

## **POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Overview**

1. As education is a key element in Viet Nam's efforts to achieve the status of an industrialized country, the Government of Viet Nam (GOV) has passed a series of policies and legislation for the development of its human resources, including the poor and ethnic minorities (EMs) in remote and disadvantaged areas of the country. However, there are still challenges in the lower secondary education (LSE) subsector that need to be addressed, LSE being one of the most critical social services that can enhance the country's equitable and sustainable social and economic development.

2. GOV has proposed the implementation of the Second Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Areas Project (LSEMDAP II) to build on the satisfactory achievements of the Lower Secondary Education for the Most Disadvantaged Regions Project (LSEMDRP), which was implemented starting in 2008.

#### **B. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and ADB's Country Partnership Strategy**

3. The country's Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for 2011–2015 lays down the foundations for the country to become a modern industrialized nation by 2020. It aims to realize the objectives of stabilizing the macro economy, ensuring security, achieving a proper growth rate, and accelerating economic restructuring and the transformation of the economic growth model. The SEDP sets the following targets: (i) social investment in 2011–2015 shall account for around 33.5%–35% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP); (ii) average growth of GDP will be approximately 6.5%–7% a year during the 5-year period; (iii) eight million people will get jobs in 5 years; (iv) social labor productivity in 2015 will be 29%–32% higher than that of 2010; and (v) unemployment rate of urban people of working age will be lower than 4% by 2015.

4. In order to realize the goals set out in the SEDP, the Government has been pushing for reforms in the education sector, which are vital to development and instrumental to poverty reduction, and has set the following targets: (i) the rate of trained workers in the work force will reach 55% by 2015; (ii) new training and re-training of human resources will be promoted to improve labor productivity in the whole economy; (iii) the quality of education will be improved, particularly at the tertiary level, focusing on quality rather than on expansion of training; (iv) education and training will be comprehensively renovated to improve the quality of human resources, paying particular attention to leadership, management, business governance, science and technology, and arts and culture; (v) vocational training will be given more importance and will aim to train one million rural laborers a year; (vi) policies on pre-school education and education in mountainous areas will be amended; and (vii) a healthy, rich, and diverse cultural environment will be developed and strengthened.

5. Consistent with the reforms in education sector, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for assistance for the continuation of initiative in LSE. Under the proposed LSEMDAP II, MOET aims to (i) expand educational opportunities for EMs living in disadvantaged areas and improve the quality and relevance of LSE in line with Government's policies to target support to minority groups; and (ii) improve education infrastructure and facilities as well as provide disaster management education in the central coastal areas of the country. Four outputs are expected to be produced during project

implementation, namely: (i) Output 1: Increased access of the most disadvantaged groups to LSE and LSE equivalency program; (ii) Output 2: Decentralization of learning and teaching; (iii) Output 3: New school clusters established; and (iv) Output 4: Project implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity enhanced. LSEMDAP II will cover 135 districts in 28 provinces located in 4 poor and disadvantaged areas of the country, namely: (i) northern midlands and mountains; (ii) central highlands; (iii) Mekong Delta; and (iv) typhoon-affected coastal areas. Some 200 schools will benefit from the project.

6. The Project is consistent with the ADB's *Country Partnership Strategy (2012–2015)* for Viet Nam, which states that the Bank will focus on higher education and the transfer of higher skills. ADB will continue to support upper secondary and higher education, as well as college-level skills development, emphasizing greater relevance to the needs of society and the labor market. The investment in the project is included in ADB's *Country Operations and Business Plan for 2014–2016*.

### C. Poverty and Social Analysis Methodologies

7. Both primary and secondary data/information were used in the poverty and social analysis of the project area. Covering all geographic areas, three sets of questionnaires were used in recording firsthand information from the respondents (i.e., parents, teachers, and students) consisting of males and females belonging to different ethnic groups in Viet Nam. In addition, interviews were conducted with school directors, including the assessment of school locations. Secondary information included reports of previous projects, statistics from MOET, other relevant data, and the project preparatory technical assistance's (PPTA's) Feasibility Study Report.

## II. FINDINGS OF THE POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

### A. Poverty and Social Analysis: Desk Study Findings

#### 1. Brief Physical and Geographic Profile of the Regions

8. **Northern midlands and mountains.** This region bordered by two provinces of China to the north, three provinces of upper Laos to the west, the Red River Delta to the southeast, the North Central Coast to the southwest, and the Gulf of Tonkin to the east. Occupying a total area of 95,338.8 square kilometer (sq. km), the region is divided into 14 provinces. The area is entirely rural in character, and clusters of EM settlements are located in remote areas. Population density was recorded at 120 persons per sq. km in 2012.

9. **Central highlands.** Located in the southeast of Indochina Peninsula, this region has a total area of 54,640.6 sq. km with two ranges of high mountains in the north and south having elevations ranging from 1,000–1,700 meters above sea level. The most upstream areas have rocky and hard soil. The region covers over three million hectares (ha), or 22% of the total forested area in Viet Nam, and 800,000 ha of land are cultivated to paddy rice, coffee, sugarcane, and other industrial plantations. Water for agricultural activities, households, and livestock is supplied by 400 reservoirs and river systems. Its people are spread in five provinces, with 80% of the population living in rural and mountainous areas, majority of whom are EMs. The recorded population density of the area in 2012 was 99 persons per sq. km.

10. **Mekong delta.** This region occupies some 40,518.5 sq. km of land, subdivided into 13 provinces. The Mekong Delta lies immediately to the west of Ho Chi Minh City, which forms a triangular feature stretching from My Tho in the east to Chau Doc and Ha Tien in the northwest, down to Ca Mau and the South China Sea at the southernmost tip of Viet Nam. Varied

landscapes are observed in the region, but it is dominated by flat floodplains in the south with a few hills in the north and west. About 2.6 million ha of land are used for agriculture, representing one-fourth of Viet Nam's total agricultural land area. The area is also a major contributor to the country's aquaculture production. The region had a population density of 429 persons per sq. km in 2012.

11. **Coastal areas.** This region consists of 14 provinces facing the South China Sea and occupies a total area of 95,885.1 sq. km with a relatively flat topography. Its long coastline offers great attraction for investments in tourism, which consequently became a magnet for in-migration from other regions in the country. The region has a population density of 200 persons per sq. km.

12. It can be assumed that the foregoing physical and geographic characteristics largely shape the socioeconomic conditions of the people, especially in the project areas.

## 2. Population and Ethnicity

13. In 2012, Viet Nam had a total population of 88.8 million and an annual growth rate of 1.06%. Population growth rate in the four regions was uneven, with the central highlands registering the highest rate at 1.9%, while the coastal areas and the Mekong Delta had the lowest growth rates of 0.65% and 0.39%, respectively. The northern midlands and mountains grew at almost 1.0% per annum. The four regions had a combined population of 53.2 million, or 60.0% of the country's population in 2012.

14. EMs comprise 14% of the country's population. While it can be assumed that they are in many areas of the country, their presence is significant in three of the four project regions: northern midlands and mountains, central highlands, and Mekong River Delta. In the coastal areas, there are also EM groups, but their populations are very small. The ethnic groups present in the project regions are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Ethnic Groups Present in the Project Regions**

Region	Ethnic Minorities
Northern Midlands and Mountains	Cao Lan, Dao, Giay, H'Mông, Ha Nhi, Hoa, Kho Me, La Chi, La Ha, Mựờng, Ngai, Nùng, Phừ Là, San Chay, San Diu, Thái, Táy, and Xinh Mun
Central Highlands	Chàm, Cơ Ho, Chơ Ro, Ế Đệ, Gia Rai, Hoa, M'Nông, Mựờng, Nùng, Thái, and Táy
Mekong Delta	Chàm, Hoa, Khmer, Kho Me, Mựờng, Nùng, and Táy
Coastal Area	Ba Na, Bru-Vân Kiều, Chàm, Cơ, Cờ Tu, Chừt, Đao, Ế Đệ, Gié Trêng, H'Mông, Hoa, Hre, Kho Me, Lao, M'Nông, Mựờng, O'đu, Ra Glai, Tà O'i, Thái, Th ó, and Xé Đàng.

15. EMs are highly mobile and tend to leave their hometowns in search for opportunities in other places, along with the Kinh. Magnets for migration are the urban centers in their provinces or the highly urbanized cities in the country, notably Can Tho, Da Nang, and Hai Phong as well as Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. The country has also 62 provincial cities and 58 urbanized municipalities that encourage peoples' migration to urban centers or to areas where industrial zones have been established. In the project regions, the rate of out-migration has outpaced in-migration (Table 2), validating the observation that Viet Nam has the highest growth rate in urbanization.

**Table 2: In-migration vs. Out-migration in the Project Regions (%)**

Project Regions	In-migration	Out-migration
Northern Midland and Mountains	1.6	4.2
Central Highlands	8.7	5.0
Mekong Delta	1.5	6.5
Coastal Areas	2.1	6.5

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 2012.

### 3. Industry and Economy

16. Since 2010, the yearly GDP of Viet Nam has grown by an average of 6%. In 2012, the country's GDP was estimated at about \$141.7 billion, or about \$1,596 per capita. As a consequence of the country's recent rapid economic growth and development, the sectoral composition of the economy has shifted from agriculture towards the industrial, manufacturing, and services sectors. As of June 2013, industry and construction accounted for about 38.7% of GDP and grew by about 5.18% since June 2012. Services, including tourism, which accounted for 43.1%, grew by 5.92%. The combined shares of these sectors ranged from 36%–41% as State-owned enterprises contributed roughly 40% of GDP. Agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, which comprised 18.2% of GDP, expanded by only 2.07%, with its share shrinking from about 25% in 2000 to less than 22% in 2012.

17. One major factor that could explain the change in the economic structure of Viet Nam, from agricultural to industrial, is the surge of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. From \$1.889 billion in 2005, FDI rose to \$9.279 billion in 2008 and ballooned to \$13–14 billion in 2013. The investments led to the rise of the industrial, manufacturing, and services sectors, which have greater value added than the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sector. Moreover, the industries are institutionalized, organized, and apply sophisticated technologies, which are totally different from the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sector. The shift in the economic structure has indirect and ripple effects on the social landscape in Viet Nam. The conversion of agricultural land for industrial use has become necessary for the location of industries and road facilities, and has resulted in people's migration from rural areas to work in these industries. Most of these industries have particular preference for women as workers, like hotels, electronics, manufacturing, etc. As services are needed by foreign investors and expatriates, coupled by the rise in tourism, the value of land has increased due to the demand for hotels and modest housing. These trends are also observed in the project regions.

### 4. Employment and Income

18. The project regions have a total labor force of 32.188 million, or 61.0% of the country's labor force, as the labor force in the country's 28 provinces reached 20.277 million, based on the *2012 Statistical Yearbook*. The labor force includes persons 15 years and above, but a sizable number is not active, as many were either in school or belong to the old population. During the same period, the number of employed people in the four regions was estimated at 31.693 million, of which 12.064 million were in the project provinces. The informal sector in Viet Nam plays an important role in providing employment as 65.4% of the employed labor force is absorbed by small domestic enterprises and agriculture. The rest works for institutional or formal organizations, including an estimated 0.993 million employees and officials in local government offices.

19. Given the nature of their work and occupation, an analysis of their income was also conducted. The *2012 Report on Labor Force Survey* of the General Statistics Office (GSO) showed that the average monthly income in the four regions ranged from VND3.028–3.680 million, lower than the national average of VND3.805 million. The urban areas have average monthly incomes of VND3.482–4.469 million, higher than the average monthly incomes of VND2.826–3.339 million in the rural areas. The average monthly incomes could have been much higher if the efforts of unpaid family members were valued, including those of women. In the rural areas in all project regions, wage workers are fewer than other employed workers, and such trend follows that at the national level, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Structure of Employed Workers in Rural Areas (%)**

Project Regions	Employer	Own Account Worker	Unpaid Family Worker	Wage Worker
Northern Midlands and Mountains	0.8	52.7	31.5	15.0
Central Highlands	1.4	55.8	27.3	15.4
Mekong Delta	2.6	50.0	19.2	28.2
Coastal Areas	1.7	52.7	21.2	24.3
<b>National Average</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>27.1</b>

Source: GSO. Labor Force Survey, 2012.

20. The low monthly incomes in the project regions could be due to the fact that workers in rural areas are mainly engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishing among the 21 industries and services identified by GSO in 2012. Overall, agriculture accounts for 62.1% of the country's active labor force in rural areas. It is the dominant industry engaging both male (58.2%) and female workers (64.4%) in the project regions (Table 4).

**Table 4: Share of Agricultural Workers in Industries in Rural Areas (%)**

Project Regions	Total	Male	Female
Northern Midlands and Mountains	78.2	73.2	83.3
Central Highlands	81.2	81.5	80.8
Mekong Delta	62.1	63.8	59.9
Coastal Areas	66.0	60.8	71.3
<b>Whole Country</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>64.4</b>

Source: GSO. Labor Force Survey, 2012.

## 5. Poverty Incidence

21. Viet Nam made remarkable achievements in poverty reduction after the Government opened its market to foreign investments, and has almost reached the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. From 58.1% in 1993, the poverty rate has dropped to 14.5% in 2008, and further declined to 11.1% in 2012. However, dissecting the decline in poverty incidence would show that some regions are still lagging behind the national average, including three of the four project regions (Table 5).

**Table 5: Poverty Incidence in the Project Regions**

Project Regions	Poverty Incidence (%)
Northern Midlands and Mountains	24.2
Central Highlands	18.6
Mekong Delta	10.6
Coastal Areas	16.7
<b>Average National Poverty Incidence</b>	<b>11.1</b>

Source: Poverty and Migration Profile 2012; General Statistics Office; p.56.

Note: The figures in Northern Midland Regions and Coastal Regions represent their averages as they are subdivided into two regions. For the Northeast Mountain Region, it was 33.5% while for Northwest Mountain, it was 58.7%. For the coastal areas, it was 21.2% in North Central Coast while 15.3% in the South Central Coast.

22. Several factors can be presumed to contribute to the poverty incidence in the project regions. The **northern midlands and mountains region** is characterized by rugged terrain that is prone to erosion. Lands used for agriculture have limited productivity due to acidity and low fertility. The people also depend on forest products, in addition to upland farming, to augment their incomes. The area is entirely rural in character, and clusters of EM settlements are located in remote areas. They have very limited access to education, financial services, and markets,

which hold back their progress.<sup>1</sup> They have a combined population of some 3.116 million EMs representing 27.3% of the region's total population.

23. The **central highlands** region is also largely inhabited by EMs who have benefited from forestland allocation by the government. However, 60% of Kinh farmers are more likely to have perennial croplands than their EM counterparts as the former sold the croplands allocated to them. The EMs have small landholdings and generally rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, but they have poorer and more sloping croplands. Their lands are planted to crops with long gestation period before the harvest of first fruits. Many EMs have no knowledge of how to improve their soil structure or fertility beyond the application of increasingly expensive fertilizers.<sup>2</sup>

24. The **Mekong River Delta** is a low-level plain not more than three meters above sea level. As the rice bowl of Asia, the Mekong Delta has the highest agricultural land use, accounting for 65% of its area. The delta has been ascribed the role of guarantor of food security in the country; it also contributes to the volume of rice being exported to other countries. However, substantial inequalities have been noted between the Kinh and ethnic minorities, particularly the Khmers, who comprise the largest population of EMs in the area. They lag behind in terms of housing conditions, access to drinking water and sanitation facilities, as well as health care. In terms of education, the record of the delta is not impressive since 8.4% of the population age 15 years old and above are illiterate.

25. In the **coastal areas**, poverty is caused by a host of natural and man-made calamities. Viet Nam's north and central coastal zones are exposed to typhoons, with the peak in October flooding agricultural lands cultivated to rice and crops and seriously affecting livestock in the area. As typhoons occur, soils are eroded and inundate the farmlands, thereby limiting their productivity. There are different estimates as to the extent of the damages, but it can be assumed that damages could reach trillions of VND. With its long coastline, the area offers great attraction for investments in tourism, which has consequently become a magnet for in-migration in the country. Such observation is supported by the population data which indicate that the area is second to the Red River Delta in terms of having the biggest population in Viet Nam. With in-migration, people compete for livelihoods, labor, and land and marine resources for their survival.

## 6. The Education Sector

26. Viet Nam has made great strides in the education of its population in the past few decades. Having made significant achievements at the primary education level, the Government has shifted its attention to the development of secondary education in order to provide a strong foundation for the development of human resources to support the country's economic development strategies. Subsequently, several key strategies and policies have been promulgated. However, there are still some challenges that the Government needs to address, especially in terms of equality, quality, and relevance of programs across the educational spectrum. The specific issues include the following: (i) limited access to education for students from poor and EM 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 same challenges are faced by the country's LSE subsector and the outcomes are reflected in the performance of the school.

<sup>1</sup> Care International. 2013. *Climate Vulnerability and Capacities of Ethnic Minorities in the Northern Mountainous Region of Viet Nam*. 5 p.

<sup>2</sup> USAID. 2008. *Viet Nam Central Highlands Needs Assessment*. Final Report. 25 p.

27. **Enrolment in the project area.** Based on school year (SY) 2012–2013 data and using the project area as a sample, a total of 0.841 million students were enrolled in LSE, equivalent to 17.2% of the national total. About 0.265 million, or 34.1% of the national total, were EM students who comprised 31.5% of the total number of students in the project areas. The female EM students accounted for 29.3% and 14.3% of the total number of female students and total enrolled students, respectively (Table 6). The gender gaps in access to LSE are evident through the enrolment rate gaps between boys and girls especially between EM boys and girls, in the project areas, in which female students account 48.8% of total enrolment students and that for EM female students is 45.3% of the total EM enrolment students in school year 2012–2013.

**Table 6: Enrolment of Female Students in LSE, SY 2012–2013**

Project Area Regions	Total Students	Female Students	Total EM Students	Female EM Students	% of EM Students to Total Students	% of EM Females to Total Female Students	% of EM Females to Total Students
Northern Midlands and Mountains	231,370	103,881	198,419	88,134	85.7	84.6	38.0
Central Highlands	108,609	59,819	46,232	25,245	42.2	41.7	22.9
Mekong Delta	92,544	46,648	21,160	7,072	-	15.2	7.5
Coastal Areas	408,492	199,969	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Project Area Regions</b>	<b>841,015</b>	<b>410,317</b>	<b>265,811</b>	<b>120,451</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>14.3</b>
National Total	4,869,839	2,363,611	777,521	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Percent to National</b>	17.2	17.3	34.2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

EM = ethnic minority.

Source: PPTA Consultant (2012–2013).

28. **Promotion of LSE students.** About 816,797 LSE students in the project areas have been promoted to the next level of learning at the rate of 97.1%. Of this total, some 396,655 female students have been promoted, exhibiting an overall promotion rate of 96.7% (Table 7). The highest promotion rate is seen in the coastal areas, at 98.3%, where there are very small populations of EMs. The lowest promotion rate is noted in the central highlands, inhabited by 11 groups of EMs, at the overall rate of 94.2% and 94.8% for female students. In nominal terms, the difference could mean that 24,218 students have either dropped out or have to repeat schooling, of whom 13,662 are females.

**Table 7: Promotion of Students in Project Areas, SY 2012–2013**

Project Regions	Total Students	Female Students	Promotion Rates (%)	
			Total Students	Female Students
Northern Midland and Mountains	224,598	99,360	97.1	95.6
Central Highlands	102,297	56,686	94.2	94.8
Mekong Delta	88,351	43,889	95.5	94.1
Coastal Areas	401,551	196,720	98.3	98.3
<b>Total Students / Average (in %)</b>	<b>816,797</b>	<b>396,655</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>96.7</b>

Source: PPTA Consultant (2012–2013).

29. The overall performance in the three regions largely inhabited by EMs is not as good as in the coastal areas. Over the same period, the promotion rate in these areas averaged 97% for males and 95% for females. In the coastal areas, the higher promotion rate should be sustained.

30. **Dropouts.** Of the students who were not promoted to the next level, there were more dropouts than repeaters. The average dropout rate in all project areas was recorded at 1.8%, with females at 1.6% (Table 8). By region, the highest dropout rate was seen in the central

highlands at 3.8%, followed by the Mekong Delta at 3.3%. The number of female dropouts was highest in the Mekong Delta (5.0%), followed by the central highlands (2.4%). The high dropout rate in the Mekong Delta could be attributed to the high demand for male labor in the fisheries industry, while that in central highlands could be due to the great demand for labor in the coffee, pepper, and other industrial plantations. (These two industries are large contributors to the country's gross national product.) Because of the demand for male labor in these regions, housewives and girls are left in the house to do the domestic chores, take care of livestock, and handle weeding of grasses in the gardens planted to cash crops.

**Table 8: Profile of Student Dropouts, SY 2012–2013**

Project Regions	Number of Students		Dropout Rate	
	Total	Female	Total	Female
Northern Midlands and Mountains	3,444	1,684	1.5	1.6
Central Highlands	4,092	1,443	3.8	2.4
Mekong Delta	3,081	2,287	3.3	5.0
Coastal Areas	4,200	1,244	1.0	0.6
<b>Total Students / Average (in %)</b>	<b>14,817</b>	<b>6,658</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>

Source: PPTA Consultant (2012–2013).

31. **Student repeaters.** While the number of student repeaters is lower than the number of students who dropped out of school, it can mean that either the students have a weak capacity to learn or the teachers are poorly equipped to teach the subjects assigned to them, or both. In SY 2012–2013, the project areas had an average repetition rate of 1.1% (Table 9). The repetition rate in areas where there are large EM populations is higher than average. One positive aspect that can be assumed in the case of repetition is that there is still some interest among repeaters to pursue their LSE schooling.

**Table 9: Profile of Repetition among LSE Students, SY 2012–2013**

Regional Locations	Number of Students		Repetition Rate	
	Total	Female	Total	Female
Northern Midlands and Mountains	3,328	1,418	1.4	1.4
Central Highlands	2,220	1,042	2.0	1.7
Mekong Delta	1,112	374	1.2	0.8
Coastal Areas	2,741	751	0.8	0.4
<b>Students / Average (in %)</b>	<b>9,401</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Source: PPTA Consultants (2012–2013)

32. The project areas have 57,623 school teachers, of whom 35,804 (62.1%) are female teachers. Of the total number of teachers, 9,208 (or 16.0%) belong to EM groups, and of the EM teachers, 56% are female.

33. **Constraints to access to LSE - LSE classrooms.** As inventoried, the subproject districts have a total of 2,350 lower secondary schools (LSSs), from which 200 will be selected as beneficiaries of the proposed project. The assessment of sample LSSs conducted by the PPTA Consultant showed that many classrooms need repair, additional classrooms are needed, and school libraries need to be provided as the existing libraries occupy very small spaces that look like storages. Many classrooms cannot be used during the rainy season due to leaking roofs. In some LSSs, two shifts of classes are held in one classroom, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, thus prolonging the working hours of the teachers.

34. **Constraints to access to LSE - Utilities and Facilities at the LSSs.** Utilities, which are important for students and teachers alike are in poor condition. While the latrines at the boarding houses for teachers are quite modest, those in the LSSs and semi-boarding houses



for students are in bad shape. The same poor conditions characterize the waste disposal systems, which are commonly found at the back of the school buildings. There is no system for the segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste materials. Water is commonly drawn from deep-wells and may be unsafe for human consumption. The importance of sanitary and hygiene should also be part of the orientation in the LSSs under the Project.

### III. FINDINGS FROM THE PARTICIPATORY CONSULTATIONS

#### A. Profile of the Respondents

35. Participatory consultations were held for the purpose of extracting information from the respondents and trying to get to the bottom of the issues associated with LSE. Three sets of respondents, who are stakeholders and beneficiaries themselves, were interviewed and consulted to validate the issues affecting LSE.<sup>3</sup> A total of 162 respondents participated in the survey and consultations, 87 males and 75 females, who are members of households, teachers, and students. Shown in Table 10 are the selected socioeconomic indicators of the respondents.

**Table 10: Selected Socioeconomic Indicators of the Respondents**

Socioeconomic Indicators	Vu Chan	Vo Tranh	Tai Van	Lieu Tu 2	Total / Average
Number of respondents	38	41	35	48	162
Male	19	18	21	29	87
Female	19	23	14	19	75
Group of respondents	38	41	35	48	162
Households	13	11	12	18	54
Teachers	10	15	8	15	48
Students	15	15	15	15	60
Ethnicity of respondents (in %)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Kinh	2.6	87.5	51.4	41.7	27.8
Ethnic Minorities	97.4	12.5	48.6	58.3	72.2
Household size	4.3 persons	4.4 persons	4.5 persons	5.0 persons	4.6 persons
Number of children per family	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.3	2.4
Ave. size of agricultural land (in m <sup>2</sup> )	1,916.4	2,630.0	5,757.1	1,543.8	2,778.6
Ave. size of house (in m <sup>2</sup> )	112	72	98	43	77
Monthly income per family (VND)*	-	-	-	-	-
Low	300,000	500,000	900,000	1,000,000	300,000
Median	900,000	900,000	2,150,000	2,400,000	1,400,000
High	4,000,000	1,400,000	6,500,000	3,800,000	6,500,000
Monthly expenses per family (VND)*	-	-	-	-	-
Low	600,000	500,000	1,500,000	850,000	500,000
Median	800,000	2,000,000	2,400,000	3,000,000	1,000,000
High	1,500,000	3,000,000	5,320,000	4,000,000	5,320,000

m<sup>2</sup> = square meter, VND = Viet Nam Dong.

Note: The last column for monthly income and monthly expenses per family should not be construed as total or average. This is rather the representation of low, median and high of all 162 respondents in the four areas.

Source: Survey by PPTA Consultants.

36. The parents<sup>4</sup> have an average age range of 28–68 years old, and majority of them are farmers. Average household size is four (parents plus two children), with an average nominal income ranging from VND1,176,000–2,952,000 per month. The highest monthly household income is VND5,500,000 while the lowest is VND200,000. About 67.9% live in one-storey houses made of temporary construction materials, compared with 22.6% living in houses of

<sup>3</sup> Joint interviews and consultations were conducted on 26–28 February 2014 in two project provinces, two LSSs each in Thai Nguyen in the Northern Mountainous Area and Soc Trang in the Mekong Delta.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that parent respondents were not able to answer all the queries in the questionnaire.

permanent materials. The houses vary in size from 5–200 sq m. About 52.8% have electricity connections, and 47.2% and 43.4% have television sets and mobile phones, respectively. Some 60.4% own and 39.6% have motorbikes. About 21% of the husbands had primary education, 47.2% had lower secondary education, 18.9% reached upper secondary school level, and only 5.7% had university education. About 37.7% are migrants from other places.

37. The **teachers** were composed of 41.7% male and 58.3% female and with ages ranging from 25–51 years old. They have been teaching in the lower secondary schools for varying lengths of service, but majority have been in the service for more than 10 years. About 56.6% are Kinh, and 43.4% are EMs. On the average, they teach two subjects each, and most of the teachers (58.3%) are not residents of the districts where they teach.

38. The **students** were composed of 43.3% male and 56.7% female. They were selected at random but were largely composed of Grade 7 students who will benefit from the project once it is implemented. About 71.7% come from EM families, while the balance (28.3%) are Kinh. The great majority are children of farmers, and the rest is composed of daughters of hired workers and housewives. Only a small percentage of students are children of parents who are engaged in formal and/or institutional occupations.

## **B. Issues Raised During Consultations**

### **1. Issues Raised by Parents**

39. Parents, mostly the fathers, are the closest persons who exert great influence over the roles and participation of their children in family matters. Young children of puberty age are more likely to follow the decision of their parents, including matters on education. However, their decisions could be often grounded on a limited perspective given that majority have only studied in the primary and secondary schools (see para. 33). Moreover, their attention is focused on the family's daily survival by ensuring that there is food on the table. The great majority (73.5%) are into farming or fishing, and 15.1% are hired workers. They possess only small areas of agricultural land with an average dimension of 2,778.6 m<sup>2</sup> and with low productivity. Of the total farmlands, 47.2% are irrigated, while the rest are not. Land preparation and planting are intensive, and the cost of farming has increased due to the rising price of fertilizers. The indicators in Table 10 suggest that most parents are saddled with debts.

40. Almost half of the respondents (49%) revealed that they only eat twice a day, compared to 32.1% who eat three meals a day. Some 15.1% said that there were instances when their children did not have food to eat. Although food scarcity is not correlated with certain seasons of the year, it is most common for the respondents to experience hunger during the months of February to May and from July to August. With respect to food security, the score is even at 35.8% for those who have enough food for the year against those who have not.

41. The respondents live in homes with an average area of 116 sq m. About 68% of those homes are single storey units made of temporary materials. Being located in remote areas, the houses are also used for the storage of household utilities including like motorbikes and bicycles. Children have limited space for study, and 47.2% of the houses do not have electricity.

42. Due to financial constraints, the parents have asked their children to stop schooling, including those who are at the LSE level. In order to save on cost of farm labor, the boys help in land preparation. They also bring cash crops or livestock to the market to augment household income. In between, they are hired to work in other farms by applying fertilizers or helping in land preparation. The girls also play various roles in the households, such as cooking food,

washing clothes, feeding the livestock, weeding the grass in the farmlands, tending the gardens, harvesting rice in the paddy fields, and fetching water for domestic use. These roles are tedious, but are very important in remote areas. However, their prolonged stay at home could lead to early marriages.

43. But some parents have another reason for asking their children to stop schooling. In addition to long travel, their children cannot be accommodated in the school because of the shortage in classrooms.

## **2. Issues Raised by Teachers**

44. Teachers are also role models who exert some influence on the students, next to the parents. They also have personal concerns while rendering their services to the LSSs. Since many of them (95.8%) are not from the area, they live in houses being rented out by local residents. Except for one, the LSSs that were visited have no boarding facilities for teachers. In the lone LSS that has a boarding house, the female respondents said that they are not provided with separate rooms (except for their married colleagues), the toilet is of poor condition, and there is no adequate supply of water for sanitation and washing clothes. This condition could be the same in other project areas.<sup>5</sup> Transportation for female teachers is not an issue as they have motorbikes, which is the main mode of transport in Viet Nam.

45. About 97.9% of the teachers use the Vietnamese language as the medium of instruction; 93.8% of the teachers do not teach in the language of the EMs. A small percentage of teachers teach subjects that are within their areas of specialization as opposed to 83.3% who were not. Since many of them teach subjects that are not their respective areas of specialization, the teachers expressed their desire for training. About 45% are interested in English training, 25.0% in information and communication technology, 20% in the current subjects they are assigned to teach, 15.0% in sociology, and 10.0% each in citizenship and history and professional skills.

46. A large majority (68%) of the teachers said that their LSSs have no laboratories, and their libraries are decrepit, have no tables and chairs, and have limited references. Some 77% of them lamented the high dropout rate among EM students, boys and girls alike, while about 23% of the teachers commented on the high dropout rate among both Kinh and EMs.

47. Each teacher teaches an average of two hours, which could be physically taxing if the teacher covers two or three sections. In some LSSs, there is a shortage of classrooms, which necessitates the holding of two shifts of classes – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The teacher's stay in the classroom for long hours poses some health hazards arising from continuing exposure to chalk dust.

## **3. Issues Raised by LSE Students**

48. The students were straightforward in their answers and provided insights on the potential causes of high dropout rates and repetition rates in the LSSs. Majority are children of farmers and workers for hire. They travel long distances—from 3-10 km—to school and back to their homes. The roads are rugged, dusty in summer, muddy in the rainy season, and there are no alternate routes to reach the school using their bicycles. One positive observation, however, is the very minimal security risks since the project areas are generally peaceful.

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<sup>5</sup> The national Social Development and Gender Specialist in the current PPTA was also involved in the PPTA for LSEMDRP in early 2007. She said that she had seen the poor living conditions in teachers' boarding houses in the remote, disadvantaged areas.

49. They voiced out the lack of classrooms in the area, validating what the teachers said Possession of textbooks by each student varies in each geographic location, with some saying they have 22 while others have 30, 15, and less than 10. But the majority (65.0%) borrows books from their classmates for answering their assignments as 23.3% just wait for their teachers to discuss the topics. There are no books that could enhance the ability of the EMs to speak the Vietnamese language.

50. The conditions in the school semi-boarding houses are also dismal. The rooms are cramped, and the students sleep on the elevated flooring of the structures made of temporary materials. Lighting is very poor and not conducive to study, and the toilets are unsanitary. Female students have no privacy because the walls separating their rooms from that of the boys have spaces or openings through which they could be seen when changing their clothes. Given also the size of the houses, with average area of 77sq mtr, they could not study well because of limited space. Moreover, only 52.8% of the households have electricity connections

### C. Future Consultations

51. The project aims to increase the enrolment and retention of LSE students and consequently reduce the gap in education performance between male and female students in the four most disadvantaged areas of the country. To complement the activities to be undertaken by the project under its four outputs, a summary Consultation and Participation Plan has been developed for guidance at the initial stage of implementation (Table 11).

**Table 11: Summary Consultation and Participation Plan**

Topics/ Subjects	Stakeholder Group	Why They are Included	Type of Participation	Participation Methods		Timeline	
				Methods	Responsibility	Start	Finish
Land acquisition and resettlement	Affected persons; chiefs of CPCs, villages, and PPCs	Project disclosure, consultation meeting, and decision making	Information sharing and discussions,	Powerpoint presentations and consultations	Local school officials and Project Implementation Consultant	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016
Student enrolment in LSE	Parents of dropout students; Women Union, Parents Association. MOET, DOETs, and BOETs	Information sharing	Intensive consultations and awareness campaign	Distribution of flyers, follow-up letters to parents, and announcement on popular radio stations	BOETs, CPCs, and chiefs of villages	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016
Design of textbooks	Civil society, NGOs, Women Union, Youth Union and parents	Disclosure and information sharing	Sharing of ideas from stakeholders	Powerpoint presentations and consultations	DOETs, BOETs, and PIC specialists	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016
Teachers' training	MOET, DOETs, and BOETs	Determining the subjects for training of teachers and principals	Information sharing	Distribution of survey questionnaires	MOET, DOETs, and BOETs	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016
Vocational counselling	MOET, DOETs, and BOETs,	Determining the subjects for training	Information sharing	Distribution of survey questionnaires	MOET, DOETs. and BOETs	2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter of

Topics/ Subjects	Stakeholder Group	Why They are Included	Type of Participation	Participation Methods		Timeline	
				Methods	Responsibility	Start	Finish
	Women Union, Parents' Association, NGOs					2016	2016
Disaster management in coastal areas	MOET, DOETs, and BOETs, Women Union, Parents' Association, NGOs	Disclosure and information sharing	Sharing of ideas with civil society, NGOs, community organizations, district governments, CPCs, village chiefs, men and women	Powerpoint presentations and consultations	MOET, DOETs, and BOETs	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2017

BOET = Bureau of Education and Training; CPC = commune people's committee; DOET = Department of Education and Training; MOET = Ministry of Education and Training; NGO = non-government organization.

#### IV. FINDINGS ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

52. The Project has a strong gender focus as it will provide greater access of female students to education and empower female teachers for decision-making by providing them with the necessary training. The situational analysis on women and female students is contained in a separate Gender Assessment Report for LSEMDAP II, as the issues discussed above also apply to women. From the gender development perspective, there are special challenges related to the enrolment and participation of girls, particularly those from the ethnic minorities. Although Viet Nam has made considerable progress towards improving girls' access to education, with almost half of the students in both primary and secondary schools being female, disparities remain in the quality of, and access to, schooling in rural and mountainous areas, especially for EMs. The issues concerning female teachers also require government interventions for MOET's development goals for LSE to be attained. Several interventions with targets have, therefore, been designed under the four outputs to address the identified gender issues. The gender issues are described briefly below, followed by a proposed Gender Action Plan to address the issues.

##### A. Gender Issues

53. The gender issues relevant to the Project are the following:

- (i) There are clearly gender gaps in enrolment between boys and girls especially between EM boys and girls, in the project areas, in which female students account 48.8% of total enrolment students and that for EM female students is 45.3% of the total EM enrolment students in school year 2012–2013. Corresponding to this, the number of dropout or repetition cases for girls, at 13,662, is higher than the 10,566 cases for boys recorded in the same period.
- (ii) Average monthly incomes of surveyed households in the Project regions are lower than the national average, especially in rural areas and lack of daily foods are among the reasons that compel lower secondary school students, boys or girls, to stop schooling to help augment the family income and foods. Furthermore, due to traditional gender division of labor in many areas of Viet Nam, including most of the project areas that women and girl children have more

burden of households chores, this leaves girls with less time to study and attend schools than boys.

- (iv) In many project areas, as both boys and girls have to travel long distances to attend school, they need to stay in semi-boarding facilities during weekdays. Female students, however, suffer greater inconvenience and have a higher safety risk due to the lack of privacy in semi-boarding rooms, the lack of or overcrowded bathrooms and toilets in semi-boarding rooms, and the lack of sufficient water supply;
- (v) Parents in the project target areas, especially those in poor and EM families in the Northern mountainous regions of Viet Nam and of Dao and H'mong ethnic groups, usually have limited awareness of the importance of education to their children, especially their daughters.
- (vi) Subject textbooks, extra-curricular textbooks, and instructional materials are usually developed with limited consideration of the local contexts (EM culture, language barrier) and gender stereotypes. This is due to the fact that many authors of these text books are not well aware of gender issues and gender blind.
- (vii) Currently in the disadvantaged regions<sup>6</sup> project areas, among around 30,628 teachers (61.5% of them are female teachers), there are 8,111 teachers in needs for teacher housing. The project provision of the teachers housing unit will be far from adequate to meet the current needs, hence, equal opportunities of access to teacher housing will need to be provided to both male and female teachers.
- (viii) Both male and female teachers have professional development needs, as the stakeholder consultation with teachers indicated that a small percentage of teachers teach subjects that are within their areas of specialization. However, it is more difficult for female teachers to attend on-the job training courses far from their homes or schools as they usually they have more family burdens and responsibilities.
- (ix) Traditional school libraries have limited textbooks, homework books, and reference books that promote gender equality. They also lack activities that promote active learning behaviors among students, particularly females.
- (x) While female teachers account for 62.1% of the total teachers in the project area<sup>7</sup> it is likely that education unit managers (i.e., LSS directors and vice directors, Department of Education and Training/Bureau of Education and Training managers) account for less than one-fourth of the total number of managers. Potential female managers face greater challenges in progressing in their career paths due to family responsibilities, but also as a result of the gender stereotype that limits women's opportunities.

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6 Total 88 districts under three regions (Northern Mountainous region, Mekong river delta, Central Highland and Ninh Thuan). In only these three regions, there are support on civil work on teachers housing.

7 Total 135 districts under four regions (Northern Mountainous region, Mekong river delta, Central Highland and Ninh Thuan and coastal regions).

## **B. Lessons Learned from LSEMDRP: Achievements and Remaining Issues**

54. The implementation of LSEMDRP has shown important lessons that can be replicated in LSEMDAP II, as highlighted in the following achievements:

- (i) LSE in mountainous and EM areas has gradually improved in terms of providing better access through the construction of LSSs and related facilities. The investments made by the Government have also encouraged various localities to construct LSSs, inter-communal school facilities, boarding schools, and semi-boarding schools. The additional classrooms have substantially reduced the number of three-shift schools and temporary facilities, among others. The increase in the number of schools, classrooms, and facilities has enabled more children, boys and girls, from EM areas to attend LSE and has contributed to the socioeconomic development of the disadvantaged and EM areas. A total of 2,755 LSSs were constructed in the northern midland and mountains region and 1,533 LSSs in the southern coastal areas and the central highlands. The Viet Nam Statistics Yearbook showed that from a total of 9,383 LSSs in school year 2005–2006, the number increased to 10,290 LSSs in school year 2012–2013.
- (ii) The number of LSS teachers, including teachers from EM groups, has increased. Teachers from EM groups comprise approximately 5.9% of the teaching staff.
- (iii) In the previous phase the public awareness campaign to promote access to lower secondary education for boys and girls, especially for those in remote and ethnic minorities areas have contributed to the increase of the enrolment rates in the project areas. In SY 2012–2013, GER was 85.95% (5.84% higher than SY 2007–2008). This intervention will be continued in the new phase with targeting to girls students and those of EM groups.

55. However, there are still tasks in LSE that remain unaccomplished. The quality of education is a key issue that the Government wants to address to improve the knowledge and skills of students and reduce wastage in terms of dropouts, repetitions, and unemployment of graduates. Following are the issues in LSE that will be addressed by the Project:

- (i) The Secondary Education Master Plan for 2011–2015 points out that access to secondary education still poses a challenge due to lack of schools and classrooms, especially in disadvantaged areas. Based on LSEMDRP data and on the survey conducted under the PPTA, the classrooms constructed in Phase I met only one-third of the requirements. In addition, as the facility construction standards used in Phase I followed the Government's 1998 construction standards e.g. high rate of students per toilet block), the hygiene and sanitation needs of students and teachers, especially females, have not been adequately met.
- (ii) MOET recognizes the importance of improving the management capacity of education planners, managers, and teachers through a variety of in-service training and capacity development programs, including face-to-face contacts and e-training. Most schools also have limited financial resources to improve their management capacity and quality of education. The project will improve the management capacity of school and education unit's management including those of female members of this group.

- (iii) Viet Nam is often affected by natural disasters like storms, floods, mudflows, droughts, etc. Natural disasters are increasing in scale and frequency, and have been difficult to predict. The current situation reflects a passive approach, which is too focused on solving problems rather than on prevention; poor infrastructure that is easily damaged when disasters occur; and limited emergency and rescue capability. Educational activities to raise awareness and skills of students and teachers are still in their infancy initial period and have not been incorporated in the curriculum. School facilities do not meet the requirements of natural disaster prevention and protection. Public awareness of the need to prepare for the occurrence of natural disasters is limited, and awareness raising efforts are sporadic and not systematic, and knowledge and skills in disaster prevention and response have yet to be incorporated into educational programs at all levels. Increasing awareness of the school children in the natural disaster affect areas of the project will be addressed through incorporating gender responsive disaster management education in the school curriculum.
- (iv) The project M&E and reporting system of the LSEMDRP has included sex and ethnic disaggregated data at a limited level and not really institutionalized, with available data on drop out, repetition, enrolments, etc. This will be improved in the new phase.

**C. Proposed Gender Action Plan and Implementation Arrangement**

Project Outputs	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 1:</b> Increased access to LSE/LSE equivalency program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Ensure that the identification of school sites for the construction of 300 LSS classrooms prioritizes disadvantaged areas with classroom shortages and with high female and ethnic minority enrolments.</li> <li>(ii) Ensure that all civil works to increase LSS classrooms includes the construction of separate latrines with adequate male and female student ratio per toilet and applies the most up-to-date construction standards (2011 or more recent).</li> <li>(iii) Ensure that 50% of the 300 semi-boarding facility spaces are allocated for female students.</li> <li>(iv) Ensure that all boarding facilities will (i) include separate quarters, bathrooms and latrines with water connection for females and males; (ii) be provided with adequate lighting, security, and privacy; and (iii) use most up to–date construction standards (2011 or more recent).</li> <li>(v) Ensure that at least 50% of 250 teacher housing units are provided for female teachers.</li> <li>(vi) Ensure that (i) all boarding facilities comply with the Code of Conduct and management of boarding facilities issued by MOET and (ii) a session on the Code of Conduct is included in the training program for school principals and managers.</li> <li>(vii) Exert effort to ensure that civil works contractors prioritize the employment of 20% women unskilled laborers and provide men and women with equal pay for equal work.</li> <li>(viii) Ensure that awareness raising activities and materials target girls and their parents and communities to: (i) increase understanding of the positive benefits of LSE, especially for female students; (ii) publicize semi-boarding facilities, life skills curriculum, vocational counselling and guidance, and other localized school initiatives to prevent dropouts and promote student achievement and completion.</li> <li>(ix) Ensure that 50% of the 4,500 staff trained to carry out awareness raising activities are female.</li> </ul>



Project Outputs	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 2:</b> Decentralization of teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Ensure that all new regional textbooks and instructional materials developed for five key subjects are gender-sensitive and include positive images and role models of females.</li> <li>(ii) Ensure that all training teaching and learning materials on disaster management education are gender-sensitive and showcase women's agency and contributions to disaster preparedness, management, and response.</li> <li>(iii) Ensure that the vocational counseling and guidance materials are specific and tailored to the needs of girls and boys, highlight the importance of LSS in relation to future advancement and employment prospects, encourage girls/boys to break gender stereotypes in education and to take on studies/training aligned with labor market needs.</li> <li>(iv) Ensure that 100% of female and male subject teachers (24,000 teachers) are trained on implementing the new curriculum and textbooks in the four disadvantaged areas targeted by the project.</li> <li>(v) Ensure that 50% of the 2,000 teachers trained on the curriculum on the preservation of EM culture and languages are female.</li> <li>(vi) Ensure that 50% of the 1,500 LSS teachers trained on disaster management education are female.</li> <li>(vii) Ensure that 50% of 2500 LSS teachers trained on vocational counselling and guidance for EM students are female.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 3:</b> New school clusters established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Quarterly teacher network meetings will include a topic on gender issues related to EM teachers, female teachers and students, and strategies for increasing the number of female and ethnic group students and teaching staff as well as enhancing the capacities of EM and female teachers.</li> <li>(ii) 100% female education managers will be trained on managing education clusters in project-supported schools.</li> <li>(iii) Ensure that at least 60% of all teachers (62% of these are females) in beneficiary schools indicate that they have participated in professional development provided through the cluster system.</li> <li>(iv) Ensure that 100% of the 1,500 librarians are trained on the effective operation of the new libraries, with 100% of female librarians trained in the project's target areas.</li> <li>(v) Ensure that about 70 new libraries are established in the cluster center schools (Baseline SY 2014 – XX) with a venue in libraries to promote gender equality activities in education.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 4:</b> Project implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) capacity enhanced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Ensure that 30% of CPMU staff are female.</li> <li>(ii) Ensure that 30% of CPMU and PPMU staff, as well as DOET management, trained on project management and education management are female.</li> <li>(iii) 100% of the female managers of the targeted LSSs in the school clusters will be trained on cluster management and operation.</li> <li>(iv) All CPMU and PPMU staff will be trained on gender issues in education in Viet Nam and oriented on the project GAP and its implementation.</li> <li>(v) The project performance monitoring framework will include M&amp;E for GAP and provide progress reports to ADB on a bi-annual basis.</li> <li>(vi) School performance monitoring systems will report sex-disaggregated data on access, reduction of dropouts, and completion of LSS in project-targeted areas.</li> <li>(vii) All three key workshops (inception, midterm, and final) will include discussions and action points on implementing and reporting progress on gender aspects related to all the four outputs.</li> </ul>

BOET = Bureau of Education and Training; ADB = Asian Development Bank; CPMU = central project management unit; DOET = Department of Education and Training; GAP = gender action plan; LSE = lower secondary education; LSS = lower secondary schools; PPMU = provincial project management unit; SY = school year.

**56. Implementation arrangements and budget.** The central project management unit (CPMU) and provincial project management unit (PPMUs) will be responsible for gender action plan (GAP) implementation and will appoint gender focal point(s) in each unit to ensure annual planning, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) of GAP as part of project

activities. The CPMU will recruit gender consultants (4 person–months of international and 9 person-months of national consultants) to provide technical assistance to CPMU and PPMUs in implementation, M&E, and reporting of GAP and related design and monitoring framework (DMF) targets. All gender indicators will be included in the project M&E framework. The project will report sex-disaggregated data on access, reduction of dropouts, and completion of LSS in project areas. A budget for GAP implementation will be included in the main project budget. All quarterly/bi-annual project reports to ADB will include sex-disaggregated data on the above indicators as well as progress updates on the project GAP.

## V. SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES

57. Land acquisition may not be required given the large areas allocated by the Government for public schools, primary or secondary. This was presumed after an assessment of sample LSSs was conducted in all the project regions. As such, adverse impacts are unlikely. Instead, social impacts are all positive. All civil works and construction activities shall be undertaken in LSS premises, as in Phase I. However, a combined Resettlement and Ethnic Minority Development Framework (REMDF) has been prepared, consistent with ADB's 2009 Safeguard Policy Statement (SPS), to ensure that there are guidelines and policies for the preparation of Resettlement and Ethnic Minority Development Plans in case land acquisition will be required. The project is classified as Environment Category C and is not expected to produce any significant adverse impacts on the environment.

## VI. OTHER SOCIAL RISKS

### A. Risks in the Labor Market

58. The **project is relevant** in creating employment in all project regions, where skilled and semi-skilled laborers are required, particularly in the northern midlands and mountains and the coastal areas, given the number of LSSs to be benefited by the project. Nobody will be retrenched from the current staff of MOET, DOETs, and BOETs, but rather, their skills shall be enhanced through various trainings and seminars programmed for them.

59. The **impacts on the local labor market** are all positive since it will decrease unemployment in the locality where the beneficiary LSSs are located. During construction, men and women will be hired for their services, except for persons below 15 years old. Their employment will sustain their family incomes and increase their purchasing power. Working for the project will also have multiplier effects on the local economy, as businessmen increase their product inventories for sale to workers' families as a result of their stronger purchasing power.

### B. Affordability

60. LSE is very much affordable to all the target beneficiaries of the project. MOET will continue to provide free education to students and will shoulder all the trainings for the teachers, principals, and education managers for the sake of improving the LSE system in Viet Nam.

### C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks

61. The spread of communicable diseases in the project areas is unlikely during civil works construction and project implementation. Likewise, it will not trigger human trafficking or the emergence of HIV/AIDS cases since civil works construction in every subproject LSS are small-scale in nature and majority of the workers shall be hired from the locality, except the engineers and the foremen, whose employment is at the discretion of the respective contractors.

## **VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **A. Implementation and Financing Arrangements**

62. MOET, through the Project Director of CPMU, will be responsible for the implementation of all associated social development plans under the project in coordination with relevant local agencies and organizations like the DOETs, PPMUs, and BOETs as well as the CPCs. The CPMU will hire the services of a Project Implementation Consultant (PIC) comprising experts and specialists in various disciplines. For the implementation and monitoring of social development plans, responsibilities shall be delegated to four Social and Gender Development (SGD) Specialists to be hired by the PIC. The International SGD Expert will be assisted by three national counterparts. S/he will prepare the detailed plan for execution and the necessary forms for monitoring and train the national counterparts. Their inputs shall be used for reference by the M&E Expert who shall be involved in the project. A total of 28 intermittent person-months will be allocated for their involvement: 4 person-months for the international expert and 24 person-months for the three national counterparts, inclusive of their engagements as Gender Development Experts. The budget for social development implementation has been included in the total project cost.

### **B. Monitoring Indicators**

63. Attachment 1 presents the indicators that shall be monitored in coordination with the project implementation consultant (PIC) experts/specialists. The indicators are from the DMF and the GAP.

### **C. Information in Project Administration Manual**

64. In the administration of the project's social components, one important element is the timing of the hiring of the international social development and gender (SDG) expert and national specialists. The timing and person-months of their involvement shall be defined and a brief description of their duties and responsibilities included in their written reports.

### **D. Monitoring Tools**

65. CPMU will design monitoring tools (with indicators, data, and templates for collecting data) with support from the PIC in gathering and reporting data for regular reporting to ADB. The PIC will help design questionnaires for surveys needed to collect other kind of data for DMF and GAP reports (see DMF and GAP for sources of information). Information to be provided shall be supported with photographs and subject to periodic validation by the international SDG expert and/or the national specialists. Monitoring results shall be included in the semi-annual project progress reports to ADB.