

PROGRAM RESULTS ASSESSMENT

A. Program Results Framework

1. The results-based lending (RBL) modality of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Supporting Fourth Primary Education Development Program covers the primary education subsector. The proposed RBL program builds on the achievements and lessons of the previous primary education subsector interventions, including the Third Primary Education Development Project (FY2012–FY2018, the previous project), and of the RBL implementation in other countries. The midterm review of the previous project and the 2017 annual sector performance report noted that while tremendous progress has been made in universal access with gender equity to primary education, the quality and overall equity of primary education still need more attention. To consolidate the achievements and renew the emphasis on quality and equity, the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (FY2019–FY2023, the program) will support comprehensive activities to extend quality education to all children at pre-primary and primary schooling age, and upscale the outreach to out-of-school children (OOSC).

2. The development objective of the program is to contribute to socioeconomic development and reduce disparities in the country by developing its human capital. The results framework links subcomponent outputs in each results area to subcomponent intermediate outcomes, which in turn are linked to high-level component outcomes and program objective indicators. The result indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound. The three results areas are: (i) quality; (ii) equitable access and participation; and (iii) management, governance, and financing. The objective of the first area is to enable children to acquire the essential grade-level competencies stipulated in the curriculum by implementing quality teaching–learning practices in all schools. The second area aims to provide all communities with learning environments that support the participation of all children and ensure continuity of education. The last area seeks to ensure strong governance, adequate and equitable financing, and good management of the primary education system to enable the provision of quality education that is efficient, inclusive, and equitable. The program has a total of 21 subcomponents to support the achievement of these objectives.¹ The key performance indicators and annual targets for each of the results areas are included in the results matrix of the program.

3. The proposed RBL is based on strong government ownership and commitment to results-based planning, budgeting, and management, and aligns with the sector-wide approach. The RBL will give the government strong motivation to achieve output and outcome results in the subsector that will strengthen the quality and equity of primary education while allowing sufficient flexibility for the government to focus on achieving the goals of its key reform agendas.

4. The RBL's scope is the same as the program's, except that the RBL will not cover certain expenditures.² The RBL's results framework is anchored in the overall program results matrix.

¹ These include (i) quality (curriculum reforms; textbooks and teaching–learning materials; teacher recruitment, deployment, and advancement; teacher education; continuous professional development; information and communication technology in education; assessments and examinations; pre-primary education); (ii) equitable access and participation (needs-based infrastructure, including water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities; needs-based furniture; maintenance and repair; out-of-school children; special education needs; education in emergencies; communication and social mobilization); and (iii) management, governance, and financing (data systems for decision-making; institutional strengthening; school level improvement plans and *upazila* (subdistrict) level improvement plans; strengthened budgets; and procurement and financial management).

² The RBL boundary excludes (i) production (printing) of textbooks; (ii) information and communication technology equipment and accessories, furniture, motor vehicles, and land acquisitions; (iii) pensions or gratuities; (iv)

The RBL's impact will be strengthened human capital formation. The outcome will be improved quality and equity of primary education for all children from pre-primary to grade 5. The need to improve the quality of primary education is reflected in the low learning achievements in Bangla and mathematics, as shown in several national student assessments (NSAs), which in turn can be attributed to insufficient quality-related inputs and inadequate teaching–learning processes. Therefore, the RBL will give emphasis on improving the quality of inputs, processes, and outputs. The need to improve equity in primary education is manifested in the remaining disparities in access and the large number of OOSC is still prevalent in the country, even though enrollment rates in primary education have risen significantly.

5. The RBL has three outputs as follows:

6. **Output 1: Quality of primary education improved.** The competency-based curriculum reform of 2011 needs to be assessed for its effectiveness in enabling students' learning, based on which the curriculum and textbooks will be further reformed to bolster the competencies of pre-primary to grade 5 students. To enrich the teaching and learning experience, new materials (including supplementary reading materials) will be developed for all grades and provided to all schools. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education was initiated by the previous project, which provided ICT equipment and built multimedia classrooms in many primary schools. However, the lesson is that the use of ICT resources needs to be more effective. This output will support the provision of updated e-teaching and e-learning materials for all schools to use. The need to improve the student–teacher ratio and fill the chronic vacancies in teaching positions in primary education will be met through a targeted recruitment and deployment plan and more effective planning and management of teaching positions. The Diploma in Primary Education (DPEd) program will be updated and extended to newly recruited teachers, and also to teachers already employed but not yet certified. Primary Teachers Training Institutes will step up their capacities to deliver the DPEd program. Output 1 will launch a new generation of teacher training in the form of continuous professional development, which aims to advance the proficiency of teachers and teacher educators by better assessing their training needs and planning their training in line with competency requirements. This output will also update the ICT training to help enrich the teaching–learning process. School-based examinations will be strengthened to ensure that student learning outcomes are evaluated in time for any remedial actions. Primary education completion examination will be more competency-focused to better reflect student learning outcomes. A Primary Education Board will be established to reform planning and administration of examinations, take charge of the NSA and follow-up analyses, and advise on evidence-based interventions.

7. **Output 2: Access to and participation in primary education enhanced.** In Bangladesh, 77.4% of primary schools are running double shifts, and primary schools' annual teacher–student contact hours are barely half of the international standard of 900–1,000 hours per year.³ Insufficient contact hours account for the gaps in learning outcomes. This output aims to build more classrooms in line with infrastructure planning standards to improve the student–classroom ratio and turn more schools into single-shift operations. Meanwhile, given that 47% of primary schools lack gender-segregated sanitation blocks and 26.8% have no safe water, parents may be reluctant to send their children to school. So, output 2 aims to provide gender-segregated sanitation facilities and safe water sources for each school. Bangladesh is a country with recurring natural disasters. The affected schools reported a 3% increase in dropout rates

unadjusted advances or loans; (v) any civil works other than additional classrooms and water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities; and (vi) procurement of goods that require international procurement.

³ Government of Bangladesh, Directorate of Primary Education. 2017. *Annual Sector Performance Report*. Dhaka.

and lower competency achievements due to discontinuation or temporary halts of school education. Output 2 thus requires new construction and/or major retrofits to make school facilities disaster-resilient and ensure the safety and continuity of primary education, especially in disaster-prone areas. In its efforts to provide second-chance education for OOSC, the previous project piloted partnerships with nongovernment entities to reach dropouts and other OOSC aged 8–14 and offering them learning opportunities. Under this output, the government will scale up the intervention to help OOSC attain the competencies targeted by primary education. A gender and inclusive education action plan will be implemented with measures for communication and social mobilization.

8. Output 3: Governance and management of primary education system improved.

The primary education system is highly centralized in Bangladesh. To manage it more efficiently would require decentralized planning, administration, and monitoring functions. Output 3 will help strengthen the institutional capacities of primary education offices at all levels in line with the updated organizational development and capacity-building guidebook. The school level improvement plan will link school funding to student enrollment, especially in regions lagging the average subsector performance. A stronger fund management system will be implemented to better respond to the schools' needs and monitor their fund usage; for added reassurance, social audits are required for each fund-receiving school. As for the responsibilities of *upazilas* (subdistricts), the updated *upazila* primary education plan will initiate needs- and performance-based allocation aimed at improving *upazilas*' performances. The output will help strengthen budget planning and execution, improve the fiduciary system, and enhance the audit resolution process by (i) rolling out a web-based advanced version of the Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++), (ii) expanding the use of the electronic government procurement (e-GP) system, (iii) establishing and functionalizing an internal audit unit, (iv) ensuring adequate staffing and training on financial management and procurement, and (v) regularizing periodic audit monitoring and reporting. The primary education monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system will be strengthened with a web-based integrated education management information system (EMIS), with data accuracy further ensured through the continuous annual primary school census and the cross-validation with the education household survey. The EMIS-generated school report cards will be used to disclose key school data in the public areas of each school, thus improving data transparency and accountability for primary education performance.

9. The RBL selected the right mix of indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, and transparent. The results areas are all geared toward enhancing the equity and quality of primary education and are expected to contribute to the anticipated impact and outcomes. Further, the RBL is expected to contribute to the sustainable development of the primary education subsector by providing additional qualified and trained teachers, improving infrastructure, enhancing the curriculum and teaching practices, and strengthening governance and management. It is expected that the proposed program will directly benefit (i) about 18.6 million students; (ii) about 340,000 pre-primary and primary school teachers; (iii) more than 65,000 government schools, including government primary schools and newly nationalized primary schools; and (iv) numerous teacher educators, planners, managers, and policymakers involved in primary education. The indirect beneficiaries are more than 90 million families and community members across the country.

B. Disbursement-Linked Indicators

10. The disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) were jointly agreed between the government and development partners for financing the program. The common DLI matrix is derived from the overall results framework of the program and summarized in the table below. These DLIs

(i) are a logical and balanced mix of outputs, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes; (ii) represent a subset of the program and results framework and reflect a balanced composition of the various results areas; (iii) are realistic and under the control of the government; and (iv) give continuity to the critical reforms that were implemented during the previous project in the respective results areas and were carried forward to this program. The sequencing of the DLI annual targets ensures a gradual schedule of reaching results.

Results Areas and Agreed Disbursement-Linked Indicators

Result Areas	Disbursement-Linked Indicator Areas
Result area 1: Quality	1. Curriculum revision and textbook development 2. Assistant teacher recruitment and deployment 3. Teacher education and continuous professional development 4. Examinations and assessments
Result area 2: Equitable access and participation	5. Need-based infrastructure development 6. Education opportunities for out-of-school children
Result area 3: Management, governance, and financing	7. Fiduciary system and budget 8. Data system, monitoring and accountability 9. Institutional strengthening

Source: Asian Development Bank.

11. The DLIs cover all three results areas and target the most critical reforms for enhancing access, equity, quality, and governance and management of the primary education system. The proposed program sets specific annual targets for each DLI over the 5-year period, of which two DLIs also include outcome indicators that relate to grade 3 learning achievements in Bangla and mathematics (a year-5 indicator of DLI 4, which is drawn as DLI A) and the national survival rate to grade 5 for both boys and girls (a year-4 indicator of DLI 6, which is drawn as DLI B). DLI 1 aims to strengthen the effectiveness of the curriculum in channeling competency-based learning. It will also develop new teaching and learning materials (including supplementary reading materials) to enrich the teaching and learning experience. DLI 2 supports streamlining a teacher recruitment plan to ensure efficient teacher placement. It aims to improve the average student–teacher ratio as envisioned in the National Education Policy (2010). DLI 3 will focus on upgraded teacher development. It will update and expand the DPED program. It will also initiate continuous professional development to advance teachers’ proficiencies in fostering students’ competency-based learning. This DLI will provide an incentive to clear the current backlog of teachers yet to attain basic professional standards of primary education. DLI 4 focuses on the role of student assessments and aims to improve learning outcomes measured by the NSA results. DLI 5 supports improving the learning environment by constructing additional classrooms in line with the infrastructure planning standard and providing gender-segregated sanitation facilities and safe water sources to more schools. It aims to increase the share of schools that operate single shifts to help augment the average teacher–student contact hours. DLI 6 supports the continuity of OOSC interventions from the previous project by upscaling the outreach to OOSC and providing a flexible education service that helps them achieve the targeted competencies. DLI 7 aims to boost efficiency and accountability of public expenditures by updating fiduciary systems, such as ensuring more capacity and better staffing, setting up an internal audit unit, strengthening audit resolution, and rolling out the iBAS++ as well as the e-GP system. DLI 8 supports improving the M&E through a web-based integrated EMIS (including student and teacher management information systems and other subsystems) and displaying key school data in the schools’ public areas to improve public awareness. DLI 9 targets institutional strengthening of primary education offices at all levels toward progressive decentralization and updates the school level improvement plan and *upazila* primary education plan to achieve stronger fund management linked to needs and performance.

12. The key outputs of the RBL and the DLIs were formulated in a way to reinforce the positive effect of the result indicators of the program. For example, by achieving the DLIs in needs-based infrastructure and teacher recruitment, it is expected that many schools will be able to meet the composite primary school quality level indicator, composed of (i) girls' toilets, (ii) potable water, (iii) student–classroom ratio, and (iv) student–teacher ratio.

C. Managing Risks and Improving Capacity

13. The program is essential to further developing primary education and thereby human capital. Public awareness and buy-in of the program have been strong. Budget allocations for the education sector and the primary education subsector have increased. The executing agency and most implementing agencies have experience with results-based management in DLI financing under a sector-wide approach from the previous project. The risks to the program lie mainly in weak central and local planning capacity and weak coordination between the Directorate of Primary Education (the implementing agency) and partner implementing agencies, which may result in delays—especially at the onset of the program—such as (i) delays in ensuring effectiveness of memorandums of understanding with implementing partners, (ii) delays in procurement caused by constrained fiduciary management capacity, (iii) weak capacity in service management to ensure quality inputs, and (iv) delays in establishing new agencies or adopting new initiatives. The occurrence of natural disasters such as cyclones and floods may disrupt smooth program implementation. The program also demands adequate inputs such as sufficient central and local staff.

14. The proposed RBL program includes several measures (further described in the program action plan [PAP] and the DLI matrix) that aim to mitigate such risks and ensure program targets to be achieved on time. The proposed RBL program will implement an institutional strengthening plan in line with the updated organizational development and capacity building guidebook (DLI 9, PAP 1.4) to improve the capacities of central and local institutions for planning, administration, and monitoring. The prior results for DLIs 1, 2, 3, and 5 are aimed at ensuring enabling policy environment and/or guidelines for program implementation and coordination, which will allow smooth coordination between the Directorate of Primary Education and partner implementing agencies and ensure collaborative effectiveness. Adequate measures are also in place to strengthen program governance and management, including measures to mitigate fiduciary risks at central and local levels (DLI 7, DLI 9, PAP 1.3, 2.2–2.6). The program plans to set up a Primary Education Board, which will also take a key role during the NSA at year 4 (DLI 4). The first 3 years of the program will allow reasonable time for its setup and functionalization, which will be done by transforming an existing compulsory primary education implementation monitoring unit rather than starting from scratch. The PAP further requires actions such as planning, approving, and monitoring the annual procurement plan of the program (PAP 2.1), and establishing disaster resilience requirements for school infrastructure to align with the need for safeguarding education in emergencies (PAP 1.7). The establishment of a web-based integrated EMIS (DLI 9) with the requisite training will facilitate central and local monitoring and reporting; above all, it will boost the capacity for evidence-based planning and management. The program support team will coordinate the planning and monitoring of technical assistance for the program to ensure that it is implemented as scheduled and that the anticipated results are delivered on time.