REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (ITAP)

ASSESSMENT OF ENABLING FACTORS[1]

COTE D'IVOIRE | MARCH 26, 2023

Background

In line with the GPE 2025 operating model, the government and country partners have analyzed country progress in the four enabling factor areas for system transformation. The *Contextualized Enabling Factors Analysis* completed by the local education group and supporting documentation were shared with the ITAP, tasked by the Board with providing an assessment of country status against the enabling factors.

The ITAP assessment seeks to contribute to country policy dialogue on the partnership compact. The ITAP considers the extent to which challenges in enabling factor areas act as bottlenecks to country education system transformation goals. Based on this assessment, it classifies each area as a low, medium, or high priority for action. A designation of high indicates that identified challenges may act as significant bottlenecks to transformation goals.

The ITAP report is shared with the government and country partners to collectively review for any major factual errors that may have affected the ITAP assessment.

The ITAP report is ultimately shared with the Board and feeds into Board decision-making on the system transformation grant allocation, with special attention given to how challenges in the high priority enabling factors are resolved in the country partnership compact.

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[1] The views expressed in this report are solely those of the ITAP country panel. Where ITAP reports lists any suggestions on how to address gaps identified, these should be regarded as illustrative only and there is no expectation from ITAP or GPE that countries follow these specific actions. The ITAP operates as an independent advisory body to the GPE Board. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the ITAP country panel.. ITAP country panel members for this report: Anton de Grauwe (Chair), Cornelius Hacking, Jean-Jacques Paul, Sara Poehlman

Part A: Main Panel Conclusions

Data and Evidence

The *Ministere de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabetisation* (MENA) has a department[2] in charge of the regular collection and production of gender-disaggregated education statistics from preschool, primary, secondary, professional training and higher education. Data processing from various databases allows the production of comprehensive pocket statistics (*Statistiques de Poche*) and reports that provide an analysis of trends over time in access and quality and include data on vulnerability. Robust practices and structures for generating quality data on learning and achievements provide regular evidence to inform policy and practice. In addition to national exams and assessments, multiple other sources feed into the evidence base, including in the education response to COVID-19. An impressive repository of evidence provides an analysis of key issues in education and related factors; however, the evidence base that identifies bottlenecks could be strengthened by rigorous evaluations of what works to overcome the inefficiencies that have led to poor quality learning outcomes. Considering the strengths of the EMIS and other data and the use of learning assessments in identifying systemic bottlenecks and solutions, the ITAP concurs with the country in rating this enabling factor as **low priority** because the existing capacity and products are robust and support the management of the education system.

Gender-Responsive Planning, Policy and Monitoring

Several years ago Côte d'Ivoire developed a robust education sector plan (ESP 2016-2025) and a detailed operational plan, with well-argued and useful cost and funding estimates. These play an important role in coordinating the different education ministries and in aligning donors' interventions. Using its strong data base, it has built an effective monitoring structure, consisting of two indicator systems, linked respectively to the ESP and the operational plan. These form the basis of yearly performance reports. However, the full potential of these instruments and structures to guide the transformation of education, identify challenges, and design promising strategies, is not used. Ministry departments did not refer much to the ESP, once it was prepared, and the plan has not yet been updated. The monitoring process does not analyse the causes of lack of progress. In addition, core issues, including gender and ECE, are covered in little depth. Recent policy documents, for instance on gender, address some of these issues. The COVID-19 response plan has contributed to a fairly effective response to the pandemic. The EGENA has proposed a new vision for the education system. However, the linkage of these documents and plans with the ESP is weak. Cote d'Ivoire's self-analysis recognizes this and indicates that work is being undertaken. Considering these challenges and the

[2] Department of Studies, Strategies, Planning and Statistiques (DESPS in its French acronym)

planned responses, ITAP is rating this enabling factor as **medium priority**, thereby confirming the self-analysis.

Sector Coordination

Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action:

The self-analysis offers a fair description of coordination functions and practices; at first glance, the setup of sector dialogue and coordination seems to work well. But based on all documents consulted the ITAP finds that, on a policy level, the *Groupe Local des Partenaires de l'Education*(GLPE) seems weak. Its ToR mention the annual joint sector reviews and the role of the development partners therein. Their focus, however, is not on policy. Therefore, the ITAP agrees with rating this enabling factor as a **medium priority**, confirming the calls by the GLPE for more transparency and coordination.

Coordinated Financing and Funding:

Alignment of partners' activities to education policy is high, but not with national systems and (budget) procedures: almost all donors predominantly finance stand-alone projects. Even the ToR of the GLPE do not focus on joint financing or pooled funding. In addition, the issue of mutual accountability needs more attention. This would end the apparent acceptance (by both government and donors) of two coexisting implementation mechanisms: one governmental, another by donors. A stronger GLPE can make a difference in this process. Therefore, the ITAP agrees with the self-analysis and rates this enabling factor as a **medium priority.**

Volume, Efficiency and Equity of Domestic Financing

Given the current level of public expenditure on education (as a share of the government budget), it will be difficult for the country to increase it significantly. The main issue therefore concerns the efficient use of the resources devoted to education, in order to free up spaces for investments that promote quality and equity. The inequitable distribution of education resources remains a serious problem and hinders the achievement of the country's educational objectives. Disparities between urban and rural areas, regions, and social groups are of great concern. The situation of young girls deserves greater attention and the schooling opportunities for children with disabilities must be seriously improved. Given the large amount of funding for education, the low level of student achievement is evidence of an inefficient education system. In addition, the implementation of the educational process itself is often inefficient. Finally, the difficulty of mobilizing resources hinders policy implementation. Taking into account the significant efficiency issues as well as the equity challenges, the ITAP agrees with the self-analysis to rate this enabling factor as a **high priority**.

Part B: Assessment of Enabling Factors

1. Data and Evidence

Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

The *Ministere de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabetisation* (MENA) has a department in charge of the regular collection and production of gender-disaggregated education statistics from preschool, primary, secondary, professional training and higher education that covers public and private institutions, as well as community primary schools. It requires emphasizing that MENA also combines the sub-sectors to produce comprehensive pocket statistics (*Statistiques de Poche*) annually that provide an analysis of trends over time and include robust data on vulnerability, such as Orphans and Vulnerable Children, victims of violence, school conflicts, student pregnancy, in addition to disabilities and exam results for the secondary level. Data is presented with analysis that clearly points to disparities, such as gaps between regions and districts.

Systemic reports on data and analysis are available online and reflect a capacity of data producers to undertake complex and multidimensional analyses of interacting elements like violence in schools. The 2021 *Rapport d'Analyse Statistique* uses available data to dig into the issues of quality in the Ivoirien education system, including the changing tendencies of parity between girls and boys, and points to specific points of progress and remaining challenges to be addressed in policies and planning.

All this could be improved by setting up a comprehenvise EMIS integrating all data produced by the system and making it accessible in real time to steer decision-making processes.

Learning Assessment System (LAS)

MENA has developed robust practices and structures for generating quality data on learning and achievements that provide evidence to inform policy and practice. Secondary level exam results are included in the EMIS. A national learning assessment, based on the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), is conducted in CE1 (3rd year of primary school) with the 2021 report highlighting that results for reading are not on track to meet 2025 targets and that learning outcomes at this level regressed between 2019 and 2021.

Multiple other sources feed into the body of data and evidence on learning and achievement. Cote d'Ivoire participated in the *Programme d'analyse des éducatifs de la CONFEMEN* (PASEC) in 2014 and 2019 for the primary level. The analysis of PASEC and the national standardized assessment (EGRA and EGMA) results served as the basis for the development of the analytical note on quality in the education system that points to needed improvements to meet national goals. Specific national and regional efforts were

also made to understand the impact of COVID-19 closures and distance learning on learning outcomes.

The Monitoring Impacts on Learning Outcomes (MILO) project implemented by MENA, reported on national and cross-national findings to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on reading and mathematics learning outcomes by reporting against SDG indicator 4.1, for the last year of primary education, in six countries. It also aimed to identify the impact of the distance education program 'My Home School' delivered through television, radio and online technologies incorporated into the remote education response. For all students at the end of primary school, although there were disparities highly correlated to household factors, there was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of students who met the minimum proficiency levels for reading and mathematics between 2019 and 2021, demonstrating resilience of students and schools in the face of the COVID-19 disruption. However, learning assessment reports and their recommendations repeatedly highlight the significant efforts needed to improve learning outcomes throughout the education sector. The annual performance reports reflect the same concern.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) includes disaggregated data on early learning for children under the age of five. However, better and harmonized data on preschool access and learning is needed to improve evidence-based investments in the sub-sector and across ministries and develop a more comprehensive diagnostic of existing structures and gaps.

It should be noted, moreover, that despite MENA's efforts to develop a genuine culture of learning assessment, secondary education is not yet covered by the different learning assessments carried out within the education system.

Evidence production and use

Cote d'Ivoire has an impressive body of evidence that provides an analysis of key issues in education and factors related to educational access and performance such as gender equality, health and household conditions. The Education Sector Analysis from 2016, that uses evidence to point to key issues, was updated with a series of diagnostic notes in 2022 that examine current evidence and issues on access, quality, internal efficiency and an institutional analysis of the cost and financing of education. However, the analysis of this evidence is not fully carried into the monitoring system as explained in the next section. Other diagnostics provide evidence and policy direction on gender and inequality in education and other social institutions.

Although information and analysis are available on inequality, further disaggregation of educational data that links social and educational factors can only help improve the planning and allocation of resources to meet national goals and reduce inequalities. In that perspective, the robust existing databases that allow identifying systems bottlenecks

could be strengthened to overcome the inefficiencies that have led to poor quality learning outcomes. In addition, a structured linkage between the different sources of data, such as the school census, the results from learning assessments and exams, and teachers' information, can contribute to a more complete picture of the state of the education system.

Conclusion:

Considering the strengths of the EMIS and other data and the use of learning assessments in identifying systems bottlenecks and solutions, the ITAP concurs with the country in rating this enabling factor as **low priority** because the existing capacity and products are robust and support the overall management of the education system.

2. Gender-Responsive Sector Planning, Policy and Monitoring

Strategic planning frameworks and practices

Côte d'Ivoire prepares regularly development plans as well as education strategic plans. The most recent *Plan sectoriel de l'éducation/formation*, prepared in 2016-17, covers the period until 2025. The plan is coherent, well organized, with robust M&E and cost and financing frameworks. It brings the different ministries of education together around a common vision and objectives, linked to the national development plans, and aligns interventions by partners.

However, strategic planning does not end when an ESP is prepared. It is a process which includes rethinking of the ESP, essential for a long-term plan in an era of uncertainty. There is insufficient demonstration of the existence of this process. There have been attempts to adapt policy to the changing realities: the COVID-19 response plan and the organization of the *Etats Généraux de l'Education Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation* (EGENA). However, in both cases, the link with the ESP is very weak: they do not refer to the same indicators, and do not use the simulation model for their financing estimates. The self-analysis shows some awareness of this, as it indicates that work is being undertaken to update the operational plan and the simulation model.

The legal and political framework does not guarantee free education of 12 years. The laws of 1995 and 2015 stipulate that basic education is obligatory from 6 to 16 years, and that the principle of *gratuité* applies to public education. In reality, fees contribute to the failure to achieve universal basic education. The underdevelopment of early childhood education is a major constraint, in particular in rural areas, while many boys and even more girls fail to complete lower secondary. The ESP pays attention to these disparities, but does not examine carefully the impact of its strategies. The strategies in the ESP on ECE may further enhance existing disparities. (see also the later section on gender).

Operational planning instruments and practices

The ESP was accompanied by a very detailed three-year operational plan, updated for 2021 and 2022. However, as the ESP had until recently not been updated (this is now ongoing), the operational plan does not reflect new concerns, such as the COVID-19 response plan and the conclusions of the EGENA. The self-analysis indicates that this will be done by April 2023. A more systematic use of the ESP would have facilitated an earlier linkage and greater coherence.

Implementation is a complex endeavour. Two factors are more important than the existence of an operational plan to facilitate it. First, the ministry-wide ownership of the ESP and the operational plan. The ESP mid-term evaluation noted that the design of these plans was the almost exclusive responsibility of a Task Force, and that ministry departments executed their work without a link to the ESP. While the existence of the Task

Force has made for more efficient plan preparation, it may not have helped the development of a strategic planning culture. Second, successful implementation relies on a balance between monitoring and capacity-development. The emphasis is much more on the former than the latter, and the interpretation of capacity-development within the ESP and among partners tends to be limited to "training" rather than addressing institutional and organizational constraints.

Budget programming and monitoring

The ESP cost and financing framework is based on a well-designed and transparent simulation model. The funding gap is very reasonable. However, the model relies on an over-optimistic estimate of GDP growth (close to 9% throughout the whole period): even before COVID-19, the rate went down from 7.2% in 2015 to 6.2% in 2019. Unavoidably, the ESP's objectives become unfeasible, and a reorientation of its priorities has so far not taken place. The operational plan includes details on the available funding amounts and sources, by activity. On the basis of the available information, it is difficult to see how coherent the relationship is with the MTEF. The COVID-19 response plan as well as the EGENA report contain cost estimates. The latter does not contain any detail on unit cost or even duration to be able to assess its quality. This is problematic as the EGENA guides the future development of the education system.

The diversity of these different estimates creates two problems. First, much information (in terms of activities and their cost and financing) is no longer relevant, including because of COVID-19. Second, a comprehensive update is necessary, to address the lack of coherence. This is announced in the self-analysis.

Sector/implementation monitoring mechanisms

Côte d'Ivoire has several tools and processes which together construct a strong monitoring system. There are two indicator systems, the *Matrice de suivi des indicateurs de résultats* (MASIR), which assesses ESP achievement, and the *Matrice de suivi de la mise en œuvre des activités* (MASMO), which focuses on the operational plan. They offer a comprehensive set, disaggregated by gender, where relevant. However, the indicators have not changed over time and do not sufficiently reflect new challenges and priorities.

Annual performance reports describe the evolution of the education sector, based mainly on the indicator systems. They inform the Joint Sector Reviews, which took place almost every year; ITAP received no information on their content. The performance reports are similar in content, even with some literal repetition, illustrating that some actors consider this a routine exercise rather than an opportunity for strategic reflection.

This is a major weakness. Monitoring should lead to a discussion on the causes of a particular evolution. The performance reports do not sufficiently do so. At best, they identify evident explanations for progress. Where there has been none, they list well-

known reasons, but do not explain why strategies to address these reasons were not developed or not implemented. Recommendations are repeated, but without examination of the reasons for their non-achievement. One related characteristic is that the focus of monitoring is in Function of the availability of data and indicators, and not in function of the importance of a priority or challenge. The overall result is that the recommendations of the performance reports lack in-depth reflection. The system is used much more for monitoring – what happened – than for evaluation or learning – why did it happen? What can we change?

Gender mainstreaming across policy, planning and monitoring processes

The coverage of gender in the ESP is mixed. On the one hand, the plan pays attention to the situation of girls, uses disaggregated indicators, and has specific targets within the equity objective. Some strategies are focused on girls, e.g. the construction of safe schools with sufficient latrines or the provision of secondary scholarships. On the other hand, there is limited reflection on the socio-economic causes of the gender disparities and no strategies that aim at changing the deep seated social factors that sustain them.

The ministries, aware of these limits, recently designed a more effective strategic framework. This includes the *Strategie Nationale de Réintegration des Filles Enceintes ou Mères Dans Le Système Educatif 2021 – 2025* and the 2020 *Document du politique genre* of the MENETFP, now Ministry of National Education and Literacy. The document examines the causes of gender disparities and proposes a well-argued set of strategies, which are confirmed by the arguments and recommendations of the SIGI report. However, this policy document misses an M&E framework and an operational plan.

The fact that gender is not well integrated in the COVID-19 response plan indicates that there is still work to be done for it to become a cross-cutting priority, which the whole administration feels accountable for. The existence of a specific gender unit (*Direction de l'Egalité, de l'Equité et de la promotion du Genre*) illustrates the importance given to gender, though it runs the risk of assigning this priority to a specific team.

Conclusion:

Côte d'Ivoire has a credible ESP and a detailed operational plan, with useful cost and funding estimates. It has built an effective monitoring structure. However, much of this has not been sufficiently used and updated, and core issues, including gender and ECE, are covered in little depth. Moreover, the potential of the M&E system to guide the transformation of the education system is not well used. Recent policy documents address some of these issues, but their linkage with the planning framework is weak. The self-analysis recognizes this and indicates that work is being undertaken. Considering these challenges and the planned responses, ITAP is rating this enabling factor as **medium priority**, thereby confirming the country's self-analysis.

3. Sector Coordination: Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action and Coordinated Financing and Funding

3.1 Inclusive Dialogue and Coordinated Action

Coordination functions and practices

The self-analysis has given a fair description of sector coordination, including the work of the GLPE. Some 28 organizations participate in the GLPE, making its composition very diverse, including bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society, labor unions, philanthropic foundations and the private sector. Some stakeholders are not represented, like Arab funds, China and South Korea. Participation includes high-level delegates from the MENA, as well as the Task-Force, set up in 1998 to promote coordination between all stakeholders The Task Force houses the secretariat of the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee, and is as such in charge of sector dialogue. The GLPE is currently chaired by the Jacobs Foundation, with Save the Children as co-chair. This structure should guarantee an effective sector dialogue and coordination, but in most documents studied, a lack of coordination is mentioned, between donors as well as between the various ministries.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the GLPE, revised in July 2021, focus on plans and programmes, on exchange of information, on operational and financial implementation mainly. The GLPE has expressed its wish for a more substantial and regular exchange on policy issues, including the need for a revision of the current ESP. From a point of view of building shared momentum for sector transformation, a role for the GLPE in the "rethinking" of the ESP would be logical; the involvement of donor agencies in policy through the GLPE should not threaten country ownership. In the ToR the Joint Sector Reviews and the role of the donors therein are mentioned, but their main focus is not on policy. The ToR of the Task Force were not made available to the ITAP.

Capacities for coordination

Joint Sector Reviews have been done in the past, although not annually; the performance reports, which form their basis, focus on monitoring mainly, not on policy issues. The ESP has been signed by eight different ministers, but cooperation and coordination between the ministries in charge of the three sub-sectors are not strong, according to the midterm review (MTR) and confirmed by the *Évaluation sommative de l'appui du GPE* and the report of the EGENA.

Non-state actors (here including religious and private schools) play an important role in the education system: they cater for about 30% of preschool, 20% of primary and 50% of lower secondary school enrolment. Good coordination and cooperation are therefore imperative, especially at the decentralized level, but the formal relationship between the government and the private sector remains somewhat unclear.

As far as the development partners are concerned, there is little synergy; they do not coordinate sufficiently what they finance, and the ITAP wonders whether this is a question of willingness or of capacity. The GLPE, however, does call for more transparency and coordination, especially when it comes to new activities. A recent project, the *Stratégie Nationale des Premiers Apprentissages* (SNAPAS) offers a positive exception, as it has allowed several partners to come together around an important government objective.

Conclusion on 3.1:

At first glance, the setup of sector dialogue and coordination seems to work well, the self-analysis finds it dynamic and functional. But based on all documents consulted, the ITAP considers that, on a policy level, the influence of the GLPE seems weak. Therefore, the ITAP agrees with the country rating this enabling factor as a **medium priority**, confirming the need to use the Joint Sector Reviews as real starting points for sector dialogue, while strengthening the role of the GLPE.

3.2 Coordinated Financing and Funding

Availability of aid alignment and joint financing mechanisms

All aid to education is aligned to the National Development Plan, as well as to the ESP. However, this alignment is limited to objectives and priorities; there remains a substantial lack of alignment with national systems and (budget) procedures: almost all donors predominantly finance stand-alone projects. This practice has led to fragmentation of resources, and a silent acceptance (by both government and donors) of two coexisting implementation mechanisms: one by government and another by donors.

As a consequence, there are no mechanisms yet that promote joint or pooled funding; the self-analysis mentions that donors are "considering" it and that the partners have engaged in a feasibility study on establishing a joint fund. The MTR of the ESP calls for coordinated financing and the setting up of a joint, single financing framework. From the studied documents, it remains unclear what has held donors back so far, especially the multilateral banks which frequently use pooled funding mechanisms in other countries. A stronger GLPE can make a difference.

Accountability and dialogue around aid effectiveness

Donor contributions to the education sector are modest: from 2005-2010, 8,1% of ODA was for education, decreasing to 2.1% in 2011, then increasing to 4.45% in 2016. Between 2012-2016, government covered 97.1% of overall sector spending, international donors accounted for the remaining 2.9% only. The figure has risen between 2017-2020, with donors accounting for about 6.1% of the overall sector spending. The figure for MENA only stands at 2% for 2018-2021. This seems low, but since some 50% of investment spending in education is covered through aid, its importance is considerable, putting external support in a different perspective.

Aid effectiveness includes alignment, harmonization and increased transparency; the latter element receives little attention. As a result, there is no real mutual accountability. This is serious in so far that mutual accountability is a precondition for education transformation, especially as far as financing is concerned; this calls for more inclusive Joint Sector Reviews.

Commitment towards greater aid effectiveness practices

The National Development Plan 2016-2020 expresses a wish to better prioritize and harmonize development partners' activities, in order to promote synergy. It calls on donors and other stakeholders to adhere to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

As mentioned, the ToR of the GLPE focus on alignment and harmonization, but there is nothing about working on joint financing, pooled funding, promoting inclusion, mutual accountability, etc. This weakens the GLPE's role, making it difficult to put the project mode of working up for discussion. The necessity of a study on the feasibility of joint financing is mentioned in a number of documents.

Conclusion on 3.2:

At a policy level, including objectives and priorities, all aid in the education sector is well aligned to the ESP. However, there remains a substantial lack of alignment with national systems and (budget) procedures: almost all donors predominantly finance stand-alone projects. Even the ToR of the GLPE do not focus on joint financing or pooled funding. In addition, the issue of mutual accountability needs more attention, and therefore the ITAP agrees with the self-analysis and rates this enabling factor as a **medium priority.** This is also justified by the fact that there are no mechanisms promoting joint or pooled funding. It is good news to see that donors are considering it. This would contribute to the transformation of education in Côte d'Ivoire.

4. Volume, Equity, and Efficiency of Domestic Public Expenditure on Education

Volume

The level of education funding is well above the GPE benchmarks[3]: total education spending represents more than 20% of total public spending (25.4% actual in 2021, 21.3% targeted for 2025) and 3.9% of GDP in 2021. The share of pre-primary and primary education in recurrent education expenditure reached 46% in 2020. The main concern is that the rather large share of personnel costs (around 80% of MENA's operating budget) does not translate into effective performance by the teaching staff, measured in terms of student learning.

Domestic financing matrix	***2019****	***2020****	***2021****	***2022*****	***2023******	***2024******	***2025******
Education as per cent of GDP	*3.7%*	*4.2%*	*3.9%*	*3.6%*	*3.6%*	*3.7%*	*3.7%*
Education as per cent of government expenditure (excluding debt service)	*29.7%*	*27.6%*	*25.4%*	*25.4%*	*24.0%*	*21.1%*	*21.3%*
Recurrent education expenditure as per cent of public recurrent expenditure (excluding debt service)	*38.6%*	*33.0%*	*32.5%*	*39.9%*	*38.1%*	*30.0%*	*30.2%*
** actual ** budgeted *** targeted*							

Source: Computed from "Domestic financing matrix" completed by the country

In 2019, capital expenditure accounted for about 10% of the budget. Too little is spent on non-salary items such as textbooks, TVET equipment and teacher training. This type of expenditure is largely covered by foreign partners, while it seems difficult to mobilize government counterparts for the activities they co-finance. In addition, the allocation of financial resources is uneven across the different education sub-sectors, with technical education in particular being underfunded.

According to the World Economic Outlook 2020-2027 database, the economic outlook is good. Over the period 2020-2027, GDP is expected to grow at a rate of 6.3% and GDP/inhabitant (2,279 USD in 2020) at a rate of 4.6%.

Given the current level of public spending on education (as a share of the government budget), it will be difficult for the country to increase to any large extent the share of public

[3] The GPE domestic financing matrix is assessed using two possible paths. (1.) In the first instance, the matrix is considered satisfactory if the country either (a.) demonstrates a commitment to spending at least 20% of the total public budget (excluding debt service) on education, or (b.) commits to progressively increasing levels of public finance towards 20% of the total public budget. (2.) If neither of these conditions holds, a country should be spending at least 4% of its projected GDP on education.

resources allocated to education. Therefore the main issue is the efficient use of the resources devoted to education, in order to free up spaces for investments in quality.

Equity

The inequitable distribution of education resources remains a serious problem and hinders the achievement of the country's educational objectives. Disparities between urban and rural areas, regions and social groups are of great concern. There is a clear difference in preschool attendance to the detriment of rural children, who represent only 26% of enrolment. Regional inequalities are high and increase, when exam pass rates and performance on standardized tests are considered. For example, between 2016 and 2020, the gaps between extreme regions for the minimum threshold of the second year of elementary school nearly doubled in math and increased by 10 percentage points in French. Similarly, the differences between the two extreme regions' BAC and BEPC pass rates increased between 2017 and 2020. The gap in the elementary school gross enrolment rate between the extreme regions also increased. The situation of young girls and children with disabilities deserves greater consideration. The documentation reviewed by the panel, indicates little attention to children with disabilities.

These disparities are the result of an unequal distribution of resources, with precarious conditions in some areas, affecting school attendance and academic performance. For example, 13% of schools do not offer all grades, and in some areas, this rate exceeds 30%. While 71% of schools lack electricity, this rate is 33% in urban areas and 85% in rural areas. Fifty-six per cent of schools have no latrines, with rates exceeding 70% in some regions. The availability of water also separates urban from rural areas. Teacher allocation is uneven, with pupil/teacher ratios above 45 in several regions and below 36 in others.

Social inequalities are of particular concern. They are revealed by the high inequality in the distribution of public spending: the RESEN 2016 indicated that the share of public education resources used for the benefit of the most educated 10% was estimated at 42.5%. While this represents an improvement over previous years and while this is in line with other systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, which struggle with similar inequalities, it does contribute to a preoccupying situation, illustrated by the following examples. According to the 2016 MICS, the attendance rate in ECE, 14% overall, was 1.5% for children from the poorest quintile and 51% among the richest. The poorest families are the most affected by the continuing registration and tuition fees in public schools, despite the principle of *grauité* in the 1995 law. Only half of all students have reading/writing and math textbooks.

Girls' secondary schooling is hampered by inadequate provision of certain amenities, such as separate toilets. The conditions offered to children with disabilities make it difficult for them to attend school. Indeed, less than 4% of schools are equipped with at least one device specific for children with disabilities, only 2% are equipped with access ramps for people with motor disability, and only 0.9% have specific latrines.

ITAP has not identified any funding formula for resource allocation that explicitly incorporates equity considerations and that could help correct the various distortions. Nor do we find evidence that public spending is aimed at improving the situation of the most disadvantaged, for example, there is no clear strategy for providing better schooling conditions in remote areas or for the poorest populations. On the basis of the available evidence, ITAP concludes that the distribution of public resources is inequitable and therefore reinforces existing disparities.

Efficiency

Given the large amount of funding for education, the low level of student achievement is evidence of an inefficient education system. In addition, the implementation of the educational process itself is often inefficient. Finally, the difficulty of mobilizing national resources as counterparts to international projects hinders policy implementation.

Results from standardized international student achievement tests help track the level of learning. These show a very low level, and what is more, a regressive one. For example, between 2014 and 2019, at the end of primary school, the percentage of students above the threshold of reading proficiency dropped from 48% to 40%. The decline is even greater (10 percentage points) in math. Many African countries are doing better than Côte d'Ivoire.

Data in the 2022 notes of the *Diagnostic du système* shows that the internal efficiency ratio in primary education is low: 42% of public expenditure was used to finance the enrolment of learners who repeat or drop out later, which can be considered wasteful spending. Dropouts alone account for 36% of primary school expenditures.

The organization of the educational process is itself inefficient. Thus, even if the randomness in the assignment of teachers to schools has decreased somewhat in 10 years, 47% of the variations in the number of teachers in schools remains based on criteria other than the number of students (this rate was 50% in 2013), with significant differences between regions. Teacher absenteeism is another important factor of inefficiency, causing the loss of an estimated 20% of teaching hours each year.

The efficiency of resources use can also be improved. For instance, in 2019, capital expenditure was estimated at around 10% of the budget. But the execution rate was only 68%. This example illustrates the low investment in long-term actions, such as training of educators, sufficient textbooks and TVET equipment. According to the mid-term evaluation report of the ESP, the execution rate as of December 31, 2020 was 50%, in particular because implementation remains essentially dependent on the mobilization of national resources as counterparts to international projects.

Conclusion:

Given the current level of public expenditure on education, it will be difficult for the country to significantly increase it. Therefore, the main issue concerns the efficient use of the

resources devoted to education, in order to free up spaces for investments that promote quality and equity. The inequitable distribution of resources remains a serious problem, reflected in the disparities between urban and rural areas and social groups. The situation of young girls deserves consideration, and that of children with disabilities is hardly taken into account. This hampers the achievement of the country's educational goals. The low level of student achievement highlights the great inefficiency of education spending. In addition, the implementation of the educational process is in itself often inefficient. Finally, the difficulty of mobilizing resources hinders the implementation of policies.

Given the significant efficiency issues as well as the equity challenges with some regions/district and social groups lagging behind others in terms of schooling conditions and learning outcomes, the ITAP concurs with the self-analysis on the **high priority** rating for this enabling factor.

Part C: High-Level Summary of Enabling Factors Assessed as High Priority

Enabling Factor	Challenges and Rationale for High Priority Rating
4. Volume. Equity. and Efficiency of Domestic Public Expenditure on Education	**Challenges**: Inequity and inefficiency prevent optimal use of education resources. Many regions suffer from precarious schooling conditions; the poorest students and those with disabilities are not adequately catered for. Student achievement is low and declining, revealing an inefficient and costly educational process, as illustrated by spending on dropouts and repetition, high level of randomness in the distribution of teachers to schools, and teacher absenteeism. Resources are not managed efficiently enough. **Rationale for high priority**: While it appears difficult for Côte d'Ivoire to further increase spending on education as a share of the government budget, the country needs to use its education resources more efficiently, in order to increase the level of student achievement from an equity perspective. This is why the ITAP agrees with the self-analysis that this enabling factor should be a HIGH Priority.