THE EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN: APPRAISAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This appraisal report reviews each section of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) against the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) appraisal guidelines of November 2012 and under each section gives findings, conclusions and recommendations for further improvement.

Strengths of the ESP process

The preparation of the ESP represents a substantial step forward in comprehensive education sector planning for Uzbekistan and provides the basis for further development and sector-wide consultation with all stakeholders. The Inception Report of the team which worked with the Local Education Group (LEG, the membership of which is set out in Appendix 1) on the drafting of the ESP (PROMAN, Section 5, Methodology and Approach) makes it clear that there was hitherto no ongoing process for developing or revising a comprehensive ESP (Sections 3 Start Situation and 5 Clarification of Terms of Reference). Their aim was to establish, through the draft ESP, a basis for further educational planning, and they assumed that further development of the ESP would be needed.

This first ESP follows on from the WIS I (2007), GoU’s first national development strategy, the main focus of which is to ‘improve the quality of education and meet the needs of the scientific and technological development of the economy and society’ (WIS II is due for publication in the first half of 2013).

The ESP enjoys strong political support, and the strength of GoU’s commitment to the education sector is indicated by both the legal commitment to making education compulsory from Grades 1-12 since 1997 (Law on Education, ESP 3.2), including senior secondary specialised education, and the high percentage of the government budget devoted to education. This enables the country to embark on ambitious sector reforms. There are also high participation rates at most levels of education. Substantial investment has been made in infrastructure, including buildings, equipment and teaching and learning resources. The challenge that GoU has now set itself is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all sub-sectors, including not only knowledge but also the skills that students need in the 21st century.

Areas for improvement

The ESP was prepared over a very short time period with the assistance of consultants from PROMAN, who clearly saw it as only the first step and that it would need further development (Inception Report). The current version of the ESP to some extent reflects the lack of time that was available for its preparation, as the detailed analysis in the report indicates. A number of areas for improvement are suggested:

- The composition of the LEG, with membership limited to GoU officials and UNICEF, has limited the contribution of other stakeholders, especially DPs, in the ESP preparation process. The LEG (in accordance with GPE guidance in the Country-level Process Guide, August 2012) should include a broader range of stakeholders, especially at the decentralised level, as well as representatives of major international DPs and non-state sectors, ideally also including direct stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators), in the peer review of the ESP and their feedback should be used in its revision process.

- A communication and dissemination plan for ESP development and implementation should be prepared, including an accountability matrix detailing the roles and responsibilities of the
different ministries and levels of administration.

- There should be coherence between the various GoU strategic documents related to sector development: WIS I and II, ESP, Ministry strategies and DP partnership/assistance strategies, taking into account any lessons learned from their preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. (It is assumed that WIS II, currently being finalised, will include a review of the effectiveness of WIS I.) DP assistance and forward planning may need to be re-aligned with ESP national and sub-sector priorities, in consultation with the DPG, and in the light of the findings of this appraisal report.

- The availability and suitability of reliable data across all sub-sectors should be ensured, with the establishment of a functional and integrated EMIS (with DPG support as required). All financial data should be reviewed and corrected, as necessary, including the percentage of public expenditure on education, as well as the alignment of the ESP budget with the WIS medium-term budget framework.

- Projected enrolment figures should be provided to facilitate planning for the human and financial resource as a result of increases or decreases in enrolment. More detailed information should be provided on human resources: the number, qualifications, distribution (by geographical area and subject area), rate of attrition of education personnel, and the level of training provided.

- A financial simulation model should be developed to inform the policy dialogue on the policy options and possible reform areas and to help estimate the resources (human, physical and financial) required to achieve ESP goals.

- Cross-cutting issues, such as inequality, efficiency, management and financing, should be included, drawing on the experience of other countries and the expertise of DPs, in order to assist with the development of reference benchmarks for education sector development. The section on SEN should be broadened to include all disadvantaged groups at all levels of education and equality of access highlighted as a cross-cutting issue for all sub-sectors.

- The Action Plan should be further elaborated with a clear indication of how, by whom and by when it will be implemented and updated as necessary.

- The M&E system envisaged for the ESP should be completed with baselines and targets clarified and information on how it will be implemented, to what timescale and by whom, indicating human and financial resource implications, as well as priorities.

- The ESP should include a risk assessment of the financial capacity to sustain education development priorities, taking into account efficiency in spending and the inflation rate, and of any changes to implementation capacity as a result of decentralisation reforms.

The English version of the ESP would benefit from some further editorial attention to eliminate spelling errors, to clarify the meaning and source of some statements on education policy issues (see examples in Section 3 below), to improve internal referencing, and the links between sections and to the intended ESP outputs and outcomes. In terms of presentation, the document might also benefit from numbered tables and diagrams which are clearly linked to related sections in the text and from the consistent highlighting of key statements, for example ESP outputs and outcomes (text boxes are occasionally used in Sections 2.4, 5.3 and 5.4).
INTRODUCTION

Following the indicative allocation of $49.9 million from the GPE (the former Education For All Fast Track Initiative, EFA-FTI), the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (GoU) indicated its agreement to join the GPE and to develop an ESP in line with Uzbekistan's WIS. The draft ESP was developed with the technical assistance of PROMAN, contracted by UNICEF as Coordinating Agency for the country-level GPE process. Overall leadership rests with the Minister of Public Education, under the supervision of the Cabinet of Ministers and the First Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Finance.

As part of the process for the development of the ESP a Development Partner Group (DPG) was set up which includes UNICEF, UNESCO, GIZ, JICA, WB, KOICA, ADB, UNRC and the EU Delegation. The DPG is responsible for assessing the ESP and producing an appraisal report on it, including the readiness of GoU to implement it, that is shared with GoU before submission to GPE.

The main objective of this appraisal is to assess the ESP in relation to the preparation of an application for an implementation grant from the GPE. The appraisal was jointly conducted by David Royle, a consultant engaged by the European Union (EU) through the Gesellschaft fuer Organisation, Planung und Ausbildung, Bad Homburg, Germany (GOPA) and Huong T. Le, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok, with organisational support provided by UNICEF, the Coordinating Agency (CA) for the local education group.

This report summarises the findings, observations and recommendations of Huong T. Le, following a desk review and a field visit to Tashkent from 14-18 January 2013 and the results of a desk-based review by David Royle in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) provided by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Uzbekistan (Appendix 2), as part of the EU’s support to the region through the Central Asia Education Platform project, managed by GOPA. The report follows the structure of the GPE/UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Guidelines for Education Sector Plan (ESP) Preparation and Appraisal of November 2012 (the guidelines form part of the EU ToR).

Based on the EU ToR and their respective areas of expertise, a division of labour was agreed between the two experts, in consultation with the EU, UNESCO and UNICEF. Huong T. Le’s focus was in particular on financing issues, as well as the ESP preparation process, but both experts reviewed all parts of the ESP against the appraisal guidelines and discussed their conclusions online and at a meeting in Tashkent on 18 January. The report has been reviewed and modified in the light of feedback received during a presentation of preliminary field visit findings by Huong T. Le to key members (UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank and EU) of the Donor Partner Group (DPG), hosted by UNICEF on 18 January 2013, at which David Royle was also present.

The appraisal report was finalised by David Royle in Tashkent between 20 and 27 January in consultation with Huong T. Le and further modified following comments from DPG members who attended the presentation of the report by David Royle on 24 January 2013. A summary of the appraisal is included as Appendix 3.

The main objective of the assignment for the EU-appointed expert, according to the ToR developed by the European Delegation, is to ‘assess Uzbek national education sector plan and the readiness to implement it’. It specifically excludes assessment of the process for the development of the national plan. The appraisal was conducted as a desk study, with no field visit, in accordance with the ToR, but based, as the ToR put it, on the ‘real situation in Uzbekistan’ and ‘a realistic view contrasting [the] plan with the reality in the country’.
The key questions the GPE appraisal guidelines seek to address are:

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

The ESP notes that GPE’s focus from 2011 to 2014 is on three areas: (i) support for fragile states; (ii) improvement of learning outcomes and quality education; and (iii) support to girls’ education. For Uzbekistan, the second area of support related to quality education is the relevant one, under which all of the priority areas above can be subsumed. The WIS I GoU objectives for education for 2008-10 (published in 2007) are to:

- [main focus] Improve the quality of education and meet the needs of the scientific and technological development of the economy and society; provide a continuous training system for all workers; expand the HE system with branches of foreign universities especially to support scientific and technical progress
- Maintain the adult literacy rate
- Increase [compulsory] education from 12-14 years
- Provide equal access and improve the quality of education in line with MDG2 [Millennium Development Goal], and maintain universal access by 2015
- Complete ‘the creation of the material and technical base for the full provision to all school graduates of secondary and vocational education’
- Provide computer classes and Internet access for at least 50% of schools by 2015.

The ESP echoes the emphasis on quality education, as well as equity issues, but the main equity emphasis is on children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

PROMAN, the consultants contracted by UNICEF on behalf of GPE to provide technical assistance to the development of both the situation analysis and the preparation of the ESP itself, began work in July 2012 with a desk review and intensive in-country consultations involving the eight working groups. Given the time available for drafting the ESP, the Situation Analysis was intended to be concise and to reflect the key aspects of the education sector against priorities for future funding under GPE (PROMAN Inception Report). The aim was to establish, through the draft ESP, a basis for further educational planning, and assumed that further development of the ESP would be needed. The PROMAN team recommended the use of research agencies (who are members of LEG) to continue the work of the working groups, and further elaborate parts of the ESP in response to feedback from the GPE (presumably including the Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research, who have been preparing WIS II and the Centre for Economic Research, whose reports on improving education quality are referred to in the ESP).
APPRAISING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

1. ESP preparation process

*General question: have the principles of education sector planning been respected?*

**Findings**

Following the agreement of the GoU to join the GPE, an LEG was established to work on the development of the ESP. The group consists of 14 members, who are heads or directors of the relevant departments of the ministries, centres and institutes involved in education, and one DPG representative (from UNICEF) and one representative from an NGO. Thus the only member representing DPs is the Head of Education, UNICEF. The group is chaired by the Minister of Public Education (MoPE).

A working group was established for each of the eight sub-sectors of the ESP, coordinated by the LEG:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD/pre-school)
- General secondary education
- Secondary Specialised Professional Education (SSPE)
- Teacher training and retraining
- Higher education
- Adult education (Ministry of Labour)
- Out-of-school education
- Education for special needs (SEN).

The membership of these working groups was expanded to include, but not exclusively, mainly government officials from related ministries and institutes and representatives of civil society. They constitute one of the main sources of information for the situation analysis and the development of outputs and outcomes for the action plan. In fact, the members of these working groups were mainly from Tashkent-based government institutions and ministries.

The ESP (Section 1.2 Methodology) details the participatory process used, including focus groups and ‘in-depth’ working groups for each sub-sector, whose outputs were developed into a results framework discussed and finalised at a validation and final development workshop. Appendices 2 and 3 of the ESP list the participants in the validation and development workshops including working group members (30 and 31 respectively): senior Ministry personnel and departmental heads, chairs/members of the working groups; rectors/directors of institutions/agencies; plus donor representatives and consultants (from UNICEF and UNESCO).

A Validation Workshop on strategic priorities was held with the LEG on 22 August 2012 and a five-year action plan was developed during a three-day workshop involving the LEG between 17 and 19 September 2012. Since the membership of the LEG (see Appendix 1) and the working groups mainly consisted of government officials, the inputs and perspectives of stakeholders other than central government appears to have been limited (for example inputs from development partners, a range of NGOs, the private sector and those at the decentralised level and including direct stakeholders: students, teachers, parents as well as administrators). In many ways this process has limited the opportunities for national partners to tap into the strengths of major education actors, who can in fact offer valuable expertise and perspectives for the development of the ESP, as well as reducing accountability and transparency at all stages of ESP preparation.
The PROMAN Inception Report makes it clear that there was no ongoing process for developing or revising a comprehensive ESP (Sections 3 Start Situation and 5 Clarification of Terms of Reference) and that ‘in collaboration with Government partners and the donor community, this consultancy will initiate the first step in designing a comprehensive ESP as a starting-point for further development’. Further, it notes that GoU documents typically do not contain any structured planning, an outline of goals, objectives, outputs and indicators, apart from sub-sector which however are not linked to the overall system. The PROMAN team’s aim was to establish, through the draft ESP, a basis for further educational planning, and they assumed that further development of the ESP would be needed. In this context the team recommended the use of research agencies to continue the work of the working groups, and further elaborate parts of the ESP in response to feedback from the GPE (presumably including the Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research, who have been preparing WIS II and the Centre for Economic Research (which is represented on the LEG), whose reports on improving education quality are referred to in the ESP).

The ToR for PROMAN’s assignment list six priority areas for additional support to the education sector identified by GoU:

- Increasing enrolment in and accessibility to pre-primary education
- Enhancing professional qualifications of teachers
- Strengthening the vocational training system to respond to changes in labour needs, particularly in the regions
- Strengthening the provision of education to children with special needs, including training for teachers to accommodate special needs students in their mainstream classes
- Establishing a modern Education Management Information System (EMIS) for data collection to inform decision-making
- Supporting the supply of updated textbooks for all subjects in the seven languages of instruction.

The ESP clearly addresses the first four of the priority areas above but not the important area of EMIS, which is crucial for the collection and analysis of disaggregated data; it also notes that GPE’s focus from 2011 to 2014 is on three areas: (i) support for fragile states; (ii) improvement of learning outcomes and quality education; and (iii) support to girls’ education with quality education the most relevant one, under which all of the areas can be subsumed.

The WIS presents a medium-term development strategy for Uzbekistan and is coupled with a medium-term budget framework (MTBF) and a rolling medium-term framework. The ESP has reflected the main goals of WIS I but there is no evidence of ESP budget alignment with the medium-term budget framework. In addition, a rather comprehensive review of legal documents and existing policies governing education was conducted (ESP 3.2 and 3.3), but there is no thorough analysis to indicate the bottlenecks and challenges for sector development, as well as explicit conclusions on the priorities, or at least the implications for education sector development (see also Section 4.1 of this report below).

There is clear support from DPG members (especially from ADB, WB, GIZ and UNDP) for WIS development and the ADB and WB Country Partnership/Assistance Strategies, for 2012-16 and 2012-15 respectively, integrate WIS objectives. WIS II will be published in 2013 and it is not yet clear how this will link up with ESP implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The World Bank Country Assistance Strategy FY2012-15 includes one of the main ESP goals as one of its four cross-cutting development policy goals and priorities: ‘to improve access to and the quality and outcomes of education, health and other social services, so that the benefits of overall growth are shared equitably by the entire population.’ It also proposes a joint strategy report (*Uzbekistan Vision 2030*)
to establish ‘roadmaps’ for specific development goals. ESP development and implementation could form part of this longer-term process and benefit from World Bank expertise in the sector.

The situation analysis was conducted over a short time period in the light of the agreed deadlines and the available time for document completion. As such it was intentionally prepared as ‘a concise document reflecting the key aspects of the education sector against the identification of priorities for future funding under GPE’ (PROMAN Inception Report, Section 5 Methodology and Approach). There was a misunderstanding of the link between the ESP and the application for a GPE grant funding: ESP is intended to be a comprehensive sector development plan and thus should reflect a sector-wide perspective, based on which the priorities for GPE grant funding can be considered. It is not good practice to compromise sector development priorities for an external grant opportunity that only supports some of them. It should also be noted that the processes for preparing the ESP and the GPE grant application are different.

The fact that the ESP was prepared to very tight deadlines with insufficient consultation with actors at the decentralised level, non-state actors and DPs, runs the risk of reducing national ownership, which also affects the likelihood of the ESP being implemented effectively. Good practice in developing an ESP shows that an inclusive process not only increases transparency and the efficiency of decision-making, but it also encourages the wide participation of stakeholders and better alignment of their programmes with the overall sector plan.

Conclusion

The preparation of the ESP represents a substantial step forward in comprehensive education sector planning for Uzbekistan and provides the basis for further development and sector-wide consultation with all stakeholders. The principles of education sector planning have not been respected entirely. Further improvements could be made to ensure more inclusiveness and transparency.

Recommendations

• The composition of the LEG should be modified to bring it in line with the GPE guidelines, according to which it should include the DPG, civil society, the private sector, and think tanks, as part of a strategy to fully involve a wider range of stakeholders, especially at the decentralised level, and ideally including direct stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators), in the peer review of the ESP, and to use their comments, feedback, as well as expertise, for the revision and implementation of the ESP.
• The ESP should be regarded as an evolving rather than a fixed plan, which can be revised or updated as and when needs or priorities change. As a principle, the quality of the ESP must be ensured regardless of the different purposes it might serve.
• A communications and dissemination plan for ESP development and implementation should be prepared, taking into account any lessons learned from WIS I and II preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes (linked to the Monitoring and Evaluation strategy – see Section 4.4 below).

2. Stakeholder engagement

General question: what are the levels of commitment and accountability among relevant local stakeholders and development partners?

Findings

The general and specific questions about effective stakeholder engagement are in the conclusions and recommendations above. The most significant issue is the composition of the LEG and its...
restricted membership. This arrangement has limited the contribution from other active stakeholders, especially DPs, in the ESP preparation process.

ESP Section 1.2 records that DPs were included in the initial consultation process, in addition to the formal involvement and guidance of the LEG, and states that the ESP is a ‘joint initiative of all stakeholders concerned’. The DPG was set up to support the process of ESP development and includes UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRC, GIZ, JICA, World Bank, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), ADB, and the EU Delegation. The DPG is responsible for assessing the ESP and producing an Appraisal Report on the plan itself and GoU readiness to implement it, which will be shared with GoU before submission to GPE. Despite advocacy by the CA to expand the membership of the LEG to include more international development partners, only UNICEF was a part of the LEG and directly involved in the preparation of the ESP.

It is not obvious from the ESP how implementation support will be provided by institutional stakeholders and there is currently no accountability matrix. This may be one of the areas for further elaboration that the PROMAN Team anticipated.

Conclusion
The composition of the LEG, with membership limited to GoU officials and UNICEF, has limited the contribution of other stakeholders, especially DPs, in the ESP preparation process.

Recommendations
- The CA/DPG/SE should advocate for the importance of an open and participatory dialogue that would allow the various stakeholders to contribute to the preparation and implementation of the ESP and the grant proposal, and ensure the full alignment of development assistance with country priorities.
- Clarify the coordinating mechanisms between the LEG and DPG.
- Clarify the role of local stakeholders (universities, civil society, NGOs) in supporting ESP implementation.
APPRAISING THE EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

3. Education sector analysis

General question: What empirical evidence was available for the development of the plan and has this been used effectively?

Findings

Section 3 of the ESP (Analysis of the current education system) reviews existing policies and their implementation by sub-sector. However, the analysis of the current system is a mixture of judgments and unqualified statements from unspecified sources; it is often quantitative rather than qualitative; key issues are not well highlighted (for example in boxes within the text, see the box on competencies at the end of Section 2.3) or linked clearly to the outcomes (Section 4). For example, in Section 3.1 (General overview) the 11:1 Pupil: Teacher ratio (PTR) is described as ‘impressive’ (but is this cost-effective and are they all good teachers, evidently not, given later discussion of training needs?); the substantial percentage of the stage budget allocated to education allows the two ministries to ‘conduct an ambitious education policy’ (precise meaning unspecified).

There appears to be a systematic inconsistency in the use of indicators for access to education (for example ‘participation rate’ (p.16), ‘rate of schooling’ (p.39), ‘enrolment rate’ in other places) and the data showing the level of financial resources (for example education expenditure as a percentage of public expenditure is quoted to be at 23.9% in page 16 but 35% in page 39). This points to a possible problem of data reliability, as well as the weak national capacity in education statistics and data analysis.

There is too much reliance on the use of the single indicator of GER as a target for education development. Given the already relatively high GER in Uzbekistan and the ESP priority on education quality improvement, the use of such a single indicator is misleading. Alternative monitoring indicators need to be developed and implemented, for example those that help to monitor the learning outcomes.

The analysis of the current education system outlines and classifies the issues by education level and sub-sector, with human and financial resources and quality of education presented as cross-cutting issues. The analysis, however, appears to miss out some important aspects that would facilitate a better understanding of education system performance, namely internal efficiency, equity and sector management. It is thus difficult to position the current state of education system performance against what it will be in future, to develop alternative scenarios for sector development, as well as to monitor the progress of ESP implementation.

Most national education systems are structured by levels of education from early childhood education, primary and secondary education, to higher education, and adult education. They use both formal and non-formal education channels. As a system, these education levels constitute sub-sectors of the education sector, and they interact with and influence each other for example in terms of the flow of students from one level of education to another and the graduates of higher levels teaching students at lower levels. When conducting an education sector analysis or situation analysis, it is important to take this sector-wide perspective on board, which means that while ‘deconstructing’ the education sector and analysing the status of each sub-sector and issues relating to each of them, their interactions and mutual influence should also be analysed and understood. Many of these interactions are in the form of the cross-cutting issues such as equality, internal efficiency, external efficiency, management, financing, etc. which have been previously
mentioned. The ESP does not include these issues or areas in the situation analysis, which reflects a knowledge gap in the understanding of system operation and performance.

Section 3.2 has a list of guiding laws, resolutions and presidential decrees in chronological order including the 2008 Law on the Rights of Child (re disabilities) but there is no reference to the broader issue of inclusion of all disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities etc.); aims and intended outcomes are identified but there is no critical analysis of their impact or link to intended ESP outcomes. The paragraph on the 1997 Law on Education ends with: ‘the latter reflects itself among others through students’ mastery of independent thinking and organisational skills after completion of general secondary education…’; in terms of the language used, it’s not clear if this an intention or what has actually been achieved. Similarly, there is a lack of clarity in the final sentence on the 1997 National Programme for Personnel Training (NPPT) concerning the ‘… unresolved problem of ensuring compulsory education without interruptions due to the lacking coordination between structure, content and organisation of teaching and learning at the different stages’. There could usefully be a link to how outputs/outcomes of the ESP will address this problem. The final ‘guiding law’, the 2012 Presidential Decree on Training and Supply of Qualified Staff..., refers to the lack of sufficient qualified teachers and instructors, resulting in (unspecified) ‘old teaching techniques’.

Section 3.3 presents data on each of the eight education sub-sectors but doesn’t clearly or specifically highlight the links to the outcomes and outputs in Section 4.2.

Section 3.3.1 on Early Childhood Education states that a key challenge is ‘a clear definition of the exact parameters which describe ECCE in general and pre-primary education in particular’ (it’s not clear what the evidence is for this conclusion is or if it is accepted by GoU as policy). The section also notes the big regional and urban/rural enrolment variances and that expansion plans need to address equitable access as well as quality, accountability and financing (the concentration of the best teachers in urban areas influences parents’ decisions) but this is not specifically carried forward to Outcome 1 in Section 4.2. UNICEF’s 2010 Annual Report states that ‘insufficient priority given to this critical period of life in the child’s learning and development process is a constraint on the development of preschool facilities and on the pace of ECD expansion’ while also noting that the ‘availability, exchange, use and analysis of data remain a cross-cutting challenge for all programmes and activities’. This cross-cutting issue is not addressed in the section on outcomes, nor is there any exploration of the current or planned EMIS.

Section 3.3.2 (general secondary Grades 1-9) quotes the number of institutions but this is separated from the data on student numbers and participation rates; there is a lot of quantitative data on investment in construction, renovation and equipment; the capacity of teachers (and their managers) to foster independent thinking skills is highlighted as an issue and this time this is linked to the specific Law on Education.

Section 3.3.3 on Grades 10/12, Secondary Specialised Professional Education (SSPE) notes that between 1998 and 2001 $235m in grants and loans was invested by donors and a pie chart shows the relative ‘slices’ given for equipment etc. but there is no evaluation nor link made to the challenges which end the section and become outcomes in Section 4. There is no indication of how these challenges were identified (presumably through the workshops outlined in Section 1.2 on Methodology).

Section 3.3.4 on Teacher training and re-training provides a detailed description of the pre-service and in-service training systems linked to the aims expressed in various GoU Programmes and Resolutions and ends with a paragraph which summarises the critical areas for improvement, which
are carried forward as outcomes in Section 4 although no explicit link is made. Distance learning as an option is not explored, although current work on ‘self-study’ is mentioned (3.3.4.2 p.29). In sub-section 3.3.4.3 on training quality three recent studies/working group interventions are mentioned but the outcomes of these pieces of work are not discussed.

Section 3.3.5 on Higher Education says that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) work to standards related to the needs of the economy and 5/10/15 year forecasts but doesn’t say who is responsible for these forecasts. Graduates from both lyceums and vocational colleges are said to be ‘sufficiently well prepared for higher education’ but it is not clear on what evidence this judgement is based; although in the preceding paragraph GoU’s concerns in 1997 for the low numbers of SSPE graduates moving on to HE is noted. A 2011 Presidential decree ‘foresees the repair and equipment of a number of universities’ but there is no hard data or timescale. It is said that GoU recognises the need for more flexible curricula and learner-centred approaches which encourage independence’ but again no source is given. There is no information on access issues for disadvantaged students and any strategies to address any such access and participation issues. The final paragraph summarises what needs to be done to achieve HE goals but the need for increased programme variety in the humanities and social sciences does not appear in the outputs in Section 4.2.

As noted earlier, and at the request of GoU, the World Bank (Partnership Programme snapshot, October 2012) is exploring the options for partnership in the HE sector and has agreed to carry out an analytical study of the sector, in preparation for future collaboration.

Section 3.3.6 on Adult education identifies the Ministry and other organisations and donor partners involved in the provision of adult education but doesn’t discuss how they are/should be coordinated and who is responsible for this. There is no enrolment data on the 150 centres run by the Ministry of Labour or any discussion about urban/rural access issues, and access for disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities etc., although this issue is touched on in the final paragraph to this sub-section. There is just a comment that participation on those courses is 60:40 men: women. A conclusion is drawn that more non-vocational courses are needed but it is not clear if this is GoU policy or an aspiration. The 2007 OECD participation rate table is not linked to the text and there is no explanation of how it relates to Uzbekistan and the region. There is a brief reference to lifelong learning but no reference to any strategy for adult education. The outputs identified under Outcome 6 in Section 4.2 were presumably developed with the relevant working group but are not fully supported by the discussion in the text.

Section 3.3.7 on out of school education mixes the clear attribution of desired outputs carried forward to Outcome 7 in Section 4.2 (for example for the Validation Workshop and GoU resolutions) with unattributed statements such as ‘there is a clear desire to strengthen additional focus areas’. The quality and availability of teachers and the need for a monitoring and evaluation strategy (both outputs under Outcome 7) are not touched upon.

Section 3.3.8 Education for learners with special educational needs (SEN): again the main conclusions are unattributed, presumably from working group deliberations; a narrow title has been chosen for the sub-section although a broader definition of inclusive education is quoted but not fully referenced; the number of children with SEN is not clear or forecast and the number not attending mainstream or special schools (56,000 in total); the EFA National Plan of Action referred to is 10 years old – has it been updated, reviewed, how is it monitored (Outcome 8 in 4.22 includes a monitoring and evaluation output)? The crucial role of teachers (availability, training, and continuing professional development) is only briefly touched upon. A joint UNESCO/UNICEF project with the Resource Centre for Inclusive Education to develop a ‘learning system’ is mentioned but no detail
and timeframe are given. It is also not clear to what extent GoU takes into account regional and international best practice in this context, with the support of DPG members.

‘Reaching the Unreached in Education in Asia-Pacific: A Commitment to Action’ (UNESCO, 2010) notes that apart from learners with disabilities and special needs, across the region, the ‘unreached population’ includes learners from remote, rural and isolated areas; learners from linguistic and ethnic minorities and minority religious groups; girls and women, especially from rural and ethnic minorities; underperforming boys including those that are at risk or have dropped out; children from migrant families, refugees and stateless children; learners from very poor families; child labourers, street children, trafficked children and abused children; children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS; and orphans and abandoned children.’ It is not clear from the ESP what the extent of the ‘unreached population’ is in Uzbekistan and if there is any plan to address the needs of any such groups. According to Section 4.3.2.6 of the ESP (Access), ‘…”access” as such is not any issue any more…the only exceptions referring to the Higher Education and the Adult Education subsectors’…Section 3.3.6 on Adult Education says that courses need to be ‘accessible and affordable for citizens with little mobility and low income’; but the section on Higher Education (3.3.5) doesn’t mention the issue.

The international agenda for inclusion is very clear: the Core Messages from ‘Support for children with special educational needs’ (European Commission December 2012) include: a strong consensus on the importance of inclusive education, and including children with SEN within mainstream education; the absence of reliable data on the prevalence of SEN and the need for a harmonised classification framework; coherent, localised and inclusive early intervention strategies, including consultation with families; inclusive education plans (IEPs), the devolution of provision to a local level and specialist support for teachers; improved information on the support mechanisms available to parents of children with SEN. No detail is given on how GoU will further address the needs of children with SEN, although the need for a ‘well- formulated’ educational policy (Section 3.3.8) and an awareness-raising strategy to promote the ‘potential benefits’ of inclusive education are identified (ESP Outcome 8, Section 4.4.8).

Section 3.4 Human and Financial Resources. This section includes a number of tables related to the expenditure on education but there are no projections beyond 2011 for the ESP period or to GoU priorities, linked to the analysis in Section 3. The forecasts are included in Section 6, Financing and Costing Considerations, but no link is made between the two sections. The PROMAN team studied all existing policy documents, including legal documents, and extracted from them key statements which could form the basis of the initial draft of the outcomes with working groups and at ESP workshops. Section 3 reviews all the GoU laws, resolutions and programmes related to education. However, there are no links in the text to population projections (for the ESP period and beyond), from which future student numbers and resource needs could be extrapolated (also to support financial projections), including teacher numbers, textbooks, equipment etc. Section 2.2 gives the population in school age groups but only to 2011; the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is given but only up to 2007.

Given the very high level of public expenditure on education in Uzbekistan (variously quoted in the ESP as 10-12% GDP, and 24-35% of total public expenditure) and the indication of a budget surplus for education, an issue worth reviewing is efficiency in spending. The ESP, however, does not seem to see it as an issue and thus takes it for granted that the education sector ‘performs well’ in terms of funding. Section 6 of the ESP is also not explicit in the way the policy, plan and budget are developed and/or negotiated.
The situation analysis on financial resources (ESP 3.4) captures only the quantitative aspect of resources, i.e. how much is available for education as a proportion of public expenditure and national income, and, to a very limited extent, the distribution of the financial resources among the different sub-sectors. It does not provide enough information to enable an understanding of the use of these resources, e.g. by expenditure category or programme priority, thus making it difficult to make the judgment on both the efficiency and effectiveness of spending. The information does not provide references for how funds are allocated and how they can be monitored. This type of information is important when different policy options are being considered.

Though the section mentions ‘human and financial resources’, as far as human resources are concerned, the information on both the quantity (for example the number of teachers and administrators) and quality (for example teacher qualifications) of human resources is totally missing. The section includes only information on teacher salaries, without reference to any other inputs to education such as students, classrooms, schools, textbooks, laboratories, etc., making it impossible to make the link between these variables, to conduct a cost analysis and to assess the resource implications of the ESP.

Considering that the ‘central focus’ of the ESP (Section 1.1) is the ‘promotion of quality education in all educational institutions’ Section 3.5, Educational quality issues does not bring out the connections to the different education sub-sectors or to the related outputs and outcomes. It provides a useful summary of the main quality issues but there is little analysis. In addition, related but important issues such as curriculum, assessment, quality assurance, as well as the way they are linked together to affect or support quality, are not discussed or analysed.

According to the Appraisal Guidelines, the LEG is required to list a ‘bibliography of the relevant sector analyses’ with the appraisal report. It is assumed that there have been many partial sector/sub-sector analyses as a result of DPG member interventions in support of GoU sector objectives but there is no reference to the lessons learned/conclusions. The ESP lists a range of national, European and international documents, including from DPG members which were used; however the Country Assistance/Partnership Strategies of major DPs are not included.

Section 3.5.3 (p.46) discusses issues concerning education quality but reference is only made to UNICEF’s Child Friendly School (CfS) programme. This is misleading as it implies that the country’s efforts to improve education quality are limited to the CfS framework and interventions by UNICEF only. A more balanced review and analysis of the situation, looking at both the GoU’s efforts and assistance provided by bilateral and multilateral DPs should be made.

The current version of the ESP does not include a vulnerability analysis: risks and mitigation strategies are not identified. This requirement is also not specified in the UNICEF ToR for the consultancy company responsible for developing the draft ESP.

According to email correspondence with the TA team the relative lack of baselines and targets in the Results Framework (Appendix 4) is because GoU wished to put a strong emphasis on monitoring educational quality as opposed to quantitative aspects. This means that the related baseline studies for most of the indicators (based on the policy objectives as reflected in the outcomes in Section 4) still need to be undertaken. Baselines and targets would be drawn from these studies.

Conclusions
This version of the ESP was considered by the consultant team who drafted it with GoU as a ‘first
step’ requiring further development. Coverage of the eight sub-sectors is uneven as indicated by the commentary above and there is only a partial reference to DP interventions. It is not always clear what is ‘policy’ and what is only an aspiration. Links are not clearly made to Section 4, Intervention Logic. Given that the ‘central focus’ of the ESP (Section 1.1) is the ‘promotion of quality education in all educational institutions’ this section does not fully bring out the challenges in this respect for the different education sub-sectors or the connections to the related outputs and outcomes. It provides a useful summary of the main quality issues but there is little analysis.

**Recommendations**

- Review and correct, as necessary, the data on financial resources, in particular the percentage of public expenditure on education.
- Further improve the analysis of human resources by adding more detailed information on education personnel (for example teachers, administrators and managers): the number, their qualifications, their distribution (by geographical area and subject area), rate of attrition, the extent in-service or professional training provided, etc.
- Further improve the situation analysis by adding critical cross-cutting areas and the issues of inequality, efficiency, management and financing. In addition, adding a more comparative perspective on system performance, drawing on the experiences of other countries and a cost analysis, would greatly assist in the development of reference benchmarks for education development in Uzbekistan.
- Link this section more clearly with the outputs and outcomes in Section 4.2 and clearly identify the source of all ‘policy’ statements
- Clarify the availability and suitability of data across all sub-sectors and the effectiveness of the current Education Management and Information System (EMIS), identifying areas for possible improvement (with DPG support as required)
- Broaden the section on SEN to include all disadvantaged groups at all levels of education and highlight access as a cross-cutting issue for all sub-sectors.

4.  **Plan design**

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

4.1  **Policy priorities**

*Findings*

Specific priorities are not well highlighted or linked to DP strategies and country assistance plans; clear linkage is lacking between Sections 3 and 4 in terms of the development of outcomes from the Situation Analysis in Section 3.

As indicated earlier, the Situation Analysis carried out by PROMAN consultants was based on consultations and focus group discussions with a broad variety of stakeholders (although details are not included in the Inception report), but the ESP intended outcomes were developed in draft form, following a review of all existing GoU policy documents, including legal documents. They were then ‘verified’ or updated in two Validation and Development Workshops.

The central priority or main focus is ‘the promotion of quality in all educational institutions’ (ESP 1.1) and a link is made to WIS I priorities for education, namely the qualifications of teachers and education infrastructure. The overall goal is ‘sustainable and quality growth [sic]’ (ESP 4.1 Overall
Strategic Vision) and a key outcome is listed for each of the eight sub-sectors. The relative importance of the priorities identified is not indicated, for example ECD as opposed to SSPE. However, Section 4.3.1.2 on Infrastructure assumes that the ‘intensified promotion’ of ECD will have infrastructural implications requiring additional investment.

In terms of identifying priorities, there is little discussion of previous or current DP interventions in the sector, apart from UNICEF and UNESCO in the section on Quality issues (3.5). The World Bank Partnership Programme ‘snapshot’ of October 2012 notes that, at the request of GoU, the World Bank has started to explore options for partnership in the higher education sector and agreed to carry out an analytical sub-sector study, in preparation for future collaboration.

The current UNICEF Country Programme for 2010-15 reflects the national focus on policy and reform aimed at improving the quality of education and aims to assist GoU to address the causes of inequity and better target resources on equity-focused solutions to achieve and sustain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO is working with GoU to improve the quality of and access to education and its main focus is on strengthening the capacity of teacher training institutions, improvement of teaching quality, training opportunities and learning materials. Specific activities include teacher training courses to integrate ICT into the teaching and learning processes; to introduce Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), which can provide accurate (disaggregated) data from all levels of basic education; and an analysis of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system.

There are a number of references in the ESP, especially in relation to the quality of teaching and teacher training, to the need for a learner-centred approach and to ensure that teachers can help students to develop independent thinking skills, creativity and decision-making skills though it is not clear exactly how this objective will be achieved across the sub-sectors. In Section 3.5.2 (Understanding of educational quality beyond existing standards and assessment) there is a reference to the fact that current assessment arrangements do not ‘track the formation of broader qualitative skills, including life skills’; this is linked to a discussion of UNICEF’s work on Child Friendly Schools (CFS) and Quality Basic Education (QBE).

The Poverty Analysis summary from the ADB Country Partnership Strategy for 2012-16 states that the ‘most pressing challenge faced by Uzbekistan...is the creation of livelihood opportunities and ensuring sufficient employment creation’. The implications of this are set out in ADB Learning Curves (February 2011) that is to say ‘the development of skilled and knowledgeable personnel who are able to facilitate the country’s transition to an internationally competitive economy. The availability of quality human resources is critical in effecting this transformation.’ Essentially the government, assisted by DPs, is seeking to accelerate this transformation and at the same time to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the 8%-9% of its gross domestic product invested in education (a much higher percentage than in countries at a similar level of development).

The draft ESP highlights the need for improving the quality of teaching and learning through increased access to pre-school education (Outcome 1), more effective teacher training at all levels, including the ability to develop students’ independent and organisational skills (Outcomes 2 and 4), as well as knowledge, and to prepare learners for higher education or the labour market (Outcome 3). There are also specific references to a learner-centred/child centred approach and developing the competencies needed to promote critical thinking, problem solving, autonomy and transferable skills (Sections 2.3, 3.2, 3.3.4.4, 3.3.5), something emphasised by President Karimov in 1997.

There is no specific reference to entrepreneurial skills. The European Commission’s paper Rethinking
Education (November 2012) emphasises the need for transversal skills, such as the ability to think critically, take initiative, problem solve and work collaboratively. It stresses the importance of the development of entrepreneurial skills because they help to create new businesses and also support employability. It recommends the development of entrepreneurial skills through ‘new and creative ways of teaching and learning from primary school onwards’ and ‘real world experience’ through problem-based learning and enterprise links, at all levels of education. There is an implicit need for a national skills development strategy or plan, linked to the ESP, the needs of the labour market and the content of the curriculum and pre- and in-service teacher training programmes (including school directors, teachers and college principals); drawing on best international practice and with DP support.

Section 2.2 (Demographic features) gives the overall population growth between 1991 and 2011 (but not for the ESP period, this comes in Section 6.1 though for a different age bracket, 3-6 rather than 3-5); however a 30 per cent increase in ECD enrolment is envisaged for the ESP period to 2017. There is no discussion of how this will be managed, resourced or how the priorities for this sub-sector might be developed (although the need for a ‘change in allocation of funds’ is referred to in Section 4.3.1.1 Policy under Key Strategic Areas and the ‘infrastructural implications’ of ‘intensified’ ECD promotion is mentioned in 4.3.1.2 under Infrastructure Strategic Area); similarly, the enrolment for general secondary education shows a declining trend and for secondary specialised professional education, although there is no data beyond 2011. There is also no data for Higher Education after 2010 and none at all for Adult Education (which is the responsibility of a separate Ministry).

As indicated in Section 4.3 Plan financing below, it is difficult to link the priorities for education development with the funding to achieve each objective. Risks and constraints are not highlighted as such, nor the need for any mitigation strategies. The relative lack of qualifications of lyceum and vocational college directors and teachers is emphasised and the negative affect the quality of teaching and learning (Section 3.2). ‘Immediate and concrete measures’ are expected under the Decree but there is no detail on the timetable or cost implications later in the ESP.

Conclusions
Strategic policy and ESP priorities have been identified, based on existing GoU policy and legal documents, and confirmed by sub-sector working groups; however it is not clear how sub-sectors might be prioritised in relation to enrolment projections and to human and financial resource requirements.

Recommendations
• Establish clear sub-sector priorities in relation to national objectives, GoU/Ministry and DP strategic documents and the availability of future funding.
• Provide essential enrolment projection data to facilitate planning for the human and financial resource requirements arising from enrolment increases as well as decreases.

4.2. Program design and prioritisation of strategies
Findings
See also the commentary above. Although there is an analysis of current and recent GoU education policy, as expressed in laws, resolutions and decrees, lessons learned and implementation experience are not explored. UNICEF’s intervention into ECD (Early Learning Development Standards, ELDS - Section 3.1.1), Quality Basic Education and the Historical Achievements within the Child Friendly School Framework (CFS) (Sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 under Education Quality Issues) are
discussed but not interventions in other sub-sectors (there have, for example, been a lot of projects in basic education and SSPE as well as textbook development and provision).

There is no analysis of the vulnerability of the education system to external factors or mitigation strategies, nor of the efficiency of the use of resources deployed, including from DPs. It is not clear whether any alternative strategies were considered but, as already stated, the process of developing outcomes was based on existing GoU documents rather than a broad review of all possibilities.

Section 4.3 identifies 11 specific Strategic Areas which are relevant to all eight sub-sectors and intended sub-sector outputs, the first four of which (policies, infrastructure, staff development, monitoring and evaluation), relate to all sub-sectors, followed by seven supplementary strategic areas. However, it is not clear exactly how these cross-cutting aspects will be integrated into the ESP as a whole and its implementation process.

One of the supplementary strategic areas is access (4.3.2.6), described as ‘not an issue any more’ except for Higher and Adult Education. However, as already pointed out in Section 3.3.8 above, there is no data on marginalised, disadvantaged or at-risk groups or a strategy to ensure equity. Section 3.3.1 points to equitable access issues related to the large differences between urban and rural communities at pre-primary level. The ADB (Learning Curves, February 2011) also raises the possible issue of affordability of education for low-income families, especially in rural areas. This issue is not mentioned in the ESP.

In terms of the constraints to improved learning, the ESP highlights the quality of teaching and teacher training (including school and college directors) at all levels of the system (including SEN) as the main constraint, in terms of giving students both the necessary knowledge and the higher-order skills they need to progress to the next stage of education or into (self-)employment. This challenge has been identified in a number of GoU documents, starting with the National Programme for Personnel Training (NPPT) adopted in 1997.

Major investments have been made in infrastructure (renovation and construction of schools and colleges, supply of equipment etc.) as the sections on ECCE, general secondary and SSPE, for example, illustrate (3.3.1-3.3.3); the focus is now shifting to teaching and learning in the classroom but exactly how this will be prioritised is unclear. In addition, important strategies relating to assessment, examinations and quality assurance are not mentioned at all.

Conclusions
Lessons learned from implementing previous interventions in the education sector (including by DPs working with GoU), and the efficiency of the use of those resources, are not routinely explored to better inform the development process for new policy initiatives.

Recommendations
• Explore the lessons learned from previous interventions in each sub-sector.
• Identify the priority areas based on which strategies and actions can be elaborated and clearly defined.
• Clarify implementation risks and constraints and identify mitigation strategies.
4.3. Plan financing
General question: is the financial plan adequate and credible?

Findings
Section 6 of the ESP provides information on the sources of data, assumptions for costing and selected budgets and expenditure on education but there is no clearly defined financial plan for ESP implementation. The section provides no information on sources of funding (even if most of the funding comes from GoU sources, an explanation should be provided to indicate that) or the country’s macroeconomic framework which would assist an understanding of projected financial resources.

There is an absence of cost projections for the ESP. Instead, budget estimate tables are presented. The information on budget estimates is not complete, for example a budget breakdown by type of budget (recurrent versus capital) or sources of funding. Budget estimates are based on past spending trends and the annual increase in the inflation rate (5-10% above reported inflation rates in recent years, ESP p.86). While this is one of the methods that can be used to make projections, its main disadvantage is that it does not capture demographic changes and thus the evolution of student flows over time. The assumption for the annual inflation rate increase is also questionable; currently it is set at a very high rate of 5-10% above reported inflation rates. Together with the issue of inconsistency in data on education as a percentage of public expenditure and the absence of baseline data, this suggests that there is problem with the accuracy of financial projections.

Information on financial projections for education for learners with SEN is not available although this sub-sector is identified as one of the eight priority sub-sectors in the ESP. A more serious concern are the missing linkages and alignment between ESP objectives, activities and required financial resources. In other words, it is difficult to relate the strategic priorities for education development with the funding arrangements to gauge how much is required to achieve each or all of these objectives. This does not only highlight the issue of consistency and coherence of the ESP but also the prioritisation of the Plan, particularly when it comes to funding. There are also no figures (Section 6.5) for Adult Education, the responsibility for which lies with another Ministry; however it is also one of the eight priorities for the ESP. It is listed along with Higher Education, Out-of-School Education and Teacher Training under Other sub-sectors.

The current information in the financial plan does not allow for an assessment of financial feasibility as well as the financial implications attached to each of the policy options under consideration. This is reflected in the way financial projections are made which tends to indicate a ‘static’ state of education development in the future, based on past trends, and does not allow for robust changes to be made when a new or breakthrough policy option is introduced or simply for when circumstances change, including the government’s financial capacity. The introduction to Section 6 confirms that the costing is based on maintaining ‘the current level of education services to 2017’. In addition, the lack of explanation about how financial projections can be linked to strategic priorities, as indicated by the strategic areas, has further undermined the credibility of financial projection results as they fail to facilitate decision making when it comes to choosing between competing priorities.

As far as the financial plan is concerned, there are a number of pieces of crucial information that are missing: macro-economic parameters which constitute the financial base for public spending, financing sources other than GoU’s (for example parents, donor partners, and community
contributions), the financing gap, and the approach to addressing the financing gap. As a result, financing considerations cannot be made inclusively and rationally.

**Conclusion**
The financial plan is not adequate and credible. It does not meet the requirements of contemporary financial planning and budgeting.

**Recommendations**
- It is strongly recommended that the financial projections in the ESP are reviewed and revised. Using a simulation model based on cohort analysis can be very helpful in this respect as it can instantly produce projection results when a target or assumption is changed.
- The financing and costing part of the ESP should include information on recent trends in financing sources, capital expenditure, and the financing gap, disaggregated by sub-sector and by year. There is also a need to elaborate how GoU will address the financing gap if any. This information is critical for making the case for additional external resources, whether through GPE or other sources.

**4.4. Monitoring and evaluation**

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

**Findings**
GPE (Learning results Report, 2012) describes ESPs as the ‘reference documents for monitoring progress’ and, therefore, it is critical that the Monitoring and Evaluation system (M&E) improves transparency by establishing and monitoring objectives and the commitments made by GPE partners at the country level.

Monitoring is discussed in Section 3.5 of the ESP on Educational Quality Issues, in terms of the monitoring and assessment of ‘the development of educational standards’ (rather than of implementation of the ESP itself) and of classroom-based monitoring of learning outcomes and examinations and tests. UNESCO’s General Education Quality Diagnosis/Analysis and Monitoring Framework is referred to and the key monitoring criteria of access, equity/inclusion, efficiency and relevance/responsiveness.

M&E is also covered very briefly in ESP Section 4.3.1.4 as one of the four key strategic areas which relate to all sub-sectors; however, the text refers to MoPE only and emphasises the need for ‘harmonisation of existing [unspecified] monitoring procedures’. Monitoring systems (it says) will be strengthened as part of (unspecified) capacity building in each sub-sector, within ‘the overarching framework of institutionalisation of quality concepts’; dedicated capacity building especially in qualitative monitoring is anticipated for ‘those responsible for designing M&E strategies’. There is no explanation of what these statements mean in practice, or how the stated intentions will be realised and by whom, nor any reference to the main discussion on M&E in Section 5.

There is some confusion in ESP Section 5 about what is planned and what already exists: it begins with a declaration that ESP implementation ‘builds [sic] on a reliable and effective performance monitoring system...’ which appears to be an aspiration rather than a statement of fact as the text...
then changes to the future tense to describe how M&E will assist stakeholders to evaluate the successful implementation of the ESP, how it will help identify problems, etc. Section 5.1 thus appears to be a description of what an M&E system might look like.

A discussion of nine critical issues, output and outcome indicators in the Results Framework (ESP Appendix 4) follows which concludes with the statement that ‘...the M&E system for the ESP (as expressed in the overall goal) is clearly based on Uzbekistan’s Welfare Improvement Strategy.’ Indicators related to each of the eight sub-sector outcomes are then identified but for many indicators (as well as in the Results Framework itself) baselines and targets boxes are either blank or incomplete. The text confirms that ‘baselines are still in the process of being established...during the first year of ESP implementation i.e. 2013’.

A number of outputs are related to M&E activities but there is no overall summary or obvious comprehensive strategy. For example, in Section 2.4 there is provision for ‘extending’ the M&E strategy to include Quality Basic Education criteria and providing training and equipment experts; in Section 4.4.3 (OP3.5) a key activity is to establish a monitoring department at MoHSSE to monitor the quality of INSET and PRESET for SSPE teachers; Section 4.4.4 (OP4.5) refers to ‘mechanisms and tools for M&E of efficiency of improving the qualifications of pedagogical specialists’; in 4.4.6 OP6.2 talks about monitoring and evaluating all activities related to Adult Education but it is unclear by whom; in 4.4.8 OP8.3 the activity is to conduct a ‘final M&E exercise’; in the same section OPs8.5, 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8 all include monitoring activities (awareness, coordination, availability) within SEN provision.

The World Bank (CAS 2012-215, Executive Summary III para.11 Monitoring and Evaluation) notes that the WIS M&E framework was ‘partially implemented’, and hardware, software, and Ministry of Economy (MoE) staff training provided; a database of over 170 improved education and health indicators was developed and integrated into the WIS M&E framework, but it also notes that (i) the M&E unit is not yet ‘formally incorporated’ into the MOE; (ii) the framework is not yet integrated into other core ministries and (iii) M&E units at regional and district level need further capacity building.

Conclusions
The M&E system proposed for the ESP is not sufficiently clear: there is a Results Framework and key indicators have been allocated to Outcomes but priorities and institutional reporting responsibilities (if any) are unclear (reporting is generally at a national/ministerial level). Much data is missing in the Results Framework and baselines are due to be developed during 2013.

Recommendations
• Clarify more precisely what kind of M&E system is envisaged, how it will be implemented, to what timescale and by whom, indicating human and financial resource implications, as well as priorities.
• Explore the possible links to/lessons to be learned from WIS I and II implementation and monitoring processes.

4.5. Development and financing of an action plan
General question: Is the education sector plan accompanied by a detailed action plan?

Findings
The Action Plan is described in Section 4.4 with activities per output derived from the situation analysis in Section 3; additional sub-activities are expected to be identified as part of an annual ‘action programming’ process (not described in any detail, nor is any review process). The Results
Framework in Appendix 4 includes a Gantt chart for 2013-17 which lists the same activities with responsibility, human resources (in terms of person months), quantified physical inputs (materials, transport, equipment etc.), and assumptions. Indicators and reporting responsibilities (Sources of Verification) are included in the Results Framework summary by sub-sector and by outcome. The way the action plan has been prepared and presented is very much like the preparation of a programme rather than a national action plan. Some costings are given; however it is essentially still a draft and the data is inconsistent and incomplete. It is therefore difficult to assess how realistic the plan might be and the capacity to implement it.

Conclusions
There is a detailed Action Plan covering the ESP period but it is incomplete in terms of resourcing, costings and the allocation of responsibilities.

Recommendation
Further develop the Action Plan and clarify how, by whom and by when it will be implemented and updated as necessary, including the annual ‘action programming’ process.
APPRAISAL OF IMPLEMENTATION AND READINESS

5. System capacity

General question: does the plan identify and address capacity constraints that would affect plan implementation?

Findings

The ESP makes no reference to implementation arrangements as well as the institutional capacity required for the education development objectives envisaged in the Plan. Appendix 4 (Results Framework) does provide an indication of the human resources required but this is limited to quantity only. A review of related parts of the ESP points to possible capacity constraints in education system management, in particular the lack of an education management information system (EMIS), and unclear roles and responsibilities at the different levels of decentralisation in the implementation of the ESP.

Efficiency in spending is one of the most important aspects of analysis, which examines the extent to which the education sector or system has used the available resources to educate and train the students that the society and the economy require. Information on the resources, in particular human and financial, that the education sector uses for undertaking this task is critical for analysing efficiency. Given the high percentage of the budget allocated to education in Uzbekistan, it is worth asking about efficiency: does the education system deliver the maximum level of expected results with the resources it is allocated?

In addition, as one of the public sectors that uses a large part of public resources, the Ministries of Public Education and Higher and Secondary Specialised Education must be held accountable for the quality of spending and the use of human resources in education (the Ministry of Labour is responsible for Adult Education). The ESP does not appear to touch upon the issue of efficiency or system management, including human resource management. Apart from being weak in terms of providing ‘evidence’ for policy formulation, it also suggests that there is a possible problem of system capacity in sector management.

Inconsistency and confusion in the data made available do not allow for an assessment of implementation feasibility.

Conclusions

The ESP makes no reference to implementation arrangements, as well as the institutional capacity required for the education development objectives envisaged in the plan.

Recommendations

- The ESP implementation plan should take into account the capacity of the ministries concerned and ensure capacity-building measures are in place, especially when it involves different ministries and agencies. A comprehensive and long-term approach to capacity development is required (again linked to agreed DP strategies).
- The ESP (as previously mentioned) should include a section on implementation which details the mechanisms and steps that will be put in place to ensure the effective implementation of the ESP.
6. Governance and accountability

General question: are there strategies in place to improve and establish good governance practices and management accountability across the system?

Findings

There is no evidence in the current version of the ESP of a ‘robust’ communication strategy or of a plan to develop one which will embrace the range of stakeholders involved in the implementation process; there is also no accountability matrix. There is some evidence elsewhere in the ESP (Section 4.4 Action Plan), but not discussed in this section, of an intention to disseminate information on key objectives, for example (in OP1.5) there is a planned information package for parents and ‘society’ re ECD awareness raising and dissemination thereof; (in OP2.5) information on the labour market and professions for general secondary schools; (in OP4.4) dissemination of best teaching practice; (in OP5.1) publication and dissemination of education standards to institutions; (in OP8.5) awareness monitoring and dissemination of materials for parents and the general public. Similarly, there is no discussion of any possible transfer of resources to individual institutions or to the oblast or rayon level.

Gender imbalance in educational management is not identified as a concern. ADB’s Country Partnership Strategy 2012-16 (Gender Analysis Summary) notes that there is ‘near gender parity in some spheres (education and literacy rates)’ but points to inequalities in terms of ‘overall women’s empowerment’. In 2009, the Human Development Report ranked Uzbekistan 99th out of 155 countries on the Gender related Development Index (GDI). Uzbekistan was ranked 57th on the Gender Equity Index. It confirms that since independence GoU has demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality in national legislation (the Constitution, ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, a law on gender equality has not yet been passed. UNICEF’s Annual Report for 2010 also notes that ‘availability, exchange, use and analysis of data remain a cross-cutting challenge for all programmes and activities’. The lack of sex-disaggregated data makes it more difficult to conduct a comprehensive gender analysis and to identify gender gaps at the national and sector levels. Uzbekistan, according to ADB’s ‘Gender statistics in the Southern Caucasus and Central and West Asia: A situational analysis’, 2012, needs ‘more comprehensive support to build the capacity of both data producers and data users’.

No details are given of arrangements regarding accountability in relation to intended beneficiaries or of monitoring reports or third-party evaluations.

Effective implementation of the ESP requires a well-functioning organisational support structure and mechanism, with clear lines of responsibility, authority and accountability for the different actors and layers of administration. The ESP makes no reference to such a support structure and mechanism in anticipation of ESP implementation, as well as how the ESP will be implemented and monitored. In the context of administrative reform, which Uzbekistan has been involved in since 2004, the implications of such reforms in the education sector should be clearly analysed and reflected in the ESP.

The level of data gap implied in the ESP is significant and there is no strong evidence that this gap can be filled.
Conclusions
It is not clear from the ESP exactly how ownership of its objectives will be created and shared with all stakeholders at all levels of the education system, including direct stakeholders (students, teachers and parents) and how responsibility for its implementation and monitoring will be managed. The possible implications of ongoing administrative reforms for the education sector are not assessed.

Recommendations
• As has already been mentioned, the ESP should include a strategy for ensuring effective support for ESP implementation, in particular with regard to the roles and responsibilities of the different ministries and levels of administration, including effective arrangements for communication and dissemination.
• An accountability matrix appropriate for the Uzbekistan system also needs to be developed to promote transparency and effective monitoring.

7. Risks to implementation and the mitigation of risks
General question: does the ESP design take into consideration possible risks and constraints in implementation?

Findings
Recent data on budget allocations shows a steady increase in absolute terms but this is largely due to inflation. The ESP also notes that since 2005 the average yearly inflation rate has been more or less in line with the annual increase in budget allocation over the same period (ESP p.41), which means there is no real increase in budget allocation. The ESP runs the risk of under-budgeting in real terms, especially when additional activities are envisaged for the plan period.

Another risk concerns the decentralisation reform efforts currently being implemented in public administration, (as mentioned in Section 6 above) reducing the role of GoU at the central level. If this is to be implemented in the education sector, many aspects of ESP implementation will be delegated to oblast/rayon or institutional level. Management and reporting functions in practice might be slowed down by central administrative bottlenecks which need to be streamlined in order to achieve the more effective functioning of different levels of government, acting together for service delivery.

Conclusion
The main risks to effective ESP implementation are inflation and the impact of decentralisation.

Recommendation
The ESP should include a risk assessment of Uzbekistan's financial capacity to sustain education development priorities to take into account efficiency in spending and the high inflation rate. It should also include a risk assessment of implementation capacity taking into account the decentralisation reforms.
REFERENCES

ADB Country Partnership Strategy, Uzbekistan 2012-16, August 2012

ADB, ‘Gender statistics in the Southern Caucasus and Central and West Asia: A situational analysis’, Mandaluyong City, Philippines, November 2012

ADB ‘Learning Curves’, Manila, February 2011

European Commission/RAND Europe, ‘Support for children with special educational needs’, December 2012


Development of an Education Sector Plan within the GPE initiative in Uzbekistan, Inception Report, 8 August 2012, PROMAN S.A., Luxembourg


UNESCO, ‘Reaching the Unreached in Education in Asia-Pacific A Commitment to Action’, Bangkok, 2010

World Bank, Uzbekistan Country Partnership Program Snapshot, October 2012
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 LEG membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shirinov T</td>
<td>Minister of Education (Chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kuchkarov D</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tailokov N</td>
<td>Cabinet of Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hoar M</td>
<td>Chief of Education, UNICEF (Coordinating Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Akhmedov F</td>
<td>Head of Main School Department, Ministry of Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Asodov I</td>
<td>Head of Monitoring Department, Ministry of Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Safarov O</td>
<td>Head of International Relations, Ministry of Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Takhirov B</td>
<td>Ministry of Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Alimova D</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Zakirov I</td>
<td>Director, Republican Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Juraev R</td>
<td>Acting Director, Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogical Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Akhmedov T</td>
<td>Director, Institute of Social Research, Cabinet of Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ashonov B</td>
<td>Director, Centre for Economic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Djamalidinova O</td>
<td>Kamolot NGO</td>
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Appendix 2 EU Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appraisal of the Uzbek national education plan/sector strategy

1. BACKGROUND

The Government of Uzbekistan has launched in summer 2012 a process for the development of a national education sector plan with the objective of joining the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and developing a grant proposal for GPE support for the implementation of the strategy in the amount of 49.9 million USD. The strategy is being developed by the Local Education Group (LEG) comprised largely of government entities/education stakeholders, with the support of an external consultant contracted via UNICEF, which currently acts as the coordinating body. The overall leadership rests with the Ministry of Education which acts under the supervision of the cabinet of Ministers and the First Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Finance.

As part of the process for the development of the national education sector plan and subsequently GPE grant application, Development Partner Group (DPG) was set up. DPG currently includes UNICEF, UNESCO, GIZ, JICA, WB, Korean Development Agency, and the EU Delegation. The DPG is responsible for assessing the national education sector plan and producing Appraisal Report that is shared with government before submission to the Global Partnership for Education. The appraisal report should assess process for the development of the national plan, the plan itself and the readiness of the government to implement it. DPG is expected to assess the Uzbek national education sector plan in November 2011.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of this assignment is to assess Uzbek national education sector plan and the readiness to implement it. The assignment should not cover assessment of the process for the development of the national plan. Although the assessment should be conducted as a desk study, it is expected that the analysis will be based on real situation in Uzbekistan and the result will offer a realistic view contrasting plan with the reality in the country. The assignment should in a report written in English.

The assessment should be conducted in line with relevant GPE guidelines for assessment of national education sector plans. In principle it should cover the following areas and be guided by the following research questions:

I. Appraisal of the national education plan
1) **Education sector analysis**

*General Question:* What was the empirical evidence available to develop the plan and has this been well used?

- Are the available data sufficiently comprehensive and reliable for the purpose of defining baselines and targets?
- Has a recent education sector analysis been conducted?
- Does the analysis cover the key areas (access, internal and external efficiency, equity, quality, management) of the education system?
- Does the education sector analysis identify the vulnerability of the education system to political, economic, social, and environmental risks (and where necessary has a vulnerability analysis been conducted)?
- Are the results broadly shared and known by key stakeholders?
- What other studies/analyses have been used for plan preparation?
- What baseline values for the sector analysis already exist, how accurate are they and what other baselines need to be collected?

2) **Plan design**

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

**Policy priorities**

- Are the strategic policy and plan priorities informed by empirical evidence from the sector analysis?
- Do the priorities take into account projections and financial simulations?
- Is there a comprehensive knowledge base for each of the strategic priorities? Or, is a process built into the EP to address data and knowledge gaps?
- Are there reliable and sufficient disaggregated baseline data to enable target setting and progress monitoring in each of the strategic priority areas?

**Program design and prioritization of strategies**

- Do the strategies take into account lessons learned from past policies and implementation experience?
- Is there evidence that the proposed strategies/interventions will have the expected impact?
- Are the strategies/interventions proposed sufficient relative to the targets set?
- Do the strategies proposed mitigate the vulnerability of the education system to political, social, and environmental impacts as identified in the sector diagnosis?
- Do the strategies/interventions reflect an efficient deployment of resources (public, private, and external development partners) relative to impact? Were alternative strategies considered?
- Are there clear descriptive or quantitative outcomes described for the planned strategies and programs that demonstrate impact?
- Are targets set for each of the marginalized and at-risk groups (such as underserved communities, girls, the poor, children with disabilities, orphans, children in hard to reach communities, ethnic minorities, refugee and internally displaced populations and children affected by HIV and AIDS)? Does the EP include a strategy to ensure...
equity in provision of basic inputs across these groups, including targeted fiscal transfers as appropriate? Does the EP provide an inclusive approach for mainstreaming support to marginalized groups?

- Are the strategies and interventions well defined and sufficient to address constraints in each of the priority areas?
- Does the EP address key constraints to better learning?
- If the health status of children is limiting their ability to learn (including psychological impacts of conflict or malnutrition due to food crises from natural disasters), is this addressed in the EP?
- Does the EP clearly summarize/define the linkages among planned inputs and the expected impact of the EP in the medium term (e.g. in a log frame, economic analysis)?

3) Plan Financing

*General Question: Is the financial plan adequate and credible?*

- Does the financing plan take into account all sources of funding?
- What is the volume of domestic funding? Is there a comparison with domestic funding in other countries in the region?
- Is projected domestic financing based on the country's macro-economic framework? If not, are the assumptions regarding growth in public expenditure and allocations to the education sector reasonable in light of recent experience?
- Are targets and costs of post-primary education described in the EP reasonable in relation to the goals for primary Education?
- Is there an integrated financial analysis or projection that ensures goals can be delivered within a reasonable domestic financial envelope? If domestic financing is insufficient, are the needs for donor contributions quantified?
- Are there mechanisms for consistent reporting to all stakeholders on available resources and expenditure?
- Does the financing plan include the strategies identified to mitigate the vulnerability of the education system to political, social, and environmental impacts as identified in the sector diagnosis?

4) Monitoring and evaluation

*General Question: Will the Monitoring and Evaluation system provide robust indicators and valid and reliable data to monitor progress toward the achievement of inputs, outputs and outcomes of the results framework and are the reporting/feedback/consultation mechanisms transparent and adequate to maintain broad ownership during implementation?*

- Does the plan contain key indicators for M&E? Is there a results framework? Is there a clear presentation of priorities?
- Are institutional responsibilities for reporting clearly identified?
- Is there sufficient human resource capacity to implement the M&E arrangements?
- Are the arrangements/processes by which government will report to all stakeholders and by which stakeholders will review and validate M&E results clearly articulated, sufficient and transparent? Does the M&E framework provide for review of donor and civil society organization support?
- What is the role of the LEG in M&E arrangements?
- Is reporting during annual Joint Sector Reviews planned?
• Will the M&E arrangements support utilization of M&E data in decision making and resource allocations?
• Does the M&E framework of the EP include monitoring of strategies to mitigate the vulnerability of the education system to political, social, and environmental impacts as identified in the sector diagnosis and program design?
• Does the M&E framework include the basic indicators of the GPE results framework? If not, what are key areas where capacity needs to be built to provide better information (for example on learning outcomes)?

5) Development and financing of an Action Plan

General Question: Is the Education Sector Plan accompanied by a detailed action plan?

• Is a three year action plan available?
• Is there a process in place for the subsequent preparation of annual action plans?
• Is there consistency between the design of the EP and the action plan including strategies to mitigate the vulnerability of the education system to political, social, and environmental impacts?
• Are the activities clearly identified and costed?
• Are there indicators and target outputs described for each activity?
• Have resources been identified for all activities?
• For activities without an identified source of funding, is there a strategy for identifying additional funding sources? Is the proposed action plan realistic?
• Does it include consistent reporting and evaluation indicators that can be assessed during annual Joint Sector Reviews?
• Are the volume and timing of expected disbursements realistic relative to absorptive capacity (e.g. relative to recent experience, relative to plans to strengthen implementation capacity, and relative to capacity to manage higher expenditure particularly in decentralized settings)?
• Do the institutional structures identified to implement the Education Sector Plan include clearly designated responsibilities for results and mandates for each Activity?

II. Appraisal of Implementation Readiness

1) System Capacity.

General question: Does the Plan identify and address capacity constraints that would affect the implementation of the EP?

• Are the needs for personnel and skill development in central and decentralized contexts sufficiently considered in the EP?
• Does the ministry have clear definitions or job descriptions of roles and responsibilities and corresponding profiles for education personnel at various levels? If not, is there a plan to develop them?
• Are resource allocations to decentralized levels adequate in relation to their respective roles in implementing the EP?
2) Governance and accountability

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

- Is there a robust communication strategy (or plans to develop one) to help stakeholders at all levels understand the objectives, strategies and activities of the plan and their role in implementing them?
- If the Plan foresees a significant increase in the transfer of resources to sub-national units and schools, does it indicate how this will be done and has attention been given to ensuring equity, efficiency, accountability and predictability?
- If gender imbalance in educational management has been identified as a concern, are there strategies in the plan to address it?
- In what ways does the EP aim to strengthen accountability to beneficiaries? (E.g. is there a set of service delivery standards that are monitored? Does the EP propose to draw on instruments for community feedback such as Community Report Cards, Social Audits?)
- To promote transparency, is there provision for third party evaluations, disclosure of and easy public accessibility to EP monitoring and audit reports, data and evaluations?
- Are effective strategies included to monitor education expenditure and leakage (e.g. through sector expenditure reviews, and expenditure tracking of resources distributed or disbursed to schools)?

REQUIRED OUTPUT
Appraisal report in English, with high quality executive summary. Outline and draft report to be made available for review/comment to the EU Delegation. Possibly presentation of the appraisal report to the DPG.

EXPERT'S PROFILE AND DURATION
Senior education development expert with good understanding of education systems in Central Asia/post-Communist political systems and the related global context (GPE, millennium goals, etc.). Experience demonstrated through previous publications on the topic. Knowledge of English and Russian.

The requested number of man-days is: 10 days (14 days if presentation to the DPG is included)

Working language(s) - English (and Russian)

Starting period - 1st week of November 2012 (expected)
Foreseen finishing period or duration - 3rd week of November 2012 (expected)
### Appendix 3 Summary of appraisal

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