

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECONDARY EDUCATION MODERNIZATION PROJECT

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION STUDY

1. The Project

Financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Nordic Development Fund (NDF) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL), the Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP, the Project) is being implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) over a five and half (5.5) year period during 2001 – 2006. Total estimated cost of the Project is US\$ 76 million. Of this, US\$ 50 million has provided by ADB, US\$ 7 million by NDF, US\$ 17 million by GOSL and US\$ 2 million by the School Development Societies (SDSs).

The overall objective of the Project is to assist the Government to modernize the secondary school system to prepare the young to compete in the modern global economy. Specially, the Project aims at improving the quality of secondary school education to raise the pass rate in the national examination. The components and sub-components of the Project are as given in the table below. The Project is being implemented in all eight (8) provinces of the country.

Component	Sub-components
(i) modernize secondary schools by introducing modern teaching, learning, and evaluation methods to improve quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- strengthening of curriculum subjects,- computer learning centres,
(ii) broaden educational opportunities for disadvantaged students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- schools upgrading to full curriculum schools,- stipends for disadvantaged students,- career guidance for educational opportunities,- public private partnerships and secondary schools financing,
(iii) improve the delivery of education services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- capacity building of MOE,- capacity building of National Evaluation & Testing Services (NETS),- capacity building of National Institute of Education (NIE).

As a follow-up to the Project, a Secondary Education Modernization Project II (SEMP II) has been approved in October 2004 and was declared effective on 19 May 2005.

Now that the ADB and NDF funding for the Project is expected to come to an end and the loan closing date is fixed as 30 June 2006, it has been decided to undertake a well designed comprehensive evaluation of the impacts of the interventions of the Project.

2. Objectives of the Impact Evaluation Study

The objectives of the study are five fold as follows:

- (i) Assess the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of each project component as well as the Project as a whole.
- (ii) Evaluate the strategy and methodology adopted by the Project in achieving the objectives.
- (iii) Assess the performance of (a) the implementing partners in the implementation of the respective project component/activity and (b) the schools in the use of goods and services.
- (iv) Analyse the anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of the Project both positively and negatively impacting the lives of the target groups.
- (v) Enlist the lessons learned and best practices developed by the Project, which could contribute to policy development and future development of the secondary education.

3. Impact Evaluation Framework

The impact evaluation study will have to cover three broad areas:

- (a) study of the impacts of the Project interventions on the participating students, teachers, principals and schools. It would also cover overarching factors of sustainability, innovation and replicability;
- (b) assessment of the performance of the Project covering relevance of the objectives, efficiency and effectiveness;
- (c) evaluate the performance of the partners including ADB, MOE, NETS, NIE, Provincial Education Departments, SDSs, private computer training institutes, and Banks (engaged in disposing of stipends).

In developing the study methodology, an integrated approach of combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods has to be used because it will provide the quantifiable impacts of the Project as well as explanations of the processes and interventions that yielded these outcomes. To ensure methodological rigor, the impact evaluation must estimate the counterfactual, that is, what would have happened had the Project never taken place.

3.1 Impacts on the students, teachers, principals and schools

Impacts are positive or negative longer-term or ultimate results produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended – in contrast to outputs and outcomes, which reflect more immediate results from the intervention.

A basic requirement in assessing the impacts on students, teachers, principals and schools is the assessment of the manner in which they have or have not changed and the extent that the Project was responsible. The indicators to be considered are mostly available in the project documents. The impact of the stipend program was recently evaluated using a questionnaire survey covering both student & principals. The evaluation report of that study is available for use during this study.

3.2 Performance of the Project

(i) Relevance of Objectives

The extent to which the project objectives are consistent with the MOE policies on secondary education needs to be assessed. The relevance factor determines whether the Project was

worth doing. It assesses whether project objectives were focused on the right priorities when designed, and if they were adjusted to suit changing circumstances during implementation.

(ii) Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the planned outputs, expected effects (immediate objectives) and intended impacts (development objectives) are being or have been produced or achieved.

(iii) Efficiency

Efficiency is the extent to which the Project achieved, or is expected to achieve, benefits commensurate with inputs, based on economic and financial analysis or unit costs compared with alternative options and good practices.

Conventional project economic indicator – economic rate of return (ERR) – presents well recognized tests of efficient resource use. Sometimes, qualitative judgements by the evaluators are necessary to assess efficiency, but always relying on an appreciation of the underlying concepts of cost/benefit analysis, together with good practice in similar situations and any other suitable indicators.

Qualitative assessments of efficiency (in the absence of ERR) should take into account, inter alia, the following factors: (a) actual costs compared with appraisal estimates and any revisions; (b) implementation delays and any redesign that may have increased costs; (c) the level of benefits and their growth curves compared with expectations (if feasible); (d) utilization rates for project facilities and services; (e) whether services and facilities meet good practice standards; and (f) whether the benefits stream appears adequate compared with the costs.

(iv) Impacts & Sustainability of the Project

- a. Evaluation of the Impacts (or contribution) to the government policy reform in education
- b. Sustainability of the Project

3.3 Performance of the Partners

(i) Government and MOE Performance

The items to be assessed include the following:

- the extent of government's compliance with loan covenants and major agreements;
- the extent to which the government and its implementing agencies facilitated project implementation and demonstrated commitment to the Project as indicated, by the factors mentioned below:
 - appointment of key staff,
 - adequacy and timeliness of counterpart funding,
 - administrative procedures,
 - adequate use of technical assistance,
 - extent of cost increases and implementation delays,
 - arrangements/resources provided to ensure sustainability.

(ii) Performance of Divisions/Units within MOE

The extent to which the Divisions/Units within MOE (such as the Career Guidance & Counseling Division) facilitated or hampered project implementation and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(iii) NETS Performance

The extent to which the NETS facilitated or hampered project implementation and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(iv) NIE Performance

The extent to which the NIE facilitated or hampered project implementation and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(v) Performance of the Provincial Education Departments

The extent to which the Provincial Education Departments facilitated or hampered project implementation and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(vi) Performance of the School Development Societies

The extent to which the SDSs facilitated or hampered project implementation and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(vii) Performance of the Private Computer Training Institutes

The extent to which the Private Computer Training Institutes facilitated or hampered the training of teachers in computer usage and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(viii) Performance of the Banks (engaged in disposing of stipends)

The extent to which the Banks (engaged in disposing of stipends) facilitated or hampered the disposing of stipends and contributed to the achievement of project objectives and likely impact will have to be assessed.

(ix) Performance of the Consultants

The extent to which the services provided by the international and domestic consultants mobilized benefited the Project implementation and realization of its objectives.

(x) ADB Performance

The extent to which services provided by the ADB ensured a sound project design; facilitated stakeholder participation; resulted in a realistic proposal with an appropriate strategy and component mix; supported implementation effectively; ensured that arrangements were adequate for the operation phase of the Project, and provided for evaluation, learning partnerships and adoption of lessons form part of ADB's performance which have to be analyzed.

The remaining part of ADB's performance which has to be analyzed comprises the following items:

- a. Adequacy of supervision processes and supervision reporting quality;
- b. Attention to fiduciary aspects: extent to which, and timeliness of which, ADB's staff ensured that government complied with agreement/covenants, and followed financial management arrangement;
- c. Attention to M&E aspects;
- d. Timely identification/assessment of implementation problems and appropriateness of support given to address them; and
- e. Quality of advice, and appropriateness of ADB follow-up, including reorientation of the Project when needed.

4. Expected Outputs

After three (3) weeks from the commencement of the assignment, the Study Team should present, at a planning seminar organized by the PMO, the refined methodology which include the matrix of analysis to firm up the impact points, indicators for each impact point, methodology for measuring the indicators, sources of data (including types, sizes and geographical coverage of samples to be surveyed) and data collection instruments (questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, check-lists and etc.).

At the end of the study period, the draft final report should be presented at a seminar organized by the PMO. The final study report should be presented incorporating the feedback received at the seminar and within two weeks from the date of the seminar.

The final report should be a well documented comprehensive Project Impact Evaluation Study Report which addresses the objectives listed under section 2 above and in a format acceptable to the MOE and the ADB.

5. Logistical Arrangements

It is envisaged that the successful completion of this study will rely heavily upon the mobilization of a strong team of specialists. The study team should consist of four (4) specialists well competent in the fields of project evaluation, educational assessment, educational management, and economics of education. One of the team members will be assigned as Team Leader and should possess strong analytical abilities and excellent writing and presentation skills.

The duration of the study is four (4) months from October 2005 to January 2006.