



Validation Report

Reference Number: PCV-VIE 2008-81
Project Number: 25034
Loan Number: 1537-VIE(SF)
May 2009

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Lower Secondary Education Development Project

Independent Evaluation Department

Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
BME	–	benefit monitoring and evaluation
DOET	–	Department of Education and Training
LSE	–	lower secondary education
M&E	–	monitoring and evaluation
MOET	–	Ministry of Education and Training
PCR	–	project completion report
PCU	–	project coordination unit
PPIU	–	provincial project implementation unit
SDR	–	special drawing rights
SLSEDP	–	Second Lower Secondary Education Development Project
TA	–	technical assistance
TTP	–	Teacher Training Project

Key Words

benefit monitoring and evaluation, curriculum development, lower secondary education, operation and maintenance, teacher training, textbook development

Director	R. Adhikari, Independent Evaluation Division 1, Independent Evaluation Department (IED)
Team leader	O. Nuestro, Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Division 1, IED
Team member	I. Garganta, Senior Operations Evaluation Assistant, Independent Evaluation Division 1, IED

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PROJECT COMPLETION VALIDATION REPORT

A. Basic Project Data		PCR Validation Date:	May 2009	
Project and Loan/Grant Number:	VIE-1537(SF)		Approved	Actual
Project Name:	Lower Secondary Education Development Project	Total Project Costs (\$ million): (SDR equivalent)	71.5	65.8
Country:	Viet Nam	Loan/Grant (\$ million):	50.0	47.1
Sector(s):	Basic Education	Total Cofinancing (\$ million):	0.5	0.5
ADB Financing (\$ million):	ADF: 50.0	Borrower (\$ million):	21.0	18.2
Cofinanciers:	Government of Belgium	Beneficiaries (\$ million):		
Approval Date:	16 September 1997	Others (\$ million):		
Signing Date:	17 December 1997	Effectiveness Date:	17 March 1998	27 March 1998
Project Officers:	Y. Hiroto S. Hutaserani T. N. Nguyen S. van der Tak	Closing Date:	30 June 2004	12 June 2006
Validator:	S. Lohani	Location (HQ or RM):	From (year): March 1998	To (year): December 2002
Quality Control Reviewer/Peer Reviewer:	O. Nuestro, Evaluation Officer, IED1	RM:	January 2003	June 2006
		Director:	R. B. Adhikari, IED1	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADF = Asian Development Fund, HQ = headquarters, IED1 = Independent Evaluation Division 1, PCR = project completion report, RM = resident mission.

B. Project Description (Summarized from the Report and Recommendation of the President)

- (i) **Rationale.** Viet Nam's ongoing transition from a centralized to a market-oriented economy—as well as its increasing modernization—demands a flexible and educated labor force. However, low levels of education have hindered the country's social and economic growth. Therefore, the Government has recognized the need to improve education, especially at primary (grades 1–5) and lower secondary (grades 6–9) levels, and has set ambitious quantitative and qualitative targets that require large-scale investments and reform of teaching content and methods.
- (ii) **Impact.** The Lower Secondary Education Development Project (the Project) was expected to improve lower secondary education (LSE) by enhancing its quality, access, and institutional development.
- (iii) **Objectives or expected outcomes.** The Project aimed to provide all LSE-age children (11–14 years) with access to higher-quality LSE and an environment that encourages them to complete the entire 4-year LSE cycle.
- (iv) **Components and/or outputs.** The Project had three components.
 - (a) **Quality improvement.** This component aimed to enhance LSE quality through curriculum reform; the quality of teachers and teacher training institutions; and provision of textbooks, teaching aids, and related in-service teacher training programs and materials.
 - (b) **Access.** This component was expected to increase LSE access through provision of

additional classrooms, particularly in poorer areas; rehabilitation of classrooms and construction of new classrooms and sanitary facilities to eliminate triple-shifting; and rehabilitation or replacement of classrooms in flood-prone areas and those with a major concentration of ethnic minorities; and

- (c) **Institutional development.** This component focused on developing LSE by (i) building the capacity of provincial project coordinators through in-service training; (ii) training school principals and teachers on educational management through in-service and distance courses; (iii) providing overseas study tours that focused on basic education alternative management systems for education service officials, teachers, teacher trainers, and administrators; and (iv) building capacity on project management and implementation, including monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the project coordination unit (PCU), and provincial project management unit staff.

C. Evaluation of Design and Implementation (Project Completion Report Assessment and Validation)

- (i) **Relevance of design and formulation.** The project completion report (PCR) rated the Project's design and formulation as *highly relevant* because the Project was designed and implemented according to the guidance for implementation of the Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (1996–2000), which reflected the Government's emphasis on secondary education and technical training; National Assembly Resolution No. 40 on curriculum reform; Resolution No. 41 on universal LSE development by 2010; and Prime Minister's Directive No. 14 on eliminating triple-shift and temporary classes. The Project was also in line with the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) operational strategy for Viet Nam that supported sustainable growth with equity and human development. The PCR indicated that the project design was sound and the formulation adequate. The Government also showed strong ownership during preparation and implementation. Although there were some changes in the project design/scope during implementation, the PCR justified that these changes were sound, because (a) the project scope was expanded to cover an additional 11 provinces in order to provide civil works for school reconstruction after the 1999–2000 floods; (b) the provision of a textbook lending scheme to poor students was suspended due to the free textbook support program introduced by the Government under the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction; and (c) the formulation and adoption of the standard curricula and materials for teacher training colleges were transferred to the ongoing Teacher Training Project (TTP)¹ to avoid overlapping activities.

The validator agrees with the reasons given by the PCR, but rates the project design as *relevant*, because (a) there was a long gap between project preparation (1993) and appraisal (1997), and (b) the benefit monitoring and evaluation (BME) system was not designed to be part of MOET's normal operations system.

- (ii) **Project outputs.** The actual project cost (\$65.83 million) was about 92% of the figure estimated at appraisal (\$71.5 million). There was wide variation in the distribution of cost by component. The actual cost for the access component increased 68% from the appraisal estimate of \$17.60 million to \$29.55 million. As a result, there was a decrease in the actual costs for quality improvement and institutional development components. Another reason for these decreased actual costs was that some activities were transferred to the TTP.

Despite a slight reduction in actual cost, the PCR found that most of the expected outputs were substantially achieved. For the quality improvement component, the outputs achieved included (a) development of new curricula and syllabi for grades 6–9, (b) piloting of curricular

¹ ADB. 1999. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the Teacher Training Project*. Manila.

materials for grades 6–9, and (c) countrywide application of new textbooks for grades 6–8. The launch of grade 9 textbooks was limited to piloting only, and their countrywide application was moved to the ongoing Second Lower Secondary Education Development Project (SLSEDP).² Altogether, 15 kinds of textbooks, teacher books, and workbooks were developed and introduced. The Project also provided training to (a) 7,140 in-service teachers to bring them up to standard against the appraisal target of 2,000 teachers; (b) 21,500 teachers on textbook replacement; and (c) all teachers on the use of new curricula. Teachers also carried out self-study activities at schools with the support of the Project's teacher instructional materials.

For the access component, the outputs achieved exceeded many targets, as the Project (a) covered 21 provinces against the target of 10 provinces; (b) rehabilitated 366 schools against the target of 234 schools; (c) constructed 2,482 classrooms against the target of 1,610 classrooms; (d) contributed to the rehabilitation of 2,182 classrooms in 237 schools under the Third Road Improvement Project;³ (e) provided furniture, blackboards, and equipment to 1,154 schools; (f) provided teaching aids (e.g., computers, printers, and overhead projectors) to schools based on their current situations, teacher capacity, and needs; (g) provided additional blackboards to schools in remote and poor areas; and (h) provided additional support for sanitation facilities, schoolyard improvements, and fence-building to 62 schools in flood-prone areas.

The outputs achieved under the institutional development component included (a) training related to projects for project coordinators and to textbook replacement for 158 principals; (b) overseas study visits for 362 education managers, project management staff members, and school principals; and (c) capacity development activities for PCU and MOET staff.

Based on available evidence, the validator agrees with the PCR findings.

- (iii) **Project cost, disbursements, borrower contribution, and conformance to schedule (as relevant to project performance).** The Project was approved on 16 September 1997 and effective on 27 March 1998. Based on the PCR, the Project's loan closure date—as stated in the report and recommendation of the President—was 30 June 2004. At actual loan closing on 12 June 2006, disbursement totaled \$47.14 million (94% of the original loan amount of \$50.00 million). The contribution of the Government and beneficiaries was \$18.2 million (87% of the planned allocation of \$21.0 million). The Government of Belgium also provided \$0.5 million to finance a portion of international consulting services on curricula development. The Project was physically closed on 31 December 2004 with one extension, which allowed for the completion of delayed project activities from the major change of scope to support civil works after the 1999–2000 floods. The actual financial closing date was 12 June 2006, 1.5 years behind schedule, due to delayed government endorsement of supporting documents.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings and notes that the Project suffered from some start-up delays (e.g., in setting up the PCU and in preparing and approving the procurement plan). These, in turn, caused delays in subsequent activities, including the countrywide application of grade 9 textbooks, which was not completed during the project period. Another reason for this delay was that the piloting of the new curriculum and textbooks occurred in two, rather than one, rounds.

² ADB. 2004. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan for the Second Lower Secondary Education Development Project*. Manila.

³ ADB. 2001. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for Third Road Improvement Project*. Manila.

(iv) **Implementation arrangements, conditions and covenants, related technical assistance, and procurement and consultant performance.**

Implementation arrangements. The PCR mentioned that the project implementation arrangements were *appropriate* to carry out the Project effectively. The Project was implemented in line with the arrangements envisaged at appraisal. At the national level, a project steering committee, chaired by MOET, was established to coordinate with other government departments and provide policy guidance. Provincial project steering committees were established in 10 original project provinces. The project manager at the PCU was responsible for daily project administration, and six assistant managers supported the project manager in six areas (administration and finance, BME, teacher training, curriculum and textbooks, civil works, and equipment and instructional materials). The vice director of the Department of Education and Training (DOET) oversaw the activities of the provincial project implementation units (PPIUs). School principals were responsible for project activities at the school level.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings mentioned above.

Conditions and covenants. The PCR reported that most of the loan covenants were generally complied with. Some covenants that were only partly complied with include: (a) suspension textbook lending due to the free textbook support scheme introduced under the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction; and (b) failure to carry out the BME annually. Some covenants had compliance delays (see Appendix 11 of the PCR) due to the Project's start-up delays, which then caused subsequent delays in some activities: (a) designation of provincial in-service training coordinators; (b) additional baseline studies and surveys for key indicators, the results of which determined specific targets and modified ethnic minority strategies; (c) consolidation of separate subjects into fewer subject groups to improve relevance of curricula; and (d) piloting of the new curricula and textbooks, for which two rounds (rather than one) had to be implemented before countrywide application.

The validator agrees with the PCR assessment that most of the loan covenants were complied with, though some with delays. However, there was a factual error in the PCR in reporting that the covenant on the textbook lending scheme was partly complied with, while it was in fact not complied with as it was suspended due to the free textbook support scheme introduced under the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction.

Technical assistance. Two technical assistance (TA) grants supported project implementation. First, ADB's advisory TA provided prior to the Project⁴ was assessed as *successful* by the TA completion report mainly because the TA outputs were extensively used for the curricula reform carried out under the Project. They provided the basis for (a) the new textbooks and teacher manuals, and (b) a detailed in-service teacher training program to match the new curricula. Second, ADB implemented TA funded by the Government of Belgium (\$0.5 million) to support the implementation of curricula reform. The PCR reported that the consultants under this TA provided valuable materials for teacher training and BME.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings mentioned above.

Procurement and consultant performance. The PCR rated the performance of consultants, contractors, and suppliers as *satisfactory* because (a) the consultants provided generally good services in accordance with their terms of reference; (b) the procurement of furniture was in line with the civil works progress; (c) the procurement of teaching aids and textbooks was in line with the development process of textbooks, with good printing quality; and (d) the quality of construction was satisfactory. Some delay in school construction in the central and Mekong

⁴ ADB. 1999. *Technical Assistance to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the Lower Secondary Curriculum and Teacher Training Systems Development*. Manila; ADB. 1999. *Lower Secondary Education Development Project – Administration of Grant from the Government of Belgium*. Manila.

Delta regions was observed because the civil works could only be implemented during the dry season.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings mentioned above.

- (v) **Performance of the Borrower and Executing Agency.** The PCR rated the performance of the Borrower (the Government) as *satisfactory* because of (a) its strong commitment to achieving the Project's objectives and complying with the loan covenants; (b) the provision of adequate counterpart funding; and (c) positive response of the State Bank of Viet Nam, an active member of the project steering committee, to problems and issues that occurred during project implementation. The PCR rated the performance of the Executing Agency (MOET) as *satisfactory* because (a) it successfully coordinated project activities involving various government departments and agencies, external aid organizations, contractors, and suppliers through the central PCU and in coordination with PPIUs, teacher training colleges, and the Education Publishing House; (b) it coordinated fully with ADB review missions; (c) documentation on disbursement, procurement, consultants, and staff development was satisfactory; and (d) the commitment of PCU leadership and staff greatly contributed to project success. However, the PCR acknowledged that PCU staff experienced start-up and management problems during project implementation.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings and rates the performance of the Borrower and Executing Agency as *satisfactory*.

- (vi) **Performance of the Asian Development Bank.** The PCR rated ADB's performance as *satisfactory* because it facilitated the Project's successful completion by (a) fielding review missions twice a year, (b) responding promptly to the requests of the Government and the Executing Agency, and (c) delegating project administration to the Viet Nam Resident Mission in 2003 to allow closer monitoring. The PCR also mentioned some of ADB's weaknesses: (a) ADB did not visit all project schools in 21 provinces due to the scattering of the school sites, although the delegation of the Project to the resident mission overcame this problem to some extent; and (b) the project officer and analysts changed several times during ADB's reorganization process.

The validator agrees with the PCR findings and rates the performance of ADB as *satisfactory*.

D. Evaluation of Performance (PCR Assessment and Validation)

- (i) **Relevance.** The PCR rated the Project as *highly relevant* because it (a) covered the LSE subsector and addressed its fundamental issues; (b) contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the Government and ADB by increasing the quality and equity of LSE; and (c) was consistent with ADB's overall poverty reduction objective through its efforts to expand education services to remote, ethnic minority, and poorer regions of the country.

Although the validator agrees with the reasons given by the PCR, the validator rates the Project as *relevant*, because (a) there was a long gap between project preparation (1993) and appraisal (1997), and (b) the BME system was not designed to be integrated into MOET's normal operations system.

- (ii) **Effectiveness in achieving outcomes.** The PCR rated the Project as *effective* because (a) the targets for civil works and equipment provision were exceeded; (b) the number of fully furnished classrooms increased, which enhanced access to LSE and eliminated triple-shifting in poor areas; (c) the LSE gross enrollment rate increased from 76.9% in 1998–1999 to 88.8% in 2003–2004; (d) the net enrolment rate reached the target of 65% by project completion; (e) the dropout rate decreased by 35%, repetition rate decreased by 60%, completion rate increased by 16%, and on-schedule graduation rate increased by 20%; and (f) the targets of student-teacher ratio, in-service teacher training, staff development, and pilot activities were

overachieved.

The validator agrees with the PCR's rating of *effective*, particularly in terms of student learning (i.e., improvements in dropout, repetition, completion, and graduation rates). However, the validator notes that some of the outcomes reported by the PCR should have been classified under the outputs category (e.g., provision of civil works, equipment, and training to teachers and other staff) and some should have been classified under the impact category (e.g., gross and net enrollment rates).

- (iii) **Efficiency in achieving outcomes and outputs.** The PCR rated the Project as *efficient* because (a) most of the physical outputs and key indicators of internal efficiency (e.g., gross and net enrollment rates, teacher–class ratio, student–class ratio, and student–teacher ratio) envisaged at appraisal were achieved; (b) project cost effectiveness increased by reassessing and prioritizing project activities and canceling and reallocating part of the loan fund to meet the urgent needs of the schools affected by the 1999–2000 floods; and (c) the students participating in pilot schools performed better in the five studied subjects compared to control group students, regardless of the level at entry.

The validator agrees with the PCR's rating of *efficient*, particularly in terms of cost effectiveness in allocating the project loan fund to meet the urgent need for school rehabilitation after the floods, without affecting project outcomes. However, the validator notes that some of the indicators reported by the PCR are not efficiency indicators, but impact indicators (e.g., gross and net enrollment rates). In addition, detailed analysis of efficiency was not possible because the Report and Recommendation of the President and PCR did not carry out economic analysis to estimate the economic internal rate of return, as such analysis was not required for basic education projects.

- (iv) **Preliminary assessment of sustainability.** The PCR rated the Project's sustainability as *most likely* because (a) the implementation of the SLSEDP reflected the Government's commitment to strengthen the LSE subsector to help achieve countrywide universal LSE by 2010, (b) a fund for school construction and operation and maintenance was established and contributed to by parents (3% of the total construction cost and 5% of the total equipment cost were raised from parents for minor operation and maintenance before the start of each school year), and (c) all teachers had textbook replacement training for the new curricula.

Although the validator agrees with the reasons given by the PCR, the validator rates the Project's sustainability as *likely*. To be considered as *most likely*, more information on the Government's long-term financial sustainability prospects is needed (e.g., increased annual percentage share of government recurrent education expenditure allocated to the LSE subsector).

- (v) **Impacts (both intended and unintended).** The PCR indicated that the outcomes achieved by the Project are expected to contribute to countrywide universal LSE by 2010. The PCR also provided additional impact indicators related to environmental, sociocultural, ethnic minority, and gender aspects, such as (a) improved school environment and sanitation awareness in public places through the Project's sanitation facilities (e.g., water supply and toilet facilities); (b) increased public awareness of LSE importance through increased community participation in project schools' operation and maintenance funds; (c) improved security for those in flood-prone areas through the construction of two-story schools, the upper floors of which can be used as temporary shelters; (d) increased access to higher-quality education among ethnic minority students (from 571,860 in 1999–2000 to 924,867 in 2005–2006); (e) increased access to quality education among female students (from 2.7 million to 3.1 million); (f) increased access to teaching jobs among ethnic minorities (from 11,380 to 18,623); (g) increased access to teaching jobs among females (from 145,033 to 206,815); and (h) increased number of female teachers meeting qualification standards.

The PCR did not rate the Project's impact. However, based on the available information, the validator rates the impact as *satisfactory*. The validator notes that there are other impact indicators that the Project achieved (e.g., increased gross and net enrollments), but the PCR classified them under outcomes/effectiveness.

E. Overall Assessment, Lessons, and Recommendations (Validation of PCR Assessment)

- (i) **Overall assessment.** The PCR's overall project rating was *successful* because (a) the Project was effective in achieving outcomes and adjusting its scope to meet emergency demands, and in establishing new schools in remote and ethnic minority provinces; and (b) had positive impacts on enrollment, community participation, female and ethnic minority enrollment, as well as female and ethnic minority teaching employment.

The validator agrees with the PCR's overall rating due to the same reasons and to detailed reasons explained earlier under each of the evaluation criteria.

- (ii) **Lessons.** According to the PCR, important lessons from the Project included: (a) the quality improvement process takes longer—beyond the project period—as teachers require time and support to change teaching methods, and students require more effort; (b) to deliver outputs and attain outcomes, the number of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds must be increased, and teacher quality must be improved through annual in-service training or refresher courses; and (c) community participation is important in creating student-friendly environments by building more classrooms and school facilities.

The validator agrees with the above lessons and identifies the following additional lessons:

- (a) Advisory TA—aimed at preparing curricula, teacher training frameworks, and capacity development plans—can add value when implemented about 1–2 years prior to a project, with an overlapping period, to expedite project implementation.
- (b) A long gap cannot occur between the completion of project preparatory TA and appraisal, and continuity must be ensured to avoid changes in circumstances that may occur after the project preparatory TA stage and not taken into account during appraisal.
- (c) To ensure that the new curricula have a sound basis in practice, it is necessary to (1) include a sufficient period of pilot testing in authentic school conditions; and (2) build an elaborate grade-by-grade piloting and development scheme.

- (iii) **Recommendations.** The PCR provided project-related and general recommendations. The latter included (a) staff involved in the project preparatory TA stage should continue to work during loan implementation, (b) loan covenants should be maintained in their existing forms, (c) M&E or BME arrangements should be elaborate to enable detailed evaluation of interventions' impact, (d) sufficient resources should be allocated to M&E, (e) M&E functions within DOET and the Bureau of Education and Training should be given an organizational base, (f) new forms of student achievement testing should be designed under the SLSEDP to provide feedback to students on their learning progress, (g) a review for the project performance evaluation should be undertaken in 2009 or 2010 when the SLSEDP is expected to be completed and long-term objectives will be achieved, and (h) M&E training should be done and key indicators be systematically collected by MOET and shared via its website.

The validator notes that the PCR's recommendations focused more on future projects, rather than on follow-up actions that should be done by the SLSEDP or the Southeast Asia Department.

F. Monitoring and Evaluation Design, Implementation, and Utilization (PCR Assessment and Validation)

- (i) **Monitoring and evaluation design.** According to the PCR, the Project's BME was not given priority, and therefore, not implemented continuously. The validator agrees and notes that the BME should have been designed as part of MOET and DOET's normal operations systems to ensure continuity of staff, activities, and budget—both during project implementation and after.
- (ii) **Implementation.** The PCR pointed out that the project targets set up for the BME were achieved before project completion. However, the validator notes that the BME was not well implemented as reflected in the lack of continuous data collection. Otherwise, more detailed data would have been available on an annual basis, so appropriate actions could have been made to accelerate the progress of outcome/impact achievements.
- (iii) **Utilization.** The PCR did not mention BME utilization. The validator notes that since the BME system was not established as part of MOET and DOET's regular systems, no mechanism existed to institutionalize and fully utilize the BME.

Therefore, the validator finds weak design, implementation, and utilization of the Project's BME.

G. Others (e.g., Safeguards, including Governance and Anticorruption; Fiduciary Aspects; Government Assessment of the Project, as Applicable) (PCR Assessment and Validation)

The PCR did not report problems related to safeguards, governance, and anticorruption issues. The validator finds no safeguard violations or major unintended consequences.

H. Ratings	PCR	Independent Evaluation Department Review	Reasons for Disagreements/Comments
Relevance:	Highly Relevant	Relevant	Although the validator agrees with the PCR's reasons mentioned in section D (i), to rate the Project as <i>highly relevant</i> , it should have no design weaknesses. In this case, the BME was not part of MOET's regular system.
Effectiveness in Achieving Outcomes:	Effective	Effective	Agreed
Efficiency in Achieving Outcomes and Outputs:	Efficient	Efficient	Agreed
Preliminary Assessment of Sustainability:	Most Likely	Likely	Although the validator agrees with the PCR's reasons mentioned in section D (iv), to rate the Project as <i>most likely</i> sustainable, additional data (on the Government's long-term financial sustainability prospects) are needed but not presented in the PCR.
Borrower and EA:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Agreed
Performance of ADB:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Agreed
Impacts:	Not Rated	Satisfactory	Satisfactory impacts on gender, ethnic minorities, and countrywide gross and net enrollment rates
Overall Assessment:	Successful	Successful	Agreed
Quality of PCR:		Satisfactory	See section I

I. Comments on Project Completion Report Quality

The PCR is *satisfactory*. It is generally well written, concise, and followed the PCR guidelines. However, it has some weaknesses, e.g., inadequate data to assess the Government's long-term financial sustainability prospects and confusion between outputs and outcomes.

J. Recommendation for IED follow-up:

None.

K. Data Sources for Validation

The data sources include the Project's Report and Recommendation of the President and PCR, back-to-office reports on loan review missions, aide-mémoire on the Midterm Review Mission, and relevant TA reports and completion reports.

**REGIONAL DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT
VALIDATION REPORT**

On 19 December 2008, the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) circulated the draft Project Completion Validation Report for interdepartmental comments. IED received comments from the Viet Nam Resident Mission on 6 January 2009. The Resident Mission, also speaking on behalf of the Southeast Asia Department, supports the assessment provided in the report.