

DONOR APPRAISAL AND ENDORSEMENT REPORT

**“NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN 2006-2015”**

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

COUNTRY: REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

OVERALL COMMENTS:

For the first time, the Republic of Tajikistan has prepared “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan 2006-2015” (NSED), a comprehensive strategic framework and plan for the whole education sector, the first sector to do so in the country. The NSED – the Education Sector Strategy and Plan document consolidates the various incremental reforms that the Ministry of Education has been undertaking in the last three years, to arrest the decline and improve the situation, in the education system in Tajikistan. The documents also integrate the various planning documents prepared for achieving the MDGs and EFA goals. The strategic plan document, while giving priority to primary and secondary education, has also covered issues in other related systems of education, such as, preschool, vocational and higher education. The long term strategy and medium term plan of action for the education sector are comprehensive in their approach and take into account the main challenges facing the education system, (identified through a systematic situational analysis) in Tajikistan today.

However in its attempt to be comprehensive, the plan, in parts, becomes overambitious and ahead of the capacity for implementation of the Ministry of Education. For proper implementation of the education plan, several complimentary measures need to be taken, which have also now been integrated into the Medium Term Action Plan. These include a proper sequencing of the action plan on a year-to-year basis, based on detailed monitoring of the achievements in the previous year. Hence the first priority for the mid-term is to improve the database and installation of an effective Education Management Information System. The second priority that emerges is to give priority to building the managerial capacity of key personnel in the Ministry of Education. These priorities are complemented with the short term priority, which is on strengthening and rehabilitating the school infrastructure, as ensuring basic learning conditions for pupils and students are prerequisite for achieving universal education. A variety of measures have been recommended in the plan for restructuring and making efficient the workings of the Ministry of Education, including installation of various kinds of systems for efficient use of human and financial resources. The functioning of these new systems is however dependent on the management effectiveness of key decision makers and managers in both the central ministry level and at the individual institutional level. The strategic goals arrived at in the Strategic Plan therefore rightly gives priority to these enabling goals, which would make the achievement of more focused educational goals more feasible and realistic.

The need for financial resources for the education sector continues to be far greater than what is available at present to the Government of Tajikistan, either from local resources or from external donors. While the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has been raising their allocation to the education sector gradually over the last five years, their capacity to raise total revenues is extremely limited, both due to an overall low economic condition of the country, as well as effective fiscal systems for revenue generation not yet being in place.

Hence resources from the Catalytic Fund source of the FTI would accelerate the progress of the most urgent requirements for the education reform, and focus on a priority social need of a relatively poor country, till other systems of fiscal governance stabilize.

Many donors share their opinion that the commitment of Ministry of Education in the process of this comprehensive sector policy development in close communications with the donor community has been a very positive step, as the donors acknowledge the importance of policy based support for the education reform, linking the existing project-based contributions by the donors. Moreover, such policy based support would help Ministry of Education to build its capacity towards more transparency and accountability for the implementation of the education sector reform.

Some approaches described in the Strategy and Plan, particularly those that describe investments in areas that have received low levels of funding in the past (pre-school, professional and vocational education, and higher education) would benefit from further consideration of international best practices previous to undertaking major investments in these areas. Since the government is faced with re-building educational services without the funding levels of the Soviet period and under changing and vastly different labor market conditions, consideration of new Tajikistan-appropriate approaches would increase the chances of achieving relevant and sustainable educational services in these areas. Adoption of appropriate and sustainable approaches and would also be likely to encourage donors to invest in these areas since the likelihood of achieving impact on educational outcomes would be improved.

While resources appear insufficient overall, donors believe that there are considerable inefficiencies in the way the sector currently works. The sector reform has started its efforts to increase efficiency, such as overall sector finance reform with the introduction of per capita funding and the rationalization of human resource structure including the review of teacher-student ratio, which will result in freeing up funds for other priority needs. Additional consideration of whether the solutions proposed in the Strategy and Action Plan are the most cost effective means to reach goals is also critical to ensure sustainability of investments, while ensuring the effectiveness of the education services on the account of equity and equality in access to quality education needs to be simultaneously addressed in the reform process.

CONCERNS:

The major concern of the group of resident international donors is the implementation capacity of the Ministry of Education and other state players (at the central, provincial and local levels) to fully implement all the proposed actions in the Education Sector Plan. This concern has primarily risen from experience. Complicating this situation is the complex system with the mixture of centralized governance and decentralized financing of the education sector. While policy decision making is highly centralized at national government, decisions on allocations of local financial resources lie within the purview of the regional level governments, and often their commitment to educational issues varies from year to year, given the uncertainties characterizing the overall situation. The mix of centralization and decentralization therefore is an issue that needs to be addressed throughout the process of implementation.

Management capacity, at both the central ministry level and the individual institutional level, for the various functions of each education subsystem is another area of concern. As National

Strategy for Education Development rightly gives priority to the management enhancement, the capacity development in both policy formulation and programme implementation needs to be further strengthened throughout the plan implementation process, as an integral component of the education development plan. High levels of staff turnover at both central and local level exacerbate this management weakness, so readiness to have core staff continuity for the implementation of the strategy is needed.

Since capacity building in both policy formulation and program implementation will require time to develop and had not been undertaken previous to the present strategy and action plan development, donors would appreciate the opportunity to continue the kind of dialogue that preceded the FTI application as the government moves into major new areas of education sector development to ensure that international best practices are taken into account.

Historically, the role of the private sector and civil society in education has also been low in the education sector of Tajikistan. While the strategic plan has proposed to enhance the role of these other stakeholders, their substantive contribution will take several years to mature through a slower process of institutional development as well as central and local governance interest in allowing and facilitating such participation.

CONCLUSIONS:

All donors, throughout the FTI process, are in agreement that the rapid decline in all education indicators, since the end of the Soviet era, has largely been due to the paucity of financial resources that a country like Tajikistan has faced since its independence, with the added demand to orient and develop the education system to respond to the skills needs that children and young people have in the 21st century. The process of preparation of a comprehensive education sector strategy and plan and the transparency in the dialogue between donors and the government, throughout this process of preparation, has however been a new and very positive development for social development in Tajikistan. Hence the donors are collectively of the opinion that the NSED – the Strategic Plan for education Sector Development and Medium Term Action Plan, based on the former, is ready for submission to the FTI secretariat.

The focus of the funding will be in rebuilding and reforming the general education sector, which essentially covers schooling from grades 1 to 11, as the basic infrastructure for this category already exists in Tajikistan. Only focusing on primary education will not be able to address the issue of declining access to quality education, including the gender gap, which emerges after the primary level. The Government of Tajikistan also has been investing in this section of the education sector from its own resources (to the extent of 80% of the education sector budget) and through different multilateral aided projects has built up capacity in policy formulation and program implementation.

Therefore, based on the situation analysis, the most effective utilization of the FTI Catalytic Fund would be ensured by further prioritization of required actions to accelerate the Education Reform process. Such a funding opportunity should address the requirement for technical

assistance to strengthen the planning and analytical skills of the management of Ministry of Education, thus, overall implementation capacity of the proposed strategy plan. This will enable incremental funding that can be infused into the education system and arrest the gradual decline in the education of the next generation of children of Tajikistan. The additional resources will critically supplement the project-based funding that donors are individually involved in currently. It will also supplement the increasing portion provided by the government. However guarantees by the government, that funding available for existing system operational costs will not be reduced to fund new structures proposed in the Action Plan would ensure that financing mechanisms to the existing system is not distorted. The bridging of the financial gap will give the country time towards greater macro economic stabilization that will at a later stage enable a greater flow of resources to the education sector.

Signatures of Donors and Partners who are recommending sector plan for endorsement

Name of Agency

Signature

DONOR APPRAISAL REPORT - EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGY AND PLAN
REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

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Executive summary:

The formal donor appraisal process for “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan 2006-2015” (NSED), began on 21st July, 2005, when the draft strategy document was submitted to all the donors stationed in the country. However right from the beginning of the strategy formulation process by the Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, all resident donors had been informed and participated in the strategy discussions. This appraisal document reflects and integrates all the comments and concerns that all donors have had during the preparation process, as well as a review of the quality and feasibility of the Strategic Plan for the Education sector prepared by the Ministry of Education. The appraisal document also looks at three possible economic growth scenarios and the implications for financial flows that follow, as well as an overall estimate for the financing gap, given existing donor commitments.

The NSED – the Education Sector Strategy and Plan document consolidates the various incremental reforms that the Ministry of Education has been undertaking in the last three years, to arrest the decline and improve the situation, in the education system in Tajikistan. The documents also integrate the various planning documents prepared for achieving the MDGs and EFA goals. The strategic plan document, while giving priority to primary and secondary education, has also covered issues in other related systems of education, such as, preschool, vocational and higher education.

However in its attempt to be comprehensive, the plan, in parts, becomes overambitious and ahead of the capacity for implementation of the Ministry of Education. The plan therefore needs a proper sequencing of the action plan on a year to year basis, based on detailed monitoring of the achievements in the previous year. The short term priority continues to be on strengthening and rehabilitating the school infrastructure, as ensuring basic learning conditions for pupils and students are the prerequisite to achieving universal education. The medium term priority is to improve the data base and installation of an effective Education Management Information System which can monitor progress and education outcomes, along with the capacity building of Ministry of Education and local staff to understand, analyze and use the information and data for decision making and to inform policy development. The second priority that emerges is to give priority to building the managerial capacity of key personnel in the Ministry of Education. Implementation capacity was the major point of concern for some donors. A variety of measures have been recommended in the plan for restructuring and making efficient the workings of the Ministry of Education, including installation of various kinds of systems for efficient use of human and financial resources.

The need for financial resources for the education sector continues to be far greater than what is available at present to the Government of Tajikistan, either from local resources or from external donors. While the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has been raising their allocation to the education sector gradually over the last five years, their capacity to raise total revenues is extremely limited, both due to an overall low economic condition of the country, as well as ineffective fiscal systems for revenue generation. It is estimated that there is a net gap of US \$ 58 million over the next five years after taking into account current donor commitments and government capacity to raise and invest resources locally, if the submitted plan for the education

sector is to be implemented. Hence resources from the catalytic fund source of the FTI would be extremely useful to focus on a priority social need of a relatively poor country, till other systems of fiscal governance develop and stabilize.

Donors have their concerns about the management and implementation capacity of the Ministry of Education given the overambitious Action Plan, while in agreement that given the rapid decline in all education indicators, a comprehensive education sector strategy and plan is required and the education reform process should be progressively supported. Additional funding to accelerate the progress of the education sector reform is critical to support the Government of Tajikistan for achieving MDGs and EFA goals, as such support would lead to further policy commitment and capacity building of its implementation by the government.

Therefore, based on the situation analysis, the most effective utilization of the FTI Catalytic Fund would be ensured by further prioritization of required actions to accelerate the Education Reform process. Such a funding opportunity should address the requirement for technical assistance to strengthen the planning and analytical skills of the management of Ministry of Education, thus, overall implementation capacity of the proposed strategy plan. This will enable incremental funding that can be infused into the education system and arrest the gradual decline in the education of the next generation of children of Tajikistan. The additional resources will critically supplement the project-based funding that all donors are individually involved in currently. It will also supplement the increasing portion provided by the government. However guarantees by the government, that funding available for existing system operational costs will not be reduced to fund new structures proposed in the Action Plan would ensure that financing mechanisms to the existing system is not distorted. The bridging of the financial gap will give the country time towards greater macro economic stabilization that will at a later stage enable a greater flow of resources to the education sector.

1. Introduction

Over the last three years the Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, has been making selective efforts at reforming the education system, which has been adversely effected since the internal strife of 1992-1997. The efforts made included preparation of a National Plan for Education to meet the EFA goals; changes in selected laws that guide education, such as changing the salary structure and workload of teachers; and initiating a large variety of mainly donor funded projects focusing on improving the quality and access to primary and secondary education. These initiatives included developing new curricula for secondary schools, rehabilitating damaged schools, and increasing access to education of population from mountainous regions. In addition the Government of Tajikistan has been progressively adopting internationally accepted development strategies and formally adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2002 and the MDG Needs Assessment Report in 2005. The government is currently also working on the PRS update and preparation of a multi-sector National Strategy for Development which will provide for a national planning framework for the long term.

However these efforts have not added up to a comprehensive framework for planning, policy formulation and implementation in the education sector. The Ministry of Education therefore set about the task of developing a National Strategy for Education Development framework for the country that could comprehensively address all the issues in development of the education sector within a long-term perspective. The various legal reforms legislated and the projects in the Ministry of Education have been selective and fragmented. With an increasing number of donor projects and financial amounts being targeted to the sector and increased capital and recurrent public funding allocated to the sector, a more comprehensive strategic approach and vision was required along with an ability to monitor progress over the medium term. The need for development of a comprehensive sector strategy framework also arose because the country has moved in the last five years from an emergency situation of rehabilitation, after a civil war, to a situation where there needed to be basic reforms initiated in the education system at different levels. Also, as the problem analysis leading up to the sector strategy shows, reforming the education sector in Tajikistan required more than changing laws at the central level, it required a reform of the basic management system that guides education in the country.

The process of first developing such a sector strategy for education development was started in 2004, and then its integration into the more formal FTI process, was initiated in early May, 2005. The donors have been involved and kept informed of the process of developing the sector strategy throughout the process. Education has been the first sector where such a comprehensive sector strategy has been developed in the country.

The draft sector strategy paper initially developed by the Ministry of Education was widely circulated within the country, both within the government system and the donors, and after several rounds of discussions and comments, validated through a process of arriving at a mutual agreement between the donors and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. This document is the formal assessment of the process and product of the strategic planning exercise undertaken, and is an integral part of the process of donor endorsement.

2. Education Sector Strategy Formulation and Planning Process

The education sector strategy formulation process has been initiated and well managed by the Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan. Two Working Groups, of seven members each, were constituted by the Ministry of Education. One worked on the process of formulating the Education Development Strategy and Action Plan while the second worked on the financial strategy and plan for the proposed sector strategic plan. The two working groups worked intensively over a period of four months, between May to August 2005, to produce a draft education sector strategy and an accompanying financial assessment and strategy. The draft “National Strategy for Education Development”, together with a five year Action Plan, was prepared. The strategy was then widely circulated within the Government of Tajikistan, to the Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, Academy of Sciences, and other related ministries, like the Ministry of Labour, for endorsement within the government. The draft was also circulated and presented to all the resident international donors through several meetings held in Dushanbe. Comments received from all stakeholders were integrated to produce an agreed upon strategy and plan for the development of the education system in Tajikistan. The ownership in

the preparation of the National Strategy for Education Development lies essentially strongly within the Ministry of Education, which monitored the progress and methodology of developing the strategy paper.

3. Donor Endorsement Process

The Ministry of Education, Republic of Tajikistan, initiated the process of education sector strategy formulation in early May 2005. A meeting of the existing Education Partnership Group, where all donors were present, was held in Dushanbe on May 7, 2005, where the process to be followed for developing a strategic framework for the education sector was described. This was followed by another meeting of existing donors in the education sector in Dushanbe on June 12, 2005 where the FTI process was explained by the UNICEF representative and the Operations Officer, World Bank, Tajikistan. In this meeting the progress report on the strategy paper preparation process was presented by the Minister of Education, Republic of Tajikistan. This was followed by a meeting of the country donor's group in Dushanbe on August 2, 2005, where a presentation was made on the framework to be adopted for the sector strategy document. The initial outline of the education sector strategy paper was circulated to all donors for information and feedback. On August 22, 2005, another meeting was held where the Ministry of Education representatives and country level donors discussed the draft National Strategy for Education Development document distributed earlier to all donors. The comments and concerns of the donors were duly noted and modifications to the draft document made. Based on these comments the final Education Sector Development Plan for the Republic of Tajikistan was finalized. This was circulated to all multilateral and bilateral donors and Embassies of donor countries present in Tajikistan. Also a final meeting of the Education Partnership Group, constituted of various donor agencies and international NGOs, was held in Dushanbe on September 23, 2005 where the concerns and conclusions about the National Strategy for Education Development and its implementation were discussed. These concerns have been incorporated in the donor appraisal document presented below. Thus the process has been characterized by a continuous series of meetings and dialogues, where both partners, donors and the Government of Tajikistan were frank in their views and a mutually agreed upon plan has emerged.

4. Assessment of National Strategy for Education Development

Described below is the assessment of the quality of the plan and issues discussed in the "National Strategy for Education Development for the Republic of Tajikistan" document developed by the Ministry of Education. There are four parts to the education sector strategy document that was prepared. The first deals with the analysis of the problem and current situation in the country. The second part deals with the strategic framework to be adopted for the next ten years including laying out of strategic goals, objectives, reform measures and strategies for implementation. The third part is a detailed Five Year Action Plan (2006-2010) for the development of the education sector. The fourth part, deals with the resource mobilization and financial implications of the Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

4.1 Quality of Strategic Framework and Action Plan

The strategic framework developed for the education sector is fairly comprehensive, taking into account all the different levels of education and their inter-linkages, and is logical in terms of deriving a set of strategic goals based on a systematic problem analysis. The strategic framework has identified the improvement in the system of management of education sector as the first strategic goal and a series of strategies to achieve this goal. This is a positive feature of the strategy document because in the context of Tajikistan, with a young state in place and a history of civil war in recent years the delivery mechanisms for development and the structures and systems that guide them have become very diffused. Compounding this problem is a complex decentralized governance structure for financial flows and other resources.

The strategic plan makes clear that a lot of initial groundwork, in terms of detailed management audits and diagnostic studies, is required before an integrated and systematic management reform of the education system can begin. The right sequencing of the Action Plan therefore becomes critical if implementation of the plan is to be smooth and make an impact on key education indicators. The strategy for education development has rightly given a substantial emphasis to human resource development, particularly in management capacity building of key education managers. The strategy paper also has given much emphasis to building up an effective education management information system (EMIS) which seems to be extremely weak at present, (and posed a lot of problems in getting reliable data to formulate an Action Plan for the sector also). Building up such an information system is a must for tracking and monitoring needs and results by the Ministry of Education in the future.

Tajikistan inherited the Soviet system of free school education. However with the changed context both the quality standards of education and its relevance to the new context need to be rebuilt. While some efforts have been initiated on curriculum reform to bring them more up to date, the outcomes of these efforts yet need to be evaluated. The strategy paper lays out the revision of standards, both in terms of setting new standards and building autonomous institutions for managing this standard setting process on a sustainable basis, and gives these factors a high priority. The mechanisms for planning such new institutions and implementing the standards established will be a new and difficult process for Tajikistan and the Action Plan, as it evolves, will specify processes of implementation and institution building. Institution building is a new field for the young state of Tajikistan which has limited know-how in this field. For instance, concerning the creation of a number of administrative centers proposed in the strategy plan, while donors support increasing the Ministry's administrative capacity, the Ministry of Education should ensure that the cost of funding these new administrative structures will not result in reduced funding for system operational costs.

The strategic goal of ensuring access and equality in education is the most complex of the goals to achieve in the current context of Tajikistan where a number of factors such as high population growth rate, high out-migration, low resource levels and rising poverty of the population all combine. The strategy paper, while disaggregating this issue in sub-goals (or objectives), suggests a variety of special programs to enhance access to those sections denied access. However this may be in itself inadequate to ensure universal access to education. Certain structural and other changes are required in the education economic and social sphere to address

this issue that is new for Tajikistan. The strategy plan is also much wider in its scope than the MDG goals and therefore needs a new kind of monitoring system that goes beyond the MDG plan. There is also a concern amongst the donors that the approach to pre-schooling in the strategic plan continues to focus only on the traditional institutional approach of kindergartens and not enough on learning opportunities and capacities for home based development of the child.

The fifth strategic goal of enhanced education infrastructure is relevant since the country has a growing child population and the unmet need to fully rehabilitate the existing infrastructure. While enabling basic learning conditions for children is prerequisite for achieving universal education, further prioritization of resource utilization has to be well considered given very poor resource position (both financial and human resources) in the education sector.

The Strategic Plan and Action Plan document takes into account the priority issues plaguing the education system in Tajikistan. The strategies will require a substantial amount of fine tuning once the implementation process begins as is usual with all implementation processes. The planners have recognized that there are substantial knowledge gaps and capacity constraints that characterize the education sector today in Tajikistan. Close and systematic monitoring of the process of implementation through first setting up an effective monitoring system would therefore be essential. A first step in identifying indicators for monitoring the achievement of each goal and objective has been taken in the strategy document and now needs investment in setting up a system of using them on a sustained basis.

One concern expressed by donors is that there is a need for continuous prioritization of goals and strategies both due to the changing situation on the ground and lack of financial resources. Hence while the strategic plan is comprehensive in its actual implementation, year-to-year priorities may have to be set that are realistic. The annual recalibrating of priorities makes the development and application of an effective and efficient management system urgent.

4.2 Critical Knowledge and Data Gaps

Tajikistan has a very poor database in most sectors, including education. The reasons for this are multi-layered. In the case of the education sector, while there is an official database system which has been used in the strategy document wherever relevant, it is reported that the data is often not authentic, as schools often do not send to the center the actual situation. Secondly, data on a variety of indicators of education are not collected in a year-on-year basis. Thirdly, relevant data of a qualitative nature, such as reasons for dropouts from school, and situation of children out of school, has not been collected. Fourthly, the budgetary process, at the central and regional level is fairly rudimentary and ad hoc. Fifthly, information technology use by the Ministry of education is rare. Finally, there is no systematic practice of using the data for planning and monitoring. Given all these factors, as the strategy document notes, establishment of an EMIS within the Ministry of Education is a strategic and priority objective itself.

The donors were concerned that the EMIS system proposed in the plan is highly dependent on the computerization of the MOE, but the capacity to use such systems is extremely limited as of

date. In the light of this concern the donors felt that it is unlikely that a sophisticated EMIS system can be implemented right up to the school level very quickly. The critical challenge is to establish the culture of information based performance management among managers, a challenge the plan responds to.

4.3 Capacity Development Issues

The strategy document has rightly placed substantial emphasis on capacity development at all levels of the education system. In addition to the training of pedagogical staff, the strategic plan has emphasized the need for significant capacity building in the area of management of education systems. This is necessary both at the central level in the Ministry of Education and because of the decentralized governance structures at the regional level. The problem analysis shows that existing capacities for professional management of a modern education system, with autonomous education establishments within them, is fairly low in Tajikistan at present. The education reform process at the legislative level, if not backed up by managerial capacity development, will not lead to the desired results specified in the Action plan. Hence provision for adequate financial resources have been made for this purpose in the plan

The donors who have been stationed within Tajikistan know that capacity development at different levels of the education system is the most critical issue in the implementation of the proposed plan. Quality of staff will continue to remain an issue, and changing structures, without changing staff quality, is not going to be adequate for successful implementation of the plan. The donors endorse the need for continuous external technical support, in addition to programme financial resources during the implementation processes of the plan. The donors also expressed the need to have transparent processes of implementation with the donors, if such technical assistance is to have value and quality standards are to be maintained. Donor projects, inputs and support will be aligned and adjusted to complement and enhance the Ministry's implementation of the strategic plan.

4.4 Assessment of Results Monitoring Framework

Indicators were developed as an integral part of the strategy document to measure the results of each of the objectives set. However, much more work needs to be done to first make the indicators more rigorous and realistic, and second, integrate these into a monitoring and EMIS system. Donors recognize the importance of technical assistance for the improvement of such a capacity in Ministry of Education. Both these tasks are listed as activities in the Action Plan in its first year of implementation. To install and implement such a monitoring framework would require technical assistance and training from outside the country. Also, in the first stage, a proper baseline needs to be established.

4.5 Assessment of Scale and Tradeoffs in Action Plan

The Action Plan has taken the PRSP and MDG Needs Assessment projections as its basis for planning quantitative targets. Financial resource estimates for General Education (grades 1-11) have also been made on the basis of MDG commitments. A formal exercise in trading off between scale and other investments in the system has not explicitly been made, thus, the targets specified in the Action Plan are ambitious to be fully achieved given the current limited resource availability. However, achieving only scale without the complementary investments in improving management of the system and improving quality would not be desirable at this point in time. The donors also specified that scale can only be reached if adequate space is given to private education institutions to develop and alternative education systems such as distance education and multi-grade systems are introduced.

4.6 Linkage of Education Plan with other sectors/plans

Simultaneously with the process of developing an education sector strategy, Tajikistan has also initiated a process of defining a broader National Strategy for Statehood and Development. This latter process has complemented the education sector strategy development process which has become as an input into the broader National Strategy Development formulation process. The National Strategy for Education Development for the Republic of Tajikistan document has also integrated the past work and reforms undertaken in the education sector. The document has taken as one of its bases, the PRSP and MDG Assessment reports that project the necessary investments and changes required to meet the goals set for the PRSP and MDGs.

4.7 Groundwork for Long Term System Reform

The groundwork for education sector reform has been in the process of being laid for the last three years in Tajikistan. However because there was no clear roadmap for such a process the reforms have tended to be sporadic and piecemeal. The medium-term strategy document is a valuable input into drawing up such a roadmap for education sector reforms, as it lays out the laws that need to be changed, the institutions that need to be built and the systems that need to be established. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan's commitment to such a reform process is strong. However they lack the technical capacity to clearly lay out the roadmap for a comprehensive reform of the education system.

5. Financial Appraisal of Education Sector Plan

5.1 Financial Allocations and Strategy

Given the existing legal framework, the issues around financial resources and the financial management of these resources have been impediments to education sector development. These finance problems are exacerbated by the rapid population growth that is being experienced now and is foreseen for the medium term. The issues of financial management have been correctly pointed out in the National Strategy for Education Development for the Republic of Tajikistan and include an education system in transition, inadequate investments in human resources and

educational facilities leading to a pent up demand for education by a growing student population, and the need for private sector investment and user fees to complement an overall paucity of resources with the government. Reform to produce efficiencies (as well as bring certain autonomy at the local level) that will enable financial decision making at the school and other institutional level is necessary.

The increased government attention and investments are shown in the financial flows provided in the plan. The financial flows show that the education sector budget financing as a share of GDP has increased to 3.4 percent in 2005 from 2.3 percent in 2000. The education share of the budget has increased steadily to 19.4 percent of overall expenditure (not including external funding) and the total planned expenditure for 2005 is \$82.3 million compared with \$17.5 million in 2000. General education expenditure is in line with international norms as it is approximately 78 percent of total education sector public spending. The increase in capital investments has been spurred by various donor projects mainly sponsored by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. The Food for Education Programme (provision of school lunch and take home rations for secondary school girls) supported by the World Food Programme continues to be substantive and essential for education as well as health purposes.

Table 1. Education Sector Financial Resources 2000-05

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Real GDP (TJS million)	1807	2512	3345	4758	6158	7100
GDP(official rate US\$ millions)	986	1065	1217	1554	2080	2336
GDP Per Capita (TJS)	292	399	523	724	860	973
GDP Per Capita (US\$)	160	162	175	221	291	320
Total Budget Expenditure (TJS million)	262	366	524	728	1028	1291
Total Budget Expenditure (US\$ million)	110	132	171	238	347	425
Budget Expenditure Growth (%)		40%	43%	39%	41%	26%
Government Expenditure as GDP%	14%	15%	16%	15%	17%	18%
Education Budget as GDP Share (%)	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Education Share of Budget (%)	16%	17%	17%	15%	17%	19%
Education Sector Funding (TJS million)	41.61	60.93	86.87	112.08	173.75	250.07
Recurrent	40.33	59.03	85.54	108.37	151.31	227.06
Capital & Reform/Development Funds	1.28	1.91	1.33	3.71	22.44	23.01
Education Sector Funding (US\$ millions)	17.48	22.00	28.39	36.63	58.70	82.26
Recurrent	16.94	21.31	27.95	35.42	51.12	74.69
Capital & Reform/Development Funds	0.54	0.69	0.43	1.21	7.58	7.57
Percent Change in Allocation		32%	30%	22%	35%	31%
External Financing (committed \$USD millions)						7.3
General Education (1-11) Share of Total Education						
Recurrent Spending	79%	78%	78%	81%	82%	77%
Recurrent GenEd Inputs Share Less Teacher Salaries				11%	20%	26%
Average Annual Wage Bill Per Teacher (US\$)						
Existing Teacher		92.41	117.11	140.50	226.87	325.34
New teachers (1-3 years in service)		73.53	93.16	111.77	180.48	258.80

Source: Ministry of Finance budget, Ministry of Education, Education Finance Working Group

While increases have occurred for the General Education category, as shown in the table above, allocations have also increased in other sectors.

Table 2: Education Sector Spending by Category (U.S. millions)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Preschool	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.3	3.2
General Education (1-11)	13.4	16.7	21.8	28.8	42.2	57.2
Vocational Education	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.8	2.3
Secondary Special Education	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.5	2.2
High Education	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.9	3.1	4.5
Capital+Development/Reform Funds+Other	1.1	1.8	2.1	2.0	7.9	12.9
Total	17.5	22.0	28.4	36.6	58.7	82.3

Source: Ministry of Finance & Education Finance Working Group; not inclusive of external funding

In addition to the need for greater financial resources, the National Strategy for Education Development has laid an equal stress on the need to improve the sector's financial management.

This is especially important given the devolution of general education management and administration to the district and institution level, the need for more of a performance orientation to show actual results of increased investments, and the devolution to non-government sources of funding to supplement specific education categories. The Strategic Goal 1 has rightly laid stress on this issue by defining several specific objectives and strategies for modernizing and streamlining the financial management systems within the education sector.

5.2 Simulation Models of Alternative Scenarios

Three scenarios were constructed to help identify the resource base for public sector and possible private sector participation in the education sector. In each of the scenarios, with increased allocations to the education sector (gradually increasing to about 4.3 percent of GDP by 2010), the education sector's share of the budget will correspondingly grow to about 23 percent (not including external funding, including budget support) and 18 percent (including external funding) of the total budget. While the above assumptions of the sector budget increase are ambitious and still require further work with Ministry of Finance, even these significant increases will not be sufficient to fund the 'finance gaps' as identified in the National Strategy for Education Development.

The scenarios are based on a low economic growth scenario of 3 percent annually medium growth scenario of 5 percent annually and a high growth scenario of 8 percent annually for the period 2006-2010.

The cost estimations for general education are based on the education financial model developed by the MDG Needs Assessment. Thus, all needs in recurrent costs and capital investment for 2006-2010 are taken from MDG financial model as well as notional private contribution to general education in order to coordinate with other sector strategy development under the overall National Strategy Development process. Data on public expenditures and donor assistance is updated according to the latest trends. Also the main long- and short-term priorities defined by MDG Needs Assessment for education sector (such as increase in number of physical facilities, building of new schools and providing with school meals for at least 50% of students and etc.) are included into the NSED financial estimations.

The overall merit of NSED financial model is that it foresees activities aimed at improving the education system through improvement of performance and management of the education system, modernization of management performance of the education system by consolidating decentralization and etc.

Ministry of Education plans to shift to per capita financing giving schools more flexibility to manage their resource envelopes and make staffing decisions, "resource envelopes" identified by the NSED should accommodate the per capita funding, once the mechanism becomes further defined. While it is mentioned in the NSED that the per capita approach will be further applied and suggests it should be done so in a more equitable manner, the details of the per capita finance mechanism are still in the pilot phase and are being worked out with the support of donors' technical assistance.

The following assumptions were also made.

1. For the each scenario the Ministry of Finance sector budget data is used up to 2005 and the Ministry's baseline budget expenditure forecast is applied for 2006. GDP and currency conversion estimates are based on World Bank and International Monetary Fund agreed data to 2005.
2. Funds are divided by education categories based on spending trends between 2000 and 2005. About 71 percent to general education (grades 1-11), 4 percent to preschool 5.5 percent to vocational and special secondary education and 5.4 percent to higher education. The remaining amount, 14.5 percent is for capital and special reform/development activities. Most of this funding is targeted to general education.
3. To estimate available finance flows, the scenarios include 1) public sector flows (recurrent and capital) to each category 2) donor funding which is mainly targeted to general education and 3) existing and potential on private sector participation. The public sector flows were previously described. Donor funds for the period 2006-2010 were estimated by canvassing donors regarding committed and pipeline projects for the 2006—2010 period and making estimates for 2009-2010. Private sector participation flows were determined from some trend data and conservative estimates for possible growth of contributions.
4. Lastly, to estimate the finance gap, priority activities of the National Strategy Action Program were costed. For general education, the estimates from the MDG assessment model were used. These costs were set against the resource flows identified in the previous step (3).

5.2 Assessment of Financial Needs and Gaps

Financing for the reform and development of Tajikistan's education system will cost a total of \$672 million for the 5-year period of 2006-2010. A majority of the costs are for Strategic Goals 3 and 5 to achieve the MDG's and the *Education for All* commitments.

Table 3: NSED and MDG Reform and Development Finance Costs by Strategic Goal (US\$ thousands)

Strategic Goal	Source	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
1. Improve the Management and Performance of the Education System for the Delivery of Educational Services	NSED Costing	366	78	80	81	83	\$ 688
2. Modernize Management Performance of the System of Education by Consolidating Decentralization	NSED Costing	29	227	161	165	168	\$ 750
3. Ensure the Relevance and Quality of the Education Services Delivered at All Levels and Align with the MDG and Education for All Goals	MDG Estimates (includes grades 1-11 recurrent costs)	78432	87152	95630	102208	111575	\$ 474,997
	NSED	1026	1796	3772	2360	3582	\$ 12,536
4. Ensure Open and Equitable Access to Basic Education and Merit-Based Access to Other Levels of Education	NSED Costing	439	745	953	1196	1432	\$ 4,764
5. Improve the Physical Infrastructure, Material and Technical Basis of Education	MDG Estimates (includes grades 1-11 capital costs)	22017	25707	23699	23794	45619	\$ 140,837
	NSED Costing	1327	9330	9774	9963	7650	\$ 38,044
<i>Total (US\$ thousands)</i>		\$ 103,636	\$ 125,035	\$ 134,069	\$ 139,767	\$ 170,108	\$ 672,616

With a 5 percent economic growth scenario and a gradual increase of public spending on education to about 4.3 percent of GDP in 2010 from the 3.8 percent targeted by the government in 2006, the public resource envelope will grow proportionally, increasing by almost half in 2010 compared to 2005.

Table 4: Macroeconomic and Education Sector Budget Scenario, 5 Percent Growth							
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP (TJS million)	1787	7249	7611	7992	8392	8811	9252
GDP(official rate US\$ millions)	980	2387	2432	2482	2528	2576	2628
GDP Per Capita (TJS)	289	1060	1024	1055	1086	1119	1150
GDP Per Capita (official rate US\$)	158	349	327	328	327	327	327
Total Budget Expenditure (TJS million)	262	1291	1356	1423	1494	1569	1648
Total Budget Expenditure (US\$ million)	110	425	433	442	450	459	468
Budget Expenditure Growth (%)		25.6%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Government Expenditure as GDP%	14.7%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%	17.8%
Education Budget as GDP Share (%)	2.3%	3.4%	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%
Education Share of Budget (%)	15.9%	19.4%	21.3%	22.5%	23.0%	23.6%	24.1%
Education Sector Funding (TJS million)	41.6	250.1	289.2	319.7	344.1	370.1	397.8
Recurrent	40.3	227.1	263.2	290.9	313.1	336.8	362.0
Capital & Reform/Development Funds	1.3	23.0	26.0	28.8	31.0	33.3	35.8
Education Sector Funding (US\$ millions)	17.5	82.3	92.4	99.3	103.6	108.2	113.0
Recurrent	16.9	74.7	84.1	90.3	94.3	98.5	102.8
Capital & Reform/Development Funds	0.5	7.6	8.3	8.9	9.3	9.7	10.2
Percent Change in Allocation		31%	14%	10%	7%	7%	7%
External Finance Committed/Estimated 2009-10 (US\$ million)		16.34	19.83	18.29	14.57	17.88	17.88
General Education (1-11) Share of Total Education Recurrent Spending		79%	77%	78%	78%	78%	78%

Source: 2006-10 Working Group estimates. Total Budget Expenditure does not include PIP or donor funding.

In addition to the public resource envelope, private sector contributions were also estimated in terms of tuition, fees for service, etc. However, these were estimated at conservative rates given the lack of an appropriate legal/regulatory framework for such private sector participation. Increasing such participation and transparency is envisaged by various legal/normative activities of the NSED and is a necessity for Tajikistan to build a comparative educational system.

Donor activity was also estimated based on donor contributions from 2003-2008. For the 2006-2010 period, it is estimated that donors will contribute about \$14-20 million annually for reform and development. The current and planned activities are tied directly to the NSED's strategic objectives.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Public, Private and Donor Resources Available					
Preschool	3.39	3.71	3.94	4.19	4.46
General Education	94.51	99.09	99.75	107.12	111.86
Vocational/Special Technical Ed	6.40	6.87	7.14	7.75	8.24
Higher Education	6.88	7.45	7.82	8.48	9.06
<i>Total Resources Available</i>	<i>111.18</i>	<i>117.11</i>	<i>118.64</i>	<i>127.55</i>	<i>133.62</i>
Total Recurrent, Capital and Reform/Development Needs					
Preschool	3.95	9.26	9.54	9.93	8.04
General Education	100.45	112.86	119.33	126.00	157.19
Vocational/Special Technical Ed	7.90	11.36	11.92	12.62	12.93
Higher Education	7.89	9.48	12.11	11.57	13.64
Other Education Management	0.1324	0.0658	0.067	0.0665	0.0697
<i>Total Reform/Development Needs</i>	<i>120.33</i>	<i>143.02</i>	<i>152.96</i>	<i>160.19</i>	<i>191.87</i>
Total Finance Gap	9.15	25.91	34.32	32.64	58.25
Percent of GDP	0.4%	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%	2.2%

Despite the increased resource envelope, consisting of additional public funding, gradually increasing share of private sector participation and stable donor funding at current amounts, there is still a substantial finance gap that continues to grow during the 5-year period. Given the amount of resources available and the finance needs there is a need for additional funding, preferably from external or private resources since domestic public resource flows are estimated in the model to already be at a maximum already unless a higher growth scenario occurs. A second option is to further refine the MDG and NSED activities. However, this latter option will put the achievement of the MDG and NSED goals at high risk.

Annexure 1: Catalogue of Main Documents for the Technical Appraisal

Document	Date of draft/Base Year Data	Authorship/sponsorship	Document Length
Decree of the Government of RT “Implementation Plan of education system reform for 2004-2009” issued on 30 June, 2004	30 June, 2004	Ministry of Education	8 pages
National Education Development Strategy of RT 92006-10150	September, 2005	Ministry of Education	17 pages

Mid-term Plan for the development of the education system (2006-2015)	September, 2005	Ministry of Education	16 pages
Financial Plan for 2006-2015	September, 2005	Ministry of Education	8 pages
Education Cost and Finance Simulation Model	September, 2005	Ministry of Education	
List of relevant education sector analyses a) Preschool education b) secondary education c) vocational (primary, basic, higher)	September, 2005	Ministry of Education	

Annexure 2: Population and Education Indicators Selected from the Appraisal Documents

Domain/Indicator	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Last available year 2004
Selected population characteristics						
Total size of population of Tajikistan (million)		6.25	6.33	6.51	6.64	6.82
% of population below the poverty line	81.0%			64.0%	63.7%	

HIV prevalence rates among adults					2800	4000
% orphans among children ages 7-14	8.8	8.0	6.8	6.5	5.9	
Gross enrollment ratios (%)						
Enrollment in primary education (%) (7-10 years old)	82.0	78.0	79.4	99.6	99.2	
Primary school (%)	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	
Secondary (%)	97.9	97.9	98.0	98.0	98.0	
Higher (number of students per 10,000 population)	127	135	151	165	175	
Primary education enrollments and student						
Total amount o students of primary education (thousand)	35.0	33.0	33.6	32.3	32.9	
% in privately financed and managed schools	0.3	1.15	1.3	1.35	1.4	
Net enrolment ratio of the poorest quintile						
Entry rate to Grade 1 (%)	25.0	24.0	23.0	22.0	21.0	
Cross-sectional measure						
Cohort measure						
Primary education completion rate (%)	93.6	95.2	96.2	97.2	97.6	
Cross-sectional measure Cohort measure						
Repeaters as % of enrollments Girls as % of total enrollments/completions	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	
Girls Entry rate to Grade 1 out of total number (%)	48.1	48.2	48.3	48.0	48.0	
Girls' primary education completion rate (%)	44.7	44.8	44.8	45.6	45.3	
Primary student learning outcomes Average national score on an international student assessment Percent correct answers on national standardized tests	International student testing system is not introduced					
Attendance Rate %	90		80			
Attendance rate among girls	85		75			
Govt. primary school service delivery indicators						
Years in cycle (primary school)	4	4	4	4		
Pupil-teacher ratio (1-4 grades)	1:18	1:21.8	1:22.3	1:21.5	1:21.5	
In rural schools	1:15.8	1:15.3	1:15.3	1:15.3	1:15.5	

Pupil-classroom ratio (1-4 grades)			1:19.8		1:20.2	1:20.1
In rural schools			1:18.8		1:18.7	1:18.6
Pupil-textbook ratio (math & language books) ¹		1:2	1:2.5	1:3	1:3.2	1:3.5
Number of teachers (thousand), including females (%)		31.2 44.8	31.4 45.7	31.1 47.5	32.1 48	32.3 44.4
Civil servants as % of total, including females		99.7 44.7	99.3 45.2	99.1 47	99.0 47.5	98.9 48.7
Average annual wage bill per teacher (including benefits) as a % of GDP per capita		54.8	55.9	61.8	52	64.5
Civil servants						
Number of teachers of private schools		0.3	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1
Non-civil service teachers						
Instructional hours and teaching loads				20/18	18/16	18/16
Annual instructional hours for pupils					1905	930
Average pupils' instructional hours per week					32.2	27.4
Average teachers' teaching load per week (hours)					24	24
Public spending on education			2002	2003	2004	2005
Public expenditure on education as a share of total public expenditure			16.6	15.4	16.9	17.2
Recurrent spending on education (all levels) as % of GDP			2.6	2.3	2.5	2.8
Basic education's share of total education recurrent spending			78	81	82	77
Share of recurrent primary education spending used on inputs other than teachers (%)				11	20	26
Share of expenditure received by the poorest quintile						
Average recurrent cost per student (as % of GDP)						
Preschool education			0.12	0.10	0.11	0.14
Basic education			1.99	1.85	2.03	2.45
Secondary Vocational Education			0.09	0.08	0.09	0.10

¹ Only 30% of secondary school students have a complete set of textbooks. 10% of students have textbooks for some subjects;

Higher			0.07	0.07	0.07	0.9
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Annexure 3: Education Indicators for disadvantaged groups as relevant (2003-2004)

Group	Gross enrolment ratios			Primary education					
	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Total enrollments	Net Enrollment ratio	Entry Rate to Grade 1	Complete Rate	% of Repeaters	Learning Achievement
Total									
Girls	48.2	46.5	39.3	79,271	49.2	48.0	94.8	0.11	
Boys	51.8	53.5	53.5	85,707	50.8	52.0	96.8	0.12	
Urban	29.1	28.0	29.5	48,080	28.9	29.1	94.3	0.3	
Rural	70.9	72.0	70.5	1,016,897	94.4	70.9	96.5	0.3	
Richest quintile	No data								
Poorest quintile	No data								
Best performing region									
Worst performing region:	41.9	48.4	9.7	986	0.25	11.0	93.0	0.3	
Disabled children									
Indigenous groups									

Annexure 4: Selected Cost and Financing Simulation Results for Assessing Strategic Directions

Indicator	EFA Indicative benchmark	FTI Country's base year position
a. Student flow indicators	100	
% of age-group entering first grade in primary cycle (a) (Total/Girls)		
% of age-group completing 6 in primary cycle (b) (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. Service delivery schools indicators in publicly-financed primary		
Pupil-teacher ratio©©©	40:1	20:1
Average annual wage bill per teacher:(d)		325
Existing teachers		
New teachers		259
Weighted average of existing & new teachers	3.5	
Spending on school inputs other than teachers as % of total recurrent spending on primary education (e)	33	26
Annual instructional hours for pupils (f)	850-100	929
% of pupils enrolled in privately-financed primary schools	10 or less	8.7
Cost to construct, furnish & equip a primary classroom (US\$)	8,000 (i)	38.386
c. Additional costs of HIV and AIDS response		
Prevention (life skills based education etc)		
Teachers (replacement/substitution/code of practice etc)		
Children affected by HIV/AIDS		
d. Actual/Projected Recurrent Costs (as% of GDP)		
		0.14
Preschool Education		
Primary education		2.45
Post-primary		0.10
Total		4
Share of primary education in overall spending	42-64	19.4%

(g)		
e. Projected Capital Costs of Classroom Construction Costs of providing water and sanitation Aggregate costs in US\$		300% 1.4 mln
f. Actual/Projected Domestic Resource Mobilization Domestically-generated government revenues as % of GDP Public recurrent resources for education As % of domestically-generated revenues (h) As % of GDP	14-18 20 2.8-3.6	18 13.5 2.45
g. Shortfall in domestic recurrent resources Preschool education For primary education For post-primary education % of shortfall comprising primary school teachers' salaries	Deficit of internal and donor funding	0.56 11.63 1.50 1.01

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.

Annexure 5: 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	1,695	1726	1748	1779	5254
Primary (Total/Girls)	712/342	733/353	746/368	761/36	2241/1080
Secondary (Total/Girls)	983/457	992/462	1002/466	1018/473	3012/1401
Number of new teachers in government schools	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	5.0
Primary (Total/Females)	0.36/0.19	0.55/0.29	0.55/0.29	0.7/0.37	1.8/0.95
Secondary (Total/Females)	0.64/0.33	0.95/0.49	0.95/0.5	1.3/0.67	3.2/1.66
Number of textbooks to be produced & distributed	4.5	5.0	5.2	5.5	15.7
Primary grades	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5	7.5
Secondary grades	2.5	2.5	2.7	3.0	8.2
Number of classrooms to be built		2,105	2,105	2,105	6,315
Primary schools		323	323	323	969
Secondary schools		1,782	1,782	1,782	5,346