

SECTOR ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY): EDUCATION

A. Sector Performance, Problems, and Opportunities

1. **Sector performance.** The Government of Viet Nam has placed a high priority on education, which has resulted in impressive achievements.¹ The state budget for education increased from 15.5% of total government spending in 2001 to 19.7% in 2013,² and the Communist Party has set a goal of increasing the state expenditure on education to 22.0% by 2020. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has undertaken initiatives to improve education including (i) granting professional certificates to teachers for achieving quality standards; (ii) training and upgrading teachers; (iii) introducing student-centered curriculum and teaching; (iv) establishing a school accreditation system; (v) developing a national achievement monitoring program; and (vi) expanding learning opportunities for girls, ethnic children, children in poor families, disabled children, and children in difficult circumstances.³

2. This government's efforts have resulted in improvements in the education quality. From 2001 to 2012, secondary education attendance rates rose significantly. Lower secondary student enrollments increased from 70.0% to 81.0% in that period, while the percentage of students attending upper secondary school jumped from 33.0% to 59.0%.⁴ In the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012, sponsored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the performance of Viet Nam's 15-year-old students in mathematics, science, and reading was higher than most of the 65 developed and developing countries that participated.⁵

3. **Education sector structure.** While Viet Nam has a number of education providers, two ministries play a major role in providing and overseeing education nationally. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is responsible for preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education. The Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is responsible for managing much of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with a focus on training students to enter the workforce.

4. MOET is responsible for pre-primary programs catering to students 3 to 5 years old; primary education, which provides a 5-year program for students at 6 years old; and secondary education. Secondary education has three components: (i) lower secondary education (LSE), covering grades 6 to 9 and catering to students 11–14 years old; (ii) upper secondary education (USE) for grades 10 to 12 for students who wish to enter into higher education; and (iii) professional secondary education (PSE) for grades 10 to 12 or 13 for students interested in TVET. In SY2012/13⁶, about 7.20 million students were enrolled in primary education, 4.87 million in LSE, 2.68 million in USE, and 0.62 million in PSE.⁷ Between SY2006/07 and SY2012/13, the total number of students enrolled in primary schools increased by about 330,000, but the total number of LSE students declined by about 990,000 students and USE students dropped by about 395,000. The number of PSE students was virtually unchanged in that period.

¹ Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2012. *Education and Training Sector Assessment, Strategy and Roadmap for Viet Nam*. Manila.

² The value of total government expenditure on education and training for 2013 is based on Ministry of Education and Training estimates.

³ Government of Viet Nam. 2011. *Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2011–2020*. Ha Noi.

⁴ Government of Viet Nam, General Statistics Office. 2013. *Viet Nam Household Living Standard Survey*. Ha Noi.

⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2013. *PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do—Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading and Science. Volume I, PISA*. Paris.

⁶ In Viet Nam, the school year starts in early September and ends 31 May, (Ministry of Education and Training <http://www.moet.gov.vn/>)

⁷ Government of Viet Nam, General Statistics Office. 2013. *Education Statistics, 2012–2013*. Ha Noi,

5. **Gap between educational programs and emerging economic needs.** Viet Nam's robust economic growth can be partially attributed to the government's policy on strengthening human resource development through education and the acquisition of technological and scientific skills. The size of the labor force grew from about 39 million in 2000 to 52 million in 2012. The government has achieved almost universal basic education, which has provided semiskilled young laborers. To boost competitiveness and economic and social growth, the government plans to increase trained skilled workers to be 55.0% of the workforce by 2015 and 60.0% by 2020. From 2005 to 2011, Viet Nam's sectors showed different growth patterns: the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector shrank by 7.0% of gross domestic product (GDP), while the industry and construction sector grew by 6.0% of GDP and the services sector expanded by 11% of GDP.

6. Most ethnic minority groups have limited employment opportunities because they live in remote locations with poor quality basic infrastructure. As a result, most have unstable or low-paying jobs. About 1.3 million workers move each year from the agriculture sector to the industry and services sectors, which is creating a strong demand to provide these agricultural workers with the skills needed in these sectors. These shifts require a workforce that can apply advanced technology and modern production tools and control systems instead of manual labor.

7. Considerable development, investment, and reform in education will be required as the labor market becomes more demanding and the need for highly skilled labors increases. The relevance and quality of programs at all levels of education urgently need to be improved. LSE needs to ensure that students have the basic competencies and the will to successfully proceed to USE, which in turn must equip senior school graduates to meet future challenges and obtain competencies equivalent to international standards. Access disadvantaged groups also needs to be improved in order to achieve social cohesion and shared economic growth.

8. **Gaps between social achievements and government goals.** Economic growth in Viet Nam has been coupled with poverty reduction and improvement in equity in recent years. Data from the 2012 multipurpose household survey⁸ show a decline in the incidence of poverty—from 58.1% in 1993 to 28.9% in 2002 and 14.2% in 2010. However, the decline in poverty has not been uniform across the different regions of the country, and the incidence of poverty continues to vary significantly across regions. While ethnic minority groups account for less than 15% of the total population, they make up more than half of the poor. Statistics show disparities in literacy rates and other basic education indicators between disadvantaged regions (the northern midlands and mountains and the central highlands) and the more advantaged regions (especially the Red River Delta and the southeast).

9. Regional and urban–rural differences are also clear, especially when gender is taken into account. In the northern midlands and mountains and the central highlands, literacy rates in 2009 among rural females aged 15 years or older were the same as, if not lower than, the rates found among rural males 20 years earlier. LSE enrollment rates differ between urban and rural areas and between high- and low-income families, as well as between Kinh and ethnic minority students. Between 199 and 2009, Poor and ethnic minority children living in rural disadvantaged areas have the lowest rate of increase. Provinces in the Mekong River Delta had the lowest proportion of the population with completed upper secondary or higher education, short-term training certificates, vocational training, and junior college or higher degrees.

10. **Gaps in academic performance among groups of students.** PISA defines equity in education as providing all students, regardless of gender, family background, or socioeconomic status, with opportunities to benefit from education. The report on the results from PISA 2012 notes that Viet Nam performed above the OECD average, but the relationship between its

⁸ Government of Viet Nam, General Statistics Office. 2013. *Viet Nam Household Living Standard Survey*. Ha Noi.

performance and socioeconomic status was about average.⁹ Further, OECD found that students in Viet Nam's cities outscored their counterparts in rural areas.¹⁰

11. OECD (footnote 5) notes that Viet Nam's enrollment rate for 15-year-old students was the lowest among the 65 participating countries. The National Achievement Monitoring Program, administered for grade 9 in SY2008/09 and for grade 11 in SY2012/013, found that ethnic minority students scored significantly lower than the Kinh majority, and students from disadvantaged areas scored much lower than students from advantaged areas.¹¹ Only 38.5% of grade 9 ethnic minority students achieved the acceptable standard in mathematics, compared with 62.2% for the majority Kinh students. For literature, 49.3% of ethnic minority students achieved the standard, compared with 69.4% for the Kinh students. Only 31.0% of grade 9 students in the central highlands area achieved the standard in mathematics. For the grade 11 mathematics, only 27.4% of ethnic minority students achieved the acceptable standard, and only 45.4% from the northeast area achieved this level, compared with 58.2% for Kinh students and 85.3% of students in the Red River area.

B. Government's Sector Strategy

12. **Country's development strategy.** The Socio-Economic Development Strategy, 2011–2020 emphasizes the need for Viet Nam to lay the foundations for a modern, industrialized society by 2020 and lays out a plan for the country's sustainable and inclusive growth.¹² The strategy requires the government “to fundamentally and comprehensively renovate the national education system towards standardization, socialization, democracy and international integration.” The Education Development Strategic Plan, 2011–2020¹³ acknowledges that the development of the education sector is the foremost national policy of the Communist Party and the government. The plan explicitly states that policies shall prioritize support for education development and human resource training for disadvantaged and ethnic minority regions, poor people, and people covered under the social policies of the government.

13. **Secondary education subsector plan.** The Secondary Education Sector Master Plan, 2011–2015 and 2020¹⁴ proposes the following nine activities to fundamentally reform LSE and USE: (i) reform education management; (ii) complete the national education system and expand the education network; (iii) develop human resources for the education sector; (iv) continue to reform the curriculum, teaching methods, and academic performance assessment; (v) promote socialization of education and effective use of resources to develop education; (vi) increase facilities and technical investments in education; (vii) promote scientific research and technology transfer to meet social demands; (viii) increase education supports for prioritized regions and learners; and (ix) expand and enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation in education. To clarify how ethnic minority and disadvantaged children will be assisted guidelines on the equality and consolidation among ethnic groups were adopted.¹⁵

⁹ OECD. 2013. *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence Through Equity: Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed (Volume II)*. Paris.

¹⁰ In Viet Nam, after accounting for socioeconomic status, the mean mathematics score for students in schools in cities (100,000 people or more) is 584 and for students in schools in rural areas (fewer than 3,000 people) is 550.

¹¹ Government of Viet Nam, MOET. 2009. *Results for Grade 9 National Achievement Monitoring Program*. Hanoi; Government of Viet Nam, MOET. 2014. *Results for Grade 11 National Achievement Monitoring Program*. Hanoi.

¹² Endorsed by the Eleventh Congress of the Viet Nam Communist Party.

¹³ Endorsed by Prime Minister's Decision No. 711/QĐ-TTg dated 13 June 2012.

¹⁴ Approved by the minister of education and training (MOET) in Decision No. 1484/QĐ-BGDDT dated 18 April 2012

¹⁵ Decision No.449/QĐ-TTg dated 12 March 2013 issued by the Prime Minister approving the ethnic minority Development Strategy by 2020.

C. ADB Sector Experience and Assistance Program

14. **Lessons learned from completed projects.** Two loans for secondary education and one loan for vocational training have been completed. It was found that the projects were more successful and effective if the following key factors were featured in the project: (i) the budget for operation and maintenance costs was adequate, (ii) coordination with development partners was undertaken, (iii) long-term capacity building was undertaken, (iv) there was a focus on results, (v) pro-poor geographic areas were targeted, and (vi) implementation delays were minimized.¹⁶

15. **Current portfolio.** ADB has a current project portfolio in the education sector valued at about \$556 million, which comprises the following projects: (i) Second Upper Secondary Education Development (\$90 million), (ii) Second Lower Secondary Education Development (\$58 million), (iii) Upper Secondary and Professional Teacher Development (\$35 million), (iv) Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions (\$50 million), (v) Secondary Education Sector Development (\$60 million), (vi) Skills Enhancement (\$70 million), (vii) A New Model University (\$190 million), and (viii) two programs funded by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) totaling about \$3 million.

16. **Forward strategy.** ADB supports Viet Nam's goal to rise to upper middle-income status through three pillars: inclusive growth, enhancing economic efficiency, and environmental sustainability.¹⁷ ADB's aim is to help the government prepare all students with the general skills needed to function effectively in a rapidly industrializing society with changing workplaces, along with higher level skills development for key high technology industries, and capacity building for research and innovation. ADB also wants measures in place to ensure that growing industrialization and the need to improve efficiency are accompanied by an equally strong thrust to promote social inclusiveness.

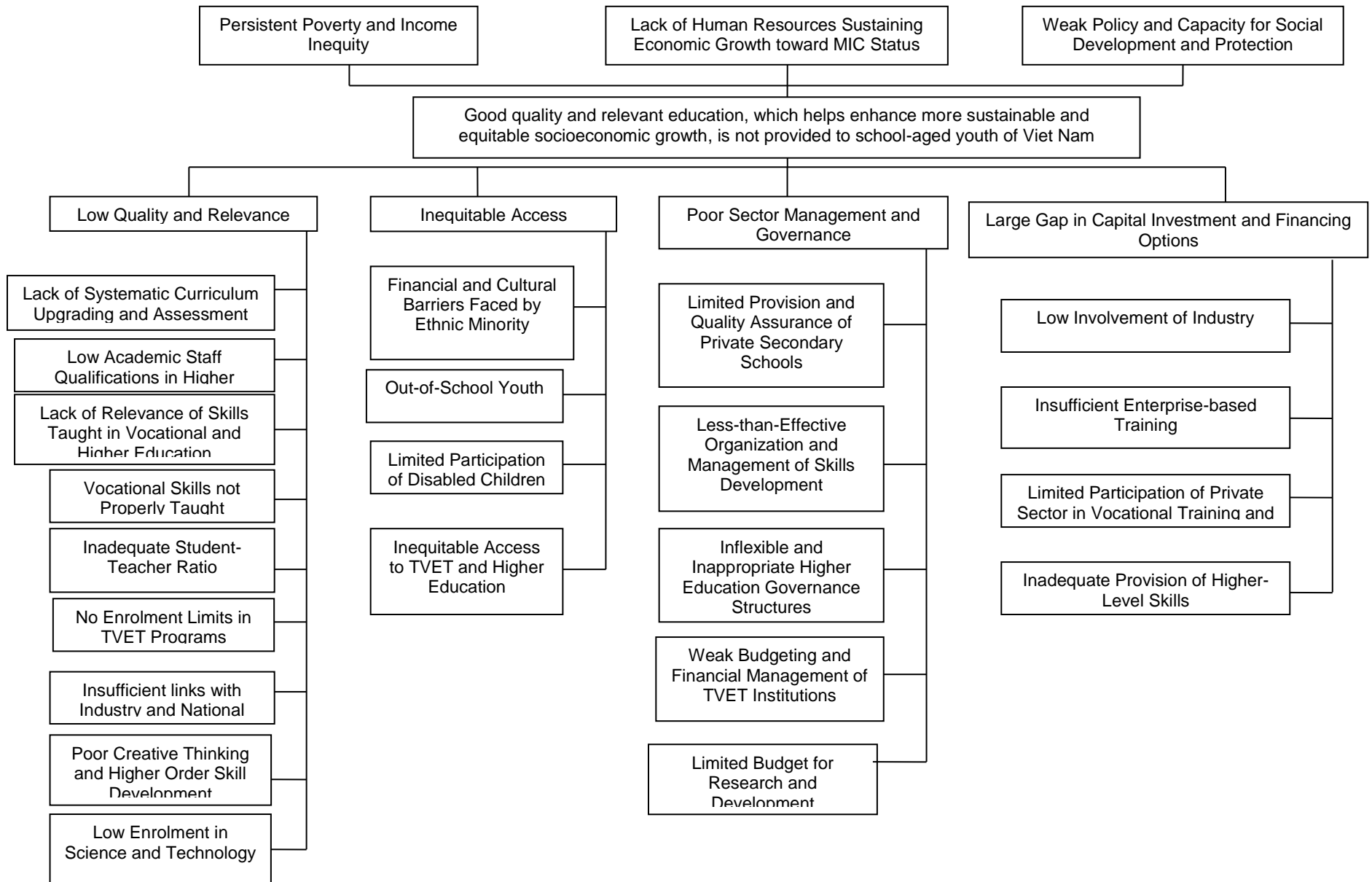
17. ADB assistance is needed to help integrate the poor and other vulnerable groups and segments of society in the development process through better access to opportunities arising from improved infrastructure and expanded and higher quality education services. ADB will strive to empower the poor, the vulnerable, and women, addressing the issues of income and other gaps in society that require enhanced social services and attention to gender equity. Support will be targeted at disadvantaged provinces and communities, particularly in the mountainous central and northern regions.

18. ADB also supports (i) well-planned and timely responses to environment and climate change challenges at the national and subregional levels, (ii) appropriate natural resource management, and (iii) the adoption of clean technology in infrastructure development. These are considered keys to achieving sustainable development while protecting the poor.

¹⁶ ADB. 2012. *Education and Training Sector Assessment, Strategy and Roadmap for Viet Nam*. Manila.

¹⁷ ADB. 2012. *Country Partnership Strategy: Viet Nam, 2012–2015*. Manila; and footnote 1.

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS



MIC = middle-income country, TVET = technical and vocational education training.

Source: ADB. 2012. *Viet Nam Education and Training Sector Assessment, Strategy, and Roadmap*. Manila.

SECTOR ROADMAP AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Country Sector Outcomes		Country Sector Outputs		ADB Sector Operations	
Outcomes with ADB Contribution	Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Outputs with ADB Contribution	Indicators with Incremental Targets	Planned and Ongoing ADB Interventions	Main Outputs Expected from ADB Interventions
The knowledge and skills of graduates from secondary and higher education and skills development meet the needs of a modernizing labor market and society.	20% of the total labor force receives academic qualification and/or vocational training by 2020 (2010 baseline: 14.7%)	Quality and relevance improved	<p>85% of secondary teachers assessed as qualified through newly developed teacher standards by 2015 (2009 baseline: 75%)</p> <p>20% increase in employees in the skilled labor force by 2020</p> <p>Increased employer satisfaction with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of employees from vocational colleges by 2020</p> <p>80% of graduates meet job requirements, of which at least 5% have qualifications equal to a good student from a top university in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations</p> <p>Viet Nam becomes one of the 50 leading countries in human resource competitiveness by 2020</p>	<p>(i) Planned key activity areas and pipeline projects</p> <p>Upper Secondary Education (37.5% of funds); Phase 2 (\$90 million)</p> <p>Lower Secondary Education (33.3% of funds); Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions (Phase 2) (\$80 million)</p> <p>Vocational and Technical Training Secondary (29.2% of funds); Skills Enhancement (Phase 2) (\$70 million)</p> <p>(ii) Ongoing projects with approved amounts</p> <p>Upper and Professional Secondary Teacher Development (\$34 million)</p> <p>Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions (\$50 million)</p> <p>Secondary Education Sector Development Program (\$60 million)</p> <p>University of Science and Technology of Ha Noi Development (\$190 million)</p> <p>Skills Enhancement (\$70 million, effective 2010)</p>	<p>(i) Planned key activity areas</p> <p>90% of upper secondary curriculums upgraded and gender-sensitive by 2015</p> <p>Lower secondary education net enrollment rate increased from 82% in 2011 to 85% in 2015, with 48% of enrollees female</p> <p>(ii) Ongoing projects</p> <p>40% of unqualified teachers receive upgrading training by 2015, of which 50% are women</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Training registers in PISA, and the performance of Viet Nam's 15-year-olds in PISA 2015 is statistically higher than the performance in PISA 2012</p> <p>42,000 secondary teachers trained, of which 50% are women</p> <p>20% increase in graduates in 15 occupational training programs by 2015, of which 30% are women</p> <p>85% of graduates from 15 occupational training programs employed within 6 months of graduation, of which 40% are women</p> <p>100% of University Science and Technology Hanoi Development Project academic staff, including 20% women, with PhDs by 2017</p> <p>90% of graduates, including 35% females, in related employment or undertaking further study by 2016</p>

PISA = Programme for International Student Assessment (organized by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Source: ADB. 2012. *Viet Nam Education and Training Sector Assessment, Strategy, and Roadmap*. Manila.