DEVELOPMENT PARTNER’S APPRAISAL
AND ENDORSEMENT REPORT

"NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN UNTIL 2020"

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

Development Partner’s Appraisal of NSED
COUNTRY: REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

OVERALL COMMENTS

The “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020” (NSED) is the second comprehensive strategic framework and plan for the education sector. The development of the document was initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2010 in order to update the goals previously outlined in the “National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan 2005-2015” (NSED 2005). The NSED builds upon the accomplishments of the previous strategy which were achieved through cooperation with multiple development partners. A significant development for the current NSED is approval of the plan, and the 3 year costed Mid-term Action Plan (MTAP), by the Government of Tajikistan. The previous NSED 2005 was accepted only at the ministry level which restricted its ability to be fully implemented.

The NSED focuses on increasing pre-primary coverage, modernization of general education—which includes orienting the education system to competency-based learning and the labor market/household needs, and restructuring of vocational education. It was developed through a 2 year process of planning utilizing a working group model. Working groups existed on 2 levels. The Ministry of Education (MoE) appointed a working group consisting of university professors and educational specialists in the areas of concern for the NSED. Several sub-working groups were formed based on expertise in specific areas of emphasis in the NSED (pre-primary, general education, vocational education). The sub-working groups combined representatives from the MoE, development partners, and representatives from the centralized working group.

The working group approach allowed for active dialogue between multiple stakeholders. However, the working group modality also meant that organization was not always a clear as it could have been. The active dialogue is a reason why the process of drafting the NSED was drawn out (2 years). The MoE actively sought the input of development partners in the drafts of the NSED. Several versions of the NSED were passed among various stakeholders, including development partners, which also extended the process, but the active dialogue was welcome.

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

The 3 year costed Mid-term Action Plan (2012-2014) covering all levels of education (from early childhood to postgraduate) is the first of the subsequent short-term budgets for the current NSED.
The development of the Mid-term Action Plan is a sign of increased ministry capacity as they took the leading role in developing and costing the plan. The MTAP indicates activities, their estimated cost, amount and source of available funds (republican budget, local budget, external) and funding gap in one table making it comprehensive. However, a financial gap analysis is not provided like it was done for the previous 2006 Sector Plan. The funding gap to implement the Plan is estimated at US$ 131.1 million (out of the Plan’s total budget at US$ 500 million). This gap is mainly due to huge needs in infrastructure upgrade and equipment provision.

CONCERNS

The major concerns of the group of resident international development partners are as follows: (i) the NSED is overambitious; it is unrealistic to achieve all results declared in the NSED, they should be prioritized given the country’s capacity; and (ii) some of the NSED initiatives are not supported by solid analytical work.

The strategy was developed with a goal of updating the plans of the MoE to more accurately fit their view of the situation in Tajikistan. There are different studies and analytical reports supporting the strategy revision (EMIS data analysis, pre-school sector analysis, girls education and adults education surveys, drop out studies, textbooks assessments, student assessments, labor market and VET studies etc.). However, several of the specific initiatives included are not based on empirical data and none are prioritized over the others.

Although the NSED clearly articulates the strategic direction for the next decade (increasing pre-primary coverage, orienting general education to competency-based learning and the labor market/household needs, and restructuring of vocational education) it does not provide clear priorities of specific goals in the likely case of the resources shortfall. At the same time development partners acknowledge the reasons for such a lack of prioritization. These reasons include scarce available resources on the one hand, and huge needs on the other hand, which make prioritization a very challenging task. In addition the MoE tries to do its best in attracting external funds from different donors which in turn have their own priorities in investments.

This information should be understood considering that the development of the NSED also demonstrates increased capacity of the MoE. The initiative to develop a new plan that would be comprehensive and be accepted at the national level was undertaken by the MoE, demonstrating ownership of the process and resulting plan. Much less technical assistance from the development partners was utilized in creating the document in comparison with the previous NSED.

The NSED and midterm plan of action for the education sector are comprehensive in their approach and take into account the main challenges facing the education system in Tajikistan today. However in its attempt to be comprehensive, the plan, in parts, becomes overambitious and beyond of the capacity for implementation of the MoE.

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

The need for financial resources for the education sector continues to be far greater than what is available at present to the Government of Tajikistan, either from local resources or from external donors. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has demonstrated their commitment to education through annually increasing the education budget in many ways—nominally, in proportion to GDP and the portion of the national budget which is utilized for education. However, their capacity to raise total revenues is extremely limited, both due to an overall low economic condition of the country, as well as effective fiscal systems for revenue generation not yet being in place.

CONCLUSION
The development partners endorse the NSED and its Mid-term Action Plan acknowledging strengths and shortcomings of both documents. The strategy represents an important step forward for the education sector by shifting the main focus from access to quality and relevance, and for the MoE as they took the leadership role in developing the plan. The process was open and included input from ministry officials, local and international educational specialists, and development partners. The MoE has taken on the additional challenge of having it accepted at the national level. This will increase the capacity of the MoE to focus their work on the outlined plans and to seek funding for the included initiatives. Unfortunately, there are multiple shortcomings of the NSED. Additional work should be done to prioritize the initiatives of the document; to develop clear implementation strategies; and outline clear indicators for monitoring progress. A joint sector analysis would be a helpful step.
SIGNATURES OF DONORS AND PARTNERS WHO ARE RECOMMENDING SECTOR PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT

Name of Agency | Signature
--- | ---
Mr. Edgor Faizov | 
Chief Executive Officer, Aga Khan Foundation in Tajikistan

Mr. Eduard Auer | 
Ambassador, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Stefan Erber | 
Country Director, German International Cooperation Office in Tajikistan

Ms. Zuhra Khalimova | 
Executive Director, Open Society Institute in Tajikistan

Ms. Laylee Moshiri | 
Representative, UNICEF Tajikistan

Mr. Charles Specht | 
Acting Country Director, USAID in Tajikistan

Ms. Marsha M. Olive | 
Country Manager, World Bank, Tajikistan Country Office

Ms. Alzira Fereira | 
Representative/Country Director, World Food Programme in Tajikistan

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PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

EDUCATION PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

Have the principles of plan preparation—country ownership, capacity development, participation—been respected?

The Ministry of Education initiated planning for the revision to the NSED 2005 in 2010, the declared “Year of Education and Technical Knowledge,” and directed the 2 year drafting process. The initial goal was to update the first education strategy to more adequately reflect the perceived needs of the education sector given the developments already achieved in the first years of NSED 2005. The MoE took the additional step to develop an education plan that would be accepted by the entire government as the previous NSED 2005 was only accepted at the ministerial level.

Multiple parties participated in the preparation of the NSED. This allowed for open sharing of ideas, but leadership of the process was not consistently clear. The initial draft of the NSED was compiled by a team of international consultants with the advice of specialists of the MoE. The initial draft was based on materials prepared by the Working Group of the MoE of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Working Group consisted of distinguished university professors and other educational professionals with expertise in priority areas of the strategy (no teachers, school directors, or lower level stakeholders were included). Additional sub-working groups based on the priority areas of the NSED (pre-primary education, general education, vocational education, etc.) also contributed to the plan. Members of the sub-working groups included development partners, local NGO and ministry officials, led by a member(s) of the Working Group of the MoE. All of these members provided input on the initial draft and subsequent drafts. In addition, as the goal was to receive approval for the plan by the Government, the NSED was submitted to other relevant ministries for their approval and their suggestions were incorporated.

The NSED aligns well with other national development documents, particularly in the area of economic development. The emphasis of the NSED is on the creation of an education system to be the basis for social and economic development and focused on accomplishment of the following objectives: (1) ensuring wellbeing of citizens and social stability in the society; and (2) establishing skilled personnel base for economic growth in priority sectors, developing technologically effective productions and attracting investments into the country’s economy. Noticeably minimal in the plan is “rights based” language for education, however there are plans to extend access to education for the most marginalized populations, street children and children with disabilities.

STAKEHOLDERS’ ENGAGEMENT

What are the levels of commitment and accountability among relevant in-country stakeholders and development partners?

The NSED was developed with limited technical support from development partners. As mentioned above, the initial plan was compiled by a consultancy team hired by the World Bank. However, the consultants acted more as guides in the process and the content of the education plan was significantly influenced by the Working Group of the MoE and the sub-working groups. Subsequent
drafts of the NSED were written with more direct control of the MoE with review and commentary of development partners and other stakeholders.

The other area of major technical support was in the development of the Mid-term Action Plan, which is described in detail below. Once the initiatives to be contained in the Mid-term Action Plan were established, development partners were asked to provide estimates for initiatives if they had completed similar projects recently or planned on implementing projects which fit under the goals of the initiatives.

The alignment of development partner’s work and the NSED flows from two sources. First, the NSED was developed with full inclusion of development partners; thus, many projects and goals of development partners were directly included in the NSED. Secondly, in the development of the Mid-term Action Plan the development partners were asked to include line items that fit within their current plans or agreements with the MoE. There are still cases where the goals or projects of development partners fall outside the strategic goals of the NSED, for example girls’ education at the compulsory level (which is not acknowledged as a problem by the MoE), and thus the plans of development partners do not fully align with the NSED.

APPRAISING THE EDUCATION PLAN

Education sector analysis
What was the empirical evidence available to develop the plan and has this been well used?

Although the strategy revision was supported by different studies and analytical reports (EMIS data analysis, pre-school sector analysis, girls education and adults education surveys, drop out studies, textbooks assessments, student assessments, labor market and VET studies etc.) the process would benefit from a comprehensive Sector Review which would be fed by those studies and is lacking. NSED 2005 was developed with the primary goal of increasing access to compulsory education for all children. The MoE believes it has achieved universal compulsory education (in Tajikistan, 90% of population studies 9 years\(^1\)) and the foundation of the current NSED is the modernization of the education system—which includes an increased focus on the quality of education- and also the role of education in economic development. The deficiencies of the sector described in the NSED are the perceived lack of integration between the education system and the strategic economic goals of the country. Although there are no standardized measures of quality or student performance the NSED notes a lack of quality of education based on different assessments conducted by the MOE and various projects of development partners. The emphasis on pre-primary education is based on empirical data which has consistently shown that less than 10% of children age 1-6 are covered with pre-primary education.

The data collection capacity of the MoE has significantly increased recently with the full implementation of the EMIS program at the level of general education. Through the program each school director completes an extensive survey about students (number in each grade, ethnicity,

\(^1\) Mark Agranovich. 2008/2009 National School Census and EMIS data analysis (funded by EDF)
completion rates, reasons for leaving school), as well as information on the infrastructure (library information, classrooms, and laboratories). The information is then compiled at the district level and forwarded on to the provincial level, where the information in compiled and sent to the MoE. While data gathering capacities of the MoE have significantly increased, data analysis is still a weakness.

The MoE publishes Annual Statistical Reports based on the EMIS data. The reports are readily available online and the printed copies have been openly shared with development partners. The next step would be for the MOE to conduct sophisticated analyses of the data which is currently being done by consultants hired by the development partners.

To date, there is little empirical information on the quality of education. Thus the current NSED is based on perceptions of poor quality, but without any established standardized measures. There are plans within the NSED and Mid-term Action Plan to develop assessments of children’s learning and quality and systems for conducting such work. A National Testing Center has been recently established to begin developing standardized assessments. These initiatives will substantially increase empirical knowledge of quality of education.

The NSED only superficially addresses areas of vulnerability. It lists the following risks in a short section of the document:

- lack of resources for systematic implementation of the NSED up to 2020, as a result separate measures will be undertaken and the systemic effect will not be achieved;
- lack of support from private sector to solve existing problems in the education system;
- unpreparedness of part of educational community for innovations, and unwillingness to change routine life and work methods;
- poor or improper media coverage of information in the education system, which result in lack of support for education reforms from the part of the community due to low understanding of essence and objectives of the reforms;
- insufficiently trained management personnel to solve large-scale complex tasks, as a result - implementation measures will not be well coordinated, specific results will not be on the required level, monitoring of National Strategy implementation will be behind schedule and may become more of a correction tool, instead of performing a feedback function in a process of management.

**PLAN DESIGN**

Are priorities and programs proposed sufficient to reach goals? Do priorities take into account risks and constraints faced by the education sector?

**POLICY PRIORITIES**

While there is an empirical basis to the NSED some of the initiatives are based on perceptions of the education system or current political strategies for economic development. A weakness of the Ministry of Education is planning and prioritization based on empirical data. This is due in part to a lack of data for some areas and partly because of low data management capacity. Prioritization is also difficult in an environment of such intense need.
The priorities of the NSED are based on a fundamental change from NSED 2005, which was arrived through analyses of empirical data. The emphasis of NSED 2005 was on access to basic education. Analyses of EMIS data and other data from the state statistical agency have been used to support the change. The same data also demonstrated the very low coverage of pre-primary education. Thus, the priorities of the current NSED has changed to increasing pre-primary coverage, "modernizing" the curriculum of general education, and increasing coverage of VET.

There are no existing system-wide measures or assessments of quality of education or children's learning outcomes in use in the education system. Thus, this initiative was not driven by comprehensive empirical analyses, although various evaluations by development partners provide some insight into the topic. The NSED and the mid-term action plan have goals to establish assessment systems (with funding fully accounted for) that would provide information on learning outcomes and quality of education. As mentioned above, a National Testing Center has been established that will develop and implement standardized assessments of learning.

There are several studies and reports on the labor market and employment in the country but an analysis of the specific needs of VET is not conducted yet. The perception that there is a lack of skilled workers in the country is also well founded given the economic situation of the country. The strategic economic development emphases of the country are directed by the goals of the president as approved by parliament. There is no data that link the economic sector and education sector, other than MoE data which catalog the number of institutions, teachers, and students of the VET program. The NSED indicates that a market analysis should be conducted, but there is not a concrete plan for implementation outlined and the initiative is not included in the Mid-term action plan.

The initiatives which expand the coverage of EMIS and Per-capita Financing to other levels of education are the result of their successful implementation in general education. These two programs were key initiatives of NSED 2005. EMIS has significantly increased the data collection capacity of the MoE. Per-capita Financing has had several positive impacts on budgeting and thus will be expanded.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Monitoring and Evaluation section of the NSED is weak. It simply lists 13 vague measures and the annex of key indicators only lists 43 similarly unclear measures. The measures vary between realistic measures, such as "increasing the coverage of children at the age of 3-6 by preschool education programs," and unrealistic goals, such as, "reducing the share of unemployed people at the age of 18-24 in the total number of unemployed." The list also includes indicators for which no established measures exist, such as "increasing the share of children demonstrating readiness for school education."

There are few clear descriptive or quantitative outcomes in the NSED or Mid-term Action Plan. This stems from the lack of clear focus and prioritization in the NSED, which spills into the Implementation Plan, Mid-Term Action Plan, and Key Indicators document. This is also due to the poor data management capacity of the MoE.
Although not listed in the monitoring and evaluation section, the NSED includes reference to an ambitious target of increasing coverage of pre-primary education by 2020 from 5% to 30% of all children aged 1-5, and coverage of the 6 year old population from 7% to 50%. Although an admirable target, this is highly unrealistic given the high population of children and tremendous institutional expansion that would be required to reach this target.

The mid-term action plan contains more detailed indicators for specific initiatives, but the quality is similarly poor. Many indicators do not include targets or thresholds, they are a simply a report of the number of children served, teachers trained, or institutions established. In addition, many of the indicators are in fact inputs, which is due to the fact that many of the initiatives are the establishment of programs, regulatory frameworks, or systems have been established.

There are initiatives within the NSED and Mid-Term Action Plan to develop new assessment systems for quality of education. These initiatives will help provide a basis for establishing better measures of learning.

Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation is simply assigned to the “respective department/unit of the secretariat of the MoE.” Resources are not allocated based on results of monitoring and evaluation.

**PLAN FINANCING**

The NSED only addresses financing in a short, 5-paragraph section. It mentions that financing will be planned at short-term intervals and that the majority of financing will come from the state budget. It does set a target of 6% of GDP for education expenditures by 2015 to be increased to approximately 7% by 2020. The 3 year Mid-Term Action Plan (2012-2014) is the current short-term budget document.

The sources of financing listed in the Mid-term Action Plan include the state budget (republican and local) and external funding from development partners. The state share of the budget is approximately (60%). The projected domestic financing for the mid-term action plan is based on budget allocation predictions from the Ministry of Finance which take into account macro-indicators. The external funding from development partners stands now at (10%). Approximately 26% of the Mid-term Action Plan is unfunded, meaning that there are no state or development partner commitments to cover the costs. There is not a specific plan to seek the outstanding funds. There are no priorities set in the case of a budget shortfall.

The Mid-term Action Plan does not contain any reference to risk. However, by submitting the educational plan, including the Mid-term Action Plan towards acceptance by the government, it has received approval for the financial plan from the Ministry of Finance for the state budget portion. Approval at this level provides greater assurance to the MoE financing of the costs which are said to have state funding. It does not guarantee funding for the large portion of the plan, but it does allow them an official platform to seek these funds.
### Table 1: Selected Macro-Economic and Education Budget Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP (TJS million)</td>
<td>24500</td>
<td>30180</td>
<td>35800</td>
<td>40700</td>
<td>46900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP (official rate US$ millions)*</td>
<td>5568</td>
<td>6354</td>
<td>7276</td>
<td>7949</td>
<td>8916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%)</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget Expenditure (TJS billions)</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>8292.0</td>
<td>9367.6</td>
<td>11027.4</td>
<td>12915.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Budget Expenditure (US$ billions)</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>1745.7</td>
<td>1972.1</td>
<td>2321.6</td>
<td>2719.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Expenditure Growth (%)</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of GDP to public expenditure</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Education Budget as GDP Share (%) | 4.0% | 4.8% | 4.8% | n.a  | n.a  |
| Education Share of Budget (%)     | 19.9% | 15.8% | n.a  | n.a  | n.a  |
| Education Sector Funding (TJS millions) | 1092.0 | 1363.7 | 1607.9 | 2709.6 | 2766.8 |
| Recurrent (mln tjs)               | 882.0 | 1043.5 | 1287.7 | 2167.2 | 2185.7 |
| Capital and Reform/ Development Funds (mln TJS) | 186.3 | 319.8 | 320.05 | 542.4 | 58.1 |
| Education Sector Funding (US$ millions) | 248.2 | 287.1 | 326.8 | 529.2 | 526.0 |
| Recurrent (US $ mln)              | 200.5 | 219.7 | 261.7 | 423.3 | 415.5 |
| Capital and Reform/ Development Funds (US $ mln) | 42.3 | 67.3 | 65.1 | 105.9 | 11.0 |

| Share of total education spending by sector(%) |        |      |      |      |      |
| Pre-primary                                     | 2.05%  | 1.75% | 1.81% | 1.88% | 1.83% |
| General (1-11) Total                           | 63.90% | 62.90% | 64.75% | 65.49% | 65.04% |
| Vocational Education                            | 1.69%  | 1.70% | 1.75% | 1.86% | 1.94% |
| Specialized Secondary                           | 2.4%   | 2.38% | 2.20% | 2.27% | 2.30% |
| Higher Education                                | 16.6%  | 16.1% | 17.48% | 18.38% | 19.24% |

Note: *All calculations of US $ were made using an official rate for 2010 and 2011 from US treasury rates 4.40 and 4.75, respectively. Rates for 2012-2014 were provided by the ministry of finance (4.92, 5.12, 5.26, respectively).

### Development and Financing of the Mid-Term Action Plan

A Mid-term Action Plan was created and submitted with the NSED for approval by the government. There is no annual break down of the Mid-term Action Plan or plan to do such. This is a significant shortcoming of the mid-term plan because the budget is dispersed by the Ministry of Finance on an annual basis, although the ministry receives a prediction of funds for the following 2 years based on MoF calculations that can be used for planning. An annual break down would also allow for tighter monitoring and evaluation of the process.

The Mid-term Action Plan lists specific activities along with cost estimates. It also contains information on the source of funding. The majority of funds (57%) are accounted for by the State Budget at the republican and local level. Existing programs or agreements from development partners make up just over 9% of the estimated costs. Over 26% of the estimate costs are
"unfunded" meaning that they are unaccounted for. There is not a specific strategy for receiving additional funding or prioritization of initiatives in the case of a lack of funding.

In the most general sense there is consistency between NSED and the Mid-term Action Plan. The general categories of the NSED are the categories in which more detailed programs are outlined in the Mid-term Action Plan. The link between the specific programs and the initiatives of the Mid-term Action Plan and NSED are less clear. Whereas the NSED more generally addresses needs across education levels, the organization of the implementation document and Mid-term Action Plan divides tasks by education levels, which follows the organization of the MoE. Some of the initiatives in the NSED are not included in either the "Priority directions on realization of State Education Policy and NSED up to 2020" document (attachment 1) or the Mid-term Action Plan (attachment 2).

Another reason for the disconnect between the NSED and the Mid-term Action Plan is the process in which the budget was completed. Development partners were asked to indicate which of their current or planned programs may fulfill the initiatives. Some of the projects included in the Mid-term Action Plan are not included in the NSED.

IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

SYSTEM CAPACITY

*Does the Plan identify and address key capacity constraints that would affect the implementation of the EP?*

Development Partners and the NSED recognize the management capacity of the MoE as a key risk to full implementation. The NSED does include language for improving the management capacity of the MoE. The Mid-term Action Plan includes a budget for professional development supported by both the state budget and development partners without outstanding costs, but there is not specific information on the types of programs that would be conducted.

Some of the plans for developing human capacity of the MoE in the Mid-term Action Plan include "Modify functional assignments of the Ministry of Education and educational departments of regional and local levels along with new tasks of education system" and "Revise the staff lists, functional obligations and job descriptions for the employees of educational departments of all levels" for which there is state and development partner budget support without outstanding costs. These activities could increase system capacity.

Development partners readily recognize the increase in system capacity that is the outcome of participation in past FTI implementation and reviews. In each of the previous grants the MoE took on larger roles and management responsibilities. Similarly, implementation of the Per-capita financing at all general schools developed strong leaders in the budget departments.

An additional concern for development partners has been the high turnover of qualified staff at the MoE. Several trainings have taken place over the past 10 years, but the most qualified staff often leave the ministry.
RISKS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND MITIGATION

Does the EP design take into consideration possible risks and constraints to implementation?

The main risks to full implementation of the NSED fall into two categories, financial risks and system capacity. The relations between the two are demonstrated in the NSED and supporting documents. As mentioned above, the NSED is a comprehensive document that outlines plans for each level of education. However, priorities among the education levels and initiatives have not been outlined. There is no budget outlined for any of the specific initiatives, indicating a lack of planning based on financial resources. The Mid-term Action Plan is similarly weak. Multiple initiatives were first listed, then the plans were costed, with a budget of 26% unfunded. After discovering that over 26% of costs were unfunded nothing was removed from the Mid-term Action Plan. Nor was there a discussion of priorities given the budget constraints. There is no specific plan to fill the gap.

Thus, the state of current financial need appears great because $131.1 million dollars in the Midterm Action Plan is unfunded. However, there is not a clear understanding about the necessity of all the programs and initiatives included in the Mid-term Action Plan and their direct relationship with the NSED is similarly unclear.

The NSED mentions "insufficiently trained management personnel to solve large-scale complex tasks" as a risk for implementation. As a result the NSED suggests that "implementation measures will not be well coordinated, specific results will not be on the required level, monitoring of National Strategy implementation will be behind schedule." The NSED does contain plans for professional development, but the topics of the training are not listed in the Mid-term Action Plan.

The MoE has drastically reduced the political risks of implementation by submitting the NSED for approval by the government. This will ensure that the strategies included are politically viable. The priorities will likely be included in strategic documents of other sectors. Being approved by the government also helps to support the large portion of the state budget of the Mid-term Action Plan as the cost estimates will first be approved by the Ministry of Finance.