

1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 09/27/2013	
Country:	Sierra Leone		
Project ID:	P115782	Appraisal	Actual
Project Name:	Sierra Leone Efa Fti Program	Project Costs (US\$M):	13.90 11.69
L/C Number:		Loan/Credit (US\$M):	13.90 11.69
Sector Board :	Education	Cofinancing (US\$M):	
Cofinanciers :		Board Approval Date :	09/02/2008
		Closing Date :	06/30/2010 09/30/2012
Sector(s):	Primary education (50%); Public administration- Education (25%); Secondary education (25%)		
Theme(s):	Education for all (100% - P)		
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	ICR Review Coordinator :	Group :
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2. Project Objectives and Components:

a. Objectives:

According to the Catalytic Fund project document (p. iv), the development objectives of the project were "to expand access to and improve the quality of basic education in Sierra Leone ." The Grant Agreement dated September 11, 2008 noted the same objectives .

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Components:

The project was composed of three components :

- Expand Access to Basic Education (appraisal, US\$ 5.90 million, final component cost not reported in ICR) was to carry out activities to increase enrollment through construction, rehabilitation, and furnishing of basic school infrastructure, and to conduct a study of out-of school children.
- Improve Quality of Teaching and Increase Access to Learning Materials (appraisal US\$ 7.85 million, final component cost not reported in ICR) was to provide teacher in-service training for 1,000 primary and 260 junior secondary teachers and distance education training for 1000 teachers each year. It was also to distribute 850,000 sets of primary teaching and learning materials and 3,000 sets of adult teaching and learning materials to students.
- Enhance Coordination and Management of the Education Sector (appraisal, US\$ 1.76 million, final component cost not reported in ICR) was to institutionalize review of education sector performance through an annual education sector performance review, and implement and support a teacher payroll and salary verification exercise.

During project restructuring, some activities were dropped (classroom construction) and others were added (de-worming program for school-age children, support for a girls' incentive program, procurement and

distribution of writing supplies and Braille textbooks, development of a learning assessment framework, training on test development in mathematics and language, review and revision of curricula, printing of revised curricula, development of a curriculum framework, and training of 700 school management committees). The restructuring shifted the project away from school construction to working on incremental improvements in service delivery .

d. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates:

Project Costs : Project costs were 84% of appraised costs due to positive exchange rate fluctuations and initially slow implementation (ICR, p. 17). The ICR does not provide actual costs by component, and therefore it is not possible to track planned versus actual costs by activity .

Financing : The project was funded entirely by a grant from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund.

Borrower Contribution : None were made, nor were they anticipated .

Dates: There were two level-one restructurings . On June 29, 2010, because of the delays in effectiveness and capacity constraints, the closing date of the project was extended from June 30, 2010 to December 31, 2011 to allow the government time to complete school construction, training, and distribution of teaching and learning materials. On December 29, 2011, the project was extended from December 31, 2011 to September 30, 2012. The second restructuring was done to modify the indicators, add a disbursement category and reallocate money to support the girls' incentive program, reduce the number of civil works, and add additional capacity building support for the Ministry . The project closed two years and three months later than initially planned .

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design:

a. Relevance of Objectives:

Relevance of Objectives : High

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005-2007) at appraisal focused on human development, since it acknowledged that investment in human resources was needed to reduce poverty and attain the Millennium Development Goals. The country's current Education Sector Plan (2007-2015) emphasizes primary education and skills training to provide the foundation for the achievement of universal basic education and expansion of post-basic secondary education . Given the poor situation of the country's education infrastructure after a protracted civil war (1991-2002), which resulted in shortages of teaching materials, displacement of teachers, poor learning outcomes, weak institutional capacity to manage the system, and poor learning outcomes, the objectives are highly relevant to the country's needs and policies . The objectives are highly relevant to the Bank's current Country Assistance Strategy (FY10-FY13), which emphasizes the need to rebuild the education system and improve the quality of education .

b. Relevance of Design:

Relevance of Design : Modest

At the time of preparation, the system was showing signs that primary enrollment was increasing, as well as a significant number of overage children and youth enrolling in school . Yet there were still a significant number (approximately 25-30%) of children who were still not in school, particularly girls in the rural and Northern regions.

Design included activities to provide increased access and quality, as well as activities to enhance the coordination and management of the sector . These were aligned with the objectives of the project . However, large-scale construction of classrooms was not a wise choice, given capacity constraints combined with the short duration of the project (3 years). The construction activities were responsible for many of the observed implementation problems (ICR, p. 25). Later in the project, there was more emphasis given to education for girls, which was important considering the under-representation of girls in secondary education and lower literacy rate among females.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy):

During the course of this project, other donors have supported basic education in Sierra Leone outside this

EFA-FTI CF grant (SIDA: teacher training; UNICEF: school census and awareness campaigns). Many of these parallel activities have most likely impacted the outcomes described here, but the extent of the spill-over impact on EFA-FTI-financed activities cannot be determined.

Improve quality of basic education : Substantial
Outputs related to learning conditions:

1.8 million primary school-aged children in 12 districts received de-worming treatment. An independent monitoring of the de-worming activities reported that this achieved 87% coverage of all primary school age children, which is even higher than the World Health Organization target of 80%. To complement the treatment, health education related to personal and community hygiene and water and sanitation was provided to communities and teachers (ICR, p. 40).

1.7 million supplementary readers for primary schools were delivered to schools and validated by third parties to be in use by teachers and children. The project also purchased 850,000 sets of pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, and exercise books. These were divided equally among the Local Councils, despite differences in enrollment or population density, due to lack of data (or trust in available data) to use as the basis for decisions (ICR, p.42).

The project also purchased sets of braille books for primary and junior secondary school (JSS) students, which were distributed to the six schools for the blind (162 primary sets, 350 primary school supplementary readers, and 100 JSS sets).

School-based management training was provided to 7,000 members of School Management Committees in 14 educational districts (ICR, p. 52). The training was aimed at improving the governance and managerial skills of the committees to ensure their functioning.

Outputs related to teaching:

1,000 primary school teachers received in-service training, which met the target (1,000 teachers). 260 junior secondary school teachers received in-service training, which met the target (260). Training was related to teaching methodology and classroom management.

1,000 untrained teachers participated in a 1-year distance teacher education program, which provided certification to teach grades 1-3. There was an evaluation of the distance training, which showed that during classroom observation, teachers performed at a higher level and the training had a positive impact on performance (ICR, p. 16 and 21); however, teachers did not perform well on an examination (ICR, p. 51). The evaluation found that the program was an appropriate strategy to improve the supply of teachers and recommended that the program should be adopted as a normal mode of training for primary school teachers in rural areas.

A Learning Assessment System Framework was developed, which met the target. Assessment instruments were developed and piloted, and training of 50 participants on test item writing was done. A question bank was established for use in the upcoming national assessment (ICR, p. 52). The framework will be further developed in the follow-up project.

A new Junior Secondary School curriculum was revised.

Other outputs:

3 Education Sector Performance Reviews were held, which met the target.

Outcomes:

The percentage of pupils who passed the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) increased from 72% in 2007 to 75% in 2012, which met the target (72%). The ICR (p. iii) points out that this was achieved while enrollments were expanding with students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The ICR does not provide information about the rigor of the NPSE or define passing.

Expand access to basic education : Modest. Given that enrollment was growing before the project period, and this project implemented fewer interventions than anticipated that would be expected to increase new enrollments (with the changed emphasis at restructuring away from classroom construction), the extent to which the outcomes related to access/enrollment reported in the ICR can be attributed to the project is unclear.

Outputs:

255 primary classrooms were built or renovated, which missed the target of 285 classrooms. The classrooms

were done in each of the 19 Local Councils. 3 new schools were constructed (two 6-classroom primary schools and one 3 classroom junior secondary school, each including an office, storage, water well and VIP latrines). Furniture and learning materials were also supplied . A total of 10,260 desks and chairs for primary students and 8,075 desks for JSS students were provided, along with 684 primary school teachers' desks and chairs and 171 desks/chairs for JSS teachers. 114 sets of office furniture and 114 cupboards for primary schools, as well as 57 sets of office furniture for JSS and 57 cupboards, were provided . Distribution decisions were made by local councils based on need . External validation showed that the furniture was delivered to schools .

An operational manual was developed to guide the girls Junior Secondary School incentive program to make the program more transparent. To make the program more efficient and reliable, the project supported collection and validation of information on girls enrollment. One year of funding for the girls JSS incentive program was provided. Subsidies offset the cost of tuition, fees for three terms in grade 7, two out three terms in grade 8, and one out of three terms in grade 9. This program was designed to increase the access and retention of girls in JSS, since the gender gap is sizable between boys and girls in grade 9 (ICR, p. 39). The subsidy was US\$ 14 per girl. Funds were paid directly to schools.

Outcomes:

The primary school completion rate increased from 61.8% in 2008 to 76% in 2011, which exceeded the target of 70%. This rate was calculated from the 2010/2011 School Census Report. This indicator replaced the gross enrollment rate and the number of pupils enrolled, since it was later found that the baseline figures were inaccurate and inflated. Moreover, population data were unreliable. Household survey data reveal that primary enrollment was growing before the project began (a Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire showed 956,000 in 2007, and a Demographic and Health Survey showed 980,000 in 2008). Since the figures from these surveys are not comparable with the School Census data, which showed that 1,194,503 children were enrolled in 2011, it is not possible to calculate the change in the number of pupils enrolled during the project period . The ICR (p. 21) points out that the changes in completion were attained in a short period of time .

The percentage of girls enrolled in junior secondary school increased from 41% in 2008 to 45% in 2011, which met the target of 44%. The ICR (p. iii) indicates that the project's incentive program encouraged parents to send girls to school, as well as keep them enrolled . The project validated the number of girls in school and made a one-time transfer to the Ministry to provide support for one academic year . The ICR (pp. 39-40) notes that because past data are unreliable, it is difficult to assess the increase in enrollment as a result of the subsidies .

5. Efficiency:

The inputs that were funded by the project (deworming, teaching and learning materials, JSS incentives) are known for their positive impact on learning and rate of return . The ICR provides data/analysis to show their value for money. The cost to bring one additional girl into JSS for one year was estimated to be US\$ 179, based on the assumption that the subsidy program resulted in a two percentage -point increase in girls JSS enrollment (ICR, p. 40). While this calculation is not precise, it conveys the cost -effectiveness of the intervention. The unit cost of deworming per child was US\$0.25 per year (or US\$0.50 for two years). The impact of this type of treatment has been found to positively increase schooling (Miguel & Kremer) by 0.15 years per pupil treated. It is not clear that this study can be generalized, but the ICR uses this rate to calculate US\$ 3.50 as the cost to add an additional school year for one child receiving the deworming treatment for two years .

The unit cost for construction of primary and JSS schools falls close to unit costs of comparable projects in and outside Sierra Leone. For example, when comparing similar school designs and sizes, the primary schools constructed by the project cost an average of US\$ 11,425, while an average of comparator costs from UNICEF in Sierra Leone was US\$10,144. The average cost per square meter for project schools was US\$ 183. Schools built in Sub-Saharan Africa range from US\$110 (community managed), US\$175 (local government managed), and US\$200 (across all projects), suggesting that this project's costs were within a reasonable range . The ICR does note there were issues with quality in some schools .

Unit costs for furniture for this project (US\$930) were below average unit costs from 10 Sub-Saharan African countries (US\$1,605).

The unit cost for distance teacher training (one-year) was US\$462 per teacher.

This grant did not replace government spending on education (ICR, p. 38).

The ICR reports other positive spillover effects from the use of national companies and local craftsmen (for civil works and furniture), which provided employment and income opportunities in the country .

Efficiency is rated **substantial** .

a. If available, enter the **Economic Rate of Return (ERR)/Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation** :

	Rate Available?	Point Value	Coverage/Scope*
Appraisal	No		
ICR estimate	No		

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome:

Relevance of objective was high, while design was modest . There was substantial attainment of one objective , while the other is rated modest. Efficiency is rated substantial because of documented cost efficiencies . After restructuring, numerous implementation difficulties were overcome and a number of improvements in the education sector were realized . A Learning Assessment System Framework was developed and piloted . Learning conditions improved with the de-worming of 1.8 million children, delivery of 1.7 million textbooks, and training of 1,000 teachers. However, given that enrollment was growing before the project period, and this project implemented fewer interventions than anticipated that would be expected to increase new enrollments (with the changed emphasis at restructuring away from classroom construction), the extent to which the outcomes related to access/enrollment reported in the ICR can be attributed to the project is unclear .

a. **Outcome Rating** : Moderately Satisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating:

Mainstreaming project implementation within the Ministry of Education provided the Ministry with experience with Bank projects and helped build personnel capacity . The Bank is working with the government to prepare a new Global Partnership for Education operation, which is expected to be implemented in the next fiscal year . This follow-up project will focus on improving the quality of basic education services and will sustain many of the activities begun under this project such as learning assessment, curriculum reform, and capacity building . The girls incentive program has become more transparent, rectifying shortcomings in data collection and disbursements. Capacity limitations continue to remain with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Local Councils. While the Ministry continues to hire personnel, there are a large number of vacancies that will take several years to fill, impacting the Ministry's ability to monitor delivery in the education system . Political stability and commitment also pose high risks to the development outcome, given the post -conflict situation in the country.

a. **Risk to Development Outcome Rating** : High

8. Assessment of Bank Performance:

a. Quality at entry:

The Bank team and development partners began project preparation after the EFA -FTI Catalytic Fund approved the grant for US\$13.9 million, based on the Education Sector Plan that was developed . Preparation followed EFA-FTI guidelines. The development partners were active and involved in preparation (discussing a pooled funding mechanism, establishing a Coordination Committee, and signing a memorandum of understanding). The Bank team included technical experts related to the project . Preparation was informed by the Bank's experience implementing emergency projects to rehabilitate basic education. The project was reviewed by peer reviewers, which was the established process for quality review at the time.

Implementation was mainstreamed through the Ministry, rather than through an implementation unit, which was a way of supporting Ministry capacity . This posed risks, however, since the Ministry had limited experience managing Bank projects (ICR, p. 54) and was not fully staffed . Given the high level of risk, which was underestimated at preparation, parallel preparation should have been done . At minimum, all key

members of the Ministry of Education's implementation team should have been identified and trained before execution of the project.

The project was designed to be part of an education sector support fund (pooled fund). It was a collective decision by the development partners to design and utilize a pooled fund . Only one disbursement category was developed for the project, which provided flexibility for the project . However, the Bank team did not adequately coach the Ministry regarding the benefits of this flexibility . Preparation identified capacity weaknesses, but it is not clear what mitigation plan was developed . There was insufficient planning for decentralization to the Ministry's District Education Offices and the Local Councils .

The ICR points out several additional weaknesses in preparation . Given the short time frame of FTI-funded projects, it was unrealistic to expect school construction, particularly given capacity constraints and unclear lines of responsibility among decentralized units . The mitigation measures and activities to ameliorate capacity constraints should have included ongoing technical support . The Bank did not plan for sufficient in-country support for project implementation, given low capacity and the country's post -conflict status . In particular, it should have been realized that the Local Councils had limited capacity, which would negatively impact construction .

Quality-at-Entry Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision:

During the initial stage of implementation, the Bank did not provide sufficient in -country support and technical guidance related to Bank process and procedures . However, after a new Task Team Leader (TTL) took over in December 2010, support improved. The new TTL made frequent missions, eleven mission between December 2010 and project closing. In 2011 the Bank placed an education specialist in the country office to provide more ongoing support to the implementation team . Supervision was active and responsive . For example, critical issues were speedily addressed, including very fast issuing of no -objection letters (ICR, p. 56). The Bank team undertook two restructurings to extend the project and refocus activities on quality and system-building, which helped improve implementation . Factors that negatively impacted project performance were identified and strategies were developed through restructuring to address them . The Bank team worked to get the Education Sector Program Secretariat fully staffed, which greatly improved implementation. As the Bank team realized the unreliability of the baseline data, appropriate changes were made to the Results Framework and indicators . The Bank team used project ratings to provide signals to the government and implementing team about deficiencies in performance . While support for the pooled fund among development partners diminished during the project, with most implementing their own programs, the Bank used the pooled fund account to simplify financial arrangements for the JSS girls' incentive program, with funds directly transferred to schools . The Bank team used the project as a coordinating mechanism for regular meetings with development partners, non -governmental organizations, and the Government .

Quality of Supervision Rating : Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating : Moderately Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance:

a. Government Performance:

The Government exhibited strong commitment to the education sector and to this project . It participated in the EFA-FTI Catalytic Fund Strategy Committee in Bonn, Germany in 2007. When EFA-FTI modified its guidelines, the Government engaged with the EFA-FTI Secretariat to request permission to follow the old procedures at the time of preparation (ICR, p.54). When this permission was not granted, the Government accommodated the new procedures, but this caused delays in signing and effectiveness of the grant . Parliament ratified the grant within an appropriate time period . The first withdrawal application was not processed until June 2009, which reduced the implementation period to only one year and a half .

When all of the classrooms were not completed by the closing of this project, the Minister of Finance gave a

letter to the Bank guaranteeing the completion of the remaining classrooms, as well as allocation of resources to the Ministry for this purpose . The Minister of Finance also provided assurance to the Bank team that issues regarding payment to contractors for incomplete work and non -performing contracts would be resolved by March 31, 2013.

Government Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance:

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was responsible for overall implementation and project management, while local councils had responsibility for the procurement and supervision related to school construction and school furniture . A project coordinator was put into the Education Sector Plan Secretariat within the Ministry. During the initial implementation, the team to manage and oversee the project within the Ministry was too small (two people). As a result, they could not fulfill all the required duties . There were numerous vacancies in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and implementation team during the course of the project, but by 2011 the Education Sector Program Secretariat was fully financed and contained a full team to address management, monitoring and evaluation, and financial and procurement staffing. Lack of staffing and understanding of Bank procedures contributed to the initial slow implementation. However, once the Secretariat understood all processes and procedures, implementation improved, as evidenced by the completed disbursements and the fact that nearly all the planned project activities were completed.

By December 2009 capacity weaknesses in the Ministry and local councils were evident in relation to civil works. Authority and accountability were not clarified between Ministry District Education Offices and local councils. There was a long delay before the second installment of contracts for the civil works was released . Delays were encountered because staff were not knowledgeable or experienced with Bank procurement and financial management procedures . These issues remained throughout the project and were not able to be resolved.

Staff in the implementing team did not understand the design flexibility that was available due to there being only one disbursement category and so did not capitalize on it, since they were not fully briefed by the Bank . Restructuring resulted in adjustments that simplified implementation processes and reduced or eliminated delays.

Regular implementation status reports were provided by the Ministry . There was compliance with financial reporting, but there were delays (see Section 11b). The Education Sector Committee met regularly to discuss project implementation . M&E evaluation data were collected and monitored regularly .

Implementing Agency Performance Rating :

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Borrower Performance Rating :

Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization:

a. M&E Design:

The Results Framework used Education Sector Plan indicators, which were appropriate to measure achievement of the objectives . The target for the percentage of children who passed the national examination remained the same as baseline; however, given the context, it was not reasonable to anticipate much change . Financial resources were devoted to a Education Management Information System for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology .

b. M&E Implementation:

When the unreliability of population estimates and the baseline school survey was realized (before 2010), the indicator related to gross primary enrollment was replaced with another one, primary school completion rate, which was an appropriate choice to measure access and student flow . Other indicators were also dropped or

revised, as the project restructuring changed some of the activities . The project financed school census data collection (along with UNICEF) and analysis for the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school years, which were the first school censuses done since 2005 (end of the civil conflict). An Education Management Information System was successfully implemented . Training was provided for staff in the Ministry related to data entry and analysis . M&E evaluation data were collected and monitored regularly . The project undertook several validation exercises to ensure learning materials and furniture reached schools and were in use, and verified the enrollment of girls in junior secondary schools . An independent engineering assessment of the civil works was carried out .

Computer training for professional and administrative staff of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was provided as part of capacity building, since there was a need for improving computer literacy . After the training, computer use increased, including email .

c. M&E Utilization:

Data were used in annual sector performance reviews . The School Census Report established an accurate baseline for education statistics, which will inform future discussion . Analysis is currently being undertaken in relation to the 2011/2012 school census, after data consistency checks were conducted (ICR, p. 53). The information from the validation exercises was discussed and used to monitor the implementation of these activities.

M&E Quality Rating : Modest

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards:

The project was classified Category B for Environmental Assessment because of the school construction . An Integrated Safeguard Data Sheet and Environmental and Social Management Framework were prepared and disclosed in Sierra Leone and archived on the Bank system . The environmental audit showed compliance with environmental safeguards.

b. Fiduciary Compliance:

While fiduciary management was deemed satisfactory, systems were weak . Financial management responsibility was held by the Finance Officer Consultant in the Secretariat in the Ministry . The project's financial management arrangements met minimum requirements in terms of internal controls, staffing, and report compliance (interim and audit reports). During the early part of the project, there was a lack of financial management capacity, and monitoring reports were delayed, including Interim Financial Reports . After implementation bottlenecks were removed, disbursements improved from 22% in June 2010 to 64% by December 2011. Annual audits were submitted . Project ratings for financial management were initially moderately unsatisfactory but were elevated to moderately satisfactory at the end of the project . There were no documented deviations or waivers from the Bank's fiduciary policies and procedures throughout the project, except for the waiver for the first year's audit . Reports were unqualified. The 2012 audit was expected on March 31, 2013, following the grace period.

While some procurement was delayed (mainly due to limited staff and capacity constraints), procurement was carried out in accordance with the Bank guidelines . Procurement issues related to payment to contractors for incomplete work and non-performing contracts . At project closing, the Minister of Finance provided assurances that these issues would be resolved .

c. Unintended Impacts (positive or negative):

The validation exercises were conducted by civil society organizations . This provided an opportunity to link the government with these organizations to strengthen social accountability and provide vital feedback about schools to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology .

d. Other:

12. Ratings:	ICR	IEG Review	Reason for Disagreement / Comments
Outcome:	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Risk to Development Outcome:	High	High	
Bank Performance :	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Borrower Performance :	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTES:

- When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.
- The "Reason for Disagreement/Comments" column could cross-reference other sections of the ICR Review, as appropriate.

13. Lessons:

A number of lessons were reported in the ICR (p. 27), which IEG has synthesized to the following :

- Projects that are implemented in post-conflict settings need to anticipate that implementation and disbursements will be initially slow. EFA-FTI projects are typically implemented in three years. This short duration is not enough time to build necessary capacity and implement large -scale civil works, which are often needed in these settings. This three-year time limit for Global Partnership for Education projects should be reconsidered.
- A strong government project implementation team must be in place prior to project effectiveness and remain throughout project implementation. In this case, key Secretariat appointments were delayed, resulting in slow implementation progress. These delays, along with the short implementation period, contributed to implementation problems.
- Strong Bank supervision and knowledge of Bank procedures is essential for implementing projects in post-conflict countries. In the case of this project, the implementation unit was unfamiliar with Bank procedures and would have benefited from earlier support from the Bank on its procedures. The presence of a Bank education specialist in -country was invaluable to provide daily support and monitor project implementation. Experience with other Bank-supported projects in post-conflict countries has shown that having the TTL in-country is critical for ensuring timely project implementation.
- The project was developed and implemented within the context of structural and institutional decentralization. Because the final decentralization mechanisms could not be fully understood until the implementation process itself started, the implementation of the project was bound to be slow. Projects that contain decentralized implementation will require an initial period of adjustment, as capacity cannot fully be built beforehand (as the final decentralized mechanisms cannot be fully understood until the implementation process is started).

14. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is concise, well written and thorough. It provides a candid assessment of weaknesses, particularly related to the Borrower/Implementing Agency and the Bank. The ICR provides a full understanding of the

implementation context and is filled with insightful comments and analysis about the choices made (or not made) and resulting consequences. The Annex provides a complete description of activities completed under each component. The ICR provides data beyond project indicators to demonstrate progress, along with critiques of the reliability of data. The ICR uses a weighting scheme to determine the overall outcome ratings, which is not needed since the project development objectives were unchanged throughout the project. The Borrower's comments were thorough and useful for the review.

a. Quality of ICR Rating : Satisfactory