EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2027







May 2024

Ministry of Education

REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI


ESSP Goa
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FOREWORD



I am delighted to present the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for the period 2024-2027, a roadmap that will shape the trajectory of Kiribati's education sector. This comprehensive plan delineates the strategic course for the Ministry, charting a path towards realizing our goals and objectives over the next four years.

Comprising five overarching goals, supported by five key objectives and 25 strategic initiatives, the ESSP is meticulously crafted to enhance the quality of education in Kiribati, aligning with our national aspirations for the holistic development of every child.

The successful execution of this plan necessitates the unwavering dedication of our entire Ministry of Education team, spanning from the grassroots level to senior management. Recognizing the pivotal role of collaboration, we acknowledge the significance of robust partnerships with stakeholders and educational partners in realizing the ambitious goals set forth in this strategic plan.

Monitoring and evaluation form integral components of our strategy. To this end, we have incorporated mechanisms to systematically track the implementation of the plan, evaluate progress towards ESSP objectives, and assess the effectiveness of our strategies and activities. Regular monitoring and evaluation will empower us to report progress and outcomes in a timely manner, fostering transparency and accountability. Our commitment to transparency extends to reporting to stakeholders and Development Partners through the Education Partnerships in Kiribati meetings.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the diligent and dedicated staff of the Ministry of Education for their tireless efforts during the implementation of the previous ESSP (2020 - 2023). I also seize this opportunity to express gratitude to our esteemed partners in Education and stakeholders for their invaluable support and assistance. As we embark on the implementation of the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2024-2027, I earnestly seek their continued collaboration and support.

The Ministry of Education remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering quality teaching and learning experiences, enhancing learning outcomes, and cultivating an educated and skilled human resource base for the prosperity of our beloved nation, Kiribati. Together, let us shape a brighter future through education.

I wish to bestow upon you all Kiribati's blessing of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa with MoE's aspirations of Te Booureirei, Te Maureirei ao Te Kimwareirei

Hon Alexander Teabo
Minister for Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The completion of this ESSP 2024-2027 is not an easy task. It requires a collective efforts of various education stakeholders since its production in October 2023. As MoE is embarking on its implementation, it is imperative to acknowledge those involved.

On behalf of MoE, I would like to thank all key national, sub-national and international education stakeholders to Kiribati who provided valuable inputs during the stakeholder consultation process of the ESSP 2024-2027. Words of appreciation to acknowledge inputs from individual members of the MoE Sector Plan Working Group (SPWG) and stakeholders at different levels across different sub-sectors are highlighted.

A special appreciation goes to Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for providing financial support through the System Capacity Grant (SCG) for the sector plan development, and not forgetting the Grant Agent UNICEF for the technical supports provided through the PROMAN consultancy firm and the Sector Plan Development Coordinator. Their tireless efforts, including MOE staff have contributed fundamentally to the production of this ESSP. Everyone's inputs and supports are greatly acknowledged with deep gratitude.

The ESSP 2024-2027 document reflects strategies that address issues at school, island and national levels through both local and global perspectives. As the ESSP involves a wider consultation process, I have no doubt the ESSP will definitely be a very useful document to guide the MOE's journey towards achieving the goals over four years of implementation.

As our slogan says, education is everyone's business, the MOE would continue to working closely with all education stakeholders and together, we can reach far in realising the improved learning and resilience of the children and youth of Kiribati.

Thank you once again and my best wishes in the implementation of this ESSP 2024-2027

Kam bati n rabwa.



Ms Roreti Eritai
Secretary for Education

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AL	Associate Lecturer
ALM	Arrangement on Labour Mobility
ALT	Action Learning Team
ANAR	Adjusted Net Attendance Rate
AUD	Australian Dollar
CA	Coordinating Agency
CCLC	Coram Children's Legal Centre
CDRC	Curriculum Development Resource Centre
CEDAK	Church Education Directors Association in Kiribati
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women
CKT	Content Knowledge Training
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [Australia]
DOP	Divisional Operational Plan
DP	Development Partner
EAU	Examinations and Assessment Unit
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EF	Enabling Factor
EFA (2)	Enabling Factors Analysis
eHCI	Early Human Capability Index
ELP	English Language Proficiency
EMIS	Education Management and Information System
EPiK	Education Partners in Kiribati
EQAP	Education Quality Assessment Programme
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESPDG	Education Sector Plan Development Grant
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EVI	Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index
FE	Financial Expert
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLE	Family Life Education
FMU	Facilities Management Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion

GEHS	George Eastman High School
GNI	Gross National Income
GoK	Government of Kiribati
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution(s)
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HSRD	Human Rights and Social Development (Division of The Pacific Community [SPC])
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	Island Education Coordinator
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning [of UNESCO]
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate (replaced by KCBE in 2020)
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KCBE	Kiribati Certificate in Basic Education (as from 2020)
KDP	Kiribati Development Plan
KECD	Kiribati Early Childhood Development
KEIP	Kiribati Education Improvement Programme
KEMIS	Kiribati Education Management and Information System
KGV/EBS	King George V and Elaine Bernacchi School
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology
KJIP	Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
KNC	Kiribati National Certificate
KNLA	Kiribati National Library and Archives
KNSO	Kiribati National Statistics Office
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KQA	Kiribati Qualifications Agency
KQS	Kiribati Quality Standards
KSA	Key Strategic Area
KSCCD	Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Disabilities
KSDIS	Kiribati Social Development Indicator Survey
KSSC	Kiribati Senior Secondary Certificate
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College
KV20	Kiribati 20-Year Vision 2016-2036
KWCSC	Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre
LDC	Least Developed Country
LEG	Local Education Group
LLL	(Instructional) Leadership and Leadership for Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEHR	Ministry of Employment and Human Resources

MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade [New Zealand]
MFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy
MLPID	Ministry of Line and Phoenix Island Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOP	Ministry Operational Plan
MTC	Marine Training College
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MWYSSA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs
MYIOP	Multi-Year Implementation and Operational Plan
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NEPO	National Economic Planning Office
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework
NTSS	National Teachers' Service Standards
NTSSF	National Teachers' Service Standards Framework
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PACER	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PLG	Peer Learning Group
PLS	Pacific Labour Scheme
PPP (1)	Public-Private Partnership
PPP (2)	Purchasing Power Parity
PPRD	Policy, Planning, Research & Development
PQF	Pacific Qualifications Framework
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PSO	Public Service Office
PTR	Pupil:Teacher Ratio
RE	Regional Expert
RERF	Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SfEP	Skills for Employment Programme
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIU	School Improvement Unit
SLHS	Saint Louis High School
SLSS	School Leader Service Standards
SLSS-PA	School Leader Service Standards Performance Appraisal
SMILE	Strategies for Monitoring and Improving Leaders' Effectiveness
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPFSC	South Pacific Form Seven Certificate
SPWG	Sector Plan Working Group
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STAKI	Standardised Tests of Achievement in Kiribati
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
SWP	Seasonal Work Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TELPA	Teachers' English Language Proficiency Assessment
TES	Transforming Education Summit
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRC	Teacher Registration Committee
TSIMU	Technical Services & Information Management Unit
TSS	Teachers' Service Standards
TSVD	Technical Skills and Vocational Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
USP	University of the South Pacific
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WGMC	William Goward Memorial College
WMPS	War Memorial Primary School

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Executive Summary

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2024-2027 serves as the key education policy document in Kiribati. It presents the long-term strategic priorities for the national education system, in line with the country's national priorities. Alignment of the strategic priorities with the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) focus areas and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in terms of the indicators and targets is an integral part of the ESSP.

The ESSP takes a holistic approach on the basis of *key strategic areas* (KSAs) which have relevance for the entire education sector, and not only for individual sub-sectors. The focus of the KSAs is on strengthening the close cooperation between all related sub-sectors, in the interest of jointly achieving the ultimate goal for the Education Sector, in line with the country's national priorities and the PacREF and SDG4 objectives. Specifically, it will take into account issues related to gender equality, disability, social inclusion (GEDSI) and resilience. It draws upon the findings of the Education Sector Analysis and also on recommendations from the Transforming Education Summit (TES) 2022, and the Enabling Factors Analysis (EFA) conducted between May and August 2023 as well as partnership COMPACT.

The ESSP is guided by an **overall vision** which is consistent with the Government's *Kiribati 20 year Vision 2016-2036* (referred to as the KV20) across the four pillars of Wealth; Peace and Security; Infrastructure; and Governance: *Today's children and youth will represent the wealth of tomorrow, being resilient in a changing world to achieve their full potential, and contributing to the sustainable development of Kiribati based on highly equitable relevant quality education and cultural and spiritual values*. The Government's mission is to deliver *culturally-grounded, equity and high-quality education that enhances improved learning and resilience of all children and youth of Kiribati, based on excellent leadership, good governance, effective teaching, proper resourcing and strong partnerships*.

Five key strategic areas have been identified for the ESSP 2024-2027 which need to be addressed by all educational sub-sectors in order to realise the **overarching vision of preparedness for life through quality education for all**, i.e. (i) Supporting ongoing professional development and well-being of teachers (ii)Reinvigorating student learning, also addressing life skills and alternative pathways; (iii) Strengthening resilience in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises; (iv) Making quality education accessible for more children; and (v) Strengthening educational leadership, management and planning. All strategic areas are interlinked and, as a result, contribute to reaching the overall vision, also by supporting and enabling learners to progress through the entire educational system in line with their specific requirements and/or talents. **According to its Theory of Change, the education system is being regarded as an enabler for achieving enhanced social and human capital development and inclusive growth**.

The strategic framework for the ESSP is determined by goals, objectives and strategies related to the respective key strategic areas (KSAs). In operationalising the strategic vision, objectives of every KSA are broken down by *Strategies*:



Goal 1: Dedicated teachers deliver quality teaching and provide learning opportunities to all students

Objective: On-going professional development and well-being for teachers and school leaders supported

1.1 Review and harmonise existing approaches of service providers in continuous professional development (CPD) of ECCE, primary, JSS and SSS teachers

1.2 Improve teachers' well-being and conditions of service

1.3 Provide professional trainings to ECCE, Primary, JSS and SSS teachers and school leaders

1.4 Provide qualification upgrading support to teachers and school leaders

1.5 Provide support towards the institutional strengthening of KTC



Goal 2: Students are learning better and have improved learning outcomes

Objective: Student learning reinvigorated to make it attractive and motivating to children, also addressing life skills, alternative pathways and lifelong learning

2.1 Reform Foundational Learning in Years 1-3 to comprise three learning areas, Language, Mathematics and Personal Development

2.2 Improve teaching and learning and assessment beyond foundational level or year 4 and above

2.3 Link TVET elements to the promotion of cultural history and heritage, life skills and alternative pathways

2.4 Introduce digital education and more innovative activities into the teaching and learning process, directed towards students' active involvement and fostering critical thinking

2.5 Provide all schools with quality teaching and learning resources



Goal 3: Schools and their communities have strong resilience to face challenges

Objective: Adaptive capacity and resilience of the education system strengthened in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises

3.1 Utilise the existing curriculum and possible modifications during future revisions for building capacities of students towards preparedness for environmental and health-related crises

3.2 Develop and implement a resilience strategy for schools in partnership with island communities

3.3 Build capacities of MoE staff, school leaders, teachers, and communities in disaster risk management (DRM)

3.4 Strengthen the role of traditional Kiribati culture in education, through learners' active engagement with traditional heritage and participation in cultural activities.



Goal 4: Students have access to quality education services and learning supports

Objective: Expand and strengthen quality education services and learning supports

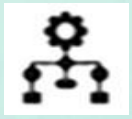
4.1 Construct, expand and/or renovate schools, with a focus on equity issues and WASH

4.2 Improve provision of transport to students, making it possible for a larger number of children to reach school

4.3 Provide Internet to Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, including Primary Schools school leaders

4.4 Expand Model Inclusion Schools and islets primary schools to JSS

4.5 Facilitate re-entry into formal education and training



Goal 5: MoE delivers efficient and effective education services

Objective: Educational leadership, management and planning strengthened

5.1 Institutional strengthening of MoE to improve efficient and effective service delivery

5.2 Harmonise data collection procedures

5.3 Develop the Kiribati Education Vision 2028-2036

5.4 Strengthen MoE engagement with national stakeholders and development partners

5.5 Implement the Teacher Registration Regulations

5.6 Strengthen the Kiribati Qualification Authority

MoE will take a results-based management approach to implementing the strategies detailed in the ESSP. The ESSP is monitored through two levels of indicators, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators. KPIs provide a sign of how well the programme has achieved intended changes as a result of the interventions, and are developed against strategies. Each strategy comes with at least one KPI. Activity indicators provide a measure of what has been delivered and completed.

The total estimated cost for all ESSP activities is $21.1M over the four years of implementation from 2024-2027. It is expected that $4.3M will be spend in year 1 (2024); $5.8M in year 2 (2025); $4.4M in year 3 (2026) and $6.6M in year 4 (2027). The largest costs are for activities conducted by FMU for building and maintenance of schools ($7.5M), and KTC costs for continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders ($6.1M). Other large costs are for curriculum development activities by CDRC ($1.3M) and primary school initiatives by SIU ($2.5M).

The projected budget allocation to education sector with current policy settings over the four-year period is 307.3m, compared to the planned expenditures for the implementation of the

ESSP estimated at AUD 325.3m. The total funding gap for the implementation of the ESSP over the four-year period is estimated at AUD 18.0m. The funding gap is equivalent to 5.9% of the projected education sector budget and 1.23% of the projected total GoK budget over the four-year period.

The education sector in Kiribati is well supported by external partners. It should be noted that external financing for education is directed mainly to the development budget. Given all these factors, it seems reasonable and achievable that the projected funding gap can be met by either additional education sector budget allocations by the GoK or through external partner support.

1. Introduction

The Government of Kiribati (GoK) is presenting the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2024-2027, serving as the key education policy document in Kiribati.[1] It presents the long-term strategic priorities for the national education system, in line with the country's national priorities. Alignment of the strategic priorities with the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) focus areas and/or Regional Goods and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in terms of the indicators and targets is an integral part of the ESSP.

Whereas the ESSP establishes the mechanisms required to meet these priorities, the integrated action plan provides a timeframe for implementing these mechanisms along with anticipated costing and financing projections. The integrated action plan called the Multi Year Operational and Implementation Plan (MYIOP), formally known as the Ministry Operational Plan (MOP) and which is annexed to this document, serves as the guide for the MoE to implement the ESSP over the current four years.

The ESSP presents an overarching framework of strategic outputs and outcomes in the education sector with a prime focus on the four years, 2024-2027.

1.1 ESSP Development process

Building on the Education Sector Analysis and considering the Partnership Compact, two main sources of data were used, i.e. quantitative and qualitative data from existing documents and inputs from stakeholders. Reviewed documents included existing legislations, policies, plans, framework, research, studies, curriculum documents, education statistical documents, resources for schools and teachers, reports of missions among others[2]. Data from stakeholders were derived from interviews held with members of the Local Education Group, government partners (including all of the Divisions of MoE, and other relevant Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources), CSOs and education representatives from multilateral and bilateral donors that include UN agencies and high commissions. At grassroots level, focus group discussions were conducted with CSO representatives, including organisations for disabilities and gender, school leaders and youth. Consultations included Island Education Coordinators (IECs), chairs of school development committee and

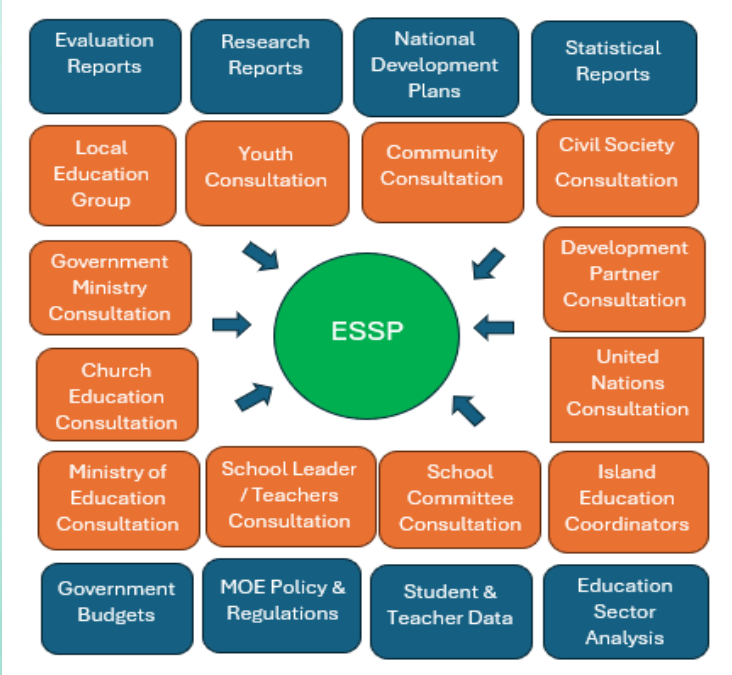


Figure 1: Reports and Groups Consulted

[1] An updated Education Sector Analysis (ESA) served as a foundation for this Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2024-2027. The ESA built upon a broad consultative process in order to solicit current information and to verify existing documentary sources. It thoroughly analysed the Kiribati education system and the current implementation of existing policies. It is available as a stand-alone background document: PFAFFE, J.F.; WHITEHEAD, S.; WRIGHT, T.: International consultancy for development of Education Sector Analysis, Education Sector Plan and GPE Partnership Compact document for Kiribati. Education Sector Analysis. 2nd draft: 17 November 2023. Bettembourg, Luxembourg: PROMAN S.A.

[2] Appendix 3 contains a comprehensive list of literature used in developing the Education Sector Strategic Plan.

teachers from outer islands invited to Tarawa to have in-person consultations. Further, consultations included Island Council Mayors and Clerks, NGOs, the University of the South Pacific (Tarawa Campus), and also partners that do not have a physical office in Kiribati (UNESCO, WB, the Pacific Community [SPC]] etc.). In-depth workshops were held with MoE Executive Management, Division Heads and technical staff of all MoE departments. In addition, the team met with the resident TA to build on the work already being done in the process of preparing for the ESSP 2024-2027.

As a multi-stakeholder platform designed to facilitate collaboration and coordination among various parties involved in the education sector, the Local Education Group (LEG) has been an important point of contact, typically including government departments, development partners, NGOs, and other education stakeholders. Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) was introduced for the coordination of ESSP development process with the roles that include issues related to policy planning and implementation, whereby the group serves as a forum for discussing and consulting on education policies, strategies, and programmes, and providing policy advice and recommendations.

Apart from the Senior Management, special attention was given to representatives of key divisions and units, the Inspectorate services, and direct implementers at classroom level.

Participatory methods have been employed such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and technical meetings with key personnel involved in education. In order to gain different perspectives on a common issue, views were sought from those involved at both a strategic and operational level.

A series of nine workshops was held with technical staff representing all sub-sectors. During the workshops, the overall Mission Statement, Objectives, Strategies and Activities were thoroughly discussed, refined and eventually drafted and agreed upon. Each workshop had a duration between 2.5 and 3 hours and was designed in a highly participatory manner. Consultations included the agreement on implementation timelines and possible indicators. This also informed the costing chapter with regard to elements not yet fully costed. In addition, 26 bilateral meetings were conducted with key stakeholders.

The emerging interlinked results framework was presented and further discussed at a Validation Workshop with the LEG, Sector Plan Working Group, technical task teams and Senior Management Meeting, and then further refined.

2 Country Context

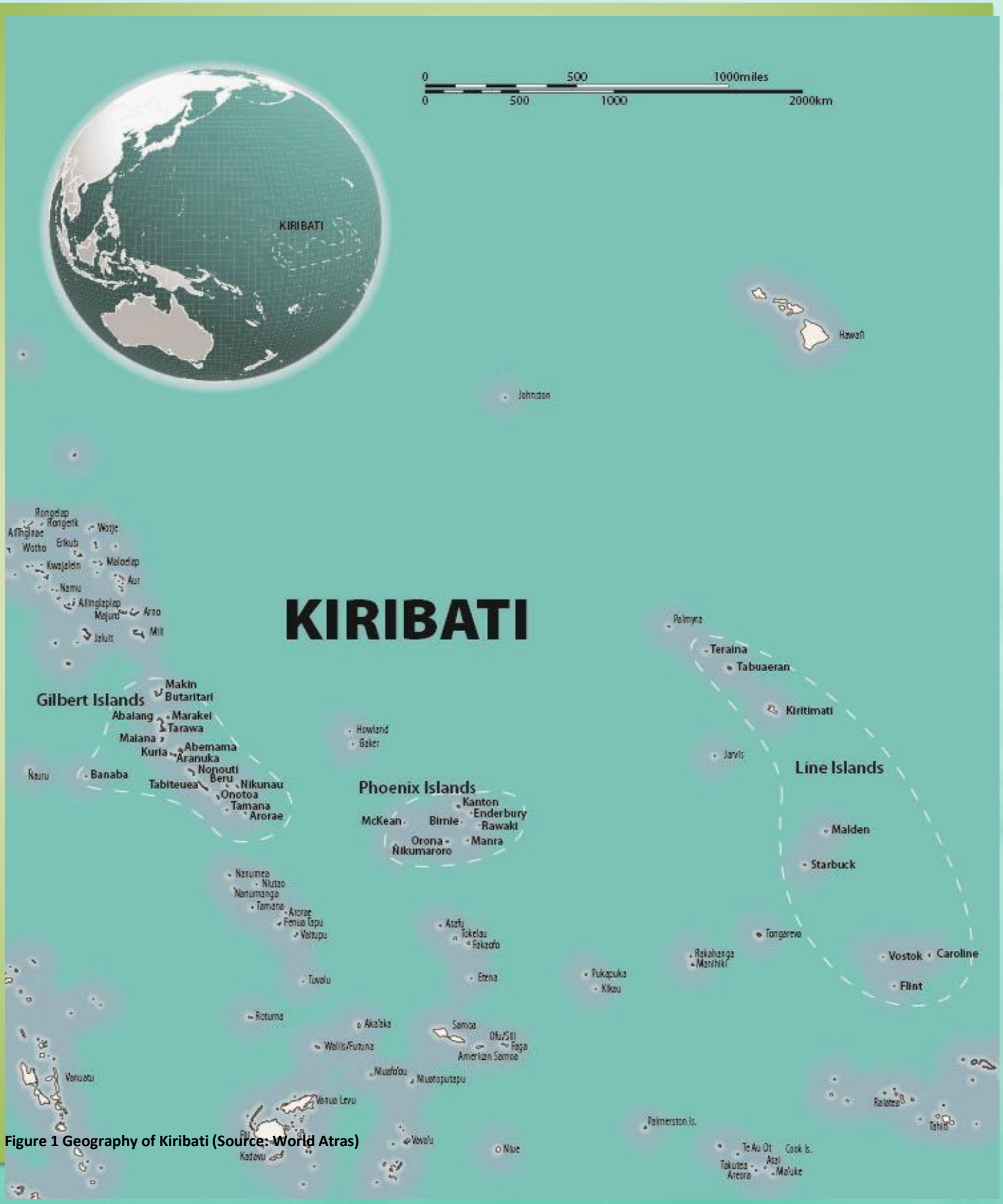


Figure 1 Geography of Kiribati (Source: World Atras)

Kiribati, a nation with 32 low-lying atolls and a raised island of Banaba, is located near the equator in the mid-Pacific region. The country is made up of three island groups: the Gilbert Islands, comprising 16 atolls with populations, the Phoenix Islands, with 8 unpopulated atolls except for a government outpost on Kanton, and the Line Islands in the East, containing 9 atolls under Kiribati's jurisdiction, while Palmyra and Jarvis Islands are US territories. Among the Line Islands, only three have inhabitants: Kiritimati (Christmas Island), the largest atoll globally, along with Teraina (Washington Island) and Tabuaeran (Fanning Island).

The atolls of Kiribati are widely dispersed, most of them being less than two meters above sea level, which renders them extremely susceptible to climate change effects. These atolls span 811 square kilometres of land, covering an extensive 3.5 million square kilometres of ocean, nearly equivalent to the size of the European Union (4.2 million square kilometres).

The estimated population of Kiribati is 133,500 (World Bank, 2023), and the capital is located on the atoll of Tarawa in the Gilberts group. The southern arm of Tarawa is densely populated and accommodates half of the country's people, while the majority of the remaining inhabitants also dwell in the Gilbert Islands.

The unique geographical structure in Kiribati poses challenges to education provision. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres and primary schools are spread across the country, but Junior Secondary Schools (JSSs) are to be found only at the administrative centre of each atoll, and Senior Secondary Schools (SSSs) are located only in the main population centres. While transport and boarding facilities are arranged so that JSSs can be reached and SSSs attended, the provision of transport still poses challenges since it is not meeting actual demand.

Vulnerability towards climate change significantly impacts the nation's future. According to the World Bank, as an extremely isolated and very low-lying island nation, Kiribati faces considerable risk from climate variability and sea-level rise. The potential risk of permanent inundation, and land and marine ecosystem degradation link climate change intrinsically with development."[3]

With a GNI per capita[4] of 3,280 USD (World Bank, 2023[5]), Kiribati is classified as a lower middle-income country. However, the fact that Kiribati's UN Human Development Index (HDI) ranking has not significantly moved from 135th position in 2009 to 136th position in 2021, out of 185 positions (UNDP 2022:274(current USD), indicates that the country has been facing a number of major, probably interrelated social and economic problems. These problems have not only hindered human development and economic growth over the last decade but also negatively affected the resource efficiency and performance of the education sector.

The GDP per capita (PPP) in Kiribati was last recorded at 1,433 USD in 2022 (World Bank, 2023), being equivalent to 11 percent of the world's average. GDP per capita in Kiribati averaged 1,633 USD from 1970 until 2022, reaching an all-time high of 3,417 USD in 1975 and a record low of 1 ,302 USD in 2010 (World Bank, 2023). 21.9% of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2019 (ADB Data Library, 2023[6]). The unemployment rate in 2020 was 11% (Trading Economics database, 2023[7]). For every 1,000

[3] Kiribati - Summary | Climate Change Knowledge Portal (worldbank.org).

[4] Atlas method, current USD.

[5] All World Bank data extracted from the World Bank Open Source database, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator

[6] https://data.adb.org/dashboard/kiribati-numbers

[7] https://tradingeconomics.com/kiribati/unemployment-total-percent-of-total-labor-force-national-estimate-wb-data.html

babies born in Kiribati in 2021, 48 died before their 5th birthday (UNICEF. 2023[8]). Thus, poverty has persisted despite the country's lower-middle-income status.

As a reaction to the downward economic trends, the *Kiribati Development Plan 2020-2023* focusses on six key priority areas, namely: (i) human wealth, (ii) economic growth and leaving no-one behind, (iii) improvement of health, (iv) protection of the environment and increasing its resilience, (v) good governance, and (vi) development of infrastructure. It includes a commitment towards improving the education system in an inclusive and equitable manner, specifically with regard to increasing school access and inclusive participation.

Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) in Kiribati was 12.39 as of 2019 (World Bank data). Its highest value over the past 49 years was 13.38 in 2012, while its lowest value was 3.14 in 1974.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the related global economic lockdown has significantly impacted on the Kiribati economy, which relies on fishing revenues, access to markets and remittances. In 2022, Kiribati has confronted a severe COVID-19 outbreak, characterised by a rapid surge in cases subsequent to a prolonged period of disease avoidance during the pandemic. Like numerous other nations, Kiribati enforced the closure of schools for a complete term (February to May 2022). To ensure continuity in children's education, Kiribati implemented several measures highlighted in the Kiribati's education sector contingency plan for COVID-19. Prior to this outbreak, Kiribati launched a national digital learning platform a 'Learning Passport', that is accessible both online and offline, and providing access to well- structured locally developed educational materials that cover all schooling levels. Additionally, radio lessons and paper-based materials were delivered by teachers through *Dropbox* to facilitate learning remotely. Specialised training was provided to teachers, to equip them with enhanced skills to support students once they returned to school. The training encompassed areas such as student well-being, minimising learning gaps, and effectively engaging parents and pupils in remote learning settings. In the event of a potential resurgence of the pandemic, a system of learning shifts would be employed, drawing from the knowledge gained during this period, rather than resorting to complete school closures. This approach aims to minimise the adverse impact on learning outcomes. Kiribati also joined a regional initiative in developing online and multimedia teaching and learning resources accessible through the regional Learning Management Platform *Waka Moana*, followed by teacher training, to enhance preparedness for blended teaching.

[8] https://data.unicef.org/country/kir/

3 Education Context

3.1 General Overview

The education system in Kiribati is structured into several year levels, including Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Tertiary Education. ECCE is available for children between the ages of 3 and 5, focusing on early childhood development, socialisation, and preparing children for formal schooling. There are 277 ECCE centres, the majority of which are run by churches and island councils, with only a few run as private centres and community ECCE centres.



Education is compulsory for children aged 6 to 14, which covers primary education through to junior secondary schooling. The curriculum covers core subjects such as Te-Kiribati and English, mathematics, science, and cultural studies. There are 97 primary schools (Years 1-6) in Kiribati, all of which are administered by the Ministry of Education.

Secondary education is divided into two levels: Junior Secondary (Years 7-9) and Senior Secondary (Years 10-13). The curriculum includes a broader range of subjects, and students prepare for national examinations, including the Kiribati Certificate in Basic Education (Year 9), Kiribati Senior Secondary Certificate (Year 12) and a regional examination at the end of Year 13. There are 20 secondary schools in Kiribati which includes senior secondary schools, of which the majority are administered by the Government, and combined junior and senior secondary schools which are administered by church missions.

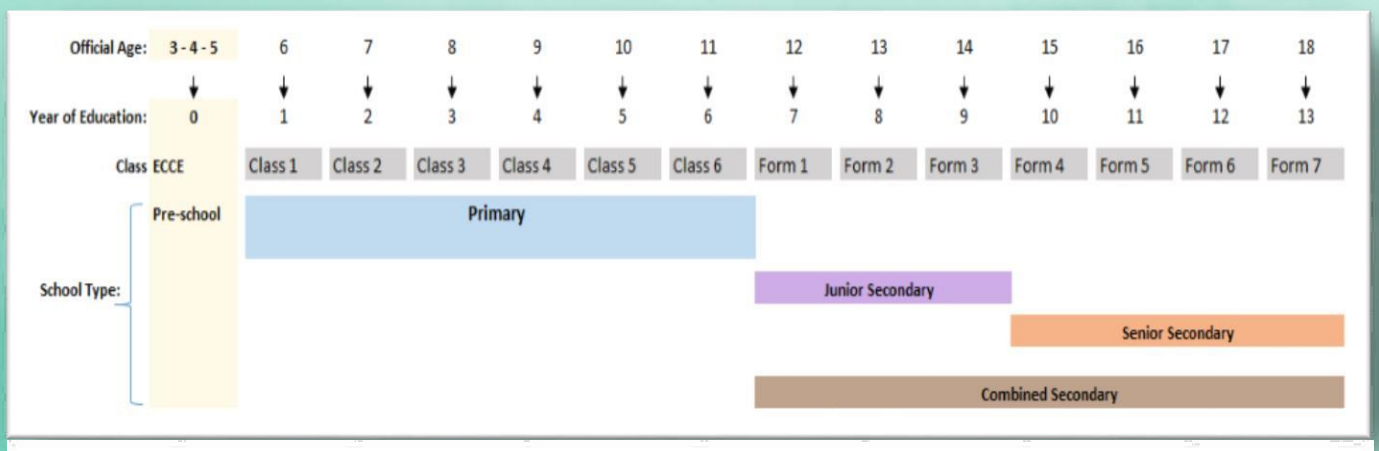


Figure 3: Kiribati School Level by age

Tertiary education opportunities are available through institutions such as the Kiribati Teachers' College (KTC), the Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT), Marine Training Centre (MTC) and University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus. Students can pursue vocational and technical courses at the KTC, KIT and MTC as well as higher education programmes at the USP Kiribati Campus. External quality assurance of post-secondary education and training institutions in Kiribati will be the remit of the Kiribati Qualifications Agency which is in the process of being established. The University of the South Pacific has organisational accreditation with the Fiji Higher Education Commission, while the Marine Training Centre is subject to

regular quality audit by the Government of Kiribati Maritime Division, according to international standards for the training and certification of seafarers (STCW).

Kiribati faces challenges related to access to education, especially in remote and outer island communities. Infrastructure limitations and the impact of climate change, such as rising sea levels, have affected educational facilities, and maintenance remains an ongoing issue.

3.2 Current implementation of existing policies[9]

Inclusive Education

The Inclusive Education Policy 2020 was reviewed in 2021 for clearer language on how students with disabilities should be mainstreamed into inclusive classrooms. The Inclusive Education Policy 2020 aims "to ensure that every school aged child in Kiribati (including children with disabilities) is enrolled in and regularly attend a school programme which caters for their individual learning needs". In particular, the policy aims at (i) providing a framework for the equitable inclusion of all girls and boys and the inclusion of children with disabilities into the 'mainstream' education system, and at (ii) identifying guidelines for how the policy is to be applied.



MoE has made considerable progress in carrying out its intentions for inclusive education. An education officer within the School Improvement Unit is responsible for Inclusive Education (in addition to Early Childhood Care and Education). This officer works with up to twenty current teacher assistants who support teaching and learning for students with disabilities in the model inclusion schools. Nine 'Model Inclusion Schools' have been identified and supported to enrol a total of 108 students with disabilities. Model inclusion schools enrol children with various disabilities including hearing, visual, physical impairment, autism, and vision. Children also transited into the model inclusion schools from the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Disabilities (KSCCD).

Currently all the model inclusion schools are in South Tarawa, but there are intentions to identify other model inclusion schools in other islands. The SIU officer responsible for inclusive education keeps detailed records of children with disabilities enrolled within the model inclusion schools, including data by gender and type of disability.

In line with the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, current challenges identified by the MoE Inclusive Education Officer relate to the rising number of students with disabilities identified every year, with a resulting increase in the number of teacher assistants required to support them in the inclusive classrooms. There is ongoing need for professional development for teachers and teacher assistants, and the question of the role being temporary or permanent makes the future uncertain for such staff.

[9] More detailed analyses for every sub-sector are contained in the ESA (MoE 2023).

Early Childhood Care and Education



The Early Childhood Care and Education Act 2017 provides the framework for the regulation of the provision and operation of early childhood care and education to children from 3 years old to under 6 years old. The ECCE Act 2017 introduced regulations for the provision and operation of ECCE services in Kiribati, including the approval of ECCE providers, and minimum standards for 'preschool' teachers and ECCE premises. The most recent national census in 2020 recorded 9716 children aged 0-2 years, of whom 48% were female and 52% male. This cohort represents the number of children that would be 3-5 years in 2023, indicating an approximate of current demand for access to ECCE centres. Data from the Ministry of Education indicates that there are currently 277 operational ECCE Centres, employing 770 teachers, to teach and care for 9,298 children.

Support for ECCE learning and development has been boosted with the approval in 2023 of the new ECCE Curriculum Framework, and Teacher Guide, with supporting teaching and learning materials. The curriculum materials are available in both Te-Kiribati and English languages. A standards framework for assessing the quality of ECCE centres has also been developed, with assessment conducted for 261 ECCE centres as of November 2023. The ECCE quality standards are contained within the Kiribati Quality Standards document, that is now being refined for application to primary and junior secondary schools.

The 2022/23 results for the quality standards assessment show that more than 90% of centres were above the average standard for interaction and workforce components, more than 80% were above average standard for physical, learning opportunity and classroom management components, and more than 70% were above average standard for play and learning materials, and health and hygiene components. Only 55% of ECCE centres were above the average standard for the assessment component, and none were above the average standard for the curriculum standards.

While the majority of I-Kiribati children aged 3-4 years attend ECCE, there is a gender disparity in attendance. Just 69% of male children aged 3-4 years attend ECCE in comparison to 75% of female children in the same age group. Disparity in access to ECCE centres is also observed in different geographical locations (urban/rural). 68% of urban 3-4 year olds attend ECCE while 77% of rural children in the same age group attend ECCE. This figure indicates that rural children in the same age group are more likely to attend ECCE compared to urban children.[10]

Primary and Secondary Education



Primary schooling in Kiribati consists of Year 1 to Year 6, followed by junior secondary schooling which consists of Year 7 to Year 9. Senior secondary school consists of Year 10 to Year 13. The Ministry of Education administers all primary and junior secondary schools, and 3 out of 20 senior secondary schools. Church bodies offer combined secondary schools which offer schooling from Year 7 to Year 13. In 2023 a total of 17,454 children were enrolled in 97 primary schools (SIU, Ministry of Education).

[10] Kiribati Education Fact Sheets, 2021 Analyses for learning and equity using data from Kiribati Development Indicator Survey 2018–2019

The gross and net enrolment rates (GER, NER) for primary education have declined since 2020. In 2023, the GER was 98% and the NER 91%. Based on the out of school rate, around 7% of students were not enrolled in a school in 2023 compared to 0% in 2020. (KEMIS, MoE). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the NER was 1.03 in 2023, suggesting gender parity, though slightly more girls (92%) were enrolled compared to boys (90%).

Junior Secondary schooling in Kiribati consists of Year 7 to Year 9. In 2023 there were a total of 7,234 students enrolled in junior secondary schools (SIU, Ministry of Education). The numbers of students enrolled in junior secondary schools fluctuated between 2019 and 2023.



The gross and net enrolment rates (GER, NER) for junior secondary education increased in 2023. The GER in 2023 was 106% for junior secondary education, indicating a high level of enrolment in junior secondary schools. More than 81% of students aged 12-14 years were enrolled in junior secondary education in 2023. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the NER was 1.04 in 2023, indicating that more girls (83%) than boys (80%) were enrolled in junior secondary education. (KEMIS, MoE).

Urban students in junior secondary schools account for more than half of the total JSS student population. There are 20 senior secondary schools and combined secondary schools in Kiribati offering senior secondary level (Year 10-Year 13); of which three are government schools. The rest of the schools are administered by either the Catholic, Kiribati Uniting Church, Adventist, Latter Day Saints or other church denominations. The government funded senior secondary schools offer only Year 10-Year 13 schooling. The mission schools are combined junior/secondary schools, offering schooling from Year 7 to Year 13.

The gross and net enrolment rates (GER, NER) for senior secondary education increased in 2023. The GER in 2023 was 90% in senior secondary education, indicating a high level of enrolment in senior secondary school. Around 78% of students aged 15-18 years were enrolled in senior secondary education in 2023. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the NER was 1.36 in 2023, indicating that substantially more girls (91%) than boys (66%) were enrolled in senior secondary education (KEMIS, MoE).

The 2016 Education Amendment Act (No. 11 of 2016) provides for free education in senior secondary schools (Year10-12) for all students who pass their national exams at junior secondary level. However, the government support for free education expanded to include all students who sat national exam at Year 9 and 11.

Post-School Education and Training (PSET)



Post-School Education and Training in Kiribati is largely unregulated, except for the TVET institutions that are administered by the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources, namely the Marine Training Centre, the Kiribati Institute of Technology and the Kiribati Teachers' College which is under the Kiribati Ministry of Education. The University of the South Pacific (USP) Kiribati Campus is the sole provider of degree-level education and above. As part of a regional institution, the USP Kiribati campus is under the governance and regulation of the University of the South Pacific.

The Kiribati Qualifications Agency (KQA) became an entity within the Kiribati Ministry of Education in 2017, progressing an intention by the Kiribati MoE to introduce regulation of the TVET sub-sector. Since 2017, plans to progress the KQA lay largely dormant until the recent recruitment of a Quality Assurance Officer in 2022. The KQA is projected to be a mechanism for ensuring post-school education and training

providers meet quality standards, and offer credible qualifications recognised nationally and internationally. The MoE has reached out to SPC-EQAP for assistance with developing the KQA in various aspects, such as developing legislation, policies, and capacity building.

In August 2023, the Kiribati government approved a proposal and plan for developing legislation to legally set up the Kiribati Qualifications Agency. The next education sector planning period will likely include activities to complete and enact legislation for regulation of TVET in Kiribati, including the introduction of quality standards for TVET providers.

Teacher training and upgrading

Teacher training is the responsibility of the Kiribati Teachers' College (KTC). The KTC is an administrative as well as technical division of the Ministry of Education; the Head of the KTC reports to the Director for Education at the Kiribati MoE. The KTC provides pre-service training to those who want to become Primary and Junior Secondary teachers, and in-service training for current teachers. The function of the College is to provide teacher training to achieve qualification and enhanced performance standards for future teachers, and to improve the quality and performance of current teachers in Kiribati.

The current roll of pre-service teachers is more than 200, although they are able to take in 300, as KTC aims for an intake of 100 every year. The KTC offers the Advanced Diploma in Teaching which is now the minimum qualification to teach in primary and junior secondary schools. They also offer a Graduate Diploma in Teaching for senior teachers who do not have a degree or teaching qualification.



In-service professional development of teachers is provided under a programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), delivered by KTC. Associate Lecturers (AL) managed by KTC work directly with schools, teachers, and principals to address ongoing professional development of teachers in Primary and JSS schools.

Associate Lecturers are now stationed in Tarawa. They visit schools on the outer islands two to three times a year to conduct CPD, monitor progress since previous CPD events, and provide ongoing support to teachers. The CPD visits for 2023 includes Kiritimati Islands and other islands not previously included before the COVID-19 pandemic. The KTC facilitated CPD in teaching literacy and numeracy for over 500 teachers in 2022. In 2023, there were more CPD modules delivered both on the outer islands and at the KTC Campus in Bikenibeu. The CPD module titles reflect the MoE concern with national assessment results from junior secondary schools, hence ongoing professional development in the listed subjects, with ongoing focus on literacy.

A *National Teachers' Service Standards Framework* (NTSSF) has been in place since 2017 to support monitoring and development of quality teaching in schools. The NTSSF was developed in collaboration with Island Education Coordinators (IECs), the MoE as well as representatives from various NGOs and donor organisations. The NTSSF assesses teacher competency in terms of four standard domains: teaching and learning methods, curriculum, teacher professionalism and learning achievement. The NTSSF includes detailed evidence requirement for 16 standards in total, mapped to the four standard domains of the framework. The outcome of NTSS assessment is identification of the teacher as a 'Teacher at Risk', 'Novice/Emerging Teacher', an 'Experienced/ Established Teacher', or 'Mentor/ Advanced Teacher'. As a tool for teacher improvement, the NTSSF is a robust standards framework for identifying the level of teacher competency against performance requirements. However, the example of the assessment round for Senior Secondary Schools indicates that there are constraints on implementing a regular cycle of performance assessment against the NTSSF.

Curriculum Development

The curriculum development process in Kiribati is overseen and managed by the Curriculum Development Resource Centre (CDRC) of MoE. MoE collaborates with various stakeholders, including teachers, educational experts, and community members, to design and update the national curriculum. The National Curriculum and Assessment Framework approved in 2015 guides what Kiribati students are expected to learn at different levels and in various subject areas. The curriculum aims to provide a balanced and comprehensive education to students in Kiribati.

The curriculum covers core subject areas such as language, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. It also includes cultural and environmental components to reflect the unique context and traditions of Kiribati. The curriculum includes the teaching of both the Kiribati language and English. English is an important language of instruction in schools, in particular in secondary schools, as it is essential for students to acquire proficiency in English for communication and access to global resources. Given Kiribati's rich cultural heritage and its vulnerability to climate change and environmental challenges, the curriculum emphasises cultural studies and environmental education. Students learn about traditional practices, history, and environmental stewardship.

For ECCE, the first-ever national ECCE curriculum was officially launched in July 2023. The development process of the ECCE curriculum started in 2018 through support from UNICEF, given the situation that each centre used to use own curriculum which was not standardised, and quality of teaching process and contents varied among the centres. The ECCE curriculum package includes an ECCE curriculum framework (both English and Te-Kiribati), a guide for teachers (both English and te-Kiribati), 12 storybooks for read-aloud activities as well as 9 posters. The ECCE curriculum uses 'Te Waa' (outrigger canoe) as a curriculum metaphor and symbolises not only the journey of life, but also the journey of a child's learning. All ECCE teachers in Kiribati are expected to receive these materials during the training (national roll-out). It is expected that all ECCE teachers will be trained by trainers starting 2024.

Curriculum resources for primary schools includes syllabus documents for all year levels in the subjects of Mathematics, English, Te-Kiribati, Community Culture, Healthy Living and Environmental Science. For junior secondary schools, subject syllabus resources include those for English and Mathematics, Te-Kiribati, Science, Social Science, Health and Physical Education, Moral Education and TVET. The senior secondary syllabus and senior secondary examinations are aligned with the Pacific senior secondary prescription and examinations administered by EQAP-SPC.

The CDRC is aiming at incorporating disability concerns throughout every element of school curricula, promoting favourable perceptions and narratives of individuals with disabilities. Issues like gender stereotyping, climate change and disaster risk reduction have also been considered in the revised National Curriculum and Assessment Framework and the ongoing curriculum. Curriculum materials, including teacher guides and learning materials, have improved and gender stereotypes and bias have been reduced in terms of imagery, language and focus. The inclusion of skills and knowledge from a respectful relationship programme is being included into the years 8 and 9 curriculum subjects of moral education, social science and health.

Learning assessment and achievement

MoE has conducted Standardised Tests of Achievement in Kiribati (STAKI) since 2004 for Year 4, 6, and 8 students, assessing numeracy, English and Te-Kiribati literacy. These tests have been administered annually in October or November since 2015. In 2021, the so far highest number of students took these tests. The proportion of students critically below the expected skill level declined between 2019 and 2021 for all assessments, with the Numeracy skills of all tested student groups showing improvement between 2019 and 2021.

In 2021, less than half of the Year 4 students met or exceeded the expected standard in Te Kiribati (47%), whereas the vast majority of students met the standard in numeracy (87%). At Year 6 and Year 8, while less than half of students met the standard in English (42% & 43% respectively), most students met the standards in Te Kiribati (77% & 78%) and numeracy (76% & 65%). For all year levels, more girls than boys met or exceeded the expected standard for all subjects.

Additionally, the Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessments (PILNA) were held across the Pacific in 2021, assessing numeracy and literacy in English or local languages for Year 4 and 6 students. PILNA, managed by EQAP, was last conducted in 2018 and was an alternative to STAKI that year.

Kiribati students sit one national examination at the end of junior secondary, i.e. Year 9, another national examination at Year 11 and Year 12, and a regional examination at the end of Year 13. The *Kiribati Certificate in Basic Education* was previously called the Kiribati Junior Secondary Certificate. The Year 11 *Kiribati Certificate of Secondary Education* (previously known as Kiribati National Certificate) and the Year 12 Kiribati Senior Secondary Certificate examination are administered by the MoE and closely follows the assessment prescription of the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate that is administered out of SPC-EQAP. The regional examination undertaken by Year 13 students is completely administered by the SPC-EQAP, and is an entry examination for the University of the South Pacific as well as other overseas universities. Students who progress to Year 13 do so to apply for a Government of Kiribati scholarship to pursue Bachelor's degree studies at the University of the South Pacific or another overseas university.

English achievement for Year 9 students in the national KCBE examination declined between 2017-2020 for male students, with a sharp decline for female students between 2019-2020. The decline in male student achievement from 2017 signals needed intervention is needed for males at the end of the lower secondary schooling cycle. Achievement in Mathematics for Year 9 students in the national JSC examination fluctuated in the low to mid-80 percentile for female students, and around the mid-70 percentile for male students. The gender achievement gap is apparent in the trend of male students' performance lagging behind female students' performance since 2015.

Kiribati National Library and Archives

Kiribati National library and Archives is one important sector of MoE which is situated at Bairiki. Function of KNLA is supporting MoE programmes in supporting and prompting literacy and numeracy through the library and archives activities. Activities include providing reading resources by establishing school libraries at all school levels including mission schools; providing reading activities to all pre-schools and primary, and secondary schools on Tarawa in the Kiribati National Library and Archives; preparing and disseminating scholarship information in the KNLA; and providing spaces for researchers in the Archives.





Infrastructure



With most of the country consisting of long, thin atolls, Kiribati has opted for an education infrastructure map that consists of smaller primary schools within easy reach for most I-Kiribati and a single junior secondary school for each island except for South Tarawa which has four. The existence of schools results in coastal erosion increasing the cost of school infrastructure as sea walls need to be built to protect buildings.

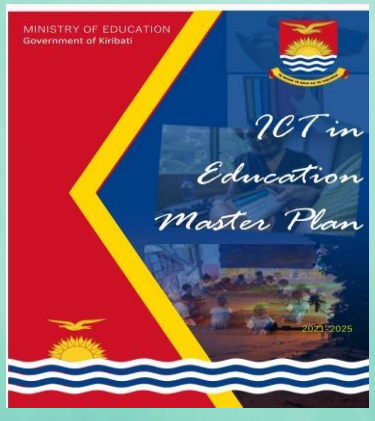
MoE issued the National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools which set out the minimum infrastructure standards to be applied to all its primary school education facilities (for both Government and Mission run schools). Infrastructure Standards are yet to be issued for ECCE, junior and senior secondary, however work is underway on National Infrastructure Standards for Junior and Senior Secondary Schools.

Issues that need attention regarding infrastructure relate to the availability in some schools of separate toilets for male and female students, and separate toilets for students and teachers. This is important for all students on all schools, in particular with relation to menstrual safety for female students. In addition, UNICEF has done much to extend WASH facilities in schools in Kiribati.

The funding arrangements for maintenance of education infrastructure are complex with a range of stakeholders involved including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (MISE), Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID), Island Councils and several development partners including MFAT with regard to supporting the maintenance of primary and Junior Secondary schools. Budgets for the maintenance of education infrastructure are not appropriated under MoE therefore most school maintenance requires close collaboration and consultation with other stakeholders.

MoE does not have a long-term infrastructure management plan for school buildings – there has been consideration for preparing such a plan but this is not realised yet. The only long- term planning for infrastructure in the past has been included in the Education Sector Strategic Plans (ESSP).

ICT in Education



The GOK has been working to reform the ICT sector as a key pillar in the national development goals focussed on gaining the benefits through its e-Government plans, as outlined in the Government Manifesto and the National ICT Policy. These policies have been articulated in the ICT in Education Master Plan 2021 – 2025 which provides a strategy and action plan for the use of ICT to help improve both the operation of the education system and for enhancing teaching and learning. The Master Plan includes specific targets of connecting schools to the Internet, providing computer labs, protection of children online, promoting e-Learning, and introducing ICT into the curriculum. The Master Plan aims to closely align its programs and projects for achieving the goals, objectives and strategies of the ESSP. Development of more learning resources and active use of the digital learning plat form, Learning passport, is also expected to enhance ICT in education.

3.3 Education costs and financing

Total public education budgets increased significantly both in current and real terms over the last ten years. Total public education budget allocations, including allocations for the Ministry of Education, Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) and the Maritime Training Centre (MTC), in current terms increased by 165% from AUD 28.2m to AUD 74.7m over the 10-year period to 2023. This has been made possible due to strong fishing revenues in recent years. Most of the increase over this 10-year period was attributable to increases in the Ministry of Education Budget which saw an increase of 165%, while the combined KIT and MTC budgets increased by 88% in the same timeframe. Actual public expenditure on education was almost certainly higher than amounts provided above, with maintenance budgets being centralised at various times with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED), Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (MISE) and the Island Councils via the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). The share of total public budgets assigned to education has remained relatively stable over the 10-year period from 2014 to 2023 (ranging between 23-25% of total budget allocations). The period of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021) saw lower budget allocations for the education sector, most likely due to funds being reallocated to the health sector and because of school closures.

As a share of GDP, education budget allocations have increased from 14% in 2014 to 23% in 2022. This increase as a share of GDP allocated to education is more a reflection of increases in the total public budget, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, rather than an indication that the education sector has become more of a priority. Kiribati is exceeding the internationally recommended benchmarks of 15 to 20 percent of public expenditure to education and 4 to 6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

MoE receives the largest proportion of the total public budgets. In 2023 the MoE received 22% of the total national budget, two percentage points more than the next largest ministry, i.e., the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED) (20%). The other most important sectors in terms of the budget are the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sport and Social Affairs (MWYSSA) (18%) and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) (10%). The share of the national budget allocated to the MoE has been constant over time, also receiving 22% in 2014. This compares an increase from 3% of budget allocations for MWYSSA in 2014 to 18% in 2023. The proportion of public budgets allocated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services has declined over time from 14% in 2014 to 10% in 2023. This suggests that Education continues to be a high priority for Kiribati. In addition to the increase in allocation of total public education budgets, there has been a substantial increase in education budget allocations by school/tertiary/TVET-aged individual since 2014. The increase in total public education budget allocations (after adjusting for inflation) coupled with low growth in the school age population is reflected in the 74% increase in budget allocations per student over the last ten years to AUD 1,211 per school/tertiary/ TVET aged individual in 2023.

The vast majority of public education budgets is allocated towards recurrent costs, with over 98% of funding allocated to this each year over the 10-year period. The public education recurrent budgets were about AUD 34.0 million in real terms in 2014 and increased to AUD 63.4 million by 2023, continuing to comprise between 95-97% of public total budgets in the sector. Development budgets are predominantly financed by development partners and are very low, making up the remaining 3-5%. Over the period, public budgets allocated to development barely changed.

There are significant issues with the standard of school infrastructure in Kiribati, with most primary and ECCE schools in the outer islands being constructed from traditional building materials (non-permanent structures). Also, many schools lack IT equipment, internet connectivity, and boundary fences despite recent commitments to improve those. Not all schools have adequate WASH facilities; and some schools do not have any source of water or electricity. This points to the need for additional development spending by GoK and Donors to ensure adequately equipped and safe schools.

The level of public recurrent budget allocations for most sub-sectors has remained relatively stable over the past five years, except for tertiary education which increased from AUD 5.3m to AUD 21.4m. This was due a significant increase in budget allocations for in-country and overseas scholarships (except for 2021 which was impacted by travel restrictions during the pandemic period). As a result of this significant increase of funding for tertiary education, other sub-sectors' proportion of the over recurrent budget declined over the five-year period.

The bulk of recurrent budget allocations in Kiribati goes to the tertiary education sub-sector, accounting for 29% of the recurrent budget in 2023 (AUD 21.4m) to tertiary education. The primary education (AUD 15.1m) and senior secondary (AUD 14.4m) subsectors account for 21% and 20% respectively of the recurrent education budget in 2023. Junior secondary schools received the next largest share of the budget in 2023 with 14% of the budget allocation in 2023, while TVET was allocated 7% of the budget. Pre-primary received only 3% (AUD 2.5m) of the recurrent budget allocation in 2023, and 3% (AUD 2.1m) was also allocated to the Kiribati Teachers College for teacher education. The allocation to special needs education was very low with less than 1% of the recurrent budget allocated to this area (just over AUD 100,000).

The more advanced the education level, the higher the public recurrent spending per student. Recurrent spending per student is lowest for ECCE (AUD 263) and increases for primary (AUD 867), junior secondary education (AUD 1,380), and senior secondary education (AUD 1,868). For TVET there is a jump to AUD 3,315 per student – this sub-sector tends to require more equipment and machinery, and depending on the programme and instructor salaries may be relatively high given their specialist skills. Recurrent spending per tertiary students receiving scholarships outstrips that for the other levels at AUD 27,056 per student. This means recurrent spending per tertiary student is around 100 times higher than the spending per ECCE student. The high level of funding for tertiary benefits students from the wealthiest households the most. The majority of individuals attending tertiary education come from the richest households.

External financing for education is directed mainly to the development budget. In 2022, 95% of the development budget was funded by the development partners. This heavy reliance on external financing makes the development budget volatile. Most of the sector funding by development partners is directed towards the Ministry of Education with AUD 10.4m (59%), followed by the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources with AUD 6.3m (35%) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (via Island Councils) with AUD 1.0m (6%). Similarly, most development partner funding is directed through donor partner financial systems (92%) rather than through the GoK financial systems (only 8%).




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4 ESSP Strategic Vision and Implementation

4.1 Overall vision and mission of the ESSP 2024-2027



The ESSP takes a holistic approach on the basis of *key strategic areas* (KSAs) which have relevance for the entire education sector, and not only for individual sub-sectors. The focus of the KSAs is on strengthening the close cooperation between all related sub-sectors, in the interest of jointly achieving the ultimate goal for the Education Sector, in line with the country's national priorities and the PacREF and SDG4 objectives. Specifically, it will take into account issues related to gender equality, disability, social inclusion (GEDSI) and resilience. It draws upon the findings of the Education Sector Analysis presented in Chapters 2 and 3, and also on recommendations from the Transforming Education Summit (TES) 2022, and the Enabling Factors Analysis (EFA) conducted between May and August 2023 as well as Partnership COMPACT. Likewise, identified priorities under the Partnership Compact have been reflected, specifically under Objectives 2 and 4.

Vision

The ESSP is guided by an **overall vision** which is consistent with the Government's *Kiribati 20 year Vision 2016-2036* (referred to as the KV20) across the four pillars of Wealth; Peace and Security; Infrastructure; and Governance:

Today's children and youth will represent the wealth of tomorrow, being resilient in a changing world to achieve their full potential, and contributing to the sustainable development of Kiribati based on highly equitable relevant quality education and cultural and spiritual values

This vision – also representing the overall goal of the ESSP – goes beyond a more traditional understanding of education, i.e. preparing the learner to progress from one educational sector to the other, reaching out to **life-long learning** and stressing the particular **importance of preparation for life in Kiribati.** It thereby highlights the **key role of Kiribati traditional culture and traditional values**, acknowledges the **specific challenges of education in a "changing world"** and thus links education to **creation of wealth and resilience**, i.e., being able to **make a decent living with good income** earned through employment.

Mission

The Government delivers culturally-grounded, equity and high-quality education that enhances improved learning and resilience of all children and youth of Kiribati, based on excellent leadership, good governance, effective teaching, proper resourcing and strong partnership.

4.2 Theory of Change

On the basis of the ESA and consultations with key stakeholders, five key strategic areas have been identified for the ESSP 2024-2027 which need to be addressed by all educational sub-sectors in order to realise the **overarching vision of preparedness for life through quality education for all**, i.e. (i) Supporting ongoing professional development and well-being of teachers (ii)Reinvigorating student learning, also addressing life skills and alternative pathways; (iii) Strengthening resilience in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises; (iv) Making quality education accessible for more children; and (v) Strengthening educational leadership, management and planning.

All strategic areas are interlinked and, as a result, contribute to reaching the overall vision, also by supporting and enabling learners to progress through the entire educational system in line with their specific requirements and/or talents. **According to its Theory of Change, the education system is being regarded as an enabler for achieving enhanced social and human capital development and inclusive growth**, as illustrated in the following page.



Figure 2 ESSP Theory of Change



4.3 Key Strategic Areas (KSAs) to realise quality education

This section discusses the KSAs presented in the Theory of Change (4.2) in more detail. There are 5 KSAs that inform goals and objectives of the ESSP.

4.3.1 Supporting ongoing professional development and well-being of teachers and school leaders



The ESSP appreciates that the improvement of teachers' service conditions will be a prerequisite for improving the sense of professionalism of the teaching force. While aiming at ongoing professional development of teachers, the ESSP will at the same time acknowledge the value of its staff by elevating their service conditions to become proficient and competent to offer quality teaching and learning while also adapting to the dramatic change caused by a more modernised and technological world.

The methodological performance of the teacher plays a central role since s/he stays at the centre of delivering educational quality, with the mere enrolment of teachers in pre-service and/or in-service courses, the distribution of books, the upgrading of educational facilities not necessarily creating a difference on their own if teachers (through their training) are not put in a position to make the transfer in their day-to-day teaching. In other words, the impact of modern and stimulating educational methodology, specifically in terms of quality student-teacher interaction, is a decisive factor for the improvement of educational quality, generally comprising four interlinked performance standards, i.e. (i) the quality of teaching and learning in the school; (ii) students' personal development and safety; (iii) the effectiveness of leadership and management of the respective school; and ultimately (iv) learning outcomes.

Consequently, the management and professional status of teachers and educational staff (and their equitable placement) will be improved by means of (i) constant professional upgrading and strengthening the provision and acceptance of continuous professional development (also providing promotional opportunities to teachers resulting in rising salaries); (ii) organisational measures (such as teacher incentives) to ensure adequate teacher coverage of hardship areas; and (iii) the introduction of systematic national learning assessments to regularly monitor learning progress (as the ultimate reflection of teacher performance).

Key areas of attention identified by the ESA include a prime focus on the improvement of content knowledge of teachers and a better mastery of the English language. While the change to competency-based learning outcomes also necessitates an adaptation of the pre-service and in-service (re-)training of teachers, it will also create an impact on the reform of accompanying learning materials (especially textbooks) and the overall approach to examinations and assessments of learning outcomes. Targeted training is foreseen to Primary teachers and headteachers, and also to JSS and SSS teachers and principals. All ECCE teachers will be trained on the ECCE curriculum and a national ECCE workforce strategy will be developed. In addition, all pedagogical staff needs to be constantly upgraded to identify and to respond to special educational needs of learners wherever required.

Over the past decades, many countries have adjusted teacher policies as both a result of new insights into learning processes and altered perceptions of the role of education in their society. Voluntarily or not, teachers nowadays assume a much broader role than previously. The intensified focus on learner-centeredness will result in teachers being expected to change their approaches in an area which is at the core of their professional activity: the initiation and management of learning processes. While the objective of learning processes used to be the acquisition of knowledge and its reproduction, school education is now to a considerable extent perceived as a means for the development of the learner's personality. Competences related to the domains of "learning to learn" and "interpersonal and civic competences" are to be developed through the teaching of all subjects.

Existing standards, including Kiribati National Teacher Service Standards (TSS) and School Leader Service Standards (SLSS) will be harmonised with the newly established Kiribati Quality Standards (KQS), and school leaders and teachers will be trained.

4.3.2 Reinvigorating student learning, also addressing life skills and alternative pathways



This key strategic area (KSA) very much focusses on continuous quality improvements based on (i) quality of teaching and learning (by means of supporting and encouraging participatory and interactive learning approaches); (ii) skills standards of teachers and instructors; (iii) quality of provided teaching and learning materials (also including the need for supporting laboratories and other adequate teaching and learning materials); and (iv) promoting life skills and alternative pathways, specifically with a view to the role of TVET and its long tradition in Kiribati as part of Kiribati cultural history and heritage.

Focal areas of this KSA will be (i) the reform of Foundational Learning in Grade 1-3 to comprise three subjects only (i.e., Personal Development, Literacy and Numeracy) (ii) the creation of alternative pathways into TVET; (iii) the infusion of more innovative activities into the teaching and learning process, directed towards students' active involvement; and (iv) the specific consideration of requirements of learners with special education needs (SEN) when it comes to teaching and learning materials related to the teaching and learning process.

Quality learning and teaching materials including gender-responsive digital resources, storybooks for ECCE students as well as support materials for children with disabilities will be developed and distributed.

The ultimate objective of the reinvigoration process will be to make the educational process relevant, interesting for the learner and thus motivating, in order for the learner to be attracted (back) into school. Innovative activities, such as utilisation of technologies in classrooms and development of interactive contents on Learning passport, will be introduced to encourage students' active participation and foster their critical thinking.

4.3.3 Strengthening resilience in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises



The COVID-19 outbreak, and the accompanying economic impact, have also affected the education sector. The ESSP will take into account lessons learnt during the pandemic, in order to be prepared for possible future crises.

There is a draft *Kiribati Guideline for School Contingency Planning* together with a draft *National Contingency Planning Guideline* available, intended to be rolled out during 2024 (MoE 2022a and 2022b). However, apart from environmental and health-related crises, the ESSP will take a much broader view of resilience, specifically targeting resilience towards personal crises, e.g., violence in schools, domestic violence, sexual harassment, bullying or psychological crises of students and teachers. The ESSP clearly acknowledges the need to improve the provision of schools with counsellors, either through specifically trained staff, or through identified teachers who enjoy the trust of students and teachers.

Generally, capacities will be increased to promote healthy, safe and protective school environments in line with the child-friendly schools' principles, as an important prerequisite for developing resilience. This will include the improvement of WASH facilities (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) at all schools such as the provision of safe water and improved conditions for hand washing, functional gender-disaggregated toilets and the development of strategies for safe behaviour and disaster risk reduction for schools,

together with materials on topics such as environmental hazards and climate change and their impact on people in order to raise children's awareness of the need to reduce activities harmful to the environment. The protection components include training of schools on safe school policy and expansion of family life education programme as well as gender-based violence advocates programme.

Curriculum implementation under the ESSP will be based on **Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD), utilising the existing curriculum and possible modifications during future revisions for capacitating students towards preparedness for environmental and health-related crises. While the curriculum reform has focussed on the transmission of knowledge *about* crises, this KSA aims at equipping learners with the skills to *concretely participate in decisions* about the way they do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, and that will improve the quality of life in an ecologically oriented way. Cross-cutting the curriculum, ESD will support learners to develop skills to investigate and solve issues in the environment; acquire attitudes of care and concern for the environment; and adopt behaviours and practices which protect the environment. It is further related to the survival of culture and language as part of the identity of the people of Kiribati, as also evidenced by the support for the National archives in the ESSP.

In the interest of promoting resilience, the curriculum will serve as an *enabler* of change by integrating key sustainable development issues such as climate change, biodiversity, gender equality, water and health promotion into teaching and learning. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that learners develop an awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environment in which they live. They must also encourage changes in learners' behaviour that will contribute to a sustainable future.

4.3.4 Quality education accessible for more children



With regard to improved access to quality education, the focus will be on strengthening the material-technical base of educational institutions by construction, reconstruction and repair, with a particular focus on equity issues (geographical location/outer islands, gender, learners with special needs, inclusion). Likewise, the ESSP acknowledges the need to optimise the provision of transport to students, making it possible for a larger number of children to reach school.

The key focus of the ESSP will thus be the **inclusion of the currently disadvantaged**, also in line with the Partnership Compact aiming at the reduction of barriers and strengthening an equitable and inclusive quality education for all. By reducing barriers for disadvantaged children to access quality education, the system eventually transforms into a more permeable state, allowing more children to benefit from quality education within a more equitable environment, supported by modern technology and enhanced management capacities.

This reform will also be supported through an enabling use of affordable and sustainable ICT tools, also with a view linking up more schools with the internet (starting with JSS and SSS, according to the already endorsed 2020 Manifesto[11]). Aiming at providing an enabling use of affordable and sustainable ICT in education has relevance for all educational sub-sectors and should eventually also include the use of modern electronic training programmes.

Further, improved accessibility under this KSA will also relate to an expansion of the Model Inclusion schools – including an expansion of those schools to the outer islands. In addition, MoE will investigate and implement strategies for facilitating the re-entry of boys and girls who left school and drop-outs into formal education and training, specifically through a reformed and easier accessible TVET system, also utilising non-governmental TVET service providers (leading to a "second chance education"). This will contribute greatly to achieving "enhanced social & human capital development and inclusive growth", thus reconfirming the ESSP's role to *prepare for life* through quality education.

4.3.5 Strengthening educational leadership, management, planning and research



Strengthening the internal efficiency and transparency of the governing system will go a long way towards strengthening the entire educational leadership, management and planning. This KSA therefore regards such process as an enabler for strengthening the institutional performance of MoE, also envisaging the much-needed strengthening and harmonisation of the Kiribati EMIS (KEMIS) system. Although KEMIS and a process of collecting data from schools has been established for some time, challenges relating to timeliness of returns, data validation and system and human capacity to both process and analyse data remain. The establishment of a centralised data hub, containing data of various sources, combined with new ways of data transfers between schools and MoE and between MoE divisions, will all be part of ESSP's objectives for the coming years.

[11] https://www.president.gov.ki/presidentgovki/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HE-Policy-Statement-Eng-ver.pdf .

In terms of management and planning, MoE will utilise the implementation of this ESSP for developing the road map for a National Education Framework covering the period 2028-2036. It is MoE's intention that while closely monitoring the implementation of this ESSP, to lay the foundation for a longer follow-up planning as from 2028. In particular, MoE intends to update a long-term plan for ECCE, i.e. fully outlining longer-term objectives of Early Childhood Education, also considering stronger MoE ownership and of ECCE into full mandate of MoE.

Under this KSA, MoE will continue leading on its engagement with local and development partners, prioritising development needs and support mechanisms, mediating between conflicting demands, and also establishing new partnerships if the opportunity arises. MoE intends to develop a Principles of Engagement Policy to guide all processes with Development Partners, public sectors and other key local stakeholders highlighting the leading role of the MoE.

Further issues under this KSA relate to (i) the current scholarship scheme which will be reviewed against the labour market needs of Kiribati, in the interest of having a balanced number of graduates serving the nation; (ii) the finalisation of teacher registration by the end of the implementation period of the ESSP; and (iii) the strengthening of the National Library and Archives, to secure the preservation of Kiribati cultural heritage as an important backbone of Kiribati education and resilience.

4.4 Cross-cutting Strategic Areas

In addition to the five key strategic areas outlined in Section 4.2 above, there are an additional six supplementary strategic areas which are of cross-cutting relevance during the entire implementation process of the ESSP, and which need to be considered during reporting and assessment.



Accessibility

Accessibility specifically refers to remote and otherwise disadvantaged areas and communities. As a cross-cutting issue special consideration needs to be given to children with special educational needs, in all educational institutions.



Availability

Availability is closely related to accessibility, but redirects the focus on infrastructural issues, i.e. construction, reconstruction and renovation of educational institutions. This is also reflected in the KSAs with regard to implementing targeted measures to strengthen the material-technical base of educational institutions by construction, reconstruction and repair, equipping with modern teaching and laboratory equipment, computers, teaching aids.



Acceptability

Acceptability touches upon existing customs and mindsets which might hinder groups of the population to not accept and/or subscribe to a specific element within the educational system. This particularly refers to issues related to inclusive education (with a rather low proportion of SEN students currently integrated into mainstream teaching), gender issues especially with regard to PSET (women have higher enrolment in the PSET institutions when compared with men, in contrast to ECCE and primary enrolment, where no such disparity exists).



Adaptability

This is primarily a systemic issue and refers to all educational sub-sectors which need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances. Adaptability will be very much required during the concrete ESSP planning process, regarding the ESSP as a "living document".



Participation of parents and communities

Parent and community participation is key to ensuring ownership of strategies and sustainable success. In particular, this will refer to the ownership of this ESSP, and the support of parents and communities provided to educational institutions and staff in their specific communities.



Partnerships and integration of approaches

This is an area of prime importance for moving towards a successful cooperation between the labour market, non-governmental service providers (including ECCE centres) and professional training. Under the ESSP, a strong social partnership model may open up new avenues for re-entering the formal education system (e.g., through utilising non-governmental TVET service providers for creating bridges to formal TVET admission). This will be further considered during the course of ESSP implementation.

4.5 Capacity assessment

The Kiribati education system is characterised by limited resources, which also relates to the central MoE management. MoE acknowledges the requirement to improve their management systems so that the limited resources available to both the Ministry and schools are used efficiently as demand for education increases (as captured by ESSP Objective No. 5). In that regard, MoE will ensure that all activities and support by Development Partners will be closely aligned with the ESSP as the only planning document in the education sector, thus avoiding the creation or even continuation of parallel systems. It has been observed in the past that requests from Development Partners have sometimes overburdened MoE staff and negatively impacted on their performance. Strengthening elements of the management system will also endure that quality education can continue to be delivered in times of economic or social shocks at either the local or national level.

MoE acknowledges that teacher quality needs to improve, and that continuous professional development needs to be based on an improved recognition of the status of teachers, including their conditions of service (ESSP Objective No. 4). This specifically refers to the outer islands and the difficulty to attract better capacitated teachers to the remote locations. Increasing student numbers, improving retention and the movement of students all prove challenging in ensuring the right number of teachers is at the right places – particularly if teachers continue leaving the system in light of unsatisfactory working conditions:

The capacity of ECCE teachers is insufficient due to the absence of specialised ECCE teachers. The current qualifications of ECCE staff are not adequate (from a few weeks to a few months basic training) to provide early childhood *education* as opposed to early childhood *care*. Whilst the principles of ECCE are largely formed, the scope is not. That is why MoE included the development of a long-term plan for ECCE into the objectives of ESSP Objective No. 5.

Further development of the country's potential will be further enhanced by the selection of the most effective technologies and dissemination of those. Six target groups can be identified:

- Government officials, who make decisions and can influence public opinion
- School leaders/principals, who will direct their focus to improved education management
- Other managers and executers of programmes and projects related to the ESSP
- Teaching methods specialists at teacher training institutions (KTC, USP)
- Monitoring and evaluation staff at all levels of the organisational structure within the education sector

- Heads, teachers and instructors of PSET education institutions.

4.6 Communication Plan

The plan for communicating and disseminating the ESSP targets to the general public, project/programme implementers and development partners, is directed at attracting investments and support from other stakeholders, ultimately aimed at achieving the objectives of the ESSP. Communication activities will be carried out primarily through meetings, working sessions, round-table discussions, dissemination of publications and electronic databases. Dissemination of information includes timely collection of information, and ensuring the access to information among the implementers of the ESSP over the entire period of the whole implementation process. The mechanism of information collection and processing is based on the ESSP Monitoring and Evaluation system and will be carried out by several methods, i.e.:

- Regular round-table discussions with participation of all ministries and agencies holding responsibility for implementation of the ESSP.
- Periodical orientation meetings with representatives of the education system (including students, teachers, parents, and development partners), NGOs, private sector, and local authorities.
- Regular communication with communities which will include mobilising communities on the importance of various aspects of Education.
- Consultations on designing and disseminating materials among beneficiaries, parents, and other stakeholders.
- Publications on the Ministries' and other educational websites, providing regular detailed progress reports on each component of the ESSP and upcoming activities.

The Communication Plan will be elaborated and continuously expanded/improved based on the needs of each implementation period and in relation to the progress of the respective ESSP activities and programmes. The feedback from all stakeholders generated through the communication plan will inform forthcoming revisions and adaptations of the Education Sector Strategic Plan and its related Action Plan.

4.7 Risk assessment

The Government is fully committed to implement the ESSP. Further, Kiribati maintains socio-economic stability, and education is identified as a priority area within the domain of social development. No changes are expected in the short run with regards to the political course of the Government in the priority areas outlined in the ESSP.

At the same time, the Government acknowledges that there are certain risks which might, directly or indirectly, impact on the results of the programmes and activities to be implemented. These risks are assessed below on a scale of severity (probability and impact combined) for each risk, along with specific mitigation measures.

Figure 3 Overview of risk assessment ratings reflecting degree of severity of risks

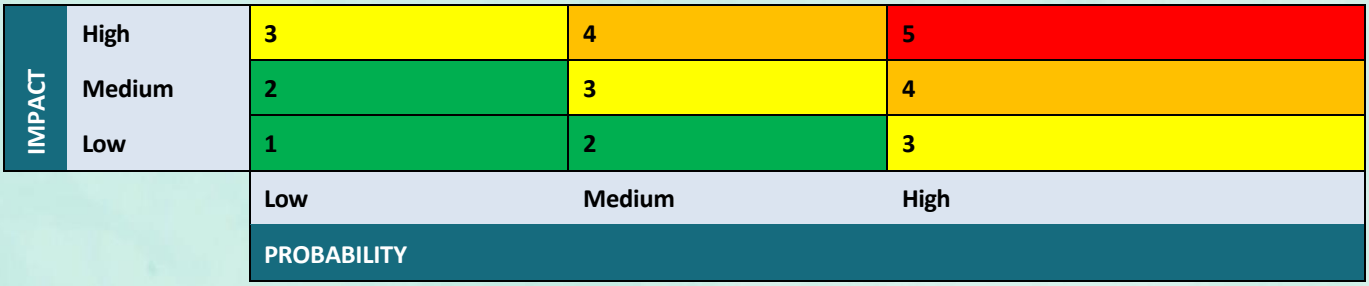


Figure 4 Risk assessment

Identified risk	Severity			Mitigation strategies
	Probability	Impact	Rating	
Absence of critical data and evidence to enable accurate reporting and analysis	Medium	High	4	This remains a medium risk until the strengthening and harmonisation of current data collection procedures, including the data transfer between schools and central MoE. It is however addressed as a central element of the ESSP under Objective 5, Strategy 5.2 ("Harmonise data collection procedures"), also with a view to building "a centralised data hub".
School closures re-occur following a recurrent COVID-19 pandemic (or similar)	Low	High	3	The current global COVID-19 situation appears to be under control. In any case, the mitigation of the risk will be achieved through KSA 2 ("Strengthening resilience in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises"), together with other support provided in the area of capacity building for ESSP implementation, as well as on the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process.
Uncertainties in covering actual budget requirements	Low	High	3	Should a certain instability of financing occur in the process of the ESSP implementation, the structure of the ESSP could be changed since it is very much regarded as a "living document". However, it is expected that due to the stability of GoK budget provision and the expected buy-in of donors, it will be possible to pursue the projected strategies without revising the original tasks.
Challenges around the administration of the ESSP, i.e. insufficient capacities in terms of human resources	Medium	Medium	3	Such risk will significantly be mitigated by means of joint coordination and monitoring with international donors, as well as via capacity building of officials following the method of results-based management.
Low buy-in of society into ESSP, maybe even expressing a negative attitude towards the ESSP as a whole and to its individual components (areas) in particular.	Low	High	3	Socio-economic results and consequences of ESSP implementation shall be made clear not only to the education community, but also to the society as whole. The key factor for reducing such a risk is related to ongoing sensitisation and socialisation work and awareness raising, i.e. by informing the population on vision, objectives, strategies and implementation processes of the ESSP. Further acceptance and buy-in will also be facilitated by joint donor reviews of the education.
Ministry staff lack capacity to understand and implement ESSP effectively:	Low	High	3	Probability low due to MoE having taken the lead in ESSP development, and due to participatory approach of formulating Mission, Objectives, Strategies and Activities.
Changes in Government Policy following the Presidential Election in 2024	Low	High	3	Ongoing inter-Ministerial exchange on ESSP implementation. However, currently no fundamental changes are foreseen in Government policy.

MOE Key Priorities

Reflected in

5 Goals, 5 Objectives

and

25 Strategies

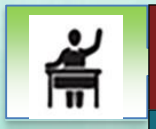


5 ESSP Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The strategic framework for the ESSP is determined by goals, objectives and strategies related to the respective key strategic areas (KSAs). In operationalising the strategic vision, objectives of every KSA are broken down by *Strategies*.



Goal 1: Dedicated teachers deliver quality teaching and provide learning opportunities to all students	
Strategy	**Objective 1: On-going professional development and well-being for teachers and school leaders supported**
1.1	Review and harmonise existing approaches of service providers in continuous professional development (CPD) of ECCE, primary, JSS and SSS teachers
1.2	Improve teachers' well-being and conditions of service
1.3	Provide professional trainings to ECCE, Primary, JSS and SSS teachers and school leaders
1.4	Provide qualification upgrading support to teachers and school leaders
1.5	Provide support towards the institutional strengthening of KTC



Goal 2: Students are learning better and have improved learning outcomes	
Strategy	**Objective 2: Student learning reinvigorated to make it attractive and motivating to children, also addressing life skills, alternative pathways and lifelong learning**
2.1	Reform Foundational Learning in Years 1-3 to comprise three learning areas, Language, Mathematics and Personal Development
2.2	Improve teaching and learning and assessment beyond foundational level or year 4 and above
2.3	Link TVET elements to the promotion of cultural history and heritage, life skills and alternative pathways
2.4	Introduce digital education and more innovative activities into the teaching and learning process , directed towards students' active involvement and fostering critical thinking
2.5	Provide all schools with quality teaching and learning resources



Goal 3: Schools and their communities have strong resilience to face challenges	
Strategy	**Objective 3: Adaptive capacity and resilience of the education system strengthened in light of environmental, health-related and personal crises**
3.1	Utilise the existing curriculum and possible modifications during future revisions for building capacities of students towards preparedness for environmental and health-related crises
3.2	Develop and implement a resilience strategy for schools in good partnership with island communities
3.3	Build capacities of MoE staff, school leaders, teachers, and communities in disaster risk management (DRM)
3.4	Strengthen the role of traditional Kiribati culture in education, through learners' active engagement with traditional heritage and participation in cultural activities



Goal 4: Students have access to quality education services and learning supports

Strategy	Objective 4: Expand and strengthen quality education services and learning supports
4.1	Construct, expand and/or renovate schools, with a particular focus on equity issues (geographical location/outer islands, gender, learners with special needs, inclusion) and WASH
4.2	Improve provision of transport to students, making it possible for a larger number of children to reach school
4.3	Provide Internet to Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools, including Primary Schools
4.4	Expand Model Inclusion Schools and islets primary schools to JSS
4.5	Facilitate re-entry into formal education and training



Goal 5: MoE delivers efficient and effective education services

Strategy	Objective 5: Educational leadership, management and planning strengthened
5.1	Institutional strengthening of MoE to improve efficient and effective service delivery
5.2	Harmonise data collection procedures
5.3	Develop the Kiribati Education Vision 2028-2036
5.4	Strengthen MoE engagement with national stakeholders and development partners
5.5	Implement the Teacher Registration Regulations
5.6	Strengthen the Kiribati Qualification Authority

6 Monitoring and Evaluation of the ESSP

6.1 Purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a prerequisite for successful implementation of the ESSP. The key objective of M&E is to provide assistance in managing the implementation of strategies related to the KSAs, described in Section 4.3, in order **to provide overall quality assurance**. As an administrative tool, M&E system monitors all key indicators, outputs, and outcomes, as well as resources involved in ESSP implementation.

Monitoring will allow a proper coordination of activities of the implementing agents on achieving the strategic objectives. The results of M&E will enable stakeholders to know:

- whether the activities that constitute the Plan of Action of the ESSP were implemented (see Chapter 5);
- whether the intended ESSP Goals and Objectives were being realised in consequence;
- whether there are any discrepancies between the expected and actual results.

M&E will thus assist in identifying the problems that need to be solved, at such an early stage that problems can still be corrected before it is too late. The M&E framework is therefore to be regarded as a **practical tool** which will provide an **early warning system should certain indicators be in danger of not being achieved**. It will allow the implementing parties of the ESSP to study the possible causes of the discrepancy and to change the direction of interventions in good time, before discovering unsatisfactory outcomes.

As a management tool, the M&E framework tracks all the key operational and resource metrics involved in accomplishing the ESSP. It is part of the normal feedback process from implementing a plan which then provides a basis for debate around performance on how to improve it and hence forms a basis for future planning and strategy development.

The Government guarantees transparency and wide dissemination of information on the monitoring of the ESSP. The civil society and the media, including the open and public websites will be used for disseminating the information to all interested parties. It will allow assessing the perception of citizens in regard to efficiency of the activities, implemented within the ESSP.

With regards to quality monitoring, the ESSP also includes indicators which capture the assessment of classroom practices and on-the-ground situations at school level. There is good international experience and best practice in the application of various scoring approaches, based on representative sampling surveys, a method which can be adapted to the Kiribati context.

While the Kiribati EMIS (KEMIS) is targeted itself for being strengthened under Objective 5, it will be the ultimate objective for KEMIS to ensure data accessibility and reliability, covering particulars of learners, parents, teachers, and other staff associated with systems and databases of ECCE, primary, secondary and PSET. In particular, KEMIS will eventually cover all details with regard to school admission, transfer from one school to another, attendance and learning achievements. Looking ahead in terms of digitisation of the education system, electronic records, diaries, and tablets will aim at making it possible for teachers to save time on daily administrative routine tasks.

6.2 Monitoring and evaluation system

MoE will take a results-based management approach to implementing the strategies detailed in the ESSP. A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan will be developed to outline how MoE and its partners will measure progress.

The data produced will inform annual planning (i.e. DOP development). Where indicated, evaluations will be undertaken by independent evaluators. The M&E Plan will be reviewed and updated as a part of these processes.

Monitoring & Evaluation Tasks

LEVEL 1 - ECCE & Schools:

Figure 5 Monitoring and Evaluation Process

1. Annual school census
2. Monitoring students progress according to NCAF
3. Administer STAKi, P ILNA, KCBE, KNC, KSSC, SPFSC
4. Report on ration and curriculum
5. Report on teaching and school leader service standards
6. Report on Kiribati quality standards
7. Report on TEACH

External Evaluation Mid Term Evaluation Improvements made Lessons learnt

End-of-Term Evaluation

1 Effectiveness
2 Efficiency
3 IMPACT

LEVEL 2 - ECCE & Schools:

1. Monitoring schools
2. Monitoring of the implementation of DOP's
3. 1/4ly progress reports by HOD's
4. Monitoring budgets
5. Monitoring staff performance

LEVEL 3 - Executive Management Team TEST, ISET, SST

1. Monitoting MOP progress through 1/4ly DOP reports
2. Make changes to support DOP changes eg – decision making, bottlenecks & budgets
3. Monitoring staff performance

Progress reports to MoE Secretary

MOE Annual Report to Minister

Coordination – PPR & D

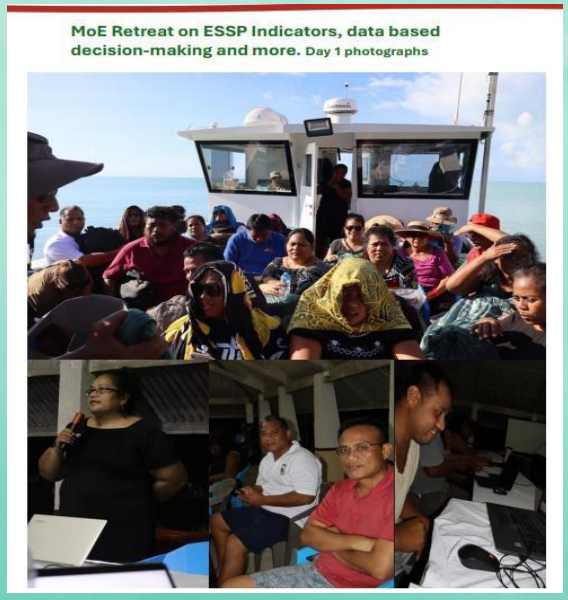
1. Develop standardized reflecting & reporting templates
2. Coordinate monthly HOD target setting
3. Organise 1/4ly monitoring and reporting week for all divisions Mar, June Sept Nov check reports for gaps

A three-level monitoring and evaluation system illustrated above will be adopted under Objective 5 for tracking and analysing the process of ESSP implementation.

Three-level monitoring and evaluation system
Level I – Internal Monitoring at regular short-term intervals
• Monitoring by schools (ECCE – SSS)
Level II – Internal Monitoring at regular three-month intervals
• Divisions and HoDs within the Support Services Team, the Improving School Effectiveness Team and the Technical & Enablement Services Team, summarise and analyse the information on the ESSP implementation to their team leaders, according to M&E Guidelines • PSET supervisors (specialists for TVET, University education) as specific subject supervisors provide additional inputs
Level III – Internal and External Monitoring
• Executive Team leaders (Directors and Deputy Secretaries) in turn report to the Secretary of Education each quarter • The EM prepares a report to the Minister on the ESSP implementation process, which includes an analysis of achievements of indicators and related targets, together with recommendations on further development of the planned activities • The report is submitted to Cabinet for approval and endorsement • The EPiK Group and the larger society is informed about the progress and implementation
The data produced will inform annual reporting to be submitted to the Hon. Minister as well as planning (i.e. DOP development). Where indicated, mid and end term evaluations will be undertaken by independent evaluators. The M&E Plan will be reviewed and updated as a part of these processes.

6.3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

ESSP is monitored through 2 levels of indicators, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and activity indicators. KPIs provide a sign of how well the programme has achieved intended changes as a result of the intervention, and are developed against strategies. Each strategy comes with at least one KPI. Activity indicators provide a sign about how well activities are going. They are about measuring what has been completed and they are listed under MIYOP.



The tables below show the KPIs that will be monitored, their currently available baselines and targets for 2028 together with their respective Means of Verification (MoV) and the overall monitoring arrangements (level and frequency of monitoring).

All indicators will be disaggregated by geographical region, gender and special needs where applicable.

6.3.1. Goal 1: Dedicated teachers deliver quality teaching and provide learning opportunities to all students

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 1.1: Review and harmonise existing approaches of service providers in continuous professional development of primary, JSS and SSS teachers	% of teachers having annual professional development by education level	40 (2023)	98	KTC Reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 1.2.: Improve teachers' wellbeing and conditions of service	Proportion of total government spending on education	12.4[12] (2020)	15	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly
	Student-teacher ratio in Primary, JSS and SSS, by location	26 (PS) 18 (JSS) 15 (SSS) (2023)	25 (PS) 18 (JSS) 15 (SSS)		
	% of salary gap between primary head teachers and JSS principals	12.5[13] (2023)	3.8[14]	MoE, Accounts Department	National, Yearly
	% of teachers benefitting from annual bonus payments	52 (2023)	100	MoE, Accounts Department	National, Yearly
	% of teachers with housing provided by the MoE	64 (PS) 42 (JSS) (2023)	80 (PS) 60 (JSS)	MoE, KEMIS	National and Regional, Yearly
Strategy 1.3: Provide professional trainings to ECCE, Primary, JSS and SSS teachers and school leaders headteachers and JSS/SSS teachers and principals	% of ECCE teachers trained in applying the new curriculum	3 (2023)	100	ECCE reports UNICEF reports	Regional and National, Yearly
	% of teachers in primary with the minimum required qualifications (Adv. Dip in Teaching)	5 (2024)	100	Teacher Registration report	National, Yearly
	% of teachers in JSS with the minimum required qualifications (Adv. Dip in Teaching)	17 (2024)	100	Teacher Registration report	National, Yearly
	% of teachers in SSS with the minimum required qualification (Bachelor Degree + Grad Cert Ed)	21 (2023)	100	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly
Strategy 1.4: Provide qualification upgrading support to teachers and school leaders.	Number of teachers and school leaders receiving KTC support for upgrading qualification	56 (2023)	100	KTC Reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 1.5: Provide support towards the institutional strengthening of KTC	Number of KTC lecturers upgraded to M.Ed. degree	0	20	Upgrading training report	National, Yearly
	Number of additional assistant lecturers recruited	0	5	KTC review report	National, Yearly

[12] Education Digest 2015-2020
[13] (JSS Salary level 7 - Primary level 9) / Primary level 9
[14] Assumption is by 2028 all primary head teachers are upgraded to level 8 of public service salary scale

6.3.2. Goal 2: Students are learning better and have improved learning outcomes

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 2.1: Reform Foundational Learning in Years 1-3 to comprise three learning areas, Language, Mathematics and Personal Development	% of students with minimum proficiency in numeracy, mid-Primary (Year 4)	86.5 (2021)	90	Literacy and Numeracy assessment (STAKI)	National, Yearly
	% of students with minimum proficiency in literacy, mid-Primary (Year 4)	71.6 (2020)	75		
	Percentage of primary schools with new curricula implemented effectively	0	100	Qualitative Survey	
Strategy 2.2: Improve teaching and learning and assessment beyond foundational level or year 4 and above	% of students with minimum proficiency in numeracy, end of Primary (Year 6)	77.5 (2021)	80	Curriculum Documents	
	% of students with minimum proficiency in literacy, end of Primary (Year 6)	41.8 (2021)	54		
Strategy 2.3: Link TVET elements to the promotion of Cultural History and Heritage, life skills, and alternative pathways	Youth participation rate in technical-vocational education (TVET) programmes	9.2 (2020)	15	Population Census / Household Survey	National, Yearly
	Number of SSS schools with at least three taster TVET courses available to students	5 (2023)	20	School reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 2.4: Introduce digital education and more innovative activities into the teaching and learning process directed towards students' active involvement and fostering critical thinking	Proportion of schools with access to computers by education level	22.7 (PS) 44.2 (JSS) 100 (SSS) (2020)	TBD 100 (JSS) 100 (SSS)	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly
	Completion rate	95.3 (PS) 83.4 (JSS) 20.9 (SSS) (2020)	99 (PS) 97 (JSS) 45 (SSS)	Digest of Education Statistics Population Census Household Survey	National, Yearly
	Out-of-school rate	0 (PS) 7.3 (JSS) (2020)	0 (PS) 6 (JSS)		
Strategy 2.5: Provide all schools with quality teaching and learning resources	Education expenditure per student by level of education	260 (ECCE) 813 (PS) 1224 (JSS) 3099 (SSS) (2020)	TBD	Govt. Budget	National, Yearly

6.3.3 Goal 3: Schools and their communities have strong resilience to face challenges

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 3.1: Utilise the existing curriculum and possible modifications during future revisions for building capacities of students towards preparedness for	Degree to which students, parents and other stakeholders agree to the relevance of curriculum for preparedness for environmental and health-related crisis	n/a	80	Survey report	National, Yearly

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
environmental and health-related crises					
Strategy 3.2: Develop and implement a resilience strategy for schools in good partnership with island communities.	Proportion of children aged 24-59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, both sexes (%)	79.9 (2019)[15]	85	KSDIS, eHCI PEARL reports	National and Regional, Yearly
	% of primary and JSS schools equipped with resilience/emergency plans (school-based contingency plans)	3.3 (2023)	80	Inspectorate reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 3.3: Build capacities of MoE staff, school leaders and teachers in disaster risk management (DRM)	% of MoE staff and teachers trained on DRM	0	75	Training reports	National, Yearly
	Number of existing SSS teachers trained in counselling	0	20	MoE Admin	National, Yearly
Strategy 3.4 Strengthen the role of traditional Kiribati culture in education, through learners' active engagement with traditional heritage and participation in cultural activities	Percentage of schools participating in the national cultural festival	n/a	90	Festival report	National, Yearly

6.3.4 Goal 4: Students have access to quality education services and learning supports

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 4.1: Construct and renovate schools including WASH facilities in line with NIS/building codes, gender, learners with special needs, inclusion) and WASH	Proportion of all schools with access to drinking water	100 (2023)	100	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly
	Proportion of schools with access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities	88 9 (PS) 84 (JSS) 100 (SSS) (2023)	91 (PS) 87 (JSS) 100 (SSS)		
	Percentage of primary schools meeting national infrastructure standards	30 (2023)	40	MoE Reports	National, Regional Yearly
Strategy 4.2: Improve provision of transport to students, making it possible for a larger number of children to reach school	Number of school transports provided to outer islands	40	60	Implementation reports	National, Yearly
	Gross and net enrolment rates by school level (Compact)	GER (2023) 98 (PS) 106 (JSS) NER (2023) 90.8 (PS) 81.4 (JSS)	GER 99 (PS) 103 (JSS) NER 100 (PS) 90 (JSS)	Digest of Education Statistics	National & Regional, Yearly
Strategy 4.3: Provide Internet to Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools, including Primary school leaders	Proportion of schools with access to internet (Primary)	23 (2020)	50	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly
	Proportion of schools with access to internet (JSS+SSS)	65 (2020)	100		
	Number of Model Inclusion Schools operating	9 (2023)	TBD	Implementation reports	National, Yearly

[15] Kiribati Social Development Indicator Survey2018-2019

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 4.4: Expand Model Inclusion Schools and islets primary schools to JSS	Number of children with disabilities enrolled in model inclusion schools	609 (2023)	TBD	School reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 4.5: Facilitate re-entry into formal education and training	Participation rate of youth in formal and non-formal education and training in previous 12 months	29.5 (2020)	50	Digest of Education Statistics	National, Yearly

6.3.5 Goal 5: MoE delivers efficient and effective education services

Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Indicator values		Monitoring arrangements	
		Baseline	Target 2028	Means of Verification	Level and Frequency
Strategy 5.1: Institutional strengthening of MoE to improve efficient and effective service delivery	MoE structure and job descriptions reviewed	No	Yes	MoE reports (Director for Research, Policy and Planning)	National, Yearly
	Process of staff performance appraisal system reviewed	No	Yes		
	Formal governance of ECCE strengthened	No	Yes		
Strategy 5.2: Harmonise data collection procedures	% of schools responding to the annual school census	95 (2023)	100		
	Centralised data hub established	No	Yes		
Strategy 5.3: Develop Kiribati Education Vision 2028-2036	Long-term plan for ECCE available	No	Yes	MoE reports	National, Yearly
	Mid-Term evaluation of ESSP 2024-2027 conducted	No	Yes (2026)		
Strategy 5.4: Strengthen MoE engagement with national stakeholders and development partners	Number of organisations attending EPIK (including line ministries and development partners)	7 (2022)	15	EPIK/LEG reports	National, Yearly
Strategy 5.5: Implement the Teacher Registration Regulations	% of teachers registered	n/a	90	Teacher Registrar Reports	National, Yearly
	% of teachers fully registered	n/a	70		
Strategy 5.6: Strengthen the Kiribati Qualifications Authority	National Qualifications Framework and NQAF are developed for secondary schools including higher education and training providers	No	Yes	KQA reports	National, Yearly

7 Financing and costing considerations

In this section we consider the ESSP 2024-2027 programmatic priorities developed via consultations among Kiribati stakeholders and assess the impact of these priorities on sector financial requirements as well as the credibility and feasibility of the plan within the context of government financial capacity. The financial credibility and feasibility of the ESSP plan is assessed over a period of four years (the same period as the ESSP); 2024 to 2027.

Recent trends in budget allocations to the education sector have been considered, and projections have been made for education sector and total government budget allocations based on the current policy settings. We have also estimated expenditures by education level and by the economic classification based on the same policy setting (before the implementation of the ESSP)

The cost estimates for the ESSP activities were provided by MoE Heads of Divisions who conducted a costing analysis using a basic template to calculate the cost of implementing each activity for which they were responsible. Costs were estimated across the years of implementation from 2024 to 2027 for the following expenditure types: meeting, travel, technical assistance (TA), teaching and learning materials (TLM), equipment and materials, infrastructure, training/workshop, and other types of expenditure. The activity costs excluded labour costs for personnel whose salaries are covered in the government budget.

7.1 Recent and projected education sector budget allocations for the ESSP period

7.1.1 Recent trends in Education Sector Budget Allocations

The Kiribati Education Sector Analysis 2023 summarises recent trends in Education sector budget allocations, including MoE and MEHR's budget for KIT and MTC.

Table 1: Trend in education sector budget[16] allocations 2019-2023 (AUD million)

Summary of Education Spending	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Public education budgets (current AUD m)	48.9m	57.9m	58.6m	75.4m	74.7m
Public education budgets (constant 2019 AUD m)	48.9m	59.2m	57.4m	67.8m	64.3m
Public education budgets as a share of total GoK budget (%)	24%	22%	21%	25%	23%
Public education budgets as a share of GDP (%)	19%	23%	19%	23%	23%
Public education spending per school-age individual (constant 2019 AUD)	956	1,146	1,101	1,288	1,211

Source: MFED budget books 2019 to 2023 and World Bank Data Bank for GDP figures.

Between 2019 and 2023 the total budget allocation for Education (recurrent and capital) increased by 53% in real terms, which was mainly attributable to increases in the Ministry of Education Budget. In constant terms the budget allocation also increased by 31%. However, the increase in the education budget has been proportionate with a significant increase in GDP and the total government period over the same period, which is due to strong fishing revenues over recent years. The Education Sector Analysis found that education budgets as a percentage of total government spending have remained relatively stable over much of the last decade however the budget as a percentage of GDP has increased over the period (which is due in general

[16] Education sector budget includes capital expenditures for secondary school construction under MLPED

to higher levels of government spending). The total education budget allocation per school age individual[17] in constant terms increased by 27% over the five-year period from 2019 to 2023.

7.1.2 Projected education sector budget allocations based on current policy settings

Projecting an education sector resource envelope until 2027 is subject to a fair level of uncertainty – especially with government expenditure in Kiribati highly dependent on revenue from fishing licence which can vary widely from year to year. In this section we have made projections for Education Sector Budget Allocations (Table 2) that are based on the current education policy settings and practices prior to the adoption of the proposed ESSP programme proposals. The projection of education budget allocations for the sector have been derived from the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as set out in the MFED budget books and recent trends in budget allocations. MFED budget books for 2023 were the primary sources for the MTEF, overall government spending and for education sector budget allocations. The 2023 MFED Budget Books projected total government and education sector allocations in the MTEF for the period from 2023 to 2026. 2027 projected total government and education sector allocations were estimated based on trends in the MTEF.

For projecting growth in GDP and inflation, we have used estimates from the ADB for 2023 and 2024[18]. Based on this, Kiribati's GDP growth is expected to be 2.3% in 2023 and 2.8% for 2024. Inflation is projected to be 6% in 2023 and then reducing to 3% in 2024. For the period 2025 to 2027 we have used the historical trends in GDP (2.3%)[19] and inflation (3.5%)[20] growth over the past 10 years (2013 to 2022) to make estimates.

When analysing the share of education budgets as a percentage of total GOK budgets and GDP over the four-year period we see these remain stable (22% or 23% of total GOK expenditure and 22% of GDP). This gives us a high degree of confidence in the estimated sector allocations below which have been derived from the MTEF and recent trends.

Table 2: Projected trend in education sector recurrent budget allocations 2024-2027 (AUD million)

Projections for Education sector Budget Allocations 2024-2027	2024	2025	2026	2027
Public education budgets (current AUD m)	75.5m	76.4m	77.2m	78.1m
Public education budgets (constant 2019 AUD m)	61.3m	60.2m	58.8m	57.5m
Public education budgets as a share of total GoK budget (%)	22%	22%	23%	22%
Public education budgets as a share of GDP (%)	22%	22%	22%	22%
Estimated School age individuals	53,591	54,071	54,551	55,031
Public education spending per school-age individual (constant 2019 AUD)	1,144	1,114	1,078	1,045

Source: 2023 MFED Budget Books (for2024-2026) and author's estimation (for 2027)

Public recurrent education budgets have been allocated by education level and economic classification in Table3 and Table 4. This has been done using the same sources as above tables (MFED budget books, the MTEF and using estimates based on recent trends). This has also been done with the assumption that the proportionate allocation of expenditure to each cost centre within MoE will remain the same[21] (as individual cost centre allocations are not specified in the MTEF – only the overall Ministry expenditure).

[17] Persons 4 to 24 years of age
[18] Asian Development Outlook September 2023 - The Pacific
[19] World Bank GDP data Kiribati 2013-2022
[20] World Bank GDP Deflators Kiribati 2013-2022
[21] the assumption is based upon the historical trend of limited change in allocations.

Table 3: Projected trend in public recurrent education budget allocations by education level 2024-2027 (current AUD million)

Education level	2024	2025	2026	2027
ECCE	2.5m	2.5m	2.5m	2.5m
Primary	15.4m	15.7m	16.0m	16.4m
Junior secondary	10.2m	10.4m	10.6m	10.8m
Senior secondary	14.6m	14.7m	14.9m	15.0m
Tertiary education	22.4m	22.4m	22.4m	22.4m
Public formal TVET	5.0m	5.1m	5.2m	5.3m
Special needs education	0.1m	0.1m	0.1m	0.1m
Teacher education	2.1m	2.2m	2.2m	2.2m
Cross-sectoral administration	3.3m	3.3m	3.4m	3.5m
TOTAL	**75.5m**	**76.4m**	**77.2m**	**78.1m**

Table 4: Projected trend in public recurrent education budget allocations by economic classification 2027 (current AUD million)

Economic classification	2024	2025	2026	2027
Personnel and related salary expenditure	35.1m	35.8m	36.6m	37.3m
Goods and Services	8.5m	8.6m	8.7m	8.9m
Subsidies and Transfers	6.8m	6.8m	6.8m	6.8m
Scholarships and other welfare	25.1m	25.1m	25.1m	25.1m
TOTAL	**75.5m**	**76.4m**	**77.2m**	**78.1m**

7.2 Resource implications for ESSP Activities

7.2.1 Estimated Cost of ESSP Activities 2024-2027

The total estimated cost for all ESSP activities, excluding salary costs for MoE officals as well as school teachers, is $21.1M over the four years of implementation from 2024-2027. It is expected that $4.3M will be spend in year 1 (2024); $5.8M in year 2 (2025); $4.4M in year 3 (2026) and $6.6M in year 4 (2027).

The largest costs are for activities conducted by FMU for building and maintenance of schools ($7.5M), and KTC costs for continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers and school leaders ($6.1M). Other large costs are for curriculum development activities by CDRC ($1.3M) and primary school initiatives by SIU ($2.5M).

Table 5: Estimated Cost of ESSP Activities by MoE Division 2024-2027 (current AUD million)

Division	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ADMIN	$10,250	$10,250	$15,750	$10,250	$46,500
ADM-TR	$16,732	$40,119	$29,642	$5,775	$92,268
FMU	$381,200	$2,246,408	$1,416,817	$3,471,725	$7,516,151
KTC	$1,538,750	$1,538,750	$1,538,750	$1,538,750	$6,155,000
PPRD	$44,140	$38,760	$37,420	$31,660	$151,980
TSIMU	$308,100	$148,500	$127,300	$125,300	$709,200
CDRC	$716,582	$430,080	$148,040	$52,700	$1,347,402
EAU	$27,400	$152,000	$41,892	$18,950	$240,242
KNLA	$285,700	$220,060	$80,000	$85,000	$670,760
KQA	$20,025	$28,875	$24,620	$45,540	$119,060
SIU-ECCE	$112,482	$121,320	$39,030	$300,200	$573,032
SIU_PS	$636,749	$636,749	$636,749	$636,749	$2,546,996
SIU-JSS	$109,932	$109,932	$109,932	$109,932	$439,727
SIU_SSS	$137,100	$137,100	$137,100	$137,100	$548,400
Total	$4,345,142	$5,858,903	$4,383,042	$6,569,631	$21,156,717

7.2.2 Estimated Cost of ESSP Activities by Goal and Strategy 2024-2027

The estimated costs by goal and strategy are shown in Table 6. Across the four years of the ESSP, $6.9M will be spent on Goal 1: Dedicated teachers deliver quality teaching and provide learning opportunities to all students; $3.8M will be spent on Goal 2: Students are learning better and have improved learning outcomes; $2.5M will be spent on Goal 3: Schools and their communities have strong resilience to face challenges; $6.0M will be spent on Goal 4: Students access to quality education services and learning supports; and $1.9M will be spent on Goal 5: MoE delivers efficient and effective education services.

Table 6: Estimated Cost of ESSP Activities by Strategy 2024-2027 (current AUD million)

Strategy	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Goal 1: Dedicated teachers deliver quality teaching and provide learning opportunities to all students	**$1,358,920**	**$1,369,150**	**$1,298,050**	**$2,873,350**	**$6,899,470**
1.1: Review and harmonise existing approaches of service providers in continuous professional development of ECCE, primary, JSS and SSS teachers	$249,800	$197,300	$188,700	$201,500	$837,300
1.2: Improve teachers' well-being and conditions of service	$8,200	$3,000	$17,500	$1,503,000	$1,531,700
1.3: Provide professional trainings to ECCE, Primary, JSS and SSS teachers and school leaders	$747,970	$815,900	$738,900	$815,900	$3,118,670
1.4: Provide support to teachers and school leaders on qualification upgrading to Advance Diploma, Graduate Certificate/Diploma	$1,750	$1,750	$1,750	$1,750	$7,000
1.5: Provide support towards the institutional strengthening of KTC	$351,200	$351,200	$351,200	$351,200	$1,404,800

Goal 2: Students are learning better and have improved learning outcomes	**$1,103,721**	**$1,171,187**	**$817,169**	**$673,527**	**$3,765,603**
2.1: Reform Foundational Learning in Years 1-3 to comprise three learning areas, Language, Mathematics and Personal Development	$121,420	$175,090	$24,000	$24,000	$344,510
2.2: Improve teaching and learning and assessment beyond foundational level or year 4 and above	$292,617	$178,997	$105,407	$99,627	$676,647
2.3: Link TVET elements to the promotion of Cultural History and Heritage, life skills, and alternative pathways	$297,500	$297,500	$313,270	$343,040	$1,251,310
2.4: Introduce digital education and more innovative activities into the teaching and learning process, directed towards students' active involvement and fostering critical thinking	$375,992	$259,360	$229,652	$206,860	$1,071,864
2.5: Provide all schools with quality teaching and learning resources.	$16,192	$260,240	$144,840		$421,272
Goal 3: Schools and their communities have strong resilience to face challenges	**$738,356**	**$601,136**	**$435,386**	**$758,086**	**$2,532,964**
3.1: Utilise the existing curriculum and possible modifications during future revisions for building capacities of students towards preparedness for environmental and health-related crises	$243,260			$52,700	$295,960
3.2: Develop and implement a resilience strategy for schools in good partnership with island communities.	$384,988	$477,078	$327,078	$597,078	$1,786,222
3.3: Build capacities of MoE staff, school leaders and teachers in disaster risk management (DRM)	$1,800	$12,000			$13,800
3.4: Strengthen the role of traditional Kiribati culture in education, through learners' active engagement with traditional heritage and participation in cultural activities	$108,308	$112,058	$108,308	$108,308	$436,982
Goal 4: Students access to quality education services and learning supports	**$445,400**	**$2,177,058**	**$1,479,967**	**$1,943,025**	**$6,045,451**
4.1: Construct, expand and/or renovate schools, with a particular focus on inclusion, accessibility and equity issues and WASH	$243,500	$2,014,908	$1,307,317	$1,517,225	$5,082,951
4.2: Improve provision of transport to students, making it possible for a larger number of children to reach school					$0
4.3: Provide internet to Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools, including Primary School head teachers	$137,900	$93,500	$100,800	$100,800	$433,000
4.4: Expand Model Inclusion Schools and islets primary schools to JSS.	$24,000	$24,000	$24,000	$285,000	$357,000
4.5: Facilitate re-entry into formal education and training	$40,000	$44,650	$47,850	$40,000	$172,500

Goal 5: MoE delivers efficient and effective education services	**$698,745**	**$540,372**	**$352,470**	**$321,643**	**$1,913,230**
5.1: Institutional strengthening of MoE to improve efficient and effective service delivery.	$441,800	$332,060	$192,000	$200,000	$1,165,860
5.2: Harmonise data collection procedures	$127,000	$53,100	$24,400	$24,400	$228,900
5.3: Develop the Kiribati Education Vision 2028-2036	$3,120	$400	$12,160	$1,400	$17,080
5.4: Strengthen MoE engagement with national stakeholders and development partners	$90,068	$90,468	$90,068	$90,068	$360,672
5.5: Ensure registration of all teachers	$16,732	$40,119	$29,642	$5,775	$92,268
5.6: Strengthen the Kiribati Qualification Authority.	$20,025	$24,225	$4,200		$48,450
Total Cost	**$4,345,142**	**$5,858,903**	**$4,383,042**	**$6,569,631**	**$21,156,717**

7.3 ESSP funding gap and total costing over the period 2024-2027

ESSP funding gap analysis

This section presents a summary of the ESSP proposed activities that are not currently covered by domestic and external resources (the funding gap). Funding gap analysis compares the cost estimate provided by MoE Heads of Divisions for four years (2024-2027)[22] with the MoE budget allocation from MFED 2024.

The cost estimates for the ESSP activities were provided by MoE Heads of Divisions who conducted a costing analysis using a basic template to calculate the cost of implementing each activity for which they were responsible. Costs were estimated across the years of implementation from 2024 to 2027 for the following expenditure types: meeting, travel, technical assistance (TA), teaching and learning materials (TLM), equipment and materials, infrastructure, training/workshop, and other types of expenditure. The activity costs excluded labour costs for personnel whose salaries are covered in the government budget.

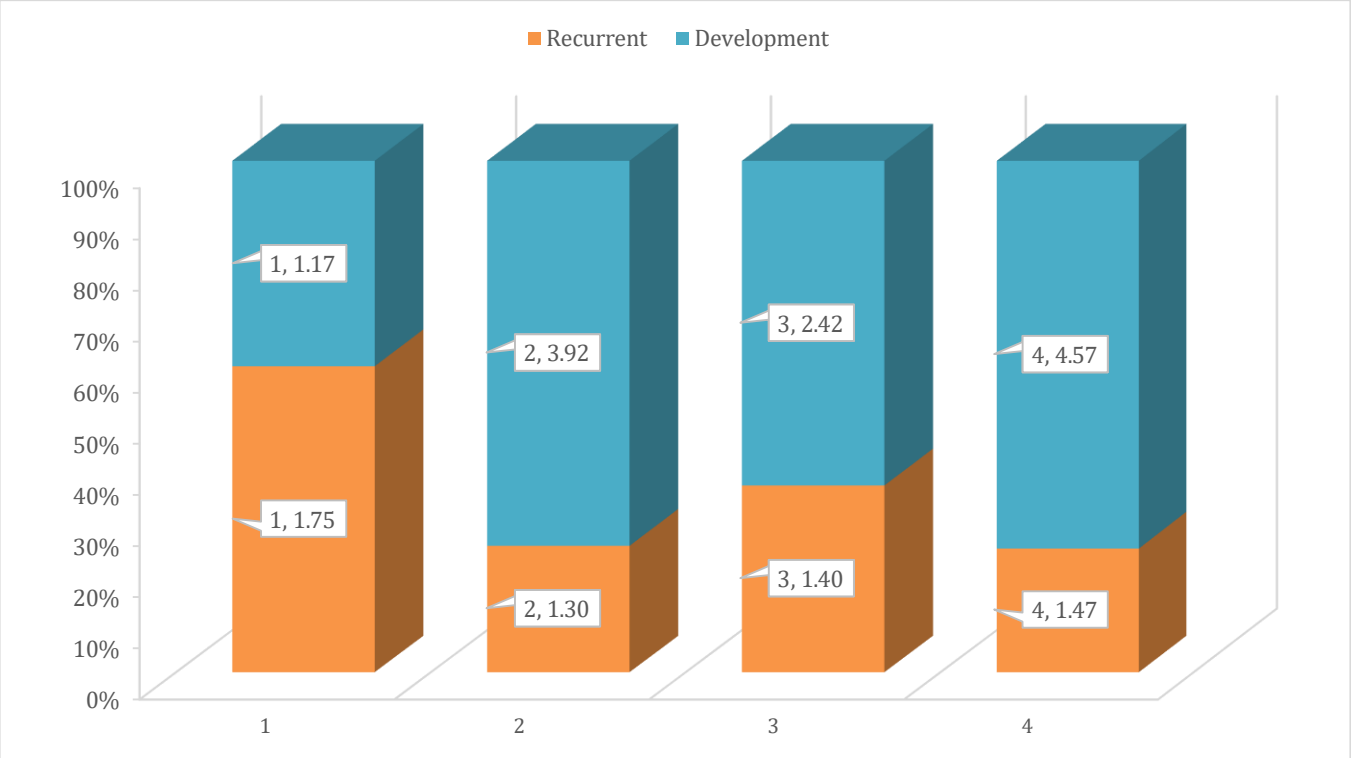
The total funding gap for the implementation of the ESSP over the four-year period is estimated at AUD 18.0m as set out in Table 7. The funding gap is equivalent to 5.9% of the projected education sector budget and 1.2% of the projected total GoK budget over the four-year period. Figure 7 shows the projected funding gap in the recurrent and development budgets.

Table 7:Projected funding gap for implementation of ESSP 2024-2027 (current AUD)

	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
Funding gap (million)	2.9m	5.2m	3.8m	6.0m	18.0m
Funding gap as a share of projected total education sector budget (%)	3.9%	6.8%	5.0%	7.7%	5.9%
Funding gap as a share of total projected GoK budget (%)	0.8%	1.4%	1.0%	1.6%	1.2%

[22] in 2024 dollars; not inflation adjusted

Figure 6 Projected funding gap for implementation of ESSP 2024-2027 (current AUD million)



The funding gap by MoE division is presented in **Error! Reference source** not found. Table 8. The division with the largest funding gap is Facilities Management with a total of AUD 7.4m anticipated over the four-year period. Teacher education also has a significant funding gap of AUD 4.7m over the period of the ESSP. Primary education has a projected funding gap of AUD 2.1m over the period of the ESSP.

Table 8: Projected funding gap for implementation of ESSP by MoE Division 2024-2027 (current AUD)

MoE Division	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ECCE	75,562	81,320	6,720	273,200	436,802
Primary (SIU)	319,063	610,884	610,701	610,515	2,151,163
Junior secondary (SIU)	62,906	79,443	78,977	78,501	299,827
Senior secondary (SIU)	127,058	127,600	127,440	127,276	509,374
Curriculum & Assessment (CDRC)	517,190	555,818	148,040	52,700	1,273,748
Facilities Management (FMU)	360,200	2,217,258	1,387,095	3,441,421	7,405,974
Teacher education (KTC)	988,830	1,217,938	1,256,490	1,217,370	4,680,627
Cross-sectoral administration	469,529	332,617	211,276	238,075	1,251,497
TOTAL	**2,920,338**	**5,222,878**	**3,826,738**	**6,039,058**	**18,009,012**

The funding gap by type of expenditure is presented in Table 9. The category with the largest funding gap is equipment and materials (excluding teaching and learning materials) with a total of AUD 7.4m anticipated

over the four-year period. Infrastructure also has an anticipated significant funding gap of AUD 4.7m over the period of the ESSP. AUD 2.9m is anticipated as the funding gap for travel and meetings/ workshops in South Tarawa and outer island schools under the ESSP.

Table 9: Projected funding gap for implementation of ESSP by expenditure type 2024-2027 (current AUD)

Expenditure Type	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Travel	75,562	81,320	6,720	273,200	436,802
Meeting/Workshop	381,969	690,327	689,678	689,016	2,450,990
Technical Assistance	127,058	127,600	127,440	127,276	509,374
Teaching & Learning Materials	517,190	555,818	148,040	52,700	1,273,748
Equipment & Materials (Other)	360,200	2,217,258	1,387,095	3,441,421	7,405,974
Infrastructure	988,830	1,217,938	1,256,490	1,217,370	4,680,627
Other	469,529	332,617	211,276	238,075	1,251,497
Total	**2,920,338**	**5,222,878**	**3,826,738**	**6,039,058**	**18,009,012**

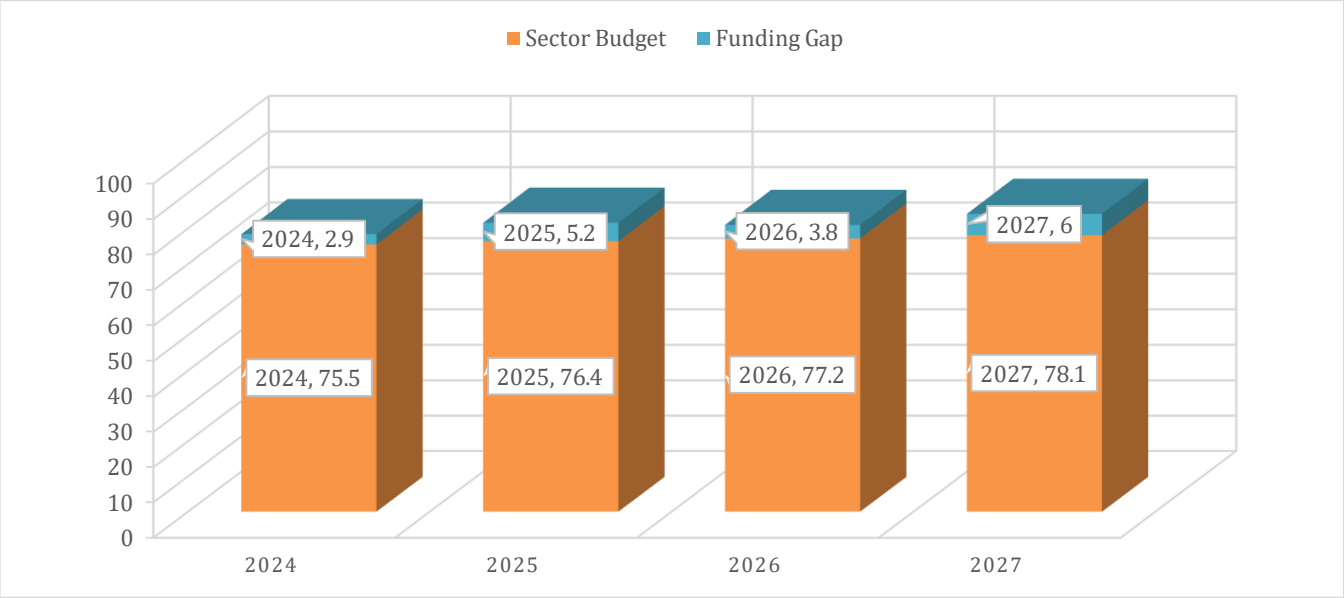
Projected sector budget with implementation of ESSP 2024-2027

This section presents the estimated sector budget with the implementation of the ESSP over the period 2024-2027. The projected budget allocation is based on 2023 MFED budget book which includes salary for MoE staff and schoolteachers. The projected budget allocation for four-year period is 307.3m, compared to the planned expenditures for the implementation of the ESSP estimated at AUD 325.3m as set out in Table 10. The funding gap makes up a small proportion of the projected sector budget with the ESSP implementation.

Table 10: Projected sector budget with implementation of ESSP 2024-2027 (current AUD)

	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
Projected sector allocation with current policy settings	75.5m	76.4m	77.2m	78.1m	307.3m
Projected funding gap for implementation of ESSP	2.9m	5.2m	3.8m	6.0m	18.0m
Planned expenditures by MoE for implementation of ESSP2023-2027	78.4m	81.6m	81m	84.1m	325.3m

Table 11: Projected sector budget 2024-2027 with ESSP implementation (current AUD million)



7.4 Financial credibility and feasibility of the ESSP

It is necessary to assess the feasibility and credibility of the proposed ESSP strategies and activities relative to the estimated public financial resources likely to be available during the plan period and to quantify any gaps that would need to be financed with additional allocation of national resources or with support from external partners.

The projected funding gap of AUD 18.0m over the four-year period is only 5.9% of the projected total MoE budget over the period of the ESSP. The projected funding gap also only accounts for 1.2% of the total projected GoK budget (%) over the four-year period.

The education sector in Kiribati is also well supported by external partners. The most significant development partner by far in terms of education financing is Australia (DFAT), with a contribution of $50m over ten years for the EduKAIT program with the initial contract term of $25m over five years (2024-2028). The next most significant development partners are New Zealand (MFAT), the People's Republic of China and Japan. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will provide $5m funding as a Multiplier Grant and $2.5m as a System Transformation Grant. Other multilateral partners such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, World bank among others will continue to provide financial support during ESSP implementation period.

It should be noted that external financing for education is directed mainly to the development budget. Given all these factors, it seems reasonable and achievable that the projected funding gap can be met by either additional education sector budget allocation by the GoK or through external partner support.

Annex 1. List of resource materials used in developing the ESSP

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