen McLaughlin, Michelle Riboud; Regina Bendokat and Eduardo Velez Bustillo (World Bank Education Sector Managers, participating via video/audio conference).

## BACKGROUND

4. The EPDF was established in November 2004 as a funding window under the FTI to support low income countries improve the quality and sustainability of their education sector planning and program development. In 2005, a total of 28 country programs received \$4.9 million<sup>1</sup> which supported activities as outlined in the progress report. The Strategy Committee met in Moscow to review progress on implementation, to discuss emerging issues after the first year of implementation and agree on allocations for 2006. World Bank Education Sector Managers, who were the recipients of the EPDF grants, presented the key achievements and submitted a request for funding for 2006. See the FTI website [www.fasttrackinitiative.org](http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org) for the detailed reports.

## EPDF PROGRESS REPORT

5. **Presentations by EPDF Recipients:** The fund recipients, World Bank Sector Managers, highlighted the key activities and achievements made possible by EPDF funds. They all lauded the EPDF as a quick response instrument that is proving invaluable in helping countries tackle binding constraints to faster education progress. During the first year of implementation, the EPDF has supported countries to:
  - a. Develop **capacity** to design and implement national **education plans** most of which have been endorsed or are close to being endorsed by the FTI Partnership. Countries that have finalized preparation of plans include Cambodia, Bhutan, Djibouti;

---

<sup>1</sup> This excludes support provided to Africa as part of the transition from NETF to EPDF. Europe and Central Asia did not receive funding in 2005.

- b. Generate and share **knowledge** on strategies to: (i) tackle issues constraining school attendance for children in poor or disadvantaged areas, (ii) get the last 10 percent of children into school and (iii) improve education quality. Under this category, several countries have also undertaken impact evaluation on interventions that have been used but have never been evaluated. Knowledge generation has been a key activity for poor areas in China, as well as the Latin America and South Asia countries that benefited from EPDF funds. Several regions have planned seminars and conferences to disseminate the knowledge;
- c. Strengthen domestic and international **partnerships** including the establishment of advisory groups comprising major donors in the region.

## DISCUSSION

- 6. **Proactively reach out to and engage partners at country level:** The Committee acknowledged the important gains that had been made in capacity building and knowledge generation. They encouraged the teams to ensure that there was broad based participation and consultation in the design and implementation of the programs. The methodological approach taken by the EAP team was recognized as best practice in that the team started with building consensus on the critical issues in the regions and then soliciting proposals for funding based on these issues. Such an approach was recommended for all teams to ensure that EPDF maintains a strategic edge.
- 7. **Strengthen harmonization and complementarity:** The committee articulated a vision whereby EPDF enables the harmonization of knowledge generation and dissemination at the country level by inter alia uniting donor activities under strategic EFA issues such as capacity building for basic education, in **fragile states**”; **HIV/AIDS and gender issues**; and stronger partnership around development and implementation of national education programs.
- 8. **Selectivity in the utilization of EPDF resources:** The Committee urged greater focus and selectivity in the utilization of EPDF resources and indicated that it would have difficulty continuing to support activities that are only indirectly linked to the EFA agenda, for example: higher education as had happened in some South Asia countries , activities in Middle Income countries such as China or activities that had alternative sources of funding such as the Malaria booster programs in Africa.
- 9. **Regional Advisory Groups.** The Committee expressed concern that there was such little discussion of Regional Advisory Groups, as agreed in Beijing and requested Sector Managers to ensure that these are effectively established in all regions although format and composition may vary from Region to Region.

## FUNDING REQUESTS FOR 2006:

- 10. A funding request amounting to US\$20.4 million was submitted to the Committee. This includes the US\$12.9 million already approved for the Africa Region. If all the requests were approved, there would be a shortfall of US\$1.1 million since the Trust fund had only \$6.4 million in hand.
- 11. **Possible additional allocations for 2006.** **Netherlands** reported that the Government was likely to make a contribution of Euros 6 million to the EPDF within the next few months. **UK**

also indicated that it would make an additional payment of about US\$1.0 million equivalent within the calendar year. These contributions would make it possible to fully fund the requests already submitted and also cover the additional request of US\$483,000 from the Latin America region. Once these funds had been received, allocation decisions could be made at the next SC meeting or by e-mail on a non objection basis if this became necessary.

**APPROVAL OF THE FUNDING REQUESTS**

12. **Qualified Approval:** Several members felt that they did not have a strong enough basis for making the allocation decisions because they had not had sufficient time to review the detailed documents or to consult with their teams at the country level. In order **to maintain the momentum on implementation the Committee approved all the requests as presented in table 1 below.** These approvals were, however, **contingent** upon the Sector Managers sending to the Committee short write-ups explaining how they plan to address (or have addressed) concerns raised (paragraphs 6-9) above as they relate to their funding requests for 2006. These documents should be provided by end of May 2006 for discussion by the Committee at the next EPDF-SC meeting tentatively scheduled for summer 2006.

**EPDF SCHEDULE**

13. **Timing of Allocation Decisions for EPDF funds:** In order to enable the Africa region transition smoothly from the NETF to EPDF, the 2006 allocation decision was made in January ahead of the Strategy Committee meeting and of the other regions. The Committee agreed to synchronize the allocation decisions for EPDF funding to all regions (including the Africa Region) starting from the calendar year 2007
14. The **Closing Date of the EPDF Trust Fund** is extended from June 30, 2007 to **December 31, 2010.**

**Table 1. EPDF – Regional Allocation Decisions for 2006**  
(In US\$ thousands equivalent)

Total balance available for allocation, incl. Africa Region	<b>19,280</b>	Shortfalls 1/
1. Africa Region (AFR)	12,900	--
2. East Asia & Pacific Region (EAP)	1,500	600
3. Europe & Central Asia (ECA)	900	150
4. Latin American & the Caribbean (LAC)	800	memo 1/
5. Middle East & North Africa (MENA)	500	--
6. South Asia Region (SAR)	2,680	355
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,280</b>	<b>1,105</b>

1/ Memo: The LAC region informed the EPDF-SC of an additional funding request amounting US\$483,000 for a collaborative work with UNESCO LAC Office in Santiago, Chile (re: Sobre el Laboratorio Latinoamericano). This work pertains to an international assessment around issues of education quality in 14-17 countries and covering a ten-year period. The total cost of the program is about US\$5.2 million.

Cleared with and cc: Ruth Kagia, Chair; and EPDF Strategy Committee Members.