SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Viet Nam	Project Title:	Second Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Areas Project

Lending/Financing Modality:	Project Loan	Department/ Division:	Southeast Asia Regional Department/Human and Social Development Division

I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

Targeting classification: **TI-M2**

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

Viet Nam's national incidence of poverty dropped from 58.1% in 1993 to 11.1% in 2012. The Government of Viet Nam achieved universal primary education and lower secondary education completion in the last Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), 2006–2010. The government aims to achieve universal primary education completion and lower secondary education for children 1–14 years old and to develop a lineup of excellent teachers and education managers to reform education in the SEDP, 2011–2015.[1]. The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) country partnership strategy[2] (CPS) for Viet Nam is aligned with the government's priorities in SEDP, 2011–2015 and prioritizes education as a core sector of support. The project is consistent with the CPS, and the project investment is part of ADB's country operation and business plan for Viet Nam, 2014–2016.[3] The project will contribute to the country's social development goal of inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

B. Results from Poverty and Social Analysis during Project Preparatory Technical Assistance or Due Diligence

1. Key poverty and social issues. Despite its education achievements, the government still faces challenges in education improvement, especially regarding equality, quality, and relevance of programs across the educational spectrum. Specific issues include (i) limited access to education for students from poor and ethnic minority families; (ii) low attendance and achievement rates; (iii) low completion rates; (iv) disparities between urban and rural areas; and (v) disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged regions. The lower secondary education (LSE) subsector faces similar challenges, and this is reflected in the performance of LSE schools. The project, which will build on the satisfactory achievements of the first Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions Project, will cover 135 districts in 28 provinces in four disadvantaged regions of the country: (i) Northern Midlands and Mountainous, (ii) Central Highlands, (iii) Mekong River Delta, and (iv) Northern and Central Coastal areas. The education issues in these regions include the following: (i) the net enrollment rate (NER) of the project-targeted areas is 84.6% in SY2011/12, lower than the national NER of about 88.0%; (ii) gender gaps between boys and girls, and between ethnic minority boys and girls in enrollment, remain, and (iii) the promotion rates of girls (96.7%) and ethnic minority girls (95%) are lower than the average national promotion rate (97.1%) and the average ethnic minority promotion rate (97%). The lower enrollment, poorer performance, and higher dropout and repetition rates of students, especially female students and female ethnic minority students, are attributed to poverty, culture and language barriers, difficult geographical areas (long and/or difficult and/or flooded roads to schools), poor school conditions, irrelevant textbooks and curricula, and limited teacher capacity. The project aims to assist the government in (i) expanding educational opportunities for ethnic minorities living in disadvantaged areas, and improving the quality and relevance of LSE in line with government policies to target support to minority groups; and (ii) improving education infrastructure and facilities and providing disaster management education in the central coastal areas of the country.

2. **Beneficiaries.** The project will benefit some 841,000 students who live in the four project regions by addressing their lower enrollment rates, and higher dropout and repetition rates. The students need improved school and semi-boarding facilities, laboratories and equipment, libraries and relevant textbooks and curriculum, and better quality of teaching. The project will also benefit the teachers and school managers in the target regions. The project will contribute to (i) developing the capacity of about 30,000 teachers (more than 50% of whom will be women and about 16% of them from ethnic minorities) in teaching new subject textbooks and curriculum; and (ii) continuing professional development of teachers, including ethnic minority teachers, in project areas. The parents and people in the communities, education administrators and managers, and LSE schools will also benefit from the project.

3. **Impact channels.** The project will make LSE more accessible to poor and ethnic minority students through (i) improved classrooms and semi-boarding facilities; (ii) introduction of a new curriculum and development of new textbooks that will preserve the languages, cultures, and values of ethnic minorities; and (iii) building teachers' capacity in using the new relevant textbooks for quality teaching. The project will introduce a new approach to the professional development of teachers and education managers by clustering lower secondary school (LSS) to enable them to continually develop their professional capacity. It will establish networking among teachers and develop the capacity of education managers, teachers, and others involved in project implementation.

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[1] Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2011. *Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2011–2015.* Hanoi.

[2] Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2012. *Country Partnership Strategy: Viet Nam, 2012–2015.* Manila.

[3] ADB. 2013. *Country Operations Business Plan Viet Nam 2014–2016.* Manila.

4. **Other social and poverty issues.** Other social issues affecting LSE in the project areas include (i) difficulty of supplying sustainable water in remote and high mountain areas—the project will attempt to secure water, building water tanks to preserve rainwater within the project area for school consumption to the extent possible; (ii) the large demand for male laborers, which attracts male students to drop out from the school; (iii) limited assets and social capital of the students' parents, which make it difficult for them to get out of poverty; and (iv) out-migration of students' parents, who leave their children behind and unattended, resulting in their poor performance and high dropout rate.

5. **Design features.** The project will invest in four disadvantaged regions that have higher poverty rates than the national average, ranging from 12.6% in the coastal region to 29.4% in northern midland and mountainous region. Three of the four regions are largely inhabited by ethnic minorities. The project will also improve infrastructure, which will attract students to enroll in LSSs and attract experienced teachers to live on school premises. Children, including those from poor families and ethnic groups, who live far from school (8 kilometers or longer) will be able to stay in, and benefit from, these improved facilities (output 1). The project will also improve awareness among parents on the importance of education, especially for girls, so that they support their children pursuing education as long as they can (output 1). The project will develop a new curriculum and textbooks, and develop teachers' capacities to improve teaching quality (outputs 2, 3). The project will continually develop the capacities of teachers and principals through teacher networking and school clustering (output 4). Finally, it will provide block grants as financial incentives to motivate cluster school members to improve the quality of education management (output 3).

II.	PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1.   **Participatory approaches and project activities.** During the project preparatory technical assistance, the project team consulted with male and female students, parents, teachers, and education unit managers on their needs and constraints, as well as on the design of project interventions. During implementation, the project will consult and collaborate with local teachers networks and parent associations, Women's Union, and active nongovernment organizations (NGOs) working on education issues at the sites. Information on the process will be shared with these stakeholders, particularly during the development of textbooks and instructional materials; behavior change communication (BCC) activities to prevent dropouts, early marriage, and teenage pregnancies; and women's labor mobilization for civil work. The project will also consult with affected people during the implementation of resettlement plans in case land acquisition will be required for school construction. As these interventions are part of the design and monitoring framework (DMF), gender action plan (GAP), and resettlement and ethnic minority development framework, they are described in the PAM.

2.   **If civil society has a specific role in the project, summarize the actions taken to ensure their participation.**
The project will collaborate locally with the participating LSS parent associations and NGOs on textbook development and on BCC activities to prevent student dropouts and teen pregnancy, and to improve student performance.

3.   **Civil Society organization.** The project will ensure adequate participation of civil society organizations, such as parent associations, Women's Union, and NGOs active at the sites, through consultations during project design, as well as through their participation during project implementation. The DMF and the GAP plan provide more details.

4.   **What forms of civil society organization participation is envisaged during project implementation**
     H ☒Information gathering and sharing   M ☒ Consultation   L ☒Collaboration   N/A ☐Partnership

5.   **Will a project level participation plan be prepared to strengthen participation of civil society**
☒Yes. The C&P plan in the PAM includes consultation, information sharing, and collaboration with parent associations, Women's Union, NGOs, Department of Education and Training (DOET), and Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) in activities such as the development of textbooks, parents' awareness raising to prevent dropouts, and design of teacher training programs. The resources for plan implementation will come from the project budget. The executing and implementing agencies are responsible for implementing the plan.

III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: **Gender equity theme**

A. Key issues

The key gender issues include the following: (i) the enrollment gaps of boys and girls in the project target areas (2.4%), especially of ethnic minority boys and ethnic minority girls (9.7%), point to higher dropout or repetition rates for girls and ethnic minority girls, particularly compared with boys; (ii) both boys and girls suffer from the long distances they have to walk to school and need to stay in semi-boarding facilities during weekdays, but female students suffer more because of the poor facilities and are at greater risk of safety because of the lack of privacy in semi-boarding rooms, overcrowded or lack of bathrooms and toilets in semi-boarding rooms, and lack of sufficient water connections; (iii) parents of students in the project target areas, especially of the poor and ethnic minority families, usually have limited awareness of the importance of education to their children, especially girls; (iv) subject textbooks, extracurricular textbooks, and instructional materials are usually developed with limited consideration of the local context (ethnic minority culture, language barrier) and gender stereotypes; (v) both male and female teachers need professional development, but female teachers are faced with the greater challenge of attending training courses far from their homes or schools as they usually have more domestic and/or family responsibilities; (vi) traditional school libraries have limited textbooks and workbooks, and lack reference books and activities that promote active learning behaviors and gender equality among students; and (vii) while female teachers account for 62.1% of the total teachers in the project target areas, it is likely that the education unit managers (i.e., LSS directors and vice directors, DOET, BOET managers) account for less than one-fourth all managers. Potential female managers face bigger challenges progressing in their careers because of family

responsibilities and gender stereotypes that limit women's choices and opportunities.

B. Key actions: ☒ Gender action plan ☐ Other actions or measures ☐ No action or measure

The GAP's design features include the following: (i) 50% of spaces in semi-boarding and teachers' housing facilities will be given to female students and teachers with appropriate toilets and sanitation facilities responsive to their needs; (ii) BCC activities for parents will help reduce dropouts among the poor, ethnic minority, and female students; (iii) 20% of local jobs during construction of civil works will be prioritized for women in the community; (iv) gender-sensitive subject and extracurricular textbooks and instruction materials will be developed; (v) teachers will be trained on the use of the new textbooks with 100% male and female teachers teaching these subjects; (vi) school clusters will be developed to foster professional development for teachers through teacher networks that enable female teachers to participate as much as their male counterparts; (vii) model modern libraries will be developed with a venue to promote gender-equality activities; (viii) 30% of trained DOET, BOET, and LSS managers will be female, or 100% of the female unit managers will be trained on school cluster operation in the project; and (ix) a school performance monitoring system will report sex-disaggregated data on access, reduction of dropouts, and completion of LSE in the project areas.

IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

A. Involuntary Resettlement   Safeguard Category: ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ FI

1**. Key impacts.** Limited, if any.

2. **Strategy to address the impacts**. None

3. Plan or other Actions.
☒ Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework

B. Indigenous Peoples   Safeguard Category: ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ FI

1. **Key impacts.** All impacts on indigenous peoples are positive.

 Is broad community support triggered? ☐ Yes   ☒ No

2. **Strategy to address the impacts**. Mitigation measures are not needed as impacts are all positive and sustainable.

3. Plan or other actions.
 ☒ Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework

V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS

A. Risks in the Labor Market

1. Relevance of the project for the country's or region's or sector's labor market.

☐ unemployment ☐ underemployment ☐ retrenchment ☒ core labor standards

2. Labor market impact. The project has limited positive impact on the labor market as it will create some jobs for local communities during the construction of LSS facilities.

B. Affordability: Affordability is not an issue. Beneficiary students and teachers do not have to pay for staying in the semi-boarding facilities and teachers' housing units to be constructed under the project.

C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

1. **Indicate the respective risks,** if any, and rate the impact as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):
L☒ Communicable diseases   L☒ Human trafficking   ☐ Others (please specify) _____
2. **Describe the related risks**: The communicable disease and social risks are low as the civil works are small scale and will not potentially bring in a large number of workers from outside (as in transport projects).

VI.   MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Targets and indicators. Poverty and inclusive social development indicators to be monitored under the project performance management system, including GAP and REMDF indicators, are (i) national and regional NERs, and student dropout rates disaggregated by sex and ethnicity; (ii) access to semi-boarding facilities and teachers' housing of male and female teachers and students; (iii) five new gender-sensitive subject textbooks developed, life skills contents, curriculum on ethnic minority culture preservation and promotion, and disaster management books; (iv) training of 30,000 teachers (disaggregated by sex and ethnicity); (v) education management training (disaggregated by sex); and (vi) central project management unit (PMU) staffing composition (disaggregated by sex.) These indicators will be monitored by the executing and implementing agencies through progress reports and surveys, where relevant**.**

2. Required human resources. The central and provincial PMUs will appoint gender and/or social focal points to monitor gender, poverty, and social impacts with assistance of the project implementation consultants, including experts with monitoring and evaluation, gender and social development, and ethnic minority development expertise. The ADB mission leader will ensure that the project midterm and project completion reports will include information on the poverty and social and gender impacts of the project.

3. Information in PAM. The PAM requires the executing and implementing agencies to include reporting on poverty, gender, and social impacts as part of regular reporting to ADB.

4. Monitoring tools. The gender and social development expert and ethnic minority expert will design templates and questionnaires for monitoring and reporting on the poverty and social dimensions of project performance, as stipulated in the loan's agreement and PAM.