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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

IDA-52070

ON A

CREDIT

IN THE AMOUNT OF SDR 65.1 MILLION

(US\$ 100 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

State Bank of Vietnam

FOR THE

VIETNAM SCHOOL READINESS PROMOTION PROJECT ( P117393 )

December 26, 2017

Education Global Practice  
East Asia And Pacific Region

## CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective {Nov 21, 2017})

Currency Unit = Vietnamese Dong

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VND 22,735.20 = US\$1

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US\$1.40 = SDR 1

FISCAL YEAR

July 1 - June 30

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BOET	Bureaus of Education and Training at the district level
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
DLI	Disbursement-linked Indicator
DOET	Department of Education and Training at the provincial level
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDI	Early Development Instrument
EFA	Education for All
EM	Ethnic Minority
FM	Financial Management
GOV	Government of Vietnam
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results Report
IDA	International Development Association
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
ISR	Implementation Status and Results Report
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NIES	National Institute of Education Sciences
NPV	Net Present Value
PD	Professional Development
PDO	Project Development Objective
PMU	Project Management Unit
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
SIL	Specific Investment Loan
SRPP	School Readiness Promotion Project
TA	Technical Assistance

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**DATA SHEET**

**BASIC INFORMATION**

**Product Information**

Project ID	Project Name
P117393	VIETNAM SCHOOL READINESS PROMOTION PROJECT ( P117393 )
Country	Financing Instrument
Vietnam	Specific Investment Loan
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Not Required (C)	

**Organizations**

Borrower	Implementing Agency
State Bank of Vietnam	Ministry of Education and Training

**Project Development Objective (PDO)**

Original PDO

The objective of the Vietnam School Readiness Promotion Project (SRPP) is to raise school readiness for 5 year old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment, through supporting selected elements of Vietnam's ECE program.



**FINANCING**

	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
<b>World Bank Financing</b>			
IDA-52070	100,000,000	99,944,415	95,191,137
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,000,000</b>	<b>99,944,415</b>	<b>95,191,137</b>
<b>Non-World Bank Financing</b>			
Borrower	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>100,000,000</b>	<b>99,944,415</b>	<b>95,191,137</b>

**KEY DATES**

Approval	Effectiveness	MTR Review	Original Closing	Actual Closing
28-Feb-2013	26-Jul-2013	31-May-2016	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017

**RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING**

Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions
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**KEY RATINGS**

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	High

**RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs**

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	14-Apr-2013	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0
02	28-Oct-2013	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0
03	05-Jul-2014	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	13.25



04	17-Dec-2014	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	30.71
05	15-Jun-2015	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	51.78
06	07-Jan-2016	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	52.46
07	02-Oct-2016	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	58.33
08	04-Apr-2017	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	63.33
09	29-Jun-2017	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	63.56

## SECTORS AND THEMES

### Sectors

Major Sector/Sector (%)

**Education 100**

Early Childhood Education 100

### Themes

Major Theme/ Theme (Level 2)/ Theme (Level 3) (%)

**Human Development and Gender 100**

Education 100

Access to Education 50

Education Financing 50

## ADM STAFF

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## I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

### A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

#### Context

- Country Context.** Vietnam had experienced rapid and consistent economic growth since launching its transition towards a market system (đổi mới) in 1986. Gross Domestic Product growth had averaged over 7 percent over the last decade. In 2010, Vietnam joined the ranks of middle-income countries. Vietnam's fast economic growth triggered an impressive reduction in poverty since the early 1990s, yet poverty remained high among certain groups. Important challenges remained. First, rural poverty remained high, at close to 20 percent. Second, while poverty reduction among ethnic minority (EM) groups had been significant, EM poverty rates remained above 50 percent – multiple times that of Kinh/Hoa.<sup>1</sup> The gap showed no sign of closing. Rather, data showed that the share of ethnic minorities among the poorest consumption decile had risen by more than 10 percentage points to 65 percent between 2006 and 2010.
- Sector Context.** There was a consensus in Vietnam on the importance of education as a key driver for personal advancement and for overcoming poverty, but education and learning outcomes remained significantly poorer for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and in particular EM children. Vietnam had made impressive progress towards achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals. Significant expansion of primary education expenditures had been accompanied by large increases in gross enrollment rates for both the majority population and ethnic minorities. While there was evidence of a narrowing of the gap between rich and poor, and majority population and ethnic minorities, a wide gap remained. First, while Vietnam's overall primary enrollment rate was near universal overall, the rate for EM children was just 80 percent. Second, while primary completion rates in 2008 were 92 percent for Kinh, they remained at 78.2 percent for children from EM groups. Gaps were even wider at lower secondary level. Third, Grade 5 learning assessments in 2001 and 2007 provided evidence for wide and growing gaps in learning outcomes between Kinh and non-Kinh<sup>2</sup>. This was confirmed by data from the Young Lives<sup>3</sup> panel survey, which revealed that EM children and children from poor households had completed fewer grades and performed considerably poorer in a literacy test administered as part of the survey than children in the sample overall. In summary, promoting EFA in Vietnam meant promoting learning for a relatively small group of highly disadvantaged children, in particular EM children.
- Experience suggested that poor education outcomes may have been due to unequal starting conditions of children entering primary school, pointing to the need for interventions at pre-primary level to correct for this. International evidence suggested that investments in Early Childhood Development (ECD) have a significant impact on subsequent educational outcomes. Analysis confirmed this for Vietnam as well, showing that access to preschool improved primary completion rates for rural and EM children<sup>4</sup> and that an early childhood education (ECE) intervention for disadvantaged children that focused on teacher training in child-centered teaching methods and good

<sup>1</sup> Kinh is Vietnamese majority; Hoa is Chinese Vietnamese minority living in Vietnam.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2011) Vietnam: High Quality Education For All by 2020, The World Bank

<sup>3</sup> Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty following the lives of 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India (in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam over 15 years.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank (2011b) Vietnam: High Quality Education For All by 2020, The World Bank



parenting promotion in conjunction with nutrition interventions had beneficial effects on test scores (Watanabe et al., 2005). ECD interventions that aim at developing the cognitive, physical, behavioral, and language skills help to promote greater equality of starting conditions when children enter primary education. And, while these benefits were felt across the population, evidence suggested that focused ECE programs particularly benefit the most disadvantaged children<sup>5</sup>.

4. While enrollment in some form of preschool for children aged 5 appears relatively high in Vietnam, the poor and ethnic minorities made less use of preschool services. ECE in Vietnam was provided primarily through over 12,000 crèches and kindergartens. According to administrative data at the time, the enrollment rate in preschool for 5-year-olds stood at more than 94.5 percent in 2010, with 66.1 percent attending full year preschool programs. Analysis from two rounds of the Vietnam Young Lives survey in four provinces confirmed this relatively high preschool enrollment rate, but indicated that EM children were significantly less likely to go to school even when controlling for household resources.<sup>6</sup> Differences also remained between poor and non-poor households, though less by urban and rural location and not by gender. Overall, the evidence suggested that EM children and children from poor households faced challenges very early in primary education, which could be addressed through more and higher quality preschool programs. However, it was precisely those children that needed high quality preschool education the most who appeared not to be getting it sufficiently.

5. The Government of Vietnam recognized the importance of ECE and made it a core element of its education sector development agenda. The draft Education Development Strategy 2011-2020 promoted as one of its objectives to complete universal ECE for five-year-old children and reach universal ECE for 4-year-old children by 2020. There had been a significant increase in the government’s focus on the quality and availability of ECE in Vietnam, culminating in the approval of a program on “Universal Early Childhood Education for 5-year-old Children 2010-2015” (Prime Minister Decision 239/2010/Qd-Ttg). The government defined “universal preschool” not just in terms of enrollment. Rather, accreditation of a province for having achieved universal preschool for 5-year-old children was based on multiple criteria. The enrollment target was 95 percent, with 85 percent of 5-year-old children enrolled in full day preschool expected to benefit from full-day provision. The attendance target was 90 percent. The incidence of underweight malnutrition (weight for age) was not expected to exceed 10 percent. It was also stipulated that physical infrastructure, material supplies, and teacher qualification should be in line with established standards. The government expected that all provinces would meet these criteria by 2015.

6. The government’s preschool program, Decision 239, aimed to expand school readiness through a focus on expansion of coverage, in particular among disadvantaged children, and improvements in quality. Its general objective was to ensure “that almost all children of 5 years of age in all areas could go to school for a full day, full school year, so that they were well prepared both physically and mentally, with adequate language ability to enter the 1st grade”. It focused on four themes: (i) promoting supply through construction of standard classrooms, functional rooms and kindergartens; (ii) provisioning of play sets and teaching aids; (iii) promoting quality through an expansion of teacher training; and (iv) promoting demand through sponsoring of lunch subsidies of disadvantaged children aged 5. Decision 60/2011/Qd-Ttg on ECE development policies for 2011-2015 augmented Decision 239 by expanding funding to lunch sponsorship for disadvantaged children aged 3 and 4, the employment of contract teachers and principals, and

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<sup>5</sup> Dearing, E., K McCartney, BA Taylor (2009) Does Higher Quality Early Child Care Promote Low-Income Children’s Math and Reading Achievement in Middle Childhood?, *Child Development*, September/October 2009, Volume 80, Number 5, Pages 1329–1349

<sup>6</sup> The Young Lives, 2008, Vietnam Round 2 Survey Report reported 89 per cent of all children attending nursery school but only 77 per cent of ethnic minority children doing so.



professional development for teachers and ECE managers employed in non-public institutions. Among the targets of Decision 239 for 2015 were to:

- ensure enrollment in full day, full year preschool to 85 percent of 5-year-old preschool children and 70 percent of 3 to 4-year-old preschool children;
- improve the quality of education and child care for 5-year-old classes, reducing the percentage of malnourished children, aiming toward the target of 100 percent children at ECE schools experiencing the new ECE curriculum;
- improve the quality of kindergarten teachers, ensuring that 100 percent of teachers for children of 5 years of age meet the standard in 2015, setting the goal of 50 percent of teachers graduated from kindergarten teaching colleges, 80 percent of teachers above the average professional standards in 2015.
- increase the number of provinces meeting the criteria of the Universal Early Childhood Education for children of 5 years age from 55 percent in 2010 to 85 percent in 2012 and 100 percent in 2015.

7. Vietnam introduced a new curriculum for ECE in 2009. The old ECE curriculum was “teacher-led”, with the teacher designing whole class activities from a predetermined activity list. The new curriculum was based on research which showed that the most effective forms of ECE have opportunities for “child-led” learning, with a small group activity and teachers focused on achieving outcomes for the individual child. The new curriculum had the potential to substantially lift quality of ECE if it was effectively implemented across the country. At the same time, the new curriculum was challenging for poorly trained teachers to implement and for implementation for disadvantaged children. While there was designated training for teaching staff, it was recognized that it was insufficient to prepare teachers for teaching the new curriculum, in particular those working with disadvantaged children.

8. As part of strengthening ECE, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) placed a strong focus on quality promotion. MOET had recently adopted new “Regulations on Standards for Assessing the Education Quality of Preschools” which was to serve as a framework for promoting, measuring, and reporting on quality of service delivery and instruction in preschools. The regulations set out a system of three levels of quality, with quality level 1 denoting the basic, minimum quality level. It was understood that many preschools in the disadvantaged areas did not meet level 1.

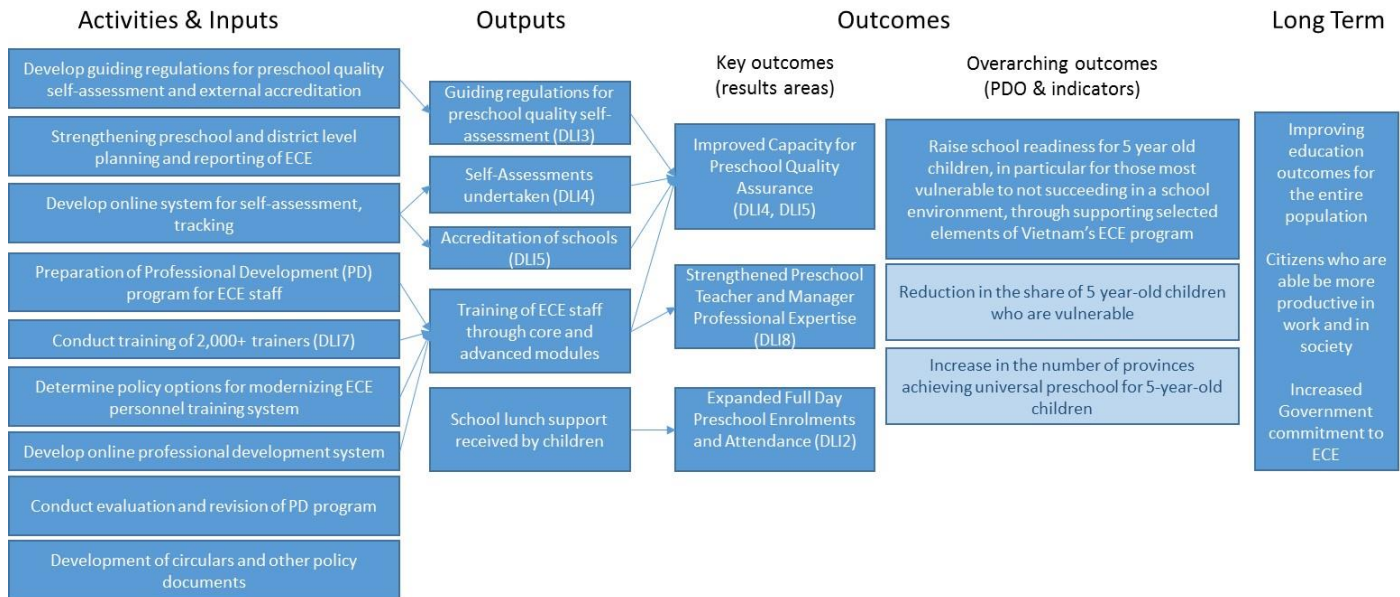
9. **Rationale for Bank assistance.** The School Readiness Promotion Project (SRPP) supported the “Opportunity” pillar of the World Bank-Vietnam Country Partnership Strategy 2012-2016. Its approach of strengthening Vietnam’s preschool system is in line with the directions from the World Bank’s Education 2020 Strategy “Learning for All”.

### **Theory of Change (Results Chain)**

10. To support the government’s efforts towards strengthening ECE delivery, the SRPP was developed with an overarching objective of raising school readiness for 5-year-old children, particularly those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment. This was to be achieved through supporting key selected elements of Vietnam’s ECE program. The PDO indicators make up the two overarching outcomes: reducing the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable and increasing the number of provinces achieving universal preschool for 5-year-old children. These outcomes were to be achieved through three key results areas: (a) expanded full day preschool enrollments and attendance, (b) improved capacity for preschool quality assurance, and (c) strengthened preschool teacher and manager professional expertise. The theory of change underlying SRPP is depicted in figure 1.



Figure 1: Theory of Change



11. The results areas each had a set of DLIs, which included a balanced mix of activities, outputs and outcomes. They were:

- **RESULTS AREA A: Expanded full day preschool enrollments and attendance**
  - DLI 1 [US\$10m]: MOET has completed a baseline report on enrolments of 3-5 and 5-year-old children in full day preschool based on school year 2011/2012 data disaggregated by province, gender, and ethnic minority status.
  - DLI 2 [US\$30m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of increasing the share of 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool that benefit from full-day provision to 80 percent; US\$5 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$30 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of 5-year-old children in preschool that benefit from full-day provision above the established baseline under DLI 1.
- **RESULTS AREA B: Improved Capacity for Preschool Quality Assurance**
  - DLI 3 [US\$5m]: MOET has adopted guiding regulations for preschool quality self-assessments and external accreditation for preschools.
  - DLI 4 [US\$15m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 90 percent of preschools have undertaken self-assessment; US\$0.17 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$15 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of schools conducting formal self-assessment over the previous school year.
  - DLI 5 [US\$15m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 40 percent of preschools achieving accreditation at Level 1; US\$0.375 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$15 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of schools achieving Level 1 accreditation.



- **RESULTS AREA C: Strengthened Preschool Teacher and Manager Professional Expertise**

- DLI 6 [US\$5m]: MOET has issued a decision approving the plan for professional development for preschool teachers and education managers in the period of 2013-2015 aimed at improving teaching practice for minority and highly disadvantaged children.
- DLI 7 [US\$6m]: Vietnam has made demonstrated progress in achieving its target of training at least 2,000 trainers to deliver the approved priority modules aimed at improving teaching practice for ethnic minority and highly disadvantaged children; US\$60,000 to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$6 million for each one percent progress toward achieving the training target.
- DLI 8 [US\$9m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 90 percent of preschool management and teaching staff that have completed the priority modules of the new ECE professional development program aimed at improving teaching practice for ethnic minority and highly disadvantaged children; US\$0.1 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$9 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of preschool management and teaching staff that have completed the priority modules.

### **Project Development Objectives (PDOs)**

12. The objective of the Vietnam School Readiness Promotion Project (SRPP) was to raise school readiness for 5-year-old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment, through supporting selected elements of Vietnam's Early Childhood Education (ECE) program.

### **Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators**

13. The PDO indicators were:
- Reduction in the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable (defined as in the bottom decile in at least one early childhood developmental domain defined by the 2012 baseline distribution) on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) school readiness assessment; and
  - Increase in the number of provinces achieving universal preschool for 5-year-old children as per government regulations.
14. The PDO results indicators were monitored by progress in three intermediate results areas:
- *Expanded Full Day Preschool Enrolments*: Enrolment of children aged 3, 4, and 5 in preschool will increase towards near universal participation in full-day preschool being achieved for 5-year-olds by 2016;
  - *Improved Capacity for Preschool Quality Assurance*: Preschools will be conducting self-assessment and be accredited according to the newly adopted “Regulations on Standards for Assessing the Education Quality of Preschools”; and
  - *Strengthened Preschool Teacher and Manager Professional Expertise*: Teachers and preschool education managers will complete newly developed ECE professional development program modules.

### **Components**



15. The project was structured into two components. The main investments were under Component 1 and provided on-budget results-based financing to support the implementation of the government's school readiness promotion interventions. Component 2 provided capacity building to support implementation and monitoring of the project and further policy development for ECE. The two components are summarized as follows:

16. **Component 1: Promoting School Readiness for Disadvantaged Children** (Estimated: 61.87 XDR; Actual: 61.87 XDR). On-budget funding supported the implementation of key elements of the government's ECE program (Program 239, complemented by Decision 60). The SRPP reimbursed government investments under the following eligible expenditure program<sup>7</sup>: lunch subsidies for disadvantaged children aged 3-5, which was also intended to encourage participation and full day preschool attendance.

17. A series of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) were identified, corresponding to the three intermediate results areas outlined above. On-budget funding in Component 1 was released annually against the achievement of these indicators and evidence of eligible expenditure under the defined Eligible Expenditure Program (EEP). The DLIs and their associated disbursement amounts are presented in Annex 6.

18. The DLI disbursements were contingent upon an independent verification process performed by the Vietnam National Institute of Education Sciences (VNIES) to monitor and verify MOET and provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) reporting on preschool enrolments and other results indicators. VNIES conducted an independent performance audit in a sample of provinces for the following areas: (i) of enrolment reporting by MOET and DOET; (ii) of preschool self-assessment and reporting; (iii) of preschool accreditation; (iv) of training completion; and (v) of the execution of the professional development program. To ensure there was not a conflict of interest, VNIES was given full independence from MOET in the conduct of its performance audit.

19. **Component 2: National Early Childhood Education Policy Development and Capacity Building** (Estimated: 3.26 XDR; Actual: 3.27 XDR). The project also financed technical assistance (TA), training expenditures, and operating costs to support capacity building and the further development of ECE policy. Specifically, it provided support for ECE policy development and capacity building including: (a) strengthening planning and reporting systems for ECE; (b) strengthening professional development for ECE personnel, including the preparation of a new professional development program; (c) development of ECE policy and regulation, including the development and piloting in selected locations in Vietnam of a new community-based Early Childhood Development service model for children aged 0 to 3 years old; (d) independent verification and performance audits of the DLI reporting; (e) financial management capacity-building for the purposes of the results-based financing under Part 1 of the Project; and (f) project management, monitoring and evaluation. Component 2 had a traditional Specific Investment Loan (SIL) disbursement design.

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<sup>7</sup> A second eligible expenditure of "salaries, including social and health insurance contributions, for contract preschool teachers to ease the shortage of teaching staff" was also included in the original design. Due to difficulties in using this, it was determined that just the lunch program would be used for disbursement, as expenditures in this category were large enough to absorb the reimbursements. The audit opinion on "Salaries for Contracted Preschool Teacher" was "Adverse" in the May 2016 ISR, with the main reasons, as cited by the Auditor, being (a) there was no separate budget code created for allocating budget for eligible expenditure (EE) of contracted Preschool Teachers Salaries; and (b) there were accounting errors made by preschools where some expenditure relevant to the EE were recorded under the other budget codes and irrelevant expenditure was charged to the code of the EE.



## B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION (IF APPLICABLE)

### Revised PDOs and Outcome Targets

20. The project development objective was not revised during the project period, nor were the key indicators.

### Revised PDO Indicators

21. None

### Revised Components

22. The project components were not modified during the project period.

### Other Changes

23. None

### Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

24. Not applicable

## II. OUTCOME

### A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs

#### Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating

25. The *Relevance of PDOs* is rated as **high**. Improving education outcomes for the entire population is an important element of Vietnam's broader economic and social development agenda. This entails the strengthening of ECE and the promotion of school readiness. Vietnam's 5-year and 10-year development plans give prominence to human resources development. In particular, the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020 identifies human resources development as one of three strategic breakthrough measures, including the expansion of ECE. The SRPP supported the "Opportunity" pillar of the World Bank-Vietnam Country Partnership Strategy 2012-2016. Its approach of strengthening Vietnam's preschool system was in line with the directions from the World Bank's Education 2020 Strategy "Learning for All". A new Country Partnership Strategy for FY18-22 went into effect in May 2017 and includes an Early Childhood Care and Education component under "Objective 1: Improving Human Endowments – Health, Education and Social Protection". The project goals continue to fit into the goals of the SEDS (2011-2020) and the Early Childhood Care and Education component under Objective 1 of the new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) (2017-2021).

26. The *Relevance of the design* was also **high**. The project focused on both access and quality. The design was simple and indicators achievable. The theory of change behind the project was sound and the selection of key targets was appropriate. The PDO -- to raise school readiness for 5-year-old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment -- was focused and measurable through the accompanying EDI instrument and the



rigorous, nationally representative survey conducted. The design was appropriate given the government's stated objective of increasing school readiness, particularly of the most vulnerable. The objective is outcome-oriented and was appropriately pitched for the government capacity and development status of Vietnam. The results-based, on-budget financing approach and related capacity building component served to ensure project success.

27. The government used the results focus to justify its rapidly increasing financial commitment to ECE, to monitor the impact of its funding commitment, and to target resources on geographic areas and groups where additional support is needed to achieve its goal of universal enrolment and improved school readiness. The government has fully sustained the activities, indicating the continued relevance of ECE.

28. The relevance is rated as high due to strong program design with a coherent results chain, a solid results framework, results indicators that measure the PDO, clear relevance of the program both from Vietnam's and World Bank's strategies and the project resulting in an increased profile and relevance of ECE in Vietnam. Given the current momentum on 'Investing Early' and the Bank's Investing in the Early Years agenda, the objectives remain highly relevant at the time of closing.

## RELEVANCE RATING: HIGH

### B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

#### Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

29. The Efficacy of PDOs is rated as **substantial**. The SRPP had the objective of raising school readiness for 5-year-old children and the two PDO indicators were exceeded by a significant amount. The five intermediate indicators were achieved and all DLIs were met and disbursed on time. In addition, there is evidence that the project contributed to the objective of increased government focus on and investment in ECE.

30. **PDO indicator 1: Reduction in the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable (in the bottom 10 percent in at least one developmental domain defined by the 2012 baseline distribution).** This indicator uses the EDI, which directly measures school readiness and specifically focuses on the most vulnerable children by measuring children in the bottom 10 percent in at least one of the five development domains: (1) physical health and well-being; (2) social competence; (3) emotional maturity; (4) language and cognitive development; and (5) communication and cognitive development. The baseline was 24 percent and the end target was 22 percent. The result at the end of the project was 12.30, cutting the percent of vulnerable children nearly in half and exceeding the end target by reducing the share of vulnerable children an additional 9.7 percent. The survey using the EDI with three rounds of data collection during the project cycle. The baseline was carried out in 2012, the mid-term in 2014 and the endline in 2016. The EDI results were independently verified by VNIES, as described in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) section of this report.

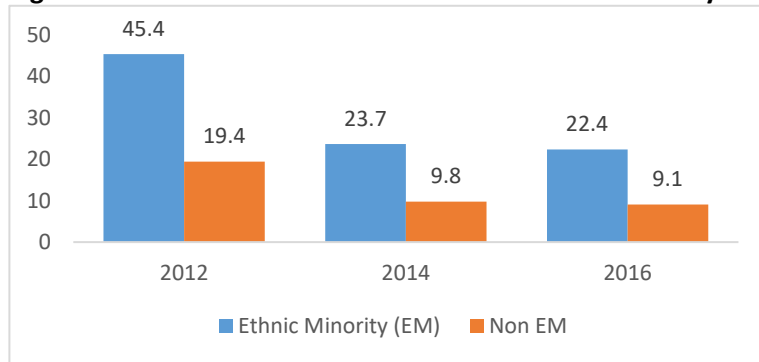
31. The EDI instrument itself and its validity as a measure of school readiness was of particular importance. As part of the preparation of SRPP, MOET conducted a school readiness assessment at the end of the 2011/12 school year based on the EDI with support from the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in Canada and the World Bank. The EDI, developed by the Offord Centre, is a rating assessment where teachers fill out questionnaires about students; it is not a direct test administered to children. However, there are 10 years of research establishing the validity of EDI both in terms of being correlated with various direct cognitive tests and being a predictor of future learning achievement. This assessment has been adapted and applied in 15 low, middle, and high income countries.





32. In all three EDI survey rounds of 2012, 2014 and 2016, the rate of vulnerability in at least one developmental domain in EM children is always higher than that of children who are not ethnic minority (non-EM). Still, the rate of EM children dropped dramatically. As seen in Figure 2, the EM rate dropped from 45.4 percent to 22.4 percent (which is a 23 percentage point drop) while the rate for non-EM dropped from 19.4 to 9.1 (which is a 10.3 percentage point drop).

**Figure 2: EDI Results of children classified as vulnerable by Ethnic Minority and Non-Ethnic Minority**



33. **PDO indicator 2: Number of provinces achieving universal preschool for 5-year-old children.** The baseline measure was 10 provinces and the end target was 50. By the end of the project all 63 provinces and municipalities had achieved universal preschool, exceeding the target by 13 provinces. The government defined “universal preschool” not just in terms of enrollment. Rather, accreditation of a province for having achieved universal preschool for 5-year-old children is based on multiple criteria: (i) the enrollment target is 95 percent, with 85 percent of 5-year-old children enrolled in full day preschool expected to benefit from full-day provision; (ii) the attendance target is 90 percent; (iii) the incidence of underweight malnutrition (weight for age) is not expected to exceed 10 percent; and (iv) physical infrastructure, material supplies, and teacher qualification should be in line with established standards.

34. **All five intermediate indicators were met:**

- a. **Intermediate indicator 1: rate of enrollment in preschool of 5-year-old children** had a baseline of 96.4 percent and a target of 97.50. The target was exceeded with 98.85 percent.
- b. **Intermediate indicator 2: Share of 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool benefiting from full-day provision** had a baseline of 73.7 percent and target of 80.0. The target was exceeded with 87.6 percent.
- c. **Intermediate indicator 3: Increase in the share of preschools having been accredited at least for level 1 quality level** had a baseline of 0 percent and a target of 40.0 percent. The target was achieved with 41.04 percent.
- d. **Intermediate indicator 4: Share of preschool teachers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program** had a baseline of 0 percent and target of 90 percent. The target was achieved at 92.82 percent.
- e. **Intermediate indicator 5: Share of preschool education managers having successfully completed priority modules of the professional development program** had a baseline of 0 and target of 90. The target was achieved with 98.49 percent.

35. **All eight DLIs were met.** The DLIs were a balanced mix of activities, outputs and outcomes. A full table of DLIs by review period can be found in Annex 6. In meeting all DLIs, key objectives were met that contributed to overall efficacy of the MOET’s ECE program and provided full disbursement.



36. **Contribution to higher level objectives.** A longer-term objective of the project was to raise the profile of ECE and promote sustained government investment in the area. One of the important contributing outcomes is the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Strategy for 2016-2025. The MOET has prepared and submitted the new ECE Strategy for the government's review and approval. The strategy aims to: raise the total enrollment rate of children aged 3 to 5 years old to 95 percent; ensure 100 percent of children aged 5 have access to full-day schooling; ensure 80 percent of preschools are accredited by meeting a minimum quality level; ensure 100 percent of teachers have a three-year ECE pre-service training. The ECE promotion and dissemination strategy for January-June 2017 was completed. A series of talk shows and interviews with related stakeholders was carried out. An international ECE conference on high quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) for all children was successfully jointly organized by World Bank, UNICEF and other development partners, raising awareness of the importance of ECD, discussing policy solutions, and knowledge sharing with other country delegates participating in the conference. It also showcased the success of Vietnam in relation to the ECE agenda. The MOET has been closely following up and successfully convincing the government to continue the important policy of supporting poor disadvantaged preschool children through Decision 239 "Universal Early Childhood Education for 2011-2015". This extension has also allowed the continued lunch subsidy support for these children.

37. The project has been successful not only in terms of expanding access to ECE services (supply) for preschool children (more classrooms, more contracted teachers, lunch subsidies) but also successful in terms of promoting demands for ECE services even in the economically disadvantaged areas where ECE services were traditionally considered as child-minding services only. Nowadays, parents have become more aware of the importance of ECE services for their children early development and started to raise voice for the local authorities to provide enough places for their preschool children. Therefore, the government's main concerns are no longer enrolment mobilization but providing adequate and high quality ECE services for preschool children.

## EFFICACY RATING: SUBSTANTIAL

### Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating

38. The rating of **substantial** is justified by the points mentioned above. All PDO indicators and intermediate indicators were met. All DLIs were met and the funding disbursed. The project played a significant role in contributing to an increased awareness in and support for ECE, both in communities and by the government. Government commitment and sustainability is high, as evidenced by increased budget support to new ECE policies and demand from parents.

## C. EFFICIENCY

### Assessment of Efficiency and Rating

39. The *Efficiency* of the project is rated as **substantial** based on an assessment in terms of internal and external efficiency indicators.

40. **Internal efficiency** varied across project institutions and regions, but increased overall due to many of the outcomes achieved through the project, including: (i) development of an online system for self-assessment and tracking of preschool quality level/accreditation; (ii) strengthening preschool and district planning and reporting; (iii) developing guiding regulations for preschool quality self-assessment and external accreditation; and (iv) modernizing the ECE personnel training system.



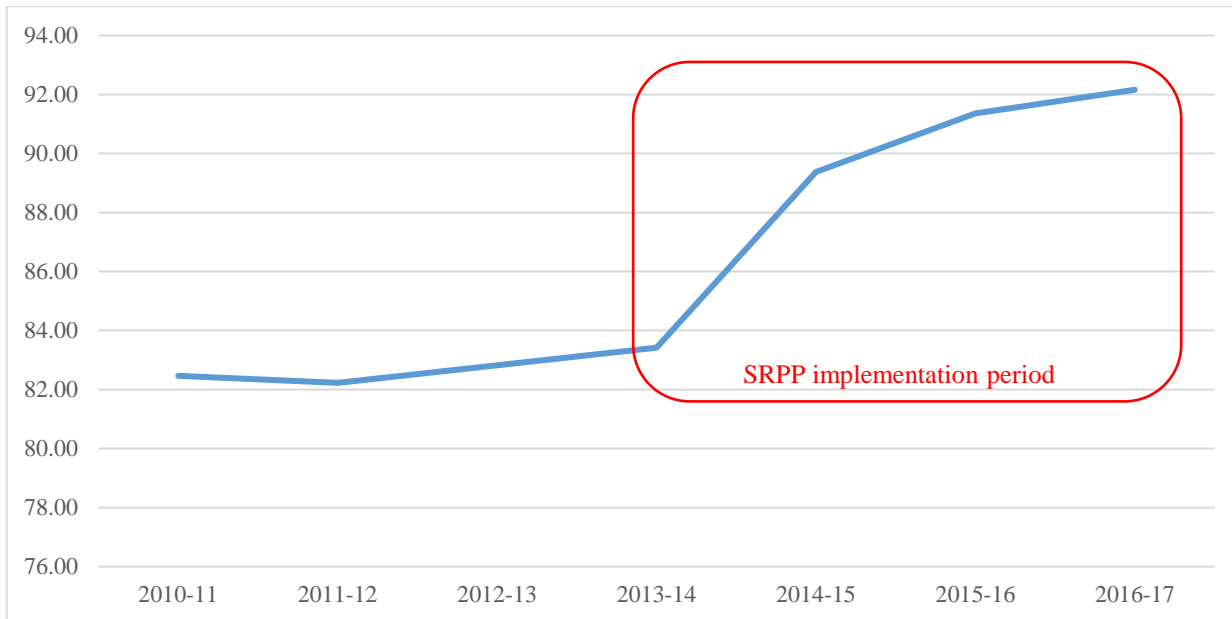
41. There is substantial established evidence from developed and developing countries on the beneficial effect of quality ECE and development interventions on cognitive ability, years of schooling attained and subsequent earnings (Naudeau et al., 2010). This is particularly true for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, making investments in ECE not just an economically sound, but also an equity-promoting investment. The design of the SRPP-supported program reflects this evidence.

42. **External efficiency.** There was a strong case for government intervention in the promotion of ECE to address market failures. The market for ECE typically fails in four major areas: (i) externality - parents place less importance on quality preschool education than would be socially desirable; (ii) coordination failure - on the one hand, demand for childcare is typically segmented and diffuse geographically, while, on the other hand, supply costs are high and step-fixed (due to natural as well as legal ceilings on child groups), making it difficult for a provider to fill the capacity as would be needed for profitable operation; (iii) information asymmetry - parents cannot easily identify high quality care; and (iv) financing/credit market failures – parents cannot afford to pay for fees and costs associated with their children’s participation in preschool.

43. The SRPP is expected to have a significant development impact through improving quality and access to preschool. The economic benefits of SRPP budget support arise through improved learning outcomes and associated higher productivity and wages, by supporting: (a) the expansion of preschool enrollment, and of full-day preschool enrollment for 5-year-old children; (b) the provision of lunch subsidies for disadvantaged children to promote demand; (c) higher preschool quality through more and better teacher and school management training; and (d) the establishment of a quality assurance and accreditation process. These achievements were all under Component 1. Furthermore, SRPP supported policy measures to determine standards and authorize quality assurance systems that would guide investments in ECED and strengthen monitoring and reporting under Component 2.

44. Over the course of the SRPP, the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable (PDO Indicator 1) decreased to 50 percent of its baseline value, compared to a targeted decrease of 8 percent. Additionally, all 63 Vietnamese provinces achieved universal preschool for 5-year-old children (PDO Indicator 2) during SRPP compared to a target of 50 provinces, and all intermediate results indicators were exceeded, pointing to substantial additionality gains through SRPP. Figure 3 shows the increase in enrollment of 3 to 5-year-old children in pre-primary education before and during the SRPP implementation period.

**Figure 3: Increase in share of 3 to 5-year-old children enrolled in ECE before and during SRPP implementation**



Source: PMU data

45. Additionally, a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) and a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of the project were conducted. The estimated impact (effect size)<sup>8</sup> of: (a) attending pre-primary education; and (b) individual components of the SRPP project on learning outcomes are based on existing research and evidence of similar education interventions and programs, both in Vietnam and other countries. For the CBA, earnings, based on returns to schooling, for project beneficiaries are estimated and detailed in Annex 4.

46. The results of this economic analysis demonstrate that the benefits from the SRPP project are significant. The cost-effectiveness analysis estimates an effect size of 0.06 to 0.47 standard deviations<sup>9</sup> per US\$100. However, this analysis is based on a range of proxies from similar interventions and the overall effect size pertaining to SRPP support is likely to be higher per US\$100 given the interaction effect of combining access to pre-primary schools, improved quality teaching, access to full-day pre-primary for most students, and other resources supported through the project.

47. Increased private earnings, as a result of increased learning outcomes,<sup>10</sup> were compared to project costs through a Cost-Benefit analysis. This presents more long-term analysis of private monetary benefits manifesting years after the program, as a result of increased learning. We estimate the future annual earnings for additional students benefiting from pre-primary education due to SRPP financing. The cost-benefit analysis yields an IRR of 9 percent and NPV of US\$215,992,518.<sup>11</sup> Annex 4 also discusses a number of additional monetary, non-monetary and social returns not captured by private monetary benefits to students, as well as long-term development impacts of the project.

48. The SRPP project has been cost efficient, based on the comparison of unit costs of services provided under the

<sup>8</sup> in terms of increase in cognitive skills as measured by increase in test scores (standard deviations) on standardized tests

<sup>9</sup> Increase of 0.06 to 0.47 standard deviations on standardized tests, based on existing research and evidence of similar education interventions, where the effect size (SD) was measured

<sup>10</sup> Proxied by benefits from similar education interventions

<sup>11</sup> We estimate the future annual earnings for additional students benefiting from pre-primary education due to SRPP financing (PMU data).



project and Government of Vietnam (GOV) norms to increase demand in ECE. Under component 1, SRPP supported the GOV's effort to provide lunch subsidies for poor and ethnic minority children to incentivize the participation of EM children in pre-primary education, which enhances enrolment and attendance.

49. The economic and financial analysis suggests that the project outputs have and will continue to generate long-term cost benefits. The efficiency of the project is rated as **substantial**.

#### **EFFICIENCY RATING: SUBSTANTIAL**

#### **D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING**

50. The overall outcome is **Satisfactory** based on **high** relevance, **substantial** efficacy and **substantial** efficiency.

#### **E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS (IF ANY)**

##### **Gender**

51. Available data suggest that Vietnam's early childhood education system does not suffer from significant gender inequalities overall, though there are some variations by locality and family background. The SRPP was a gender-informed project. Gender disaggregated enrollment and school readiness statistics were collected at baseline and were collected annually and at the mid-term and end of the project. Findings from the EDI survey were used to inform MOET's ECE policy formulation. Provincial enrollment rates highlighted remaining inequities and put the spotlight on provinces' efforts to rectify those.

##### **Institutional Strengthening**

52. In the internal efficiency points above, there was considerable institutional strengthening in terms of systems and capacity. Component 2 of the project provided technical assistance to increase the capacity in the areas of ECE policy development, project management and monitoring and evaluation. The project also contributed to institutional strengthening through financial sustainability.

53. The SRPP was the first results-based project in Vietnam, and the second on-budget design in the education sector. As a pioneer in implementing such a design, the project contributed to institutional strengthening in terms of implementing with the use of DLIs, independent monitoring, and strengthening of monitoring and reporting. This has proven to be a model of subsequent educational financing projects in Vietnam.

54. There were many system changes as well. Teachers shifted to child-centered learning under the new ECE curriculum, and with support of extensive training using the 10 core modules and 10 advanced modules. This training has been institutionalized in pre-service and in-service programs.



### **Mobilizing Private Sector Financing**

55. N/A

### **Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity**

56. The project contributed to poverty reduction and shared prosperity through its focus on Ethnic Minorities (EM) and disadvantaged children. The increase in full day schooling and the accompanying lunch program benefited families with higher poverty levels most. For children living in disadvantaged areas, the most practical support was for children to attend full day preschool according to the new ECE curriculum. In order to improve the quality of preschool education, ministries and sectors continued to make policy proposals to government that would ensure children living near the poverty line benefited from priority policies for preschool children. In significantly reducing the share of age 5 children who are vulnerable from 24 percent to 12.3 percent (PDO indicator 1) and with all provinces achieving universal preschool (PDO indicator 2), the project had a particularly strong impact on the disadvantaged. In the longer-term impacts, preschool children gradually have the opportunity to develop both physically and intellectually, contributing to the government's concerted effort to alleviate poverty for disadvantaged EM areas.

### **Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts**

57. The enhancement of professional development for ECE teachers was particularly successful and had impacts beyond what was originally envisioned. A study conducted on the professional development program found that teachers found the new online Learning Management System (LMS) to have been particularly impactful. Due to the designedly flexible learning contents to make it easy for learners to study at anytime and anywhere, most learners are interested, self-conscious and actively involved in learning. The LMS system's operation log shows that the system operates and serves around the clock seven days a week, and there are always learners using the system.

58. The LMS is considered a remarkable success of the project. It facilitated conditions for the ECE in a new professional development (PD) training form, in which learners learn voluntarily. The system contains 10 advanced modules (six for teachers and four for managers), each requiring regular active engagement from the person undertaking the module, with immediate feedback on any incorrect understanding of the material. The modules build on the 10 priority modules which were delivered face-to face. Each module requires the person to undertake an assessment at the end of the module. There are also e-forums where participants can raise questions and have discussions with others. The LMS includes comprehensive reporting so that progress in provinces, districts and individual schools can be tracked in real time, as well as the progress of individual participants. Educational leaders at all levels are happy to know the learning status of participants at any given time whether they are studying or have completed with credible and rigorous results. The percentage of learners that attended and finished the program is very high. Most provinces reached over 90 percent. This is the highest rate compared to previous E-Learning training programs used by MOET. This PD training program is sustainable, and easy to quantify, maintain and transfer technology.



### III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

#### A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

59. The SRPP was envisioned as a pioneering initiative to support an existing government program through targeted key quality areas. The government's interest in World Bank involvement in its ECE program was the results focus that SRPP would bring to the initiative. The design and preparation activities provided a sound foundation for the project.

60. **Evidence-based design** - The technical design of the project drew from globally-recognized approaches for effective ECE and interventions that are aligned with international best practice. These design elements were well-suited to institutions participating in the project.

61. **Appropriate selection of beneficiary groups to target** - The targeted project beneficiaries were disadvantaged children aged 3-5, with particular attention to those from an EM background. The SRPP focused resources and attention on preschools with low capacity to deliver quality services for the most vulnerable children in line with the new ECE curriculum. These preschools were often in disadvantaged areas with high shares of EM children, children from less educated parents and from poorer households who are the most likely to be vulnerable in terms of school readiness.

62. **Appropriate plan for monitoring** - Through a results-based financing mechanism, the SRPP provided incentives for the utilization and reporting of self-assessments, while TA and external performance audits would strengthen capacity for their use. Moreover, school readiness assessments based on the internationally used EDI at baseline, mid-point, and the end of the project were expected to ensure a close focus on the development objective and deepen the knowledge of the dimensions of school readiness and non-readiness. Independent evaluation through VNIES was to be conducted for DLI indicators.

63. **Adequacy of risk and mitigation measures identification** - Key risks and appropriate mitigation measures were adequately identified during preparation. Challenges in the form of capacity and governance were anticipated. This was particularly true because the SRPP was innovative in its results-based, on-budget design which will have been novel for the government agencies involved. Delivery of monitoring risk was also substantial, but, the project itself supported a strengthening of planning and reporting under the government's program and the SRPP financed considerable capacity building under Component 2, particularly in administrative reporting.

#### B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

64. The project faced initial hurdles as MOET adjusted to the new model of financing. This created delays initially, but as the Project Management Unit (PMU) grew in knowledge and capacity the project began to function effectively. There were various factors that played a role in the success and challenges during implementation.

65. **Collaboration within the Ministry** was essential coordination across multiple functional departments. A small PMU was created within the MOET Department of Early Childhood Education and coordinated by the MOET Department of Planning and Finance, but the MOET system was used to implement the project. All MOET functional departments were part of the PMU to administer the project, but the representatives were also carrying



out their full departmental duties rather than having full-time PMU assignments. This was particularly effective because implementation of the project was integrated into the daily activities of MOET departments

66. **Horizontal communication and cross-sector collaboration** were identified by many stakeholders as having a critical role in project success. The strong communication between with the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOET were cited as having been essential for the project and making sure funding was available. The nature of ECE including nutrition also required cross-sector collaboration with the Ministry of Health as well as with important organizations such as the Women’s Union and local government. The high level of horizontal and cross-sectoral communication was viewed as being a major contributor to the success of the project as well as raising the profile and awareness of ECE.

67. **Close partnership between MOET and the Bank.** The Bank and MOET built a strong relationship of partnership and trust through the project implementation. With strong local staff in country, the Bank was able to respond quickly to issues/challenges as they arose, further contributing to the project’s implementation.

68. **Use of TA to support key interventions.** The TA under Component 2 played a key role in supporting activities related to the DLIs. This included conducting baseline studies, capacity building in strengthening preschool and district level planning and reporting in ECE, support of the self-assessment and accreditation systems, and preparation of professional development programs for ECE staff. Without having this funding and support available, activities would have likely been delayed and may not have produced the same level of quality outputs or achieved the same level of outcomes.

## IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

### A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

#### M&E Design

69. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation was at the heart of the SRPP, which aimed to improve government reporting mechanisms on the quality of preschools and enrollments and attendance. Moreover, the SRPP supported administering the EDI school readiness assessment instrument at baseline, mid-term, and closing of the project. The reporting of intermediate results indicators on an annual basis as per the results-based financing arrangement as well as school readiness outcome monitoring at baseline and mid-term, provided valid measures of progress in meeting the project’s development objective.

70. The results monitoring for quality under the SRPP relied on the use of the EDI. EDI is a school-based rating of a child’s readiness to attend school conducted by the teacher covering five domains of child development: (1) physical health and well-being, (2) social competence, (3) emotional maturity, (4) language and critical thinking skills, and (5) communication skills and general knowledge. It is an assessment specifically designed for monitoring and evaluating ECD investments. The instrument provides a readiness score of children sampled from schools as well as the percent of children deemed “not ready” for school using a cut-off based on a percentile from either the sampled or a reference population. It is a rating type assessment for measuring school readiness of a population of children; the instrument is a checklist filled out for each sampled child by preschool teachers at the end of the school year. Because it is a rating type assessment, it requires no interaction between the child and a trained specialist, only between the trained specialist and a teacher, and is therefore cost effective.





### M&E Implementation

71. The baseline of the EDI survey was administered in early 2012, with funding from the Russia Education Aid for Development Trust Fund, so as to arrive at a baseline prior to project implementation. The 2012 assessment with a random sample of 8,562 children from 200 pre-schools in 100 districts and 54 provinces resulted in a baseline for the SRPP on the PDO level results indicator: 24 percent of children aged 5 in the sample were vulnerable in terms of their school readiness. The 2014 mid-line and 2016 end-line surveys were conducted in the same pre-schools with 8,404 and 8,247 students respectively. Vulnerability is defined as being in the bottom decile of the distribution for at least one of the five early childhood development domains. The baseline assessment was led by MOET with a team consisting of MOET ECE officers, experts from VNIES and local consultants. District ECE officers in the selected districts were trained by the team and in turn trained teachers to fill out the questionnaire for their students. Because existing staff were used to implement this survey, capacity was built for future rounds of the assessment. Applying EDI at the beginning of the project and then subsequently throughout the project provided policy makers with information on improvements in school readiness.

72. Technical assistance was provided under component 2 to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, and reporting in MOET, as well as in provinces and districts. First, it supported conducting school readiness assessments based on the EDI at mid-point, and the end of the project. This allowed for assessing whether the SRPP met its intended development objective of improved school readiness for disadvantaged children and yielded important insights for overall ECE policy development. Second, it supported the improvement of the reporting mechanism on preschool quality and progress towards achieving accreditation for Level 1 according to the new “Regulations on Standards for Assessing the Education Quality of Preschools”. Third, it supported the office of the VNIES to monitor and verify MOET and DOET reporting on preschool enrolments and other results indicators. Fourth, it supported independent performance assessment of the self-accreditation process in a random sample of schools and districts.

73. The M&E data was used to inform indicators in the results framework and regularly reported in the project Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs). The MOET and VNIES units responsible for M&E ensured attention to effective M&E implementation and the data was found to be of reliable quality, including in its sound methodology, independence of analysts where necessary, and quality control. The M&E activities have continued after project closing.

### M&E Utilization

74. The MOET utilized the M&E data in informing the ECE program direction and in conveying progress to key stakeholders, particularly in demonstrating the extent to which the program was achieving ECE objectives. The findings contributed to increasing financial commitments to the program, with the government able to demonstrate results. The ECE proportion of the MOET budget increased to 14 percent in 2016, up from 11 percent in 2012. This is much higher than the world average and higher than most countries, indicating Vietnam is advanced in recognizing the importance of investing in early childhood education. The M&E results also helped government prioritize spending on improved quality, as well as on better targeting of program resources. It has played a key role in documenting results and helping the government justify its investment in preschool.

### Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E

75. The overall rating of quality of M&E is **high**. The M&E system’s design, implementation and utilization were all effective and of high quality. The M&E under the project played a key role in assessing the achievement of objectives and in determining whether DLIs were met. The EDI, in particular, was directly related to the PDO of the project and, in



implementing it through a rigorous survey, served as a valid indicator for reduction in vulnerable children for school readiness. The independent verification group VNIES, provided independence where necessary and contributed to assurance on the quality and reliability of the data. Capacity was also developed within MOET and the results played an important contributing role in justifying further investment in ECE as well as an increased profile and awareness.

## B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

76. **Safeguards.** The project was rated a Category “C” operation. The indigenous peoples safeguard, OP/BP 4.10, was triggered. However, a free standing Ethnic Minority Development Plan or Planning Framework was not required due to the fact that the project focused on delivery of educational services to students and teachers in poor, ethnic minority, remote and low performing areas. A social assessment (SA) was conducted as required by OP 4.10, and was part of project preparation. Project safeguards were consistently rated **satisfactory**.

77. **Financial management.** The project faced many Financial Management (FM) challenges initially, but by the end of the project the FM aspects were functioning satisfactorily. The FM ratings were **unsatisfactory** and **moderately unsatisfactory** for the December 2014 – January 2016 period, but **moderately satisfactory** by October 2016 and **satisfactory** by April 2017 through the end of the project. The reason for the moderately unsatisfactory rating in December 2014 was that while project accountants had been recruited, cash management had been improved and the Interim Financial Reports had been submitted to the Bank on time with acceptable quality, the most significant outstanding issue was the financial audit which had by that time been overdue for nearly five months. By the May 2015 supervision mission the FM rating was lowered to unsatisfactory because: (i) completion of the project audit for 2013 was seven months overdue due to delayed appointment of auditors and the complexity of auditing to verify State Treasury Accounts; and (ii) financial accounting at preschools was found to be weak and the audits provided an adverse opinion because (a) the wrong budget codes were frequently used by preschools and (b) District State Treasuries were unable to identify the accounting errors made by preschools. By the November 2015 mission, the rating had been increased to moderately unsatisfactory, finding that the quality of the audited financial statements (FS) of the project had improved over the time in terms of timelines and audit opinion. The overdue FS of the project for the period ending December 31, 2013 were submitted to the Bank in January 2015, and the FM for the period ending December 31, 2014 was submitted on June 23, 2015, which was within the deadline indicated in the Financing Agreement.

78. **Procurement.** Procurement was rated as **moderately satisfactory** early in the project, but **satisfactory** in the final year of the project. The reason for early moderately satisfactory ratings is that there were delays in the signing of some packages and general implementation progress was behind schedule. It was noted that the MOET internal review process needed to be simplified. Procurement delays had an impact of delaying construction of the ECE Centers, but all were completed by the end of the project. In the final year, there were no issues in the area of procurement.

## C. BANK PERFORMANCE

### Quality at Entry

79. The project preparation team ensured that the project design was closely aligned with the Vietnam SEDS 2011-2020, Vietnam Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2011-2020 and the Bank’s CPS 2012-2016. The design was



simple, the PDO was precise and key indicators were appropriate for measuring progress toward achieving the PDO. The design took into consideration the recommendations from the Quality Enhancement Review, peer reviewers and lessons learned from other Bank-supported projects in Vietnam. The design included the appropriate activities that, if implemented well, could be a demonstration project on the benefits of active pedagogy for replication. The preparation team identified the appropriate risks and incorporated design features to mitigate them and included the relevant technical specialists to develop the project. The quality at entry for the SRPP project was **satisfactory**.

#### Quality of Supervision

80. There were nine Bank review and implementation support missions which included a Mid-term Review. The project team was actively engaged in supporting the government in its efforts to implement the project. Whenever implementation challenges arose, the Bank team worked with government to find appropriate solutions that would not compromise the integrity of the design. The supervision teams consistently reported on FM and procurement progress during supervision missions and worked with the PMU team to build their capacity in these areas. They also systematically documented project progress in aide-memoires, back-to-office reports and ISRs, all of which kept Bank management informed of progress and provided the foundation for the ICR analysis. Key to the project's achievements was the consistent supervision by the Bank team, both in country and from headquarters that had the needed technical expertise to support the MOET/PMU with implementation of the new approaches to teaching and learning. All-in-all, there was a high level of supervision for this project. Excellent collaboration on project implementation and coordinated work with the MOET contributed to the many project successes.

81. The Bank's role extended beyond supervision to being a supportive partner in SRPP and ECE with a particularly strong relationship of trust. Various key stakeholders within the government stressed the relationship with the Bank as having been a particularly important contributor to its success. The quality of supervision for the SRPP project was **highly satisfactory**.

#### Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance

82. Based on the analysis above, overall Bank performance is rated **satisfactory**.

#### D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

83. The risk to sustaining the development outcome is **low** based on the following:

- a. A key contributor to sustainability of the development outcomes is the design of the project itself. The project supported key areas within the government's existing ECE program. The project supported MOET's program and the additionality of the project through the results indicators was an effort to improve the quality throughout the system. The financing mechanism was budget support, with use of ongoing government budget lines. This has made the transition at the closure of the project almost seamless, as activities continued and were not perceived as SRPP-specific activities. The subsequent (post-project) MOET budget allocations increased for ECE, indicating increased support and a high degree of sustainability.
- b. Key policies and components have been institutionalized. Professional development modules and preschool accreditation are strong examples of this institutionalization. The training approach of 10 priority modules and 10 advanced modules for teaching staff and managers is viewed as highly effective. The new comprehensive childhood development curriculum (developmental domains), focusing on effective classroom methods, is now integrated into the system.



- c. Sustainability and continuation of the outcomes has also been demonstrated through key policies. With the success of the universalization of ECE for 5-year-old children for the period 2010-2015, the MOET received opinions and aspirations of the provincial people, and unanimous agreement from relevant ministries, and submitted to the government ECE Development Scheme period 2016-2025, and issued a Governmental Decree on a number of ECE development policies period 2016-2020.
- d. A proven and accepted template is now available for further expansion.

84. Although there is clearly strong support for ECE and the program is moving forward, there are some SRPP activities that will require attention for continuation. Monitoring and on-site support to provinces will need to continue to improve. Teacher training is an ongoing effort. The online LMS has been one of the highly successful aspects of the program, but will still require continued support. SRPP also introduced a new community-based ECE center model in four provinces and cities, supplementing ECE shortcomings in disadvantaged areas, providing opportunities for development and more choices for parents with early childhood care and education. This model is the basis for the government to study early childhood development policy which is being concerned by low-income communities and international organizations. This was a very small proportion of overall project resources and the centers were established toward the end of the project, so the long-term sustainability is unclear, but the government stressed the importance of these centers and their role for future ECE expansion.

85. The project results indicators also show that the difficult regional socio-economic conditions, poor family's living conditions, and mother's low educational level are still direct factors limiting the effectiveness of child education. There is also still a gap for EMs, as measured in the EDI results. It is therefore necessary to continue to channel resources and have special interventions for these groups to further improve children development level and school readiness.

## V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

86. **Lesson 1. Communication across ministries and cross-sector collaboration can play a critical role in project success.** The strong communication between with the MOF and MOET were cited as having been essential for the project and making sure funding was available. The nature of ECE including nutrition also required cross-sector collaboration with the Ministry of Health and with important organizations such as the Women's Union and with local government. The high level of horizontal and cross-sectoral communication were viewed as being a major contributor to the success of the project and in raising the profile and awareness of ECE.

87. **Lesson 2. Collaboration within the Ministry is essential for projects that span multiple functional departments.** A small PMU was created within the MOET Department of Early Childhood Education and coordinated by the MOET Department of Planning and Finance, but the MOET system was used to implement the project. All MOET functional departments were part of the PMU to administer the project – including Planning and Finance, the Department of Teachers and Education, Accreditation and Early Childhood Education -- but the representatives were also carrying out their full departmental duties rather than having full-time PMU assignments. This was particularly effective because implementation of the project was integrated into the daily activities of MOET departments.

88. **Lesson 3. A focus on government programs and the use of existing government systems to achieve disbursement-linked indicators has a greater possibility of ensuring ownership and sustainability.** The project is



considered to be highly sustainable in large part because it supported key areas within the government's existing ECE program rather than operating as a separate project. The financing mechanism was budget support, with use of ongoing government budget lines and no ring-fencing, creating no additional transaction costs. The additionality of the project through the results indicators was an effort to improve the quality throughout the system. This has made the transition at the closure of the project almost seamless, as activities continued and were not perceived as SRPP-specific activities. The subsequent (post-project) MOET budget allocations increased for ECE, indicating increased support and a high degree of sustainability. The model also helped to institutionalize key policies and activities. Institutional arrangements facilitated implementation, improved disbursement, and fast-tracked achievement of exceeding targets.

89. **Lesson 4. Complementary TA support is important when providing budget support and DLI approach to introduce quality aspects into a system.** The TA support under component 2, while only 5 percent of project funding, played a critical supportive role. Capacity building and further development of ECE policy were integral, including (a) strengthening planning and reporting systems for ECE; (b) strengthening professional development for ECE personnel; (c) development of ECE policy and regulation; (d) independent verification and performance audits of the Disbursement Linked Indicators reporting; (e) financial management capacity-building for the purposes of the results-based financing under Part 1 of the Project; and (f) project management, monitoring and evaluation. The TA support is considered to have helped enhance quality and effectiveness in key areas and contributed to ensuring activities took place that would have potentially been difficult under the government system.

90. **Lesson 5. Projects that are designed to demonstrate effectiveness will benefit from a results-based focus and inclusion of measurable evidence.** Increasing financial commitments to the ECE program was likely to be sustainable, contingent on the government being able to demonstrate results. The SRPP was designed to help government prioritize spending on improved quality, as well as on better targeting of program resources. It also helped the government to justify its investment in preschool by documenting results. The SRPP built administrative, auditing, and reporting capacity to improve the results focus. In addition, the EDI survey provided important analytical support for the ICR findings and reporting. Without a robust survey that measured readiness to learn, it would have been difficult to demonstrate improvements in the project's main objective of student readiness to learn or to attribute actual project impact.

91. **Lesson 6. A project that explicitly aims to raise the profile of its area (in this case ECE) can create positive synergies.** The project from the outset had the goal of providing strong evidence on the benefits of ECE. This was a driving factor in how the project was approached. Activities were designed and implemented to ensure quality and results. Supplemental activities like the 2017 international conference on ECE were done to shine a light on the importance of ECE and showcase the project accomplishments. The profile was raised, demand for ECE services increased and this gave leverage for MOET by the end of the project to push for additional resources and ensure sustainability of activities.

92. **Lesson 7: A project that is kept simple and clear will have a higher likelihood of success.** The SRPP focused only on ECE and was kept simple in terms of the objectives, the PDOs and the related activities supported under the project. This was a contributing factor to its success and could serve as a model for other projects.

93. **Recommendation 1: Support of the LMS.** One of the big successes of the project was the effective use of e-learning and the establishment of the LMS. This can serve as a model for further teacher professional



development in Vietnam -- including for the Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness Project (ETEP) -- and globally. MOET has transferred the technology management of the LMS to the Information and Communications Technology Department and the content management to the Teachers and/or ECE Department. It will be critical to have high levels of communication between departments to ensure the LMS system receives the proper level of support both technically and in terms of content in order to function properly in the long-term.

94. **Recommendation 2: MOET could continue to support the implementation of the 10 priority modules in day-to-day activities.** While the practice guidelines and criteria on how to implement child-centered preschools have been issued, some preschools, especially in ethnic minority areas and other disadvantaged areas, need more support. MOET needs to closely monitor and encourage provinces to provide on-site support to teachers and managers to adopt child-centered approaches in their daily working.

95. **Recommendation 3: Continue supporting the pilot community based ECD Centers and conduct an evaluation to determine effectiveness and sustainability.** The centers appear to provide a very useful model for enhancing integrated ECD services and garnering additional community support. The initial level of enthusiasm for the centers was very high, but required a large amount of time from volunteers (both support staff and experts). Longer-term sustainability will require funding, possibly through charging small fees for services. Such sustainability options could further be explored.

96. **Recommendation 4: Continue expanding ECE full-day enrolment at younger ages (3-5), particularly in educationally disadvantaged districts so that more ethnic minority and poor children can benefit from better ECE services.** Great progress has been made and the government now has momentum to expand to the hardest to reach groups.



**ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS**

**A. RESULTS INDICATORS**

**A.1 PDO Indicators**

**Objective/Outcome:** Raising school readiness for five year old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment

**Unlinked Indicators**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Reduction in the share of 5 year-old children who are vulnerable (in the bottom 10 percent in at least one developmental domain defined by the 2012 baseline distribution) on the EDI	Percentage	24.00	22.00	22.00	12.30
		01-Jan-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	31-May-2016

**Comments (achievements against targets):**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion



Number of provinces achieving universal preschool for 5 year-old children	Number	10.00 01-Jan-2013	50.00 30-Jun-2017	50.00 30-Jun-2017	63.00 14-Jun-2017
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Comments (achievements against targets):

## A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators

### Component: Component 1

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Rate of enrolment in preschool of 5 year-old children	Percentage	96.40 31-May-2012	97.50 30-Jun-2017	97.50 30-Jun-2017	98.85 14-Jun-2017

Comments (achievements against targets): No revision of target

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of 5 year-old children enrolled in preschool benefiting from full-day provision	Percentage	73.70 31-May-2012	80.00 30-Jun-2017	80.00 30-Jun-2017	87.60 14-Jun-2017

Comments (achievements against targets): No revision of target





Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Increase in the share of preschools having been accredited at least for level 1 quality level	Percentage	0.00	40.00	40.00	41.04
		01-Jan-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	14-Jun-2017

**Comments (achievements against targets):**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of preschool teachers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program	Percentage	0.00	90.00	90.00	95.32
		31-May-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017

**Comments (achievements against targets):** No revision of target

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of preschool education managers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program	Percentage	0.00	90.00	90.00	98.08
		31-May-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017



Comments (achievements against targets): No revision of target

**Component: Component 2**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Increase in the share of preschools having been accredited at least for level 1 quality level	Percentage	0.00	40.00	40.00	41.04
		01-Jan-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	14-Jun-2017

Comments (achievements against targets):

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of preschool teachers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program	Percentage	0.00	90.00	90.00	95.32
		31-May-2013	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2017

Comments (achievements against targets): No revision of target

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
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Share of preschool education managers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program	Percentage	0.00 31-May-2013	90.00 30-Jun-2017	90.00 30-Jun-2017	98.08 30-Jun-2017
<b>Comments (achievements against targets):</b> No revision of target					

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**B. KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT**

<b>Objective/Outcome 1</b> To raise school readiness for 5-year-old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduction in the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable (in the bottom 10 percent in at least one developmental domain defined by the 2012 baseline distribution) on the EDI</li> <li>2. Number of provinces achieving universal preschool for 5-year-old children</li> </ol>
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rate of enrolment in preschool of 5-year-old children</li> <li>2. Share of 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool benefiting from full-day provision</li> <li>3. Increase in the share of preschools having been accredited at least for level 1 quality level</li> <li>4. Share of preschool teachers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program</li> </ol>
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guiding regulations for preschool quality self-assessment (DLI 3, component 1)</li> <li>2. Self-Assessments undertaken (DLI 4, component 1)</li> <li>3. Accreditation of schools (DLI 5, component 1)</li> <li>4. Training of ECE staff through core and advanced modules (DLI 7 and 8, components 1 and 2)</li> <li>5. School lunch support received by children (resulting in Expanded Full Day Preschool Enrolments and Attendance (DLI 2, component 1))</li> </ol>

**ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION****A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Preparation</b>	
Christian Bodewig	Task Team Leader
James A. Stevens	Task Team Leader
An Thi My Tran	Team member
Binh Thanh Vu	Team member
Lingzhi Xu	Team member
Kari L. Hurt	Team member
Binh Thanh Vu	Team member
Nguyet Minh Nguyen	Team member
Jeffrey Waite	Advisor
Eduardo Velez Bustillo	Sector manager
Quynh Thi Xuan Phan	FM Specialist
Miguel-Santiago da Silva Oliveira	FM Specialist
Cung Van Pham	FM Specialist
Tuan Anh Le Social	Development Specialist
Hoai Van Nguyen	Procurement Specialist
Thuy Cam Duong	Environmental Specialist
Hisham A. Abdo Kahin	Country Lawyer
<b>Supervision/ICR</b>	
An Thi My Tran	Task Team Leader(s)
Hoai Van Nguyen	Procurement Specialist(s)
Cung Van Pham	Financial Management Specialist
Lan Thi Thu Nguyen	Environmental Safeguards Specialist



Rosfita Roesli	Team Member
Nguyet Minh Nguyen	Team Member
Giang Tam Nguyen	Social Safeguards Specialist
Quynh Nguyen	Consultant

**B. STAFF TIME AND COST**

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time and Cost	
	No. of staff weeks	US\$ (including travel and consultant costs)
<b>Preparation</b>		
FY10	20.727	48,041.99
FY11	38.077	130,961.82
FY12	39.458	190,631.06
FY13	32.913	163,358.13
FY14	10.525	62,978.98
FY15	2.400	13,295.04
FY16	5.450	34,093.17
FY17	5.100	24,509.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>154.65</b>	<b>667,870.06</b>
<b>Supervision/ICR</b>		
FY13	.450	5,044.70
FY14	19.910	64,863.39
FY15	29.057	156,247.13
FY16	22.155	91,737.41
FY17	3.900	38,392.48
FY18	4.725	47,387.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.20</b>	<b>403,672.30</b>





**ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Amount at Approval (US\$M)</b>	<b>Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)</b>	<b>Percentage of Approval (US\$M)</b>
Component 1: Promoting School Readiness for Disadvantaged Children	95.00	95.00	100
Component 2: National Early Childhood Education Policy Development and Capacity	5.00	4.95	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>99.00</b>

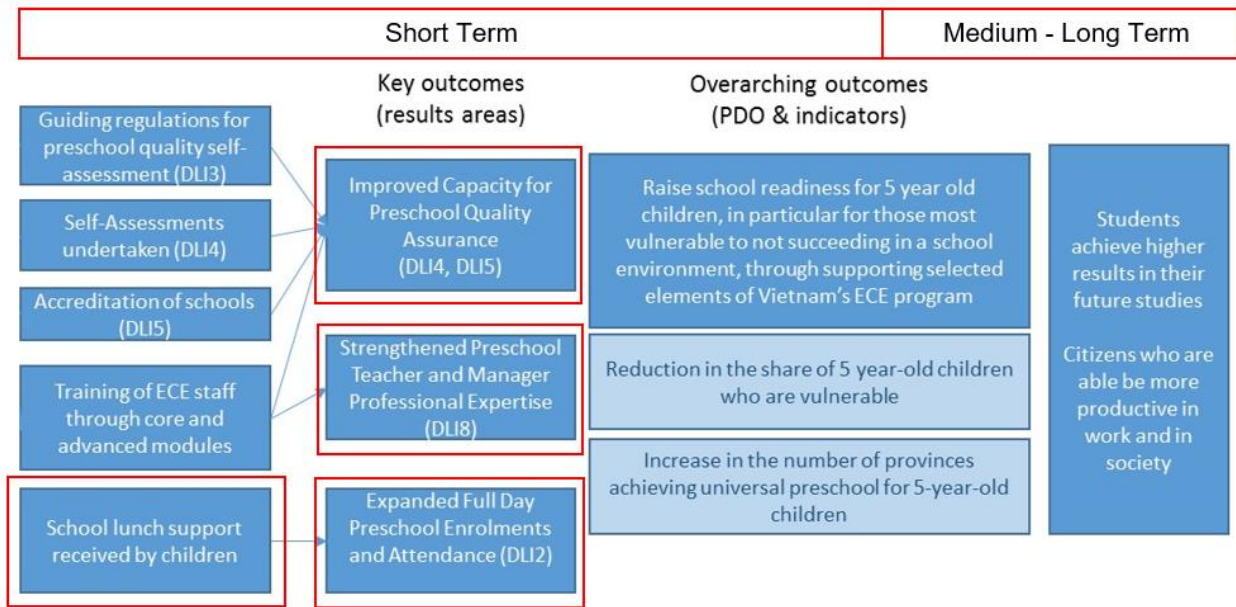




ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS

1. SRPP is expected to have a significant development impact through improving quality and access to preschool. The PDO was to raise school readiness for 5-year-old children, in particular for those most vulnerable to not succeeding in a school environment, through supporting selected elements of Vietnam's Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. The economic benefits of SRPP budget support arise through improved learning outcomes and associated higher productivity and wages, by supporting (a) the expansion preschool enrollment, and of full-day preschool enrollment for 5-year-old children (b) the provision of lunch subsidies for disadvantaged children to promote demand, (c) higher preschool quality through more and better teacher and school management training, (d) the establishment of a quality assurance and accreditation process; all under Component 1. Furthermore, SRPP supported policy measures to determine standards and authorize quality assurance systems that would guide investments in ECED and strengthen monitoring and reporting under Component 2. The main investments were under Component 1 and provided on-budget results-based financing to support the implementation of the Government's school readiness promotion interventions. The framework of economic benefits, based on the Theory of Changes is depicted in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Framework of economic benefits based on Theory of Change



2. Reduction in the share of 5-year-old children who are vulnerable (PDO Indicator 1): Over the course of SRPP, the share of vulnerable 5-year-old children halved.<sup>12</sup> The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures school readiness through a set of developmental domains. EDI baseline data collected in 2012 found that 24 percent 5-year-old children were “vulnerable” as defined by being in the bottom 10 percent of the developmental outcome distribution in at least one developmental domain. Based on previous trends and projections of additional interventions through SRPP, the end target for this indicator

<sup>12</sup> Based on EDI data collected in 2012 and 2017.



was set at 22 percent at Project Design. However, over the course of SRPP, the percentage of 5-year-old children falling into the “vulnerable” category decreased significantly more, to 12 percent, cutting the percentage of “vulnerable” children effectively in half.<sup>13</sup> Given that SRPP provided on-budget financing, the direct effect of SRPP in reducing the number of “vulnerable” students is difficult to estimate, however, the fact that the share of vulnerable 5-year-old children halved over the time of the SRPP support, points at substantial additionality gains through the project.

3. **Increase in the number of provinces achieving “universal preschool” for 5-year old children (PDO Indicator 2): 26% more provinces achieved “universal preschool” and all intermediate results indicators were exceeded, pointing at substantial additionality gains through SRPP.** By the end of the project all 63 Vietnamese provinces had achieved “universal preschool” as defined by (a) enrollment rate above 95 percent, (b) enrollment rate of 5-year-olds in full-day preschool above 85 percent, (c) attendance rate above 90 percent, (d) incidence rate of underweight malnutrition of pre-primary students below 10 percent, and (e) infrastructure and teacher qualifications meeting certain standards. The target was exceeded by 13 provinces, or 26%. All Intermediate Results Indicators exceeded their targets, the largest increase being the share of 5-year-old children enrolled in full-day schooling, pointing at a strong translation of project inputs to outcomes and the additionality of the project (see Table 1).

**Table 1: All Intermediate Results Indicator exceeding targets**

Intermediate Results Indicators	Baseline (2012/2013)	Target	Actual (2016/2017)
IR 1: Rate of enrolment in preschool of 5-year-old children (%)	96.4	97.5	98.9
IR 2: Share of 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool benefiting from full-day provision (%)	73.7	80.0	87.6
IR 3: Increase in the share of preschools having been accredited at least for level 1 quality level (%)	0.0	40.0	41.0
IR 4: Share of preschool teachers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program (%)	0.0	90.0	92.8
IR 5: Share of preschool education managers having successfully completed the priority modules of the professional development program (%)	0.0	90.0	98.5

4. **Attending pre-primary school has significant impacts on learning outcomes.** Investments in human capital before the start of primary school lay the foundations for learning during basic education. These investments have benefits in terms cognitive and non-cognitive development, which in turn have benefits later in life, such as higher productivity and wages (Naudeau et al., 2010). This is particularly true for children from disadvantaged background, making pre-primary education investments not just economically sound, but also equity promoting. PISA (OECD, 2016) shows that students who had attended pre-primary school tend to perform better at the age of 15 than students who had not attended: “Students

<sup>13</sup> Based on the 2012 distribution. The Baseline data collection was carried out in 2012, and the end line data collection in 2016.



who had attended between 2 and 3 years of pre-primary school score 35 points higher than students who did not attend and 50 score points higher than students who had attended less than one year, on average.”<sup>14</sup> OECD (2013), estimates the effect size for Vietnamese students who had attended pre-primary school for more than one year on mathematics performance of 15-year old children to be 0.43 SD.<sup>15</sup> Berlinski et al (2009) investigated the effect of a large expansion of pre-primary education, similar to SRPP, on primary school performance in Argentina. They found that one year of pre-primary school increased average third grade test scores by 24% of the standard deviation of the distribution of test scores.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Aboud and Hossain (2011), found the effect size of pre-primary school attendance on primary school performance in first and second grade for rural Bangladeshi students to be between 0.36-0.67 (first grade) and 0.19-0.58 (second grade).<sup>17</sup>

**5. Furthermore, additional instructional time, specifically full-day schooling, together with teaching quality, also leads to higher learning outcomes.** Main funding under SRPP was targeted to support full-day schooling, specifically for 5-year-old pre-primary students. There exists a large body of research showing positive and significant effect sizes of full-day schooling on learning outcomes. Nguyen and Griffin (2010) analyzed the 2007 national Grade 5 survey of student achievement in Vietnam and found that student enrolment in full day school programs contributed to differences in mathematics achievement. This finding is in line with Tam et al (2015), who find that “full-day schooling improves student learning progress” utilizing the Young Lives School Survey 2011 data. Nguyen and Griffin (2010) also highlight the positive impact of teacher feedback and teacher subject knowledge on student achievement.<sup>18</sup> Recent research on Full-day schooling programs in Mexico by Padilla-Romo (2016) and Cabrera-Hernandez (2015) also indicate significant impact of FDS programs on mathematics and Spanish test scores, with the effect size growing with years of implementation.<sup>19</sup>

**6. The estimated impact of the SRPP project support on learning outcomes can be proxied by existing evidence of similar education interventions.** Table 2 presents a summary of estimated impacts of selected education interventions that are relevant to activities supported by SRPP funding. These include specific research on the effect of pre-primary school attendance, specifically in Vietnam, full-day schooling and teacher quality as described in paras 4 and 5. In addition, estimated average intervention effect sizes from meta-analyses by Krishnaratne et al (2013) and McEwan (2015) are used to proxy the impact of SRPP funding pertaining to teacher training, expanded learning and instructional time and school meals. Overall, the statistically significant estimated impacts of interventions range from 0.09 to 0.67 standard deviations increase in student test scores. Based on this evidence and observations from the project’s results framework, we can reasonably expect the SRPP project to have a similar range of impacts on student learning outcomes.

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<sup>14</sup> PISA 2015 Results (Volume II): Policies and practices for successful schools, OECD 2016, page 46, please note that the relation is curvilinear: students who had spent too little time (less than one year) in pre-primary education score lower than students who had not attended or who had spent more than one year

<sup>15</sup> PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity (Volume II): Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed, OECD 2013, Table II.4.12

<sup>16</sup> Berlinski, S., S. Galiani and P. Gertler (2009), “The effect of pre-primary education on primary school, performance”, *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 93/1, pp. 219-234, Mathematics test scores

<sup>17</sup> Frances E. Aboud, Kamal Hossain (2011), “The impact of pre-primary school on primary school achievement in Bangladesh”, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Volume 26, Issue 2, 2nd Quarter 2011, Pages 237-246

<sup>18</sup> On teacher subject knowledge also see Hungi (2008).

<sup>19</sup> Padilla-Romo (2016) finds that adoption of full-day schooling improves student achievement by a 5% of a standard deviation one year after adoption and by 15% of a standard deviation four years after adoption.



**Table 2: Recent studies on impact on student learning outcomes relevant to SRPP funding**

Authors (Year)	Category of intervention	Effect Size (SD)	Relevant SRPP support
OECD (2013)	Attending pre-primary school in Vietnam (> 1 year)	0.43**	PDO/Pre-primary attendance
Aboud and Hossain (2011)	Attending pre-primary school	0.36-0.67***	PDO/Pre-primary attendance
Nguyen et al (2010)	Enrollment in full-day schooling program	0.10**	Full-day schooling
	Teacher quality: Teacher feedback	0.09**	Teacher training
Hungi (2008)	Teacher quality: Teacher subject knowledge	0.16**	Teacher training
Padilla-Romo (2016)	Enrollment in full-day schooling program	0.15***	Full-day schooling
Cabrera-Hernandez (2015)	Enrollment in full-day schooling program	0.11***	Full-day schooling
Hungi (2008)	Teacher quality: Teacher subject knowledge	0.16**	Teacher training
Lavy (2015)	Additional learning/instructional time	0.12**	Full-day schooling
Krishnaratne et al (2013)	Additional teachers/teaching time	0.28**	Full-day schooling
	School meals	0.06	School lunch
	School based management	0.22***	Principal Training
McEwan (2015)	Teacher quality: Teacher training	0.12***	Teacher training

Notes: \*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01, Note: School Based management (Krishnaratne et al, 2013) is used to proxy the summative effect of training provided to school administrators and community and parental involvement in school decision making.

7. **Increased learning outcomes can be compared to project costs through a Cost-Effectiveness analysis.** The purpose of cost-effectiveness analysis in education is to ascertain which program or combination of programs can achieve particular objectives at the lowest cost.<sup>20</sup> Typically, student learning outcomes are used as the respective measure of effectiveness (Bray, 2008) and compared to costs per student that are directly related to student learning.<sup>21</sup> With the objective of providing a conservative cost-effectiveness measure, we include all costs pertaining Component 1. In order to compare the cost-effectiveness of SRPP to other interventions, the impact is presented using the widely-accepted ratio of standard deviations per 100 US\$. Using PMU estimates of the average number of additional students supported through SRPP per year, the average cost per student for these additional students is USD\$ 154. Utilizing the range of estimated impacts of SRPP on learning outcomes (0.09 – 0.67 SD increase, see Table 2), the impact of SRPP ranges from 0.06 to 0.47 standard deviations per US\$100. The cost-effectiveness is likely to be on the upper end of this range due to two factors. Firstly, the effect size proxies for pre-primary

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/cde/econ/readings/levin95.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> For example, MacDonald et al (2017) estimate annual operating costs for an intervention on Early Grade Reading in Tonga, based on expenditure during the first year, exclude one-time costs related to the design of the program and materials. However, with the objective of providing a conservative cost-effectiveness measure, we include all costs pertaining to component 1.



access, which is the effect estimate most relevant to SRPP, are quite large (see first two rows of table 2). Secondly, the cost-effectiveness analysis is based on effect size proxies for individual aspects under SRPP. Thus, the overall effect size of SRPP, combining access to pre-primary schools, improved quality teaching, access to full-day pre-primary for most students and other resources is likely to be higher, due to interaction effects that are not captured by this analysis.

8. **Increased private earnings, as a result of increased learning outcomes, can be compared to project costs through a Cost-Benefit analysis.** Additionally, to the cost-effectiveness, a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of the project was conducted estimating private monetary returns to schooling based on: (i) benefits from similar education interventions; (ii) project costs; and (iii) projections on earning differentials for the beneficiaries. This presents more long-term analysis of private monetary benefits manifesting years after the program as a result of increased learning.

9. **Cognitive ability matters for earnings attainment.**<sup>22</sup> The link between earnings and school quality, as measured by cognitive skills attainment, has been analyzed in a research review by Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2010). The authors find that a standard deviation increase in cognitive ability corresponds to approximately 17 to 22 percent higher earnings on average (Table 3). Relating this increase in earning, on average 20 percent, to an estimated impact range under SRPP of 0.09 to 0.67 standard deviations, predicts a 1.82 to 13.53 percentage increase in earnings as a result of the SRPP funded interventions.

**Table 3: Estimated returns to a standard deviation increase in cognitive skills**

Country	Estimated Effect	Source
Chile	0.17	Patrinos and Sakellariou (2007)
Ghana	0.14–0.30	Glewwe (1996)
Ghana	0.05–0.07	Jolliffe (1998)
Kenya	0.19–0.22	Boissiere et al. (1985), Knight and Sabot (1990)
Pakistan	0.12–0.28	Alderman et al. (1996)
Pakistan	0.25	Behrman et al. (forthcoming)
South Africa	0.34–0.48	Moll (1998)
Tanzania	0.07–0.13	Boissiere et al. (1985), Knight and Sabot (1990)
Average	0.17-0.22	

Source: Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (2010)

10. **Earning differentials can be explained as a function of schooling and labor market experience.** Broadly speaking, they represent the value the labor market places on education as well as incentives for individuals to invest in education. In terms of private returns to schooling, the opportunity cost of one additional year of schooling is represented by foregone future earnings (Acemoglu and Autor, 2011).<sup>23</sup> Research indicates that ECE interventions have high benefit-cost ratios and rates of return (Engle et al,

<sup>22</sup> Leuven et al. (2004)

<sup>23</sup> Acemoglu and Autor (2011), Lectures in Labor Economics, manuscript, MIT



2011).<sup>24</sup> Nadeau et al (2011) have estimated the annual rates of return for high quality ECE programs to be between 7% and 16%.<sup>25</sup> Doan et al (2016) find that one additional year of schooling corresponds to 5.7 percent higher earnings in their latest estimate based on the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey 2014, which is below the regional East Asia & Pacific average of 9.2 percent.<sup>26</sup> Montenegro and Patrinos (2014) find a declining trend in returns to schooling, rising average levels of schooling attainment, and increased skill supply suggesting an increasing world demand for skills.

11. **Future increased earnings, as a result of the SRPP funding additionality, can be estimated using Mincer earnings equation.** Based on Doan et al. (2016) estimate of 5.7 percent higher earnings corresponding to one additional year of schooling, and recent enrolment and graduation data for Vietnam, we estimate the future annual earnings for additional students benefiting from pre-primary education due to SRPP financing.<sup>27</sup> Figure 5 shows the increase in enrollment of 3 to 5-year-olds in pre-primary education before and during the SRPP implementation period. We then calculate the annual increase in future earnings as a direct effect of the SRPP project using a lower-end estimate (1.82 percent increase), a middle estimate (7.67 percent increase), and a high-end estimate (13.53 percent increase). In a final step, the stream of increased earnings for the direct beneficiaries<sup>28</sup>, which represents the additional private return incurred through the SRPP project's additionality, are compared to the total project costs to calculate net present value (NPV) and internal rate of return (IRR) (Table 4). Within the range of estimated percentage increases in earnings, based on the returns to individual project components (Table 3), the SRPP project yields an IRR between 12 percent and 23 percent, and a NPV between US\$478,899,535 and US\$4,089,437,345. Even under a worst-case scenario, which assumes no increased earnings for half of the cohorts, due to the comparatively short exposure to increased pre-primary access and improved quality, and only 1.8 percent increased earnings for retained cohorts, the project still yields an IRR of 9 percent and NPV of US\$215,992,518.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 4: Increase in share of 3 to 5-year-old children enrolled in ECE before and during SRPP implementation**

<sup>24</sup> Engle, Patrice L., Lia C.H. Fernald, Harold Alderman, Jere Behrman, Chloe O'Gara, Aisha Yousafzai, Meena Cabral de Mello, Melissa Hidrobo, Nurper Ulkuer, Ilgi Ertem, and Selim Iltus (2011). "Strategies for reducing inequalities and improving developmental outcomes for young children in low-income and middle-income countries" *The Lancet* 378.9799:1339-1353.

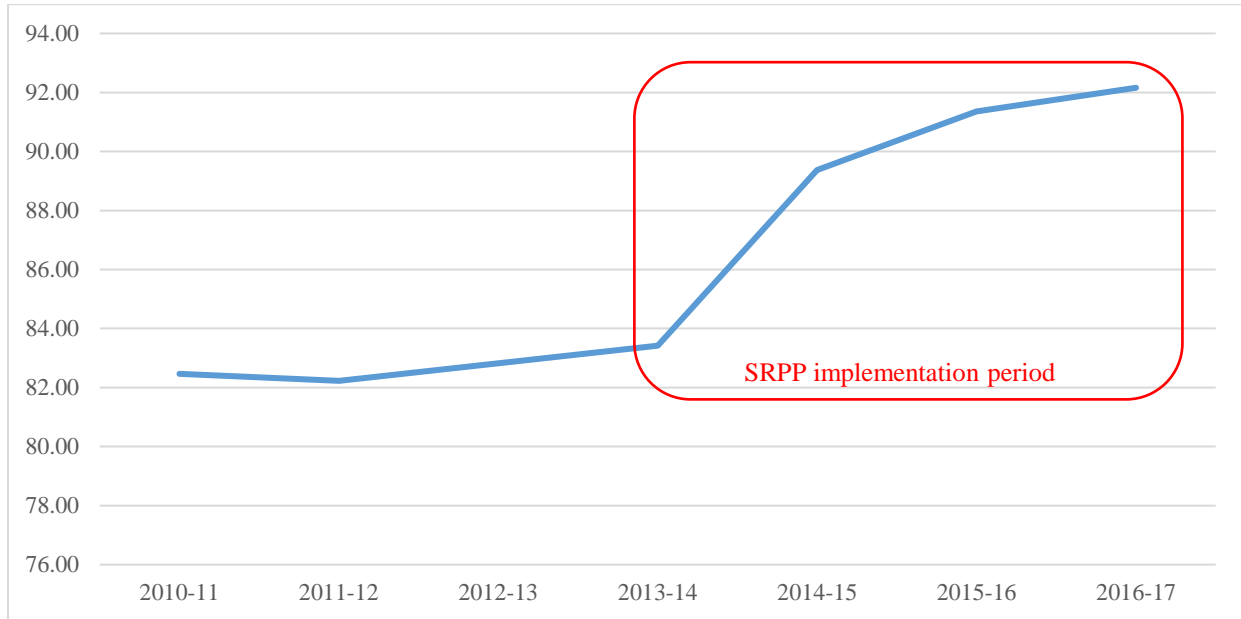
<sup>25</sup> Nadeau, Sophie, Kataoka N, Valerio A, Neumann MJ, Elder LK (2011). "Investing in young children: an early childhood development guide for policy dialogue and project preparation". The World Bank. Washington, DC.

<sup>26</sup> World Bank, Education Global Practice – EAP, internal memo (July 2016)

<sup>27</sup> For the Mincer earnings function, no earnings are assumed before age 15 and after age 60. The number of additional students benefiting from pre-primary education due to SRPP budget support have been estimated by the PMU. For the purpose of creating a conservative benefit estimate, we only calculate future benefits for the cohorts (age 3-5-year-olds) in school at the time of project implementation (2013-2017). Future cohorts, that would have access to long-term benefits, such as increased access and better quality ECE, are not assumed as direct beneficiaries of the project for that purpose.

<sup>28</sup> The number of additional students benefiting from pre-primary education due to SRPP budget support have been estimated by the PMU.

<sup>29</sup> All Net Present Values and Internal Rate of Returns are calculated to the project start date in 2013 and are represented in US\$ 2013 figures. Inflation rates are based on historical figures and GSO projections.



Source: PMU data

**Table 4: Summary of Cost-Benefit Analysis for additional students benefiting from pre-primary education through SRPP financing**

Direct beneficiaries	High returns (13.5%)	Medium returns (7.7%)	Low returns (1.8%)	Worst-case* (1.8%)
NPV	US\$ 4,089,437,345	US\$ 2,282,626,793	US\$ 478,899,535	US\$ 215,992,518
IRR	23%	19%	12%	9%

Source: Author's calculations, Assumptions: 5% discount rate (WB/IMF standard), exchange rate as stated in ICR, inflation rates by GSO, further assumptions on cost/benefit modelling, all NPV's in 2013 figures (project start)

12. **There are a number of additional monetary, non-monetary and social returns not captured by private monetary benefits to students.** Firstly, the above analysis, in an attempt to give a conservative estimate, only included the additional student cohort, who benefited from quality pre-primary education due to the SRPP budget-support to the existing GOV ECE financing.<sup>30</sup> However, improvements in teacher and school management training and accreditation for all pre-primary schools, have been supported financially and through technical assistance by SRPP. This improved school quality will likely have a positive impact on student learning for all pre-primary students in Vietnam and lead to better long-term economic development outcomes. Secondly, over the course of SRPP, the percentage of 5-year-old children identified as “vulnerable” decreased to half of its baseline value (24 percent). Richter et al (2016) estimate that for “children estimated to be at risk of poor development due to extreme poverty and stunting, their average percentage loss of adult income per year is likely to be 26%”.<sup>31</sup> Thus, SRPP project will most likely have a long-term development impact on inequality by offsetting these socio-economic

<sup>30</sup> As estimated by the PMU.

<sup>31</sup> Richter, Linda, Bernadette Daelmans, Joan Lombardi, Jody Heymann, Lorencia Lopez Boo, Jere R Berhman, Chunling Lu et al. 2016. “Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: pathways to scale up for early childhood development.” The Lancet. 2017. Volume 387. 103-18.



disadvantages. Another expected benefit includes lower dropout and repetition rates at lower and upper secondary level as a result of improved learning outcomes, as well as the provision of school meals, which effectively reduce the opportunity cost of attending school. These factors have not been incorporated in the above analysis, however are likely to lead to even higher earnings. Finally, the overall benefit of the project will likely be even higher, if we account for general social returns such as productivity spillovers and reduced crime rates (Moretti 2005).

13. **The SRPP project has been cost efficient, based on the comparison of unit costs of services provided under the project and GOV norms to increase demand in ECE.** Under component 1, SRPP supported the GOV’s effort to provide lunch subsidies for poor and ethnic minority children to incentivize the participation of EM children in pre-primary education, which enhances enrolment and attendance (see Figure 5). Eligibility for the lunch subsidy was defined as follows: “(i) children whose parents are residents in frontier or mountainous areas, island villages, or designated disadvantaged districts and villages; (ii) children from registered poor families; (iii) orphans, and (iv) disabled children with economic difficulties.”<sup>32</sup> Table 5 shows the GOV cost norm for lunch subsidies paid per student per month, that was paid during the SRPP implementation period.

**Table 5: GOV cost norm and lunch subsidy during SRPP implementation period**

GOV cost norm (per student)	Lunch subsidy during SRPP implementation period (per student)
US\$ 5/month	US\$ 5/month
VND 120000/month	VND 120000/month
GOV cost norm: Decision numbered 239/QĐ-TTg dated 9 February 2010	

Source: PMU data

<sup>32</sup> SRPP PAD, page 33





## ANNEX 5. BORROWER, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

### Project Description

1. Overview. The Viet Nam School Readiness Promotion Project is a special investment loan implemented in the form of disbursement-linked indicators. The project aims to support the implementation of Decision No. 239/QĐ-TTg and Decision No. 60/2011/QĐ-TTg by enhancing school readiness for disadvantaged children, through supporting targeted budget by reimbursement for a number of eligible items during 2012-2017.
2. General objectives. To support the improvement of school readiness for children from 3 to 5 years old under the Decision No. 239/QĐ-TTg dated 09/02/2010 of the Prime Minister approving the Scheme on universalizing ECE for 5 years old children period 2010-2015 and Decision No. 60/2011/QĐ-TTg dated 26 October 2011 of the Prime Minister stipulating a number of ECE development policies period 2011-2015 aimed to increase the number of children going to school and implementing quality full day ECEC to ensure that most 5 years old children in all regions are well prepared for physical, intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, and Vietnamese development and are ready for grade 1.
3. Component 1: Promoting school readiness for disadvantaged children (US\$95 million). On-budget funding will support the implementation of key elements of the Government's ECE universal scheme for 5 years old children and the implementation of policies on teachers and children aged 3-5 and the training to improve professional expertise for teachers and managers under Prime Minister's decision.
4. Component 2: National ECE policy development and capacity building (US\$5.5 million). SRPP will finance technical assistant, training expenditures and operating costs to support capacity building and implement ECE policy.
5. Project beneficiaries. Project beneficiaries are disadvantaged children aged 3-5. SRPP will focus resources and attention on preschools with low capacity to deliver quality services for the most vulnerable children in line with the new ECE curriculum. These preschools are often in disadvantaged areas with high shares of EM children, children from less educated parents and from poorer households who are the most likely to be vulnerable in terms of school readiness.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

#### Component 1: Promoting school readiness for disadvantaged children

6. DLI 1: Baseline report on enrolment of 3-5 and 5 years old children in full day preschool based on school year 2011/2012. The data was to be disaggregated by province, gender and ethnic minority status. SRPP collected reports from the DOETs about the results of enrolment of 3-5 and 5-year-old enrolled at the school of each district and province in 2011/2012 school year and completed the report and had it sent to the World Bank. Vietnam Institute for Educational Sciences (VNIES) verified results and submitted to the World Bank, achieved 100 percent target. In the school years 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2016-2017, the MOET collected data based on the prescribed form. The results show that during the implementation of policies stipulated in Decision No. 60/2011/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister, the rates of encouraging children aged 3-5 enrolled and attended full day preschool aged 3-5 rapidly increased, respectively increased by 1.99 percent and 2.92 percent.



Indicator	Baseline 2011-2012	Mid-line 2014-2015	End-line 2016-2017	Comparison
Rate of children aged 3-5 enrolled and attended full day preschool reached 80%	82.2%/65.59%	86.45%/73.63%	92.16%/ 80.17%	Completed report in 2013 (100%)

7. DLI 2: Share of 5 years old children enrolled and benefiting from full day provision reached 80 percent. To implement the universalization of preschool education for 5-year-old children under the Government's Decision No. 239/QĐ-TTg, the MOET has actively led the local authorities to have the work implemented. The provinces have included it into provincial socio-economic development objectives, coordinated the sectors at all levels, prioritized the resources, mobilized efforts of managers and teachers to perform it practically, with the support of local people. Therefore, by the end of April 2017, 63 out of 63 provinces met the target of universalisation of preschool education for 5 years old children. Provinces have well implemented policies for children and teachers, while maintaining the rate of under 5 years old children being provided with care and education at pre-schools, constantly raising the rate of children aged 5 enrolled and benefited from support lunch at the school. The rate of 5-year-old children supported with lunch increases annually. In the school year 2016-2017, the rate of children aged 5 enrolled is 98.75 percent, the number of children attending full day preschool is of 1,368,367 children reached 85.5 percent.

8. DLI 3: Issued circulars guiding self-assessment and external accreditation. Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (DETA) has formulated documents and actively advised the MOET's leaders on issuing Circular No. 07/2011/TT-BGDĐT and Circular No. 45/2011/TT-BGDĐT regulating Standards for accrediting preschool education quality, process and procedures in a timely manner. To unify levels of quality accreditation with other levels of education, simplifying administrative procedures for provinces, the MOET has integrated the above mentioned documents in Circular 25/2014/TT-BGDĐT regulating standards for evaluating preschool education quality, process and procedures for preschool accreditation. Criteria of Circular 25 are equivalent to the criteria regulated in Circular 07 and 45, appraised and approved by the World Bank at the mid-line Implementation Support Mission (ISM) from November 30, to December 4, 2015, thus Circular 25 does not change the project's end-line external accreditation objective (DLI 5). The DLI was 100 percent completed.

9. DLI 4: Preschools undertake self-assessment with 90 percent of preschools completing self-assessment activities. Based on the MOET's circular, DOETs has directed preschools to conduct self-assessment of preschool quality. The preschool quality self-assessment is included in the annual targets of the province. The MOET has issued many documents guiding the provinces to carry out self-assessment and external accreditations; guided requirements, suggestions for finding evidence in accordance with standards of preschool quality assessment; coordinated with the MOF in issuing Circular 125/2014/TTBTC-BGDĐT guiding contents and spending level for preschool education quality accreditation. Through synchronized implementation of measures, preschools accelerate the self-assessment progress, complete the target in the timely manner. Self-assessments went from the baseline of zero in 2011 to 96 percent in 2017 surpassing the target of 90 percent.

10. DLI 5: 40 percent of preschools externally accredited achieved at least quality level 1 standards. For



preschool education, this activity of preschool quality accreditation is new. Although there are guiding circulars, most educational managers at all levels were unfamiliar; foundation of the preschool input facilities was weak, many preschools are newly established ones, procedures and external accreditation records are relatively complex. The number of educational managers and teachers trained in external accreditation is inadequate. Some provinces have not paid much attention to this task, the MOET's and DOET's inspection and supervision has not been paid proper attention. Conducting self-assessment and external assessment requires: responsibility, funding, retrospective evidence finding, coordinated implementation. It is therefore necessary to provide PD training and time to implement. In the context of limited education budget, it is a big challenge. The MOET has coordinated with provinces to open 18 training courses on technique and external accreditation skills from local budgets for 6,312 people. SRPP PMU has coordinated with the DETA to organize many technical training and external accreditation skills activity at project's plan. 1,827 managers were trained in preschool quality's external accreditation at 7 venues in 7 regions of 63 provinces and cities. SRPP's efforts have increased the total number of managers and preschool teachers trained in preschool education quality's external accreditation to 8,139 people, contributing an important part to provincial self-assessment and external assessment. As of August 2015, 18.8 percent of the preschool externally accredited achieved at least quality level 1, an increase of 12.1 percent over the previous year's same period. By the end of 2016, 37.4 percent of preschools achieved at least quality level 1 and the end of March 2017, 41.0 percent of preschools achieved, surpassing 1 percent against the target. This result is considered outstanding in the preschool education quality accreditation.

#### Strengthen preschool teachers and managers professional expertise

11. DLI 6: The MOET issued decision to add nine child-centered priority modules, focusing on teaching EM and disadvantaged children, on regular PD program for preschool teachers and managers. On August 17, 2011 the MOET issued Circular No. 36/2011/TT-GDDT on teacher training under PD program for teachers; on July 10, 2012 the MOET issued Circular No. 26/2012/TT- GDT promulgating regular PD regulations for preschool teachers. On June 6, 2013, the MOET's appraisal council completed the 2nd round evaluation according to regulations and submitted to the Minister of Education and Training for decision to use regular PD training materials for teachers and managers according to the Decision No. 17/KH-BGDĐT on PD training plan for managers and preschool teachers in the period 2013-2015. 100 percent of the target was achieved.

12. DLI 7: Train 2.000 provincial trainers. This DLI was aimed at improving the teaching quality for EM children and disadvantaged children. From August 16 to September 15, 2013, SRPP PMU coordinated with the Preschool Department and the Department of Teachers and Educational managers to organize 45 training courses on PD priority modules for managers and senior teachers from 63 provinces, cities. There are 2,008 provincial senior staff trained in 10 priority modules to provide PD training for managers and teachers in the province.

13. DLI 8: 90 percent of preschools complete 10 priority modules training in the new preschool PD curriculum to improve the teaching quality for EM children and disadvantaged children. To implement Decision No. 17/KH-BGDĐT on PD training plan for managers and teachers, the MOET issued the official letter No. 597/BGDDT dated 13/2/2014, instructing the implementation of PD training plan for managers and teachers in the period 2013-2015, with effort to have 90 percent of teachers and managers completed 10 PD priority modules. Provinces have focused on conducting PD training of 10 priority modules for managers, teachers, providing skills support and methods of organizing activities of child care and education from the child-centred perspective, especially the preparation of Vietnamese for EM children. By the end of March 2016, 95.6 percent of the managers and teachers completed the training of 10 priority modules, of which 21 provinces and cities had 100 percent of managers and



teachers completed, 30 provinces had 90-99 percent completed the 10 priority modules training. The 90 percent target was exceeded by 5.6 percent.

#### Component 2: National ECE policy development and capacity building

14. Strengthening planning and reporting systems. Capacity building with the support of international and national consultants to improve preschool planning, implementation and reporting. This includes (i) assessment of weaknesses in the current reporting system and recommendations for systematic improvement measures, (ii) technical assistance and training in the preparation of provincial preschool education development plans and preschool self-assessment. During the project periods preschools and BOETs have improved their planning skills in child mobilization, implementing preschool curriculum, training 10 priority and advanced modules, accrediting preschool quality, preschool education reporting skills on above-mentioned indicators is increasingly improved, helping the localities with foundation to concentrate resources and implementation direction. Data on disbursement-linked indicators for the above activities, especially the improvement of preschool children enrolled, implementation of policies for kindergarten children and contract teachers, self-assessment and preschool quality external accreditation, training of priority modules is updated regularly. The independent verification report of the VNIES submitted to the MOET and the World Bank shows that data is reliable.

15. Strengthening the evaluation of results on school readiness by the Early Development Instrument (EDI) tool. Improvement of school readiness indicator for 5-6 years old children moving from kindergarten to 1st grade. This indicator is measured by the EDI, a tool measuring school readiness and supplemented by monitoring the drop-out and repeat rates of grade 1 students in the project's involved provinces. With the support of international and national consultants, the assessment based on the school readiness design template was developed on the basis of the EDI survey in the baseline 2011-2012 school year. The surveys were conducted in SRPP's mid-term and end-term. The EDI used Offord Center's EDI holistic 5 developmental domains, MacMaster University, Canada. The mid-term survey, based on the set sample implemented at the baseline survey, is revised to suit reality. The number of officially surveyed children in 2014 survey was of 8,562 students from 54 cities/provinces, of which 7,706 observations were eligible for representing Vietnamese children aged 5 and suitable for analysis. The 2016 end-term survey had official 8,247 children aged 5 surveyed. 7,564 observations have valid EDI data and used for analyzing reports.

16. Through surveys, school readiness indicator for preschool children improved significantly after four years of project implementation. The EDI surveys results showed that the proportion of children at risk of vulnerable and vulnerable in at least one domain reduced sharply from 2012 to 2016. By the end-term, only 29.6 percent of the 5-year-old children surveyed were identified as at risk of vulnerable and vulnerable in at least one domain. Comparing the 2016 results with those of 2014 and 2012, the proportion of children at risk of vulnerable and vulnerable in at least one domain had declined systematically, from 50.68 percent in 2012 down to 36.8 percent in 2014 and plunged to 29.6 percent in 2016 (reduced by 21.08 percent compared to 2012); This shows the practical impact of the project. The percentage of EM children vulnerable in each developmental domain has decreased significantly, falling from 11.6 percent to 24.5 percent. The proportion of vulnerable children from poor and non-poor households reduced almost by half (21.2 percent in 2016 against 41.3 percent in 2012). Despite the percentage of vulnerability overall reduced, groups of EM children, children from poor household, children with many siblings, and children of mothers with low levels of education are still children with high vulnerable percentage. In all three survey rounds of 2012, 2014 and 2016: The rate of vulnerability in at least one developmental domain in EM children is always higher than that of non-EM children. The proportion of vulnerable children from poor household is significantly higher than that of children from non-poor household. In 2016, the proportion of



vulnerable in at least one developmental domain in EM children (22.4 percent) was twice as high as that of non-EM children (9.1 percent). In comparing 2016 results with those of 2012 and 2014, the proportion of vulnerable in at least one developmental areas in EM and non-EM significantly reduced.

17. *Percentages of vulnerability in children who attend full day preschool with lunch and don't attend continuously from the age of 3 to 5 years has a big gap.* The proportion of vulnerability in at least one developmental domain among children who attend full day preschool with lunch and attend full day without lunch has decreased significantly: both decreased by 9.5 percent. The proportion of vulnerability in at least one developmental domain in children who do and don't attend preschool continuously from the age of 3 to 5 years in 2016 has decreased significantly, from 9-13 percent compared to that of 2012.

18. *The level of training, capacity of managers and teachers, priority modules training activity, facility conditions, equipment, toys, and school quality affect school readiness.* Modules training activity has been evaluated by teachers and managers useful and effective in their actual work at preschools, contributing to improving the quality of child care and education and reducing the percentage of vulnerability. Classrooms have adequate equipment, toys and teachers know how to use them effectively in organizing activities for children to explore and contribute to the preparation of children entering school.

19. Strengthening professional development for ECE staff. The Government and the MOET are in the process of developing and renewing professional qualification for Vietnamese ECE staff to equip them with the most advanced practiced. The project supports these initiatives in three directions:

- Evaluation of ECE personnel training system and policy proposals. Technical support for a comprehensive assessment of: (i) teacher training and PD policies in selected countries with advanced ECE systems; (ii) Formal training curriculum for both full-time pre-service and part-time in-service training; (iii) training contents and methods to ensure that training addresses essential competencies, including those related to teaching of EM children and children with disabilities; (iv ) the selection criteria for and duration of pre-service training; (v) measures to build capacity for trainers and lecturers and others as needed; (vi) exploration of potential college equivalencies and formal credentials for training programs occurring outside of the higher education system; (vii) improvements to data on all aspects of the teacher training system; and (viii) Policy recommendations to increase the number of EM teachers trained.
- Preparation of PD programs for ECE staff. There was development of 10 PD priority modules out of 42 regular PD modules with the support of International and national ECE experts. The current 10 ECE priority modules, actively develops in the direction of children-centered approach in early childhood care and education. There were 4 modules for managers which were: building child-centered preschool; involvement of parents and community in child care and education; care and education for EM children and disadvantaged children; and nutrition and organizing lunch for preschool children. There were 6 modules for preschool teachers which were: language development education; cognitive development education; social skills and Emotional development education; building child-centered preschool; and involvement of parents and community in child care and education; and care and education for EM children and disadvantaged children.



- The MOET's appraisal and evaluation board completed 2 evaluation rounds according to regulations and submitted to the Minister of Education and Training for decision to use priority modules as regular training materials for teachers and managers. The 10 priority modules for professional development are printed and posted online at <http://taphuan.nhagio.edu.vn> so that managers and teachers can download for prior self-study and post training.

20. The ECE evaluation found that after completing the training for 2,008 provincial trainers, in order to promote PD training for managers and teachers, the MOET issued Official Letter No. 597 / BGDDT dated 13/02/2014 guiding the implementation of Decision No. 17 / KH-BGDDT on PD training plans for managers and teacher, with the target of 90 percent of managers and teachers trained on priority modules. Provinces have actively deployed professional training for managers and teachers, ensuring training conditions, quantity and quality as prescribed. By the end of March 2016, 95.6 percent of managers and teachers had completed the training of 10 priority modules, of which 51/63 (80.95percent) provinces had 90-100 percent of their learners completed 10 priority modules training. Managers and preschool teachers firmly grasp the content and apply it to their work, especially the content of building a child-centered preschool in the development, design of educational environment and activities. An independent web-based survey and direct interview on the quality and effectiveness of the 10 priority modules training for 9,025 trainees (have separate report) in August 2016, shows that: (i)93.7 percent of learners rated the training materials are very useful for child care and education at their preschool; and (ii) 2.3 percent of learners are not confident about applying learned knowledge and skills after the completion of the training. Finding related to the time to apply the knowledge was as follows: (i) 55.9 percent of learners applied immediately (after 1 week) learned knowledge and skills in child care and education at their preschool upon completion of the training and (ii) 9.1 percent of learners have not applied within 3 months learned knowledge and skills to their work. Finding related to level of educational attainment after applying priority modules into work was: (i) 43 percent of learners stated that their child care and education process was improved thanks to the learned knowledge and skills; (ii) 56.1 percent assessed the learned knowledge made their work better; (iii) 0.9 percent stated that there was no change in their child care and education; (iv) 95.5 percent of learners believe that parents and community appreciate (satisfied and very satisfied) changes in their child care and education through applying learned knowledge and skills of 10 priority modules; and (v) 4.4 percent are not yet satisfied or aware of changes in their child after teacher applied learned knowledge and skills of the modules.

21. In addition, level of active involvement of children in activities were: (i) 43.5 percent of managers and teachers evaluated that children are much more involved and 55.6 percent teachers said children are more active in participation in preschool activities after teacher applied new knowledge and skills of priority modules; and (ii) 0.8 percent of managers and teachers did not find any positive change in children after applying learned skills and knowledge.

22. Evaluation and revision of regular PD program. After two years of implementing the 10 priority modules, expert team re-evaluated the modules to renovate the content and methodologies and further develop the professional skills for managers and teachers, continue the improvement of child care and education quality. Once the re-evaluation there was an online learning software system (LMS) developed by Viking and PassionZone with the structure and interface directly modified by international expert, advanced modules are appropriately formatted according to the new learning method to upload to the network, and commented by the teacher and managers in accordance with 03 levels of testing specified. The software was tested and accepted by the MOET



on 24/9/2016 at <http://srpp.edu.vn> for official training implementation. There was additional training and retraining activities on the revised modules approved by the MOET's leaders, leading the transition from traditional training (face to face) to online training (E-learning). By the end of June, 2017, through the website <http://srpp.edu.vn>, SRPP has completed training for about 38,000 learners as managers and teachers nationwide, completed the plan on time and achieved good results. 97.83 percent of learners rated this LMS system actively supported them during their study process. The content of the discussion topics was also highly appreciated in terms of training content and practicality (96.68 percent rated very good and good). Due to the designedly flexible learning contents to make it easy for learners to study at any time and anywhere, most learners are interested, self-conscious and actively involved in learning. Many learners stayed up late to complete the training program. The LMS system's operation log shows that the system operates and serves almost 24/7, and there are always learners learning on the system. Mechanisms of control, reports, feedback help the MOET and provinces easily grasp and control the learning progress of learners, from which there are measures to urge participants to participate and complete the program.

23. This is a remarkable success of the Project, the LMS actually facilitated conditions for the ECE in a new PD training form, in which learners learn voluntarily. Each learner not only shares in the learning process, but also excitedly share at the end of the course with colleagues. Educational leaders at all levels are happy to know learning status of participants at any given time whether they are studying or have completed with a credible and rigorous results. The percentage of learners attended and finished the program is very high. Most provinces reached over 90 percent. This is the highest rate compared to previous E-Learning training programs. This PD training program is sustainable, easy to quantify, maintain and transfer technology.

24. Developing ECE policy and regulation for the next period. This sub-component financed national and international consultants, as well as workshops to support the development of policies and regulations on preschool education, including strategies for preschool development. It also includes workshops that share best practices between provinces. The sub-component supported the development of ECE policy scheme for the period 2016-2025. This support helped MOET to summarize 10 years of implementation of Decision 149/2006/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister approving the Preschool Education Development Scheme 2006-2015, summarize 5 years implementing Decision No. 239/QĐ-TTg approving the Scheme on universal preschool education for 5-year-old children and Decision No. 60/2011/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on a number of Preschool education development policies period 2011-2015. Based on the reviews of achievements, achieved results and unachieved results on preschool education development in the past periods and analysis and needs assessment of preschool education in the new period, the MOET has developed proposals submitted to the Government for approval: (i) Preschool Education Development Scheme 2016-2025, and (ii) Government Decree on a number of policies for preschool education development 2016-2020. For 2016-2020 the government wants to consolidate and expand the network of schools and classes, ensuring by 2020 at least 30 percent of children of nursery age and 90 percent of preschool age children, mostly 5 years old children is entitled to go to class. During this period MOET wants to develop early detection program for children at risk of developmental delays and children with disabilities and have 100 percent of preschools complete self-assessment, of which at least 45 percent of preschools are quality accredited. To strive by 2020 one classroom per class (group) is ensured; The percentage of solid classrooms is 75%; at least 45% of preschools meet national standards; and to maintain solid results of universal preschool education of 5 years old children. For 2021-2025 the aim is to improve the network of preschools, ensuring that by the year 2025, the nationwide average enrollment rate of children of nursery age will be at least 35 percent, and children of preschool age will be at least 95 percent. Striving by 2025, preschool children in public preschool institutions will account for 70 percent, non-public schools account for 30 percent.



25. Overseas and domestic study tours, sharing workshops on ECE. The project supported three domestic study tour delegations for 362 managers and teachers from 34 provinces and cities in three disadvantaged areas of the country: Northern mountainous region (11 provinces): 115 participants gathered in Quang Ninh province; Central Highlands and South Central Coast (9 provinces): 98 people gathered in Khanh Hoa Province; South West (14 provinces, cities): 149 people attended in Ba Ria - Vung Tau province. The project also supported overseas study tours. In 2016, SRPP organized two overseas study tour delegations to the United States (California) of 11 delegates and to Australia of 24 delegates for officials from the MOET, MOF, MPI and educational managers of 4 provinces and cities. Through the study tours, delegates exchanged, shared with experts and officials of other countries on ECE development policy, methodology and other topics of interest. The delegations have learned many valuable lessons and proposed to develop ECE policies and solutions in the draft scheme on ECE development period 2016-2025 and Government Decree on a number of ECE development policies.

26. Community-based ECD services model. The activity was to pilot community-based ECE model for children aged 0-3, in 4 provinces and cities. The model integrates parent support, nutrition and childcare and other services at the center. This pilot was designed by adapting international experience into the context of Vietnam. This support includes consultancy services from national and international experts as well as revision and adjustment of a number of existing civil works, provision of materials and training costs for 4 community-based ECE center. The pilot: (i) introduced international existing service models, cooperate with the WB, planning overseas study tours to survey models similar to the conditions of Vietnam; (ii) used technical assistance to advise the MOET to evaluate the learned model to develop a feasibility scheme for model development in Vietnam; (iii) joined the national experts and the WB in Vietnam to survey in four Vietnam provinces that are expected to develop the model; (v) introduced, consult and develop Center's operational guidelines and activities; and (vi) advise appropriate policies to maintain the Center's operations. Based on the pilot MOET was able to open the 4 centers have been timely accepted and put into operation, hoping to open a new ECEC form in the provinces/cities of Lao Cai, Bac Ninh, Da Nang and Dak Lak, supplementing the lack in ECEC services in Vietnam for the period 2016-2025.

27. Project management. SRPP PMU has developed the Operational Manuals, promulgating project management and implementation documents, coordinated with concerned units to timely issue documents for project implementing activities. PMU formulated and submitted to the MOET's leaders for approval the work plans, financial plans and procurement plans; issuing internal working regulations, quarterly plans and monthly plans for implementation. According to the plan approved by the MOET's leaders, SRPP PMU has implemented procurement selection of consultants, equipment, software, office rent; Organizing training for preschool teachers and managers; Organizing the assessment and audit of other works as planned. The PMU has reported implementation status to the MOET, the MPI, the MOF and the Donor as regulated. Procurement work at PMU complies with donor guidelines and Vietnamese Law on bidding. The PMU also contracted the Vietnam Institute for Educational Sciences (VNIES) to conduct independent audits of DLI reports, reporting verification results to the MOET and the WB.

28. Project Relevance. SRPP supports the implementation of the Government's policy on universal ECE for children aged 5 period 2010-2015, meeting the needs of preschool education development. Together with the Government's VND 14.6 trillion fund for the implementation of the Scheme, SRPP contributed to the State budget ensuring the most essential expenditure items. Not only preschools are benefited but the disadvantaged children are supported with lunch in the classroom, teachers are trained to improve the PD expertise in care and education; contract teachers and EM teachers have stable income, raising their status in the family and society





and supported by the population.

29. Sustainability. From the weakest starting point among national levels of education on education quality accreditation, preschool education strived in all aspects to implement the project's accreditation indicator, creating obligations and motivation for preschool settings and the whole level of education, not only achieved the accreditation target but also to continue the work of educational quality accrediting in order to outperform other levels of education. The work of PD training of preschool teachers has been continued until the end of 2020. Re-training preschool teacher is conducted earnestly, the Preschool Department received and developed deeper: develop theme on practical support for preschool settings in the school year 2017/2018. Based on the priority modules, the Preschool Department has developed into the Scheme on "Building child-centered preschool vision 2020". The development of 10 advanced modules, converting them to E-learning format and uploading to website <http://srpp.edu.vn> and training for large number of learners (38,000 managers and preschool teachers) is project's significant success. This lays the foundation for the MOET to continue the training of more than 300,000 managers and teachers remain untrained by 2020.

30. The project contributed to the policy contents for the next period as follows: (i) through activities implementation, the SRPP consulted the MOET to develop ECE development scheme vision 2025 and the Government's Decree on a number of policies for ECE development period 2016-2020 and submitted to the Government for issuance; (ii) the SRPP's successful implementation aimed supporting the Government to implement the scheme on universalisation of ECE for 5-year-old children period 2010-2015 leads to a rapid increase in the enrolment rate of preschool aged children, especially regarding disadvantaged EM children. One of the successes is to focus on improving ECE quality, considered as a priority investment target of the whole country. The SRPP has helped the Government to finalize ECE at all stages, identifying spending priorities to improve ECE quality, and better targeting the use of the scheme resources; and (iii) the SRPP has also helped the Government in documenting evidence of ECE investments by recording the EDI results during the project period. Through the project implementation, capacity for planning, auditing and results reporting, from project design's baseline data to next phase policy is designed and implemented actively with internal force, with or without sponsor support by the MOET's and DOET's officials.

31. CONCLUSION. The overall general conclusion is that the SRPP, formulated on new disbursement mechanism, on-budget funding, is aligned with the Vietnam State policy, meeting the requirements of preschool education. The SRPP has exceeded its designed targets, significantly contributing to Viet Nam's achievement of the universal ECE goal for 5-year-old children.

32. Lessons learned. There are three lessons learned: (i) the MOET and the WB have selected the right essential issue, utilizing experience in project design to ensure effective operation, and meeting both urgent and long-term requirements for preschool education; (ii) Affected by global economic recession conditions and national tight budget, the SRPP overcomes difficulties and finally achieved the designed targets thanks to the cooperation of all relevant departments helped include the targets on each department's new school year tasks, regularly directing and promoting provinces to fulfil disbursement targets; and (iii) The SRPP PMU is organized in a compact, flat and united manner with regular support from the WB and the MOET's officials. This help promotes individual and collective responsibility in well performing tasks.

33. Reasons for achievements. The reasons for achievements are: (i) the success of the project aimed to support the Government implementing the Decision 239/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister is first of all thanks to the



close guidance and determination of the MOET leaders, ensuring the effective coordination of SRPP PMU members with the departments within the MOET and with the provincial managers at all levels to advise the leadership decision and take the lead in the implementation; (ii) The main component of the project implemented in the provinces received the attention and support of the party committees and the local authorities. They also actively and skillfully arranged the project support integrated in the State's general allocation resources in implementing the target of universalising ECE for 5-year-old children in each area, and organizing and mobilizing the people for successful implementation; and (iii) The SRPP PMU highly appreciated the efforts of managers at all levels and teachers at ECE settings, who enthusiastically take responsibility, sacrificed many aspects and encouraged the parents' support in improving the quality of child care and education to achieve project objectives.

34. Recommendations to the Government. Through the implementation of the SRPP aimed to support the Government in implementing policies at the Decision 239 / QD-TTg and Decision 60/2011 / QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on a number of policies to develop ECE by 2015, Parents and children are encouraged to send their children to the classroom, but it also reveals that classrooms are inadequate and early development indicators of disadvantaged children is low. We are looking forward to receiving the on-going support from the Government with additional schemes, projects and policies on material facilities, schools and classes for disadvantaged and EM areas. For projects disbursed entirely to the State budget such as the SRPP, it's necessary to improve the mechanisms and responsibilities of relevant ministries and agencies to ensure proper and traceable allocation and use of funds at sponsor's request.

35. Recommendations to the World Bank. Through the effective implementation of the SRPP, it is proposed that the WB consider continuing its concessional loan support for Vietnam ECE to address emerging difficulties.

36. Recommendations to the MOET. SRPP submits to the Government and requests the WB funding for a follow-up project (IDA or non-refundable) to implement the targets at the Scheme/Decree on ECE Development next period. Above is the SRPP implementation completion report. Despite many efforts, it certainly can not reflect all efforts made as well as weaknesses addressed during the implementation. We are looking forward to suggestions for improvement.



**ANNEX 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (IF ANY)**

**Table A1. Disbursement-linked indicators under Component 1 for SRPP (per review period)**

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
<b>Results A: Expanded Full Day Preschool Enrolments</b>	DLI 1 [US\$10m]: MOET has completed a baseline report on enrolments of 3-5 and 5-year-old children in full day preschool based on school year 2011/2012 data disaggregated by province, gender, and ethnic minority status	DLI 2 [US\$30m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of increasing the share of 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool that benefit from full-day provision to 80 percent; US\$5 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$30 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of 5-year-old children in preschool that benefit from full-day provision above the established baseline under DLI 1			US\$40m
<b>Results B: Improved Capacity for Preschool Quality Assurance</b>	DLI 3 [US\$5m]: MOET has adopted guiding regulations for preschool quality self-assessments and external accreditation for preschools	DLI 4 [US\$15m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 90 percent of preschools have undertaken self-assessment; US\$ 0.17 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$15 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of schools conducting formal self-assessment over the previous school year			US\$35m
		DLI 5: [US\$15m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 40 percent of preschools achieving accreditation at Level 1; US\$ 0.375 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$ 15 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of schools achieving Level 1 accreditation			
<b>Results C: Strengthened Preschool Teacher and Manager Professional Expertise</b>	DLI 6 [US\$5m]: MOET has issued a decision approving the plan for professional development for preschool teachers and education managers in the period of 2013-2015 aimed at improving teaching practice for minority and highly disadvantaged children	DLI 7 [US\$6m] Vietnam has made demonstrated progress in achieving its target of training at least 2,000 trainers to deliver the approved priority modules aimed at improving teaching practice for ethnic minority and highly disadvantaged children; US\$ 60,000 to be made available up to an	DLI 8 [US\$9m]: Vietnam makes demonstrated progress in achieving its target of 90 percent of preschool management and teaching staff that have completed the priority modules of the new ECE professional development program aimed at improving teaching practice for ethnic minority and highly disadvantaged children; US\$0.1 million to be made available up to an aggregate amount not exceeding US\$9 million for each confirmed one percentage point increase in the share of preschool management and teaching staff that have completed the priority modules		US\$20m



		aggregate amount not exceeding US\$6 million for each one percent progress toward achieving the training target		
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*Notes: Full day means two sessions per day with lunch served at school. Disbursements against progress under DLIs 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 will be per full percentage point. Any increases above a full percentage point but not constituting a full additional percentage point will be rounded down to the nearest full percentage point for the purposes of that year's disbursement, but be counted towards the next disbursement. All DLIs are subject to independent annual verification. For all DLIs (except DLIs 1, 3 and 6) the first payment under each DLI shall be made based on the results achieved above the established baseline for the respective DLI, and all subsequent payments shall be calculated based on the additional results achieved above the most recent results verified and accepted by the Association and used in the calculation of the previous payment*



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