

Sierra Leone
Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018
Appraisal Report

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

This appraisal considers that the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan meets the criteria for endorsement by the Education Development Partners Group and that individual education partners feel confident they are in a position to align their intervention in the sector to contribute to the Plan provided that the recommendations made in this report are acted upon within a period to be agreed within an Education Development Partners Group meeting.

The Donors Group recommends that priority be given to the development of a strong monitoring and evaluation strategy and plan for the Education Sector Plan that should be used as a trigger for the first GPE disbursement.

This will ensure systematic linkages in monitoring all activities across the sector. It is also an opportunity to become an effective capacity development mechanism for the Education Sector in Sierra Leone.

The Education Development Partners believe that the application to the Global Partnership for Education for a Programme Implementation Grant is adequately based on the Education Sector Plan.

The appraisal is based on two Education Donor meetings held on 23rd and 29th August 2013 and an Education Development Partner meeting held on 27th August 2013, where comments and recommendations from Education Development Partners were consolidated.

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ACRONYMS

EDPs - Education Development Partners

ESP – Education Sector Plan

MTEF - Mid-Term Expenditure Framework

CSR – Country Status Report

GPE – Global Partnership for Education

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

SUMMARY

Summary of the appraisal

			Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Room for improvement	Comment	
Education Plan Development Process	Education Plan Preparation Process				√	Consultations were conducted at different levels but no record provided	
	Stakeholders' Engagement				√	Various stakeholders were engaged in the development process including CSOs no record provided	
Education Plan	Education Sector Analysis			√			
	Plan Design	Policy Priorities		√			
		Programme Design and Prioritisation of Strategies				√	
		Plan Financing				√	The Plan has a large financing gap
		Monitoring and Evaluation				√	Overall strategy to be defined as well as some indicators
		Development and Financing of an Action Plan				√	
Appraisal of Implementation Readiness	System Capacity				√	More Technical Human Resources capacity at Ministry needed	
	Governance and Accountability				√	Clearer accountabilities are to be defined	
	Risks to Implementation and Mitigation				√	Risk analysis and mitigation strategies are lacking	

General Comments

The Sierra Leone Ministry of Education has developed the Education Sector Plan 2014-2018 “Learning to Succeed” (ESP) The ESP includes Result Framework (Chapter Five of the ESP) and a medium term Implementation Plan, “Making Learning Real”, for the period 2014-2016 as a separate document to the ESP.

The Education Development Partners have contributed to the appraisal of the ESP. General comments highlighted by partners follow.

Strengths

The development process of Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan (ESP) has been consultative, from national to community level

Education Development Partners, Government, Institutions and Civil Society organisations have been involved in the initial drafting of the ESP

The ESP is well aligned with national policies and strategies and contributes to Sierra Leone commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All Goals

Sector analysis of the Plans is strongly grounded in the 2013 Education Country Status Report

The three strategic areas of the ESP are appropriate and relevant to the development needs of the education sector in Sierra Leone

The ESP addresses some of the opaqueness and complexity of the previous Education Sector Plan in its clearer alignment with the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy III, Agenda for Prosperity, and in its structure

Planning is not exclusively focused on basic education (this was one of the shortcoming of the previous ESP)

Institutional capacity development for more efficient and effective implementation of the plan and for monitoring of education results are reflected in the planning

The structuring of the ESP is conducive to systematic implementation and monitoring

Planning and costing take into account the potential surge in school age population expected based on projections illustrated in the Country Status Report

Areas for improvement

The Plan development process has been complex and communication between government and partners has not been sustained at all stages of the process

If education service users such as parents and learners have been involved in the consultations process, their participation is not clearly stated or articulated in the Plan

Political, economic, vulnerability and risk analysis of Sierra Leone context are missing though much of this is captured in the Country Status Report. This should be noted or clearly referenced in the plan.

Discussion around implementation risk and mitigation strategies is missing

Aras such as Emergency and Preparedness response are not included

Definition of clear roles and accountabilities for the monitoring of implementation of the ESP is weak

Some issues (e.g. medium of instruction, life skills, early child development, services for children people with disabilities) are either silent in the ESP or not adequately costed to reflect the level of prioritisation given in the discussion

Strategies to achieve equitable delivery of education services at various planning and implementation stages need strengthening (which can be done through choices made at implementation stage)

The focus on vocational skill training for human capital that is highlighted in Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy is not fully captured in the ESP

Alignment, if any, with the Mid-term Expenditure Framework is not highlighted

Discussion is missing on both how government intends to bridge the identified funding gaps and if the growth rate predicted is not realized

Recommendations

The following list of recommendation reflects their chronological sequence within the various sections in the appraisal report with slight consolidation to avoid over repetition.

- 1. Annual subsector Action Plans to be developed based on the ESP and its Implementation Plan**
- 2. The subsector Implementation Plans to highlight their contribution to:**
 - a) Skills training for human capital development and**
 - b) Subsectorial disaster risk reduction strategies**
- 3. A monitoring and evaluation unit to be established at government level with the necessary personnel with relevant competencies to monitor the ESP as a whole, not only GPE funded interventions.**
- 4. Activities to raise awareness of the ESP to be conducted as part of the envisaged external communication strategy**
- 5. Public awareness activities to be timed so as to ensure local level feedback mechanisms (local authorities, teachers, pupils, parents, trainees, professional stakeholders) may be embedded in the development of subsector plans and their implementation**
- 6. Education Development partners to support government tracking Plan implementation progress against expected outcomes (including active engagement in the Annual Joint Sector Reviews)**
- 7. Government to develop central and local level mechanisms to ensure government coordination of stakeholders' contribution to the ESP**
- 8. A monitoring and evaluation strategy to be developed for the Education Sector Plan that should be used as a trigger for the first GPE disbursement**
- 9. Ongoing analysis of the sector to be considered as part of the mid-term review of the ESP implementation**
- 10. Short medium and long term contingency plans to be developed and reflected in annual subsector plans**
- 11. Equity to underpin decisions on targeting and resource allocation**
- 12. Monitoring and evaluation unit to:**
 - a. Define links between specific inputs and expected impacts**
 - b. Conduct a risk assessment to identify bottlenecks and risks that would prevent the realization of the expected impacts and to develop mitigating strategies**
 - c. Include PETS in the monitoring framework**
- 13. Ministry to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment of the sector**

BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone Local Education Group (LEG)

The Sierra Leone Education Development Partners Group (EDPs, i.e. the local LEG) was established in 2007. It comprises representative from the government, multilateral and bilateral donors, International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and a representative from the local Education Civil Society (CSOs) umbrella organization.

The World Bank is the Supervising Entity for GPE purposes in Sierra Leone.

UNICEF is the Coordinating Agency.

General background to the Education Sector Plan Development Process

The Sierra Leone Ministry of Education has developed the Education Sector Plan 2014-2018 “Learning to Succeed” (ESP) The ESP includes Result Framework (Chapter Five of the ESP) and a medium term Implementation Plan, “Making Learning Real” for the period 2014-2016 as a separate document to the ESP.

The ESP development process, including two writing workshops and all national and local level consultations, has been supported by the GPE Programme Development Grant.

The process has been participatory. Thematic working groups including representatives from the Ministry of Education and other relevant Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and Education Development Partners representatives, including donors, and implementing Non-Governmental Organisations participated in the drafting of the initial outlines of each sections of the Plan.

A consultant has led the various stages of the development process. These include

1. Desk review of relevant policies and reports conducted by the thematic working groups and consolidated by the consultant in consultation with the Ministry of Education;
2. Local level consultations with Local Councils and various representative groups to ensure priorities stemming from progressive decentralization of education service delivery, and devolution of authorities from central to local level, are embedded in the Plan.

Throughout the development of the Plan several Education Development Partners meeting have been held where feedback and recommendations to the various drafts have been

provided by donors and partners. The Donor Group¹ as a subcommittee of the Education Development Partners Group, has also been closely involved in the process. The Group has provided technical assistance and written feedback to the Ministry of Education to facilitate inclusion of a broad donor perspective in the Plan.

A steering committee, with multilateral and bilateral donor members, two representatives from the international NGO group, and the Ministry of Education Director of Policy and Planning has provided technical supervision to the plan development process led by the external consultant.

The Appraisal Process

This Appraisal Report is based on guidelines provided on pages 19 to 26 of the “Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal” published by the Global Partnership for Education in November 2012.

The report has been collated by UNICEF, the Coordinating Agency for Sierra Leone. However, its content is the result of a concerted effort of the Education Development Partners Group. The content and recommendations for the Appraisal Report have been consolidated following one Education Donors meeting held on 24th August 2013 and two Education Development Partners Group meeting held on 27th and 29th August 2013.

The Report has been subsequently shared with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology before its submission to the GPE Secretariat as part of the GPE Programme Implementation Grant application.

Based on the GPE Guidelines, the general questions the appraisal aims to answer include:

1. Does the plan contribute to the achievement of education sector goals?
2. Is there a significant likelihood that the targeted outcomes of the plan will be achieved?
3. If there are risks, how will they be mitigated?
4. Has the plan preparation process been participatory and transparent?²

The Appraisal Report also takes into account the comments from the GPE Secretariat to the Education Sector Plan draft submitted to them in July 2013.

¹ The European Union Delegation, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), The UK Department for International Development (DFID), The World Bank and UNICEF

² GPE, (2012) Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal, p.19

EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

Alignment to national policies objectives

The Education Sector Plan reflects Sierra Leone commitment to international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 and the six Education for All goals.

The Plan is comprehensive in scope with a thematic structure that is justified and facilitates crosscutting issues across sectors to be addressed. The Plan provides a good foundation for development in the three strategic areas identified:

1. Access, Equity, Completion
2. Quality and Relevance
3. System Strengthening

These are adequate focus areas for the education sector in Sierra Leone as they address gaps identified in the sector analysis reported in the Education Sector Country Status Report 2013. For each area strategic objectives have been identified with specific intervention and feasible outcomes/outputs aligned with the strategic priorities. This structure helps address the complexity and opaqueness of the current 2007-2015 Plan.

The Plan for 2014-2018 is aligned with the education priorities and goals of the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2013-2018 (PRSP III), The Agenda for Prosperity. National sector goals and priorities in education subsectors beyond basic education are considered.

However, the strong focus on vocational skill training for human capital development that is embedded in the PRSP III, The Agenda for Prosperity, is not fully reflected in the ESP 2014-2018.

The alignment with the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is not evident in the Plan. The EDPs are not in a position to assess whether alignment is embedded within the Plan as the MTEF, if available, has not been shared by government.

Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies to mitigate the risks represented by natural, political, economic crises is not considered in the ESP.

Recommendations:

1. **Annual subsector Action Plans to be developed based on the ESP and its Implementation Plan**
2. **The subsector Implementation Plans to highlight their contribution to:**
 - c) **Skills training for human capital development and**
 - d) **Subsectorial disaster risk reduction strategies**

National ownership and leadership, participation and consultation

The Plan has been developed following a consultative process started in 2012 with the involvement of national and international stakeholders in the initial drafting of the plan.

The development of the Plan started with an initial planning workshop with representatives from government, teacher training institutions, donor community, implementing partners and community organisations. Heterogeneous thematic groups led by government representatives were formed and plans to develop the first draft of the various thematic areas to include in the Plan agreed. A subsequent workshop was held where the first drafts developed by the working groups were shared and consolidated.

Subsequently, local level and national level consultations were conducted through individual and focus group meetings with the consultant leading the preparation of the Plan. This included meetings with Ministry of Education Directors. Composition of the Ministry national consultation teams, their visiting schedule and attendance list of one of the district visits (Tonkolili Council) are annexed to the ESP.

Engagement of the ESP consultant and of a Ministry of Education ESP technical committee with the national taskforce working on the Human Development Pillar of the PRSP III, The Agenda for Prosperity, also facilitated the national level definition of education sector priorities and the harmonization of the two strategies.

The Donor Group, as a subcommittee of the Education Development Partners Group, has also been involved in the process. Besides discussions and input tabled at the Education Development Partners meetings, the Donors Group has been providing technical support and written feedback to the Ministry of Education both on the development process and on the content of the Education Sector Plan.

To ensure government leadership and shared ownership of the Plan development process a steering committee was established including multilateral and bilateral donor members, representatives from the international NGO group, and representation from the Ministry of Education.

The combination of all the above strategies has resulted in an Education Sector Plan developed through the active engagement of government implementing partners and donors, and which provides a framework with strategic goals around which to mobilise stakeholders.

However, a number of issues have been identified by the EDP Group in this area.

Initial proactive engagement of Ministry of Education in the process, through participation of its representatives in the Plan drafting workshop has not been sustained throughout. The steering committee, for instance, was due to be chaired by the Ministry and to include several Ministry of Education Directors. The only Ministry representative who attended the meeting on a regular basis, but did not chair them, is the Director of Policy and Planning.

More open communication between key Ministry representatives and donors/partners would have contributed to EDPs' better understanding of Ministry line of decision on the Plan development process and to smoother solution of issues that have arisen at various stages of that process.

As for the general public consultation process, the provision of detailed reports to the EDP group through the steering committee would have strengthened understanding of levels of engagement of the public and service users in the process (e.g. parents, learners, trainees) and of public ownership of the Plan.

The Plan envisages the strengthening of communication and coordination within the Ministry of Education and between the Ministry and external stakeholders as one of its strategic objectives, and the development of an external communication strategy. Under that objective activities to promote awareness of the Education Sector Plan and ownership of its implementation would be in place. This would also address concerns raised on national ownership of the Plan and concerns that stakeholders have operated in Sierra Leone with no awareness of the current 2008-2015 Plan.

Recommendations:

- 1. A monitoring and evaluation unit to be established at government level with the necessary personnel with relevant competencies to monitor the ESP as a whole, not only GPE funded interventions.**
- 2. Activities to raise awareness of the ESP be considered as part of the envisaged external communication strategy**
- 3. Public awareness strategy activities to be timed so as to ensure local level feedback mechanisms (local authorities, teachers, pupils, parents, trainees, professional stakeholders) may be embedded in the development of subsector plans and their implementation**

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Role of the LEG in the preparation of the ESP

The Education Development Partners (EDPs) have been closely involved in the development of the ESP. EDPs representatives have participated in the drafting of the first chapters of the ESP and supported Ministry of Education representatives in their leading role within the drafting working groups. Feedback to the process has been provided by EDPs through the EDP meeting and within the Steering Committee set up to supervise the work of the consultant hired to lead the ESP development process. The Donor Group has also coordinated responses to the various drafts of the ESP and to the process.

Recommendations:

- 1. Education Development partners to support government tracking Plan implementation progress against expected outcomes (including active engagement in the Annual Joint Sector Reviews)**

Stakeholders support to the implementation of the ESP

Where available, information on EDPs expected contribution to the education sector were gathered to support the drafting of the ESP. These are reflected in the costing of the Plan.

The Cost Chapter in the Implementation Plan in the “Risk” section states that,

“Public support of the ESP and its implementation has been ensured by large scale national consultations at the local council level involving a very broad cross-section of stakeholders including traditional leaders and opinion formers”

However the nature of that support, the risks involved and the mitigating strategy proposed in the event that support should be withdrawn are not discussed.

Central coordination of information on support to the sector by government implementing partners and donors needs to be improved for more effective planning and monitoring of education delivery. Though not discussed in detail, this is one of the development areas included in the System Strengthening of the ESP.

The Ministry of education can use annual Education Joint Sector Reviews prescribed in the ESP to support effective regular tracking of sector performance against ESP indicators, including planned partners’ contribution to the sector. In the same way, more efficient coordination of education stakeholder’ planning at central and local level would result in more efficient and effective contribution of all partners to the implementation of the Plan.

Recommendations:

- 1. Government to develop central and local level mechanisms to ensure government coordination of stakeholders' contribution to the ESP**

Partner technical support to ESP development process

The development of the Plan was consultative. Partners provided technical support at various stages of the process. EDPs participated in the initial drafting of the ESP. The EDP Group provided feedback to the various revisions of the ESP and to the process through EDP Group, Donors Group and Steering Committee meetings.

EDPs alignment to support of the ESP

The costing of the ESP includes EDPs current and, where available, short-term planned contribution to the sector, as provided by individual EDPs. Specific partners have already been identified for potential support to subsectors and specific areas of ESP implementation based on their own mandate and priorities.

Annual Joint Education Sector Reviews provide an opportunity to assess Ministry performance in the management of its own sector plan and for planning and monitoring EDPs alignment to the ESP.

EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

Reliability and comprehensiveness of baseline data

Sierra Leone produces regular Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys, Household Surveys. A School Census has been conducted in the country on a yearly basis since 2010. Education access, participation and equity baselines are established based on data produced through the school census. Recently a 2013 Poverty Profile was also published by the World Bank with an education component in it.

As a result the ESP provides satisfactory baseline data in the areas of access and participation and to some extent equity. However baseline data on efficiency management and learning is either missing or inadequate.

Reliable mechanisms for the production of information on education system efficiency, management and learning are still to be developed or strengthened. This also applies to processes for timely public dissemination and access of the data that is produced (e.g. School Census Reports).

To respond to this gap, the Plan provides for the implementation of the 2011 Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy which supports the development of mechanisms for the production and dissemination of reliable statistical data and information on the education sector.

In the short term, the initial collection, analysis and dissemination of data on implementation progress against its performance indicators for monitoring purposes offers an opportunity to improve the ESP baseline data. This is envisaged in the ESP. However the Plan is not clear on the operational management of the monitoring process and on accountabilities for all the stages of that process. This could jeopardize successful monitoring of the Plan and its implementation.

Recommendations:

- 1. A monitoring and evaluation strategy to be developed for the Education Sector Plan that should be used as a trigger for the first GPE disbursement**

Sector Analysis and its component and its dissemination

An Education Country Status Report (CSR) for Sierra Leone was produced in 2013. The CSR provides a comprehensive analysis of all areas including access, internal and external efficiency, equity, quality and financial management.

That sector analysis provided in the CSR has been satisfactorily adopted to define strategic priorities and actions in the ESP.

Data on which the Country Status Report has been produced, however, are based on the triangulation of projections of 2004 population census, and 2010 education, economic data primary sources. Sierra Leone is undergoing swift economic and social changes and therefore conclusion based on analysis of three year data may not be fully reliable.

The lack of timely reliable information on the sector is satisfactorily addressed in the ESP. Through one of its strategic objectives the ESP provides for the strengthening of the Ministry of Education data collection, analysis and dissemination systems. This will result in more regular production of reliable information on the sector for policy development and planning.

However, discussion on how this will be achieved is not comprehensively addressed in the ESP document. Most discussions on strategic actions to be implemented for the achievement of Objective 3, System Strengthening are deferred to the Education Sector Development Strategy.

Other analyses used to prepare the ESP

Several analytical studies and various background documents (e.g. in areas such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education, Early Child Development, Early Grade Literacy Skills, Curriculum, gender equity in education, etc.) were used to support the development of the ESP. These were either commissioned to bridge gaps in the Country Status Report or produced by EDPs.

A cost simulation model was also developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance supported by Pole de Dakar/UNESCO/BREDA and a World Bank technical team. The cost simulation model is based on official financial projections. Various financial scenarios were determined for the costing of the ESP, based on different revenue vs. expenditure projections. The scenario selected (Scenario 4) for the development and costing of the ESP is one where average annual real growth is gauged at 6.1 percent. This may appear ambitious considering that between 2004 and 2011 annual growth in Sierra Leone has averaged 5.2 percent. However the choice of scenario is rather conservative in a context where important returns are expected in the near future from increasing activity in the extraction sector.

However, articulation of the background political and economic context in which the sector operates is weak throughout the document. Moreover, a comprehensive social, economic, environmental vulnerability risk assessment of the sector would have provided a more comprehensive picture of the environment in which the ESP is to be implemented.

Recommendations:

- 1. Ongoing analysis of the sector to be considered as part of the mid-term review of the ESP implementation**

Existing and needed baselines

The ESP provides baseline data for most of its indicators.

Baselines missing include:

1. Early grade learning
2. Trained teachers
3. All system strengthening and management baselines

The Plan envisages a number of activities, to reach its strategic objectives that will support the provision of the missing baselines. These activities include, the early grade learning assessments, the strengthening of data collection and management systems through the establishment of an Education Management Information System, the establishment of the Teaching Service Commission.

However, the document is silent on how the implementation of some of the above planned strategic actions may provide opportunities to fill gaps such as the lack of reliable ESP baseline data.

PLAN DESIGN

Policy Priorities

Priorities in the ESP are defined around three main strategic areas:

1. Access, Equity, Completion
2. Quality and Relevance
3. System Strengthening

These are relevant, critical and appropriate for the Sierra Leone context. They reflect the needs identified by the analysis of the sector in the 2013 Country Status Report and in the 2011 Capacity Development Strategy.

Intervention to increase access, equity and completion include intervention that will impact both the supply and the demand side of education (i.e., school construction, provision of teachers, reduction of cost for families, pre-schooling, alternative education, extracurricular activities, mobilisation of communities, functional literacy). By addressing geographical as well as gender inequities, besides financial inequity, at intervention level, the equity component of this strategic area will be strengthened further.

Interventions to increase quality and relevance of education range from the improvement of the school environment, to curriculum reform and provision of teaching learning material, a reading programme to increase literacy levels, assessments to gauge learning progress, improved teacher education and deployment, and the regulation of non-formal community education.

Interventions to strengthen systems include various areas identified as crucial and included in the 2011 Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy, from the operationalization of the Teaching Service Commission, to the establishment of data collection and dissemination, system monitoring, communication and information systems, and the strengthening of the policy environment and sector human resources, to name a few.

A discussion of short, medium and long term priorities and contingency, which is missing, would provide a strong basis and guide the development of subsector annual action plans.

Although equity is included as part of one of the strategic areas, little attention is paid to the implications of non-equitable implementation of the plan on the most vulnerable groups due to their sex, geographical location, economic, social status or their physical, cognitive, emotional ability to access services and resources. To ensure an equitable implementation of the ESP it is important that choices are carefully made at activity planning stage, on how decision will be

taken and how they will be based on equitable criteria regarding, for instance, selection of locations for development interventions, beneficiaries, allocation of resources, representation in decision making panels, etc.

Recommendations:

- 1. Short medium and long term contingency plans to be developed and reflected in short term subsector plans to be developed**
- 2. Equity to underpin decisions on targeting and resource allocation**

Prioritization of strategies

Prioritisation of strategies in the Education Sector Plan 2014-2018 has been defined through consultation for each main strategic area.

The top three priorities from consultations in the areas of access, equity and completion were as follows:

- i. Increase in the provision of infrastructure (classrooms, teacher housing, etc.) of quality
- ii. Enforcement of legislations and policies impacting on access to education especially for disadvantaged groups so as to reduce disparities
- iii. Increase in and more equitable distribution of pre-primary provisions (ESP 2014-2018, Chapter two)

The top three priorities from consultations in the areas of quality and relevance were as follows:

- i. The solving of teacher management issues as teachers are central to addressing issues of quality at school level
- ii. The urgent development and use of new curricula that meet changing demands and needs
- iii. An urgent need to improve on the conduct and quality of examinations / student assessments (ESP 2014-2018, Chapter three)

The top three priorities from the consultations in the area of system strengthening were as follows:

- i. An urgent need to improve the monitoring and supervision of schools and general school and student management
- ii. A need for an increase in the budget for education
- iii. A need to improve on issues of coordination and communication within the education sector and with stakeholders (ESP 2014-2018, Chapter four)

However, no report is provided in the plan on the consultations from which the prioritisation has resulted. Therefore it is not clear on which bases such priorities have been selected

The plan does not discuss how the priorities are linked to the Implementation Plan and costs allocated to the various areas of development. For instance, under access, equity and completion, priority ii mentions provision of services for “disadvantaged group”. However the ESP is virtually silent on the provision for the disabled for instance or intervention to ensure gender equality. Under the same heading pre-primary provision is identified as a priority, however, budget allocated to it is very slim if compared to primary, junior secondary and secondary cycles.

A better definition of the link between input provided to satisfy the selected priorities and the outcome and impact expected as well would provide support to the implementation of the ESP and clarify the rationale behind the priority choice.

In the same way an analysis of the bottlenecks and risks that could prevent the realisation of the expected outcome would increase probability of successful implementation.

Recommendations:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to:

- a. Define links between specific inputs and expected impacts**
- b. Conduct a risk assessment to identify bottlenecks and risks that would prevent the realization of the expected impacts and to develop mitigating strategies**

PLAN FINANCING

The cost to implement the ESP as discussed in the previous chapters is 4.1 trillion Leones that is 951 million US Dollars over five years. This is reflected in the five year costing of the ESP. Costing of the ESP has been aligned as much as possible to the costing of the PRSP III, The Agenda for Prosperity.

The implementation Plan which spans over three years is expected to cost 206 million US Dollars. It is to be noted, that as stated in the document, the costing of the Implementation Plan does not account for MEST spending such as teacher salaries which are factored in the ESP costing.

The first three years of the programme are expected to absorb 55 percent of recurrent and 66 percent of development spending.

The scenario used to determine the fulfilment of costs of the ESP assumes an average annual real growth rate of about 6.1 percent.

The scenario takes account of the growing pressures at the post-primary level as a consequence of successes at the primary level. It also takes cognizance of the requirements for an improvement in the quality of education at all levels and the urgent need to strengthen the system.

This scenario presented in the ESP has been selected from several scenarios elaborated in collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance supported by a World Bank technical team. The cost simulation model is based on official financial projections. Various financial scenarios were determined for the costing of the ESP, based on different revenue vs. expenditure projections. The scenario selected (Scenario 4) for the development and costing of the ESP is one where average annual real growth is gauged at 6.1 percent. This may appear ambitious considering that between 2004 and 2011 annual growth in Sierra Leone has averaged 5.2 percent. However the choice of scenario is rather conservative in a context where important returns are expected in the near future from increasing activity in the extraction sector.

This information, or the alternative scenarios, is not presented in the ESP or in the Implementation Plan.

The funding gap, as it appears, is rather important but no discussion is provided to explain it, or to suggest strategies the government intends to adopt to try bridge that gap.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND SYSTEM CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Result framework, key indicators and priorities

A monitoring framework has been provided for the entire duration of the ESP with output level indicators under each strategic outcome. Baseline and yearly milestones are also provided.

The ESP envisages a series of interventions that will support the collection of data to strengthen the current Monitoring Framework and fill existing gaps. These include the development of the Education Management Information System, the learning assessment that will help gauge how effective the system is in promoting progress in literacy and numeracy learning, the establishment of the Teaching Service Commission that will spearhead the establishment of stronger teacher management record systems. These could be more clearly captured as part of the monitoring framework.

The ESP also mentions the important role of Local Councils and Chief Education Committees in supporting the monitoring of the ESP implementation.

Partnership with other stakeholders is also mentioned to enhance monitoring of the implementation of the ESP.

The ESP states that more reliable system performance information will be produced and disseminated more regularly and that expectation will be widely shared and known (ESP 201-2018 Chapter five).

Overall monitoring of the ESP is defined as responsibility of the Inclusive Management Team at the Ministry of Education headed by the Chief Education Officer. This team is due to conduct quarterly meetings to review progress on the implementation of the ESP. The production of annual work plans is expected to be responsibility of a unit under the Ministry of Education Planning and Policy Directorate.

Effective monitoring of the ESP implementation is a major area of concern for the EDP Group. This is even more so when considering the limited human resource capacity in the Ministry in terms of numbers, expertise and competencies and its resulting loss of accountability.

A clearer outline of institutional roles and responsibility for the collection, analysis and public dissemination of data is missing. The System Strengthening component of the ESP provides opportunity for that definition, and it caters for system capacity as well as individual capacity. The ESP takes into account the development of individual capacity within the system and the

strengthening of Human Resources management and system as part of the implementation of the Education Sector Capacity Development Strategy.

However the ESP is silent on how the development of those capacities may support effective monitoring of the sector and its planning.

In the same way, the role of partners in supporting monitoring and the strengthening of accountability are not elaborated.

The elaboration of the role that existing mechanisms can play in strengthening monitoring and ensuring accountability. These mechanisms can include annual Joint Education Sector Reviews and government and partners' role in them. Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) can also support consolidated data collection on sector performance. All these can help strengthen the ESP monitoring framework.

Attention to the overall capacity to manage the surge of resources expected from revenue should also be considered.

Recommendations:

- 1. Monitoring and evaluation unit to revise monitoring plan**
- 2. Include PETS in the monitoring framework**

RISK MITIGATION

The risk analysis and mitigation strategies are identified in the ESP within the table below:

Type of Risk	Mitigating Measures	Level of Impact	Level of Likelihood
Lack of resources to implement activities	Encourage implementation partnerships Fully brief partners in annual sector reviews and hold donors round table if necessary	High	Moderate
Lack of political will	Emphasise link with PRSP and ensure key objectives in performance contract of MEST	Moderate	Low
Lack of capacity to sustain action	Partnerships and donor support for capacity development	High	Moderate
Lack of coordination	Design effective coordination strategy and establish effective coordination unit	Moderate	Moderate

The ESP states that other risk can be found in the associated project appraisal document prepared to source funds for implementation of some key activities.

The Implementation Plan dismisses the risk of underfunding by the government as the cost scenario selected takes balances factors such as the fluctuating price of commodity, the revenue from mining and agricultural sectors, etc. resulting in a risk averse solution.

Generally the analysis of factors that may prevent the ESP implementation from being successful is very weak.

The inclusion of those risks “associated project appraisal document prepared to source funds for some key activities” as part of the ESP text, and a comprehensive discussion on contingency strategies to be adopted if the risk identified could not be mitigated would have provided a better opportunity for effective planning for successful implementation.

Also, the identification of roles and responsibilities of government units for the implementation of the ESP with clear accountabilities would provide some level of internal control for the mitigation of some of the risks identified.

Recommendations:

- 1. Ministry to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment of the sector**

CONCLUSION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESP APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Donor Group recommends that priority is given to the development of a strong monitoring and evaluation strategy and plan for the Education Sector Plan that should be used as a trigger for the first GPE disbursement.

The Education Development Partners Group will ensure that recommendations presented in this report are monitored regularly through the Supervising and Coordinating Entities and reported upon as a standing item at Education Development Partners Group meetings and the Annual Joint Sector Reviews.

ANNEX – APPRAISAL MEETINGS – ATTENDANCE

EDP APPRAISAL MEETING ON 27 AUGUST 2013

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED

Action Aid Sierra Leone

British Council

Catholic Relief Service (CRS)

Concern

Department for International Development (DFID)

EFA Coalition

European Union

IBIS

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

UNICEF

World Bank

World Food Programme

DONORS MEETINGS ON 23 and 29 AUGUST 2013

Department for International Development (DFID)

European Union

Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

UNICEF

World Bank