



BTC

**BELGIAN
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

FINAL REPORT

BUDGET SUPPORT

SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM (SEQAP II)

SECOND COMMITMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

VIETNAM

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List of acronyms

BoET	Bureau of Education and Training
BSA	Budget Support Advisor
CMO	Convention de Mise en Œuvre
CPMU	Central Program Management Unit
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFA	District Fundamental School level Audit
DFID	Department for International Development
DoET	Department of Education and Training
EDSP	Education Development Strategic Plan
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EM	Ethnic Minorities
EQMS	Education Quality Management Information System
ETEP	Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness Project
EUR	Euro
FDS	Full Day Schooling
GoV	Government of Vietnam
G2 (G5)	Grade 2 (5)
GPB	British Pounds
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDS	Half Day Schooling
HIDE	Household Informal Disbursements for Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQEFA	Vietnam High Quality Educational for All
ICM	Implementation Completion Mission
ICR	Implementation Completion Report
IDA	International Development Association
IFR	Interim Financial Report
JRM	Joint Review Mission
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation

MDS	Mixed Day Schooling
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NTEP	National Teacher Effectiveness Program
PA	Parents Association
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PEDC	Primary Education for Disadvantaged Children
PFM	Public Financial Management
PforR	Program for Results
PMU	Program Management Unit
PSEV	Parental Spending for Education in Vietnam
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RGEP	Renovation of General Education Project
S	Semester
SA	Specific Agreement
SDR	Special Drawing Right
SEQAP	School Education Quality Assurance Program
TABMIS	Treasury And Budget Management Information System
TBS-EFA	Targeted Budget Support for Education For All
T30 (T35)	Periods of instruction
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
VNEN	Viet Nam Escuela Nueva
WB	The World Bank

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Basic Data on the Belgian Contribution

Title of the programme	School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP II)	
Earmarking (sector/subsector/region)	School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP II) (on-budget support part)	
Country	Vietnam	
Period covered by SA	13.11.2012 – 31.12.2016	
Period covered by CMO	30.11.2012 – 30.09.2017	
Financial data	Contribution Belgium – SEQAP I	1,000,000 EUR
	Contribution Belgium – SEQAP II	4,000,000 EUR
	Contribution UK - DFID	12,000,000 GBP*
	Contribution The World Bank	85,400,000 SDR** (± 127,000,000 USD)
	Contribution Vietnam	27,900,000 USD
	TOTAL	± 176,672,000 USD
DAC – Code /Sector	11220 Primary Education	
NI – Code	NI38463	
NAV – Code	VIE1204611	
Date of arrival expert	February 2013	

* The initial contribution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain amounted to 17,000,000 GBP (16,250,000 GBP on budget and 750,000 GBP off-budget). This amount was reduced to 12,000,000 GBP due to a budget reallocation in the amount of 5,000,000 GBP in favour of the HIV/AIDS program in 2013.

** The IDA share amounts to 72,800,000 SDR on-budget and 12,600,000 SDR off-budget.

*** The BSA was initially recruited for TBS-EFA (VIE0503211) and SEQAP I (VIE0903811) and started delivering services as from 15.03.2010 and 01.01.2011 respectively.

1.2 Disbursement Calendar

Disbursements in million EUR	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Installments transferred by BTC	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Installments disbursed by Partner	0	0	0	0	2		2		0	0

1.3 Summary

SEQAP was launched in March 2010 with the signing of a joint Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Vietnam, Belgium, DFID and The World Bank. A first Specific Agreement was signed between the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium in November 2010 in the amount of 1,000,000 EUR (SEQAP I). A second Specific Agreement was signed in November 2012 in the amount of 4,000,000 EUR (SEQAP II).

1.3.1 Context

Vietnam is a fast developing country of over 95 million people (UN estimate March 2017). About 40 % of its population is younger than 25. Despite considerable progress in alleviating poverty over the past two decades, Vietnam development is still not inclusive. The mountainous areas tend to be much poorer than the lowlands and progress in poverty reduction has been much slower for Vietnam's ethnic minorities than for the Kinh and Chinese ethnic groups.

These inequalities are reflected in the education system where (a) the educational attainment beyond primary is driven by higher performance of the most advantaged groups; and where (b) the quality of the education system, in particular for disadvantaged groups, is still insufficient. Evidence suggests that such inequities are due to the fact that disadvantaged groups have less access to good facilities, qualified teachers and sufficient instructional time, which are strong determinants of performance for poor disadvantaged groups – more than for wealthier groups. Such obstacles are amplified by the limited yearly allocated instruction time in primary education (less than 700) which represents the main weakness of the Vietnam education system.

To address these issues, MoET has launched a program promoting transition from half-day to full-day schooling (FDS) in order to reach 35 periods of instruction time per week by 2025. The School Education Quality Assurance Program contributes to the development and implementation of a policy framework to ensure a feasible and truly quality enhancing transition to FDS. The program focuses on helping the poor getting access to a comprehensive package of measures at school level, allowing schools to gradually move to a FDS model of at least 30 instructional periods per week.

The program builds on the internationally accepted evidence that achievement increases with instruction time and that the increase varies by both the amount of time and the classroom environment : school circumstances are important determinants of the benefits and desirability of increased instruction time. The conceptual appeal is clear : additional time allows teachers to cover more material and examine topics in greater depth ; build-in more hands-on learning ; individualize and differentiate instruction; and answer students' questions.

1.3.2 Objectives

The objective of SEQAP is to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly for disadvantaged primary education students through supporting the Government's full day schooling (FDS) reform program. It will do so by :

- Contributing to the design of the national policy framework for the implementation of a school driven FDS model to reach 30 or 35 well used teaching periods a week ;
- Supporting improved teaching and school management practices through pre- and in-service trainings and the application of professional standards for teachers and managers ;
- Supporting the upgrade of infrastructure and facilities and recurrent expenditure as needed in targeted schools to successfully move to FDS.

1.3.3 Results achieved

13 Joint Review Missions (JRM) have been carried out. This report is based on the findings of the final Joint Review Mission (Implementation Completion Mission - ICM) held in October 2016 and the final data made available by MoET and The World Bank in the Implementation Completion and Results Report (June 2017).

After 6 years of implementation, the finding of the JRM and the ICM confirm the need to keep focusing on sustainable financing of FDS options in order to maintain the current rates of access to FDS. Ultimately, the Government of Vietnam needs to commit to a costed implementation plan that supports and rewards FDS and provides schools and parents with the vital resources to increase access to FDS. Counting solely on contributions of local communities may not be sufficient, although schools have proven to be creative in finding solutions to financing FDS, using limited resources.

The decentralized implementation of FDS in the target schools used a budget support aid modality. The roll-out of FDS in SEQAP schools continued proceeding well over time :

- 1,628 primary schools in 4,731 main and satellite sites (representing 28,531 classes) operated FDS with the support of SEQAP.
- 1,277 schools benefitted from infrastructure support, resulting in 2,006 classrooms, 1,289 toilets and 262 multi-purpose rooms.
- 1,395 out of 1,628 SEQAP schools have 100% of the students accessing FDS.
- 606,229 primary students, accounting for 94 % of the total student body, now have access to FDS as a consequence of SEQAP. Of these, ethnic minority students account for 43.5% of total students. (43.5% ethnic minority students), benefited from additional instruction time.
- Direct project beneficiaries reached approximately 647.117 children of which 49.2 % were female. In addition, 147.872 teachers, 13.998 school administrators, and 300 provincial and district administrators were trained.
- 51,800 (98%) poor primary SEQAP students (annually) benefitted from lunches subsidized by SEQAP.

Source : MoES – Progress Report 13, September 2016 and WB – AM of the ICM Report, October 2016.

The program coverage - representing about 11% of Vietnamese primary schools - was only possible through a sector budget support funding modality and by using country systems. The modality allowed testing for different options and approaches, resulting in a costed Roadmap to FDS. This has proven vital to the sustainability of current and future SEQAP (FDS) activities as the full FDS roll out is expected to be funded by the central and provincial budget.

As such SEQAP supported FDS ‘pilot’ is providing the Government of Vietnam with the needed evidence and tools to make informed decisions on FDS for the period 2017-2025. SEQAP’s experience, recommendations, strategic directions and costed options for the further roll-out of FDS have been included in the FDS Roadmap. This Roadmap is considered the single most important output of SEQAP.

SEQAP’s intensive training approach as well as a number of the modules developed by the Program have been adopted by the new National Teacher Effectiveness Program (NTEP). This is important in the context of the new competency-based curriculum which will be implemented from the school year 2018-2019 onwards and which assumes a full-day schedule. The SEQAP approach and modules, in particular those relating to Active Teaching and Learning, are found to be well suited to prepare teachers and managers for this new curriculum.

1.3.4 Conclusions

The SEQAP objective and design focused on the Government of Vietnam’s priority to increase access to FDS. The FDS Roadmap substantially contributed to sustainability by allowing the Government of Vietnam to better identify the recurrent expenditure implications of meeting FDS goals, and thus influencing policies to ensure that the Government’s goals are sufficiently financed.

The impact of SEQAP on poor SEQAP districts was substantial as can be seen from the improved Vietnamese and math scores as well as access to FDS. SEQAP’s support was instrumental in providing the needed inputs to support learners and families in disadvantaged areas.

MOET and the Government of Vietnam are fully committed to continuing support for FDS. The MOET 2008-2020 EDSP explicitly states a commitment to move to FDS with plans to achieve full transition to at least 30 instructional periods per week by 2020, and 35 instructional periods per week by 2025.

In addition, the on-budget mechanism used in SEQAP showed the way for program financing through government systems that led to the first education sector Program for Results (PforR) lending for a new WB-supported project Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP).

1.3.5 Lessons learnt from SEQAP

- Lesson 1 : Programs can be successful if they are aligned with governments’ stated policy goals.
- Lesson 2 : Community involvement and continuous community outreach is important when trying to affect policy change at the local level.
- Lesson 3 : Teacher training is more effective when large numbers of key teachers are trained on subject content as well as training methodologies.
- Lesson 4 : Project development objectives that measure quality of education need reliable assessment data for time series analysis.

Source : WB – Implementation Completion and Results Report, June 2017.

1.3.6 Lessons learnt for Belgium

The decision of Belgium to be involved in SEQAP, where a relatively small financial contribution to a larger Program through a basket fund was combined with the provision of full-time technical support to the donor group, created the following advantages :

- This approach allowed Belgium to be involved in the technical discussions and orientation of the Program as well as the dialogue in the education sector ;
- It allowed Belgium to intensively advocate for support to disadvantaged groups, active teaching and learning, and safeguarding of cultural identity of minority groups on the agenda of a national Program and on the agenda the sector dialogue ;
- Due to its participation and its role in SEQAP, Belgium was considered a major actor at sector level by MoET and by other development partners ;
- Using the national systems allowed for strengthening decentralized financial management in Vietnam and for timely execution of the funds made available by Belgium ;
- The basket fund modality allowed the Budget Support Advisor (BSA) to fully perform their technical and advisory role and to dedicate sufficient time to it.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background and Purpose of this Report

The final report at hand covers the period from 01 January 2013 through 31 December 2016. The report covers the Specific Agreement concerning the second commitment for the School Education Quality Assurance Program (SEQAP) in Vietnam. A separate report was drafted for the first Specific Agreement (Final report VIE0903811), covering the first two years of implementation. This report discussed the status of the Program at the end of 2012.

Belgium's total financial contribution to SEQAP amounts to 5,000,000 EUR : a first commitment of 1,000,000 EUR signed on 29.11.2010 (Specific Agreement I) and a second commitment of 4,000,000 EUR signed on 13.11.2012 (Specific Agreement II).

The reason why the Program is governed by 2 Specific Agreements goes back to the lengthy process of forming a new national Government in Belgium in 2010 and 2011. Between June 2010 and December 2011 the caretaker government could only administer day-to-day affairs. A budgetary commitment for the full Program cycle required the new Government to be in place.

Initially SEQAP was a five year program running from 2010 through 2015 but, following a request of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), a one year no cost extension was granted till the end of 2016.

2.2 The School Education Quality Assurance Program

2.2.1 Rationale for Full-Day Schooling and SEQAP

Full-day (or mixed day) schooling - i.e. a minimum instruction time of 30 periods a week - is a key determinant of pupil achievement. Evidence also suggests that already disadvantaged groups are even more disadvantaged by having limited access to good facilities and qualified teachers. In poor, rural areas more instruction time is often constrained by lack of school resources and limited teacher workload. Therefore, there is a strong justification for supporting the provision of more instruction time in disadvantaged areas, together with improved school facilities, and better trained teachers to ensure both equity of access to FDS and higher quality of education for a sustainable future. This is in Vietnam facilitated by a current teacher surplus.

Between 2007 and 2011, the Government of Vietnam made a series of positive steps towards full-day schooling including the introduction of a flexible curriculum framework (leaving room for additional subjects), and regulations on teachers per class group applicable to FDS. However, in terms of direct support, the transition was left to a large extent to the discretion of local authorities that could provide sufficient infrastructure and to parents that could contribute to cover additional teacher work involved. This resulted in inequitable FDS coverage : only few schools and students managed to move towards FDS in poorer areas.

Given the fact that the Government's Education Strategic Plan 2008-2020 aims at expanding opportunities for universal high quality education and at improving the quality and effectiveness of each level of education, there was a clear rationale for creating a policy to facilitate the roll-out of FDS across the country. Provision of full day schooling was and is to be extended in a sustainable way to those for whom access is still unequal, and those areas where quality was and is lagging behind compared to the rest of the country.

2.2.2 Objectives and Key Interventions of SEQAP

The objective of SEQAP is to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly for disadvantaged primary education students through supporting the Government's full day schooling (FDS) reform program.

It will do so by :

- Contributing to the design of the national policy framework for the implementation of a school driven FDS model to reach 30 or 35 well used teaching periods a week ;
- Supporting improved teaching and school management practices through- pre and in-service trainings and the application of professional standards for teachers and managers ;
- Supporting the upgrade of infrastructure and facilities and recurrent expenditure as needed in targeted schools to successfully move to FDS.

2.2.3 Approach

SEQAP adopted two main strategies to achieve its objective :

- Provide advice (effective models, policy options) to the Government of Vietnam through the MoET to meet its FDS targets, particularly in disadvantaged areas, while maximizing overall learning achievement as well ;
- Contribute to expanding access to FDS through construction, training, grants, etc.

The first strategy is expected to result in the FDS Roadmap. The Roadmap is considered the single most important final output of SEQAP in terms of sustainability of quality enhancing full-day schooling in Vietnam. It is not a legal document but rather a set of instructions that can be taken into consideration by the Government to extend FDS to 90 % of primary schools by 2020 in the most optimal way. The FDS Roadmap presents several options, with costs and benefits clearly outlined. The document presents several potential models for meeting the overall goals of ensuring FDS in disadvantaged areas. Each of these potential models or approaches is subsequently evaluated in terms of technical effectiveness, feasibility, and financial sustainability.

This Roadmap builds on the experience drawn from the second strategy, in particular as regards the implementation of FDS in poor and disadvantaged areas in 1.629 schools in 36 provinces between 2011 and 2016. It presents what has been learnt about the fundamental requirements for implementing FDS in disadvantaged areas, key success factors, challenges involved, and how these challenges might be addressed and overcome if the Government is to achieve its objective.

2.2.4 Implementation Modality

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the Ministry of Finance (MoF) including State Treasury, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) were involved in the implementation of SEQAP. MoET acted as focal point and was responsible for coordination with other ministries. The focal points in partner ministries were involved on an ad hoc basis and monitored ongoing activities, led policy dialogue and

addressed obstacles during the implementation period. At technical and policy level, joint working groups provided advice to the Government. The daily management was assured by a MoET based Central Programme Management Unit (CPMU). SEQAP was executed through the existing institutional (MoET) structure at central, province, district commune, and school level.

SEQAP applied a “hybrid” financing arrangement :

- Ring-fenced and decentralized ‘on budget’ resources with code/sub-codes within the state budget lines for expenditure at local level (province, district, commune, and school), and
- Ring-fenced ‘off-budget’ resources following a traditional project approach for centrally managed expenditures by the CPMU (e.g. contracting of consultants, operating costs).

On-budget expenditures, which represented approximately 90 % of the Program, were financed following a report-based disbursement method with six-monthly unaudited Interim Financial Reports. The reports were based on the government reporting system with reporting deadlines on 15 September and 15 April. MoET consolidated the provincial reports and the financial reports submitted by the MoF.

MoET was responsible for reporting on off-budget expenditures.

2.2.5 Budget

SEQAP was financed by a basket fund to which several development partners agreed to contribute. Commitments to the basket fund consisted in :

- a loan of The World Bank (85.4 million SDR or ± 119.8 million USD) ;
- Grants of the United Kingdom (12 million GBP) and Belgium (5 million EUR) ; and
- a contribution of the Vietnamese Government (27.9 million USD).

The contributions from Belgium and the UK (DFID) were only to be used for the on-budget part of the Program. DFID front-loaded its disbursements because the available budgets could not been guaranteed until the end of the Program. To balance the flow of donor funds over the duration of the Program, Belgian agreed to back-load its disbursements towards the end of the Program.

A first instalment of 1,000,000 EUR (first Specific Agreement) was paid in 2010 in order to comply with the Belgian commitment to the Program. The remaining amount, two instalments of 2,000,000 EUR (second Specific Agreement), were scheduled in the second semester of 2013 (for fiscal year 2014) and 2014 (for fiscal year 2015) respectively, following the annual Program reviews (15 October of each year). The two instalments were transferred in November 2013 and December 2014 respectively. The reported disbursement rate is 100 %.

2.2.6 Structure of the Program

The SEQAP Program consisted of four different components :

- **Component 1: Improve Policy Framework for the Implementation of Full-Day Schooling Program**

This highly strategic component aimed at completing the requirements for the transition to FDS in 2009-2015 but also at building a more efficient and equitable framework for scaling-up the reform in 2015-2025 time period. This component largely consisted in technical assistance and was implemented by the central level.

- **Component 2: Improve Human Resources for the Implementation of Full-Day Schooling Program**

This second component covered the training and professional development of teachers, school leaders and education managers to successfully move to FDS in beneficiary provinces, with a particular focus on teaching methods, teacher standards and school management. The implementation of the FDS model requires significant training packages for school leaders, teachers and education managers to guarantee a smooth transition. Professional development is critical to optimal use of additional instruction time and effective classroom instruction, which was expected to ultimately lead to improved learning outcomes.

The component included activities focusing on in-service training for teachers, school leaders and education managers as well as the quality assurance framework for effective in-service training in the targeted provinces. All professional development related activities were managed at the district level (BoET : Bureau of Education and Training).

- **Component 3: Improve School Facilities and Resources for the Implementation of the Full-Day Schooling Program**

This component essentially supported the upgrade of infrastructure and facilities, and supported recurrent expenditures in 1,628 schools to successfully move to FDS, with corresponding supportive measures such as decentralized capacity building for effective school construction, and preparation of the FDS plans. Improved teaching quality is essential but was in itself not sufficient for a successful transition. There was a need for a comprehensive package allowing for upgraded infrastructure and facilities; appropriate teaching-learning materials ; support to operation and maintenance ; effective teacher time ; and complementary welfare interventions to help the most vulnerable families to keep their children in school.

SEQAP covered 1,628 primary schools. About 85 % of the targeted schools had less than 100 % of the students in FDS - as measured by T30 - and about 80 % of the targeted schools were in poor income quintiles (Q3, Q4, Q5). The targeted schools represented about 40 % of schools with less than 100 % of students in FDS in the 36 SEQAP provinces.

- **Component 4: Program management**

This component provided support to the management of SEQAP to ensure a smooth implementation and tangible results on the ground. Support was provided to the CPMU in key intervention areas, as well as capacity building at the sub-national level in procurement and financial management.

3 IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION STATUS

The Implementation Completion status reflects the findings of Implementation Completion and Joint Review Mission (JRM 13), which took place from 10 to 21 October 2016. It is complemented with the finding of the Implementation Completion Report(s). The information presented below is based on the WB Implementation Completion and Results Report (N° ICR00004103)

3.1 Component 1 : Improve policy framework for the Implementation of the FDS program

3.1.1 Subcomponent 1.1 : Develop a model for FDS in Vietnam

Developing a model for FDS in Vietnam helped complete the requirements for the application of an FDS model in 2009-2015 while laying the foundation for an improved FDS model in 2015-2025. A variety of technical assistance products for teachers, school management and education managers were produced under this sub-component, focusing overall on the following areas :

- Guidelines for transitioning to FDS ;
- In-service training modules on school management and use of time for FDS ;
- Teacher guides and learning materials for reinforcement of core subjects in T30 ; and
- Time schedules, criteria and detailed guidelines for implementation of T35.

A comprehensive list of these materials is presented below :

List of Materials developed	Copies distributed
FDS planning manual	3,718
FDS operation manual	17,016
FDS model and transition roadmap	17,016
Guideline for pedagogy, program design and time schedule of FDS	17,016
Management of teaching activities of FDS	17,205
Teacher guides for quality assurance in Vietnamese (Grades 1-5)	11,486
Teacher guides for quality assurance in Vietnamese (Grades 1-5)	11,486
Student learning materials for Mathematics (Grades 1-5)	11,486
Student learning materials for Mathematics (Grades 1-5)	11,486
Teacher guides for Vietnamese communication skills for ethnic minority students	23,500
Guidelines on organizing extracurricular activities in FDS schools	30,000
Guidelines on Musical education activities in FDS schools	30,000
Guidelines on Art education activities in FDS primary schools	28,329
Guidelines on Physical education activities in FDS primary schools	28,329

Guidelines for student clubs	8,866
Teacher guides for a student-centered teaching approach	15,000
Videos and printed Q&A materials on FDS activities	2,400
Teacher guides for all subjects (natural, social and science subjects)	2,400
Guidelines and trainings for a new pedagogical approach to FDS	500
Guidelines on improved creative activities in FDS	-

* Numbers of copies distributed varies per target group (teachers, school leadership, education managers, GOV officials, etc.)

Source : ICR report – Annex 2 – Table 10.

3.1.2 Subcomponent 1.2 : Policies and Roadmap for FDS Implementation

Policies and Roadmap for FDS implementation in Vietnam aimed to support the development of the broader policy framework needed for FDS to ensure that the enabling environment, related policies, and other regulations needed to allow the successful application and improvement of the full-day schooling model were developed. The project produced 12 policy studies to provide information on transitioning to FDS, as well as to assist in laying the foundation for the transition. The culmination of these policy studies, along with stakeholder consultations, was the development of a policy roadmap for the transition of primary schools from half day to full day schooling, analyzing different FDS scenarios, and resources required for each scenario. The policy roadmap was finalized by project closing thereby meeting the target for the intermediate indicator for this activity.

A comprehensive list of these policies is presented below :

List of Policies developed
Roadmap for the transition of primary schools from half day schooling to full day schools in the 2016-2020 period
Policy study on human resource management and related FDS implementation issues and structure
Policy study on teacher workload, contracting and employment under FDS
Policy study on time-on-tasks and classroom observations under FDS
Policy study on teacher competencies and educational requirements for FDS teaching
Policy study on overall teacher resources and working arrangements needed for FDS
Case studies on FDS
Policy study on efficiencies of SEQAP and lessons learned
Policy study on strengthening the involvement of communities and parents to improve the effectiveness in implementation of FDS
Policy study on solutions on how to encourage participation of the community and parents in FDS activities
Policy study on non-salary recurrent costs
Policy study on Cost and Finance for FDS phase 1
Policy study on Cost and Finance for FDS phase 2

Source : ICR report – Annex 2 – Table 10.

In the framework of SEQAP Belgium (co)financed 3 additional studies :

- **Vietnam High Quality Educational for All Study by 2020 – HQEFA (The World Bank, UKaid and Belgium)**

The HQEFA study has been carried out by The World Bank in collaboration and with the support from the International Department of the United Kingdom (UKaid) and the Belgian Development Cooperation and sought extensive participation of the Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

The purpose of the HQEFA Report was to examine critical trends in important student educational outcomes such as attendance, grade attainment and achievements ; to identify the key factors that affect these outcomes ; and to provide policy recommendations for building strong foundations of human resources in Vietnam.

The report is divided into a policy report (volume 1), an analytical report (volume 2) and statistical appendices (volume 3). The three volumes have been disseminated in both English and Vietnamese versions during the consultation workshop.

- **Parental Spending for Education in Vietnam (PSEV – HIDE Study)**

In 2011 Belgium financed a study on Household Informal Disbursement For Basic Education in Vietnam (HIDE). The study maps out the full and real costs of basic education from the perspective of families in Vietnam, perceptions of the socialisation policy in education and perceptions of corruption in the education sector in Vietnam. In the course of 2015, the report was updated, revised and renamed in order to meet some concerns of MOET which were hindering the publication of the report.

As the findings of the Study are potentially sensitive to the Vietnamese Authorities, a formal authorization from MOET was never provided, despite the efforts made by the Belgian Technical Cooperation and the Embassy of Belgium in Vietnam.

As the findings of this report are an important resource for different actors in the education sector, the study has been informally shared with key development partners but cannot be cited or referred to.

- **Study on the Evaluation of teachers' performance in Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Regular Education in Vietnam.**

The purpose of the study was to provide guidance on how to reform the teacher evaluation system in Vietnam, at early childhood, primary, secondary and regular education levels, and on the tools used for the evaluation, based on international experience, and in the context of the Fundamental and Comprehensive Education Sector Response in Vietnam.

The result of the study is a detailed overview of teacher evaluation practices in Vietnam and five other countries, and a set of recommendations for an improved procedure to evaluate teachers in Vietnam based on an evaluation of the current practice and the international examples.

The study report consists of 3 sections: an overview and evaluation of the assessment of teacher performance in Vietnam (section 1) ; an overview of international practices in teacher evaluation (section 2) ; and a set of recommendations for Vietnam based on international experience (section 3).

3.2 Component 2 : Improve Human resources for the Implementation of FDS

3.2.1 Subcomponent 2.1 : Training and Professional Development of Teachers

This sub-component focused on supporting improved teaching methods of teachers for effective FDS, including maximizing the use of the additional and existing teaching periods, while also helping address some current gaps in the teaching of additional subjects for FDS. The sub-component financed :

- In-service teacher training for 147,872 classroom teachers : 45,776 teachers in SEQAP schools, receiving on average 18 trainings over the project implementation period, and 102,096 teachers in non-SEQAP schools (compared to an estimate of 115,000 classroom teachers at project design) ;
- Additional school-based trainings in local languages (H'mong, J'rai, Cham, Khmer) , culture and context, and life skills for 18,636 teachers in all SEQAP program schools ;
- 4-5 month long campus-based in-service teacher training in local languages for 201 teachers (compared to an estimate of 150 teachers at project design), and additional in-service teacher training for about 1,187 teachers in communication skills (compared to an estimate of 1,500 teachers at project design) ; and
- 5-7 month long pre-service training in English, Music and Art, Physical Education and Union work, and Computer Literacy/IT for 410 bachelor degrees.

This pre-service training of non-core subjects was piloted under SEQAP, and the first time specific pre-service training was offered. In addition, this sub-component also financed eight graduate studies scholarships and stipends for teachers to study Primary Education in Australia.

3.2.2 Subcomponent 2.2 : Training of School Leaders and Education Managers

This sub-component focused on increasing the capacity of school leaders and education managers to support effective FDS. School leaders and education managers played a key role in ensuring a successful transition of the school to FDS and high quality school-based training. The sub-component financed :

- In-service training in the school-based training package for 8,217 key teachers/deputy-principals from SEQAP and non-SEQAP schools (compared to an estimate of 2,500 key teachers/deputy principals at project design) ;
- In-service training on school management in all SEQAP program schools for 4,715 education managers, and on average, 23 trainings per trainee. These included management teams within a school (about 70 % of trainees), as well as BoET and DoET officials (about 30 % of trainees). 9,283 education managers in non-SEQAP schools was financed as well, with on average four trainings per trainee (compared to in-service training planned only for SEQAP schools at project design) ; and
- Training of 300 provincial and district teams in school supervision and management for transition to FDS.

A list of training modules utilized for trainings under SEQAP are presented below. The project financed the development of 16 modules, three more than planned at project design, and used two additional modules (modules 17 and 18), which were developed under other projects.

Training modules developed for Teachers, School leaders and Education Managers	
Module 1	FDS school model and transition road map
Module 2	Management of teaching activities in FDS primary schools
Module 3	Guidance on FDS planning
Module 4	Professional standards of primary teachers to be applied in FDS primary schools
Module 5	Active teaching – teaching techniques in FDS primary schools
Module 6	Pedagogical training for primary teachers through intensive professional meetings
Module 7	Organization of extra-curricular creative experience activities in FDS primary schools
Module 8	Teaching quality assurance (training assessment and monitoring) in Math and Vietnamese grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Module 9	Workbook to consolidate skills and knowledge in Vietnamese and Math grades 1,2, 3, 4, 5
Module 10	Communication skills in local languages (H'mong, J'rai, Cham, Khmer)
Module 11	Organization of Art education in FDS primary schools
Module 12	Organization of Music education in FDS primary schools
Module 13	Organization of Physical education and Union Work in FDS primary schools
Module 14	Strengthening communication skills in Vietnamese for EM students
Module 15	Strengthening Knowledge and skills in local culture
Module 16	Practical FDS teaching framework/"Hands-on teaching method"
Module 17	Vietnamese grade 1 – using Education technology
Module 18	Student club organization in FDS primary schools

Source : ICR report – Annex 2 – Table 12

3.2.3 Subcomponent 2.3 : Quality Assurance of Training and Professional Development

This sub-component was to help build the required quality assurance framework for training and professional development in the beneficiary provinces and districts, and all program and non-program HDS, FDS and MDS schools. This sub-component financed :

- Communication and awareness raising for the implementation of teacher standards ;
- Training for 760 key MoET trainers in teacher professional standards (compared to an estimate of 600 key MoET trainers at project design) ;
- Training of about 2,631 education managers, receiving on average three trainings on using the teacher and principal standards for annual teacher and principal performance appraisal and training need assessment (compared to an estimate of 2,600 education managers at project design) ;

- Training of about 7,719 school principals, receiving on average three trainings, on using the teacher standards for annual teacher performance appraisal and training needs assessment (compared to an estimate of 3,150 school principals at project design) ;
- Training and assessment of 41,061 primary teachers against the teacher professional standards (compared to an estimate of 85,000 primary teachers at project design) ;
- Training of 9 future educators for effective trainer training ;
- Training of 10 national specialists on ethnic minority languages ; and
- Development of 2 new training modules on local culture and context, and professional standards and quality assurance.

The number of outputs related to trainings given were substantial and a major achievement of the project. The number of trained teachers, school leaders and education managers, as well as the number of training sessions provided consistently exceeded target estimates at project design, with the exception of 2 out of 13 estimates for training participants. In addition, and as mentioned earlier, a substantially larger number of non-SEQAP schools also benefited from materials and trainings developed under the program. These non-SEQAP schools were usually in the same provinces as SEQAP schools utilizing economies of scale.

The project modified the traditional cascade training approach through the participation of school leaders in centralized trainings as well as by providing intensive training for teacher-on-teacher trainings. This modified cascade training resulted in most training targets being largely exceeded, especially at school level, as is described above. The intermediate results indicator used to measure head teachers and deputy head teachers trained to implement FDS as a proportion of all head teachers and deputy head teachers was exceeded by 5.75 %. In addition, MoET felt that the SEQAP training modules were so successful that it decided to adopt 4 training modules to become standard national trainings. At the time of project closing, training modules 2, 5, 6 and 7 listed in the table above were undergoing national appraisal.

The SEQAP PMU continuously adopted training content and arrangement based on lessons learned during the project. For example, a training “master plan”, developed on a central and provincial level, was bi-annually reviewed based on trainings already given and specific local needs. These master plans contained training objectives, division of responsibilities, and a description of resources and milestones for all trainings and managers of trainings. The trainings were reviewed based on how they contributed to the implementation of FDS and the adequacy of the training modalities (duration and schedule of trainings, contents, objectives and scope of trainings, and evaluation of trainings). Evaluation of trainings was a major aspect of this feedback loop approach, and field studies were commissioned, resulting in a 2013 external evaluation report and the 2015 application of classroom observations. Furthermore, SEQAP mobilized national FDS teaching professionals, experts on trainings, and experienced teachers to support training design.

3.3 Component 3 : Improve School Facilities and Resources for the implementation of FDS

3.3.1 Subcomponent 3.1 : Upgraded Infrastructure and Facilities

This sub-component focused on physical improvements in the beneficiary schools. Overall, this sub-component financed :

- 2,006 additional regular classrooms ;
- 262 multi-purpose rooms ;
- 1,289 sanitary facilities ;
- 7 regional school construction coordinators, architectural consultant services and construction-related workshops ;
- Classroom furniture to all new classrooms and multi-purpose rooms ; and
- Equipment and materials for 150 district resource centres.

The number of schools receiving financing to upgrade infrastructure and facilities through construction was 1,277.

During project preparation, it was agreed between the donors and PMU that the cost and square meter estimates used were for reference and the basis for the program calculations for construction. However, it was also recognized that civil works costs would vary among localities due to various factors, and that market costs would apply once the project began.

In 2011, during the first year of implementation, the PMU and districts were already indicating that the budget envelope allocated for construction of schools was too small to fully accommodate all construction. At this time, the PMU and the project's civil works consultant estimated the actual square meters needed for construction to be higher than accounted for in project preparation. This, in combination with surging raw material prices and inflation, resulted in a revision of the number of classrooms to be constructed from 2,800 classrooms, 500 multi-purpose rooms and 2,440 sanitary facilities to 2,006 regular classrooms, 262 multi-purpose rooms and 1,289 sanitary facilities.

In 2011, the Government of Vietnam issued *Document TCVN 8793/2011*, which revised the average primary schools square meter standards and prices upwards to reflect the market situation. These standards are in line with the revised square meter estimates under SEQAP. Furthermore, while the square meters per construction had to be revised upwards, absolute costs per construction did not increase proportionately, resulting in a lower average unit costs per m² compared to estimated figures at project design.

3.3.2 Subcomponent 3.2 : Operation of FDS

This sub-component largely focused on the development and implementation of school FDS plans and related recurrent costs incurred by the beneficiary schools for operation and maintenance, including additional teaching-learning materials, needed to maximize the effects of the transition to FDS.

To finance operation and maintenance, inclusive of teaching-learning materials, the program provided a small operating grant (school education grant) to schools. The average amount of the grant was 1,633 USD every six months to the 1,628 project schools. The amounts received varied per year and the average grant amount of 1,633 USD is based on an average of total grants per year and number of schools. These grants were managed by the school principals under guidelines and procedures outlined by the program within the Grants Operations Manual.

Additional teaching-learning materials (including emergency textbooks) were procured through the BoETs and delivered directly to the schools. FDS regional coordinators and part-time support to DoET made sure FDS plans were satisfactory.

Overall, this sub-component financed :

- School education grants (of 1,195 USD per semester) that were spent on eligible expenditures for 1,628 schools ;
- Additional complementary teaching-learning materials (including emergency textbooks) and equipment for poor and ethnic minority students ;
- 6 regional FDS coordinators supporting provinces, districts and schools in the planning of their transition to FDS ;
- 108 employees to provide part-time support to provincial DoET to process FDS plans and reports (including financial reporting and consolidation) ; and
- provincial/district/school/community workshops on FDS planning and appraisal, and school grants.

3.3.3 Subcomponent 3.3 : Demand-side Support for Disadvantaged Students

This sub-component focused on additional salary costs associated with regular teachers to support the transition to FDS. As schools moved from HDS to the FDS model of at least 30 periods of instruction per week, some program schools needed to finance incremental teacher salary costs. More precisely, half day schools with less than 1.3 teachers per class group needed to receive a salary increase corresponding to a staffing ratio of 1.3, which was used to provide a salary increase to cover the additional workload of existing teachers, rather than hiring new teachers. The additional salary costs for regular teachers were managed by the BoETs together with teacher training. Overall this sub-component therefore financed incremental teacher salaries for 7,100 regular teachers not going beyond the equivalent of a ratio of 1.3 teachers per class group.

3.3.4 Subcomponent 3.4 : Additional Teacher Time

This sub-component financed complementary welfare interventions to help schools keep the most vulnerable children in school. The sub-component financed :

- School student grants of 2,137 USD per semester to be spend on eligible expenditure for 1,628 schools ; and
- Salaries for 36 junior community coordinators for about two years per province, which included one more province than originally targeted.

More specifically, the interventions financed under the school student grants were : scholarships and funds (“attendance” and “performance” rewards) to buy emergency clothes to help ethnic minority families and households from the poorest 20 % income quintile keep their children in school ; lunches ; and pay for local language assistants that complemented supply-side interventions for ethnic minority and very poor students.

The school student grants were jointly managed by the schools’ parent associations (PA) and principals, and were an average of 2,137 USD every six months. Similar to sub-component 3.3, the amounts received varied per year and the average grant amount of 2,050 USD is based on an average of total grants per year and number of schools. Grants were managed according to the program guidelines and instructions set out in the Grant Operations Manual.

3.4 Component 4 : Program Management

3.4.1 Subcomponent 4.1 : Support to MoET PMU

Overall Support to the MOET SEQAP PMU provided direct support to the PMU for the management and oversight of SEQAP. It financed :

- a program coordinator and 8 international consultants on FDS program design, FDS financing, FDS planning, M&E, FDS road map, and assessment of Grade 5 students ;
- 5 national level program officers in main areas (planning and implementation of FDS, staff training for FDS and professional standards, and school grants) ;
- 1 procurement officer, 3 accountants and 5 support staff ;
- 79 national program workshops between 2010 and 2016 ;
- limited equipment, furniture and vehicles ; and
- bi-annual, mid-term and implementation completion reviews.

3.4.2 Subcomponent 4.2 : Financial Management

This sub-component ensured that the financial management of SEQAP was properly carried out at all levels. It consisted of 4 main groups of activities :

- technical assistance for MoET, provinces, districts and schools to improve the effectiveness of program expenditure, which included 5 international and 1 national consultant, tasked with providing technical assistance to the PMU, particularly for program monitoring, budgeting and budget allocation, reporting, auditing, and contracted accountants (accounted under sub-component 4.1) to assist MoET in implementation of Financial Management work for the off-budget expenditure, and part-time support in all provincial DoET to help districts with financial reporting and reconciliation (accounted under sub-component 4.1) ;
- Financial Management training/workshop to be held at least on an annual basis, province by province, to foster best Financial Management practices ;
- the preparation of a total of 5 SEQAP Financial Management guidelines (on SEQAP funds generally, financial management, school grants, and student grants) ; and
- annual independent audit and tracking studies.

3.4.3 Subcomponent 4.3 : Procurement

This sub-component was to ensure that the procurement management of SEQAP was properly carried out at all levels. It consisted of 4 activities :

- technical assistance to specifically assist MoET, DoET, BoET, districts authorities, communes and schools to improve the effectiveness of Program procurement, which included one international advisor on procurement matters based within the PMU in MoET for SEQAP, and 6 national consultants, each of which worked with the provincial governments, DoETs, BoETs, districts, communes and schools ;
- 36 procurement training/workshops, on average 7 trainings/workshops per year, province by province, to share best practices in procurement ;
- preparation of SEQAP procurement guidelines ; and
- an annual independent audit.

4 ACHIEVEMENTS (INDICATORS) AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Objective(s) and Key Performance Indicators

The SEQAP objective (Outcome) was to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly disadvantaged primary education students, through supporting the Government's full-day schooling reform program.

The (initially) selected key indicators were :

- Indicator 1 : percentage of Grade 5 students achieving independent learner status in Vietnamese language ;
- Indicator 2 : percentage of Grade 5 students achieving independent learner status in mathematics ;
- Indicator 3 : percentage of Grade 5 students with good or excellent grades in Vietnamese ;
- Indicator 4: percentage of students completing primary education ; and
- Indicator 5 : proportion of students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a total of all students.
- Indicator 6 : Early Grade Reading Assessment Survey

The key indicators were adjusted in September 2015 as a part of the Project Restructuring. The indicators were dropped or restated for the following reasons :

- Indicator 1 : Dropped because MOET changed the goal of the 2011 Grade 5 assessment to assess only the achievement of 'minimum' learning standards and therefore did not provide a valid comparison with 2001 and 2007 results.
- Indicator 2 : Dropped because MOET changed the goal of the 2011 Grade 5 assessment to assess only the achievement of 'minimum' learning standards and therefore did not provide a valid comparison with 2001 and 2007 results.
- Indicator 3 : Restated using the "Grade 5 classroom assessment in Vietnamese and mathematics.
- Indicator 4 : Dropped because the District Fundamental School Quality Level Audit (DFA) – an education statistics database developed under the PEDC project – was discontinued in 2010. In 2015, EQMS - the replacement database – could not provide data for all indicators subsets yet.
- Indicator 5 : Dropped because the District Fundamental School Quality Level Audit (DFA) – an education statistics database developed under the PEDC project – was discontinued in 2010. Other databases could not provide data for all indicators subsets.
- Indicator 6 : Dropped as the EGRA pilot was only conducted in 2013. EGRA was not repeated in 2014 and 2015.

The (final) key indicators were the following :

- Indicator 1 : Grade 5 students who achieved a “good” of “excellent” classroom assessment in Vietnamese as a proportion of all G5 students with test results (SEQAP schools) ;
- Indicator 2 : Grade 5 students who achieved a “good” of “excellent” classroom assessment in Mathematics as a proportion of all G5 students with test results (SEQAP schools) ;
- Indicator 3 : Students completing Grade 5 as a proportion of enrolled Grade 5 students (SEQAP schools)

On the Output level the following indicators were monitored :

- Indicator 1 : Students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all students.
- Indicator 2 : Schools with 100% of students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all schools.
- Indicator 3 : Classrooms meeting at least “house level 4” standard as a proportion of all classrooms.
- Indicator 4 : Grade 1 & 2 ethnic minority students in classrooms with a teaching assistant as a proportion of all Grade 1 & 2 ethnic minority students (SEQAP schools).
- Indicator 5 : Teacher trained to use increased instructional time effectively as a proportion of all teachers.
- Indicator 6 : Head teachers and deputy head teachers trained to implement FDS as a proportion of all head teachers and deputy head teachers.
- Indicator 7 : Full day schooling Roadmap developed and adopted by MOET.
- Indicator 8 : Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at primary level resulting from project interventions (dropped during the 2015 restructuring – replaced by indicator 3).
- Indicator 9 : Proportion of classrooms meeting the national standard (dropped during the 2015 restructuring – replaced by indicator 3).

These indicators were to measure how SEQAP was affecting the policy of MOET to move forward FDS in SEQAP schools.

4.2 Beneficiaries

The SEQAP beneficiaries identified in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) were primary school students, teachers, provincial, district and school administrators, and communities from a total of 35 disadvantaged provinces. During the 2015 project restructuring, Bac Giang was added to the project bringing the total number of provinces to 36. Poor provinces were defined as provinces with

- a large share of economically and socially disadvantaged regions, specifically regions with a large share of ethnic minority groups compared to the overall population ;
- a large share of primary schools not currently employing FDS ;

- a large share of primary schools with insufficient infrastructure to teach two sections per day (measured as on average half a classroom available per class) ; and
- a large share of primary schools with only one teacher per class on average.

Direct project beneficiaries having benefitted from project interventions reached approximately 647.117 children of which 49.2 % were female. In addition, 147.872 teachers, 13.998 school administrators, and 300 provincial and district administrators were trained.

Source : ICR report – Main beneficiaries p.5.

4.3 Indicator Values

The selected indicators at Outcome (objective) level were met or exceeded

	Baseline	Target	Achieved
Outcome level (Development Objective)			
<u>Indicator 1</u> :	Grade 5 students who achieved a “good” of “excellent” classroom assessment in Vietnamese as a proportion of all G5 students with test results (SEQAP schools).		
Value (overall)	69.60	82.50	83.11
Value (girls)	76.50	88.30	90.01
Value (ethnic minorities)	64.60	68.00	69.15
Comment	Target exceeded : 17.41 % increase in the assessment results for all learners in SEQAP schools, 17.66 % for girls and 7.04 % for ethnic minority students during the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 2</u> :	Grade 5 students who achieved a “good” of “excellent” classroom assessment in Mathematics as a proportion of all G5 students with test results (SEQAP schools).		
Value (overall)	65.70	79.00	85.31
Value (girls)	69.40	84.00	86.73
Value (ethnic minorities)	60.80	69.00	71.04
Comment	Target exceeded : 23.50 % increase in the assessment results for all learners in SEQAP schools, 24.98 % for girls and 16.84 % for ethnic minority students during the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 3</u> :	Students completing Grade 5 as a proportion of enrolled Grade 5 students (SEQAP schools).		
Value (overall)	96.30	99.00	99.80
Value (girls)	96.30	99.60	99.78
Value (ethnic minorities)	73.50	99.00	99.65
Comment	Target met : 3.65 % increase for all learners in SEQAP schools, 3.61 % for girls, and 35.58 % for ethnic minority students during the implementation period.		

Source : ICR report – PDO Indicators and table 2 p. 20-21

	Baseline	Target	Achieved
Output level			
<u>Indicator 1</u> :	Students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all students.		
Value	48.40	85.00	89.74
Comment	Target exceeded : 85.40 % increase over the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 2</u> :	Schools with 100% of students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all schools.		
Value	60.60	75.00	77.44
Comment	Target exceeded : 153.10 % increase over the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 3</u> :	Classrooms meeting at least “house level 4” standard as a proportion of all classrooms.		
Value	87.90	90.00	91.57
Comment	Target exceeded : 4.17 % increase over the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 4</u> :	Grade 1 & 2 ethnic minority students in classrooms with a teaching assistant as a proportion of all Grade 1 & 2 ethnic minority students (SEQAP schools).		
Value	3.50	---	3.78
Comment	Increase in the number of teaching assistants for G1 and G2 ethnic minority students during the implementation period.		
<u>Indicator 5</u> :	Teacher trained to use increased instructional time effectively as a proportion of all teachers.		
Value	1.90	95.00	98.76
Comment	Target exceeded by 3.76 %.		
<u>Indicator 6</u> :	Head teachers and deputy head teachers trained to implement FDS as a proportion of all head teachers and deputy head teachers.		
Value	31.30	94.00	99.75
Comment	Target exceeded by 5.75 %		
<u>Indicator 7</u> :	Full day schooling Roadmap developed and adopted by MOET.		
Value	No	Yes	Yes
Comment	Target met : the Roadmap was developed with a fully costed strategy to inform government policy on the implementation of 30/35 hours (a week) of classroom instruction. MoET is using the Roadmap to guide further implementation of FDS.		

Source : ICR Report - Intermediate outcome indicators

Further detail shows that disadvantaged areas experienced substantial improvement during the implementation period. By December 2016, 77 % of schools in poor SEQAP districts had fully transitioned to FDS. Another 37 % of schools in non-SEQAP poor districts also fully transitioned to FDS, which speaks to SEQAP's objective to substantially support the Government of Vietnam to move to FDS nation-wide.

	Baseline	Actual 2015-2016	% Increase
Students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all students.			
National	61.10	74.32	21.60
Poor districts	54.20	74.34	37.60
Poor SEQAP districts	51.60	77.12	49.50

Source : ICR report – Table 5 p. 22 (DFA and EQMS data)

	Baseline	Actual 2015-2016	% Increase
Schools with 100 % students receiving at least 30 periods per week as a proportion of all students			
National	49.20	62.42	26.90
Poor districts	39.20	64.07	63.40
Poor SEQAP districts	37.20	65.72	74.80

Source : ICR report – Table 6 p. 23 (DFA and EQMS data)

	Baseline	Actual 2015-2016	% Increase
Proportion of classrooms meeting at least “house level 4”			
National	92.70	94.20	1.60
Poor districts	54.70	90.00	64.60
Poor SEQAP districts	53.60	91.40	70.40

Source : ICR report – Table 7 p. 23 (DFA and EQMS data)

When SEQAP poor rural districts are compared to national level and non-SEQAP poor districts, the improvements in learning outcomes are significant :

	Baseline	Actual 2015-2016	% Increase
Proportion of Grade 5 students with Good or Excellent learning outcomes in Vietnamese language			
National	79.50	88.47	11.30
Poor districts	39.10	54.07	38.30
Poor SEQAP districts	37.20	61.73	65.90

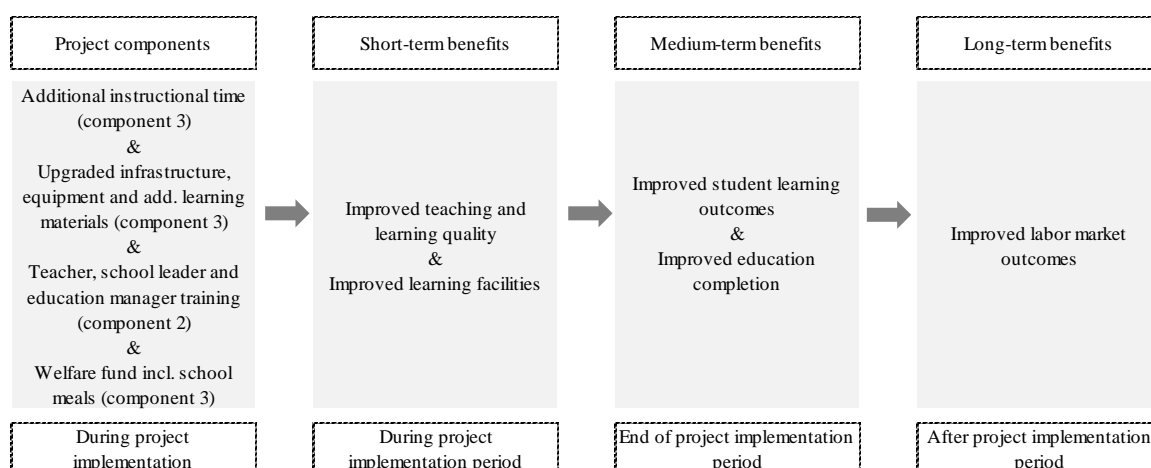
Source : ICR report – Table 3 p. 21 (DFA and EQMS data)

	Baseline	Actual 2015-2016	% Increase
Proportion of Grade 5 students with Good or Excellent learning outcomes in Mathematics			
National	74.30	88.21	18.70
Poor districts	33.10	52.17	57.60
Poor SEQAP districts	32.70	56.63	73.20

Source : ICR report – Table 4 p. 21 (DFA and EQMS data)

4.4 Analysis

SEQAP is expected to have a significant development impact through improving education quality. As indicated above, the Objective of SEQAP was to improve learning outcomes and education completion for primary education students, particularly disadvantaged primary education students, through supporting the Government's FDS reform program. The benefits of SEQAP arise through improved learning outcomes and education completion, and associated higher productivity and wages for SEQAP students, by funding additional instructional time, upgrading school infrastructure and equipment, providing teacher, school leader and education manager training, as well as a welfare fund providing for school meals.



Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - Figure 2.

4.4.1 Improved Education Completion

Over the course of SEQAP, primary education completion rates reached over 99 % for disadvantaged students in SEQAP schools and nationally. For the past ten years, gross enrollment rates have been consistently above 100 % with net enrollment rates around 98 %. In the first year of project implementation (school year 2009-2010), primary education completion rates stood at 96 % nationally and for SEQAP schools, but only at 82.2 % and 73.5 % for ethnic minority students, nationally and for SEQAP schools respectively. Over the course of the SEQAP project, primary education completion rates for ethnic minority students converged. Over the last three school years of the SEQAP projects, completion rates for ethnic minority students, female students and students in rural areas were consistently above 99 %.

	SEQAP schools	All schools	SEQAP schools	All schools	SEQAP schools	All schools
	2013 - 2014		2014 - 2015		2015 - 2016	
All students	99.60	99.80	99.70	99.80	99.80	99.90
EM students	99.20	99.50	99.50	99.30	99.70	99.40
Girls	99.50	99.80	99.80	99.90	99.80	99.70
Rural areas	99.60	99.80	99.70	99.70	99.70	99.80

Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - table 13 p.42.

4.4.2 Improved Student Learning Outcomes

Indicative findings and M&E data show improved learning outcomes under SEQAP. The 2007 Grade 5 study (MoET) based on the grade 5 classroom assessments, found a positive relationship between the number of students achieving a “good” or “excellent” assessment mark in mathematics and Vietnamese with a high proportion of students in mixed or FDS. The positive relationship was even more pronounced for low performing students and students from poor provinces. SEQAP specifically targeted disadvantaged students. Data collected as part of the Project’s results framework point at large improvements in the Vietnamese and mathematics classroom assessment marks of SEQAP school students. Comparing the grade 5 marks in Vietnamese and mathematics for SEQAP schools to the national average marks shows that, while on a national level more students were achieving a “good” or “excellent” mark, SEQAP schools had larger relative increases in the number of students achieving those high marks.

VIETNAMESE	SEQAP schools			National average		
	2009-2010	2015-2016	% change	2009-2010	2015-2016	% change
All students	69.90	83.11	19 %	79.50	88.41	11 %
EM students	---	69.15	---	---	70.35	---
Girls	76.50	90.01	18 %	84.10	95.02	13 %
Rural areas	68.50	85.11	24 %	75.10	87.17	16 %

Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - table 14 p.42.

MATHS	SEQAP schools			National average		
	2009-2010	2015-2016	% change	2009-2010	2015-2016	% change
All students	65.70	81.12	23 %	74.30	88.21	19 %
EM students	---	71.04	---	---	69.73	---
Girls	69.40	86.73	25 %	77.20	92.71	20 %
Rural areas	64.90	82.32	27 %	73.70	84.32	14 %

Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - table 15 p.43.

4.4.3 Additional instructional time and teaching quality

It is expected additional instructional time, specifically full-day schooling, together with teaching quality, will lead to higher learning outcomes. The main activities under components 2 and 3 aimed at strengthening teaching quality, through teacher, school leader and education manager training, as well as providing necessary infrastructure, resources and teacher salaries to increase instructional time to full-day schooling. While indicative findings and M&E data indicate improved learning outcomes, the estimated impact of the project individual components on learning outcomes used for this analysis are based on existing evidence and research. Nguyen et al (2010)* analyzed the 2007 national year 5 survey of student achievement in Vietnam and found that student enrollment 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 et al (2010) also highlight the positive impact of teacher feedback and teacher subject knowledge on student achievement.

* Nguyen, C., and Griffin, A. (2010). Factors influencing student achievement in Vietnam. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2 (2010) 1871-1877. Elsevier.

** Tam, T. N. T. M., and Pasquier-Doumer, L., (2015). Does Full-day Schooling reduce educational inequality in Vietnam? *ESP Working Paper Series* 2015 No. 72.

4.4.4 Cost effectiveness

Based on the comparison of unit costs of goods and services procured under SEQAP, it can be concluded SEQAP has been cost-efficient. Component 3, specifically sub-component 3.1 “Upgraded infrastructure and facilities needs for transition to FDS”, constitutes the largest investment under SEQAP. Under this component, funds are provided for the construction of classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, sanitary facilities as well as equipment to accommodate the demand for additional space of FDS. The number of construction works had to be revised downwards over the course of the project. When relating the construction costs to the number of original and actual construction works, it is observed that, while the square meters per construction had to be revised upwards, absolute costs did not increase proportionately. This lower average unit costs per m², points at strong cost efficiencies of the SEQAP project.

	Planned		Actual	
	# of rooms	Unit cost (USD/m ²)	# of rooms	Unit cost (USD/m ²)
Classrooms	2.800	209 USD	2.006	226 USD
Multi-purpose rooms	500	263 USD	262	225 USD
Sanitary facilities	2.400	393 USD	1.289	242 USD
Average unit cost (USD/m ²)	288 USD		231 USD	

Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - table 19 p.48.

Similarly, the project delivered training for SEQAP teachers, administrators and education managers in a more cost effective manner than is standard requirement for trainings as prescribed by the Government of Vietnam. The provision of teacher training falls under Component 2, the second largest component of SEQAP. The overall unit cost for all trainings (teachers, administrators and education managers) was on average 29 USD per day under SEQAP, while the same cost for teacher training funded by the Government of Vietnam is 49 USD. These costs include overall training costs and are presented below. Both, teacher trainings (sub-component 2.1) as well as administrator and education manager trainings (sub-components 2.2 and 2.3) were significantly lower than the Government standard unit cost, pointing at a consistently efficient use of resources of the project to fund training activities.

Type of Training	SEQAP		GOV standard unit cost
Unit cost per day for all trainings (teachers, administrators, education managers)	29 USD		49 USD
Unit cost for training per day by target group	Teacher training (component 2.1)	Administrators Education Managers (component 2.2/2.3)	
	28 USD	41 USD	na

Source : ICR report - Annex 3 - table 20 p.49.

4.4.5 Institutional change

There was institutional change related to teachers and teacher training that can be attributed to the SEQAP.

First, the project supported a modification of the traditional cascade training approach through the participation of school leaders in centralized trainings, as well as by providing intensive training for teacher-on-teacher trainings. This modified cascade training resulted in most training targets being largely exceeded, especially at the school level. This training process has been institutionalized within MoET. MoET felt that the SEQAP training modules were so successful that it decided to adapt 4 training modules to become standard national trainings.

Second, there was strong capacity development related to the training that remains within the MOET. During the project implementation, the project management team (MoET staff) began developing a “master plan” for teacher training based on central and provincial bi-annual reviews, and then continuously adopted training content and arrangement based on lessons learned during the project thereby creating a strong feedback loop for training material improvement.

Finally, there was institutionalization of a continuous professional development project with the issuance of *Circular No. 26/2015/TT-BGDDT* that was introduced because of the SEQAP policy study. In addition, *Circular No. 21/2015/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV* institutionalized the teacher title standards. SEQAP FDS teaching methodology and school management materials were incorporated into the in-service teacher training activities and will be continuously reinforced through the Bank-supported ETEP project. These are all substantial contributions to the institutional changes within MoET.

5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PROCUREMENT

5.1 Financial Management

SEQAP financial management was complex and a challenge during much of the implementation period. This was largely because 'on-budget' ring fenced activities were implemented in 36 provinces and 256 districts (each with its separate PMU), which made supervision of the expenditures difficult. This was particularly true given the limited capacity and experience at the local level with donor-funded projects. These issues made reporting difficult, which led to delays in the CPMU's ability to provide timely interim financial reports (IFR) and audit reports as required by the project financing agreement. To assist in the reporting requirements, the Treasury and Budget Management Information System (TABMIS) was installed at the central and provincial levels. SEQAP provided training on the system, and over time, with the use of the system, reporting improved and IFRs and audit reports were submitted in a timely fashion.

The other issue that created a challenge for implementation was the allocation of 'on-budget' funds from MOF to the provinces. The regular budget distribution to provinces takes place annually by the end of December. However, the SEQAP distribution was often made after the December distribution, usually during the first three months of the following year. This created delays in the flow of funds for SEQAP activities. Moreover, once the funds reached the provinces, there were often additional delays in passing the funds to the districts and schools. Over the life of the project, the flow of funds improved to the extent that the 36 provinces did receive funds by January or February of each year.

Finally, the IFRs were usually submitted on time, and the SEQAP audit reports were unqualified.

5.2 Procurement.

The CPMU hired the needed procurement staff and appointed a procurement coordinator with previous procurement experience and capacity. This provided a solid foundation for ensuring compliance with the procurement procedures and guidelines. The procurement team was effective in providing the annual procurement plans, following the appropriate procurement guidelines, and signing contracts for construction and consultant services.

However, one of the challenges for procurement throughout the implementation period was the flow of funds issue mentioned above. Distribution of district infrastructure budgets were, at times, delayed, which slowed payments for some contracts.

The SEQAP partners and CPMU worked with MOF and provinces to ensure the timely distribution of funds so that contracts could be paid. By project closing, all procurement had been completed.

The World Bank procurement team conducted the required prior and post reviews as dictated by the financing agreement and found :

- procurement processes were in compliance with provisions of contract agreements ;
- procurement filing was good ; and
- procurement-related documents were kept as required.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

6.1 Conclusion

The SEQAP objective and design focused on the Government of Vietnam's priority to increase access to full-day schooling (FDS). An important design feature was the inclusion of the FDS Roadmap which contributed to sustainability by allowing the Government of Vietnam to better identify the recurrent expenditure implications of meeting FDS goals, and thus influencing policies to ensure that the Government's goals are sufficiently financed. This was and continues to be relevant given the Government's policy to roll out FDS nationwide by 2025.

The impact on poor SEQAP districts was substantial as can be seen from the improved Vietnamese and math scores as well as access to FDS. SEQAP's support was instrumental in providing the needed inputs to support learners and families in disadvantaged areas. Local capacity for the support programs (in particular school lunches) has been developed and is strong, however, continued financing remains uncertain. MoET is working with the disadvantaged communities to continue the program.

MoET and the Government of Vietnam are fully committed to continuing support for FDS. As indicated above, the MoET 2008-2020 EDSP explicitly states a commitment to move to FDS with plans to achieve full transition to at least 30 instructional periods per week by 2020 (T30), and 35 instructional periods per week by 2025 (T35). A major contribution of SEQAP to this goal was the development of the FDS Roadmap, which provides costed T30 and T35 options for MoET considerations as they continue to rollout FDS. In addition, sustainability of SEQAP activities is evidenced by the :

- *Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg dated 6/13/2012*, institutionalizing 2 sessions a day (or FDS) for primary school.
- issuance of *Circular No. 26/2015/TT-BGDDT* on continuous professional development based on research introduced by SEQAP, and *Circular No. 21/2015/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV* on teacher standards that was based on the policy study done related to teacher competencies and educational requirements for FDS teaching ;
- issuance of *Decree 116/2016/ND-CP* on continuous support for general education schools and students in disadvantaged areas with rice and travel allowance;
- the New Rural National Target Program continuing to provide investment in sanitary facilities for schools ;
- introduction and utilization of SEQAP FDS teaching methodology and school management materials into the in-service teacher training activities ;
- continuation of use of the FDS operation manual that helps teachers and school managers implement the transition to FDS ; and
- recognition that onsite training at the school level shows better results.

This last observation was also confirmed by the recently closed Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-supported Vietnam Escuela Nueva Project (VNEN).

In addition, the on-budget mechanism used in SEQAP showed the way for program financing through government systems that led to the first education sector Program for Results (PforR) lending for a new WB-supported project Enhancing Teacher Education Program (ETEP).

The Renovation of General Education Project (RGEP) and the ETEP project have both taken lessons from SEQAP in terms of the establishment of a national assessment centre under RGEP as well as teacher training and development and provision of materials in ETEP and RGEP, and included them in the project designs, all of which continue to support the government's stated commitment to move to FDS.

6.2 Lessons learnt from SEQAP

- **Lesson 1 : Programs can be successful if they are aligned with governments' stated policy goals.**

SEQAP specifically supported the government's goal of transitioning to full day schooling. The SEQAP design included many activities to support the government's policy. However, the inclusion of a roadmap that provided fully costed transition scenarios for FDS policy implementation, as well as school grants that required community participation to educate communities on the benefits of FDS, were particularly significant in supporting the FDS goals.

- **Lesson 2 : Community involvement and continuous community outreach is important when trying to affect policy change at the local level.**

SEQAP, with the use of facilitators, worked with communities through the school education grant and school welfare grant to educate communities on the need for FDS, and help them develop plans to support the transition to FDS using the two grant mechanisms.

- **Lesson 3 : Teacher training is more effective when large numbers of key teachers are trained on subject content as well as training methodologies.**

Under SEQAP, key teachers received repeated training on content and training methods at the provincial level ensuring strong capacity for ongoing training and support. This approach led to the government issuance of *Circular No. 26/2015/TT-BGDDT* on continuous training. An additional benefit to using SEQAP key teachers as trainers, was that they could provide follow-up training at the school level and continuous professional support for teachers. Moreover, the training materials were sent to teachers two weeks prior to training for self-study, so they could come prepared with questions, which created for a more productive participatory training activity.

- **Lesson 4 : Project development objectives that measure quality of education need reliable assessment data for time series analysis.**

The original design included the use of the standardized Grade 5 assessment as the indicator for measuring quality improvement. This indicator presented problems for measuring quality because the 2001, 2007 and 2011 assessments used were not comparable. While the project was not able to use the Grade 5 standardized assessment as an indicator to measure the Objective, it did provide technical assistance to help develop an 'item bank' that can be used to develop more reliable and comparable assessments in the future.

6.3 Lessons learnt for Belgium

The decision of Belgium to be involved in a programme like SEQAP, where a relatively small financial contribution to a larger Program through a basket fund was combined with the provision of full-time technical support to the donor group, appears to have paid off :

- This approach allowed Belgium to be involved in the technical discussions and orientation of the Program as well as the dialogue in the education sector. Through the BSA, Belgium could contribute to orient decision-making among donors and between donors and the partner, even on issues and funds Belgium did not directly contribute to (eg. the technical work related to the use of the off-budget resources where only The World Bank and DFID contributed to). The importance of this contribution should not be underestimated as the technical work accomplished in the framework of the off-budget resources (policy studies, development of training materials, development of procedures for the use of school grants) set the stage for the use of the on-budget resources of the Program.
- It allowed Belgium to intensively advocate for support to disadvantaged groups, active teaching and learning, and safeguarding of cultural identity of minority groups on the agenda of a national Program and on the agenda the sector dialogue. These topics were important to other partners and participating agencies as well although not given the same priority or importance.
- Due to its participation and its role in SEQAP, Belgium was considered a major actor at sector level by the MoET and by other development partners.

It is fair to say that on-budget support is presenting a series of challenges to partner agencies as well. Nevertheless using the national systems allowed for strengthening decentralized financial management in Vietnam and for timely execution of the funds made available by Belgium.

- Fungibility remains a concern. There might be good reasons for preferring project aid in particular circumstances, but the 'fungibility' of budget support is not among them. The analysis of Owen Barder on 'liquidity' of aid is interesting in this respect (<http://www.owen.org/blog/4580>). Unlike what would be the case with 'pure' sector budget support, SEQAP partners did not get full insight in the education sector budget as part of the technical dialogue.
- Because the funds made available by Belgium were part of a larger basket, predictability and timely disbursement did not raise any concerns.
- SEQAP had a significant impact on decentralised Public Financial Management (PFM) in the education sector and in particular on the use of TABMIS (Treasury And Budget Management Information System). While financial management has remained a challenge throughout the implementation of the Programme, considerable progress has been made on how localities, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Treasury and the MoET handled financial management. Important lessons drawn from this process related to how to track available budgets at school level, how to track expenses made by schools, and how to timely allocate funds, particularly given the fact that the majority of schools obtained financial autonomy.

- The basket fund modality allowed the Budget Support Advisor(s) to fully perform their technical and advisory role and to dedicate sufficient time to it. In traditional project modalities part of the available time has to be dedicated to administrative and operational issues, which limits the availability for technical assistance. The presence of the BSA was to the advantage of Belgium in the SEQAP donor group. In many cases, the BSA was best informed about specific technical programme details and (s)he was the first point of contact for other members of the donor group in SEQAP technical matters.

7 ANNEXES

7.1 Map of participating provinces

