

**VIETNAM: SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE PROJECT**

**POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR
ETHNIC MINORITY
DEVELOPMENT**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Project

The School Education Quality Assurance Project (SEQAP) will aim to improve and decrease inequity in learning outcomes, by supporting the Government's transition to Full Day Schooling (FDS), overall and for disadvantaged groups. The proposed outcome indicators include: (i) increase the percentage of primary students reaching the "independent learner" stage and/or performing at level 4 or more in the reading and math skills scale; (ii) decrease percentage of primary students with low levels of reading and math skills (levels 1 and 2), with particular emphasis on poor, rural, and other disadvantaged groups; (iii) achieve universal primary completion; and (iv) increase secondary school enrollment, particularly for the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups.

The project consists of four components: 1) Improved Policy Framework for Transition to FDS: Aiming at completing the requirements for the application of FDS in 2009-2015, while developing the policy framework for improved FDS model in the 2015-2025 period; 2) Improved Human Resources for Transition to FDS: Aiming at training and undertaking professional development of teachers, school leaders and education managers to successfully move to FDS, with focus on teaching methods, teacher standards and school management and supervision -in project beneficiary provinces, districts and schools; 3) Improved Physical and Other Recurrent Resources for Transition to FDS: Aiming at upgrading infrastructure and facilities, provide teaching materials and support other recurrent expenditures to successfully move to FDS -in project beneficiary provinces, districts and schools; and 4) Program Management: Aiming at supporting the management, monitoring and evaluation of SEQAP to ensure smooth implementation and results on the ground.

The proposed project will cover up to 32 provinces and project activities in at least 20 provinces will involve ethnic minority communities.

Institutional and policy framework

The term of ethnic minorities refers to those groups that are different from the national majority group – Kinh living in Vietnam. However, in the context of the project it should be noted that in fact, the Kinh is an ethnic minority in many areas and there are no Kinh resident at all in some areas.

Government Policy on Ethnic Minority Development

Vietnam has a very broad spectrum of ethnicities. There are officially 53 ethnic groups in Vietnam who constitute the category of ethnic minorities. Ethnic Kinh is a majority with about 85% percent of total population, dominating the political, economic, and social affairs of the Social Republic of Vietnam. Most of the ethnic group population lives in the uplands. Population of ethnic minority groups range from over a million to only a few hundreds. The only ethnic minority groups who live mainly in the down-land are Hoa (origin from Chinese), Cham and Kh'mer.

The Government requirements show that ethnic minority groups consist of following characteristics:

- ③ An intimate understanding and long stay in the territory, land or area of their ancestors closed attachment to the natural resources;

- ③ Self-identification and recognized by neighboring members by their distinctive culture;
- ③ A language different from the national language
- ③ A long traditional social and institutional system; and
- ③ A self-provided production system.

The equality and right of every ethnic person living in Vietnam has been clearly stated at the highest level in the constitution of 1992. Its article 5 declares that:

“The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the unified State of all ethnicities living in on the territory of Vietnam. The State carries out a policy of equality, solidarity and mutual cultural assistance among all nationalities, and forbids all acts of national discrimination and division. Every nationality has the right to use its own language and system of writing, to preserve its national cultural identity, and promote its fine customs, habits, traditions and culture. The State issues a policy of comprehensive development and assistance, and gradually improves the material and spiritual living conditions of the national ethnic minorities”.

The Government also has in place a number of programs aimed at the integration of ethnic minority groups into overall Vietnamese society and in particular their greater participation in mainstream economic life. Most of the Government’s programs for ethnic minority development are the responsibility of Committee for Ethnic Minorities Affairs (CEMA). The Government is seeking to address the inequities of both development and infrastructure provision in the remote and mountainous areas with its cornerstone initiative-Program 135-which provides assistance to communes experiencing special difficulties that have a high proportion of ethnic minorities. The program also provides educational supports to poor students.

Some key Development Policies for Ethnic Minority Areas

Instruction 525/TT of November 1993 provides an overall policy framework for the accelerated development of mountainous areas and areas of ethnic minorities. The main points of Instruction 525 are: (i) the promotion of an economy based on consumer goods, instead of an economy of self-sufficiency; (ii) the development of the rural infrastructure, in particular the access roads to the villages and the supply of drinking water; (iii) the reinforcement of the existing education systems, the adaptation of the education and training programs to the local conditions and the encouragement of informal education efforts; and (iv) the study of the causes of the insufficient food supply and the identification of ways to resolve this problem in each province.

Since 1968, Government policy has been aimed at settling the ethnic minorities and reducing shifting cultivation. This policy has been implemented in the form of programs that encompass both natural resource management and reforestation, and the economic development of ethnic minority areas. Two main programs have been the ‘327 Program from 1992 to 1997, based on Decision 327 of September 1992 on the reforestation of deforested hills, and the Sedentarization and Fixed Cultivation Program that has been targeted at ethnic minority people in upland areas for many years. This program has supported resettlement of upland communities to lower-lying and less remote areas, and has restricted sloping land cultivation and promoted irrigated paddy or long-season cash crops. A New Economic Zone program targeted at people moving into upland areas has been ongoing at the same time.

Today, two subsequent large-scale national programs are being implemented and address the development of the forestry sector and of poverty reduction in upland areas in a separate manner. The Five Million Hectare Reforestation Program (5MHRP) based on Decision 661 has replaced Program 327 and is on-going for a period of 12 years from 1998 to 2010. 5MHRP provides government funds for protected forest and special use forest. The 135 Program, which started its phase 2 in 2006 implementing for 5 years 2006-2010, plans and undertakes infrastructure development in the poor and remote communes, known as Zone III communes. Most of these communes are mountainous communes primarily inhabited by ethnic minority people. Subsidies and donations of agricultural inputs are also made available, for example through the Hunger Eradication Program. The Sedentarization and Fixed Cultivation Program and the New Economic Zone Program are still ongoing. The Sedentarization and Fixed Cultivation Program now mainly funds house construction materials for newly married young couples and for households having lost their homes after landslides, fire or flooding.

The World Bank Policy on Indigenous People

The Bank's policy on indigenous people (OP4.10), issued in July 2005, is to ensure that the development process fosters full respect for their dignity, human rights, and culture uniqueness. More specially, the objective at the center of the policy is to ensure that indigenous peoples do not suffer adverse effects during the development process, and that they receive benefits which are culturally appropriate to them.

The Bank's policy is that the strategy of addressing the issue pertaining to indigenous peoples must be based on the free and informed participation of the indigenous people themselves which requires identifying local preferences through direct consultation.

Indigenous people are commonly among the poorest segments of a population. They engage in economic activities that range from shifting agriculture to wage labor or even small-scale market-oriented activities. The definition used by World Bank is very similar to that of the Government.

Any project proposed for the World Bank financing that have a significant effect on indigenous people are required to follow these steps:

- ③ A screening to identify whether ethnic minorities are present in or have collective attachment to the project area;
- ③ A social assessment to determine if the policy will be triggered, i.e. ethnic minorities will be negatively affected or can not participate in project benefits by virtue of their ethnicity ;
- ③ A process of free, prior and informed consultation with the effected people ethnic minority communities in order to full identify their views and to ascertain whether there is broad community support for the project ;
- ③ If the social assessment concludes that ethnic minorities will be negatively affected or can not participate in project benefits, preparation of an action plan with necessary measures; and
- ③ Disclosure of the plan.

To ensure that indigenous people groups are included in appropriate ways in the development process, the policy requires the preparation of an indigenous peoples development plan (IPDP). All ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam are considered indigenous and have equal rights under the Constitution of The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and therefore the IPDP process is referred to as the EMDP process.

Legal Framework Implementation

The Government agency responsible for upland ethnic groups is the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Affairs (CEMA). The role of CEMA is to advise the Government on all matters relating to upland ethnic groups, and to supervise national development programs which assist ethnic minorities such as the 135 Program. In addition to the national office in Hanoi, CEMA has departments in each province. In 1995 CEMA developed a framework for External Assistance with the Development of Ethnic Minorities. This framework resulted in a strategy for the development of ethnic minority people within the Government's goal of stability, sustainable growth and reduction of poverty. The key points of this framework were:

- a) To fight against poverty;
- b) To encourage active participation of the populations of ethnic minorities in their own development;
- c) To reinforce the institutions involving ethnic minorities;
- d) To develop natural and human resources in a sustainable manner; and
- e) To ensure mutual respect between, and increase responsibility of, the parties involved.

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

The proposed project will likely be implemented in 32 provinces nationwide with 20 provinces having a varied proportion of ethnic minority population. While ethnic minorities in Vietnam enjoy full legal and citizenship rights, they continue to remain disproportionately poor. Despite improvements in health, education and economics, most ethnic minorities remain relatively disadvantaged compared to average national standards.

Poverty Among Ethnic Minorities

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam now represent 39% of all poor people despite making up only 14% of the country's population. 61% of ethnic minority peoples were still poor in 2004 compared with only 14% of the *Kinh* and people of Chinese ethnicity. Estimates suggest that 37% of those living in poverty in 2010 will be from ethnic minorities, more than twice their share of the poor in 2003 and close to three times their share of the Vietnamese population. Hunger remains a significant problem for ethnic minority peoples with one third of all ethnic minorities experiencing hunger in 2004, compared with only 4% of *Kinh* and ethnic Chinese, and nearly half of the ethnic minorities living in the Central Highlands live in hunger¹.

¹ Swinkels, R and C. Turk (2006), Explaining Ethnic Minority Poverty in Vietnam: a summary of recent trends and current challenges, p 2-3.

Social Structures

The indigenous ethnic minority communities have diverse social structures, including matriarchal, patriarchal, bi-triarchal, or transition from one social structure to another. The roles of men and women differ considerably according to the dominant social structure in the community, the family and the ethnic group. In this context gender does not simply mean the status and role of women, but also the status and role of men. In matriarchal communities, men often have a lower status than women and so an awareness of gender issues in the context of SEQAP will help improve the position and role of the disadvantaged sex, and create conditions for gender equality.

The Social Assessment for the SEQAP

The social assessment for the School Education Assurance Project (SEQAP) is an activity in support of the overall design of SEQAP and its overarching goal to improve the quality of primary education in Vietnam. The social assessment study completed a set of structured interviews with poor, disadvantaged, and ethnic minority stakeholders in two selected provinces to understand their perception of the implementation of full-day schooling (FDS) education. The provinces of Lao Cai (Northern Highlands) and Kon Tum (Central Highlands) are the two provinces of focus for the social assessment. Lao Cai and Kon Tum provinces are representative of locations with poor and disadvantaged communities and large ethnic minority populations facing issues of low education achievement.

Field interviews gathered data and opinions on educational constraints, insights on participant views of full-day schooling, and their preferences for measures that might facilitate the implementation of full-day schooling and improve educational attainment. Interviews focused on school principals, teachers, and parents in primary school grades 1–5, although input was also gathered about kindergarten classes, where available.

The social assessment study in two highland provinces confirms that ethnic minorities in the highlands areas of Vietnam often receive lower quality services in education compared to the national norm, and encounter numerous barriers to using education services. Ethnic minority families often have significantly lower health and education status than the national average. These elements all pose challenges to improved education quality.

The decision to access education is influenced by the perceived cost of the service, family income, and the expected benefit from the service. Factors such as distance, monetary cost, and subsidies affect the cost and choices. Some families simply are unwilling to consistently send their children to a school that is an hour or more away, when it effectively reduces children's capacity to work at home and creates a serious opportunity cost. Limited basic needs, and the monetary costs—e.g., cost of travel to school, school expenses, clothes, and food for lunch—also can obstruct access given the low incomes that ethnic minorities earn in the highlands.

In addition, households consider the value of the education services. Poor quality services are less likely to be used, regardless of the cost. Ethnic minorities may be especially sensitive to considerations of quality or appropriateness. Language barriers make it difficult for their children to take full advantage of the school system, lowering its perceived value. The delivery systems and curriculum developed by the majority is not always sensitive to the beliefs or cultural practices of ethnic minority parents and students.

The field work under this social assessment contributes a number of findings that are important input to the SEQAP design teams. The final chapter of this report outlines key

findings, including: measures to boost demand and overcome access constraints, strategies to engage parents, along with more attention to procedures and mentoring programs for principals and teachers to support FDS implementation. Institutional mechanisms to raise awareness around FDS and multi-language instruction, along with further steps to boost minority provider recruitment and expanded cultural understanding for all providers, are all important findings of the study. Several additional policy and regulatory issues are also documented to support further development of the SEQAP project policy framework.

The following table summarizes key constraints to access. While this information is not entirely new, as many studies and data sets have made these points, this social assessment confirms the following constraints are observed in both Lao Cai and Kon Tum provinces.

Constraint	Description
Physical/Geographic Constraints	Ethnic minorities live in rough terrain in the highlands. The physical geography of these areas is a real challenge, and the remote locations increase the costs to provide and maintain infrastructure and education services. Travel distances and the terrain, particularly in rainy weather, make it difficult for students and teachers to reach their schools.
Economic Constraints	Ethnic minority groups face severe economic constraints, including their isolation from markets, small-scale agricultural activities, and low incomes. Families living in poverty will weigh the opportunity and direct costs of accessing education against the expected benefits. Trade-offs between sending children to school and keeping them at home to work the land or help with household chores are occurring in the highlands.
Fiscal Constraints	On the supply side, competing demands on limited funds results in communities with not as many schools, greater distances between the available schools, fewer teachers and teaching aids, and poorer quality infrastructure. Constraints on the availability of subsidies and funding formulas based on per pupil numbers pose challenges for raising the level of poorer school facilities.
Lack of Understanding	Ethnic minority families come from different cultures than most education service providers, often have lower educational standing, face high rates of illiteracy, and may have less knowledge and understanding of education and its long-term benefits. Difficulties in communicating with teachers and principals also represent constraints to education quality and achievement.
Competing Cultural Systems	Central and standardized interventions and delivery mechanisms often struggle to acknowledge and appreciate traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices. In turn, minority groups can be skeptical of services that challenge traditional knowledge and practices. They may view schools that discourage children from using local languages and curriculum activities that draw mainly from majority cultural examples as awkward or even as threats to their ethnic identity and welfare.
Poor Quality Services	Services that are of a lower quality are more likely to be perceived as less relevant. Highland school buildings are often not up to national standards, teachers are less qualified, and visual aids are limited. Lower quality services are a disincentive for school participation, and may impede the pace of student achievement and reduce the parent's perceived value of school attendance.
Gender and Ethnic Group Considerations	Cultural values and behavior patterns are almost universally colored by gender and influenced by ethnicity. These values and distinctions, in turn, create gender-specific or ethnic group patterns in demand for and acceptance of education achievement. Differences may appear in the primary grades, but are more pronounced at higher grade levels. Real and perceived utility and opportunity costs of the services may exist, and these may differ by gender and ethnic group. Poverty and income status can also compound these differences.

Constraint	Description
Language	<p>National language policy requires the national language as the language of instruction, and learning Vietnamese offers long-term economic benefits for many. Vietnam has taken important steps to encourage the use of ethnic languages in schools, and this flexibility is recognized as valuable. Teachers, parents, and students often see value in local language support in early grades of primary school to facilitate learning. Local language teaching is limited in availability, because there are few minority teachers or principals, and training for teachers in local language is only in the pilot stages.</p> <p>Limited literacy or Vietnamese language skills limited parents' ability to help their children study at home. It also poses a constraint on parents' ability to interact with principals and teachers. Where teachers do speak the language of the community they work in, outreach, communication, and ultimately effective assistance to parents and students reduces constraints.</p>

3. PROJECT POLICY FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the Government of Vietnam's policies on ethnic minorities and the World Bank's policy on indigenous peoples, an ethnic minority policy framework is prepared for the SEQAP to ensure that ethnic minorities can meaningfully participate in the project and receive culturally appropriate benefits from the project. This Policy Framework for Ethnic Minority will be approved by the Government of Vietnam to be applied in the SEQAP to guide the subsequent preparation of the Ethnic Minority Development Plan(s).

The Development Plan will include the following main elements:

- extensive information dissemination and disclosure of project information;
- full participation of ethnic minorities in their own development will be instituted so that approaches will be culturally appropriate and local knowledge fully utilized;
- additional attention and targeting will be given to the poorest, remote and most vulnerable groups;
- where ethnic minority groups are in need of more facilitation assistance, beyond what is already provided by the local government, the Project will provide the services of community facilitators or experienced and interested non-government groups;
- partnership with other government agencies, donors and non-government organizations who have rich experience in the mountainous areas; and
- strengthening the capacity of local and indigenous institutions to generate and manage locally-adapted and culturally appropriate strategies and economic growth.

Project principles for Ethnic Minority Development

The basic ethnic minority development principles of the project are:

- a) Ethnic minorities are encouraged to participate in all project activities and they will benefit from the project in a way which is culturally appropriate
- b) Adverse impacts on ethnic minority communities, as distinct and vulnerable groups, should be avoided or minimized by exploring all viable options ;

- c) Preparation of EMDPs and their implementation is to be carried out with participation and consultation of ethnic minority people; and
- d) Implementation schedule and budget for ethnic minority people development planning (including participatory mechanisms and surveys) and implementation must be incorporated into the overall project;

Project Policy

The project policy, in-keeping with the World Bank safeguard policy, requires that if the screening or social assessment determines that ethnic minority groups in the project area are likely to be affected/benefited by the proposed project, the EMDP addressing the specific ethnic minority groups, their concerns and needs, and the socio-economic issues that are significant need to be prepared.

For example, where subproject traverse areas with ethnic minority groups that have low levels of literacy, education and skill compared with the Kinh in the subproject area, an assessment must be undertaken to determine if and how this is likely to disadvantage them (due to disease or degradation of culture and traditions), or to carry out necessary actions in encouraging their involvement in the project so they could enjoy project benefits.

If there is any doubt as to whether the EMDP needs to be, a summary of information pertaining to the specific ethnic minority groups within each project province to be forwarded to the World Bank's Social Development/Indigenous People's Specialist for the project, for review and advice.

The type of information to be included in the summary as follows:

- Numbers and groups of ethnic minority people or households in the project province;
- The proportion of ethnic minority people or households of project province's population;
- The key and defining cultural aspects of the ethnic minority groups in the project province and the degree to which they are integrated (or not) with the Kinh; and
- Main issues facing ethnic minority development in the project province;

Consultation and Participation of Ethnic Minorities in SEQAP

In accordance with the World Bank's Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples, SEQAP will engage in free, prior and informed consultation with them. To ensure such consultation with ethnic minority groups, an appropriate gender and intergenerationally inclusive framework that provides opportunities for consultation at each stage of preparation and implementation among the borrower, the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities and their organizations will be established.

Consultation methods that are appropriate to the social and cultural values of the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities and their local conditions will be used. Special attention will be given to the concerns of ethnic minority female, youth and children and their access to development opportunities will be taken into consideration in designing SEQAP consultation activities.

Ethnic minority communities will be provided with all relevant information about the proposed project in a culturally appropriate manner at each stage of preparation and implementation. An assessment of potential adverse effects of the proposed project on the affected ethnic minority community will also be included.

4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Project Coordination Unit (PCU)

MOET through PCU at national level is responsible for the over-all planning, implementation, management and coordination of the project including ethnic minority development activities. PCU has assigned a group of staff to oversee SEQAP implementation, some of whom are responsible for ethnic minority development activities.

PCU assisted by national social safeguards specialist, will assist, support and supervise PPMUs in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of all ethnic minority development plans. PCU will establish an internal monitoring and evaluation system through PPMUs and an external one through an independent supervising organization (preparation stage for SEQAP ethnic minority development plans undertaken by the consultant in coordination with PPMUs as the above mention).

Provincial Project Management Units

PPMUs are required to assign at least one staff who shall be responsible for the preparation and implementation of the ethnic minority development plan.

The specific measures identified during consultation will dictate the nature and structure of organizations to be involved in the implementation of the EMDP. The EMDP should at least identify the types of agencies that could undertake the measures recommended in the plan, and hold initial consultations with those agencies to develop the measures at a level that can be accepted. The EMDP will set out the institutional arrangements required to implement each plan.

The main responsibility of PPMU ethnic minority specialists is to:

- ③ Undertake the screening of all activities of each subproject and submit to PCU the list of activities requiring further EMDP work;
- ③ Prepare the EMDP for each annual work program
- ③ Implement and monitor the EMDP activities
- ③ Coordinate with the provincial and district authorities as required to ensure implementation of EMDP activities
- ③ Continue and maintain effective consultation with ethnic minority communities and
- ③ Submit regular progress reports quarterly to PCU on the EMDP and related activities.

Other agencies

Consultation and cooperation with other relevant agencies should take place as necessary (eg. Women Union, Committee for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Affairs, local organizations and bilateral agencies working on education and poverty reduction program in the area, etc).

5. PROCESS FOR ETHNIC MINORITY DEVELOPMENT PREPARATION

Ethnic Minority Development Plan (EMDP)

The development plan will consist of a number of activities to enhance the project benefits for ethnic minority communities or to assist them overcoming barriers or constraints to their enjoyment of benefits. These activities need to be financed and a detailed budget is included in the EMDP.

The EMDP will outline the characteristics of ethnic minority households and communities in the project province, identify the risks or constraints that need to be addressed, and provide the details (including costs, implementation arrangements and monitoring requirements) of the proposed measures. The EMDP will:

- Identify how the project will affect/benefit the ethnic minority people;
- Identify how they are disadvantaged or vulnerable because of their social or cultural identify and how the World Bank safeguard policy is triggered by this; and
- Develop a plan for addressing the disadvantages and vulnerabilities that the ethnic minorities face in order to fully benefit from the project activities (the interventions should be described in a way that will show how they meet the requirements of the World Bank policy).

The EMDP need to be a time-bound action plan that includes all of the financial and institutional arrangements required to implement the measures being recommended.

An EMDP should comprise of:

- ③ Briefing of Law and Policy Framework ;
- ③ The socio-economic characteristics of ethnic minority groups (based on SAs);
- ③ Summarizing all activities toward to ethnic minority groups made by consultants ;
- ③ Giving action plans to establish measures to (i) eliminate the negative impacts on ethnic minority groups and (ii) ensure that ethnic minority group will receive full socio-economic benefits ;
- ③ Specifying the institutional responsibilities for implementation and specific solutions ; and
- ③ Proposing the cost estimate and financial plans.

PPMUs will coordinate with the district respective agencies to monitor the preparation and implementation of EMDP. The new findings will be recorded in the quarter report to submit to PCU. PCU will summarize those reports to send to the WB every year.

Public Disclosure

Once the Government and the WB approves the draft documents, they will be disclosed publicly available.

- (i) The approved Policy Framework to be made available in accessible places and in a form, manner and language understandable to all ethnic minority groups and stakeholders;
- (ii) Placement of copies of the EMDP in Vietnamese, and any other ethnic minority language as required, in provincial, district and commune offices; and
- (iii) Disclosure of the approved and endorsed EMDPs in places that are publicly available, including in the Viet Nam Development Information Center in Ha Noi.

6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The overall project will be implemented over five year period and is scheduled to commence upon loan approval. The EMDP should have an implementation schedule that is coordinated with the project implementation.

7. COSTS AND BUDGET FOR EMDP ACTIVITIES

The sources or funding for the various activities will need to be determined during loan negotiation between WB and the Government (MOET/PCU). Depending on the structure of the loan, funding for some EMDP activities could be made available as a specified budget item from loan funds. Otherwise the financing of EMDP activities is expected to come from the Government counterpart funds. Following the loan agreement, each EMDP will be required to clearly specify and identify the sources of funding for each of the actions in the plan, along with any funding from alternative sources if required for any aspects of the activities.

Cost estimates provided in the plans must be as detailed as possible and linked with specific activities (i.e, costs for each specific intervention, administration costs). A 20% contingency should be included. The EMDP will include detailed costs of compensation and other rehabilitation entitlements (including restoration and enhancement measures and development assistance) for affected ethnic minority households over and above those measures included in the resettlement plan. The EMDP will focus on the costs involved in mitigating adverse cultural effects or removing any constraints to ethnic minority groups enjoying project benefits that have been identified through consultation.

