Appraisal Report for ESC (LEG) on SCZ ESSP

Process: The ESC (Local Education Group) is required to produce an appraisal report that is shared with government prior to submission to the Global Partnership in support of the grant application. The appraisal is the basis for endorsement by the development partners, which in turn signifies their commitment to align their support to the ESSP. The structure of this report, and the embedded lead questions (in italics), is matched to the guidelines given by GPE.

Section 1: Education sector plan preparation process

Have the principles of plan preparation been respected?

1.1 The reality of preparing an education sector plan (ESSP) for SCZ is well captured in the quotation below, from Section 1.1 of the ESSP draft:

> "Developing a credible, coherent, and feasible education plan has not been easy in the context in which South-Central Somalia currently finds itself. The barely emerging government systems and, in particular, limited information systems, reliable demographic, economic and other data upon which planners would normally rely in developing a sector strategic plan, inevitably limits the scope of this Plan. The long civil war destroyed not only the region's physical infrastructure but also its social dynamics and human resource capacity. The critical challenge facing the region is to restore the provision of education to thousands of children."

Baseline conditions for the preparation of *any* kind of plan have only existed for a matter of months, so it is to the great credit of the fledgling education leadership led by the Minister and the Director-General, that a plan is now being presented. Even so, the plan as presented should always be viewed as through a conflict sensitive lens, given the extent of destruction of the pre-existing system over a period of more than twenty years and continuing levels of uncertainty and insecurity.

1.2 It is therefore entirely appropriate that (i) the time-frame of the present plan is three years; (ii) it is described as representing an 'early recovery phase', and; (iii) it may be seen as an interim roadmap.

1.3 The most visible signal of renewed engagement has been the very successful National Education Conference held in Mogadishu in mid-June 2013. A full report of this three-day conference is presented as an annex to the ESSP (and to the GPE submission). It brought together predominantly local stakeholders (community leaders, universities, etc), including representatives from Puntland, with development partners. The conference language was Somali throughout. Key contributors came from the 'Education Umbrellas'. These private consortia have, with some success, been able to continue to run schools at different levels during the worst security situations. Their past contributions are recognised, along with their potential to

provide on-going services in the coming years. In essence, they provide the existing core of service provision in education, although the variety of curricula and examinations for which they prepare students probably works against the establishment of a coherent system for SCZ going forward. The Education Umbrellas will need to be significant providers at all levels for the foreseeable future, but with increased coherence with the DoE-led structures. Inevitably, the lists of needs generated by conference working groups are lengthy, but they do reasonably reflect the necessary components which need to be put into place in due course. The setting of the conference did not allow for detailed prioritisation of needs, except to emphasise the priority for getting children back into school environments where there was a fair chance of conditions conducive to learning being in existence.

Section 2: Stakeholder engagement

What are the levels of commitment and accountability among relevant local stakeholders and development partners?

2.1 Since 2006, contributions to educational development in Somalia have been coordinated through the Education Cluster, a mechanism taking in all partners in a format designed to be responsive to emergency needs. Since 2012, a new grouping – the Education Sector Committee (ESC) – has been constituted in SCZ (and other regions), with a substantial overlap of membership with the Education Cluster. The ESC will be jointly led by the DoE and UNICEF and is likely to become the normal mechanism for government – development partner discourse. Just to emphasise the unusual nature of relationships in the case of Somalia, there are actually two ESCs, one of which is Nairobi-based, the latter allowing discussion among partners who are Nairobi-based and not able to regularly be represented in Mogadishu/SCZ. As of now, both segments of the ESC retain useful functions, not least in relation to the preparation of the SCZ ESSP, but as normalisation proceeds, presumably the role of the Nairobi-based group will diminish. The technical assistance recruited to support the preparation of the SCZ ESSP was mediated through this group, with contributions from various sources including: Somalia-based educators, diaspora-based educators, and internationally recruited educators. Given the very low level of access to planning capacity in SCZ, there was probably no alternative scenario, and my assessment is that the less-than-ideal mechanism for generating the ESSP has been operated in a sensitive and reflective way.

2.2 The future alignment of development partners with the ESSP is a subject for speculation. Experience from other countries emerging from conflict, such as Mozambique or South Sudan, suggests that the transition to ‘normal’ business can be quite disorientating for some development partners, as new governments and ministries set new benchmarks for relationships with donors. The DoE in SCZ will expect to lead in insisting that development partner contributions are ‘on plan’, but it is quite possible that this will be contentious, even in the environment of post-Paris/Accra agreements on aid effectiveness. The ESSP makes clear, quite

appropriately, that the development of a basket/pooled funding/trust fund modality will be expected. This, too, must be expected to take some time to put in place.

Section 3: Education sector analysis

What empirical evidence was available in the preparation of the plan and has this been used effectively?

3.1 In Section 2.8, the ESSP indicates that:

> "There is an absence of:
>
> - an agreed Education Policy, regulatory framework, strategic and implementation plan and financing framework;
> - an effective sector management system;
> - a sector budget;
> - updated population (demographic) figures."

This is the reality of the lack of availability of empirical data to assist planning in SCZ today, for reasons which are well understood. A significant component of the plan is focused on addressing this deficit. Until very recently, the only body attempting to provide a data base has been the Education Cluster, which has documented the efforts both of the Education Umbrellas and of the various development partners. For example, it is estimated by the Education Cluster that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for SCZ primary-age children is 37%, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 72%. Overall, it is estimated that as many as 1.8 million children of school-going age may be out of school.

3.2 Progress is now being rapidly made in creating a functioning EMIS, based on that now working effectively in the Puntland region. The first results from this will form the baseline for future planning. It is conventional wisdom to say that sector plans should be living documents; in the case of this ESSP this will be even more important, as the provision of reasonably sound baseline data becomes available for planning purposes. For now, quite obvious judgments like creating three new reasonably-equipped primary schools in each of the 83 districts of SCZ, where there are currently none, will have to suffice.

Section 4: Plan design

Are the proposed priorities and programs sufficient to reach the goals?

4.1 Policy priorities

4.1.1 The DoE has clear vision and mission statements relating directly to the re-building of a functional education system. The DoE presents its highest priority in double-headed form – one element eminently practical (getting children back into school) and one structural (restoring the functioning of the DoE)

"The top priority for the Directorate is to get as many children into basic education as quickly as possible and to restore the functioning of the Directorate"

Basic education has, by DoE, been defined according to OECD guidelines as incorporating early childhood education/primary education/lower secondary education, up to 14 years in all. In this interim, early recovery plan, focus is reasonably and properly put on the need to regenerate a functional primary school system. The very large numbers of children unable to access any form of schooling, with the needs of IDPs as being acute, set a huge challenge and an early start is both practically and politically sensible. The determination of the DoE to achieve functionality will be at least as great a challenge, as the sheer volume of institutional development needs set against the limited capacity sources may be problematic. The proposed set of *five* prioritized activities over the first year of the plan comprise: *two* financial, *one* institutional strengthening, *one* service delivery for basic schools, and, *one* curriculum initiative relating to the generation of a life-skill oriented primary curriculum. The first three will require a high level of commitment by the development partners, particularly in relation to the establishment of a pooled funding modality. Will *all* partners accede to this intention? If they do, it will be unusual. Is the anticipated GPE funding perceived as the first such contribution?

4.2 Program design and prioritisation of strategies

4.2.1 There is a risk of repetition here, but simply to reiterate the commitment in the ESSP to two key strategic areas, presented in a little more detail in Section 7.0 of the plan, thus:

- *Institutional Development activities* involving the costed development of policies, strategic plans, implementation plans and performance frameworks thereby enabling the education system to function.
- *Service delivery activities* involving (a) infrastructure development based on minimum quality standards, the refurbishment of the 20% of schools still standing and the construction of new schools to meet an anticipated rise in the numbers of children accessing education and, (b) quality improvement measures designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery; and measures to inculcate popular confidence in Government service provision.

Given assumptions about security and stability of governance, these represent the *very best outcomes* that can be expected from this three-year interim plan. The first is a necessary condition for any growth of educational functionality; the second is a clear statement of the intention of Government to invest in quality basic education and to communicate this commitment to its community stakeholders. This second will, as resources and capacity allow, take in all children- be they girls, boys, recent IDPs, those having special educational needs, those having particular health and nutrition needs, etc, etc. As will be indicated in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, targets for attending to the needs of all these groups, i.e. all children, cannot be set until a sensible baseline has been established through a functional EMIS data base.

4.3 Plan financing

Is the financial plan adequate and credible?

4.3.1 At the outset, it is best to list all the aspects of financing in SCZ which are **not** now in place, as they immediately provide a reality check on what is, and is not, possible in relation to the 2013-2015 interim ESSP. They include:

- SCZ has no macroeconomic framework, nor any data on actual/projected domestic funding
- The education sector has no budget allocations
- There is no integrated financial analysis which allows estimates of breakdown between domestic and development partner funding
- No estimates are available for the costs of post-primary education

Answers to many of these questions and identification of gaps will come from attention to the strengthening of wider governance, others will be forthcoming from the institutional development activities prioritized in the interim ESSP.

4.3.2 For now, we have available an agreed set of prioritized activities for the next three years. These have been costed at a rounded figure of US$71.3 million. The headline budget items are:

Item	**US $ million**
Institutional development	1.5
School buildings and equipment	34.5
Curriculum preparation and textbooks (for literacy and numeracy only)	12.3
Salaries (DoE, REOs, Primary and Secondary teachers)	12.8

4.3.3 And how will the financing of this budget occur? The Prime Minister has pledged that the budget for the Directorate of Education will be 'equal to the security budget', but at present it is minimal. Funds to the value of $8.2 million are expected from GPE, with anticipation that up to 20% of these funds may be released early through the 'Accelerated Support in Emergency and Early Recovery Situations' facility. Otherwise, there is no matrix showing the potential commitments and contributions of the wide range of development partners.

Recommendation: That these commitments be sought as a very high priority, not least as it provides an opportunity to test the commitment of development partners to funding the sector in a coherent way through direct support to the ESSP.

4.3.4 All of these rather speculative figures are subject to an increasingly favourable security environment over the period of the ESSP.

4.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Will the M&E system provide robust indicators and valid and reliable data to monitor the progress toward the achievement of the inputs, outputs and outcomes described in the results framework and are the reporting, feedback and consultation mechanisms transparent and adequate to maintain broad ownership during implementation?

4.4.1 In order to address questions relating to M&E, a number of key early actions have to occur, specifically:

- The appointment and training of an M&E officer in the Department of Planning of DoE
- The building of an increasingly effective EMIS based on the existing Puntland model, which will allow the generation of a clear results framework, with baseline and target indicators linked to the logical framework and the operational plan/budget [Discussion of the present status of SCZ in relation to a results framework is at Section 4.5.2 below]

4.4.2 Additionally, a key strategy priority within the ESSP shall be the creation of the National Education Communications Strategy, which, properly funded, will provide the instrument by which DoE can present regular updates on progress with the plan to key stakeholders.

4.4.3 The commitment to an annual sector review process is laudable, but is not of itself a sufficient activity to ensure quality of service delivery. GPE itself has recently presented its findings from a study of such review processes, which suggests that they do not always deliver on expected outcomes. A summary of the GPE findings is presented as **Annex 1** to this report.

4.5 Development and financing of an action plan

Is the education sector plan accompanied by a detailed action plan?

4.5.1 The ESSP is accompanied by a three-year Implementation Plan. This is designed to be read alongside the three-year Logical Framework and the three-year indicative budget. Overall, these documents are internally consistent.

4.5.2 The logical framework incorporates appropriate indicators, although for obvious reasons, baseline data for nearly all of these is currently unavailable. If reference is made to the Results Framework presented by GPE, in relation to the outcome level of "Number of children (girls and boys) receiving good quality primary education, and transitioning to lower and upper secondary", twelve key performance indicators are listed therein. Of these, GPE suggests that for the first ten, relating to things like – enrolment, stage transition, gender parity, out-of-school children – national data is 'generally available'. The remaining two indicators relate to reading/literacy levels. As we know, for SCZ, no reliable data is available for almost all of these indicators, although we have some Education Cluster data for primary GER and gender equity. None will become available until (a) the Department of Planning in the DoE is properly staffed with trained personnel, and (b) there is a functioning EMIS in place. Both of these are among the highest priorities for the interim ESSP. And, as EMIS data becomes available, it will become possible to sharpen the indicators with baseline and target numbers.

4.5.3 Responsibility for reporting of results, etc, has been discussed in Section 4.4.

4.5.4 Although an indicative budget has been presented for all items in the operational plan, assurances cannot be given at this stage regarding levels of funding, as has been discussed in Section 4.3.

Section 5: System capacity

Does the plan identify and address capacity constraints that would affect plan implementation?

5.1 The brief answer to this question is 'yes'; a dominant theme of the ESSP is the urgent capacity strengthening needs across the whole sector, starting from a very low base. One of the two major strands of the interim ESSP for the next three years addresses a cluster of urgent capacity needs in relation to both personnel and skill development, in order to create a Directorate of Education which becomes steadily more fit for purpose.

5.2 A further major emphasis in the plan aims to take some 1,500 primary school teachers on to the government payroll, where presently there are none, simultaneously providing them with a basic teacher education program which will give them some measure of confidence in their classrooms. The total number of primary teachers working today is estimated at 8,550, all but a handful being paid

through the Education Umbrellas and therefore by school fees. If an expansion of primary places at 20% per year from the estimated 2012-2013 base of 375,000, as envisaged in the ESSP, and if the total number of teachers was raised to 10,050 (8,550 + 1,500), the PTR would move from the planned 45:1 in the ESSP to around 61:1. This appears to be unacceptably high if a quality emphasis is to be retained. To maintain the 45:1 ratio, a further 2,195 teachers would need to be recruited before the end of the present ESSP.

Recommendation: Reflect again on the number of teachers to be recruited to give the schools a fair chance of producing good quality learning outcomes.

5.3 The need to create a decentralised, regional structure of education management is recognised in the prioritisation of the setting up of eleven Regional Education Offices (REOs), with trained personnel offering both management and quality assurance/inspection services.

Section 6: Governance and accountability

Are there strategies in place to improve and establish good governance practices and management accountability across the system?

6.1 The statement by the Minister in her foreword to the ESSP is helpful as both a statement of intent and a commitment:

> "This Plan will help us achieve synergy as the Ministry takes effective mandate of managing education delivery in Somalia. Addressing all these challenges requires substantial investment in technical assistance, strong institutions that are sustained through indigenous capacity, developed to meet the fiduciary and management standards demanded of us as responsible stewards of public funds."

She goes on to recognize the community contribution to continuity of schooling during the disruptive times, and commits the Ministry to continue to engage with communities at all levels as the system is reconstructed, keeping them in the communication loop.

6.2 As has been said before, one of the key pillars of this interim recovery plan is focused exactly on the establishment of policies, strategies and structures which will meet exactly normal international standards in relation to governance and accountability. At this early stage of recovery, this can only be identified as work in progress, which will continue to be the case throughout the three years of the current plan. Without sustained investment in locating the right people to lead and manage the system over the coming years, ensuring that they have the appropriate skill sets, little will change.

6.3 The plan recognizes the need to establish an element of decentralisation from an early stage, hence the re-building of regional structures through REOs and

associated infrastructure. These regional hubs will need to be maintained at exactly the same levels of governance and accountability as the central DoE.

Section 7: Risks to implementation and the mitigation of risks

Does the ESSP design take into consideration possible risks and constraints in implementation?

7.1 There is no need here to repeat the possible impact of the external (to the education sector) risk factors emanating from the wider political setting. This has been discussed in Section 1. It remains a dominant issue and the scale of the challenges facing the education sector will not be underestimated. Taking a more positive perspective, if the present hunger for provision of 'normal' schooling for young Somalis does not fade when set against the realities of fragile institutions, then much is possible. In the time-frame of the present interim plan, only early growth of institutions, including the Directorate of Education (DoE), can reasonably be expected.

7.2 The risk analysis presented in Section 9.0 of the ESSP is therefore focused on risks within the remit of those implementing the plan, which present a formidable demand on the DoE. Every aspect of accountability has to be developed from almost zero level. This can be viewed as a challenge, certainly, but also as an opportunity, as we have discussed in Section 4.4. The ESSP does properly focus, as its key priority, on the establishment of a series of policies, strategies and structures which will provide the basis for the growth of a viable education system. Significant technical support services will need to be mobilised – from the Somali diaspora, from neighbours, and from development partners – but these will have little long-term impact unless they become simply part of the normal workings of the DoE, which cannot be taken for granted.

7.3 The potential employment, with GPE funding, of an external managing entity (UNICEF), provides medium-term assurance regarding financial governance, but this too will only be a meaningful contribution if it results in embedded systems within the DoE.

7.4 The continuing engagement of international development partners of a range of types, including relatively new contributors, will provide significant quality assurance in regard to financial governance. But there will be a duty on these various partners to recognise that they are operating in a new context, where all that they do must come under the remit and leadership of the DoE and Ministry of Human Development and Public Services. For some, this may be a painful transition.

Annex 1

Scope for Improvement of Joint Sector Reviews

- **Targets:** Most do not yet systematically and explicitly report against targets

- **Sector-wide approach:** Few cover the whole sector, though most include some other (than basic education) sub-sectors

- **Learning Outcomes:** Most refer to but few have explicit data or means to measure learning outcomes

- **Gender:** Many have rhetorical references to gender issues but few have substantial analysis

- **Capacity:** Institutional capacity is a big issue for all