Mongolia: Supporting the Development of an Education Sector Master Plan

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<th>Project Name</th>
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<td>Project Number</td>
<td>51103-001</td>
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<td>Country</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<td>Project Status</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<td>Project Type / Modality of Assistance</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>Source of Funding / Amount</td>
<td>TA 9376-MON: Supporting the Development of an Education Sector Master Plan</td>
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<td>Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction</td>
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<td>US$ 600,000.00</td>
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**Strategic Agendas**
- Inclusive economic growth

**Drivers of Change**
- Governance and capacity development
- Knowledge solutions
- Partnerships

**Sector / Subsector**
- Education - Education sector development

**Gender Equity and Mainstreaming**
- Some gender elements

**Description**

The proposed knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) will support the development of an education sector master plan (ESMP) in Mongolia through capacity development, research and development, and policy advice to improve planning and management of the education system. The Government of Mongolia has requested the TA from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to develop a long-term education sector plan which defines a clear roadmap towards the goals set forth in the Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision 2030 (the Vision 2030). ADB provided technical assistance for the development of the first ESMP, 2006-2015 and its update, 2009-2015, and has been one of the major development partners in the education sector in Mongolia since the late 1990s. During the mission conducted in June 2017, ADB and the government reached agreement on the objectives, scope, implementation arrangements, costs, and consulting service requirements. The TA is included in ADB's country operations business plan, 2017-2019 for Mongolia.

**Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy**

Mongolia’s education sector underwent a decade of reforms (2004-2015) associated with the restructuring of the education system from a 10-year (4+4+2) into a 12-year (5+4+3) system in line with international standards. During this reform period, the first ESMP, developed jointly by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports (MECSS), development partners, and other stakeholders, guided and coordinated their interventions in the sector. There was also an institutionalized mechanism led by MECSS - Education Donors’ Consultative Mechanism (EDCM) - to review progress in ESMP implementation and discuss issues related to the education sector with development partners. The ESMP and EDCM helped reduce overlaps and ensure synergies between different interventions supported by development partners, increased predictability and sustainability in policy directions, and enhanced accountability.

Notwithstanding, the EDCM ceased to function in the early 2010s due to lack of institutional leadership and the first ESMP expired in 2015. Since then, there has been no education sector plan developed based on solid assessments and broad consultations with development partners, and no mechanism for education stakeholders to gather, jointly review, and discuss progress and issues in the education sector. Underlying is the fundamental issue weak capacity and systems to plan and manage the education sector based on detailed studies and assessments and to make education policies and reforms more credible, accountable, and sustainable. This issue further involves inadequate staffing, and frequent management and staff turnover at MECSS and associated institutions.

As Mongolia faces severe economic difficulties, negative effects of the lack of long-term planning for the education sector have been amplified. Although the kindergarten-aged population has been growing by 10% - 25% annually since 2009, and school-aged population, by 8%, timely investments were not made to meet the growing demand for education. As a result, the enrollment capacity of kindergartens and schools has now been overstretched, resulting in large classes with more than 30 students (occasionally, 40-50 students) at schools and kindergartens, and schools operating in two and three shifts in Ulaanbaatar and some aimag centers. Unless long-term planning and forward-looking investments are made, progress in the net enrollment rates at pre-primary, primary, and junior secondary levels may be reversed, as kindergarten-aged population is further projected to grow until 2019, and school-aged population, until 2025. The lack of long-term planning also led to difficulties with the introduction of elective courses at senior secondary level in the school year 2016/17, especially at small schools with only a handful of students in senior secondary level (grades 10-12). A new loan is planned in the country operations business plan, 2017-2019 for Mongolia to mitigate these negative effects and support forward looking investments.

Slow economic growth has also accentuated the importance of skills and human resource development. As youth unemployment rate rises, poor employability of senior secondary and higher education graduates has increasingly become an issue. Likewise, as the current economic difficulties have highlighted the need for investments in science, technology, and innovation to diversify the economy, strengthening research and development in higher education and developing science and technology human resources have become a priority. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort in the long-run.

The Vision 2030, approved by the parliament in 2016, sets out broad directions and goals for the education sector until 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4. However, there is at present no detailed plan which identifies concrete actions in a rational sequence to attain the goals of the Vision 2030, supported by a credible and comprehensive framework for expenditure. Moreover, due to lack of an evidence-based, long-term education sector plan, operations of development partners are at present uncoordinated. In this context, the joint development of a new ESMP by MECSS and its associated institutions, development partners, and other stakeholders can fill the gap, while opening up new possibilities for adopting a sector-wide programmatic approach to education sector development in Mongolia.

**Impact**

Access to, quality and relevance of education improved

**Project Outcome**

**Description of Outcome**

Education system planning and management strengthened

**Progress Toward Outcome**

Progress towards the outcome will be reviewed in October 2019.

**Implementation Progress**

- Support the Development of an Education Sector Master Plan
- Progress towards the outcome will be reviewed in October 2019.
Description of Project Outputs

- Management and coordination mechanisms for ESMP development established
- In-depth education sector studies and reviews of international experience and lessons completed
- ESMP and expenditure framework developed

Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports (MECSS) established the development partners consultative mechanism (DPCM) and organized the first DPCM meeting on 27 February 2018. During the meeting, the TA objective and activities and the management and coordination mechanisms and process of developing an education sector master plan were presented. The consulting firm which will support the project implementation unit of the MECSS was mobilized on 27 April 2018.
- A review mission was fielded in August 2018 to review status of TA implementation, which is on track. An updated workplan and terms of reference for the core group and technical has been approved by MECSS.
- A review mission in December 2018 reviewed implementation progress noting that (i) a UNESCO-ADB-IEEP-UNICEF training workshop on education policy for MECSS staff was held in September 2018; (ii) core technical and sub-technical teams had been organized in October 2018; (iii) and meetings on preschool, higher education, and general school (primary and secondary education) to discuss report formats were held in November 2018. The inception report was approved in September 2018, and the interim report was approved in February 2019. The first part of the interim report comprises discussions on the mechanisms to plan, manage, and coordinate the process of ESMP development under the leadership of MECSS and the TA team and describes fundamental activities for preparing the national education survey, which is the second phase of the ESMP development. The second part of the interim report will present the main outputs of the second phase of the ESMP development focusing on the results of the in-depth study of the national education survey and analysis.

Geographical Location

Nation-wide

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Indigenous Peoples

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design

- Major development partners and stakeholders in the education sector were consulted on the scope, outputs, and activities of the TA.

During Project Implementation

- The TA will support the establishment of mechanisms to plan, manage, and coordinate the process of ESMP development, including the development partners consultative mechanism, and various consultation workshops.

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services

ADB will engage a consulting firm (international, 4 person-months; national, 20 person-months) to provide expertise in planning and management of ESMP development throughout the three phases, while serving as a project management unit. The consulting firm will be selected using the quality- and cost-based selection method with a quality cost ratio of 90:10, and simplified technical proposal. ADB will also engage individual consultants (4 international specialists, 10 person-months; 4 national specialists, 22 person-months) in phases II and III as part of the technical sub-teams to provide expertise on secondary education, higher education, and other areas identified under output 1. Output-based, lump-sum contracts with a provision for fixed out-of-pocket expenditures will be considered for the consulting firm and individual consultants. ADB will engage consulting firms and individual consultants in accordance with ADB Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and the associated project administration instructions and TA staff instructions.

Responsible ADB Officer

Eisuke Tajima

Responsible ADB Department

East Asia Department

Responsible ADB Division

Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD

Executing Agencies

Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Sports

Government Building-III, Suite # 514, Baga toiruu-44, Sukhbaatar district

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Timetable

- Concept Clearance: 28 Jul 2017
- Fact Finding: 18 Jun 2017 to 23 Jun 2017
- Approval: 15 Sep 2017
- Last Review Mission: 15 Sep 2017
- Last PDS Update: 29 Mar 2019

TA 9376-MON

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