APPRAISAL

OF THE

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

2014-2018

A Report Submitted to the Local Education Group

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Introduction and Description of the Task

The development partner group within the Local Education Group (LEG) is responsible for submitting an appraisal of the Education Sector Plan to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) as part of Guyana’s request for funding. This appraisal report on the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 is a technical input to the discussions on the endorsement of the plan by the development partners. The report was shared with the government prior to submission to the GPE.

The structure of the report follows the Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal (2012). It covers three sections with subsections: the plan preparation process, the plan design, and implementation and readiness.

The appraisal seeks to answer the following questions:

- *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 appraisal was prepared from a desk review of the ESP and other relevant documents and a one week visit to Guyana in June/July 2014. The visit included discussions and work sessions with the Ministry of Education (MOE), field visits to regional education offices, schools and nursery education centers in Region 7 and interviews with UNICEF and the Guyana UNESCO Commission. The UNESCO representative for Guyana is not resident in the country. There was also regular contact with the World Bank as the Lead Partner for Guyana.

An appraisal summary table is provided in annex 1, List of persons met during the visit to Guyana in annex 2 and a selection of documents consulted in annex 3.

I would like to thank the Permanent Secretary, Ms. Delma Nedd, the Chief Education Officer Mr. Olato Sam, the Chief Planning Officer Mrs. Evelyn Hamilton and other officers of the MOE at the central and regional levels. I particularly appreciate their warm welcome and the giving of their time to guide me to a better understanding of the education sector in Guyana. I also appreciated the helpful and constructive discussions with the UNICEF Representative for Guyana and Suriname, Ms. Marianne Flach and her team and the Secretary-General of the UNESCO Commission in Guyana Ms. Inge Nathoo. My thanks also go to Hongyu Yang, the World Bank Team Leader for education in Guyana for her constant guidance and support.
Executive Summary

Introduction

This appraisal report on the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 is a technical input to the discussions on the endorsement of the plan by the Local Education Group (LEG). The report was shared with the government prior to submission to the GPE. The structure of the report follows the Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal (2012). The appraisal was prepared from a desk review of the ESP and other relevant documents and a one week visit to Guyana in June/July 2014.

Appraising the Development Process of the Education Sector Plan

Education Sector Plan Preparation Process

The ESP goals are consistent with the Government of Guyana’s strategies over the last fifteen years. During this period, the highest priority was put on the development of human resources. The goals of the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2001 to 2010 included universal access to quality education for all, public sector management reform and increased use of ICT. Despite positive results in many areas challenges remained in the area of quality improvement, ICT and public sector reform programs. By the end of 2010, Guyana had recorded significant progress in economic and social development moving from a least developed country in 2001 to a low middle income country.

The PRS for 2011-2015 seeks to build on these results. The aim is to promote inclusive growth partly through diversification of the economy and further development of human resources. These strategies are also supported by development partners.

Consistent with this background, the main focus of the ESP is to improve the quality of education at all levels.

Stakeholder Engagement

National leadership in the preparation of the ESP. The government showed strong leadership and ownership in the development of the plan. The ESP is a product of the MOE which worked in collaboration with other ministries, stakeholders, NGOs and development partners.

Consultative process. The development of this plan followed the consultative tradition in Guyana and was carried out from early 2012 throughout 2013. The consultations were based on issues/policies that had been raised by the public and the results of assessments of sector performance.
Appraising the Education Sector Plan

Education Sector Analysis

The ESP reflects the results of various evaluations and analyses of the education sector performance at the national and sector/subsector levels. These include at the national level the National Development Strategy (NDS), 2001-2010, the PRSs for 2004-2008 and 2009-2012, and at the sector level the Study – Universal Secondary Education in Guyana (2008). The ESP also benefits from analysis carried out for the preparation of various projects and lessons learnt from the implementation of the projects. This included issues related to the environment and inclusion of indigenous peoples.

The data used in the ESP come mainly from the MOF for macro and fiscal issues and the MOE for the sector. These are considered to be overall reliable. The Ministry of Finance has been spearheading the improvement of data collection and analysis to strengthen the public sector management. The MOE is one of the two pilot ministries in which the system is being piloted. The vulnerability of the ESP to various risks are discussed and considered modest.

Plan Design

Policy priorities

The structure of the ESP is based on cross-cutting issues in the sector rather than by sub-sectors. The rationale for this is that given the successes in expanding access to primary and secondary education, the key constraints to the development of the sector are generic in nature. Nursery education is prioritized as the foundation for building good quality education at all levels. A World Bank/GPE supported project in this area is already being processed.

The ESP lists six sector strategic intermediate outcomes:

**Intermediate outcome 1: The performance of government departments responsible for ESP initiatives improves.** This intervention recognizes that successful implementation of the plan depends largely on the implementation capacity of the MOE. It will be based on an audit of the system.

**Intermediate outcome 2: Accountability system that creates incentives to improve student learning outcomes is established and functioning.** This outcome will address learning achievement for all regions and sub-groups. The participation of PTAs and the wider community in school operations is included to help promote quality improvement.

**Intermediate outcome 3: Quality of school facilities improves.** This is included because experience in Guyana shows that learning opportunities are limited in schools with poor physical facilities. The environment of schools would be improved through the Child Friendly School Program Sponsored by UNICEF.

**Intermediate outcome 4: The quality of teaching improves.** Teacher performance is a key factor in learning achievement. Performance of the teaching corps was degraded following
massive emigration of highly qualified and experienced teachers. The aim is therefore to replace these teachers.

**Intermediate outcome 5: Teaching-learning materials/ instructional tools/ assisted devices aligned to the curriculum to facilitate better learning outcomes.** Curriculum is the key to learning and needs to be improved. The key learning tools such as textbooks etc. also need to be better linked the revised programs.

**Intermediate outcome 6: Students’ instructional time increases.** Instructional time is lost in schools due to a variety of weather related and management factors. Greater involvement of the PTAs would help to reduce student and teacher tardiness and absenteeism.

**Program Design and Prioritization of Strategies**

The seven strategies in the ESP are in general well defined and address most of the constraints in the various areas and for all groups. However, there is no discussion on alternative strategies considered and reasons for their rejection.

The ESP targets are disaggregated by gender and vulnerable groups. Some of the targets related to improved achievement seem too ambitious. Implementation risks and mitigation measures are discussed. The plan does not include a logical framework. The impact of this is likely to be modest since most programs are based on past experiences in Guyana.

**Plan Costs and Financing**

The costing of the plan matches the policy, institutional and governance context of Guyana. Assessment of the costs are driven by specific guidelines such as teacher:pupil ratios and are distributed by departments and units in the MOE following the government budget structure.

This makes it difficult to carry-out a cost-efficiency analysis for each intervention or subsector. The costs are also not disaggregated into recurrent and investment costs making it difficult to assess sustainability. The impact of this is likely to be modest since the criteria for selecting components include an assessment of the expected benefits/effects on learning and opportunity costs.

Financing of the plan is moderate a concern. Between 2009 and 2013 public sector allocations to education averaged about 4.8 percent of GDP which was about the same as for low-middle income countries. The share of education in the national budget was also maintained at about 15% and the budget grew by about 5.6 percent annually. This trend is projected to continue. However, there is no Medium Term Expenditure Framework against which to judge the probability of the budget growth trends.

The total financing gap of US$ 98.3 million is probably not too high, equivalent to about 10.1 percent of projected allocations to the sector during the plan period. This could be managed through increasing efficiency, phasing expenditures towards the end of the plan period and seeking increased external funding.
**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Overall, the M&E arrangements are adequate for monitoring implementation progress and achievement of the ESP goals. The M&E framework when combined with the Implementation and action plans together provide an overall picture of the expected results and the management structure for the system. Accountability to stakeholders would be through the proposed MOE Advisory Committee and engagement with communities/PTAs, stakeholders and partners.

The data for the M&E would rely on the information collected by the MOE supplemented by pilot and monitoring reports. The data is expected to be reliable as the system is being improved.

**Development and Financing of an Action Plan**

The three-year action plan comprises the specific actions and the indicators for monitoring progress and measuring results. The departments responsible for each action are shown in a separate table. About 90 percent of the resources for financing the plan would come from the government budget. Sources of funding for about 20 percent of the remaining gap have been identified and shown in the main text of the ESP but not in the plan. These sources should also be shown in the action plan. Some explanation should be provided on how the shortfall would be addressed. There should be specific and agreed arrangements for the implementation of the capacity audit since this would determine the final targets.

**Appraisal of Implementation and Readiness**

**System Capacity**

The concern about capacity is justified given that the system is now moving to more complex operations required to address issues such as improving quality nationally and expansion of quality education in the most remote areas and to disadvantaged groups. However, Guyana has shown good basic capacity in moving the system forward in the past. The capacity audit recommendations would include where necessary, refinements of the institutional arrangements of the MOE, skill requirements and targets. The chances of success in this area are good based on past experience at the MOE and strong national commitment to public sector reform.

**Governance and Accountability**

Adequate governance and accountability arrangements are ensured in the sector through extensive consultations with all stakeholders in the review and formulation of government policies and strategies especially in the preparation of the ESP. This consultative approach is likely to continue as it is part of a systematic approach by the government to promote stakeholder participation in public sector programs.
Risks to Implementation and the Mitigation of Risks

The political risks are considered low given the commitment of the government and all political parties to prioritizing education as one of the key pillars of the country’s future development. Financial governance risks are considered low to moderate. Much of the funds for the ESP would come from the budget and managed through the government’s fiduciary system which is being strengthened. Funds disbursed under partner financed projects are normally managed through specific bilateral arrangements. The environmental and social risks, including those related to indigenous peoples associated with the implementation of the ESP, are being addressed through existing arrangements which have been judged satisfactory by various partners. Implementation capacity constraints are recognized as a moderate risk and are being directly addressed through the proposed audit. Although the risks are moderate, it would be good to discuss delays or weaknesses in the implementation of the proposed capacity audit and subsequent actions, as this would be critical to the success of the program.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The ESP is an adequate basis for moving forward with GPE and donor funding, when viewed in the context of the evolution of the system over the last 10 to 15 years, overall government policies and commitments, implementation capacity and financing. The focus of the plan on improving quality and management efficiency at all levels builds on the achievements of expanding access to both primary and secondary education to almost 100 percent. The focus on quality education for all regions and groups would help consolidate these gains and prepare all students for higher levels of education and training as well as the job market. This would help raise incomes and the levels of living of the population. In the national context, good quality graduates from the system would help promote growth and increase efficiency in the management of national resources. Capacity issues are addressed and there is strong commitment from the government to finance the plan.

Recommendations

A list of nine recommendations is shown at the end of the main text. These recommendations while important are not considered fundamental enough to threaten achievement of the ESP goals.
I. Appraisal the Development Process of the Education Sector Plan

1. This section covers the Plan Preparation Process and Stakeholder engagement. It seeks to determine (a) whether the objectives of the plan correspond to the national plans, development strategies and expenditure framework; (b) the extent to which key stakeholders including civil society, development partners, trade unions, and communities participated in the consultative process and (c) whether those responsible for implementation of the program such as government officials, teachers and the LEG were part of the decision making process.

Education Sector Plan Preparation Process

2. The ESP goals are consistent with the Government of Guyana’s strategies over the last fifteen years. During this period, the highest priority was put on the production of adequate numbers of quality graduates from the education system. This was seen as one of the main pillars for building the future development of the country. Consistent with this, the main focus of the ESP is to improve the quality of education at all levels through increased emphasis on factors that would improve quality and strengthen the system of accountability for increased internal efficiency and learning outcomes. Integration of computerized technology in the education system and further institutional and human resource development are also integral parts of the ESP to help achieve the sector goals.

3. The fifth prong of the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2001 to 2010 was aimed at achieving universal access to quality education for all. This followed immediately after the fourth prong which was to integrate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the development process in the country. Specifically, the strategy included the utilization of ICT in the process of delivering education services at all levels. The strategy also identified weak/inappropriate institutions as constraints to the development of the country. The sixth prong was therefore focused on public sector management reform. An assessment of the results of this strategy showed that while the access objective was largely achieved over the period, challenges remained in the area of quality improvement. Similarly, while good progress was made in the implementation of the ICT and public sector reform programs, the planned goals have not yet been achieved.

4. By the end of 2010, Guyana had recorded significant progress in economic and social development moving from a least developed country in 2001 to a low middle income country. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) for 2011 to 2015 states that “(W)hile economic growth averaged about 1.3 percent in the first half of the decade, it significantly jumped to an average of 4.4 percent over the period 2006-2010. In the critical areas of education, health and social services, substantial progress was made. Governance and institutional structures were also improved to augment economic and social transformation by improving efficiency, accountability and transparency and improving the rule of law.”
5. The PRS for 2011-2015, which is the framework for implementing the government’s medium-term growth strategy, seeks to build on these results. The aim is to promote inclusive growth to raise the levels of living, partly through diversification of the economy. The PRS rests on five pillars the second of which is stronger governance, institutional, and regulatory structures, followed in third place by accelerated investment in human capital, and primary health care. The PRS also includes initiatives to strengthen public sector management focusing on consolidating the gains from previous programs while deepening institutional reforms, building human resource capacity and strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacity. For the education sector, the PRS envisages inter alia (i) improving access to quality and equitable education at the pre-primary and primary levels; (ii) improving literacy and numeracy for all; (iii) improving the school/classroom environment; (iv) improving ICT; (v) strengthening school health, nutrition and HIV& AIDS programs in the curriculum and (vi) attaining universal secondary education.

6. These strategies are also supported by development partners. The UNDP supports the priority given to human and social development. The Country Program Document (CPD) for 2012-2016 includes assistance for building national, institutional and policy capacities to pursue human development priorities. The CPD also notes that Guyana has reached many of the MDGs including those on primary education. It also recognizes the government’s commitment to pro-poor policies through the allocation of 40% of the budget to initiatives in these areas. The CPD is the framework within which Specialized UN agencies (including UNESCO and UNICEF active in the education sector in Guyana) will align their assistance to the country.

Stakeholder Engagement

7. National leadership in the preparation of the ESP. The government showed strong leadership and ownership in the development of the plan. The ESP is a product of the MOE which worked in collaboration with other ministries, stakeholders and development partners. The process was coordinated by the Ministry of Education’s Planning Unit under the political and administrative leadership of the MOE. The Planning Unit worked closely with the professional and technical officers at both central and regional levels in the articulation of policies, strategies and operational plans. Development partners provided financial and technical contributions such as advice on best practices and critical reviews of the document at various stages.

8. Consultative process. The development of this plan followed the consultative tradition on which major strategies and plans are based in Guyana, such as the NDS, the PRS and previous education sector plans. Consultations for the ESP were held from early 2012 throughout 2013 on various issues facing the education sector with all major stakeholders. These consultations were based on issues/policies that had been raised by the public and that had emerged from the various monitoring reports of the sector. These issues were systematically reviewed by the management team of the MOE and included in the annual work plan under the leadership of the Minister. In line with this and consistent with the objectives of the ESP, emphasis more recently has been on consultations with stakeholders and hinterland communities on issues and options for improving education in the various regions. Rapporteurs were hired to record the proceedings of these consultations which were then shared with all stakeholders and civil society for information and feedback.
9. Within the government system, the leadership, senior management team and technical officers of the MOE participated directly in the preparation of the ESP. This included officials in the various departments of the MOE at the central level and the regions who would be responsible for implementation of the plan. A large number of institutions also participated. These included nursery, primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges, technical training institutions and the university. All of these groups were consulted on a regular basis on the various strategic options considered for the plan. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) provided overall guidance on macro and fiscal policies during the process. In addition the MOE consulted with the following: the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security. The latter provided guidance on the development of plans for the Welfare and Guidance Units and the HFLE program.

10. Consultations were held with a wide range of civil society stakeholders. Parents, teachers, teacher unions, students, representatives of Disability Persons’ Organizations and community members participated through consultative and PTA meetings and workshops. The consultations covered sector-wide issues as well as specific topics such as early childhood education, technical and vocational education and training, science education and teacher training. The special needs of the Amerindian societies were also discussed with the relevant reference groups. To ensure that appropriate strategies and instruments were available for implementation of the program, a number of tools were developed and tested. Materials such as the nursery schools diagnostic tool and the nursery readers were developed and field tested. Nursery school teachers and supervisors were then trained in their use through a series of workshops. These instruments were reviewed and revised based on the feedback from field staff and the workshops.

11. There are currently no joint partnership arrangements in Guyana similar to what exists in other countries. Agreements tend to be on a bilateral basis. For example, there are reporting relationships with some donors e.g. UNICEF and the EU with which there are agreed indicators linked to their budget support program which are reviewed on a semi-annual or annual basis. There are also specific arrangements with the World Bank related to monitoring and reporting on projects supported by the Bank. There was a thematic group of donors to education which met annually or more frequently as necessary at meetings convened by the Minister. With the reduced number of donors to education specifically (EU gives budget support generally) this has not been convened for some time. UNICEF which has a permanent presence in Guyana was closely involved in the development of the ESP and contributed by sharing experiences. They support the sector strategy through their programs in Guyana and gave feedback on various drafts of the plan. The UNESCO Commission and non-resident UNESCO representatives contributed during periodic visits and through electronic media and support the sector through their current programs. The World Bank also collaborated closely with the government in the preparation of the ESP through provision of technical inputs and comments on various versions of the draft as it evolved.

12. Similar to development partners, there are no formal joint meetings with NGOs. However, there are quite a few areas of government and NGO/Civil Society collaboration. Specifically the government works with NGOs on specific programs such as the Special
Education Needs (SEN) sub sector and provides subsidies to the NGOs to implement programs. The National Council for Technical and Vocational Education which is responsible for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy has strong private sector representation (required by the Act which set it up). Similarly the National Accreditation Council has representatives of trade unions and other civil society organizations.

13. Annex 2 of the ESP shows a list of over a hundred institutions and groups consulted during the preparation of the plan. The list includes institutions for children with special needs, nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as communities. Sector wide issues discussed included the low levels of student learning, teacher absenteeism, regional equity, transparency in school management, physical facilities and safety. Issues discussed on SEN covered access, teacher training, curriculum and assessment.

II. Appraising the Education Sector Plan

14. This section covers education sector analysis and plan design. The section on sector analysis covers the extent to which the plan is based on existing data and empirical evidence. Specifically, the section discusses the coverage of the sector and other analysis on which the plan is based, the reliability and adequacy of the data and the extent to which the sector analysis are shared by a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The section also assesses the extent to which possible risks have been identified and addressed.

15. Plan design covers policy priorities, program design and prioritization of strategies, plan financing, monitoring and evaluation and development and financing of an action plan.

Education Sector Analysis

16. The ESP reflects the results of various evaluations and analyses of the education sector performance at the national and sector/subsector levels. These include at the national level the National Development Strategy (NDS)2001-2010, the PRSs for 2004-2008 and 2009-2012, and at the sector level the Study – Universal Secondary Education in Guyana (2008). The ESP also benefits from the findings in project related documents such as the Implementation Completion Report of the Guyana EFA/FTI Project (2004 – 2007) and the sector analysis carried out for the Improving Teacher Education (2010) and Secondary Education Improvement (2014) Projects. Proposals related to the Amerindian population rely on the results of initiatives in the NDS and the PRSs as well as the Social Assessments for Amerindian Peoples Plan in the teacher education and secondary education projects. In addition to these documents, the MOE continually reviews access and students’ learning levels at the national and regional levels to identify issues that need to be addressed. In this regard, special attention has been paid to the relationship between nursery education and learning, teacher training and conditions of service as well as quality and capacity for implementing the sector programs.
17. The evaluations of the NDS and the PRSs record the significant progress that was made between 2001 and 2012 in rebuilding the education sector by expanding access at the primary and secondary levels from the erosion that occurred in the seventies and eighties. They however note the low levels of learning achievement especially in math and science and the weak administrative and management capacity of the education system. By 2010 the impact of the government’s program to infuse ICT in government operations to help address some of these weaknesses had registered only limited impact in the education sector.

18. At the sector level, the Implementation Completion Report (ICR) for the Education For All Fast Track Initiative Project came to similar conclusions, identifying the quality of education at all levels as a major concern. One of the major findings was the low qualified teacher:pupil ratio. This continues to be addressed through increasing the production of qualified teachers for both primary and secondary education. The length of teacher training has been reduced and ICT has been included for use in teacher training and teaching. The capacity of the teacher training institution is being increased and management strengthened. Secondary education is also targeted to achieve 100 percent net enrollment rates in quality schools especially in the regions. The focus is on continuous professional development of teachers especially in math and science and establishment of complete secondary schools. Nursery education also became a priority to address the poor preparation of students for primary school and to help improve learning at all levels. The various assessments of the system recognized that if universal access and improved quality were to be achieved, the needs of the indigenous population and vulnerable children as well as those with special needs had to be addressed.

19. One of the major benefits of the tradition of extensive consultation on public policy issues (described earlier) in Guyana is that civil society becomes fully conversant with development issues and participate in designing and implementing solutions. This builds consensus and commitment among the political leadership, professionals and technical officers, beneficiaries (students, parents and other citizens) and development partners which would facilitate implementation. The consultative process in Guyana can be considered credible given the concurrence of their findings with those in other systematic evaluations of the system such as Demographic and Health Survey 2009 and studies and results of assessments done for various projects.

20. The data used in the ESP come mainly from the MOF for macro and fiscal issues and the MOE for the sector. These are considered to be overall reliable although there are concerns about the quality of some of the data. To address this, the Ministry of Finance has been spear heading the improvement of the collection and analysis of data to strengthen the public sector planning and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. The MOE is one of the two pilot ministries in which the system is being piloted. There are however two areas of concern. The first relates to the comparability of data on assessments of student achievement from one year to the next since standardized testing is not commonly used. However, with those caveats, the assessments can be considered useful. The discipline of carrying out learning assessments with the engagement of beneficiaries and using the results to improve learning brings positive benefits to the process such as a focus on and accountability for learning. Standardized testing is a challenge even for middle income countries. Another area of concern is the demographic data. The long interval
between the last two censuses makes it difficult to project age specific data which is needed for calculating enrollment rates and projecting future needs.

21. Given that the focus of the ESP is on raising quality and strengthening institutional capacity, the weaknesses in the administrative data would probably only have a limited impact on the evaluation of results of the plan and some of these are being addressed in the plan. The baseline and targets for the capacity building component would be derived from the initial diagnosis of the system and assessment of needs and the capacity required for implementation. The other components; learning assessment, improvement of school facilities, teacher training, learning materials and instructional time are discreet components for which reliable data exists or can be collected prior to project start and during implementation. The only area in which reliability would continue to be a concern is in the comparability of test and examination scores yearly since standardized testing is not generally used in the system or likely to be put in place in the short-term.

22. The vulnerability of the ESP to economic and political risks are discussed and considered modest. This is based on the relative political stability since the last elections, the continued recovery of the economy and the commitment of all political parties and stakeholders to improving the quality of education for all on an equitable basis. The social and environmental risks associated with the ESP would be managed using national institutions which has been the basis for the arrangements for these areas in recent World Bank supported projects such as the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP).

Plan Design

Policy priorities

23. The policy priorities section aims to determine whether the overall and individual policy and plan priorities are based on the findings of sector analysis that can also be used to set targets and to monitor implementation progress. The use of projections and options derived from simulation models is also discussed.

24. Unlike many sector plans, the structure of the ESP is based on cross-cutting issues in the sector rather than by sub-sectors. The rationale for this, is that given the successes in expanding access to primary and secondary education, the key constraints to the development of the sector are generic in nature mainly related to quality improvement at all levels and the challenges to regular delivery of quality education in all parts of the country. This approach is reflected in the key proposed interventions: (a) capacity building; (b) student assessment; (c) school construction; (d) teacher training which is managed by the same institution for all levels of education; (e) provision of teaching materials and (f) use of instructional time. The primary policy objective stated in the ESP is to improve the quality of education. Specifically, “the strategy for 2014-18 focuses on improving learning outcomes for all levels and all sub-groups and decreasing the differences in learning outcomes between sub-groups, especially between students in coastal and hinterland schools. The learning outcomes of primary concern are literacy and numeracy, followed by science and technology.”

1 ESP
emphasis would be placed on strengthening the institutional and management capacity of the institutions responsible for implementation, including increased use of ICT for the delivery of education programs and for management of the system.

25. The emphasis on quality is a logical evolution from previous national and sector plans, especially between 2001 and 2010, which focused on both equitable access and quality. As stated earlier, the results of previous plans showed success in expanding gross access in both primary and secondary education to over 100 percent and 80 percent respectively, except for the hinterland and riverine areas. The government recognizes that programs to further expand access need to continue, especially in deprived areas and for children with special needs. However, the focus on quality is supported by research which shows that in order to consolidate and further expand access, and increase retention the quality of education needs to be improved. In addition to other interventions aimed at quality improvement, the ESP therefore focuses on further development of nursery education which is the foundation for building good quality education at all levels. While access to nursery education has expanded to about 80 percent of the target group, the programs can be further improved. The proposals in the ESP are therefore to increase focus on readiness for school and pre-literacy skills to enhance the chances of success for students, especially those in remote areas. A World Bank/GPE supported project in this area is already being processed.

26. The ESP lists six sector strategic intermediate outcomes. These outcomes correspond with the key issues identified in recent assessments of the sector. They also correspond to the key interventions that have been identified by research as key factors for improving access and quality of education and summarized in the ESP. Current major issues in the sector discussed in the ESP are enrollment rates especially for secondary education and vulnerable groups, internal efficiency, learning achievement, and equity. The following six intermediate outcomes are listed in the ESP:

**Intermediate outcome 1: The performance of government departments responsible for ESP initiatives improves.** This intervention recognizes that successful implementation of the plan depends largely on the implementation capacity of the MOE. The specific capacity building interventions would be based on an audit of the MOE to be taken in the initial stages of plan implementation. This is similar to the internal audit of the weaknesses and strengths of the MOE and on emerging challenges in the sector carried out in the first two years of the 2008-2013 sector plan which led to the creation and strengthening of various departments. The previous and proposed audits are part of the national program described in the NDS, aimed at reforming and improving the performance of the public service. Much progress was made in this area in the decade to 2010 but challenges remain as the development issues in the sector and the country become more complex. The decision to carry out this audit is reasonable to ensure success especially as it is linked to the options of modifying programs to the existing capacity or capacity that would be available during the plan period through training and selected technical assistance.

**Intermediate outcome 2: Accountability system that creates incentives to improve student learning outcomes is established and functioning.** Evidence shows that regular learning assessments can be powerful tools for improving quality especially when the results are used to improve the teaching and learning process. This outcome is designed to address quality and internal efficiency and learning achievement issues in the system. The section of the ESP on the
current status of the education system provides detailed information on internal efficiency and student achievement, disaggregated to show the performance of children in deprived areas and those with special needs. Data on internal efficiency indicate little progress in the area of internal efficiency for both hinterland and coastal schools between 2001 and 2010. Coastal schools did better in attendance than hinterland schools for both male and female, while girls have higher internal efficiency rates than boys in secondary education.

More recent evidence shows that although learning outcomes have improved, they are still lower than desirable. The data which is disaggregated by gender, coastal/hinterland areas shows that quality needs to be improved at all levels and for all sub-groups, especially in English and Mathematics for coastal students and in all subjects for students in the hinterland. The evidence on achievement is based on examination results which make them less reliable than if they were based on standardized testing. The proposal is to improve these tests by participation in one of the regional assessments as a way of raising national capacity in student evaluation. The data on SEN shows that participation and achievement of children who fall in this group is much lower than for other students. The data was not disaggregated by income level.

The decision to further involve the participation of PTAs and the wider community in the operation of schools is supported by research, international experience and pilots in Guyana which show that this can help improve internal efficiency, teacher performance and learning outcomes partly because of increased accountability.

Intermediate outcome 3: Quality of school facilities improves. Although there is no definitive research conclusion on the relationship between physical facilities and learning, experience in Guyana shows that learning opportunities are limited in schools with poor physical facilities, especially when the country is impacted by severe weather conditions. This outcome would rely on continuation of the building program started in the 2008-2013 Plan to expand access especially to nursery and secondary education. The environment of schools would be improved through the Child Friendly School Program Sponsored by UNICEF. The data for this outcome is credible. It was derived from a recent survey of schools, which showed that about 75 percent were in average condition but needed some further improvements and regular maintenance.

Intermediate outcome 4: The quality of teaching improves. The selection of this outcome is justified as teacher performance is a key factor in learning achievement. Guyana has suffered a serious degradation of teacher performance over the last two decades following the emigration of large numbers of highly qualified and experienced teachers. The country therefore embarked on an effort to expand training of teachers for all levels. Assessment of results for the pre and in-service training programs in the 2008 – 2013 Plan showed that although the proportion of trained teachers had increased from 58 to 70 percent, there were still issues related to the number and quality of new and serving teachers. This is partly because of the loss of a large number of experienced teachers to the regional and international markets. A comprehensive review of the teacher training institutions and programs using regional comparators was therefore carried out for the preparation of the World Bank supported Improving Teacher Education Project to identify possible solutions. The review made the following recommendations: (a) teacher qualifications had to be upgraded; (b) the pre-service training duration had to be shortened; (c) training institutions had to be strengthened and (d) the teacher in-service training programs had to be further improved and focused on mathematics, science and nursery education. It was also found that the areas of greatest need for qualified teachers were the hinterland and riverine areas,
nursery and special education. These issues are currently being addressed in the ongoing World Bank supported project cited above.

**Intermediate outcome 5:** Teaching-learning materials/ instructional tools/ assisted devices **aligned to the curriculum to facilitate better learning outcomes.** The focus on the curriculum is justified given its importance as the channel through which the inputs, processes and culture of the school get translated into learning. Guyana has been engaged in revising the curriculum over the years to introduce inquiry and competency based concepts in the curriculum to meet emerging needs. Continuation of the reforms will be based on a comprehensive review of the current status of the curriculum as a basis for further action including development of modules for SEN. Revision of the textbooks, assessment instruments and teacher training programs, which are important tools for implementing the curricula would also be revised to better link them to the revised programs. The interventions to improve the textbooks and materials distribution chain will be based on past experiences especially in the hinterland and riverine areas.

**Intermediate outcome 6: Students’ instructional time increases.** The decision to include instructional time as one of the outcomes is based on research and experiences in Guyana. Research shows that quality is improved when: (a) the school is open; (b) the teacher is present and well prepared for teaching; (c) the students are in class; (d) the number of instructional hours per school day or per school year mandated by the national government is within the international range and (e) opportunities to augment students’ time on task such as homework and tutoring are used. Experience in Guyana shows that schools which lose several school days per year due to natural disasters, teacher absenteeism and low student attendance or because of high direct or indirect/opportunity costs tend to perform less well in assessments and examinations than those which do not suffer from these constraints. More intensive involvement of the PTAs in the functioning of schools using school report cards and other monitoring and communication instruments would also help to intensify oversight and reduce student and teacher tardiness and absenteeism. They would also provide key inputs to designing more flexible school schedules to increase student and teacher attendance.

**Program Design and Prioritization of Strategies**

27. This section assesses whether the ESP addresses the key constraints to improved learning taking into account lessons learned from past policies and implementation experience. It also discusses the inter linkages among the various components and the extent to which they will have the desired impact especially on vulnerable groups. Finally, it examines the extent to which the ESP includes the cost-efficiency of the policy choices and the risks associated with achievement of the goals.

28. The seven strategies for quality improvement in the ESP are consistent with research findings and their application in Guyana as described in the Plan and in the previous section. They also draw from lessons learned for the implementation of the NDS, the PRSs, and the implementation of the EFA-FTI Education Project and the on-going Teacher Improvement and Secondary Education Projects. The strategies consist of three contextual and input factors. The contextual factors are:
a. Adequate capacities in the sector to improve learning outcomes.
b. An accountability system
c. Limited autonomy for schools.

29. The four input factors are:
   a. The quality of physical facilities and the school environment
   b. The quality of teaching especially teacher performance
   c. The quality of the curriculum and the availability of quality of teaching and learning tools
   d. The amount of time that students spend learning during the school year.

30. The strategies are in general well defined and address most of the constraints in the various areas. All of the interventions are based on a continuation of past and on-going programs and for some there would be preliminary studies to determine the precise design and targets prior to implementation. However, there is no discussion on alternative strategies considered and reasons for their rejection.

31. The capacity building interventions would be based on the audit which would be carried out prior to implementation of the program. The accountability system is also well defined and the current weaknesses in test design and execution would be addressed through increased contact with international agencies specialized in this area. This would help improve the quality of the tests and build institutional capacity and skills in this area. Although the plan mentions the involvement of PTAs and communities in the running of schools, limited autonomy for schools is not yet developed to levels suggested as desirable by research findings and international experience. The explanation for this is that this strategy is being implemented progressively to ensure that all the possible risks associated with conditions in Guyana are properly addressed in the final design. However, the reader would need to be convinced that this is a credible approach and not one that covers administrative or political resistance to decentralized management.

32. The quality of the school environment is based on past experiences with the program and targets nursery and secondary education, especially in the hinterland and riverine areas where the greatest needs have been identified. The pre-service teacher training program is well defined and is currently being implemented through the Teacher Improvement project. The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program for teachers is also well developed but faces several challenges associated with the mechanisms for distance education and capacity at the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). For both programs the implementation arrangements would be refined based on ongoing assessments of pedagogical and logistical issues. One area which has not yet been determined is the entry requirements for student teachers to pre-service training. This is currently being addressed through consultations with all stakeholders. This process needs to be monitored closely as it could have implications for the pool of candidates qualified for entry and subsequently, for the quality and number of teachers to be produced in the future. These are major factors that will help determine success in reaching the quality improvement goals of the plan.
33. The outcome related to improvement and availability of teaching tools is equally complex and time consuming. Attention will need to be paid to the sequencing and duration of the tasks, the skills mix and the piloting of these instruments to ensure good quality outcomes. The approach to the use of instructional time is based on experiences in Guyana. It is difficult to determine whether the official instructional time is adequate since there is no indication of this in the Plan. The allocated time in Guyana would also be difficult to establish and manage given the diversity of the parameters related to geographic, weather, farming and other practices that would need to be taken into consideration before final decisions are made. The issues would relate to ensuring that students have adequate time to cover the curricula and that there is equity across the system. It could also complicate the scheduling of examinations. The ESP should better explain the approach to address the challenges.

34. The strategies include special interventions for students at risk, vulnerable children and SEN children. The initiatives include the school feeding program, reintegration program for teenage mothers and the provision of cash, material support (such as textbooks, exercise books, and uniforms), mentoring, counseling, and health services for at risk children. In addition, through Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) program students will be exposed to life skills. The SEN and School Health Unit will collaborate in identifying SEN children through screening and in providing educational support, for example, transportation, hiring of teacher aides, to SEN children. These strategies have proved successful in the past in promoting increased participation of disadvantaged groups and in promoting equity in the system.

35. The text of the ESP and the Results Framework contain outcome and output targets which are expected to be achieved by the end of the plan period. Some of these targets such as those related to improved achievement levels seem too ambitious and may need to be revisited. The framework defines the targets for the ESP as a whole and is disaggregated by gender and vulnerable groups. The targets for the latter do not cover all their needs during the plan period, but the programs are planned to continue after the five year duration of the ESP. Consultations are currently being held as a basis for developing a special plan to address the specific needs of the hinterland and riverine areas as well as for disadvantaged children as a supplement to the ESP.

36. The overall impact of the initiatives in the ESP is likely to be positive, especially when viewed in the context of the evolution of the system over the last ten to fifteen years. The interventions in the system over this period proved to be successful in expanding access and equity to counter the erosion in the system in prior years. The proposed interventions in the ESP build on these successes and focus on quality using the key instruments that are supported by research evidence and experience in Guyana. Efficient management of the system will be needed to ensure successful implementation of the programs. The capacity building initiative in the ESP is designed to address this issue. The ESP does discuss some of the risks associated with the implementation of the programs and mitigation measures. In general the key risks have been identified and will be discussed more fully later. The plan does not include a logical framework. The impact of this on the impact of the program is not likely to be serious since the strategic choices are based on a systematic identification of needs, research and past experience in Guyana.
Plan Costs and Financing

37. This section will cover the cost structure of the plan, an assessment of public sector allocations to the sector and the likely impact of the financing gap on achievement of the plan objectives. The costing of the plan was designed to match the policy, institutional and governance context of Guyana. The costs are linked to the targets set for each of the components except for areas where preliminary work is required before the design would be completed, such as the capacity building component. Assessment of the costs are driven by specific guidelines aimed at achieving the goals of the various components such as teacher:pupil ratios, costs for teacher training, salaries and projected salary growth over the period as well as costs for classroom construction and maintenance. These assumptions are contained in the simulation model and are distributed by departments and units in the MOE following the government budget structure.

38. While this approach makes it easy to follow the evolution of the MOE budget, the lack of a presentation of the budget by component makes it difficult to carry-out a cost-efficiency analysis for each intervention or subsector. In addition, the costs sometimes combine several types of activity and are not disaggregated into recurrent and investment costs. This makes it difficult to assess sustainability. The impact of this on the implementation of the plan is likely to be modest since most of the designs are based on past or current experiences which have proved to be successful. In addition, the ESP states that the criteria for selecting components include an assessment of the expected benefits/effects on learning compared to the total and opportunity costs of the intervention. It would have been more helpful if the application of these criteria had been made explicit in the ESP.

39. Financing of the plan is moderate a concern. The government has shown its commitment to education over the last five years to 2013 by making significant allocations to the sector. Over the period, public sector allocations to the sector averaged about 4.8 percent of GDP which was about the same as for low-middle income countries. The effort was however greater since the share of the public sector in GDP was about 33 percent, one of the highest. The share of education in the national budget was also maintained at about 15% and the budget grew by about 5.6 percent annually. Based on projections in the ESP, these trends are likely to continue and allocations to the sector are expected to increase further. However, there is no Medium Term Expenditure Framework against which to judge the probability of the budget growth trends.

40. Within this context, the financing gap of US$ 98.3 million is probably not too high. As shown in the table below this is equivalent to an average of about 10.1 percent of total allocations to the sector during the plan period. The gap drops from about 12.3 percent of the MOE budget in 2014 to 5.8 percent in 2018. The curve is therefore skewed to the left. Given the projected increases in allocations to the sector, it is unlikely that this gap would be met by further increases in public sector allocations. However, there are opportunities to move expenditures to later years in the plan in a manner that would not undermine the achievement of the overall goals. This would be consistent with the proposal to phase implementation based on capacity constraints. In addition, given that the gap is only about 10 percent of the budget, the MOE should explore options for increasing efficiency in the use of resources to reduce costs. Moving
expenditures towards the end of the plan period would also give more time to seek increased external funding to finance the gap.

Table: Financing gap as a Percentage of the MOE Budget (US Dollars).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Budget Forecast</td>
<td>163,707,175</td>
<td>175,713,415</td>
<td>190,747,425</td>
<td>209,398,690</td>
<td>232,432,545</td>
<td>971,999,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of ESP</td>
<td>183,758,439</td>
<td>197,622,067</td>
<td>214,161,431</td>
<td>228,885,947</td>
<td>245,852,076</td>
<td>1,070,279,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing Gap</td>
<td>20,051.00</td>
<td>21,909.00</td>
<td>23,414.00</td>
<td>19,487.00</td>
<td>13,419.00</td>
<td>98,280.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of MOE budget</td>
<td>12.25%</td>
<td>12.47%</td>
<td>12.27%</td>
<td>9.31%</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
<td>10.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

41. The issues to be addressed include the extent to which the M&E system provides 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. The reporting, feedback, and consultation mechanisms are examined to determine whether they are transparent and adequate to maintain broad ownership during implementation.

42. Overall, the M&E arrangements are adequate for monitoring implementation progress and achievement of the ESP goals. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework when combined with the Implementation and action plans together provide an overall picture of the expected results and the management structure for the system. The system is an evolution from the one that was used for the previous plan and is embedded in the national M&E system. The MOF is progressively establishing an M&E system at the national level for all ministries and the MOE is one of the two ministries selected to pilot the system. This framework ensures support for building the capacity in the MOE and for resources to carry out the M&E tasks in the plan from the MOF. Against this background, all departments and units in the MOE are now responsible for developing detailed action plans which would be monitored regularly by the MOE M&E Committee which is convened periodically by the Minister or the PS. Accountability to stakeholders at the central level would be through the MOE Advisory Committee to be established once the new Education Bill is approved.

43. The composition and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee are not clear and the participation of the LEG is not mentioned in the ESP. Some explanation of this should be added to the text. Units in the MOE will be expected to report regularly based on the targets and timelines defined in their action plans. In addition to these arrangements, the increased involvement of PTAs and other communities in school operations through school report cards and other instruments would also expand accountability for results to the school/community levels. Monitoring would also include the targets set for the hinterland and riverine areas as well
as for vulnerable children at all levels. Implementation of the Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Plans designed for the ongoing World Bank supported projects would continue to be monitored.

44. The process for reviewing the report cards and providing feedback needs to be mentioned in the text even if they will vary by location. The proposed semi-annual, annual and mid-term reviews would bring together a wide range of stakeholders. The results of the reports of units in the MOE and the periodic national reviews would be used to improve and modify implementation of the plan as necessary. This would help increase the chances of successful implementation.

45. The data for the M&E would rely on the information collected by the Planning Unit and various departments of the MOE supplemented by pilot and field monitoring reports on special initiatives. The data is expected to be reliable given the on-going improvements in the quality of the EMIS. The imminent release of the census data would also help in providing more up-to-date information on the composition of the school-age population disaggregated by regions and groups. The composition of these two would help improve targeting of programs.

**Development and Financing of an Action Plan**

46. The three-year action plan comprises the specific actions that would be taken to implement the various components of the plan and the indicators that would be used to monitor progress. The plan does not include the departments responsible for each action. This is shown in a separate table where the same components are shown. The disadvantage of this approach is limited since the plan was developed in the same framework used for the preparation and monitoring of the annual departmental action plans both of which are linked. About 90 percent of the resources for financing the plan would come from the government budget. Sources of funding for about 20 percent of the remaining gap have been identified and shown in the main text of the ESP. These sources should also be shown in the three-year action plan and some explanation provided on which activities would be affected by a shortfall in funding and how this would be addressed. This is to identify and focus attention on any threats that would compromise achievement of the ESP objectives so that they can be addressed. Overall the targets in the plan seem reasonable, but this judgment cannot be conclusive at this time. The final targets would depend on the results of the proposed capacity audit of the various departments. There should therefore be specific and agreed arrangements for the preparation of the audit and for reviewing and updating the action plan once the audit is completed and the recommendations are agreed.

**III. Appraisal of Implementation and Readiness**

47. This section covers system capacity, governance and accountability and risks to implementation and the mitigation of risks. System capacity covers the identification and treatment of capacity constraints that would affect plan implementation, governance and accountability identifies the strategies for improving and establishing good governance practices.
and management of accountability systems in the sector while the risks to implementation and the mitigation of risks discusses the adequacy of the arrangements in this area in the ESP.

System Capacity

48. This section discusses whether the skill and institutional requirements are adequate for implementation and the resource arrangements for financing this area. The ESP gives one of the highest priorities to the capacity requirements for implementing the programs. Implementation will therefore be initiated with an audit of the key departments responsible for program implementation to ensure that they have the required institutional arrangements and skills mix to succeed. In cases where the capacity is not yet in place or cannot be put in place quickly, programs would be modified or phased in to avoid overload of the system.

49. The concern about capacity is justified given that the system is now moving to more complex operations required to address issues such as improving quality nationally and ensuring provision of quality education in the most remote areas and to disadvantaged groups on a sustained basis. Some of the challenges include the use of distance education and ICT to deliver classroom lessons and to train pre-service and in-service training programs for teachers. Expanding quality nursery education across the country and expanding the use of assessment in the teaching process as well as to monitor student achievement over time would also require skills that are in short supply in Guyana. Although these are challenging interventions, Guyana has demonstrated good basic implementation capacity by succeeding in rebuilding the education system to expand access to primary and secondary education over the last ten to fifteen years. Some capacity has also been demonstrated in the initial implementation of some of these new initiatives such as the distance education programs for schools and teacher training. The establishment of the Learning Channel was an unexpected outcome of the previous plan. Support for further strengthening of some of these programs is being provided by some donor-supported projects including the World Bank supported Teacher Education Project and will continue in the ESP.

50. To ensure systematic development of the required capacity, the audit recommendations would include where necessary, refinements of the institutional arrangements of the MOE and the needs for skills development, training and technical assistance. Particular attention would be given to the capacity needs in the decentralized areas which are the focus of the ESP. One issue which could be made clearer in the plan relates to how the regional governments would be supported to implement their own responsibilities for the plan. There have been some concerns that some programs, for example the distance education programs for schools, suffered after initial implementation, because of inadequate support from the regions.

51. The chances of success in developing the needed capacity are good given that the MOE has had previous experience in conducting and using institutional capacity audits and there is strong commitment to achieving the goals of the ESP. The audit would also be carried out in the context of the overall government program to modernize public sector management started in the NDS and continued in the PRSs.
Governance and Accountability

52. Adequate governance and accountability arrangements are ensured in the sector through extensive consultations with all stakeholders in the review and formulation of government policies and strategies especially in the preparation of the ESP. The consultations at the national level would be formalized through the proposed National Advisory Committee to the MOE as included in the draft Education Bill which has been laid in Parliament. In addition to prior consultations on policies and programs, the committee would also receive periodic progress reports on the implementation and would contribute to the revision of the programs as necessary. Communities have been and would continue to be involved through their participation in the development and monitoring of regional action plans. At the school level, in addition to being involved in the development of action plans, communities would participate through PTAs and School Improvement Action Committees which manage funds for the functioning and maintenance of schools. Delegation of the responsibilities for managing these funds is seen as important to promote efficiency in the use of and accountability of the funds. To facilitate the engagement of the various stakeholders, a communications strategy including school report cards would be put in place to inform the public of progress in implementing the sector programs. This consultative approach is likely to continue as it is part of a systematic approach by the government to promote stakeholder participation in public sector programs which has been in place over the last ten years.

Risks to Implementation and the Mitigation of Risks

53. The political risks are considered low given the commitment of the government and all political parties to prioritizing education as one of the key pillars of the country’s future development. This commitment by the political leadership is buttressed by parents and civil society who value education as a means out of poverty and are regularly involved in public policy discussions to share views on constraints and build consensus on solutions. In view of this, the policy environment and fiscal support are likely to be stable for the foreseeable future. However, the risks associated with decentralization including the role of regional governments in the implementation of programs and how this could support or threaten success need to be discussed more fully.

54. Financial governance risks are considered low to moderate. Much of the funds for the ESP would come from the budget and managed through the government’s fiduciary system. There have been concerns about the adequacy of this system from the government and the international community, but there has been a program in place to address issues and further build the system. There are specific arrangements for the management of funds disbursed at the school level which include the involvement of communities to increase transparency and accountability. The risks associated with the management of those funds are therefore thought to be low. Funds disbursed under projects financed by partners are normally managed through specific arrangements agreed between the government and the agency that will make sure that fiduciary threats would be adequately addressed.

55. There are environmental and social risks associated with the implementation of the ESP especially with respect to school construction and indigenous peoples. These risks are moderate to low. The sector has a track record of managing the environmental risks through the national
system which has been strengthened and used by the World Bank and other agencies through various projects. Similar arrangements have been made to protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Guyana and to promote their inclusion in access to quality education. The indigenous peoples plan prepared for previous projects would continue to be used and updated as required.

56. Implementation capacity constraints are recognized as a moderate risk in the ESP and are being directly addressed through the proposed audit. This should mitigate the impact of any negative factors on implementation. One area in which the risks are still moderate to high relates to incentives for professionals including teachers. Current compensation packages continue to be less than completely attractive to qualified Guyanese who could fill these positions. Many therefore continue to emigrate or stay away from the country after qualifying. The key constraint here is the limited resource envelop available to the government. This might change in the medium to long term as new and emerging industries mature leading to increases in public sector revenues. Although the risks are moderate, it would be good to discuss delays or weaknesses in the implementation of the proposed capacity audit and subsequent actions as this would be critical to the success of the program.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

57. The ESP is an adequate basis for moving forward with GPE and donor funding, when viewed in the context of the evolution of the system over the last 10 to 15 years, overall government policies and commitment, implementation capacity and financing. The focus of the plan on improving quality and management efficiency at all levels builds on the achievements of expanding access to both primary and secondary education to almost 100 percent. The focus on quality education for all regions and groups would help consolidate these gains and prepare all students for higher levels of education and training as well as the job market. This would help raise incomes and the levels of living of the population. In the national context, good quality graduates from the system would help promote growth and increase efficiency in the management of national resources.

58. The chances of successful implementation of the plan are good, given that the selection of components are consistent with research, are largely based on past experience of what has worked or tested in Guyana and are based within the broad framework of the national development strategies. The chances of achieving the targeted outputs are enhanced by the emphasis on ensuring that there would be adequate capacity to implementing the programs. The option of refining or phasing the implementation of the plan to the capacity that would be available during the period gives added credence to the commitment to achieving the goals of the Plan.

59. The costs are linked to the targets set for each of the components and assessment of the costs are driven by specific criteria aimed at achieving the goals of the ESP such as teacher:pupil ratios. The presentation of the costs follows the structure of the MOE budget and this makes it
difficult to assess the cost-efficiency for each intervention or subsector. In addition, the costs are not disaggregated into recurrent and investment costs. This makes it difficult to assess sustainability. The impact of this on the implementation of the plan is likely to be modest since most of the designs are based on past or current experiences which have proved to be successful. Financing of the plan is moderate a concern. The government has shown its commitment to the education over the last five years to 2013 by making significant allocations to the sector. Over the period, public sector allocations to the sector averaged about 4.8 percent of GDP which was about the same as for low-middle income countries and the share of education in the national budget was also maintained at about 15% and grew by about 5.6 percent annually. Based on projections in the ESP, these trends are likely to continue and allocations to the sector are expected to increase further. However, there is no MTEF against which to judge the probability of the budget growth trends.

60. The financing gap of US$ 98.3 million equivalent to about 10 percent of the projected budget for the period is probably not too high. However, given the projected high increases in allocations to the sector it is unlikely that this gap would be met by further public sector allocations. To address this, expenditures can be moved to later years in the plan. In addition, given that the gap is only about 10 percent of the budget, the MOE should explore options for increasing efficiency in the use of resources to reduce costs or for seeking increased external funding to finance the gap.

61. The chances of success of the plan are further strengthened by the wide consensus around the priorities, strategies and proposed participation in implementation. Under the political and administrative leadership of the MOE, the professional and technical staff developed the plan in collaboration with civil society and international partners. An advisory committee to the MOE is proposed in the draft Education Bill. Regional and school level staff, PTAs and communities already participate in the design and implementation of programs. Despite this positive sign, collaboration with civil society could be strengthened. The operational mechanisms for civil society participation are not formalized except for bilateral agreements on specific programs. It is therefore difficult to determine the extent to which the deliberations of the advisory committee, PTAs and other groups would impact policy, strategic and implementation decisions.

62. With regard to the involvement of stakeholders in the operations of the system, the approach seems to be one of gradual devolution of roles and responsibilities to local levels to ensure that all possible risks are addressed before final decisions are made on this issue. Some responsibilities have been devolved to regional governments and the current assessment is that weak support from these governments has undermined the success of programs initiated by the central government. Part of the problems is the lack of adequate financial support for these programs. A discussion of how these issues would be addressed needs to be included in the plan. Some of the issues might lie outside the mandate of the MOE. The plan should therefore be presented more explicitly in the national strategic context to provide reassurance that exogenous factors that might affect success will be addressed. The role of regional governments in the management of the education sector is a critical area that needs to be addressed.

63. The key risks to implementation have been identified and mitigation measures described. The policy and strategic environment is likely to remain stable given consensus among the
political, civil and community leadership on the goals of the sector. Fiduciary risks have been identified and addressed. The fiduciary environment is being improved at the national level and specific arrangements to address threats are included in partner financed projects. The projections in the plan show that public sector financial commitments would increase over the period. This risk would be minimized if allocations to the sector follow the projected trends.

64. The environmental and social risks are addressed in the sector through national arrangements and weaknesses in the system are addressed on a project related basis. There is also an Indigenous Peoples Plan through which issues in this area are addressed.

65. The key issue of capacity for implementation is being addressed as a part of the plan. This substantially reduces the risk of failure due to capacity weaknesses. Much would depend on how well the proposed audit is carried out and recommendations implemented. However, some discussion of the level of risk in this area should be included in the document.

Recommendations

66. Despite the strengths of the plan, there are some areas that could be strengthened to better demonstrate national commitment to the plan, the public sector financial support to the sector and the achievements over the last fifteen years. The rational for the designs of the various outcomes should also be better explained. Since this is not a complete sector program, ongoing projects financed by the government and partners should be included in the plan to show complementarity and the potential joint output of all the programs. Finally, although there is only limited presence of partners in the sector, there should still be some discussion of the arrangements for their collaboration with the government.

67. Specifically the following areas should be looked at:

   i. The program should be better located in the historical and national policy/strategic framework. The national commitment to initiatives such as public sector reform, ICT and M&E should be highlighted and linked to the choices in the ESP to demonstrate national commitment and feasibility of implementation.

   ii. The reasons for structuring the plan in terms of cross-cutting themes instead of sub-sectors should be better explained since this is a departure from the usual practice. This conceptual approach is probably better suited to the Guyana context but it is not obvious from a quick read of the document. The action plans and budget are presented by departments so the subsector perspective is not lost.

   iii. The figures in the tables on budget allocations to the sector should be further analyzed to bring out more clearly the positive story about government commitment to financing the sector.

   iv. In the absence of current demographic data, secondary sources should be used to show the progress made on expanding access to both primary and secondary education as a backdrop for the decision to focus on quality.
v. The rationale for the designs used for the various outcomes should be made more explicit. Where possible, the design of the various outcomes should be shown in the context of how these issues have been addressed in the past and what was achieved. In particular, there should be some discussion of how these choices were made, their suitability for the context, efficiency in the use of resources and the impact.

vi. The link between national and key sector initiatives such as M&E, management reform and ICT should be made more explicit to demonstrate coherence of the ESP with national objectives and to create greater confidence that these outcomes would be achieved. Current programs and projects financed by the government and other donors in the sector should be more directly discussed to complete the presentation of the program. For example it is not clear from the ESP what UNESCO is financing.

vii. The organizational structure for collaborating and obtaining support from partners in the sector should be described more clearly.

viii. Given the projected relatively high increases in allocations to the sector, it is unlikely that this gap would be met by further public sector allocations. The following options should therefore be explored to address the financing gap: (a) move expenditures to later years in the plan in a manner that would not undermine the achievement of the overall goals; (b) explore options for increasing efficiency in the use of resources to reduce costs; (c) seek increased external funding especially if more time could be allocated to this by moving some expenditures towards the end of the plan period.

ix. There should therefore be specific and agreed arrangements for the preparation of the audit and for reviewing and updating the action plan once the audit is completed and the recommendations are agreed.
## ANNEX 1
### SUMMARY OF APPRAISAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Plan Development Process</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Room for Improvement</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Plan Preparation</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td></td>
<td>More structured ways of engaging partners and civil society should be explored</td>
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<td>Stakeholders' Engagement</td>
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<td>Education Plan</td>
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<td>There has been no recent sector analysis</td>
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<td>Plan Design</td>
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<td>Education sector Analysis</td>
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<td>Plan Design Policy Priorities</td>
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<td>Program Design and Prioritization of Strategies</td>
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<td>Plan Financing</td>
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<td>There is a need to address how the financing gap would be addressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Need for more structured annual reviews with partners and civil society</td>
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<td>Development and Financing of an Action Plan</td>
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<td>All the required information should be in one table and sources of funding shown including where none is yet available</td>
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<th>Appraisal of Implementation Readiness</th>
<th>Very Satisfactory</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>System Capacity</td>
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<td>Governance and Accountability</td>
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<td>Except for formal involvement with partners and civil society</td>
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<td>Risks to Implementation and Mitigation</td>
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<td>Modest</td>
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## ANNEX 2

### NATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN APPRAISAL MISSION

**JUNE 28 – JULY 5, 2014**

### LIST OF PERSONS MET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delma Nedd</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olato Sam</td>
<td>Chief Education Officer</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Chapman</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Education Officer (A)</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn Hamilton</td>
<td>Chief Planning Officer</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicola Warrinna</td>
<td>Senior Statistician</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Clarke</td>
<td>Senior Planner</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslyn Edwards-Charles</td>
<td>Assistant Chief Education Officer Secondary (ag)</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingrid Trotman</td>
<td>Assistant Chief Education Officer, Nursery Education</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola Rowe</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Cyril Porter College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana King-Waithe</td>
<td>Nursery Subject Specialist</td>
<td>MOE/NCERD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quineta Walrond</td>
<td>Consultant ECD</td>
<td>MOE/NCERD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionne Farelle</td>
<td>Head of Test Development</td>
<td>MOE/NCERD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petal Jetteo</td>
<td>National Science Coordinator</td>
<td>MOE/NCERD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marianne Flach</td>
<td>Representative for Guyana and Suriname</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abheet Solomon</td>
<td>Deputy Representative for Guyana and Suriname</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Rodrigues</td>
<td>Learning and development Officer</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inge Nathoo</td>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
<td>Guyana National Commission for UNESCO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 3

SELECTED DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal - Global Partnership for Education UNESCO/IIEP

National Development Strategy (2001- 2010)- Guyana

Universal Secondary Education (Use) In Guyana 2008


Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Project - Amerindian Peoples Plan

The Government Of Guyana - Amerindian Peoples Plan (APP) Guyana - Guyana Early Childhood Education Project


Guyana Demographic and Health Survey – 2009 Ministry of Health Georgetown, Guyana, Bureau of Statistics, Georgetown, Guyana, ICF Macro (Technical Assistance

Guyana Country Report for UNESCO

GUYANA BILL No. of 2014 EDUCATION BILL 2014

A Better Guyana for all Guyanese Budget 2014


Project Paper For Small Recipient Executed Trust Fund (Retf) Grant Us$ 1.7 Million To The Co-Operative Republic Of Guyana For an Early Childhood Education Project June 30, 2014

International Development Association - Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit In The Amount of SDR 6.5 Million (Us$10 Million Equivalent) to the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana for a Secondary Education Improvement Project - May 5, 2014

Implementation Completion and Results Report (Tf-053679)on a Grant in the Amount of US$ 32.92 Million to The Co-Operative Republic of Guyana for The Education For All Fast Track Initiative Project - June 22, 2013

Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit In The Amount of SDR 2.8 Million (Us$4.2 Million Equivalent) including SDR 1.2 Million in Pilot CRW Resources (Us$1.8 Million Equivalent)to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for an Improving Teacher Education Project
- August 18, 2010

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA - Secondary Education Improvement Project ID Number: P147924 THE WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (EAMP)

Great Teachers - How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean

Education for All – Global Monitoring Reports 2008 -2012

Learning to make Better Choices HFLE - Learning to make Better Choices – Caricom/World Bank

The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Latin America and the Caribbean - Emiliana Vegas and Lucrecia Santibáñez with Bénédicte Leroy de la Brière Alejandro Caballero Julien Alexis Hautier and Domenec Ruiz Devesa- World Bank

Early childhood care and education in the Caribbean (CARICOM states) - Leon Derek Charles, Sian Williams – 2006

Assessing National Achievement Levels in Education - Vincent Greaney and Thomas Kellaghan

Making Schools Work – Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos World Bank