

Sustainable Capacity Development Project in Education Sector Planning in Afghanistan (2011-2013)

A project implemented by the Afghan Ministry of Education and the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)

(Tripartite Agreement of 22.07.2010)

Evaluation Report

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Acronyms

ANTRIEP	Asian network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
ATP	IIEP's advanced training programme
DANIDA	Danish Agency for International Development Assistance
DoPE	Department of Planning and Evaluation
ESPA	Education Support Programme to Afghanistan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEIP	National Education interim Plan (2011 – 2013)
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NESP-1	First National Education Strategic Plan (2006 - 10)
NESP-2	Second National Education Strategic Plan (2010 - 14)
NESP-3	Third National Education Strategic Plan (2014 - 20)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
NTP	National Training programme in Educational Planning and Management
NTP 1	First batch of NTP trainees
NTP 2	Second batch of NTP trainees
NTP 3	Third batch of NTP trainees
NTP 4	Fourth batch of NTP trainees
PED	Provincial Education Department
SCP	IIEP's specialized short course
TA	Technical Assistant
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

1. **Background.** The cooperation between the Afghan Ministry of Education and UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) started in 2002, shortly after the Bonn Conference at which the new country leaders were selected following the toppling of the Taliban government. That cooperation aimed at slowly developing capacity in educational planning and management in the context of post-conflict state building, with the financial support of a number of successive donors including Germany, Italy, Norway and others. Slowly but steadily, capacity was raised through hands-on activities such as developing the first and then the second National Education Strategic Plan.
2. **Context.** It is in the context of that longstanding cooperative work that the Sustainable Capacity Development Project in Educational Planning was signed in a tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Education (MoE), the IIEP and DANIDA in December 2010 (definitive version). The purpose was to sustain the progress made so far and to reach a further phase in establishing autonomous capacity for training in educational planning and administration.
3. **Description of the project.** The total value of the Project was slightly over 3 million US dollars to be spent over a three-year period, 2011-2013. The Project comprised six components as follows:
 - ▶ Component 1: Setting up of a national training programme in educational planning and management;
 - ▶ Component 2: Consolidation of planning capacity at central level and development of provincial planning officers' capacities;
 - ▶ Component 3: Rollout of MoE capacity development programme in strategic and operational planning at provincial level;
 - ▶ Component 4: Technical support;
 - ▶ Component 5: Research and documentation of lessons learnt;
 - ▶ Component 6: Logistics and support services.
4. As a result of a much stronger emphasis that was progressively invested in the establishment of a permanent national training programme in educational planning and management, the Project budget distribution changed dramatically between the initial and final allocations. The share of Component 1 multiplied by almost three, rising from 16 per cent (of activity costs, not counting management) to 46 per cent. The other components were reduced, with Component 2 falling from 45 to 29 per cent and Component 3 from 16 to 8 per cent.
5. **Evaluation features.** The evaluation serves accountability and learning purposes. An Inception Report defining the methodological approach was drafted and agreed by all stakeholders before the evaluation itself was undertaken. An information-gathering

mission to Kabul was fielded from 14 to 27 February 2014 collecting the relevant data through interviews, focus group discussions and documentation review. The evaluation Team was made up of two consultants specialized in educational planning and management. At the end of the field mission, a meeting was organized on 26 February 2014 in the MoE to hear and comment on the mission's preliminary findings with IIEP taking part from a distance. Soon afterwards, as DANIDA and the MoE were having their ESPA meeting on 9 March 2014 and needed a summary evaluation report as input, the report was submitted on 6 March 2014. Most of the conclusions reported in that summary report are found here.

6. **Relevance and coherence.** The Project was clearly a response to real capacity needs as observed during more than ten years of cooperation between IIEP and MoE in this field. Particularly with the National Training Programme (NTP) – a genuinely adapted solution in the form of a permanent institute within the MoE's TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) system – the Project has enabled the MoE to address the technical capacity gaps in the Afghan context. Regarding component 5 on research and documentation, and as illustrated by its budget reduction from 8% to 1%, some rethinking is needed towards a more realistic orientation.
7. **Results.** On the basis of the stated output of having autonomous capacity to train education planners and use it to train 240 technicians at all levels, the Project has clearly demonstrated its effectiveness. More than 1,000 staff at provincial and district levels have been trained through a number of short-term workshops and, on the other hand, the established NTP capacity (curriculum, trainers, materials, facilities and the overall system) enables the Ministry to train more than 200 staff a year. Evidence of Project effectiveness is also visible with other components, including the formulation of the third National Education Strategic Plan (NESP-3) with much less dependence on inputs from outside the country than with earlier plans.
8. Nevertheless, a number of issues about the NTP are raised in this report, regarding namely: the need to have more technical involvement of IIEP in quality assurance of the programme, the need for IIEP graduates to be more substantially involved in the actual teaching, the need to move from traditional to modular functioning, questions about the supervision of trainees' practical assignment, and the need to slow down the pace of trainee recruitment to allow for course and practice adjustments.
9. The consolidation of MoE capacity through the use of embedded technical assistants has produced impressive results in terms of producing strategic planning documents. It is in their function as facilitators for skill transfer that questions are raised, as a number of obstacles are found in their way. However the issue is much broader than this project and even this ministry.
10. **Sustainability.** Sustainability appears to be the strongest point of the Project: the setting up of the National Training Programme is genuinely adjusted to the institutional setting of Afghanistan under the MOE TVET system. Furthermore a new building with the necessary dormitory facility is under construction for the benefit of the NTP.

Key recommendations

11. Among the key recommendations for the short term, the Evaluation Report calls for an extension of the Project to enable the batches of trainees who have only completed the first semester to complete the course, and to allow for new batches of trainees to be taken in. It also calls on IIEP to scale up its quality assurance interventions including organizing a blended course for the NTP trainers and reviewing the curriculum and training materials.
12. For the longer term, a functional institutional analysis of the educational planning and management systems in broader terms should be carried out. The purpose of the study will be to identify more institutional reforms that can strengthen the planning and management system beyond the strict MoE remit.
13. The re-engineering of the NTP in several of its dimensions in order to consolidate its gains and correct its weaknesses is also strongly suggested.

1. Background

1.A Context

14. After the toppling of the Taliban rule in December 2001 and the formation of the new Afghan Government under President Hamid Karzai, UNESCO and its International Institute for Educational Planning – IIEP – wasted no time in initiating substantial cooperation with the Ministry of Education – MoE – in its efforts to rebuild the education system.
15. In May 2002, a UNESCO identification mission that included IIEP visited the country and found that the MoE’s capacity in education sector planning, management and policy formulation needed drastic reinforcement. With financial support from such countries as Germany, Italy and Norway, the IIEP started some modest but strategic and persistent capacity development interventions first with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and then the Ministry of Education (MoE).
16. Beginning with basic workshops on basic planning concepts, then training on education indicators along with the provision of basic office equipment and furniture, that cooperation has continued unbroken until now. Later, other interventions such as admitting some officials into the Institute’s flagship Advanced Training Programme in Paris as well as other training modalities led to rising capacity in educational planning in the 2002-2005 period.
17. As is shown below, that long-term and ongoing collaboration is one of the clearest factors of success of the Project. The cooperation was intensified in 2006 with the first comprehensive multi-year MoE capacity development project for educational planning, funded by Norway. Its most visible result was the formulation of the very first National Education Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 (NESP-1). Indicating the exceptionally high political value attached to it, NESP-1 was launched by President Hamid Karzai himself. Later, NESP-1 was to be followed by NESP-2 (2010-2014), from which an adjusted Interim Plan for the period 2011-2013 (NEIP) was derived for submission to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and, most recently, by NESP-3 (2014-2020) which is in its final draft stage awaiting to be soon finalized and circulated after the new government is elected.
18. It is in the context of that longstanding cooperative work that the Sustainable Capacity Development Project in Educational Planning was implemented under a tripartite agreement between MoE, IIEP and the donor, DANIDA.

1.B Description of the Project

19. The Project was signed in December 2010 for a period of three years between the MoE, DANIDA and the IIEP. It intended to be a comprehensive and strategic intervention aiming at reinforcing MoE’s policy development, planning and implementation, and

monitoring/review capacity. It pledged to pay particular attention to scaling up and ensuring the sustainability of existing capacities that were recently developed.

20. The intended impact of the Project was that at the end of the period, “the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE) plans and efficiently manages the education sub-sector under its responsibility in a more autonomous way (compared to 2010); it relates as the lead entity to other development partners (including other Afghan Government Ministries with a stake in education, Government bodies, local authorities, local communities, NGOs, parents and donors) in joint efforts aimed at educational and human resource development in Afghanistan.” That purpose statement meant that not only the technical planning skills would be substantially raised at all levels, but also that the MoE at national, provincial, district and local levels would master the plan as the major educational development tool in its relationships with its partners.
21. To reach the stated objective, the Project was organized in the following six substantial components, of which the first five are part of the present evaluation:
 - ▶ Component 1: Setting up of a national training programme in educational planning and management;
 - ▶ Component 2: Consolidation of planning capacity at central level and development of provincial planning officers’ capacities;
 - ▶ Component 3: Rollout of MoE capacity development programme in strategic and operational planning at provincial level;
 - ▶ Component 4: Technical support;
 - ▶ Component 5: Research and documentation of lessons learnt;
 - ▶ Component 6: Logistics and support services.
22. The difficult political and security context in which the Project was to be implemented meant that almost 30 per cent of the December 2010 budget was allocated to project management, including technical supervision, monitoring and support costs. The allocation by component shows that component 2 was allocated by far the largest budget with 45%, followed by components 1 and 3 with 16% each, components 4 and 5 around 10% and 8% respectively, and finally component 6 with 4%.
23. But as the project activities were being implemented, the priority assignment among components shifted, with component 1 tripling its budget share in the latest budget revision of December 2013. Component 1 was then allocated 46%, followed by component 2 with 29%, component 4 with 10%, component 3 with 8% and finally components 6 and 5 with 5% and 1% respectively. That shift reflects the major raise in priority of the setting up and implementation of the National Training Programme in educational planning and management in 2012.
24. The two diagrams on page 10 show in more detail the shifts that occurred between the beginning of the project and its end. Two of the most striking highlights are that:

- ▶ Activity 1.1 associated with the setting up of the NTP rose from 5% to 24% of the budget;
- ▶ Component 5 on research dropped from 6% to 1%.

1.C Evaluation features - Summary of the Inception Report

25. The evaluation serves accountability and learning purposes. IIEP and MoE will use it to confirm the effectiveness of the particular mix of approaches they chose to follow in that specific context. MoE also wants to see how the capacity building could be made more cost effective and sustainable and how the capacity gap could be addressed in the long run. For its part, DANIDA will use it to make decisions on Project extension requests currently under consideration. The methodological approach of the evaluation was agreed among all three parties as described in an Inception Report that was finalized on 20 February 2014. An information gathering mission to Kabul was fielded from 14 to 27 February 2014.
26. At the end of that mission, the preliminary findings were presented and discussed in a meeting at the MoE with all parties taking part. During the mission, documents were gathered; four questionnaires were developed and distributed to respondents; and interviews and focus groups discussions were organized with key informants. The evaluation was undertaken by a team of two consultants specialized in educational planning and management.
27. In the Inception Report it was proposed to reconstruct the logic of intervention of the Project as summarized in Diagram 1 on page 9. On the basis of that reconstructed intervention logic, this evaluation focuses on the **output** rather than on the individual activities whose relative priority levels changed over time.

Diagram 1: Reconstructed hierarchy of Project objectives

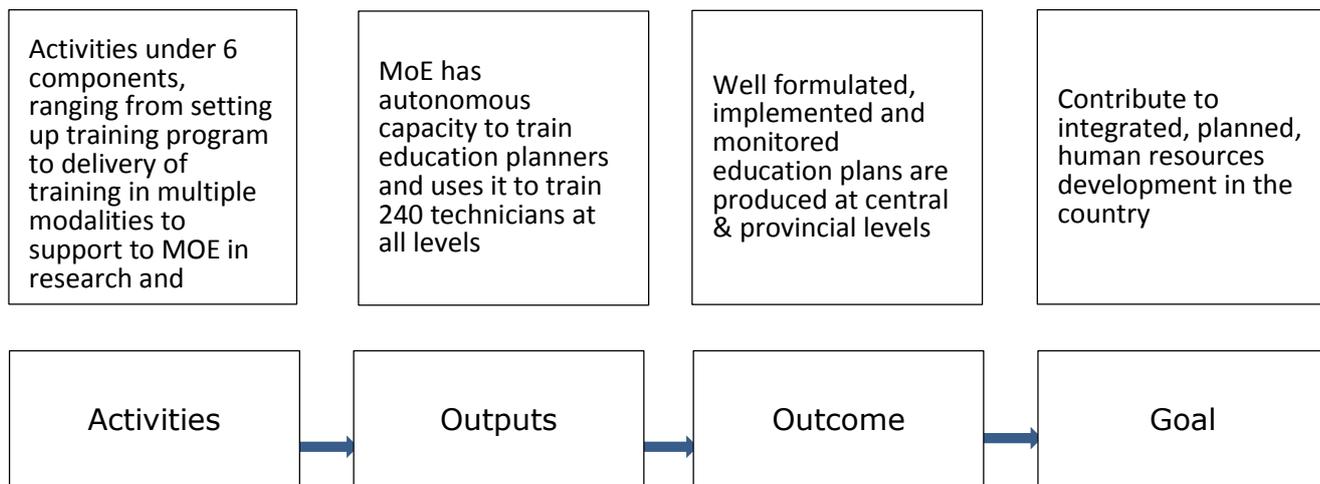
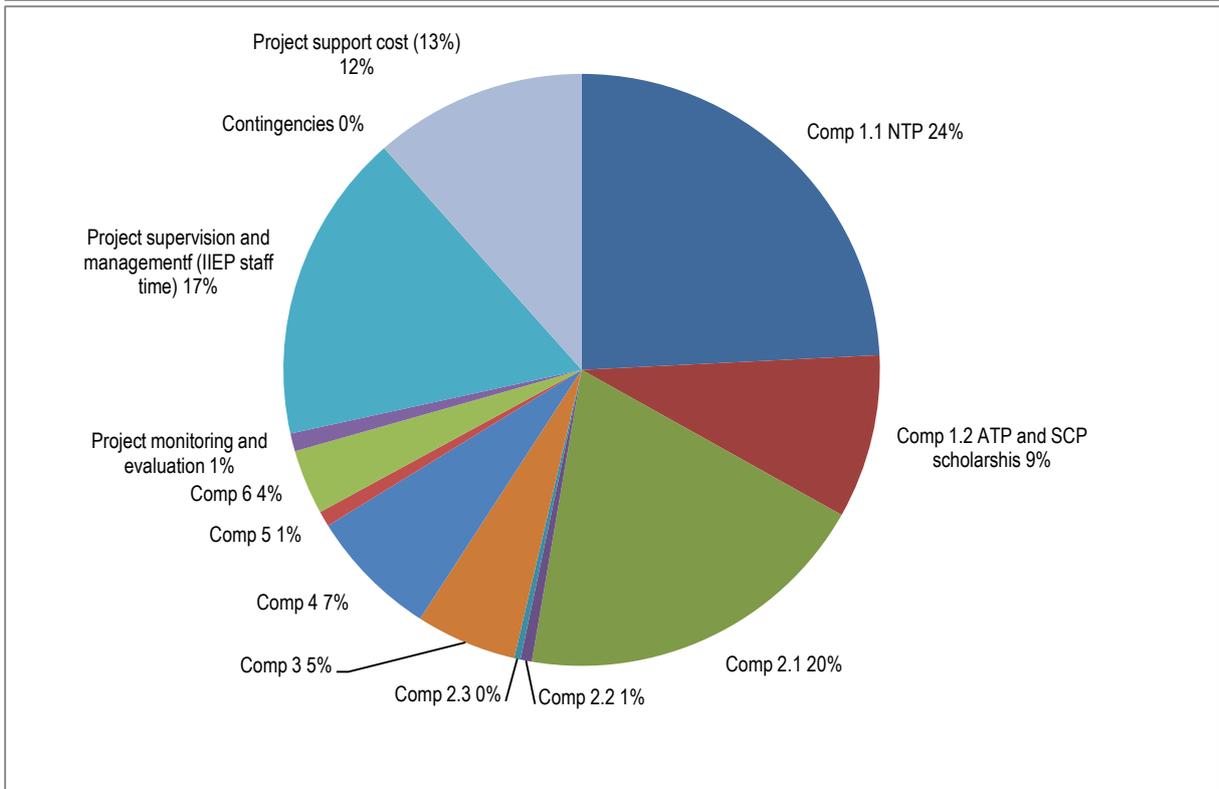
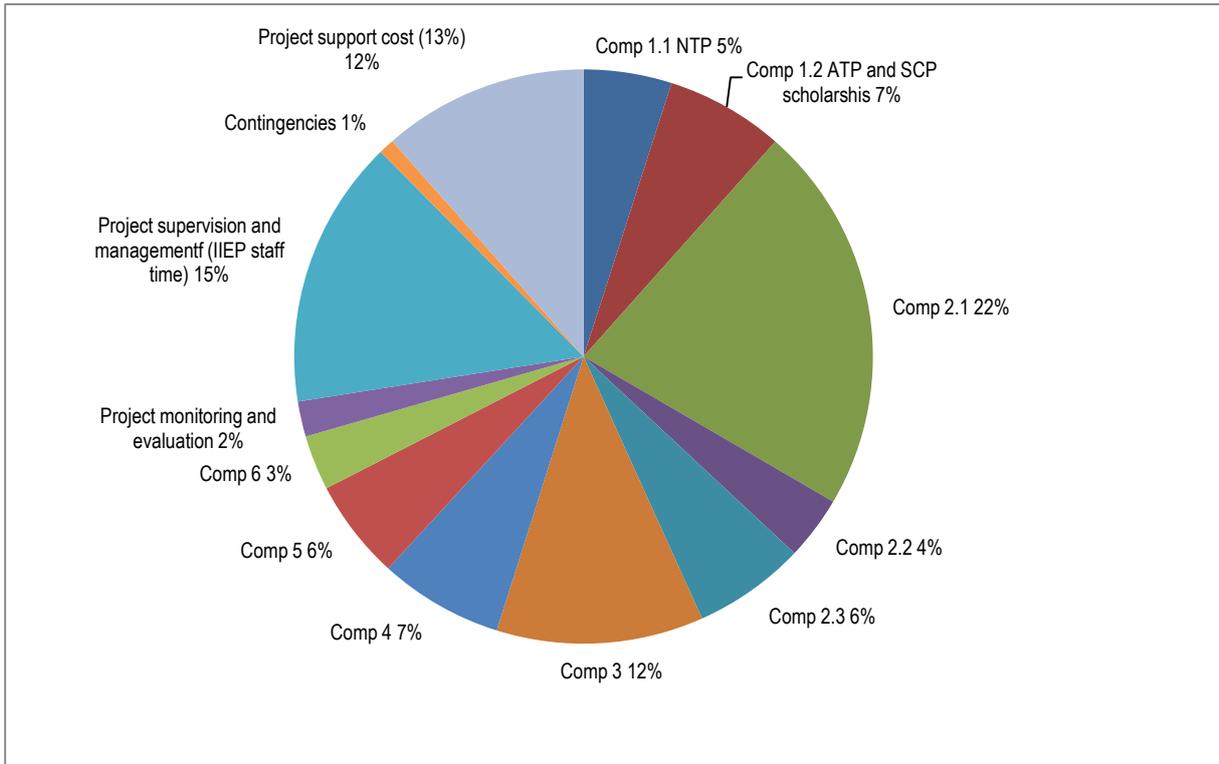


Diagram 2: Original and final budget structures: Dec 2010/Dec 2013



2. Main findings

2.A Project design and redesign: relevance and coherence

2.A.1 Relevance

28. ***The Project was clearly a response to real capacity needs as observed during more than ten years of cooperation between IIEP and MoE in this field.*** Underlying the capacity gap, it was not until 2006 that a first educational strategic plan was formulated in Afghanistan with assistance from IIEP and Norway. At central level, technical skills in education planning were scant and they were even weaker at sub-national levels.
29. Particularly with the National Training Programme (NTP) – a genuinely adapted solution in the form of a permanent institute within the MoE Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme – the Project has enabled the MoE to address the technical capacity gaps in the Afghan context. This brand new establishment has a capacity to provide a two-year diploma training in educational planning and management to approximately 200 individuals each year.
30. The very first activity listed in the Project design was to “Conduct an appraisal of capacity development needs jointly with the Department of Planning”. The implication was that such an analysis would serve as the basis for rethinking and adjusting the Project structure. Precisely because these capacity gaps seemed obvious, there was no such formal needs assessment conducted at the Project start as was mandated. During the interviews, neither the IIEP nor the DoPE remembered seeing or discussing such a formal document. A number of diagnostic studies were conducted but not in that spirit: they were either done during the final months of the Project or they were not the subject of any high level discussion by the three parties for Project adjustment.
31. Such an analysis could for example have enabled the MoE to categorize the training needs between the minority needing fellowship for IIEP direct training, the high level staff at central, provincial and district levels needing the two-year NTP diploma, and the majority staff at all levels, more suited to specific short-term training. The flexibility of the donor in terms of changes in activity structure or budget allocation has often been cited. That is indeed very good in facilitating the implementation of the Project when faced with new challenges. It does, however, not justify not conducting the needs assessment as planned.
32. Senior MoE officials acknowledge that education authorities both at central and subnational levels value evidence-based plans “only to some extent”, as opposed to a large extent. That view was strikingly confirmed by the NTP participants during focus group discussions. More than half of them expressed concern that the whole planning exercise is seen as useless as nobody uses the plan to guide routine activities at district and provincial levels. They said that even when accurately done, it is only paper work, a kind of show-off exercise. Allocation of resources is done irrespective of the plan.

33. It is arguable in that condition that a significant part of capacity development in educational planning should probably be about institutional strengthening aimed to raise the status of evidence-based planning at central and provincial levels. This requires a number of reforms to be cooperatively designed and implemented by the MoE, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Ministry in charge of human resource management at Government level to support evidence-based planning. One might imagine that at least elements of that concern might have been included in the Project. Whether a MoE project can influence policy outside that ministry will depend on the soundness of the proposed reforms and on the political will on the part of the MoE highest authorities.
34. The issue of relevance and prioritization of Component 5, “Research and Documentation”, needs confirmation. As stated above, successive budget allocation shifts have meant that the level of priority given to this component has dramatically reduced from 8 per cent of the budget allocation at the start of the Project to only 1 per cent at the end (December 2013). As clearly stated in a 17 June 2013 IIEP letter to DANIDA, “Research and documentation overall has been given lower priority than anticipated in the original project proposal.” A new research policy needs to be reformulated and discussed.
35. It needs to be emphasized that what is said of the Research and Documentation Component of the Project does not apply to the Research and Evaluation Unit, which has activities and outputs independently of the Project. To show that, a list of recent outputs produced by that unit is given in Annex 5 where it can be seen that quite a large number of policy documents have been issued. However, that is distinct from fulfilling the preplanned activities of the Project.
36. In an attempt to rethink the Project research functions in the MoE framework, a dedicated policy seminar was prepared and proposed by IIEP but somehow could not take place for various reasons. Had it taken place, that seminar could most probably have resulted in a different and more realistic (re-)orientation of Component 5.

2.A.2 Coherence

37. Coherence of the Project with existing country and donor systems was examined in its objectives, components and procedures. Nothing was found inconsistent with existing institutional systems, quite the opposite: the long-term training programme as well as the short-term workshops and the technical assistant-based capacity development schemes are very much in line with current practices and pertinent to MoE’s needs.

2.B Outputs and implementation processes: effectiveness and efficiency

38. As stated above (paragraph 27), this evaluation focuses on the Project outputs and does not embark in a component by component description and review of activities. However, Project activities are summarily reviewed in Annex 2 which shows a list of the Project activities as they appear in the original Project Document for each

component together with their implementation status. As can be seen in that table, the vast majority (albeit not all) of activities have been implemented. With the priority changes regarding component 5 (research and documentation) mentioned above (paragraph 34), there are understandably a larger number of unimplemented activities under that component than in others.

39. The project output was stated as “MoE has autonomous capacity to train education planners and uses it to train 240 technicians at all levels”. The question is therefore, does the MoE have autonomous capacity to train education planners and does it use it to train at least that number of technicians at national and subnational levels? On the basis of information that was gathered in the country including through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and visits, ***the Evaluation Team can confidently answer yes to this question.***
40. ***The Project has clearly demonstrated its effectiveness.*** On the one hand, MoE has used its skilled human resources to provide short-term training to more than 1,000 staff at provincial and district levels. On the other hand, with the NTP, the MoE is building the ground for training even more people. The established capacity (curriculum, trainers, materials, facilities and the overall system) enables the Ministry to train around 200 staff a year on a diploma level. As for content, the trainees readily recognize that participation in the NTP has made a real difference in their professional knowledge and skills.
41. Evidence of Project effectiveness is also visible with other components including the formulation of the third National Education Strategic Plan (NESP-3) with much less dependence on inputs from outside the country than was the case before. NESP-3 is now in a quasi-final version, only awaiting new resource mapping to be determined by development partners and the new government. In another significant show of rising capacity in educational planning and management, the MoE has been able to produce two Education Joint Sector Review Reports, one in July 2012 and another in December 2013 with the latter requiring significantly less assistance from international staff consultations.
42. This clear statement of success does of course not prevent the Team from identifying a number of implementation factors that should be worked upon in order to make future phases of the project even more successful. The following sections of the Report provide some details on the most important aspects of the Project and identify areas for improvement.

2.B.1 The National Training Programme

43. The setting up of the National Training Programme in educational planning and management (NTP) is the flagship activity and main achievement of the Project. The NTP establishment is visibly taking root in the Afghan institutional environment as shown by the four batches of trainees who have already gone through it and who are very satisfied with the technical knowledge and skills learned.

2.B.1.1 Instructors

44. The number of instructors fluctuates from one batch of trainees to the next, due to the coming and going of DoPE staff and TAs. As of the time of the fourth batch (NTP4), i.e. the batch of trainees who attended the first semester between September and December 2013, the number of instructors is shown in Table 1 below. During that later batch, there were 9 full time instructors, 2 part-time instructors in charge of administrative tasks, 1 full time administrator and 2 academic supervisors. The latter are full time DoPE staff involved in academic support without being directly in charge of an instruction unit. These staff are of three different administrative statuses according to the source of their salary: 4 are IIEP/DANIDA technical assistants (TAs), 6 are GPE TAs and 4 are Government civil servants.
45. Looking at the instructors' professional qualification, especially for those closely related to educational planning, it is remarkable that no IIEP trained staff are assigned as full-time instructors. There are needs of course within DoPE planning activities which are in competition with the NTP needs.
46. Annex 6 shows a list of people who were – or are being – trained by IIEP Paris in educational planning and management since 2002. The list shows that 22 people were trained, of which 8 are currently working within the DoPE and 4 others in other departments of the MoE. Furthermore, three additional people are currently being trained and will be back to DoPE in July 2014. Considering the key importance of the NTP in providing the foundations skills for the future, this report argues that it is highly advisable that at least one MoE staff or TA fully trained by IIEP be assigned to NTP as a full-time instructor.

Table 1: Distribution of NTP staff

Funding source	Full time instructor	Part time instructor/ administrator	Administrator	Instruction supervisor	Total
GPE	6				6
IIEP		1	1	2	4
Government (TVET)	2	1			3
Government (DoPE)	1				1
Total	9	2	1	2	14

Sources: Internal report (6 January 2014), *Progress report on National Training Programme (NTP) in Educational Planning and Management (NTP) 4, Residential Phase 1 (23 September-21 December 2013)*; Focus group discussion with the trainers 22/2/2014

2.B.1.2 *Operating mode*

47. The NTP follows a curriculum that was developed in cooperation between TVET and DoPE and that covers twelve separate subjects. The organization of lesson timetables follows a traditional school type mode: the twelve subjects are successively taught every week according to the number of instruction sessions allocated to each subject. Thus Educational planning is allocated 10 sessions a week, Monitoring and Reporting 6, Budgeting 4, etc., with a total weekly schedule of 44 sessions of 40 minutes each. Typically four subjects are taught every day, with two sessions per subject. It should be noted that the trainees are organized in two streams to reduce class size and allow more interaction between the trainers and trainees.
48. This classic operating mode is not typical of training institutions whose instructors are deeply active in other related activities such as educational research, planning or management. The most common operating mode is modular where a given subject is taught continuously for a number of days or weeks by one or several instructors/facilitators before moving to the next subject.
49. The benefit of a modular system is the ability to maintain close connection with real world planner-instructors or researcher-instructors throughout the course. In the NTP case there is of course a practical assignment that every trainee has to carry out in their work place after attending a full semester of theoretical session. But this is a different thing: it is about applying part of the teachings in practice. This type of operation is more adapted to full-time teachers as in a school. Currently, a real life practitioner will not be able to teach in NTP.
50. There is a related difficulty of course: if it were to embark on a modular operation, the NTP would have a lot of difficulties stabilizing a teaching staff if it were to come from various institutions. Fortunately, the central organ concentrating real life educational planning activities is also the department in charge of the NTP. There is the connection: that the core teaching in educational planning should come from the DoPE's specialized and well trained staff, intervening in the life of the programme on a modular basis.

2.B.1.3 *Practical assignment*

51. It is a typical and important feature of the NTP that each trainee must carry out a practical assignment at their work place during the second and fourth semesters of training. The assignment is actually identical for everyone: development of a three year provincial rolling plan and a nine-month progress report for their respective provinces or districts. This feature is very important because it provides a strong practical edge to the training and thus has a potential to better assimilate the acquired knowledge and skills. It also enables the trainees to maintain connection with their provincial or district areas of work so that their improved knowledge can actually assist educational development there.

52. Two weak points have been found with this activity, one regarding its supervision, the other regarding working conditions. The supervision of the practical assignment is done by the NTP instructors on an equal footing: the 35 provinces (including Kabul City) have been divided on a permanent basis among the instructors based on language ability and familiarity. Each instructor is thus in charge of three to six provinces and any trainee from a given province will necessarily be supervised by the instructor in charge of that particular province.
53. The instructors are very diverse in terms of their educational background and areas of specialization: we have teachers of English, Islamic studies, computer literacy, budgeting etc. in addition to teachers of educational planning and of monitoring and reporting. While this procedure is perfectly understandable on a practical basis, this Report argues that it reduces programme effectiveness in that effective coaching of serious academic work can only be done by someone from the related area of specialization. A teacher of English or of Islamic study will be as little effective in supervising the preparation of a strategic plan as a mathematician supervising a medical doctor trainee. This is true despite some training workshops that have been organized for the benefit of all the instructors in educational planning. Some reflection should therefore take place on how to change that: maybe by calling in more contribution by DoPE staff, by assigning sub-activities covering the various other areas of training for the specialized instructors to supervise.
54. It is possible to keep the general assignment of drafting a provincial or district strategic plan, while adding specific assignments related to the various other subjects. For example, to deal with the English subject, the trainees could be requested to translate a portion of their provincial or district plan into English. Or, to deal with the statistics subject for example, the trainees could be requested to perform a set of determined statistical calculations as part of the draft plan.
55. Contact between trainee and supervisor has also been reported as difficult; more than 50% of the trainees had contact by mobile phone, which is utterly inadequate. At least one participant travelled to Kabul and was still not able to meet his supervisor. There should be a fixed number of pre-planned meetings scheduled during the practical work of the participants. Getting feedback on practical work of the participants by their respective supervisors is an essential part of pragmatic learning of a participant.
56. For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that DoPE has one national TA placed in each PED to support capacity development in educational planning and management. The provincial TAs are also mandated to support the trainees from the respective province/districts in carrying out their practical assignment, although the evaluation team is not in a position to confirm their effectiveness in that particular role.
57. The other weakness affecting effectiveness regards working conditions during the assignment. The Provincial Education Departments do not always provide adequate conditions for the trainees to carry out their homework/practical work. This includes among others: assisting with transport to districts for a proper situation analysis,

facilitating access to internet or simply refraining from overloading them with daily work.

2.B.1.4 The pace of trainee recruitment

58. Recruitment to the National Training Programme has advanced in rapid succession since it started in late 2012. Diagram 3 on page 19 shows the exact sequences of the four separate batches of trainees who have completed the first residential semester and the one batch who have completed semester 2 of practical assignment and semester 3 of the second residential course. This extremely high speed may be good when trying to meet some quantitative targets, but it is definitely not suitable when trying to strengthen the quality of a starting programme.
59. Because of that rapid pace in recruitments, the teaching staff cannot take time to reflect on the achievements of a completed session in order to improve on the teaching methods, materials and organization with the following one. As a justification for the high recruitment frequency, it is arguable that the (implicit) quantitative targets for the 2-year diploma training are probably unrealistic, partly as a consequence of a failure to perform a needs assessment at the start of the project as discussed above (paragraph 31). As stated there, a needs assessment might show that there is no need to train so many provincial/district staff annually.

2.B.1.5 Quality assurance of the training programme

60. The evaluation team investigated the quality of training as judged by both the participants themselves and the instructors. One questionnaire was filled by 34 participants from a diversity of batches and another by 10 instructors. Both questionnaires are shown in Annex 4. Additionally a focus group discussion was held with a dozen participants from some ten provinces and another with the trainers at the site of the NTP. The results are shown here.
61. During the focus group discussion, the eleven participants who answered the question about the subjects that are considered the most important in their professional life gave the following frequencies:
 - ▶ educational planning (mentioned 11 times)
 - ▶ statistics (mentioned 11 times)
 - ▶ monitoring and reporting (mentioned 5 times)
 - ▶ budgeting (mentioned 3 times)
62. The vast majority of participants acknowledged that they have learned a lot of things from the programme, including pupil-teacher ratio, plan preparation, computer, monitoring and reporting, analysis, statistics, etc. However, a majority (but not all) of the participants complained about the teaching methods; they are too teacher-centred, with almost non-existent class activity. Especially for subjects such as

statistics, planning or monitoring and reporting, according to them, there should be “two hours of theory followed by two hours of work”. It was reported by all the participants that most of the classroom teachings were lecture method or teacher-centred and there was no hands-on activity or practical work done by the participants.

63. The learning materials are considered OK by the participants. While the content is good, several chapters are hard to understand because of some deficiencies in language editing. In particular, the Pashto speakers had more difficulties. The training materials were written in Dari and then translated in Pashto, without proper editing and the Pashto version arrived very late. Soft copies of materials were also available only in Dari at the beginning. The late availability of materials was thus summarized by one participant: *“you receive a heater in summer and a fan in winter!”*

Diagram 3: Sequence of NTP recruitment since the start of programme (showing enrolment)

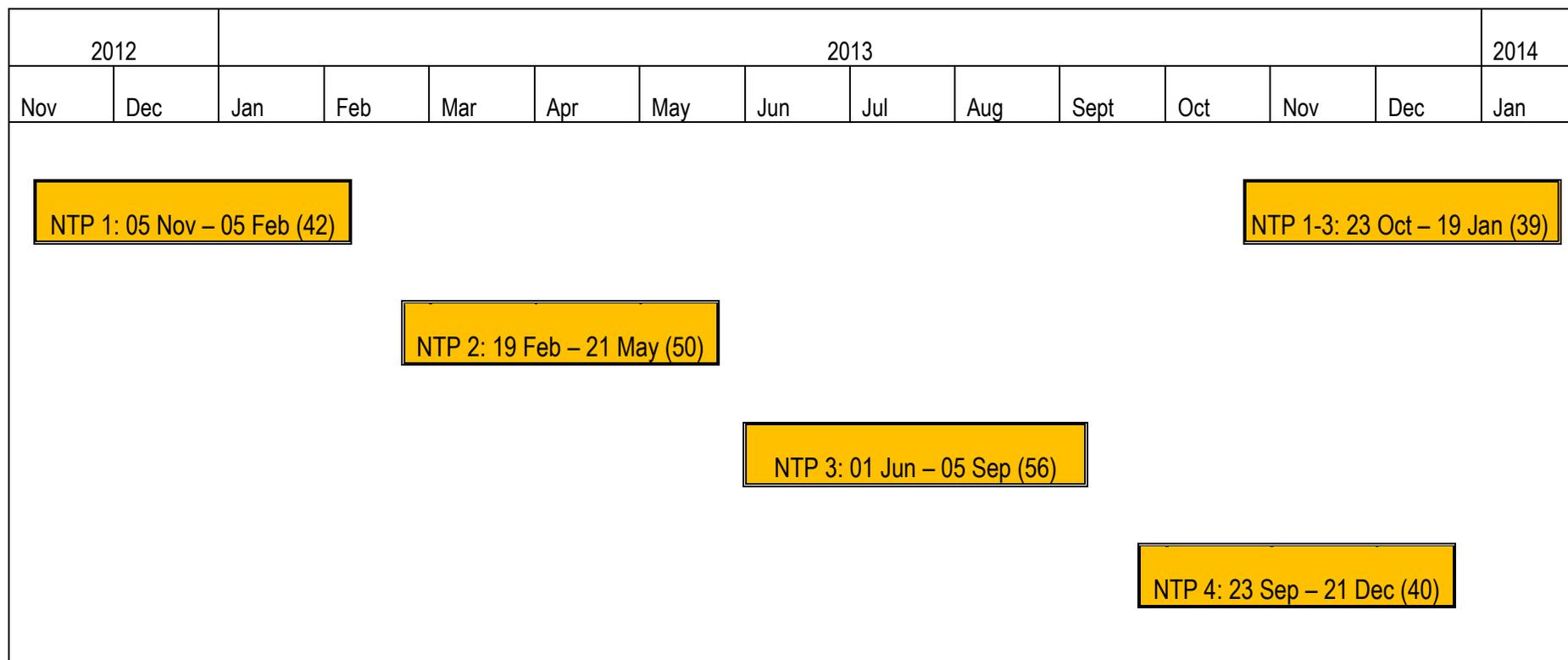


Table 2: Per cent of NTP trainers with the following opinions on the programme

Trainer's opinion	%
The entering level of a majority of participants is adequate	90
The majority of participants are very motivated	80
The participants rarely show lack of interest by talking in class	50
The instructor has a guide and it is very clear and helpful	70
The learning materials are very clear and comprehensive	80
The trainer has received Training of trainer of more than one week	90
The trainer interacted 10 times or more with participant on Semester 2 practical assignment	45
The trainer and participant interacted mostly by email or face to face	40

Source: Evaluation questionnaire

64. From the instructors' perspective, Table 2 shows how they judge the teaching conditions. It can be seen that they have a generally more positive view of the programme than the participants, with perhaps a weakness in the frequency of and methods for interacting with participants to supervise their practical assignment. Differing views between trainers and trainees are understandable because they have different stakes in the operation.
65. Based on the collaborative trust that had been established between MoE and IIEP since the early 2000s, it was the understanding of the Project initiators that the technical breakthroughs in educational planning and management in Afghanistan were to be supported and supervised by the IIEP. That can be seen in the official correspondence as well as in the project document itself. It follows that the NTP establishment – which by all measures appears to be the most innovative result – needed the type of quality assurance that only IIEP can provide in order to soar up.
66. To be sure, IIEP support has been steady from the beginning through the work of the Project Coordinator under IIEP supervision. Through facilitating the necessary administrative and budgetary procedures, he enabled the implementation of all the important steps in the programme establishment. However, the genuine IIEP guarantee in this area is not of an administrative but a technical nature: course structure, curriculum, instructional materials, teacher selection criteria, etc. This close technical supervision has only happened in a limited way for various reasons, including out of confidence in the ability of the many IIEP-trained staff in the DoPE.

67. Illustrative of the situation is the fact that the instructional materials in educational planning and management exist only in Dari and Pashto and have not been translated into English; and, therefore, have not been reviewed by IIEP-Paris. The Evaluation team was given a brief presentation of the major chapters covered in the educational planning brochures. One doesn't see there chapters on such important issues as: a detailed analysis of education in Afghanistan, plan formulation methodologies, issues of quality of education and teacher policies, etc. These issues may be covered under other chapters like the situational analysis but they need to be made the subjects of detailed class discussions and, in any case, it is necessary that IIEP confirms and gives a stamp of approval on them particularly in these early stages of the new programme.

2.B.2 Consolidation of DoPE capacity through embedded Technical Assistants

68. With Component 2, the Project had as one of its objectives to consolidate capacity in the DoPE through the coaching of staff by Project-supported Technical Assistants (TAs). The TAs are qualified people who are assigned in key positions within the DoPE in order to carry out the highly technical tasks while at the same time spending time with their colleagues transferring knowledge and skills to them. In exchange they have a special contract and salary, well above the standard Government wage.
69. The use of TAs is hardly unique to the Project or the MoE; it is a widely used system throughout Afghan Government ministries with the direct financial contribution by external donors. The Project supports eight such TAs, of which three are assigned to the NTP and five to DoPE. They hold such key positions as heads, senior managers or managers of planning units in the Department. Six of those TAs (counting one currently in Paris attending the ATP) have received training from IIEP either long-term or short-term. This shows that there is a strategy of building a core team and of using them as a technical backbone for DoPE functions and NTP. In the life of the Project, the TAs have made significant technical contributions in areas such as development of National Education Strategic Plan, national operational plans, development of the Education Joint Sector Review Report, financial projections for major reports, development of provincial plans etc. and facilitating workshops.
70. The TAs have contributed in a very significant way to the technical outputs of the MoE in their area of expertise. The following partial list of contributions is clear evidence of their positive impact:
- ▶ Development of concept notes for budget circulars;
 - ▶ Production of budget details for ESPA I and II programs;
 - ▶ Development of Medium Term Budget Framework for MoE;
 - ▶ Resource mapping for priority programs of MoE;
 - ▶ Financial analyses as part of major reports on education;
 - ▶ Development of provincial development packages;
 - ▶ Annual statistical reports;

- ▶ Analytical components of NESP;
- ▶ Development of monitoring and reporting systems;
- ▶ Production of annual operational plans;
- ▶ Facilitation of training workshops.

71. The most common factor cited by the TAs, in questionnaires and interviews, as stimulating productivity is good coordination and communication among colleagues and units. Regarding transfer of knowledge and skills to civil servant colleagues, the TAs most often use their own outputs as examples, often give formal group presentations, and sometimes discuss assignments and share references to good books. When asked to give an estimate of the level of success in knowledge and skill transfer, there is a wide variety between them: for some, only some of the targeted colleagues have acquired the skills while for others it is the vast majority. On average, there is a consensus that approximately 60 per cent of colleagues have acquired some of the targeted knowledge and skills, which is rather satisfactory given the constraints attached to this mode of transmission. They estimate that another three to five years would be necessary in order to complete the job.
72. Despite their efforts to impart capacity to colleagues, the TAs said that they were limited by the following obstacles:
- ▶ weak educational background of their colleagues;
 - ▶ colleagues whose area of training is completely different from the expected type of work (recruited through “special recommendations”);
 - ▶ pressure of work leaving them little time for coaching;
 - ▶ in some cases some colleagues resisted because of what they saw as frustrating salary differentials;
 - ▶ absenteeism;
 - ▶ staff turnover.
73. At the same time some TAs enthusiastically reported how many of their civil servants colleagues, who initially could not even use a computer, were motivated to learn about computers and were successful. It is probably much easier to convince somebody to acquire computer literacy than educational planning skills because of the wider social value of such a knowledge and skill.

2.B.3 Efficiency

74. According to the latest budget allocation shown in Diagram 2 above (page 10), the three items (out of 13 items) with the highest budgets are: the NTP with 24 per cent, the TAs salaries with 20 per cent, and the IIEP scholarships with 9 per cent. That budget structure is a correct reflection of the shifting priorities as expressed by the MoE and authorized by DANIDA.

75. One of the major cost sources with NTP is the \$22 DSA¹ paid the participants – all coming from far away provinces – for the duration of the three month residential period. While costly, this arrangement was the only implementable possibility under very tight time constraints. In future, a dedicated building with the necessary dormitory facilities is being constructed for the NTP with funding support from Denmark (ESPA, on budget). That will remove the need for DSA payment for housing and reduce the expenses for feeding and pocket money, thus saving a lot of money.
76. As a number of participants have said, a number of subjects being taught at the NTP could be removed allowing for sizeable saving for the Project and Government and, at the same time, increase instruction time for key subjects. These subjects have no connection with educational planning and management, but are imposed through some TVET regulations. A reflection is already underway to see how the change can be implemented. These are: fundamentals of education, Afghanistan values, and rules and regulations.

2.C Impact and features of sustainability

77. The intended Project impact was formulated as: “Well formulated, implemented and monitored education plans are produced at central & provincial levels”. On this basis, indications are that the outcome has not and could not have been reached (for reasons which are not linked to the quality of implementation). Most of the Heads of provincial Planning units met complained that, even when well formulated, provincial plans remain “pure paper work”. At central level, the Plan is also hardly the mandatory guiding principle for resource allocation (human as well as financial) for reasons connected to the fragility of the State institutions and structures.
78. One clear indication of positive impact on capacity development is the adaptation of the required simulation models that were completed by the DoPE without requesting the initially planned IIEP support.
79. Sustainability appears to be the strongest point of the Project: the setting up of the NTP seems to have had sustainability as the driving principle. Thus a genuine structure in the form of an institute within the current TVET sub-system has been set with the necessary legal and budgetary ground work. A new building with the necessary dormitory facilities is being constructed for the NTP with funding support from Denmark (ESPA, on budget). A number of trainers are already drawn from among civil servants with salaries paid from the Government payroll.
80. Ultimately, sustainability will mean that in a near future the new programme can be entirely financed by national resources when foreign partners end their financial support. Interestingly, DoPE states that in three years’ time, MoE will be in a position to cover 30 per cent of the cost of the NTP, indicating that the Afghan Government is on track to totally own the training programme.

¹ Daily Subsistence Allowance: cash to cover the food, transportation and accommodation costs of the NTP participants during their residential phase in Kabul.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.A Overall assessment

81. The Project is a genuine response to real capacity needs in educational planning and management. It has demonstrated its effectiveness by setting up a National Training Programme that is well adapted to the Afghan context and with recognized results. Sustainability is the strongest point of the project, having managed to establish a well-functioning structure, well embedded in the current Government institutional setting. The following paragraphs give more detailed assessments on the basis of the evaluation criteria focusing on the evaluation questions in the Inception Report.
82. **Relevance and coherence.** To the question: “What obstacles to the educational planning system were identified and to what extent are they reflected in the Project’s objectives?”, the answer is that (a) no formal needs assessment was conducted but (b) the Project was clearly a response to real capacity needs as observed during more than ten years of cooperation between IIEP and MoE in this field.
83. To the question of coherence: “To what extent is the Project in harmony with other capacity development interventions, possibly in education planning?”, the answer is: it is, to a very large extent. All of the components are in harmony with similar activities in the MoE and beyond: the short term workshops use similar formats to the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute; the NTP is under the framework of the TVET system and jointly supervised by TVET and DoPE.
84. **Effectiveness.** The question of whether the number of people who have been trained in educational planning and management through the Project is consistent with the initial plans has a very positive answer as more than 1,000 staff have attended short-term workshop and the new NTP has established capacity to train close to 200 staff every year. Those numbers are significantly higher than originally planned.
85. To the question regarding the issuance of a number of key strategic documents as a result of the Project, the answer is positive for most of the documents. In particular, the planning guidelines to provinces have been implemented and plans are now produced at subnational levels. To the question of whether there have been changes in attitude from partners regarding educational planning capacity, the Evaluation Team answers yes given notably the results of two Education Joint Sector Review meetings (2012 and 2013) in which all stakeholders took part. NESP-3 has been completed with due consideration of the results of the joint sector reviews and is now waiting for finalization of resource mapping and official approval.
86. **Efficiency.** Estimates of man-months that have been used to produce the major project outputs have not been done for lack of information. However it can be said that whatever staff time was used was overwhelmingly national with minimal foreign input. In itself, that result is a confirmation of the effectiveness of the Project in raising national capacity.

87. Regarding the NTP unit costs, a dramatic rise of the level of priority for that component was authorized between the start and the end of the Project: the budget allocation was raised from 5 to 24 per cent between December 2010 and December 2013 (see page 9). This increase actually corresponds mainly to a transfer of funds from Component 3 (provincial training) budget line to Component 1 (NTP) budget line. In substance, it is a transfer between two training-focused budget lines that happened when satisfying results had been achieved in Component 3. For the first year of the NTP's operation, the highest cost item was the DSA paid to participants. An efficient solution is underway as a new dedicated building is being constructed including provision for dormitories.
88. **Impact.** Effect of the Project implementation on school mapping, teacher deployment or relations between the education authorities and the community has been little to none because of persisting institutional weaknesses affecting educational planning. On the other hand, it has had a real effect on increasing the aid flows to education and also on the quality of dialogue with internal and external partners.
89. Concerning the question about changes in the nature of activities carried out by NTP graduates in provincial and District education offices, it is premature to ask this since no one has yet graduated. The NTP is a two-year programme and the first batch of participants still has a practical semester to complete before graduating.
90. **Sustainability.** Attention to sustainability is a high point in this project and a commendable one. The question about factors that have facilitated developing the system to more autonomy can be answered by first citing the very high political support for the Project at the top level of the MoE. There is determination at that level to reach the goal of autonomous training capacity in educational planning and management. Another factor is certainly the high level of flexibility of DANIDA, which enabled MoE and IIEP to set up new systems including substantial priority changes.
91. The question about the sustainability of such wide salary differentials between civil servants and the TAs cannot receive a positive response in the short term. The system is widely used in all Government branches and has as the underlying factor inadequate salary scales in Government services. The response therefore has to do with far reaching public reforms beyond the concerns of this Project.
92. State building in Afghanistan has been a long and difficult struggle. The joint efforts of MoE and IIEP to assist in rebuilding the education system through capacity development in planning and management started almost immediately with the establishment of the post-Taliban regime. One of the most crucial factors for the success of the Project is therefore the long-term approach of capacity development that both IIEP and the MoE have been following. That approach enabled them to emphasize processes as well as results and thus stands out as a model for post-conflict capacity development in educational planning and management in other countries.

3.B Recommendations

3.B.1 Recommendations for the short-term

93. This Project is worth extending to enable the batches of NTP trainees who have only completed the first semester to complete the course, and to allow for new batches of trainees to be taken in. This extension will allow the Programme to take strong roots. Longer term funding support will also help the MoE in making longer term capacity development plans in educational planning and management.
94. For IIEP to provide quality assurance to the training activity at the NTP, it needs to thoroughly review the curriculum and learning materials in educational planning based on lessons learned and feedback from the trainees and support the necessary adjustments. Translation into English would be a first step.
95. It seems logical that at least one IIEP-trained staff be appointed as a full-time trainer with the NTP in addition to the academic support currently provided by the DoPE.
96. It is recommended that IIEP considers organizing a blended course for the benefit of NTP trainers.
97. A reorientation of the research and documentation component of the possible new phase of the Project is in order to align to revised priorities.

3.B.2 Recommendations for the longer-term

98. As had been proposed early on in the project design but was not implemented, a functional institutional analysis of the educational planning and management systems in broader terms should be carried out. Such an analysis may lead to identifying actions and reforms involving not only the DoPE, but also the entire MoE as well as other related ministries. In that framework, responses can begin to be found to the weaknesses of planning that the provincial planners have pointed out.
99. A restructuring/re-engineering of the NTP in order to consolidate its gains and correct its weaknesses. Some of the lines of action discussed above include:
 - ▶ shifting from a traditional to a modular type of operation;
 - ▶ this shift will enable DoPE to engage more of its specialists in the teaching of NTP without weakening its planning operations;
 - ▶ slowing down the succession of trainee recruitment to allow time for corrective reflection and changes to ensure quality over the long run.
100. With the above re-engineering of the NTP, all IIEP trained TAs/staff should be allowed to make a contribution to the NTP through well regulated interventions. It will also be possible for the DoPE to identify, inside and outside MoE, a pool of competent trainers/trainers/practitioners to deliver modules over a determined period of time

or even one-off lectures or strategic seminars on appropriate subjects. Those presenters could be from the academia (interesting partnerships to develop with State and private universities in Kabul), from the civil society, from different MoE Departments (DoPE, Finance/Budget, etc.) as well as other line ministries (for example Finance).

101. Interaction and partnership with regional related entities are to be encouraged: examples are universities in the region; NUEPA; ANTRIEP and others.

ANNEXES

Annexes:

Annex 1: Terms of Reference of the evaluation

Background

Based on a Tripartite Agreement for 2010-2013 between the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan (MoE) and the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the *Sustainable Capacity Development in Education Sector Planning Project* (hereafter referred to as “the Project”) has been developing long-term sustainable national capacities for the efficient implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of Afghanistan’s National Education Sector Plans. In this Tripartite Agreement, DANIDA is the financing partner. MoE and IIEP are the two implementing partners. The final Project proposal was signed on 21 December 2010, and implementation is expected to end by April 2014 due to a no-cost extension granted by DANIDA until 30 June 2014. To date, the vast majority of the substantive Project activities are completed.

The intended Project outcomes were to make available the necessary technical skills in strategic planning, plan implementation and monitoring at central and decentralized levels of the education system, and consequently, to enable the MoE to formulate, implement and monitor medium-term national education strategic and yearly operational plans relying mostly on its own capacities.

The Project has worked on three axes: the development of a National Training Programme (NTP) in Educational Planning and Management, implemented by MoE, including training of trainers (Project Component 1); strengthening MoE capacities at the central level in Kabul (Component 2); and developing technical skills/capacities at provincial and district levels (Component 3). To do so, the project has employed an IIEP National Coordinator, a team of 10 national Technical Assistants (Component 2), and has drawn on technical support from IIEP and consultants (Component 4). Some research and documentation of lessons learned has been undertaken (Component 5). Finally, the Project has invested in logistics and support services (Component 6).

Purpose of the evaluation

The Project evaluation intends to serve three main purposes:

- (1) To judge whether the approaches used by MoE and IIEP in implementation of the Project were the right ones, and whether their combination forms a model which can

successfully be used again (and further refined) for capacity development in the field of educational planning – in Afghanistan and possibly in other comparable contexts

- (2) To allow DANIDA, as financing partner, to decide on a possible extension of the Project
- (3) To inform the Afghan educational authorities and the international community of the results of this project and of its related lessons learnt

Objectives of the evaluation and evaluation questions

The first main objective is to evaluate the Project's level of success measured against the standard OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability:

- (1) **Relevance:** to what extent have the approaches, strategies and interventions been appropriate in addressing the educational planning needs of the Afghan MoE? This includes:
 - ▶ The *capacity development approach* chosen by the Project: the focus on development of skills and support to processes alongside different categories of MoE staff instead of focusing on production of deliverables
 - ▶ The *combination of complementary skills development modalities*: training at central and subnational levels, training scholarships at IIEP in Paris, distance courses, generic skills training, coaching through technical assistance
 - ▶ *Institutional partnership* over a medium- to long-term period: continuous cooperation between a Ministry of Education and a specialized UNESCO institute instead of short-term contract-driven consultancies
 - ▶ *Combination of distance and permanent residential support*: the role of IIEP Paris staff and of the National Project Coordinator embedded at the MoE.
- (2) **Impact:** has the Project achieved its Intended Impact, i.e. to enable MoE efficiently plan and manage the education sub-sector in a more autonomous way (compared to 2010); to relate as the lead entity to other development partners (including other Afghan Government Ministries with a stake in education, Government bodies, local authorities, local communities, NGOs, parents and donors) in joint efforts aimed at educational and human resource development in Afghanistan?
- (3) **Effectiveness:** have the Project's activities (as stated in the Tripartite Agreement) been implemented? Have the Project's Intended Outcomes been achieved i.e. for to formulate, implement and monitor medium-term national education strategic and yearly operational plans relying mostly on its own technical capacities?
- (4) **Efficiency:** to what extent have the Project's resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been converted into results? Considering the specificities of the Afghan context, would alternative strategies have allowed to obtain equal or better results with less resources?
- (5) **Sustainability:** to what extent has the Project contributed to institutionalized educational planning capacity in the Afghan education sector? How likely are the

capacities developed through the Project to keep benefitting MoE during the coming years?

The second main objective is to make recommendations for a potential extension of the Project with regard to the following dimensions:

- (6) **Key success factors and key weaknesses** of the Project with a view to identify components or activities to be prioritized in similar or comparable future capacity development projects
- (7) **Potential activities or measures to be added** to the design of similar or comparable future projects to enhance their relevance and internal coherence
- (8) **Improvements to be made** to increase impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and connectedness with other existing capacity development initiatives and national policies.

Scope, focus and limitations of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will cover the entire Capacity Development Project (six components) funded by DANIDA for a total of DKK 16.8 million (US\$ 3 million). The focus should however be more on the substance of the activities than on the aspects related to logistics (Component 6) unless the latter are found to significantly influence the quality of the intervention.

The evaluation does not include a financial audit of the Project.

A number of limitations are nevertheless to be taken into consideration by all parties, including:

- ▶ **Security:** the evaluator will be subject to United Nations security rules while in Afghanistan. These rules prohibit travel to provinces. The evaluation mission will take place in Kabul only. MoE and IIEP will take necessary measures, to the extent possible, to ensure that key beneficiaries can meet with the evaluator in Kabul.
- ▶ **Language:** in case the selected evaluator is not Dari speaking, consultation of documentation produced in national languages will be either limited or not possible. This can be mitigated to some extent by interpretation and translation services (planned for within this evaluation). To ensure that the evaluation reviews a sufficient documentation base, key materials not available in English will be identified and (partially) translated; and other documents such as the NTP training materials will randomly be picked and (partially) translated.
- ▶ **Timing:** The residential phases of the National Training Programme (NTP) in Educational Planning and Management (Component 1) will be over when the evaluation mission will take place. It is therefore likely that most Provincial and District Education office staff trained on the NTP would have left Kabul. MoE will take

necessary measures to ensure that NTP trainees' feedback be collected through alternative ways.

Evaluation design and methodology

It is expected that the detailed methodology to be used for the evaluation will be proposed by the selected evaluator. The methodology should be outlined in the inception report and presented to the IIEP and to the Afghan MoE for approval. Other relevant parties such as DANIDA will also be consulted.

In general, it is however expected that the evaluator will:

- ▶ **Hold a series of interviews and focus group discussions** in English or Dari (with interpretation) with key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Project, including a sample of MoE staff who participated in different capacity development activities provided by the Project i.e. the NTP, the provincial training workshops, the IIEP Advanced Training Programme (ATP) and Specialized Courses (SCP) in educational planning and management, distance courses, and English courses
- ▶ **Hold interviews with other relevant informants:** MoE top management including General Director of Planning and Evaluation (DoPE), DoPE Deputy Directors and section heads, DoPE staff, IIEP National Coordinator, Team of national Technical Assistants embedded at DoPE, management and relevant staff of the MoE Institute of Administration and Management where the NTP is embedded, Human Resources Department, IIEP staff and other development agencies
- ▶ **Review relevant documentation** which includes: MoE-DANIDA-IIEP Tripartite Agreement and Annex 1 Project Proposal, progress reports, technical consultancy progress reports, training materials produced during the Project, guides and documents available at the DoPE, relevant email correspondence where appropriate, etc.
- ▶ **Conduct targeted small-scale surveys** through questionnaires for different types of Project beneficiary groups and/or stakeholders.

Profile of the Evaluator

The evaluation will be conducted by an individual consultant, external to MoE, IIEP and DANIDA. The consultant will be recruited according to UNESCO administrative rules and regulations in consultation with MoE and DANIDA.

The profile of the consultant should meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Proven track record in conducting evaluations of educational projects/programmes
- ▶ Technical knowledge and experience of educational planning and management
- ▶ Degree in education sciences is an asset
- ▶ Experience of capacity and institutional development programmes
- ▶ Demonstrable skills in writing high quality reports
- ▶ Experience of educational development in conflict-affected or early reconstruction settings
- ▶ Fluency in English, both spoken and written, is essential

Final evaluation report & deliverables

The final report should be no more than 30 pages (annexes excluded), and will include:

- ▶ Executive Summary
- ▶ Evaluation scope, purpose and methodology
- ▶ Presentation of main findings with detailed analysis
- ▶ Key recommendations (for MoE, DANIDA and IIEP)
- ▶ List of consulted stakeholders and informants
- ▶ Feedback session to MoE, DANIDA and IIEP (possibly using a PowerPoint presentation and video conferencing)

Timeline and duration of evaluation

An *indicative* timeline, based on MoE's agenda, is suggested below. The consultant will submit all reports to IIEP who will share immediately with MoE and DANIDA for review.

Contract start - review of documentation begins	30 January 2014
Draft Inception Report shared for comments	7 February 2014
Deadline for feedback to Inception Report	11 February 2014
Final Inception Report submitted	12 February 2014
Evaluation mission to Kabul, Afghanistan	13 – 27 February 2014 (travel inclusive)
Draft Evaluation Report submitted	7 March 2014
Deadline for comments on Draft Evaluation Report	12 March 2014
Final Evaluation Report submitted	14 March 2014

Annex 2: Summary implementation status of Project activities

Activities as stipulated in the 2010 Project Document	Implementation status
1.1. Conduct an appraisal of capacity development needs jointly with the Department of Planning	Not in the designed spirit. Some diagnostic analyses were conducted either late in the Project or without leading to tripartite restructuring
1.2. Design the training programme that will address main issues in education planning	Yes, the programme was designed but whether or not it addresses the main issues is unclear
1.3. Identify and recruit 1 national technical assistant to act as Coordinator of the training programme under the supervision of the Director General of DoP	Yes
1.4. Translate resources into Dari/Pashto (glossary of educational planning and management terms, IIEP and UNESCO publications, other sources, tools, etc.)	Yes partly (3 IIEP Working Papers on strategic planning – awaiting final check)
1.5. Conduct pedagogical course(s) on adult learning and training for MoE trainers	A much more limited one-week workshop
1.6. Identify equipment needs and procure equipment for MoE training facility	Yes
2.1 Identify, contract and train potential MoE/Afghan trainers in educational planning (including those already employed since 2008)	Yes
2.2 Design and deliver a comprehensive training programme in educational planning for central MoE and PEO planning staff in Kabul or a nearby country	Only for provincial and district offices
2.3 Identify, design and translate necessary materials	Yes, but these materials need further editing due to observed deficiencies
2.4 Provide MoE with technical support in-country and/or at a distance between capacity development workshops	Yes

2.5 Select, jointly with MoE, suitable candidates every year in due time for: scholarships at IIEP in Paris (IIEP to take participants in charge while in Paris), study visits abroad and distance courses delivered by IIEP	Yes, partly. Within the Project, 7 scholarships have been awarded for IIEP's Annual Training Programme and 7 for its Specialized Course Programme; in addition, one IIEP distance course and one World Bank Institute e-learning course have been organized
2.6 Design, organize and lead study visits	No
2.7 Design, organize, deliver and monitor progress on distance training courses	Yes, partially (MoE officials participated in one IIEP distance course on educational planning for conflict and disaster risk reduction)
2.8 Identify, contract, supervise generic skills trainers and monitor progress of staff benefitting from courses	Yes
3.1. Coach/prepare MoE trainers (linked to component 1 – IIEP)	Yes
3.2. Support design and implementation of capacity development programme (IIEP)	Yes
3.3. Plan, organize and deliver training courses for up to 300 provincial planners over the three-year period of the Project (MoE)	Yes, more than 1,000 trained
3.4. Identify, contract and supervise short-term national technical assistants	Yes
4.1. Assist MoE technically in the formulation of the Interim Plan requested by the Education For All Fast Track Initiative	Yes
4.2. Assist MoE in the formulation of its Capacity Development Plan (support to NESP-2 Management priority programme)	No such document was the subject of tripartite discussion
4.3. Develop/finalize MoE projection and simulation model (for target setting and cost estimations)	Yes, MoE did it by themselves
4.4. Support MoE in formulating and/or reviewing plans or subject-specific strategy documents	Yes

4.5. Provide technical assistance for the finalization of NESP-2 (including results framework and indicators)	Yes
4.6. Assist MoE in the preparation of NESP implementation progress reports (annual, semi-annual and quarterly)	Yes
4.7. Assist MoE in the preparation and organization of NESP-2 implementation review meeting(s)	Yes
5.1. Conduct ongoing documentation of the process of capacity development within MoE to ensure all lessons learned are captured on a regular basis	No, this was later found less of a priority
5.2. Assess skills available and functioning of the Research and Evaluation Unit	No such document was the subject of tripartite discussion
5.3. Identify research needs	Yes, partly. There is a list of policy topics without prioritization
5.4. Design research programme/topics	No programme with a timeline
5.5. Identify MoE potential researchers and/or research programs managers/ supervisors	No
5.6. Identify and contract potential national researchers	No
5.7. Overview research processes	Yes, partly. There was a lot of technical back-up provided by regarding some research studies e.g. on curriculum implementation carried out by DoPE/R&E Unit. A seminar was designed and proposed in Paris on an MoE research strategy, but did not happen.
5.8. Comment on drafts (if language permits)	Yes.
5.9. Issue and disseminate publications	No

Annex 3: List of persons met

Mohammad Aref Arefee	IIEP Coordinator
Ahmad Parwiz Ahmadzai	Programme Officer (Education), Royal Danish Embassy
Yukiko Matsuyoshi	Chief Education Unit, UNESCO
Mohammad Azim Karbalai	Deputy Minister, Literacy
Abdul Razaq Wahidi	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance
Sayed Hamidullah Hamidi	Deputy Minister, Administration and Finance
Abdul Wassay Arian	Director General, Planning and Evaluation Department
Mohammad Qasim Mohseni	Director, Policy and Strategic Planning (Project-funded TA)
Zekrullah Taebi	Director, Policy and Programs development, TVET
Ismail Khatab	Director, EMIS
Ghulam Mohammad Hajizada	Director, Programme Coordination
Mohammad Naeem Bahin	Director, Islamic Education
Jalaludin Atayee	Senior Manager, Research and Evaluation Unit (Project-funded TA)
Mohammad Hasib Amini	Senior Manager, Strategic and Operational Planning Unit (Project-funded TA)
Abdul Ghaffar Khan	Manager, School Establishment Unit
Abdul Raffi Hadad	Manager, Budget Unit
Shuaib Amiri	Manager, Programme and project Coordination
Abdul Subhan Raouf	Manager, Monitoring and Reporting Unit (Project-funded TA)
Baluch Noori	Manager, Strategic and Operational Planning Unit (Project-funded TA)
Mirwais Ahmadzai	System Analyst, EMIS
Abdul Sami Sulaimanzada	Senior Planning and Evaluation Officer, R&EU
Sayed Rahmat Shah Malyar	Coordinator, National Training Programme (Project-funded TA)
Hidayatullah Suleimankhail	National Training Programme (Project-funded TA)
Mary Hamidi	National Training Programme (Project-funded TA)
Maryam Zohab	National Training Programme
Hasina Nazari	National Training Programme
Hizbullah Hamidi	National Training Programme (Project-funded TA)
Ghulam Mustafa Mustafa	National Training Programme
Ahmad Safaei Safaei	National Training Programme
AbdulHaq Raouf	National Training Programme

Mohammad Shafiq Sediqi	National Training Programme
Abdul Mateen Sarwari	National Training Programme
Abdul Satar Dehzad	National Training Programme
Mirwais Abdul Malik	Planning and Budget Implementation Manager (Parwan)
Mohammad Moshfiq	Planning and Budget Implementation Manager (Laghman)
Mohammad Aslam	General Planning Manager (Nangarhar)
Abdul Naser Mawdoudi	Literacy Planning Officer (Herat)
Ahmad Shah	General Planning Manager (Kapisa)
Eid Mohammad	EMIS Manager (Logar)
Mohammad Hamed	Planning and Budget Implementation Manager (Kabul)
Abdul Razaq	EMIS Manager (Kabul City)
Sayed Mahdi Abdullahi	General Planning Manager (Sarepol)
Ewaz Ali	General Planning Manager (Kabul Province)
Mohammad Zahir	General Planning Manager (Maydan Wardak)
Mohammad Naser	Planning and Budget Implementation Manager (Laghman)
Ahmad Zamir Gowara	Current IIEP ATP trainee, Paris
Mohammad Nasim Qazizada	Current IIEP ATP trainee, Paris (Project-funded TA)
Hamid Askarzada	Current IIEP ATP trainee, Paris

Annex 4: Questionnaires used for information gathering

A. Questionnaire 1: Director General Planning and Evaluation department

Obstacles initially identified before the Project started

Q1. The following may have been obstacles to sound educational planning prior to the initiation of the Project. Rank them in the order of their effect, with 1 being the most important obstacle:

- Shortage of staff with the technical skills
- Shortage of material equipment/facilities (buildings, computers, vehicles, etc.)
- Institutional pressure for short term solutions to pressing problems
- Lack of accurate and timely data
- Financial management lacking in transparency
- Too strong role taken by external donors to education leaving insufficient space to Government initiative
- Little value attached to evidence-based plans by authorities
- Security situation in the country

Q2. To what extent do education authorities at central level (outside DoPE) value evidence-based plans?

- To a large extent
- To only some extent
- Little or no value

Q3. To what extent do education authorities at provincial and district level value evidence-based plans?

- To a large extent
- To only some extent
- Little or no value

Q4. Was an explicit needs assessment performed in the 2007-10 period?

- YES NO

If yes, list (from documented sources) the needs that were identified.

Q5. What is the approximate number of DoPE technical staff with the following skills (a person should not be associated with more than two skills):

- Conduct a situational analysis for a sub-sector of general education
- Conduct a situational analysis for technical and vocational education
- Conduct a situational analysis for adult and non-formal education
- Monitor and evaluate a programme or sub-programme of the plan
- Analyze issues of access and equity of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of quality of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of internal efficiency of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of non-formal education
- Make enrolment projections
- Make projections of teachers needs
- Master, adapt and use a computer-based simulation model
- Conduct a school mapping exercise for a district
- Identify projects and draft project documents for submission for external donor funding

Q6. What is the approximate number of DoPE technical staff with the following skills counting only regular civil servants without the TAs (a person should not be associated with more than two skills):

- Conduct a situational analysis for a sub-sector of general education
- Conduct a situational analysis for technical and vocational education
- Conduct a situational analysis for adult and non-formal education
- Monitor and evaluate a programme or sub-programme of the plan
- Analyze issues of access and equity of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of quality of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of internal efficiency of a sub-sector of education
- Analyze issues of non-formal education
- Make enrolment projections
- Make projections of teachers needs
- Master, adapt and use a computer-based simulation model
- Conduct a school mapping exercise for a district
- Identify projects and draft project documents for submission for external donor funding

Q7. Please explain how the figure of 240 was arrived at as a target for training.

National Training Programme

Q8. How many NTP trainers are operational today?

Q9. Is there a system in place to evaluate them? YES NO

Q10. Of those in charge of planning subjects, what per centages would fall in the following categories?

- High rate trainers
- Satisfactory trainers
- Rather poor trainers

Q11. How many NTP educational planning modules have approved training materials?

Q12. Given the budget pattern of DoPE, what per centage of NTP costs can the department cover with its own resources in three years? _____%

Production of the planned documents

Q13. The following strategic documents were targeted in the Project document. State if they have been issued and assess their quality.

- A research programme YES NO
 If yes, issue date
 If yes: Very good quality Acceptable quality Poor quality

- A capacity development plan YES NO
 If yes, issue date
 If yes: Very good quality Acceptable quality Poor quality

- Guidelines for provincial and district level plans YES NO
 If yes, issue date
 If yes: Very good quality Acceptable quality Poor quality

Q14. Looking back at the amount of work done to develop key documents, can we estimate the number of man-months spent by category of personnel?

- a) The NTP programme document
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- b) Completed NTP training materials (see Q11.)
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- c) Simulation models
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- d) Other specific technical inputs (*please specify*)
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- e) NEIP
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants
- e) NESP-3
 Regular staff TA Trainers National consultants International consultants

Impact of the Project

Q15. To what extent has the Project affected the following processes?

- a) School mapping
 To a large extent To some extent Little to none
- b) Teacher deployment
 To a large extent To some extent Little to none
- c) Relationships between the education authorities and the community
 To a large extent To some extent Little to none
- d) Increase in the aid flows to education
 To a large extent To some extent Little to none
- e) Quality of dialog with internal and external partners
 To a large extent To some extent Little to none

f) The staffing structures at all levels of the MoE

To a large extent

To some extent

Little to none

B) Questionnaire 2: Project Technical assistants

Length of service

Q1. State your position before contracting with IIEP:

Q2. Are you a former participant to an IIEP training programme?

_YES

_NO

Q3. If yes, which programme did you attend?

Advanced Training Programme:

_YES _NO

Specialized short term course:

_YES _NO

Distance course:

_YES _NO

Visiting fellow Programme:

_YES _NO

Q4. Date contract was signed:

Q5. Date present contract ends:

Q6. Entity of assignment:

Department:

Directorate:

Unit:

Outputs and contributions

Q7. List the main technical contributions and outputs produced by you in the period of this Project (since December 2010):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

Q8 If you are satisfied with some or all of your outputs, name the factors that helped you achieve them:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q9. If you are dissatisfied with some of your outputs, name the obstacles that made it difficult to achieve better performance:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Transfer of capacity and sustainability
--

Q10. Indicate the number of staff who could potentially benefit from your direct coaching:

Q11. What methods have you used to transfer capacity to those colleagues (*put an "x" next to your choice or choices*)?

- Giving formal group presentations
- Using your outputs as examples
- Discussing and supervising assignments with individuals
- Preparing handouts
- Sharing reference books and brochures
- Referring them to useful websites

Q12. Which of the following statements best describes the outcome of your transfer of capacity (*put an "x" next to your one choice*)?

- All or the vast majority of the targeted colleagues have now acquired the targeted skills
- All or the vast majority of the targeted colleagues have now acquired some of the targeted skills

- A majority of the targeted colleagues have now acquired the targeted skills
- A majority of the targeted colleagues have now acquired some of the targeted skills
- Just some of the targeted colleagues have now acquired the targeted skills
- Just some of the targeted colleagues have now acquired some of the targeted skills
- None of the targeted colleagues have now acquired the targeted skills
- None of the targeted colleagues have now acquired any of the targeted skills

Q13. How longer would it take to have the majority of the targeted colleagues acquire the targeted skills
(put an "x" next to your one choice)?

- More than 5 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 2 years
- 1 year
- Not feasible

Q14. List 3 recommendations to improve the Project:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C) Questionnaire 3: NTP trainers

Length of service

Q1. Your position before contracting with IIEP:

Q2. Date contract was signed:

Q3. Date contract ends:

Q4. Subjects taught:

- 1.
- 2.

Quality of curriculum, materials and graduates

Q5. For the majority of participants, would you say that their entering level of instruction is (tick one):

- Below expectation
- Adequate
- Above expectation

Q6. Looking at the majority of participants, how motivated are they to follow the programme (tick one)?

- Very motivated
- Moderately motivated
- Not motivated

Q7. In your classes, do participants show lack of interest by talking in class (tick one)?

- Yes, very often
- Yes, sometimes
- Rarely

Q8. Do you have a teacher guide for your subject (tick one)?

- YES NO

Q9. If yes, how do you judge its quality and clarity (tick one)?

- Very clear and helpful
- Moderately clear and helpful
- Rather poor

Q10. How do you like the learning materials (handouts given to participants) for your subject (tick one)?

- They are very clear and comprehensive
- They are moderately clear and comprehensive
- They lack clarity or have gaps

Q11. Did you attend one or several "Training of Trainers" session (tick one)?

- YES NO

Q12. If yes, what was the total duration (tick one)?

- More than two weeks
- Between one and two weeks
- Less than one week

Q13. Do you sometimes receive a pedagogical control while teaching?

- YES NO

Q14. If yes, by who (Tick one or more):

- Representatives of DoPE
- Representatives of TVET
- Representatives of IIEP

Q15. If yes, do you receive advice for improvement?

- YES NO

Q16. Do you ever receive any pressure in marking participants' work?

- YES NO

Q17. Have you received training in educational planning?

- YES NO

Q18. In your opinion, what are the two main challenges in the existing educational planning processes at national or provincial levels?

1.

2.

Working conditions

Q19. In your opinion, the facilities in class are (tick one):

- Very conducive to learning
- Barely conducive
- Not conducive

Q20. Do you have access to a staff room?

- YES NO

Q21. If yes, the staff room is (tick one):

- adequate in size

- too small
- too big

Q22 Do you have access to:

- A computer? YES NO
- Internet? YES NO

Q23 Please indicate the average number of hours per week for the following activities (give a number in each box, put 0 where necessary):

- Class teaching:**
- Development of teaching modules:**
- Work at the DoPE or other department in the MoE:**
- Supervision of practical assignments :**

Practical assignment by participants in their provinces and districts
--

Q24 Is your subject explicitly reflected in the practical assignment (tick one)?

- Yes, very much
- Yes, but only indirectly
- No

Q25 On average how often and how did you interact with participants to assist in their practical assignment?

How many times (tick one)

- 15 or more times
- Between 10 and 15 times
- Between 5 and 10 times
- Less than 5 times

How (tick one)?

- Mostly face to face
- Mostly by email
- Mostly by telephone

Q26. What per centage of the supervisory interventions that you provided were well understood and carried out (tick one)?

- 100%
- 80 % to less than 100%
- 60 % to less than 80%

Less than 60%

Q27. Do the participants receive enough support from their heads in the provinces in terms of time for the task?

YES NO

Q28. Do the participants receive enough support from their heads in the provinces in terms of material support?

YES NO

Q29. What are the best aspects of this programme?

1.

2.

Q30. What were the least good aspects of this programme?

1.

2.

Q31. List 3 recommendations to improve the NTP

1.

2.

3.

D) Questionnaire 4: NTP participant

Relevance to work assignment

Q1. What was your position before the training and what is it now:

Position before:

Position after:

Q2. What are your main lines of responsibility?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q3. To what extent do these responsibilities make use of your acquired skills from the trainings provided under this project (*tick one*)?

- To a large extent
- To only some extent
- Little to none

Q4. To what extent do education authorities in your province or district value in general evidence-based plans (*tick one*)?

- To a large extent
- To only some extent
- Little or no value

Q5. List the key strategic documents that have recently been issued in your province or district, i.e. which are important in facilitating the achievement of objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q6. Which of those strategic documents were developed at the initiative of the local authorities (provincial or/and district)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q7. How credible are the provincial or district plans with the managers and to what extent do they use them as a guide in their daily activities (*tick one*)?

- To a large extent
- To only some extent
- Little or no value

National Training Programme trainers, materials and facilities

Q8. How fair do you think the selection of participants from your province or district was for this training (*tick one*)?

- Very fair and base on clear technical consideration
- Biased by provincial or district authorities' preferences
- Biased by central authorities' preferences

- A fairly negative impact on your training
- A negligible impact on your training

Practical assignment in your province or district
--

Q15. Was your PED head supportive of your work for the assignment (tick one)?

- Yes, very much
- Yes, but not always
- No

Q16. How and how often did you interact with your NTP supervisor to guide you in your practical assignment?

How many times (tick one)

- 15 or more times
- Between 10 and 15 times
- Between 5 and 10 times
- Less than 5 times

How (tick one)?

- Mostly face to face
- Mostly by email
- Mostly by telephone

Q17. Overall, how would you rate the quality of supervision that you received (tick one)?

- Very good
- Rather good
- Rather poor

Other aspects of the programme

Q18. What is your most important expectation about the effect of your graduation on your future career (tick one)?

- Salary raise
- Job promotion
- Move to Kabul
- More job satisfaction

Q19. Is this capacity development method in accordance with:

the civil service norms

Yes, perfectly More or less No

the decentralization policies

Yes, perfectly More or less No

Q20. How do you judge the duration of the different parts of the programme?

Semester 1 (residential)

Too long Adequate Too short

Semester 2 (practical assignment)

Too long Adequate Too short

Semester 3 (residential)

Too long Adequate Too short

Semester 2 (practical assignment)

Too long Adequate Too short

Q21. How do you rate the financial conditions of the programme (*tick one*)?

Very good Rather good Rather poor

Q22. What were the best aspects of this programme?

Q23. What were the least good aspects of this programme?

Q24. List 3 recommendations to improve the NTP

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Annex 5: List of documents recently produced by the Research and Evaluation Unit of the DoPE

1. *Evaluation Manual* (Dari), October 2011;
2. *Research Manual* (Dari);
3. *Planning and Evaluation Department Capacity Development Plan*;
4. *Research and Evaluation Policy* (Dari), October 2011;
5. *Draft Guideline of Evaluation* (Dari), October 2011;
6. Afghanistan Reliable technology Services, *Plan for Strengthening of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Education Management Information System (EMIS) at National and Sub-national Levels, Volume I*, August 2013;
7. Afghanistan Reliable technology Services, *Plan for Strengthening of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Education Management Information System (EMIS) at National and Sub-national Levels, Volume II*, August 2013;
8. *An Outline of DOPE – R&EU priorities*;
9. *Concept Note – research on Implementation of Teaching Methodology* (Dari);
10. *MOE Policy Questions*;
11. *The Research and Evaluation Unit at a Glance*, December 2013;
12. *Research Coordination Among Ministry of Education Departments in Afghanistan*, July 2013;
13. *Education Research Topics and Agendas*, December 2013 ;
14. *A Study on Teacher Qualifications and Subject Area Specialization in Kabul City Districts 1, 11 and 13*, May 2013;

Annex 6: List of IIEP-trained Afghans since 2002 and their current situation

Last name	First name	Type of IIEP programme ²
A) Currently attending course at IIEP		
HAMID	Mohammad Askarzada	ATP 2013/14
QAZIZADA	Mohammad Nasim	ATP 2013/14
ZAMIR	Ahmad Zamir Gowara	ATP 2013/14
B) Currently assigned to DoPE		
RAOUF	Abdul Subhan	ATP 2012/13
SULAIMANZADA	Abdul Samie	ATP 2011/12; SCP 2011
AHMADZAI KHAN	Mirwais	ATP 2011/12
ATAYEE	Jalaludin	ATP 2010/11
MOHSENI	Mohammad Qasim	ATP 2006/07
AMINI	Mohammad Hasib	SCP 2013; WSP157; PRD59
NOORI	Baluch	SCP 2013; PRD59
C) Currently in the MoE but outside DoPE		
HABIBYAR	Mohammad Shakir	ATP 2010/11; SCP 2012
AHMADI	Mohammad Sharif	ATP 2007/08
AHMADZAI	Ghulam Jan	SCP 2013
KARBALAI	Mohammad Azim	SCP 2005; ITC336
D) Currently outside of the MoE/the country		
SHALIZI	Muhammad Ateiq	ATP 2011/12
SOROUSH	Karim	ATP 2005/06
KOHISTANI	Sardar Mohammad	ATP 2003/04
FAHIM	Ahmad	SCP 2012
ILYAS	Mohammad Khan	SCP 2011
ALEFI	Hedayatullah	SCP 2003; WSP90; ITC207; ITC239

Source: IIEP files

² ATP: Advanced Training Program; SCP: (Specialized) Short Courses Program; ITC: Intensive training Course; WSP: Workshop; PRD: Distance Training Course.

Annex 7: Evaluation inception report

1. Purpose of the Inception Report

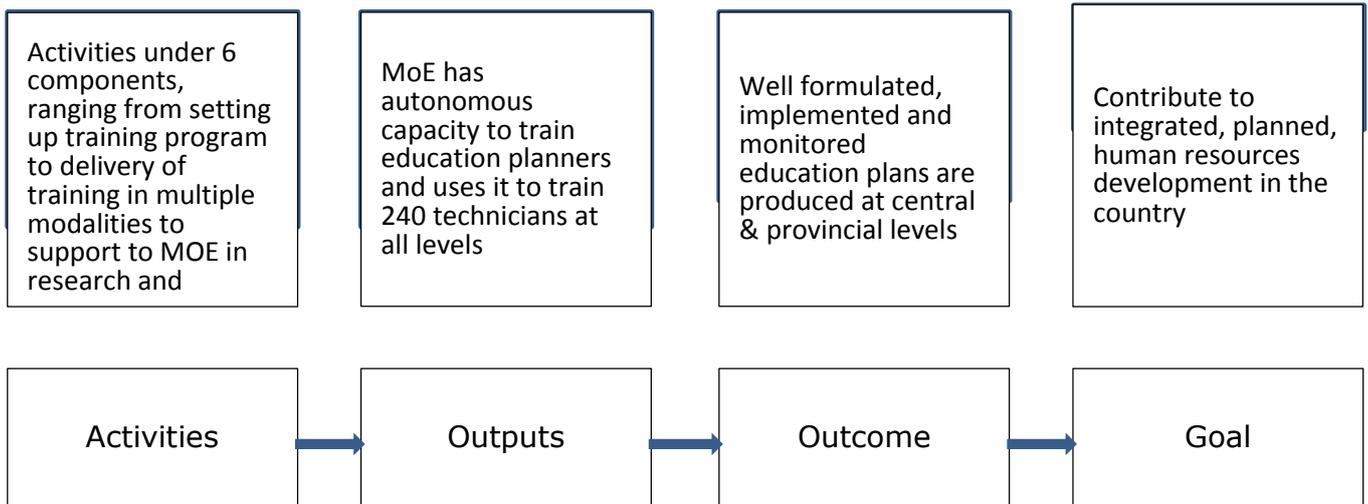
1. The project to be evaluated, hereafter referred to as “the Project”, goes under the name “The sustainable capacity development project in education sector planning in Afghanistan”. The way for its design back in 2010 had in fact been prepared by a large number of earlier capacity development activities implemented by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the same area. Starting in the early 2000s and particularly since 2006, the MoE and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), with financial support from Norway and some other donors, had worked hard and together to push capacity in educational planning.
2. The most spectacular sign of the successes achieved thanks to those efforts was the official launch by none other than President Hamid Karzai, in May 2007, of the first National Education Sector Plan (2006-2010) – NESP-1. NESP-1 was later to be followed by NESP-2 (2010-2014), from which an adjusted Interim Plan for the period 2011-2013 was derived for submission to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and, most recently, NESP-3 (2014-2020). And so, many key components of the Project build on those earlier activities. However, it is only the later portion, which covers the period from the end of 2010 through to end 2013 (with a no cost extension until mid-2014) that is being evaluated.
3. Based on the evaluation Terms of Reference shown in Annex 2, this Inception Report therefore aims at clarifying as much as possible the approach and methodology that will be followed in conducting the evaluation exercise. As in all evaluations, several parties have a stake in the findings and a level of transparency and consensus about methods before the actual data collection begins is indispensable. An agreement at this inception stage goes a long way in ensuring the future credibility of the conclusions.
4. In this case, three major stakeholders are involved: the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE) which is the beneficiary of the Project as well as its main implementer, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) as the main technical partner of the Project, and the Danish Agency for International Development (DANIDA) as the main financial partner. The three entities share a common view of the importance of education, particularly education planning, as a prop for state and nation building of Afghanistan. The recently published book (*On the road to Resilience: Capacity development with the Ministry of Education*, Morten Sigsgaard (ed), 2011) shows very clearly both the importance given to education in that country and how the Project comes as a part of a long tradition of cooperative engagement between IIEP, the MoE and its external partners.
5. The main point of the evaluation is, therefore, to identify and understand the enabling factors behind the achievements and maybe the disabling factors behind areas of lesser success. This, in turn, will assist in bringing increased effectiveness in future endeavors for capacity development in educational planning and management.
6. The Report has three substantial sections: section 2 clarifies the evaluation focus and approach, section 3 identifies the evaluation questions and section 4 describes the sources of information. For reasons of time, the actual tools (questionnaires, interview and focus group guides) are not detailed here. However their substantive contents are obvious from the evaluation questions.

7. A tentative outline of the Evaluation Report is shown at the end as Annex 3.

2. Evaluation focus and approach

2.A Reconstructing the intervention logic

8. In designing the evaluation, one of the first steps is the reconstruction of the intervention logic in order to clarify the activities and their intended effects as well as the explicit or implicit assumptions made at the time of intervention design. As part of the project proposal, a logical framework (Logframe) was established back in 2010.
9. In theory the effects and impacts described in the Logframe should be the basis for evaluation because the targets are clearly defined as well as the means of verification of all of the indicators.
10. The 2010 logframe is a useful reference for evaluation even though some logframing principles seem to have been overlooked in the process. A first major weakness is the over-ambitious formulation of the project goal. Where a project usually contributes to an improved situation, this logframe sets outright that, as a result of the Project, the MoE “will plan and efficiently manage education”. This leaves out the many conducting factors that are needed to transform pure capacity into effective products and processes.
11. A second problem is the setting of too many outcomes and the absence, in the Project document, of an explicit “output” level between activities and outcomes. The various components should have been considered purely as groups of activities contributing to achieving a few outputs rather than as outcomes.
12. The delineation of the six components shows a number of inconsistencies and overlaps, particularly between Components 1, 2 and 3. Thus the “designing” of the training programme and the delivery of training appear to be part of both Components 1 and 2 (activities 1.2, 1.4 and 2.2 in the Project logframe). Another example: while Component 2 reads as “consolidation of planning capacity at central level and development of provincial planning officers’ capacities”, none of the listed expected outputs or inputs refers to provincial officers. These are fully considered under Component 3.
13. Nevertheless, the setting of targets and accompanying objectively verifiable indicators as well as the specified sources of verification are extremely useful for this exercise. The specific targets are set as follows and will serve as a basis for evaluation for the three components:
 - 10 trainers are operational
 - 40 central MOE planners able to apply basics of strategic and operational planning;
 - 200 provincial and district staff are able to apply basics of educational planning
 - 9 staff graduate from IIEP courses
 - 50-60 staff are trained in English and computer
 - Training programme with Afghan specific training materials and a training facility established
 - MOE guidelines for provincial planning used.
14. For the sake of this evaluation it is suggested that the hierarchy of objectives be as shown in the following diagram. This alignment will make the evaluation easier by clearly distinguishing different levels of achievement with different types of constraints that can be accounted for in case of partial success.



2.B Assessing project evaluability

15. From a number of considerations, one can confidently state that this project is fully evaluable. To begin with its daily implementation is followed and facilitated by the IIEP full-time Project Coordinator sitting in an office in the Ministry of Education. This proximity and availability make it possible to record all important decisions and events related to the project implementation. Combined with a very regular reporting system, the project management is in a position to provide all necessary data.
16. Secondly, while complex, the main focus of the intervention is in the area of educational planning, of which IIEP has utmost mastery with more than fifty years of experience. Mechanisms by which the stated effects are produced through the planned activities are well known.
17. There may be a worry with regard to impact given the short duration of the Project. Producing meaningful and demonstrated impact on raising capacity in educational planning requires a minimum length of time that is longer than the three-year duration of the Project. Such demonstrated capacity can only be seen many years afterwards. It will probably be possible to observe a number of positive changes towards capacity but not full-fledged impact. On the other hand all other criteria can be evaluated even with such a short intervention period.
18. Lastly the fact that activities involved both the central and decentralized levels allows for assessing effects on strategic national orientations as well as on local operational actions.

2.C Evaluation criteria

19. This evaluation uses the standard evaluation criteria that are internationally recommended for development assistance interventions. The evaluation TORs also refer to the same criteria, which are: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. It is customary to add another criterion – coherence – to determine the extent to which the Project agrees and is complementary to other policies of the MoE.

20. As the TORs accurately describe, the relevance criterion seeks to show the extent to which the approaches, strategies and interventions have been appropriate in addressing the educational planning needs of the Afghan MoE. This includes at least the following dimensions:
- ▶ The *capacity development approach* chosen by the Project: the focus on development of skills and support to processes alongside different categories of MoE staff instead of focusing on production of deliverables
 - ▶ The *combination of complementary skills development modalities*: training at central and subnational levels, training scholarships at IIEP in Paris, distance courses, generic skills training, coaching through technical assistance
 - ▶ *Institutional partnership* over a medium- to long-term period: continuous cooperation between a Ministry of Education and a specialized UNESCO institute instead of short-term contract-driven consultancies
 - ▶ *Combination of distance and permanent residential support*: the role of IIEP Paris staff and of the National Project Coordinator embedded at the MoE.
21. The effectiveness criterion seeks to show whether or not the Project's activities have been implemented. It also helps show to what extent the intended outputs, outcomes and goal have been achieved.
22. The efficiency criterion seeks to establish the extent to which the outputs and the desired effects have been achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.). In other words, considering the specificities of the Afghan context, would alternative strategies have allowed to obtain equal or better results with fewer resources?
23. The sustainability criterion seeks to establish the continuation of benefits after the intervention has stopped. To what extent has the Project contributed to institutionalized educational planning capacity in the Afghan education sector? How likely are the capacities developed through the Project to keep benefitting MoE in the coming years?
24. The impact criterion seeks to estimate the long-term effects produced by the Project. These may be positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended.
25. Finally the coherence criterion seeks to show to what extent the Project's activities and objectives are coherent and complementary with other MoE policies and other broader national policies to which it has linkages.

2.D Scope and constraints

26. As clearly stated in the TORs, it is important to stress that the focus of this evaluation is on the substantial components of the project. Thus Component 6, which deals with logistics and other support, will be left out. Similarly, the evaluation does not cover financial reviews of the Project as separate procedures are in place for that.
27. Due note must also be taken of the more difficult circumstances of the evaluation created by the ongoing election campaign, with accompanying security issues. As a way of mitigating some of these risks, an effort will be made to have the list of interlocutors finalized as early as possible in the process to allow flexibility.

2.E Quality assurance

28. Evaluation quality is achieved when, in the users' eyes, the conclusions of the evaluation are shown to arise from an impartial and rigorous work that meets professional standards. Quality assurance is, therefore, applied through:
 - clarity in the evaluation approach
 - transparency in the application of data gathering and processing tools
 - taking into account all points of view
 - cross checking interpretations so as to avoid bias
29. According to the TORs, the three main potential users of the evaluation results (MOE, IIEP and DANIDA) will keep control of the evaluation process without interfering in the actual analyses and findings. They will be consulted to approve the inception report that spells out the methodology to be followed and the tools to be used and to comment on the preliminary findings and conclusions before the final report is written. Any controversial or doubtful result will then be checked again and verified.
30. An additional way of maximizing quality is the extensive use of the triangulation principle in bringing together points of view on issues, coming from a diversity of stakeholder interests. In all this process however the principle of independence of the evaluation team will be safeguarded along the way.

3. Evaluation questions

31. An evaluation matrix listing the main issues relating to the different components of the project is shown in Annex 1. The following questions around the stated evaluation criteria are directly derived from that matrix.

3.A Relevance

32. What obstacles to the educational planning system were identified before the start of the Project (for example by the key external partners, by internal partners, by other government agencies, by MoE technicians, etc.) and to what extent are they reflected in the Project's objectives? What needs assessment activities were performed by the IIEP and MoE before initiating the Project?
33. To what extent do central, provincial and district education authorities value evidence-based plans? How many staff are, on average, assigned to planning tasks?

3.B Effectiveness

34. What is the number of trainers in educational planning that are operational and how is their quality judged (DoPE, NTP participants)? How many staff have graduated from each of the Project modalities (including study visits and distance training) and how are they distributed by divisions, provinces and districts? How is the quality of the graduates judged by the trainers and the MoE? What is the per centage of modules for which training materials have been developed and how is their quality judged (NTP participants, trainers, MoE)? What management modality has been applied to the NTP? Has this modality been effective?
35. Have the following strategic documents been issued (date): a research programme and research guidelines, a capacity development plan, guidelines for provincial and district level planning? To

what extent have they been implemented? What key planning documents have been produced by the MoE (including at provincial and district levels) before and after the start of the Project? What key review, monitoring and evaluation documents have been produced?

36. What evidence is there of changed opinion of MoE's partners about its planning performance? How credible are education plans with key managers within MoE and to what extent do they use them as key reference tools? Same question for provincial and district level managers. Within government and donors, how credible is the education plan and, for example, to what extent it is used as the basis for government and donor budget allocation to education?
37. What evidence is there that the main findings of the EJSRs have been taken into consideration in the development of later plans?

3.C Efficiency

38. Estimate the amount of staff time in man-months (national, international) to produce the following outputs: training programme document, training materials, simulation modeling and other technical inputs, formulation of NESP-3.
39. Similar question for sector reviews and other research activities
40. Provide a detailed unit cost estimate for the NTP sessions, distributed by main items (salaries, DSA, transport, overhead, materials, etc.) and show changes over time. Same for research outputs if applicable.
41. Analyze the changes between EJSR-1 and 2 in terms of cost and funding.

3.D Sustainability

42. What factors have facilitated, assisted or influenced in developing the system to be more autonomous and independent in carrying capacity building activities more sustainably in MOE?
43. What is the civil servant status of the trainers and TAs and how does it compare with officials of a similar level? What are the attrition rates in this group, their evolution and main reasons?
44. What are the career implications of taking part and graduating from the national training programme? What value is attached to education research output in a career?
45. Analyze the tasks carried out by the graduates from NTP and other training modalities in the MoE, PEDs and DEOs, and the extent to which they make use of the skills acquired in education planning and management. What role is given to central level specialists towards provincial and district planners?
46. Analyze the DoPE budget allocation and capacity to cover NTP costs internally: estimate the additional budget needed and its acceptability with MoE and Finance Ministry.

3.E Impact

47. Analyze possible effects of the Project on the following: school location determination, teacher deployment, relationships between education authorities and community, increase in aid volumes to education, quality of dialogue with internal and external partners, staffing structures at central and provincial levels.
48. What changes have been observed in the activities carried out by DEO and PED staff members (specifically NTP participants) compared to pre-project phase? To what extent has the project enabled the decentralization capacity of planning the implementation of the MoE strategies and also the monitoring skills of the NTP participants?

3.F Coherence

49. To what extent is the Project in harmony with other capacity development interventions, possibly in education planning, at MoE, DANIDA and other donors' programs?

4. Sources of information for the evaluation

50. In order to gather answers to the above evaluation questions, four sources will be used: (i) making use of existing documentary sources, (ii) conducting interviews with relevant institutional actors, (iii) holding focus group discussions with groups of actors with stakes in the project, and (iv) getting questionnaires filled for factual information. The nature of the information being sought and the status of the informants are taken into account to determine which method suits which interlocutor.

4.A Making use of existing documentary sources

51. Lots of data are kept with the National Project Coordinator, in the DoPE and within its units as well as IIEP for management purposes. They will be properly analyzed and used in the report. Other relevant information such as published education and related reports outside MoE will be sought through the Coordinator.

4.B Interviews with institutional actors

52. It is proposed to hold interviews with the following officials:
 - IIEP national coordinator
 - Deputy Minister for Administration and Finance
 - General Director, Planning and Evaluation
 - Senior Manager of Research and Evaluation
 - General Director, HRD
 - General Director Basic education
 - General Director Secondary Education
 - Senior Manager TVET Planning and Evaluation (OR Deputy Minister)
 - Literacy Manager for Plan and Reporting (OR Deputy Minister)
 - Representative of Ministry of Finance and/or Planning
 - Deputy Minister of Admin and Finance

- DANIDA Education officer
- UNESCO education programme officer

4.C Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries

53. Focus group discussions are proposed for the following categories:

- ▶ Directors Strategic Planning, Programme and project coordination, and EMIS
- ▶ Managers Planning and reporting, and Administration
- ▶ NTP trainers
- ▶ TAs
- ▶ Central level planners/former IIEP trainees (Advanced Training Programme, Short Courses Programme, Distance courses)
- ▶ a sample of PED participants and officials
- ▶ a sample of DEO participants
- ▶ major donors to education (education or social programme specialists)

4.D Questionnaires for factual information

54. The following officials and participants will be asked to fill a questionnaire at the beginning of the mission. The objective is to have a maximum of factual data as early as possible prior to interviews and focus group discussions. The latter will aim at identifying significant factors and elements to explain/understand identified successes or less successful situations.

- DG DoPE
- all TAs
- all NTP trainers
- a sample of NTP provincial and District participants

55. The wording of the questionnaires (which should be rather brief), will be extracted from the evaluation question above (paragraphs 31 to 49).

5. Conclusions and recommendations

56. The findings from the above analyses will result in a set of preliminary conclusions and recommendations. It is proposed to submit these preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to a reference group of DoPE, IIEP (either through direct participation via video conference, or represented by the Coordinator) and DANIDA during the final days of the mission.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Annex 2: A tentative outline of the Evaluation Report

Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Project as a whole
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Was a needs assessment conducted for the central level? -Was a needs assessment conducted for provincial and district levels? -Weaknesses spotted by partners -NTP participants' opinion about relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Selection procedures; -Number of candidates compared to number of places; -Candidates' education level -Assessment of district/provincial plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What are the felt needs at provincial and district levels -Size of planning staff at provincial and district levels -What planning is done at provincial and district levels and main results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Felt needs by DoPE in technical expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what extent do policy makers use research results in general? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What was the key donors to education's opinion about planning needs?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has a document been produced to frame the training programme? -If yes, show strengths and list modalities; -List all modules with respective durations; -List training materials for each module; -Quality of training materials assessed by trainers and participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of operational trainers -Length of experience as trainer -Number of modules taught; -Continued connection with actual planning activity; -Number of people trained by modality -Number graduates from ATP, SCP, VTP, Study visits -Number trained in English and computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -description of planning staff in provincial and district offices; -has this changed after the training? -Guidelines for provincial and district level planning: dates of issue, relevance and quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- What inputs from DoPE have been made into the FTI Interim plan? -Has a capacity development plan been issued (date, strengths, weaknesses)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has a research programme been issued (date)? -List of studies completed: date, quality, relevance; -How extensive was the dissemination? -Quality assurance mechanisms in place -Connection with research centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What is the donors' opinion about the strength of the planning process? -What is the quality of dialogue between donors and MoE? -Frequencies of education joint reviews -Staffing of DoPE per unit/service -Assignments of staff before and after training; -main outputs since graduation; -level of international inputs for NESP3

Evaluation criteria	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Project as a whole
						<p>compared to NESP 1 and 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of provincial plans produced; -Number of monitoring and assessment reports of provincial plans; -How credible is the plan with key education managers? -How is the budget external and internal allocation done compared to the plan? <p>How much of a reference is the plan with key managers?</p>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --description of the development process toward the training programme definition ; -time started and finished; -number of man-months of national and international staff; -number of man-months for materials development 	-Detailed global and unit cost analysis per session: by salaries, DSA, facility, materials, services, etc.	-Cost of DSA and transport per person	-Number of man-months for simulation and other technical inputs	-Cost per study	-Number of man-months of international inputs into NESP-3
Sustainability	-Is the new status of trainers recognized and stable?	-Budget analysis of DoPE;	-Has an estimate of total staffing needs been made?	-Number of trainers in all these technical issues	-How beneficial are the research activities	-Institutionalization of planning integration

Evaluation criteria	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5	Project as a whole
	-What are the career implications for graduates?	-Budgetary capacity of DoPE to sustain the programme -Attrition rates	What transportation facilities are available for local planners to relate with communities, -Status of local plans in districts		valued in the researchers' career?	
Impact	-Is the Project having an impact on University Education faculty courses? -Is there a demand for training from local levels?	-Any changes in work place relations between graduates and others? -Any changes in community involvement? -Any impact on increasing resource allocation?	-Impact on school location -Impact on teacher allocation with province Impact on relationship with communities	-Quality of dialogue with internal and external partners	-What impact of findings on the education system?	-Is the plan a recognized reference instrument? -Is a better plan encouraging additional aid volumes to education?
Coherence	-With regulations in TVET? -With DANIDA's and other partners' interventions	-Coherence with civil servant regulations			-Publications channels available?	-Coherence with the overall budgetary discipline;

Annex 2: Tentative outline of the Evaluation Report

Table of content

Acronyms

Executive summary

1. Background

1.A Context

1.B Description of the Project

1.C Summary of the Inception Report

2. Main findings

2.A Project design and redesign: relevance and coherence

2.B Outputs and implementation processes: effectiveness and efficiency

2.C Impact and features of sustainability

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.A Overall assessment

3.B Key lessons learned

3.C Recommendations

Annexes:

- TOR
- Bibliography
- List of persons met
- Questionnaires used for information gathering