

***Thematic global evaluation of  
European Commission support to the  
education sector in partner countries  
(including basic and secondary education)***

Final Report  
Volume I

December 2010

*Evaluation for the European Commission*







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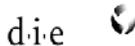
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This report has been prepared by Particip GmbH. The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission or by the authorities of the countries concerned.



# Thematic global evaluation of European Commission support to the education sector in partner countries (including basic and secondary education) *Final Report*

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### List of acronyms

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| ABET    | Adult Basic Education and Training                  |
| ACP     | Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries             |
| ADB     | Asian Development Bank                              |
| AED     | Academy for Educational Development                 |
| AIDCO   | EuropeAid Co-operation Office                       |
| AIDS    | Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome                 |
| AJK     | Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan)                   |
| ALA     | Asia and Latin America group of nations             |
| ALFA    | América Latina – Formación Académica                |
| AWPB    | Annual Workplans and Budgets                        |
| BE      | Basic Education                                     |
| BEC/TF  | Basic Education Trust Fund                          |
| BE-SCSP | Basic Education-Sector Capacity Support Programme   |
| BGCSE   | Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| BRAC    | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee              |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| CBA      | Competency-Based Approach   |
| CBO      | Community-Based Organisation  |
| CF       | Catalytic Fund  |
| COM      | Official Communication of the European Commission   |
| CPI      | Corruption Perception Index   |
| CRIS     | Common Relex Information System   |
| CSE      | Country Strategy Evaluation   |
| CSO      | Civil Society Organisation  |
| CSP      | Country Strategy Paper  |
| DAC      | Development Assistance Committee  |
| DCI      | Development Co-operation Instrument   |
| DEMIS    | District Education Management Information System  |
| DG       | Directorate General   |
| DG DEV   | EC Directorate General on Development   |
| DG EAC   | EC Directorate General on Education and Culture   |
| DG RELEX | EC Directorate General for External Relations   |
| DLI      | Disbursement Linked Indicator   |
| DP       | Development partner   |
| DPEP     | District Primary Education Programme  |
| DSP      | Differential Stipend Program  |
| EC       | European Commission   |
| ECA      | European Court of Auditors  |
| ECHO     | Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission                                      |
| ED       | Éducation Développement   |
| EDF      | European Development Fund   |
| EFA      | 'Education for All' Initiative  |
| EFA-FTI  | 'Education for All' - Fast Track Initiative   |
| EGS      | Education Guarantee Scheme  |
| EIDHR    | European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights  |
| EMECW    | Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window   |
| EMIS     | Education Management Information System   |
| ENP      | European Neighbourhood Policy   |
| ENPI     | European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument  |
| EQ       | Evaluation Question   |
| ESDP     | Education Sector Development Programme  |
| ESI      | Employment and Social Inclusion   |
| ESSP     | Education Sector Strategic Plan   |
| ETSIP    | Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme   |
| EU       | European Union  |
| EUD      | Delegation of the European Union  |
| FA       | Financial Agreement   |
| FMIS     | Financial Management Information System   |
| FOPIIE   | Fortalecimiento Pedagógico de las Escuelas del Programa Integral para la Igualdad Educativa |
| FTE      | Full-Time Equivalents   |
| FTI      | Fast-Track Initiative   |
| GBS      | General Budget Support  |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product  |
| GER      | Gross Enrolment Rate  |
| GIR      | Gross Intake Rate   |
| GIS      | Geographic Information System   |
| GMR      | Global Monitoring Report  |
| GoU      | Government of Uganda  |
| GPI      | Gender Parity Index   |
| HDI      | Human Development Index   |
| HE       | Higher Education  |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| HIV      | Human Immuno-deficiency Virus  |
| HQ       | Headquarters   |
| HRD      | Human Resources Development  |
| ILO      | International Labour Organisation  |
| IMF      | International Monetary Fund  |
| iQSG     | Inter-service Quality Support Group  |
| JAA      | Joint Annual Appraisal   |
| JC       | Judgment Criteria  |
| JEU      | Joint Evaluation Unit  |
| JRM      | Joint Review Mission   |
| LDCs     | Least Developed Countries  |
| LRRD     | Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development   |
| MDBS     | Multi-Donor Budget Support   |
| MDG      | Millennium Development Goal  |
| MDTF     | Multi-Donor Trust Fund   |
| MEDA     | Mediterranean Basin and Middle-East group of nations   |
| MIS      | Management Information System  |
| MKUKUTA  | National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty  |
| MoE      | Ministry of Education  |
| MoEC     | Ministry of Education and Culture  |
| MS       | Member States (of the European Union)  |
| MSS      | Minimum Standards of Services  |
| MTBF     | Medium-Term Budgetary Framework  |
| MTDF     | Medium-Term Development Framework  |
| MTEF     | Medium-Term Expenditure Framework  |
| MTR      | Mid-Term Review  |
| NDP      | National Development Plan  |
| NER      | Net enrolment Rate   |
| NFPE     | Non-Formal Primary Education   |
| NGO      | Non-Governmental Organisation  |
| NIP      | National Indicative Programme  |
| NSA      | Non-State Actors   |
| NWFP     | North Western Frontier Province  |
| ODA      | Official Development Assistance  |
| ODI-CDD  | Overseas Development Institute –Centre for Democratic Development                                |
| OECD     | Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development   |
| OECD-DAC | The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development |
| oQSG     | office Quality Support Group (within EuropeAid)  |
| PABS     | Poverty Alleviation Budget Support   |
| PAPSE    | Programa de Apoyo Presupuestario Sectorial para la Educación (Nicaragua)                         |
| PASEB    | Programme d'appui au secteur de l'éducation de base  |
| PASEC    | Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs des Pays Confemen                                     |
| PCD      | Policy Coherence for Development   |
| PCR      | Primary Completion Rate  |
| PDDE     | Plan décennal de développement de l'éducation  |
| PDDEB    | Plan Décennal de Développement de l'Education de Base  |
| PEDP     | Primary Education Development Programme  |
| PEFA     | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability  |
| PER      | Public Expenditure Review  |
| PESLE    | Programme for Enrichment of School-Level Education   |
| PETS     | Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys  |
| PFM      | Public Finance Management  |
| PISA     | Programme for International Student Assessment   |
| PIU      | Project Implementation Unit  |
| PLU      | Programme Liaison Unit   |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| PPARP   | Programme Pluriannuel d'Appui à la Réduction de la Pauvreté                      |
| PROMOTE | Programme to Motivate, Train & Employ Female Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools |
| PRS     | Poverty Reduction Strategy   |
| PRSP    | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper   |
| PSLE    | Primary School Leaving Examination   |
| PTR     | Pupil/Teacher Ratio  |
| PVD     | Pays en Voie de Développement  |
| RBM     | Results-Based Management   |
| RG      | Reference Group (of the present evaluation)                                      |
| ROM     | Results-Oriented Monitoring  |
| SBS     | Sector Budget Support  |
| SCOT    | Strengthening of the Capacity of Teacher Training Programme                      |
| SEMIS   | Secondary Education Management Information System                                |
| SERCE   | Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo                               |
| SERP    | Sector Support Reform Programme  |
| SEPSP   | Sindh Education Plan Support Programme   |
| SIP     | School Improvement Programme   |
| SISED   | Somali Integrated Secondary Educational Development                              |
| SMC     | School Management Committee  |
| SOUTEBA | Programme de soutien à l'éducation de base                                       |
| SPSP    | Sector Policy Support Programme  |
| SSP     | Support to Sector Programmes   |
| SUPE    | Support to Universal Primary Education   |
| SWAp    | Sector-Wide Approach   |
| TA      | Technical Assistance   |
| TACIS   | Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States                   |
| TAP     | Technical and Administrative Provisions  |
| TDMS    | Teacher Development and Management System  |
| TIMSS   | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study                            |
| TOP     | Terms of Partnership (between Provincial & District Government)                  |
| ToR     | Terms of Reference   |
| TR      | Transition Rate  |
| TSP-DoE | Technical Support to the Department of Education                                 |
| TVET    | Technical and Vocational Education and Training                                  |
| UN      | United Nations   |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme   |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                 |
| UNICEF  | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund                           |
| UPC     | Universal Primary School Completion  |
| UPE     | Universal Primary Education  |
| USAID   | United States Agency for International Development                               |
| USE     | Universal Secondary Education  |
| VET     | Vocational Education and Training  |
| WB      | World Bank   |



## Executive Summary

### Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation aims to assess the extent to which the European Commission's (EC) assistance has been relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable in producing the expected impacts in the education sector. Moreover, the evaluation also assesses co-ordination and complementarity with other donors and actors, coherence with the relevant EC policies and partner Governments' priorities and activities, and with international legal commitments in education. The evaluation covers basic and secondary education, including the relevant sub-sectors, all regions where EC co-operation is implemented<sup>1</sup>, and aid implementation over the period 2000-2007.

### Background to the evaluation

At the global level, education policy has developed rapidly over the last decade. The major driving processes include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to education, the Education for All initiative (EFA), and the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), to all of which the EC either is a signatory or has subscribed, and which form the international context in which EC support to basic and secondary education is embedded. Moreover, the EC has underwritten a number of aid-effectiveness commitments, including the Paris Declaration, and thus aims to achieve related principles such as ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results-based management (RBM), and mutual accountability in development partnership. The EC has acknowledged these shifts by producing education-related policies and by developing a set of modalities to support partner countries' development efforts in general, but also in support of education specifically.

EC support to basic and secondary education, as defined by the ToR, has been evaluated against this backdrop.

### Methodology

The evaluation was managed and supervised by the Joint Evaluation Unit (JEU), and was closely monitored by a Reference Group (RG) consisting of members of DGs RELEX, DEV, AIDCO and ECHO<sup>2</sup>. It consisted of four main phases:

- During the **Inception Phase**, an inventory of EC support to basic and secondary education was completed. The scope of the evaluation was further refined, arriving at a set of Evaluation Questions (EQs) to guide research.
- During the **Desk Phase**, preliminary findings related to the EQs were produced, taking account of results of a survey of 23 European Union Delegations (EUDs), of interviews at EC HQ (headquarters), and of further analysis of documents.
- During the **Field Phase**, information gaps were filled and hypotheses tested. Country Notes were produced for each country selected.
- The **Synthesis Phase** collated all information retrieved, which was analysed, synthesised and cross-checked. This report and its annexes are the final outcomes of this phase.

Overall, some 6,000 documents and publications were screened and analysed, including 181 CSPs/NIPs and 20 relevant EC Country-Level Evaluations. Interviews were held with more than 200 people, either individually or in groups, or as focus groups in the field visit countries. In addition, three video focus group discussions were held with a total of 12 EUDs, and six case studies were implemented in the field visit countries, augmented by project visits.

The numerous **limitations of the methodology** applied relate to aspects such as: attribution; difficulties in producing a comprehensive inventory of EC funding, and access to, and availability of, information because of the lack of institutional memory at EC HQ and field levels. Moreover, access to data and stakeholders was also sometimes constrained during field visits. However, the evaluation team compensated for this to a certain extent by cross-checking and combining information from different sources.

### Analysis and main findings for each Evaluation Question

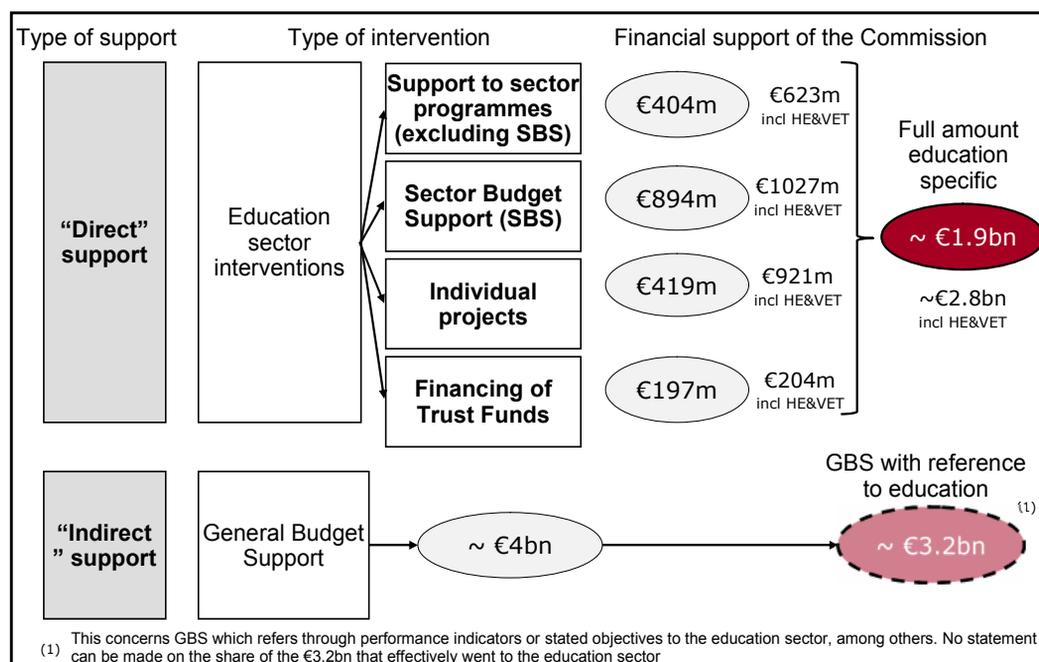
The following figure presents the global overview of all the EC financial contributions to the education sector, as defined in the thematic scope of the evaluation, from 2000 to 2007. It also includes the financial contributions towards higher education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET). While HE and VET are outside the scope of the evaluation, this allows a quick overview of the share

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of regions and countries under the mandate of DG Enlargement

<sup>2</sup> Directorate General for External Relations (DG RELEX), Directorate General for Development (DG DEV), EuropeAid Office for Co-operation (DG AIDCO), and EC Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

that basic and secondary education receive, compared to the entire sector: **approximately two-thirds of the EC's direct support to education is geared towards basic and secondary education.**

Figure 1: Global overview of EC financial contribution to the education sector



Over the period 2000-07, the EC contracted a total amount of around € 1.9 billion for direct support to the education sector<sup>3</sup>, excluding HE and VET, and used the following types of aid modalities – Sector Budget Support (SBS), individual projects, support to sector programmes (excluding SBS<sup>4</sup>), and financing of Trust Funds. Of this amount, around € 1.4 billion (74% of the total amount contracted) was disbursed over the same period. Taking into consideration HE and VET, the total amount contracted by the EC over the period 2000-07, through its “direct” support, was around € 2.8 billion, of which € 2.1 billion (75%) was disbursed. The EC financial contributions supporting the sectors that fall within the scope of this evaluation (thus not including HE and VET) represent 69% of the total contracted by the EC for the entire education sector.

A substantial part of GBS provided by the EC can be considered as indirect support to the education sector. Over the period 2000-07, a total of around € 4 billion was transferred to national governments of beneficiary countries under GBS operations. Around € 3.2 billion of this concerned GBS that the EC referred, among other sectors, to education. Given the nature of GBS, no statement can be made on the share of the € 3.2 billion that effectively went to the education sector.

### EC support is highly relevant.

Major advancements have been made in aligning EC support to education with partner countries' national priorities and policies over the course of the period evaluated. This increase in alignment occurred in conjunction with the greater use of modalities such as SBS and GBS, which, by their inherent characteristics, entail a high level of coherence with, and alignment to, national policies. Where no education sector policies or national frameworks existed, the EC has attempted to support their development. Understandable exceptions to these overall developments are fragile states, where national structures and policies are inadequate.

As EC support to education has increasingly been delivered through “joint” approaches – that is, sector support programmes, budget support, and trust funds– there has also been an increase in the harmonisation of this support with other donors and the partner government.

<sup>3</sup> “Direct support” should be understood here as support that targets directly and entirely the education sector. It should be distinguished from “indirect support” (see below), to be understood as support that is dedicated to education as one sector among others.

<sup>4</sup> This term had to be created by the evaluation team in order to describe EC support to a sector or sub-sector that is neither SBS nor a project. The CRIS database does not allow for properly identifying all Sector Policy Support Programmes (SPSPs) directly. Therefore, this construct had to be chosen. For further details, see the Inventory in Annex 2, especially its Appendix 1.

EC support to education was generally found to be coherent in terms of the various DGs involved, financing modalities employed, and the levels at which it was targeted. However, room for improvement remains, particularly in coherence of geographic and thematic instruments in support of education.

***EC support has helped partner countries to progress towards Universal Primary Education (MDG2), and appears to have contributed to improving access and completion rates.***

MDG2 has been achieved in only a few countries, but taking into consideration the progress made, most countries – apart from LDCs in *Sub-Saharan African* countries and *fragile states* – are on course to achieve MDG2 by 2015. **EC support has helped partner countries to progress towards the goal, and appears to have contributed to improving access and completion rates. EC support has extensively contributed to construction and rehabilitation in post-conflict or post-emergency situations, and in meeting the shortfall in school provision in certain regions.** Apart from the problems of trying to extend school provision to hard-to-reach areas, partner governments have to cope with the fact that population growth sometimes nullifies progress in school enrolment.

Compared to 2005, much progress was made in 2007 towards achieving MDG3 on gender equality and target 3A, aimed at eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Design and implementation of **EC-supported programmes and projects have attempted to remove barriers to girls' enrolment** with support to a variety of measures, including training of female teachers.

Compulsory education is fully within the realm of partner government responsibility. EC support linked to this domain is fostering pro-poor policies and strategies with resource allocations linked to the PRSP. **The EC has contributed, together with other development partners, to the abolishment of school fees in a number of countries.** It has also given extensive support to non-formal education (especially in *Asian countries*), has assisted in removing poverty-linked barriers, and has provided governments (mainly in *Sub-Saharan Africa*) with resources that create fiscal space to cater for education in rural areas.

It can be seen that the EC, in its support programmes, has made efforts to identify discrimination or under-provision, and to help enable the implementation of strategies to overcome these issues.

The evaluation found evidence that **EC support to partner governments has yielded good results in pro-poor education sector reform programmes**, or through projects implemented by NGOs and complementing partner government provisions with non-formal education, including a focus on remote, hard-to-reach areas, or on vulnerable ethnic groups, tribes and scheduled castes, and on inclusive education for children with disabilities.

EC support placed an emphasis on increasing the capacity of formal education systems to enrol and retain growing numbers of pupils, especially girls. However, around 10% of children are still categorised as hard-to-reach, often from ultra-poor and disadvantaged groups. Given the severely limited partner government funds, or, in some countries, the lack of political will to allocate the required funds to basic education for **disadvantaged segments of the population**, these groups **could often not be reached**. Altogether, despite considerable progress related to EFA2 and MDG2 and 3, combined efforts and financing by partner country governments and donors (including the EC) have not been enough to ensure targets set in the early 2000s will be met by 2015.

***Gradually, the EC is assisting partner countries in responding to the growing need for secondary education.***

**EC support with regard to secondary education has rather been focused on medium human development countries<sup>5</sup> with secondary education policies and strategies, on supporting secondary school construction and rehabilitation** (especially in *fragile states* in post-conflict or post-emergency situations), and on removing barriers to female participation. Total EC support directly to secondary education amounts only to € 41.5 million, which represents 2% of the total for basic and secondary education (3% for the sample countries). Most of this was directed towards the secondary education SBS in *Tunisia*, which is the only SBS support that has focused exclusively on secondary education. It has contributed to the increase of the transition rates (TR) to lower secondary and upper secondary by supporting the government policy of reducing repetition and drop-out rates at primary level.

The figure mentioned does not include other EC Sector Policy Support Programmes (SPSPs) where secondary education is part of the support to basic or elementary education (and which often incorporate lower secondary education). However, the degree to which EC funds are targeted at lower secondary is not always sufficiently clear, given the varying definitions of basic/primary and secondary

<sup>5</sup> This categorisation refers to the Human Development Index of the UN; see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/>

education. Given the fiscal resource requirements for universalising primary education, most *sub-Saharan African* countries have lagged behind on secondary education.

**EC support has not significantly focused on strengthening capacity for delivering pro-poor secondary education.** However, with the relatively small investment, and within particular country contexts, the support to the sub-sector has been cost-effective, having made some contribution to improving transition to secondary education (both lower and upper), including in remote areas and for disadvantaged pupils.

*EC support to improving quality needs further focus.*

The **impacts of EC support on improving quality were found to be rather limited in the vast majority of countries that have received quite substantial support.** Most countries, given the paucity of funds for basic education, are concentrating on sustaining and improving access, including meeting recurrent budget requirements for recruiting the necessary additional teachers. While the EC has provided support yielding good results related to improved management of the sector impinging on quality (see EQ 6), direct education quality improvement measures have hardly been tackled so far. The evaluation's analysis showed that **support through GBS sometimes has assisted governments to meet the bare necessities for education system survival**, including financing of teacher salaries and textbooks. Without such support, education provision would have further deteriorated.

**SBS and sector support programmes, especially in middle-income countries, have assisted partner country governments to accommodate quality improvement strategies system-wide.** Middle-income countries avail of more resources and increasingly concentrate on an international competitiveness agenda, requiring quality improvement of basic and secondary education.

**Especially where the government was not in a position to ensure quality, EC support to NGOs, following a project mode, assisted either in under-reached areas or in facilitating the mainstreaming of quality improvement strategies.** EC support in addressing post-conflict and post-emergency situations, through MDTFs or NGOs, covered not only construction and rehabilitation, but also system re-engineering and methodologies to enhance learning. EC support has assisted where partner countries have given priority to creating minimum quality conditions for hard-to-reach children.

**Overall, even though some EC support focusing on enhancing quality was given, in only a few cases has this contributed to system-wide quality improvements.** Where the EC has used the NGO channels, improvements can be noted, but these are not systemic and nation-wide.

*Alarming literacy and numeracy acquisition levels reiterate the demand for EC support to quality improvement.*

Regarding basic education skills, analysis showed that the focus of EC support is on out-of-school illiterates, on early school leavers prone to relapse into illiteracy, and especially on strengthening low-quality education. The EC has used government and non-state actors, including NGOs, as channels of support to programmes bringing out-of-school children into school.

However, **EC support to quality improvement has not so far enhanced basic literacy and numeracy skills**, but concentrates on strengthening the capacity of education systems, including NFE provisions, to provide young people with an adequate package of competencies for further education, and on preventing relapse into illiteracy. In addition to that, the EC selectively provided support to basic education literacy acquisition through NGOs, especially in *Asia*.

**All efforts have not so far yielded improved learning achievements in almost all partner countries studied**, with data on learning achievements and school-leaving examination results depicting a gloomy picture of consolidation or even further deterioration during the period under evaluation.

A **quality crisis** is confirmed by the fact that targets related to learning achievements are often not met where included in SBS and GBS indicators for flexible tranche release. Setting such indicators, which seems increasingly to be happening in *ACP* countries since the start of EDF 10, is a good step forward. However, linked to these indicators, countries should be provided with guidelines and tools to adjust and improve the situation. This is especially the case with GBS where, given partner country ownership, the EC is not in a position to steer funding to programmes directly relevant to enhancing learning. SBS is very likely to be more appropriate for triggering and supporting necessary reforms.

The results indicate that **the yield on EC investments to enable all children to enrol and complete basic education of sufficient quality may be seriously jeopardised unless high priority is given to improving quality of learning.**

***EC support through new aid modalities assisted partner countries in improving conditions for effective education service delivery.***

EC support, particularly in its willingness to move to budget support in education, has played a catalytic role in partner countries sustaining – and, in some cases, accelerating – their efforts towards putting in place systems and tools that will help to improve education sector service delivery and resourcing. Education strategy frameworks and procedures have been established in the majority of partner countries, and the operationally more demanding Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), as results-based budgeting tools, have been established by a smaller group.

**The EC has helped to establish pro-poor and gender-responsive policy frameworks** favouring primary, lower secondary and non-formal education and supporting measures for education governance and institutional and financing reform. The EC contributed financing to ensure appropriate education sector allocations in line with the costed PRSPs. Capacity development support is intended to help partner governments fulfil competency requirements of education staff, and hence to help those governments to accommodate targets for tranche release. Efforts are being made to arrive at appropriate linkages with broader nation-wide reforms, but their effectiveness depends often on the strength of national leadership support for education.

Funding the education sector at the minimum benchmark level of at least 3% of GDP<sup>6</sup>, as referred to by GMR 2010, is achieved by most countries, again with EC budgetary assistance. **Delivery of education services was found to have been improved where reform efforts were integrated into a wider governance reform agenda in the partner country.** There is, within EC support, more emphasis on decentralisation and public finance management reform, assisting in creating favourable conditions under which EC budget support – be it SBS or GBS – could translate into actual improvements in service delivery in the schools.

With regard to **capacity development, the EC has often been successful in helping partner countries to establish or improve their Management Information Systems for the education sector.** However, where EC support was going beyond the Ministry responsible for Education, enhancing linkages with the Ministry of Finance and Interior Affairs, significant challenges were encountered. It was found that GBS is assisting partner governments to meet budgetary requirements that stem from the enrolment increase in *Sub-Saharan Africa*. Even though this support seems to be essential for system survival, it does not in itself enhance system delivery. **GBS, combined with EC TA when specifically demanded through a project modality, might address some constraints inherent to the GBS modality in assisting partner governments to improve service delivery – that is, when GBS is used as a stand-alone modality without additional TA support.** SBS, based on eligibility criteria, and sometimes in combination with EC TA through a project modality, appears to have assisted governments to meet the system transformation required for complying with the triggers and indicators.

Overall, EC support has impacted on service delivery through providing resources, supporting the design, implementation and monitoring of pro-poor education systems, and through increasing transparency and accountability.

***Increasing transparency and accountability of education sector service delivery remains a challenge for EC support.***

The importance of the transparency and accountability agenda, stressed in Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and reflected in the high Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of most countries analysed, indicates a strong perception of proneness to corruption. The EC's contribution to the definition of roles between government stakeholders on issues of accountability and transparency remained rather limited, as was also the case with regard to staff competencies for accountability in the education sector. However, the EC has contributed to decreasing fiduciary risk through supporting improved control systems, such as internal and external auditing, which are part of standard systems required both for SBS and GBS. Through EC co-financing, Public Expenditure Reviews (PERs) and Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) have been implemented, revealing that leakages, misuse of funds and teacher absenteeism are frequently occurring problems. **The EC has played a noteworthy role in some countries in helping to strengthen the role of non-state actors (NSAs) in education sector policy dialogue.** However, a systematic EC-NSA interface in policy dialogue and critical monitoring could be further enhanced. The EC plays a key role in periodic joint sector reviews, including budget reviews.

**EC support for decentralisation of education sector management processes has had a mixture of successes and difficulties.** In particular, the creation of School Management Committees at local level has been enhanced by EC support linked to local-level democracy, but has had mixed results.

<sup>6</sup> The EFA FTI Secretariat suggests a benchmark between 2.8% and 3.6% (see: EFA FTI Secretariat (2006) Guidelines for the Appraisal of the Primary Education Component of an Education Sector Plan. March 2006).

Moreover, there appears to be a limited proportion of education budget that is fully managed at the decentralised level, with only a few countries having moved in that direction.

**Delays in aid disbursement frequently occur** – the main reasons being non-compliance with triggers and indicators (GBS and SBS), often as a result of the complexity of EC procedural rules and the weak capacity of national staff. Efforts have increasingly been made by the EC to align its support to partner countries' fiscal cycles, but predictability risks (e.g. political changes, lack of predictability in the MTEF) are detrimental to alignment. Alignment of EC funding to partner country's fiscal has thus been frequently undermined by failure to comply with indicators essential for disbursements to be released, thus ultimately reducing predictability of financing.

*The EC has been an active player in co-ordination related to the education sector, regularly taking a leading role, and thus providing considerable added value.*

The EC's role can be characterised as frequently being more significant in those countries that are using SBS, or in countries that are in the process of introducing SBS or a more systematic sector approach.

**Different co-ordination mechanisms are in place at various levels** (political, technical / administrative) and different times in the programme cycle, and between the various stakeholders. Sector working groups and Joint Review Missions seem to be the most relevant ways to improve co-ordination at this level. Joint activities at the planning level also appear to enhance co-ordination.

It seems crucial that partner governments increasingly lead aid co-ordination activities, and it has been found that **SBS has considerable potential at sectoral level to strengthen effective co-ordination not only with the government, but also among donors**. Overall, it has to be recognised that **a key area of EC added value lies in promoting better and more efficient co-ordination and relevant mechanisms among donors, and especially MS**. This is sometimes achieved by actively supporting the alignment of resources.

While EC support to FTI increased towards the end of the period under evaluation, co-ordination, at country level, between support provided by the FTI and EC support is very limited. With regard to channelling through MDTFs with Development Banks, the quality of co-ordination can be rated as rather good, and complementarity is usually achieved. **FTI or MDTFs seem capable of facilitating the move towards EC sector support where a comprehensive approach is lacking, or where only limited co-ordination mechanisms exist. Yet, overall, FTI or MDTFs do not seem to have played a significant role in preparing for a rapid shift towards wider EC support to the sector.**

*The EC has based its choice of aid modalities on international best practices supported mostly by robust analytical effort, thus ensuring high efficiency. Challenges still persist in structuring engagements in fragile countries and in contexts with poor governance quality.*

**In its support to the education sector, the EC has generally used aid modalities and channels that were adjusted to the local contexts and followed international best practices. Its aspiration of aligning as closely as possible to its domestic partners is outstanding and probably unmatched**, but seldom leads to uncritical adoption of budget support, if conditions are not conducive. The leading position in alignment of aid modalities is thus still backed up by analytical underpinnings. **Where feasible, the EC has mostly opted for SBS or GBS, which has enabled it to work in partnership with domestic stakeholders on addressing issues related to access, equity and policy-based resource allocation**. The FTI, with strong backing from the EC, has played an important role in raising awareness and funds, and improving donor co-ordination. These are all important achievements. However, the compact between donors and partner countries that FTI was supposed to build upon and strengthen has not materialised to any significant extent; **FTI is still more of a donor collaboration than a genuine partnership**.

There are still **instances where the EC is not using government systems**. In non-fragile states, full alignment can be undermined if there are significant deviations between the policies of the local partner and those promoted by the EC, and also by poor governance quality. The option has often been to use NGOs as alternative channels for mainstream education and pilots. The results, efficiency and effectiveness have often been impressive and have delivered on reducing gender disparities, enhancing learning outcomes and improving access, not least in *South Asia*. However, there are challenges related to the use of non-state education providers – accreditation and compatibility for transition being among the major ones. In cases where frontline service delivery is corroded by weak governance, EUDs should probably have considered using non-state channels when the government is unable or unwilling to address widespread failures. Effectively addressing governance failures at service delivery level is probably the single biggest omission in the EC and EUD analytical work that underpins the aid modality choices. In this context, it is important to note that the **EDF offers substantial flexibility in**

combining different approaches and instruments, including the strategic use of NSAs. However, it will also be important to ensure government ownership and a high degree of alignment.

The EC's aid modality choice has been highly relevant. The key challenge is to structure the engagement in a fragile context and where governance quality is eroded. "Shadow alignment"<sup>7</sup> may be an option that could be pursued. In countries with eroded governance quality, the challenge is to avoid reinforcing the status quo and instead galvanise support for change.

### Main conclusions

The main conclusions can be divided into three clusters, as presented in the following table:

| Summary of conclusions per cluster |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Policy focus and achievements      | <p>The EC has managed well to adapt its policy framework for supporting education in partner countries, in a way that allows for meeting existing and emerging needs. It has also successfully <b>increased the alignment of its support to education</b> with partner country policies and priorities. However, while direct and indirect EC support to education have both increased over time, the <b>relative share of direct support to education has decreased when compared to other sectors</b>. The evaluation team found evidence of a differentiation between LDCs in <i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>, increasingly receiving EC support through GBS, and countries that score quite high on the HDI, which tend to receive EC support through sector support and SBS.</p> <p>In terms of education-related results and impacts, <b>the EC has effectively assisted partner countries in accommodating an enrolment expansion</b>, thus enhancing their capacity to meet MDGs. However, <i>LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states</i> lag behind.</p> <p><b>Much remains to be done to bring quality of education to a minimum acceptable level for all pupils, and learning achievements remain in crisis.</b> The EC has already made steps in this direction. <b>From the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF onward, a clear shift is seen in SBS and GBS education-related indicators for flexible tranche release.</b> While earlier frameworks emphasised outcome indicators related to access, the new ones <b>include quality indicators</b>, such as outcome indicators related to learning achievements.</p> <p><b>EC support focused on the primary level</b>, with only a small share of overall support providing direct assistance to secondary education – mostly in medium human development countries. The EC has contributed to secondary school construction, but mainly in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and in fragile states. It has become clear that secondary education systems in most countries are not ready to accommodate students everywhere.</p> <p>Increasingly, countries adopt the concept of elementary education, covering primary and lower-secondary education. Nevertheless, education sector analysis largely concentrates on primary education, and thus little insight is available either on resource requirements (fiscal, staff and physical) or on the potential for secondary education to overcome the divide between urban and rural areas.</p> |

<sup>7</sup> Shadow alignment is a state-avoiding approach, but one that is "future-proof", facilitating eventual alignment when conditions permit. It does not give an authority or government control over resources, but does use structures, institutions or systems that are parallel to, but compatible with, existing or potential organisation of the state. It aims to avoid creating a diversionary institutional legacy that can undermine or impede the development of a more accountable and legitimate future relationship between the people and their governments. The key to shadow "systems" alignment is to ensure system compatibility. Shadow alignment is useful in situations where there is a lack of, competing or multiple systems, where there are concerns about legitimising a particular government or authority, or where there are serious concerns about the intentions of the authorities towards their own population. For more information see e.g. WHO High-Level Forum on the Health MDGs (2004): Achieving the Health Millennium Development Goals in Fragile States.

| <i>Summary of conclusions per cluster</i>  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Service delivery/Government take-up</i> | <p>With regard to service delivery and government take-up, it can be concluded that reforms in the education sector have a higher chance of succeeding if they are linked with, and integrated into, reform efforts outside of education – such as Public Finance Management (PFM), decentralisation and civil service reform – that also can lead to “spill-over” of benefits into the education sector.</p> <p>Moreover, the EC’s <b>shift to sectoral and general budget support has acted as a trigger for EC partner countries to set up their education sector resource management systems</b>, including sector strategies, policy frameworks and Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) or other tools making sector planning and budgeting more predictable. However, experience from the sample countries shows that the mere existence of an MTEF or comparable schemes does not guarantee its actual significance in budgeting or activity planning. In this context, it has been noted that <b>EC capacity development support</b> geared towards improving the delivery of educational services, including at decentralised levels, <b>is often impeded by the lack of adequate resources and realistic timetables</b>. Resultant operational pressures can have adverse effects on the degree of ownership that the partner government feels it has of the capacity development agenda. <b>Support to NSAs, aimed at strengthening their monitoring role, can provide value added to EC education support.</b></p>  |
| <i>Managing aid modalities</i>             | <p>With regard to the issue of managing aid modalities, it can be concluded that the <b>introduction of GBS and SBS</b> provides great potential for increased co-ordination and policy dialogue on education-related issues. However, this means that a stronger capacity is also required at EUD level to deal with the new elements of these types of aid. The introduction of these modalities has <b>deepened the dialogue on systemic issues</b>, but challenges still remain in defining indicators and triggers that can provide appropriate structure to the dialogue.</p> <p>At the preparatory phase of EC support, the selection of aid modalities is increasingly anchored in robust analysis of country context. It is evident (and, in the evaluation team’s view, positive) that the <b>EC has a consistent ambition to align as much as possible</b>, but this is not resulting in mechanistic default to always provide assistance in the form of, for example, GBS. However, the <b>choice of aid modality in fragile states is still a challenge</b>, both for the EC and for other development partners.</p> <p>Finally, the <b>EC should continue supporting the recent reforms of FTI, given that, in the past, FTI has not consistently delivered on its compact and alignment aspirations</b>. The compact between donors and partner countries that FTI was supposed to build upon and strengthen has not materialised to any significant extent; FTI is still more of a donor collaboration than a genuine partnership. In terms of promoting alignment, FTI has also been less ambitious than other development partners, not least the EC. This is partly due to FTI’s close association with the World Bank in terms of governance, supervision and insistence on using the Bank’s procedures.</p> |

### Main recommendations

The main recommendations can be clustered along the same lines as the conclusions on which they are based, as presented in the following table:

| <i>Summary of recommendations per cluster</i> |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Policy focus and achievements</i>          | <p>Given the dire funding situation with regard to meeting EFA and MDG goals related to education, the <b>EC may want to increase its overall funding towards the education sector, possibly by reconsidering its overall priorities in terms of the share of development aid allotted to the various sectors</b>. While it is outside the scope of this evaluation to make a judgment on which sectors need greater support, it is clear that there is a great need in education that is currently not being met by the international community. The EC has made very clear commitments to addressing the goals raised above.</p> |

| <i>Summary of recommendations per cluster</i> |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Service delivery/Government take-up</i>    | <p>With a view to increasing the efficiency of aid delivery, it is recommended that EC education sector support is re-targeted. The following <b>strategic options for differential targeting should be considered</b>: 1. Further differentiate between support to LDCs, fragile states and medium-growth economies, in terms of resource packages and modalities; 2. Increase overall share of education sector support to LDCs in sub-Saharan Africa (the main modality mix could be GBS with education indicators for flexible tranche release, complemented by SBS); 3. Gradually, within SWAp, shift resource share from primary education to secondary (and VET); 4. Within SBS, complement the existing support with a new approach focusing on pro-poor quality-driven system reform (approaches to focusing EC support would be considered to ensure that it triggers quality improvements).</p> <p>With a view to further <b>enhancing quality aspects</b> in EC support, there is a need to assess the usefulness of examination results, internal efficiency and quality improvement strategies as indicators for education-related variable tranche release in GBS and SBS, as well as a need to develop approaches to enhance these as triggers for quality improvement. Criteria for SBS eligibility could include partner government commitment to quality-enhancing reform and capacity to design and implement agendas for ensuring education of minimum acceptable quality for all of its pupils.</p> <p>With regard to <b>service delivery</b>, it is recommended that efforts to promote overall governance reform are integrated into support to education sector reforms, particularly including decentralisation and PFM reform. Moreover, support efforts to work out the operational details of MTEFs should be stepped up in countries that are struggling to make these tools work appropriately, orienting efforts solely towards the specific persistent challenges in those countries.</p> <p>In the context of <b>co-ordination, harmonisation and alignment</b>, an important lesson emerging is that there is often not enough leadership by national authorities. In order for the government to better assume a leading role in the co-ordination of the development activities at sectoral level, additional efforts should be made with the aim of improving the capacity of the partner government.</p> |
| <i>Managing aid modalities</i>                | <p>With regard to improving the management of the full spectrum of aid modalities, it is recommended to <b>further build EC capacities to engage and intervene in enlarged multi-actor dialogue, related to the education sector</b>. This could be achieved through an increase in, and a better planning of, the available resources and the further development of staff competence. Furthermore, it is suggested that efforts aimed at improving the analytical basis for the choice of the aid modality should be increased, taking into account country needs and the state of the education sector. This is especially relevant within a fragile context, and where indicators are divergent. The global ambition to align as closely as possible should be maintained.</p> <p>The <b>EC should continue to use GBS and SBS as an entry point for policy dialogue</b>, but should enhance efforts aimed at shaping indicators, to provide structures, incentives and guidance that are both ambitious and yet realistically achievable. Lessons should be learnt in this context from successful GBS/SBS operations, thus reducing the “learning curve” when introducing SBS and GBS.</p> <p>At the same time, <b>it is important to advocate and provide support to the use of NSAs in fragile contexts</b> – as well as their general watchdog role in the education sector – to further increase transparency and accountability in the sector.</p> <p>The FTI’s goal and ambitions remain relevant and worthy of EC support. However, its governance, implementation practices and accountability structures and orientations are currently undergoing adjustments and reforms. It is recommended that the <b>EC engages with FTI and continues its support to these reforms</b>, at both HQ and country levels, to promote better alignment and mutual accountability. While the EC is legally obliged to use the World Bank as a supervisor, the EC should encourage the Bank to accelerate efforts initiated after the period under evaluation and aimed at improving alignment.</p>  |



# 1 Introduction

The thematic global evaluation of European Commission (EC) support to the education sector in partner countries (including basic and secondary education) is part of the 2007 evaluation programme approved by the External Relations Commissioners and commissioned by the Joint Evaluation Unit common to the European Commission's Directorates General (DG) Development, External Relations and the EuropeAid Co-operation Office (also referred to respectively as DG RELEX, DEV and AIDCO). The evaluation was implemented between May 2009 and October 2010.

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR, see Annex 12), *“the purpose of the evaluation is to assess to what extent the Commission assistance has been relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable in providing the expected impacts in the education sector. It should also assess the co-ordination and complementarity with other donors and actors, the coherence with the relevant EC policies and partner Governments' priorities and activities as well as with international legal commitments in education.”*

The ToR specify the following main issues related to the scope of the evaluation:

- All the aspects of **EC support to basic and secondary education** in partner countries fall within the scope of this evaluation. On the other hand, support to vocational training activities and co-operation in higher education are not to be covered. These themes are to be evaluated separately in 2008 and 2010, as approved in the multi-annual evaluation work programme.
- The evaluation should cover **activities that fall within the relevant sub-sectors**, financed from thematic and geographical budget lines/instruments, European Development Fund (EDF) and other financial instruments.
- **All regions where EC co-operation is implemented** (with the exception of regions and countries under the mandate of DG Enlargement) are included in the scope of this evaluation.
- The evaluation shall cover **aid implementation over the period 2000-07**. To provide relevant and forward-looking recommendations, the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF programming should also be seriously looked into, so that all its implications on education in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) countries are examined.

According to the ToR, the evaluation shall lead to conclusions based on objective, credible, reliable and valid findings, and provide the EC with a set of operational and useful recommendations. Moreover, the evaluation should come to a general overall judgment on the extent to which EC policies, strategies and sector programmes, including Sector Budget Support (SBS) and General Budget Support (GBS), have contributed to the achievement of the objectives and intended impacts, based on the answers to the agreed evaluation questions.

In addition, the ToR emphasise the forward-looking aspect of the evaluation, implying that it should take into account the most recent policy and programming decisions, and that it should provide lessons and recommendations for continued support to the education sector within the present context and relevant political commitments.

It should be noted that a variety of definitions exists that outline basic terms related to the different facets of support to education. This evaluation uses the definitions produced by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD/DAC) and those provided in COM(2002) 116 on *“Education and training in the context of the fight against poverty in developing countries”*. Annex 14 outlines them.

## 1.1 Synthesis of the European Commission's strategy and programmes<sup>8</sup>

At the global level, international education policy has been driven by the 'Education for All' Initiative (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3, which set targets for universal complete primary education and for gender equality. Follow-up to the Millennium Declaration set the international context for additional funding and for processes of national planning, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process and national education planning. Given the rapidly evolving international context during the period under evaluation, major EC policy documents that are highly relevant for the education sector have come into effect. Landmark documents include:

- Communication on *“European Community's Development Policy”*, COM(2000) 212;

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that, considering that the period under evaluation is 2000-07, it is evident that the practical impact on the ground of the policies and guidelines published in 2006 or later will be rather limited. However, as this evaluation also includes a forward-looking aspect, these policies are highly relevant in the context of devising operational and useful recommendations, as required by the TOR.

- Communication on “*Education and training in the context of the fight against poverty in developing countries*”, COM (2002)116;
- The Council Resolution on “*Education and poverty*” (Resolution EC 8958/02);
- “*The European Consensus on Development: Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of Governments of the Member States meeting with the Council, the European parliament and the Commission*”; Official Journal C 46(2006);
- Regulation 1905/2006 establishing a financing instrument for development co-operation;
- Investing in People: Strategy Paper for the Thematic Programme 2007-2013.

### 1.1.1 Overview on major policy statements

The European Commission’s policy and approach to education and training is firmly anchored in the overall *Development Policy of the EC*, which has poverty reduction as the core objective (COM 212, April 26, 2000). The EC specifically identifies the social sectors, including education, as one of six priority areas for development assistance. In addition, renewed focus on education is seen as a key precondition for many developing countries to reach the MDGs, which include the achievement of universal primary education as the second goal.

The EC already emphasised the importance of education and training in its development co-operation policy in the *Development Council Resolution on Education and Training* of 1994, which gives clear priority to basic education and support to non-formal education, expressing commitment to the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on EFA I. The foundation for European Union (EU) development co-operation related to primary and basic education is the international EFA reiterated in 2000 in Dakar. Moreover, the EC is firmly committed to assisting developing countries to reach the MDGs, including the achievement of universal primary education by 2015.

The key policy document setting out the EC’s approach towards support to education is the *Communication on Education and Training in the Context of Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries* (2002). This policy was also reiterated in 2002 by the Council Resolution on “*Education and Poverty*” (Resolution EC 8958/02). It was re-emphasised in the 2005 “*European Consensus on Development*”, and complemented by the subsequent financial instruments and thematic policy documents based on them.

The 2002 Communication references and reiterates the EFA and MDG commitments to “*basic education, in particular to primary education and teacher training*”<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, it identifies the importance of meeting national and international commitments to increasing budgets and pro-poor targeting, and highlights the shortfall of Member States’ Official Development Aid (ODA) against their commitments. The Communication identifies (Basic) Education for All as the foundation for an educated society, and as an essential precondition and driver for economic competitiveness and growth, for poverty eradication, and for social development and governance. It also notes that education and training can have a significantly positive impact on health, social and political participation, and equal opportunities. It further stresses that education can facilitate a more equal distribution of income and promote good governance by strengthening demand for accountability. Moreover, the Communication emphasises the need for sector support to be increasingly co-ordinated with developing countries’ policies and complementary with other donors.

**Overall policy thrusts** of the Communication are the following:

- Total resources for education and training must be **increased**, in particular for the **poorest** countries and population groups;
- The **recurrent expenditure** of “education” budgets can be covered by the EC, subject to certain conditions;
- Developing countries will have to improve the efficiency and **quality** of their education systems;
- They will have to improve access to primary education by working towards making it **compulsory and free**;
- **Equality** between the sexes is essential;
- The links between **HIV/Aids** and education should be taken into account in education programmes;

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<sup>9</sup> It also prioritises work-related training and higher education at regional levels, and makes a prescient plea that education “has to be developed in a balanced way to ensure that systems produce students at different levels, and that their qualifications are in keeping with labour market demand”.

- Account should be taken of education issues in conflict prevention and in conflict and post-conflict periods in order to **protect children**, particularly girls.

In 2006, the Financial Regulation (1905/2006) “Establishing the financial instruments for development co-operation” established the financial instruments for 2007 and onward. It again reaffirms what was envisaged by the previous major policy documents regarding education, the co-operation policy now:

1. giving priority in primary education to achieving quality primary education followed by vocational training, and to reducing inequalities in terms of access to education; promoting compulsory and free education up to the age of 15 to combat all forms of child labour;
2. aiming at achieving universal primary education by 2015, and at eliminating gender disparity in education;
3. promoting vocational training, higher education, lifelong learning, cultural, scientific and technological co-operation, academic and cultural exchanges, as well as enhancing mutual understanding between partner countries and regions and the Community.

The Regulation also stresses the importance of social cohesion as a priority policy, the combating of all forms of group-based discrimination (gender, children, indigenous people, etc.), and the overarching importance of the MDGs for poverty reduction.

In addition, the Regulation prepares the ground for a number of thematic programmes, including “Investing in People”<sup>10</sup>. The Regulation specifies that thematic programmes “shall be to support actions in areas which directly affect people’s living standards and wellbeing defined below and focusing on the poorest and least developed countries and the most disadvantaged sections of the population, and includes a pillar (one out of four) on education, namely “Education, Knowledge and Skills”.

### 1.1.2 Regional policy specificities

This evaluation focuses on the global level of EC support to basic and secondary education, which is described in the aforementioned documents and depicted in the impact diagrams (see Annex 20). Given the fact that there exist various financing instruments for support to different regions, it is evident that there also exist regional policies focusing on co-operation. Based on a review of the main regional policy documents, these are the main regional specificities to be highlighted:

Table 1: Major education-related regional specificities of EC policies

| Region                   | Main issues   |
|--------------------------|---|
| ACP                      | Article 25 of the Cotonou Agreement: “ <b>Sectoral policies and reforms</b> which improve <b>the coverage, quality of and access to basic social infrastructure and services</b> and take account of local needs and specific demands of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, thus <b>reducing the inequalities of access to these services.</b> ”                  |
| Asia                     | Considerable support to <b>higher education</b> , which is not part of the scope of this evaluation. The Commission’s Regional Strategy Paper for EU-Asia Co-operation (2007-13) has identified higher education and support to research institutes as two key priorities.  |
| Latin America            | In the 2002-06 regional strategy document (2002), no specific mention is made with regard to the support to primary or secondary education. The focus was rather on the support to <b>higher education</b> . However, regulation 1905/2006 identifies improvement of basic services, including health and education, as priorities for some Latin American countries. |
| ENP-Tacis <sup>11</sup>  | The <i>TACIS Regulation</i> 99/2000 seeks human resource development through education and training, with detailed action areas in support of institutional, legal and administrative reforms. The main focus was on <b>vocational and higher education</b> .<br>The Indicative Programme 2005-06 has <b>no mention of primary or secondary education per se</b> .    |
| ENP - MEDA <sup>12</sup> | The MEDA Strategy Paper 2002-06 stresses <b>education for employment</b> and, in general, prioritised co-operation and development in <b>vocational and higher sub-sectors</b> , and the need to encourage regional approaches.   |

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that such a programme “is subsidiary to programmes referred to in Articles 5 to 10 and shall encompass a specific area of activity of interest to a group of partner countries not determined by geography, or co-operation activities addressed to various regions or groups of partner countries, or an international operation that is not geographically specific.” Thus, per se, the aims of this programme do not represent “overall EC policy” e.g. related to education, but just complement such a policy under specific conditions, and hence is not represented in the impact diagram below.

<sup>11</sup> European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP); Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)

<sup>12</sup> Mediterranean Basin and Middle-East group of nations (MEDA)

### 1.1.3 Cross-cutting issues

A number of policy trends and commitments have an impact on the EC's support to the education sector, and thus have to be considered when analysing such support. Among these are the following cross-cutting issues – raised in the 2005 European Consensus – that are to be mainstreamed in all development work: human rights, including gender equality, and democracy; good governance; the rights of children and indigenous peoples; environmental sustainability; and combating HIV/Aids. Each issue has implications of potential action with regard to the education sector. Annex 19 further specifies EC positions and policies in that regard.

## 1.2 Intervention logic

Based on further analysis of the above policy documents, the intervention logic of the EC support to basic and secondary education has been reconstructed. It is reflected in policy impact diagrams for the period 2000-07 (see Annex 20)<sup>13</sup>. The developed diagrams depict the **policy context** – international and of partner countries, some major strategic elements of EC policy as defined in the 2002 Communication, and the (intended) effects of the interventions financed in terms of **outputs, results, intermediate impacts and global impacts**.

Four major strands of EC policy in support of basic and secondary were identified by the evaluation team, based on the relevant policy documents:

- **Access to education and equity:** The core elements of this strand relate to the inclusiveness of the education system and to achieving quality education at primary and secondary levels. At the lower levels of the cause-effect chain, the two intermediate impacts – *“Inclusiveness of the education system improved”*, and *“Basic education skills and literacy improved”* – are related to a set of three results: 1) Access to primary and basic education for all expanded (MDG2); 2) Free and compulsory education for all enhanced (EFA2); 3) Education protected and restored in fragile states, in conflict and post-conflict countries, and in transition countries.
- **Quality of education:** Improving the quality of primary education, leading to better learning outcomes, is essential to increase the transition rate to subsequent levels of education and to lay the foundation for the delivery of more qualified and employable graduates. It is only through improving quality that a country's investments in primary education can yield a good return in terms of a literate and skilled population, which ultimately contributes to poverty alleviation. Quality issues have thus been placed into three main groups of results: qualifications and competencies of teachers; school leadership and management; and quality of curricula and materials.
- **Policy framework, sector management and sector finance:** This strand and the one on *“accountability and transparency”* are closely interrelated. Both strands relate to two major issues: the production of more qualified and employable graduates, underpinning the fact that policy frameworks and financial resources are to support service delivery related to access, equity and quality; and the effective and decentralised pro-poor service delivery. Achieving the three following key results should ultimately contribute to an improved policy framework, sector management and finance: 1) Increased pro-poor funding and allocation to basic education needs; 2) The existence of an improved policy, legislative and financial framework and a sound sector policy framework; 3) Strengthened sector management (processes), including resource allocation and performance measurement. Moreover, improving donor co-ordination and harmonisation and resource allocation is considered an important ingredient in the setting up and reform of policy frameworks, and in operational sector management and finance.
- **Accountability and transparency:** Increasing accountability and transparency would, in addition to the aforementioned co-ordination, require that civil society decision-making processes and accountability requirements are adequately addressed. Growing pressures on public resources within donor countries, plus the more stringent conditions for the provision of aid and a stronger emphasis on partner government ownership, have made accountability and transparency key issues in education sector support. Moreover, in partner countries, educators, parents, community members, and civil society as a whole demand that performance and resources allocated are made transparent. Decentralisation and devolution of funding to lower levels of administration and schools is further fostering the need for transparency and accountability. In this regard, EC support would have to aim at strengthening the technical and financial planning, management and accountability reporting procedures, including auditing in the ministry and decentralised administrations.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Evaluation methodology for EC external assistance, 2006:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/methodology/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/methodology/index_en.htm)

Successful implementation of EC support along these strands should ultimately contribute to a set of four lower-level global impacts:

- Equity enhanced among society, and rights protected;
- Broad-based, high-productivity economic growth;
- Improved health (including HIV/Aids) status;
- Good governance.

Together, these should ultimately lead to the intended global impacts – that is, poverty reduction, sustainable economic and social development, and integration in the world economy. These objectives are in line with Article 177 of the Treaty and are referred to in all major policy documents.

### **1.3 Context of EC support to education: International policy framework for basic and secondary education – and how the EC supports it**

As outlined above, international education policy at the global level has developed rapidly over the last decade. The major driving processes, to which the EC either is a signatory or has subscribed (see Annex 19 for further details), include the following:

#### **1.3.1 Comprehensive policy framework**

##### **1.3.1.1 Poverty Reduction Strategies**

The PRS initiative, introduced in World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) operations in 1999, has also become a key element in the international development aid architecture<sup>14</sup>. It requires a comprehensive country-based strategy for poverty reduction, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The aim is that these strategies must be genuinely country-owned and must reflect the outcome of an open participatory process involving governments, civil society and relevant international institutions and donors. PRS seeks to link and bridge national public actions and external support with development outcomes required to meet MDGs. Education is normally an element covered by a PRSP.

##### **1.3.1.2 Aid effectiveness: New commitments and aid modalities**

After a lot of criticism from inside and outside, the international development aid system has witnessed a number of initiatives and changes, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of aid. These efforts have occurred to a large extent during the evaluated period, and thus provide important context to the analysis done. The desire to make aid more effective has led to a number of high-level policy commitments being made, and new aid modalities – such as budget support – having emerged.

In terms of policy commitments, the international efforts for improving aid-effectiveness include the Monterey accord to increase and assure financial support and the series of aid-effectiveness commitments leading to the Rome (OECD, 2003) and Paris (OECD, 2005) Declarations, to establish the principles of **ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results-based management (RBM) and mutual accountability** in development partnership.

In many countries, the education sector and health sector have been at the forefront of these initiatives. Both are service delivery sectors with big budgets and complex dependencies; both are sectors in which there are, usually, many interested development partners, with a tradition of fragmented support. Policy for support to education since 2000 has sought to improve aid effectiveness and the related education-specific challenges. For example, EFA-FTI has developed to incorporate detailed planning, financing and monitoring procedures (see section 1.3.2.3):

Since 2000, the EC has become a proponent and leading actor in joint approaches towards increasing resources and improving the processes to deliver development assistance, which has accelerated over recent years. Moreover, the EC (with some of the Member States) is seen as a major player in the implementation of the “Paris Agenda”. In addition, the EU has committed to untying aid in its own operations<sup>15</sup> and encourages Member States to do the same.

In terms of the modalities to achieve the aims of the aid effectiveness agenda in the education sector, a lot has happened over the last 15 years. The Paris Declaration includes 12 progress indicators, many of which encourage the use of budget support and of partner country public financial management systems.

<sup>14</sup> <http://go.worldbank.org/OA7M2IKHL0>.

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 “establishing a financing instrument for development co-operation”, paragraph 24: “*Untying aid in line with best practices of the OECD/DAC is a key factor in adding value to aid and in building local capacity.*”

The Communication on “*Education and training in the context of the fight against poverty in developing countries*” (COM 2002-116) already favours macro-economic and budget support based on a sectoral approach to provide a framework for the activities in this field, and has already allocated priority status to macro-economic and budget support. Moreover, the EC has strongly committed itself to (Sub-sector, Sector or General) Budget Support<sup>16</sup> as the financial modality that offers the potential to move towards country ownership, alignment and accountability, to reduce transaction costs, and to improve harmonisation and coherence with other partners. The Regulation “*Establishing a financing instrument*” (1905/2006) further elaborates on budget support as one of the three financing modalities. Budget support is seen as being a feasible modality if the partner country’s management of public spending is sufficiently transparent, and where it has put in place properly formulated sectoral or macro-economic policies.

Since then, and especially for the ACP countries (i.e. for the regional level), efforts towards higher predictability have continued. The Technical Discussion Paper on an **MDG Contract** (2007) and the document “*The MDG Contract – An approach for longer-term and more predictable General Budget Support*” (2008) state that the EC, in line with international commitments and Council Conclusions, intends to provide more long-term and predictable general budget support, whenever deemed possible, during the implementation of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF<sup>17</sup>. It is part of the EC’s response to international commitments to provide more predictable assistance to developing countries.

**Box 1: Main features of the MDG contract**

The MDG Contract would have the following key features:

- 6 year commitment of funds for the full 6 years of EDF 10;
- Base component of at least 70% of the total commitment, which will be disbursed subject to there being no unambiguous breach in eligibility conditions for GBS, or in the essential and fundamental elements of co-operation;
- Variable performance component of up to 30%, which would comprise two elements:
  - o MDG-based tranche: At least 15% of the total commitment would be used specifically to reward performance against MDG-related outcome indicators (results, notably in health, education and water) and Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms following a mid-contract review of progress against those indicators. Performance would continue to be monitored annually, but any possible financial adjustment would be deferred to the second half of the programme.
  - o Annual Performance Tranche: In case of specific and significant concerns about performance with respect to implementation of the PRSP, performance monitoring (notably data availability), progress with PFM improvements, and macroeconomic stabilisation, up to 15% of the annual allocation could be withheld.
- Eligible countries would be those with GBS programmed under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, that have a successful track record in implementing budget support, show a commitment to monitoring and achieving the MDGs and to improving domestic accountability for budgetary resources, and have active donor co-ordination mechanisms to support performance review and dialogue.

Source: DG Development website

In the framework of the evaluation, issues related to the MDG Contract will mainly be relevant when forward looking – that is, when drawing conclusions and drafting recommendations.

### 1.3.2 Education policy framework

#### 1.3.2.1 Education for All (EFA)

During the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, where the Dakar Framework for Action was adopted, participants (including the EC) reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by 2015. The international community collectively committed itself to reaching six goals by 2015 covering most levels of education – from early childhood care to secondary education and also adult literacy. The six EFA goals are:

- Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education;

<sup>16</sup> See “EuropeAid (2007): Guidelines on the Programming, Design & Management of General Budget Support”. The document adopted the following definition: “*Budget support is the transfer of financial resources of an external financing agency (i.e. the EC) to the National Treasury of a partner country, following the respect by the latter of agreed conditions for payment. The financial resources thus received are part of the global resources of the partner country, and consequently used in accordance with the public financial management system of the partner country.*”

<sup>17</sup> In March 2009, the European Commission committed €225 million to the Government of Zambia for a six-year period (2009-14) to support the country’s efforts to improve the efficiency of its poverty-focused public programmes and to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Zambia is the first country to sign such an MDG Contract.

- Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all;
- Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults;
- Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50%;
- Goal 5: Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015;
- Goal 6: Improve the quality of education.

### 1.3.2.2 Education MDGs

The MDGs have set the policy priority for most agencies and partner countries, with their targets of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and gender equality in the formal school system dominating the discourse and action. The education MDGs are a sub-set of the EFA objectives, and their aim is: first, to give a full primary education to all boys and girls by 2015 (universal primary completion); and second, to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and for all levels of education by 2015 at the latest.

Box 2: *MDG Goals related to education*

**Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education:** Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

**Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women:** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

The 2005 target for gender equality has not been met, and the 2015 targets are also unlikely to be met in many countries. There has been no international response to the shortfall at the heart of a target-oriented policy commitment. The *de facto* response is to pursue the goals, but with implicit acceptance of the different scenarios in different countries. Both the Dakar Declaration and the MDGs propose additional support on the basis of appropriate national education planning, and make commitments to develop national capacity to do so.

### 1.3.2.3 EFA Fast-Track Initiative

Launched in 2002, the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) is a global partnership of donors, partner countries, international organisations and civil society. For low-income countries that have sound policies but insufficient resources, FTI aims to help them to accelerate progress towards quality basic education for all girls and boys. The original objectives and strategies described in the EFA-FTI Framework document of March 2004 focused on the “core EFA goal” of “*universal primary school completion (UPC), for boys and girls alike, by 2015*”. The scope of the FTI has recently been expanded to cover all EFA goals (FTI Board meeting of May 2010). All low-income countries with an approved Poverty Reduction Strategy, or equivalent, and an education sector plan or interim plan endorsed by the local donor group are eligible for support.

The FTI is a partnership that ties donors and partner countries through reciprocal obligations. Partner countries commit themselves to developing and implementing a sound and sustainable education sector plan, and to increasing domestic finance for primary education. Donors commit themselves to supporting this sector plan with increased financing, alignment and harmonisation. The FTI’s implementation rests on a highly decentralised process, led by the partner country but working closely with local donor representatives under the leadership of the in-country lead donor.

The EC has supported the FTI – politically, operationally (active involvement in the governance) and financially – since its inception. A significant contribution has been made to the Catalytic Fund (CF), a multi-donor trust fund that has been set up to provide transitional financial assistance to countries whose education sector plans have been endorsed by donors through the FTI review process, but which have difficulty mobilising additional external funding at the country level.

## 1.4 The Evaluation Questions (EQs)

Following the ToRs, and as agreed in the structuring stage, the evaluation exercise is based on a reconstructed intervention logic and a structured process of defining EQs. In the end, nine EQs have been retained (see Annex 20). These questions have been selected with a view to covering, as far as reasonably possible, the various aspects of the intervention logic, but with a sharper focus on some specific aspects. The focus has been directed at aspects that will permit provision of information and analytical material contributing to an analysis of a number of issues that become apparent from desk work done during the production of the inception report and from the inventory. For each question, Judgment Criteria and Indicators were defined. Annex 16 provides further information on these evaluation building blocks. The EQs were discussed and agreed upon with the Joint Evaluation Unit and the Reference Group.

Table 2: The Evaluation Questions

| No. | Evaluation Question   | Type                             |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | To what extent is EC support <b>aligned</b> to education development objectives in national development plans, such as PRSPs, and ensured <b>coherence</b> between EC development co-operation policies on education and other EC policies affecting education?                           | Relevance                        |
| 2.  | To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving <b>access to and equity related to basic education</b> ?  | Sector results                   |
| 3.  | To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving transition to <b>secondary level</b> (both lower and upper)?  |                                  |
| 4.  | To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving <b>quality of education</b> , at primary and secondary levels?  |                                  |
| 5.  | To what extent has EC support to education contributed to enhancing <b>basic education skills</b> , especially literacy and numeracy?   | Governance and sector management |
| 6.  | To what extent has EC support to education helped in improving <b>education system service delivery and resourcing</b> ?  |                                  |
| 7.  | To what extent has EC support to education helped to strengthen <b>transparency and accountability</b> of the management of education service delivery?   | Aid effectiveness                |
| 8.  | To what extent and how has the EC contributed to improving <b>co-ordination, complementarity and synergies</b> with Member States and other donors in the education sector, in line with the Paris Declaration?   |                                  |
| 9.  | To what extent have the various <b>aid modalities, funding channels and instruments</b> and their combinations, in particular GBS/SBS/SSP <sup>18</sup> /projects, been appropriate and contributed to improving access to, equity of, and policy-based resource allocation in education? |                                  |

The EQs can also be linked to one or several of the five DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) and/or to the visibility and value-added themes identified in the terms of reference of this evaluation. These linkages are illustrated in the following table, and further detailed in the individual EQs.

Table 3: Coverage of the evaluation criteria by the evaluation questions

| Criteria<br>Question                 | DAC criteria |               |            |        |                | EC criteria |             | Other criteria |                      |            |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|------------|
|                                      | Relevance    | Effectiveness | Efficiency | Impact | Sustainability | Coherence   | Added value | 3Cs            | Cross-cutting issues | Visibility |
| EQ1- relevance                       | ✓✓✓          | ✓             | ✓          | ✓      | ✓              | ✓✓✓         | ✓           | ✓              |                      | ✓          |
| EQ2- access                          | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        | ✓      | ✓              | ✓✓✓         | ✓✓✓         | ✓              | ✓✓✓                  | ✓          |
| EQ3- secondary                       | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        | ✓      |                | ✓✓✓         | ✓           |                | ✓✓✓                  | ✓          |
| EQ4- quality                         | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        | ✓      | ✓              | ✓✓✓         | ✓✓✓         | ✓              | ✓✓✓                  | ✓          |
| EQ5- skills                          | ✓            | ✓✓✓           | ✓          | ✓✓✓    | ✓              | ✓           | ✓           | ✓              | ✓                    | ✓          |
| EQ6- delivery                        | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        |        | ✓              | ✓✓✓         |             | ✓              |                      |            |
| EQ7- transparency                    | ✓✓✓          | ✓             | ✓          |        | ✓✓✓            | ✓✓✓         |             | ✓              |                      |            |
| EQ8- co-ordination & complementarity | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        |        |                |             | ✓           | ✓✓✓            |                      | ✓          |
| EQ9- modalities                      | ✓✓✓          | ✓✓✓           | ✓✓✓        | ✓✓✓    | ✓✓✓            | ✓           | ✓✓✓         | ✓✓✓            | ✓                    | ✓          |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| ✓✓✓ | The criterion is largely covered by the EQ   |
| ✓   | The criterion is partially covered in the EQ |

The answers to the Evaluation Questions are presented in section 3. The findings on which they are based, and the related analysis, are also set out in that chapter. Detailed findings and analysis can be found in Annex 1. Conclusions and recommendations emerging from the evaluation are then presented in section 5.

<sup>18</sup> Support to Sector Programmes (SSP), see above.

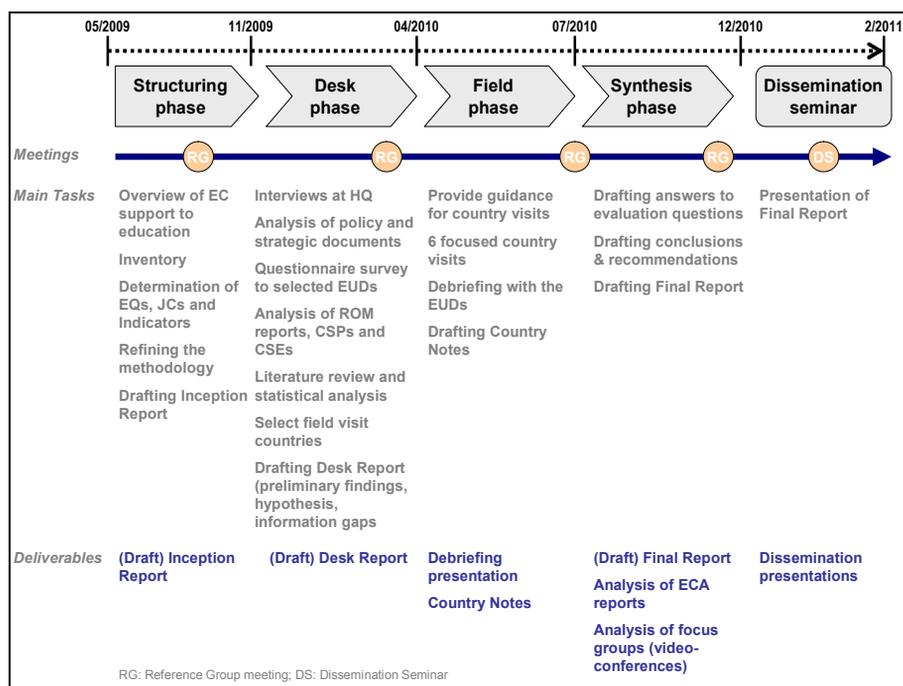
## 2 Methodology

Evaluation objectives and scope have already been set out above. The following sections describe the methodology applied for this evaluation. Annex 13 provides a more detailed description.

### 2.1 Key steps of the evaluation process

The methodology applied for this evaluation is based on the methodology developed by the Joint Evaluation Unit (JEU). The evaluation has thus been conducted in four main phases, as detailed the figure below. It was managed and supervised by the JEU. Evaluation progress was closely followed by a Reference Group (RG) chaired by the JEU, and consisting of members of DGs RELEX, DEV, AIDCO and Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO).

Figure 2: The evaluation process



As shown above, the results of each step were presented in a report, which was then submitted to the JEU and the RG, composed of education specialists from various DGs. Feedback obtained during the meetings, and afterwards in written form, was then considered in the next version of an individual report. Reports were then formally approved once they were perceived as being satisfactory by the JEU and the reference group.

### 2.2 Describing the object of the evaluation (structuring phase – inventory)

As a first step in the evaluation process, it was essential to provide an overview and typology of EC support to the education sector that falls within the scope of the evaluation. This work proved particularly challenging and substantial resources of the evaluation had to be devoted to this task. A detailed approach to the inventory and its main challenges and limits is presented in Annex 2.

The following main **types of sources** were considered:

- The EC's Common RELEX Information System (CRIS);
- Interviews with EC staff involved or previously involved in support to education and/or General Budget Support;
- 181 Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes (CSPs/NIPs);
- Documents related to GBS to identify if they have a link to the education sector (Financing Agreements, etc.)

Despite the limitations encountered in terms of availability of information, the approach has enabled the construction of a complete overview of the EC support to basic and secondary education between 2000 and 2007. The full inventory and typology are included in Annex 2.

### 2.3 Developing the methodological framework (structuring phase)

The first task was to define the **intervention logic** underlying the EC support to basic and secondary education in the EC's external co-operation with partner countries, according to the mandate of the

evaluation. It constituted the basis for formulating the EQs and served as the benchmark against which to evaluate the activities financed. More details on this intervention logic and how it was constructed are provided in Annex 20.

The second task consisted of defining and structuring a set of **nine Evaluation Questions**. For each question, the **judgment criteria and indicators** required to answer the question were defined. Furthermore, **information sources** were identified for each indicator, as well as the **approaches for collecting the information**<sup>19</sup>.

Importantly, at this stage of the evaluation process **a set of 23 countries was selected to be further analysed through a desk study**, as suggested by the ToR. **These countries should be regarded as representing and reflecting the broad range of EC support to basic and secondary education**. In this selection, the evaluation team has tried to accommodate numerous factors that are assumed to be important, and thus relevant criteria for making a selection.

The selection finally covered 23 countries, and included the six top-ranked beneficiary countries of direct support to education.

Table 4: *Countries analysed during the desk study (sample countries)*

| ACP                |              | Asia       | European Neighbourhood         | Latin America |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Botswana           | Mozambique*  | Bangladesh | Russia                         | Argentina     |
| Burkina Faso*      | Niger        | India      |                                | Nicaragua     |
| Dominican Republic | Somalia      | Indonesia  | Tunisia                        |               |
| Eritrea            | South Africa | Pakistan   | Occupied Palestinian Territory |               |
| Ghana*             | Tanzania*    | Tajikistan |                                |               |
| Jamaica            | Uganda*      | Vietnam    |                                |               |

\* MDG Contract country

The selection covers 52% of the GBS that has a relation to education. In terms of coverage (i.e. total amount contracted), due to the fact that the biggest beneficiaries are included in the selection, and that these are Asian countries, there is necessarily a more pronounced share of Asian countries represented in relation to total support.

## 2.4 Collecting data (Desk Study and Field Phase): Overview of process and tools

The two next phases were mainly devoted to information and data collection to feed into the findings for each indicator:

### 2.4.1 Desk Study

During the Desk Study, data was mainly collected through interviews at EC headquarters, through extensive document reviews, including an analysis of CSPs and NIPs; from existing EC Country Strategy Evaluations that deal with education as a focal sector; Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) data; and a web-based survey of European Union Delegations (EUDs). On the basis of the information collected, the team identified preliminary findings, hypotheses to be tested, and information gaps to be filled during the Field Phase. These were presented in the Desk Report.

The Desk Report also presented a final set of EQs, along with appropriate judgment criteria and relevant quantitative and qualitative indicators<sup>20</sup>. Data research during the desk study, and further reflections about the feasibility of retrieving necessary data, resulted in changes that are depicted in Annex 16. These changes did not negatively impact on the evaluation's evidence base, but helped in simplifying this already complex exercise.

### 2.4.2 Field Phase

The Desk Phase was followed by a set of six country visits (case studies), each of a maximum of 10 days on average, travel included. The missions were organised in close consultation with the JEU and

<sup>19</sup> Annex 13 explains in more detail how the EQs were defined, how they are linked to the DAC criteria and the key issues, and how they were structured. It should be noted that a number of Judgment Criteria and Indicators were adjusted and reformulated during the desk phase.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that, given the fact that the changes in the indicators were a result of the desk work undertaken, the CSP analysis (Annex 26) in particular presents results of the use of individual tools that still follow the initial list of criteria and indicators presented in the Inception Report.

respective EUDs. The main tools used for data collection were: additional document study, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The main objective of the field phase was to complete the data collection and to contribute to answering the EQs. Their aim was to capture specific issues in more depth than had been identified during the desk phase, to fill data gaps, and to test hypotheses developed for each country on the basis of a desk review. The field phase covered both policy and strategy aspects and implementation issues. Nevertheless, **the field phase was not intended to conduct an in-depth assessment of the implementation of specific EC interventions.** The analysis of specific interventions was aimed at exemplifying results and impacts of EC support. Emphasis was on processes and achievements, which could not be not fully covered by the tools of the desk analysis.

The countries chosen for the field visits belong to the group of 23 countries proposed in the Inception Report as desk study countries. The criteria for selection of the field visit countries were multiple, concerning geographical and sub-sectoral distributions, participation in the FTI scheme (FTI-CF), MDG Contract, mix of aid modalities, specific context<sup>21</sup>; with at least one French-speaking and one Spanish-speaking country; and avoiding overlaps with the countries chosen by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) for their field case study and countries where a field mission for a Country Strategy Evaluation (CSE) had been undertaken recently or was being planned. Based on a utility analysis, as well as the discussions with the RG and the JEU, the following selection of field study countries was agreed:

Table 5: *Countries selected for the field phase*

| <i>ACP</i>         | <i>Asia</i> | <i>European Neighbourhood</i> | <i>Latin America</i> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Dominican Republic | Bangladesh  | Tunisia                       | -                    |
| Niger              | Pakistan    |                               |                      |
| South Africa       |             |                               |                      |

These countries represent 21% of EC funds contracted to the education sector (between 2000 and 2007) and within the scope of the evaluation, and 6% of EC GBS with education-related indicators.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, based on the desk analysis, the evaluation team identified research focuses for each of the field visit countries.

The results of the Field Phase were Country Notes (see Annexes 6 - 11), combining the data collected in the field with the document analysis and the results of the EUD survey for the given country. After all field missions had been conducted, the evaluation team presented the results of the field phase in the form of a detailed debriefing for the RG in Brussels.

### 2.4.3 Additional data collection

It should be noted that, due to the reduction in the number of field visit countries<sup>23</sup>, additional data collection, initially not foreseen, could be carried out during and after the field visits. These cover:

- Three **focus groups** with a selection of countries to cross-check evaluation findings and conclusions on selected topics, using the video conference facilities available at EuropeAid premises in Brussels. A detailed report has been produced (see Annex 5), and results are integrated into this report.
- A detailed **analysis** of the preliminary findings of missions and desk studies of the **European Court of Auditors** (ECA) on education and GBS undertaken very recently. Thus was agreed upon, to address the fact that field visits had especially been reduced in Africa. A detailed report has been produced (see Annex 4), and results are integrated into this report.

## 2.5 Collecting data: Details

A number of tools have been used during both Desk Study and Field Phase that are detailed in Annex 13, which also relates these tools to individual EQs. Given the considerable amount of information theoretically available, the evaluation team built on the following logic to obtain and cross-check information.

<sup>21</sup> Fragile/failed states, difficult partnership, post-conflict, LRRD – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

<sup>22</sup> The rather limited amount relating to GBS is due to the reduction in the number of field visit countries.

<sup>23</sup> Initially, eight country visits had been envisaged. However, due to a number of reasons, it was possible to visit only six of the eight countries suggested by the evaluation team. Moreover, possible alternatives could not be agreed upon. Given this likely loss in evidence base from field visits, it was decided to implement an analysis of recent reports of the European Court of Auditors (preliminary findings) related to education or GBS, in order to strengthen the evidence base for the evaluation, especially for ACP countries.

Table 6: Hierarchy of data collection and analysis

| Level  | Tool  | Purpose  |
|--|---|--|
| World-wide   | Literature review related to education in general, Education for All Initiative (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), different aid modalities, etc.  | To identify trends in support to education<br>To feed in issues  |
| World-wide   | Analysis of other relevant evaluations, such as the General Budget Support (GBS) evaluation   | To support and cross-check evidence collected  |
| World-wide, desk study countries                         | Data base extractions from various international sources collecting education-related indicators: EFA, World Bank Edstats, UNESCO <sup>24</sup> Education Policy & Data Center (financed by USAID <sup>25</sup> and the Academy for Educational Development (AED)), the latter being the only source providing data for the sub-national level <sup>26</sup>                                      | To generate figures and general trends for the period 2000 to 2007 (sometimes 2008) for numerous indicators selected for answering the EQs, at various levels: worldwide, groups of countries, desk study countries  |
| World-wide, region-specific, desk study country-specific | Interviews with EC staff in Brussels  | To discuss specific topics related to EQs, and corresponding to responsibilities of staff  |
| Desk study countries                                     | Country level analysis of inventory for the 23 desk study countries   | To identify trends in portfolio for desk study countries   |
| Desk study countries                                     | Analysis of two sets of Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) (2002/03, 2007/2008) for the 23 countries suggested for the desk study, as well as of the related mid-term reviews where available (see Annex 26)  | To identify information and produce findings related to a limited number of indicators, as has been specified in the Inception Report  |
| Desk study countries                                     | Analysis of EC CSEs with an EQ on education (or social sector including education), and/or with GBS with education-related indicators (condition: evaluation produced 2005 or later).<br>This analysis covered the following countries of the desk study: <i>Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam.</i> | To generate evidence on EC contributions to achievement of EC objectives in education, along the lines of the EQ<br>To inform JCs <sup>27</sup> and indicators of the evaluation, already at a relatively aggregated level.<br>To allow for comparison across countries. |
|  | In addition, specific analysis of a number of education sector interventions in these countries, using: CSPs and NIPs, but also ROM-information, external evaluations, Financing Agreements (FAs) and Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs), Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs), Joint Review Missions, etc.  | To complement the existing rather aggregated information by lower level evidence.  |
| Desk study countries                                     | For those countries not covered by CSEs: Analysis of 1-4 interventions per country along the issues of the EQs, using available information in CRIS - Common Relex Information System, such as external evaluations <sup>28</sup> , ROM-information, progress reports, FAs and TAPs, MTRs, Joint Review Missions, etc. <sup>29</sup>  | To complement information for the countries selected for the desk study<br>To allow for comparison across countries<br>To generate aggregated information  |
| Desk study countries                                     | Analysis of other country-related documents, such as evaluations, Sector Reviews  | To complement information for the countries selected for the desk study  |
| Desk study countries                                     | Web-survey of the 23 EUDs selected for the desk study   | To gauge perceptions of a major stakeholder group on a number of JCs and indicators, as well as on general issues of concern<br>21 questionnaires were received, more or less completed, with some delays.   |
| Six case studies out of the 23 desk study countries      | Country visits to six countries out of the 23 desk study countries  | To examine specific issues more in-depth than identified during the desk phase<br>To fill data gaps<br>To test hypotheses developed during the   |

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<sup>25</sup> United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

<sup>26</sup> There exist numerous blanks in data sets downloaded, with a huge number of time series being incomplete. Some gaps could be filled during the Field Phase.

<sup>27</sup> Judgment Criteria (JC)

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that access to information on evaluations implemented in individual countries, and not managed by EC HQ, is difficult. During the field visits, some such additional information sources could be retrieved.

<sup>29</sup> It must be emphasised that the quality and quantity of information available in CRIS is very heterogeneous. Therefore, these analyses were necessarily also of a heterogeneous quality.

| Level   | Tool  | Purpose   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | desk phase<br>To cross-check information  |
| Sample of ACP Desk Study countries and others         | Analysis of the ECA reports on education and GBS in Africa ( <i>Niger, Liberia, Namibia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso</i> )  | To balance the reduction to six field visit countries by a detailed analysis of the preliminary findings of missions and desk studies of the ECA on education and GBS undertaken very recently.<br>To cross-check the evaluation's own evidence, and to complement it<br>To identify trends and patterns that emerged from the ECA reports. |
| Other countries not included in the desk study sample | Three video conferences with a number of selected EUDs, each of which formed a focus group. 12 countries covered:<br>Group 1: <i>Madagascar, Jordan, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji</i><br>Group 2: <i>Cambodia, Somalia, Zimbabwe</i><br>Group 3: <i>El Salvador, Morocco, Paraguay, Ecuador</i> | To further strengthen the evidence base for the evaluation<br>To cross-check evaluation findings and conclusions on selected topics   |

## 2.6 Analysing and judging: Synthesis Phase

Following the debriefing presentation of the field work to the RG, the evaluation team proceeded to the Synthesis Phase. The information collected was analysed and synthesised so as to answer the EQs, provide overall conclusions and recommendations, and reach an overall judgment on the EC's support to basic and secondary education. This work resulted in the present report.

The factual information on which the evaluation is based is provided in detail in the following annexes: Inventory, CSP analysis, Analysis of ECA reports, Focus Group Analysis (Results of video-conferences with a sample of EUDs), and Country Notes.

Information from various sources was combined, cross-referenced and cross-checked, and this served as a basis for developing the argumentation. For each EQ, the team constructed balanced answers, using the building blocks that are the indicators and the JCs. Regular consultations were held between team members to ensure coherence of the answers.

The combination of answers to the different EQs allowed the team to formulate more general judgments in the form of Conclusions and, on that basis, propose a set of Recommendations). This approach allowed for a clear linkage between EQs (findings), conclusions and recommendations.

The approach used when comparing countries or identifying trends at the level of the desk study countries is based on **regions of support** and **Human Development Index (HDI)**. Additionally, analysis further considered the issue of "failed/fragile states". In the knowledge that these concepts are part of broader debates and subject to discussion, this evaluation limits the consideration of that aspect to a few sample countries (see Annex 13).

## 2.7 Dissemination

It is envisaged that a dissemination seminar will be held in Brussels after approval of the final report. In co-ordination with the JEU, the evaluation team will present the conclusions and recommendations during the seminar, to which a broad audience will be invited.

## 2.8 Challenges and limits of the evaluation

### 2.8.1 General challenges and limits

The scope of the evaluation includes education policies and their translation into results/impacts. Therefore, many indicators specifically investigated in the course of this evaluation refer to achievements at a global level. It also looked at specific country achievements, progress made and constraints encountered, through specific case studies/field visits at country level. None of the identifiable dynamics and effects at country level is solely dependent on EC contributions, but is an interplay of various stakeholders and contextual factors. This makes it rather difficult to correlate a **specific contribution of the EC** directly to the current situation in the education sector in a given country, or at the regional or **global level**.

The **use of some aid modalities**, especially GBS, adds to the complexity of assessing EC contributions. While there are often education-related indicators in governing agreements, approaches in terms of how to assess this modality at a general level are still subject to discussions.

In order to better assess possible EC contribution to progress related to a huge number of indicators, depending on the EQ, a specific focus has been placed on:

- Disaggregating data at international and national levels;
- Analysing the evolution of standard indicators over time and linking them to EC support;
- Gathering information on output and impact indicators;
- Combining quantitative data with qualitative assessments on the role played by the EC,
- Cross-checking information.

Another challenge of the exercise is related to the **country visits**. These were extremely short, so it was of utmost importance to cover – as set out in the ToR – only the main issues related to education in the context of the country, as well as the elements testing the desk phase findings. It is therefore clear that not all interventions in a country could be meticulously covered.

The scope of the exercise is wide and ambitious, yet it is important to remember that it **focuses on basic and secondary education**, not touching upon Vocational Education and Training (VET), for which simultaneously the *“Thematic global evaluation of EC support in the sectors of Employment and Social Inclusion (ESI) in partner countries”* is ongoing.

## 2.8.2 Some specific challenges and limits

### 2.8.2.1 Inventory

Challenges and limits relating to the **inventory** are presented in detail in Annex 2. Three key challenges had to be tackled in constructing the inventory and typology.

1. The first challenge is common to all mapping exercises for thematic evaluations and relates to the information source on which they are based. In particular, CRIS presents some limits for the purpose of an **inventory of a sectoral evaluation**, such as the fact that, in many cases, no sector code has been attributed to the interventions.
2. A second challenge is related both to the use of CRIS and to the **nature of the aid modalities** used in the education sector. It is not possible to identify automatically in CRIS whether the EC’s funds have been delivered through SBS or GBS, which are not encoded as such.
3. The third challenge relates more specifically to **the need to tackle GBS** in the inventory. The funds provided by the EC through GBS are not supporting directly a particular sector, but the EC might define performance indicators referring to the education sector for the release of variable tranches. The inventory was thus also covering GBS that is, in this sense, “relevant” to the education sector, but which is challenging in terms of identification.

With a view to tackling these three key challenges, the evaluation team developed a specific and systematic approach that enabled:

- Identifying the relevant interventions in terms of Commission support to the education sector;
- Categorising these interventions by type of modality used by the Commission to deliver its aid;
- Identifying those GBS that are relevant to the education sector.

The specific approaches used for the inventory of the EC’s “direct” and “indirect” (through GBS) support to the education sector are considered by the evaluation team as the most comprehensive way of tackling this complex exercise. However, they present some limits, as highlighted in Annex 2.

### 2.8.2.2 Access to accurate and readily available information

**Information available in EC databases** was not easily retrievable. Nevertheless, the information was sufficient to allow construction of an overview and typology of funds for support of the education sector. Furthermore, the **availability of documents** on support in individual countries **differed** considerably. These gaps could only partly be compensated by documents that are stored within the ROM system. Field visits helped in complementing information.

Moreover, the evaluation team was confronted by **“institutional memory”** limits at both EC Headquarters (HQ) and field levels, owing to the rotation of staff and the incomplete incorporation of documents in EC databases. However, as the evaluation team used different information sources, this could to a certain extent be compensated for by cross-checking and combining the information from different sources.

As for the **Field Phase**, the visits could be organised in a way that relevant current EUD staff were usually available. However, results of both the *Niger* and *Tunisia* field visits have been compromised, due to limited access to relevant national stakeholders. Through more extensive desk research, the evaluation team tried to fill the gaps occurring due to these situations.

### 3 Inventory: Overview on EC resources to support basic and secondary education

This section provides an overview of EC resources to support basic and secondary education. Further details can be found in Annexes 2 and 21.

#### 3.1 EC funding towards the education sector

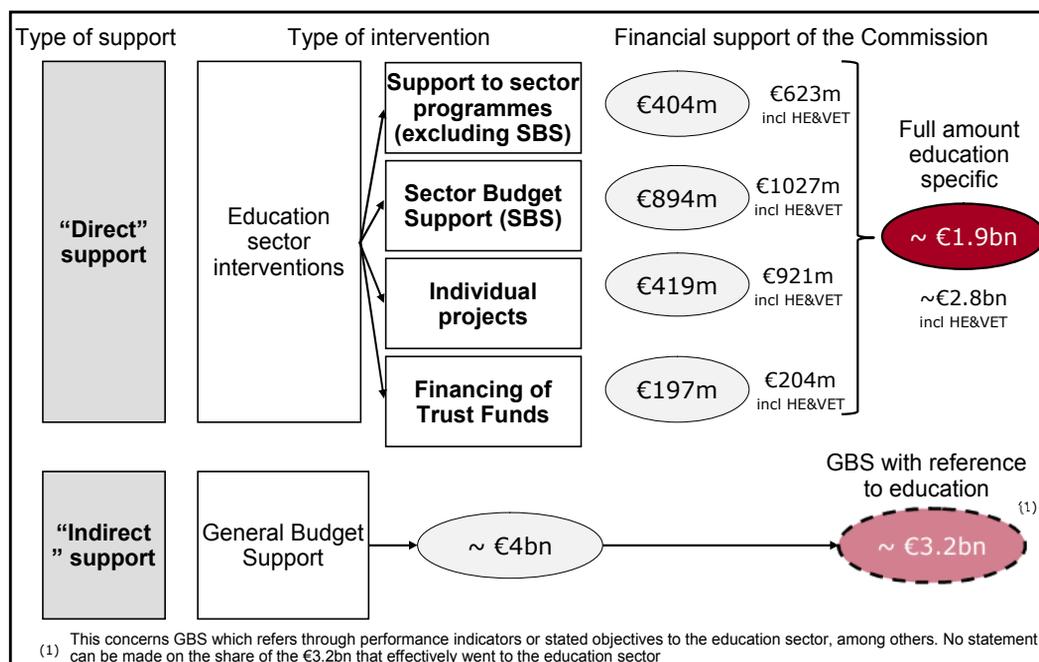
This section presents the findings of the inventory and typology of the EC's funding to partner countries with respect to **basic and secondary education during the period 2000 to 2007**. However, where useful, reference is made to higher education (HE) and VET. Moreover, it distinguishes systematically between direct support and indirect support (i.e. GBS with a reference to the education sector).<sup>30</sup>

All figures presented have been obtained using the Common Relex Information System (CRIS). The approach developed by the evaluation team to compile this inventory, as well as the limitations to take into account, are presented in detail in the Annex 2. The financial figures used are all **contracted amounts** – that is, the amounts related to the contract signed between the EC and a specific “contractor” for the implementation of a given support. Figures on the disbursements from the EC to the “contractors” are also provided – that is, the payments effectively made by the EC to the “contractors” on the amount contracted. They concern all payments made from the signature of the contract until the date of the data extraction from CRIS (10 June 2009) by the evaluation team.<sup>31</sup>

##### 3.1.1 Overview of EC support to the education sector

The following figure presents the global overview of all the EC financial contributions to the education sector, as defined in the thematic scope of the evaluation, from 2000 to 2007. It also includes the financial contributions towards HE and VET. While HE and VET are outside the scope of the evaluation, this allows a quick overview of the share that basic and secondary education receive compared to the entire sector: approximately two-thirds of the EC's direct support to education is geared towards basic and secondary education.

Figure 3: Global overview of EC financial contribution to the education sector



<sup>30</sup> “Direct support” should be understood here as support that targets directly and entirely the education sector. It should be distinguished from “indirect support” (see below), to be understood as support that is dedicated to education as one sector among others.

<sup>31</sup> This is the only information on disbursements available in the data extraction from CRIS. The actual disbursements from the “contractors” to the final beneficiary are not available in CRIS, and nor are the dates of the payments. Only the sum of all payments made, from the signature of the contract until the date of the data extraction from CRIS, is available.

Over the period 2000-07, the EC contracted a total amount of around **€1.9 billion for direct support to the education sector, excluding HE and VET**, using the following types of aid modalities – Sector Budget Support, individual projects, support to sector programmes (excluding SBS)<sup>32</sup>, and financing of Trust Funds) – which are discussed in more depth later in this report. Of this amount, around € 1.4 billion (i.e. 74% of the total amount contracted) was disbursed over the same period. When taking into consideration HE and VET, the total amount contracted by the EC over the period 2000-07, through its “direct” support was around € 2.8 billion, of which € 2.1 billion (i.e. 75%) was disbursed. The EC financial contributions supporting the sectors that fall within the scope of this evaluation (thus, not including HE and VET) represent 69% of the total amount contracted by the EC for the entire education sector.

A substantial part of the **GBS** provided by the EC can be considered as **indirect support** to the education sector. Over the period 2000-07, a total amount of around € 4 billion was transferred to national governments of beneficiary countries under GBS operations. Out of this total amount, around € 3.2 billion referred to GBS. **It is important to underline that it cannot be stated that this amount went to the education sector; it can only be stated that the amount refers to GBS with which the EC, in one way or another, pursued goals for the education sector, among other sectors. As for General Budget Support, no statement can be made on what share of the € 3.2 billion went, in effect, to the education sector.**

### 3.1.2 Trends in EC’s “direct” support to the education sector

**Direct support** (with and without HE & VET) showed a serrated pattern, but with a trend towards increase (from levels of € 129 million in 2000 to € 580 million and € 326 million in 2006 and 2007). In terms of sub-sectors, the following can be summarised:

- 45% of the funds contracted had to be attributed to the so-called “*education, level unspecified*” sub-sector<sup>33</sup>, as defined by the DAC sector classification (DAC code: 111), which thus also includes sector programmes that cover the **entire education sector**.
- 53% of the total amount, or € 1 billion, was contracted for “*Basic education*” (DAC code 112), which includes “*primary education*” (DAC code 11220), representing 71% (€ 714 million); of this amount, support classified directly under “*basic education*” (DAC code 112) represents 24% (€ 239 million), and “*basic life skills for youths and adults*” (DAC code 11230) amounts to 4.6% (€ 46 million), while “*early childhood education*” (DAC code 11240) represents only 0.4% of the amount contracted towards “*basic education*”.
- Secondary education (excluding VET) represents only a small share of the amount contracted by the EC (2%, or € 42 million). However, with higher education and VET included in the total amount contracted, secondary education (which includes vocational training as defined in the DAC classification) would represent 17% of the contracted amount.

As for the **geographical breakdown**, 77% of the direct funding went to the *ACP* (40%) and *Asia* regions (37%), with smaller shares (10% each) to *ENP-MEDA* and *Latin America*. Support to *ENPI*<sup>34</sup>-*TACIS* is insignificant. Compared to the EC’s overall external assistance for each region, *Asia* and *Latin America* are, in relative terms, the main regions benefiting from the EC’s support to education; 19.4% and 8%, respectively, of the total amount contracted by the EC in these regions during the period under evaluation has been contracted for education support. Interestingly, direct EC support to education, in relative terms, represents 3.5% in *MEDA*, and only 3.3% for *ACP* (0.5% in *ENP-TACIS*).

In terms of **country portfolios**, inventory data shows that 18 countries benefited from 69% of the funds, with *India*, *Bangladesh* and *Pakistan* alone accounting for 32% of the funding, and the remaining 15 countries accounting for 1% to 4% each. Support to these countries has, among other things, covered the following:

- In *Bangladesh*, the Second Primary Education Development Programme PEDP II (€ 104 million committed), Support for Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE, € 12.5 million);
- In *India*, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP, 1994-2002, € 150 million), the Sector Budget Support Component of the State Partnership Programme with Chhattisgarh and Ra-

<sup>32</sup> This term had to be created by the evaluation team in order to describe EC support to a sector or sub-sector that is not SBS, nor a project. The CRIS database does not allow proper identification of all Sector Policy Support Programmes (SPSP) directly. Therefore, this construct had to be chosen.

<sup>33</sup> This category includes interventions for the support of education policy and administrative management, education facilities and training, teacher training, and educational research. It also includes all interventions that cover the entire education sector but which cannot be classified under a detailed education sub-sector. It is included in the figure to reflect the correct share of the detailed sub-sectors, but does not give much insight in terms of education sub-sectors supported by the EC.

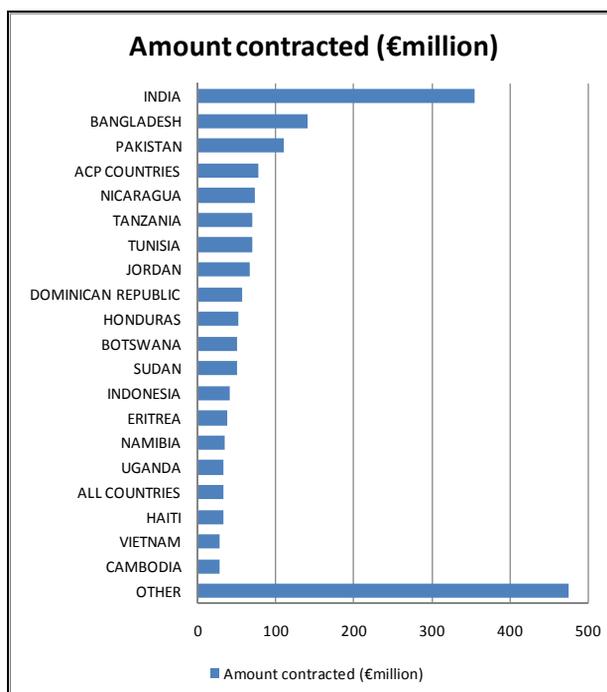
<sup>34</sup> European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument

jasthan (since 2006) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – (National Programme for Universal Elementary Education from 2001 to 2008, € 200 million);

- In *Pakistan*, the Northern Pakistan Education Programme (€ 19.3 million) and other support channelled via the Aga Khan Foundation, the Sectoral Budget Support to a provincial government, the Government of Sindh, to implement its Medium-Term Education Sector Support Reform Programme (SERP, € 38.2 million), and resources for Earthquake Emergency Assistance in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and North Western Frontier Province (AJK/NWFP), and in terms of education delivery through non-formal education provision in parts of the Northern Areas (€ 40.2 million).

Table 7: EC support to education sector without HE and VET, 2000-07: Main beneficiaries

| Country/region     | Amount contracted (€ million) | % on total amount contracted | Amount disbursed (€ million) | Disbursement rate |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| INDIA              | 355                           | 19%                          | 203                          | 57%               |
| BANGLADESH         | 141                           | 7%                           | 81                           | 58%               |
| PAKISTAN           | 110                           | 6%                           | 71                           | 65%               |
| ACP COUNTRIES      | 78                            | 4%                           | 50                           | 64%               |
| NICARAGUA          | 73                            | 4%                           | 72                           | 98%               |
| TANZANIA           | 70                            | 4%                           | 50                           | 72%               |
| TUNISIA            | 70                            | 4%                           | 58                           | 83%               |
| JORDAN             | 67                            | 4%                           | 41                           | 61%               |
| DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | 57                            | 3%                           | 46                           | 81%               |
| HONDURAS           | 52                            | 3%                           | 51                           | 97%               |
| BOTSWANA           | 51                            | 3%                           | 41                           | 79%               |
| SUDAN              | 51                            | 3%                           | 50                           | 99%               |
| INDONESIA          | 40                            | 2%                           | 15                           | 38%               |
| ERITREA            | 37                            | 2%                           | 18                           | 49%               |
| NAMIBIA            | 34                            | 2%                           | 27                           | 80%               |
| UGANDA             | 33                            | 2%                           | 33                           | 98%               |
| ALL COUNTRIES      | 32                            | 2%                           | 16                           | 49%               |
| HAITI              | 32                            | 2%                           | 30                           | 95%               |
| VIETNAM            | 28                            | 1%                           | 24                           | 85%               |
| CAMBODIA           | 27                            | 1%                           | 25                           | 93%               |
| OTHER              | 475                           | 25%                          | 418                          | 88%               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>1.914</b>                  | <b>100%</b>                  | <b>1.420</b>                 | <b>74%</b>        |



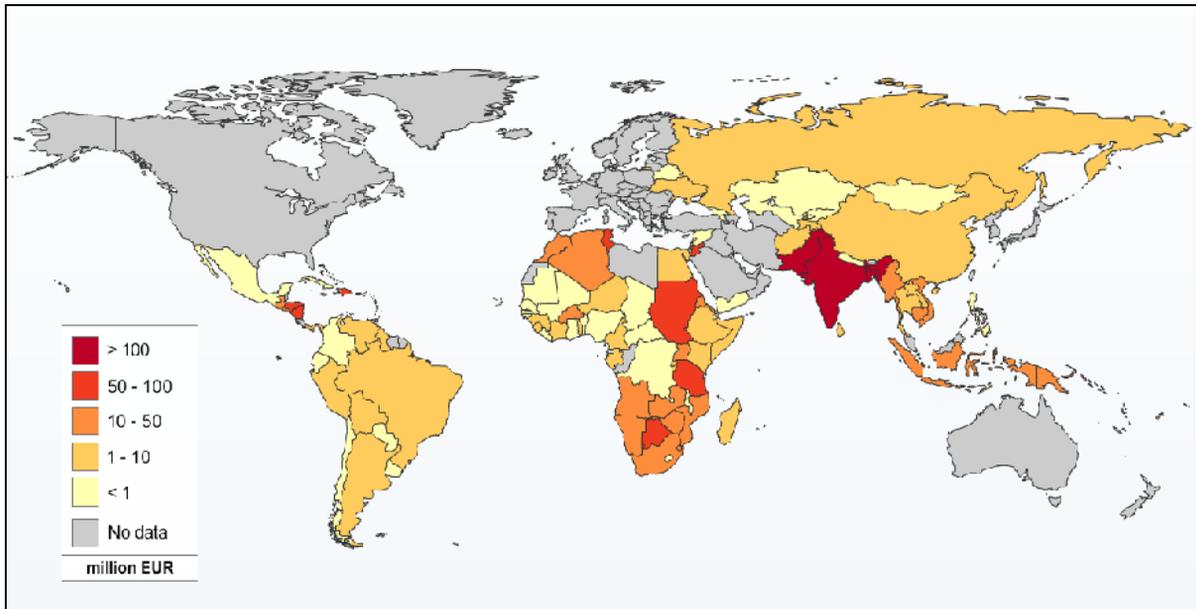
Source: CRIS and ADE analysis

Note: "Other" includes 91 other countries - see section 1.4.6 in Volume 2b for a detailed list

The following figure shows the geographic distribution, again highlighting the fact that the highest individual amounts have been committed to Asian countries. However, when looking at the per capita direct support to education, the picture changes. Mainly *Sub-Saharan African* countries, such as *Botswana* and *Namibia*, and some countries with rather low population, such as *Tunisia* or the *Dominican Republic*, have benefited from the highest per capita support<sup>35</sup>.

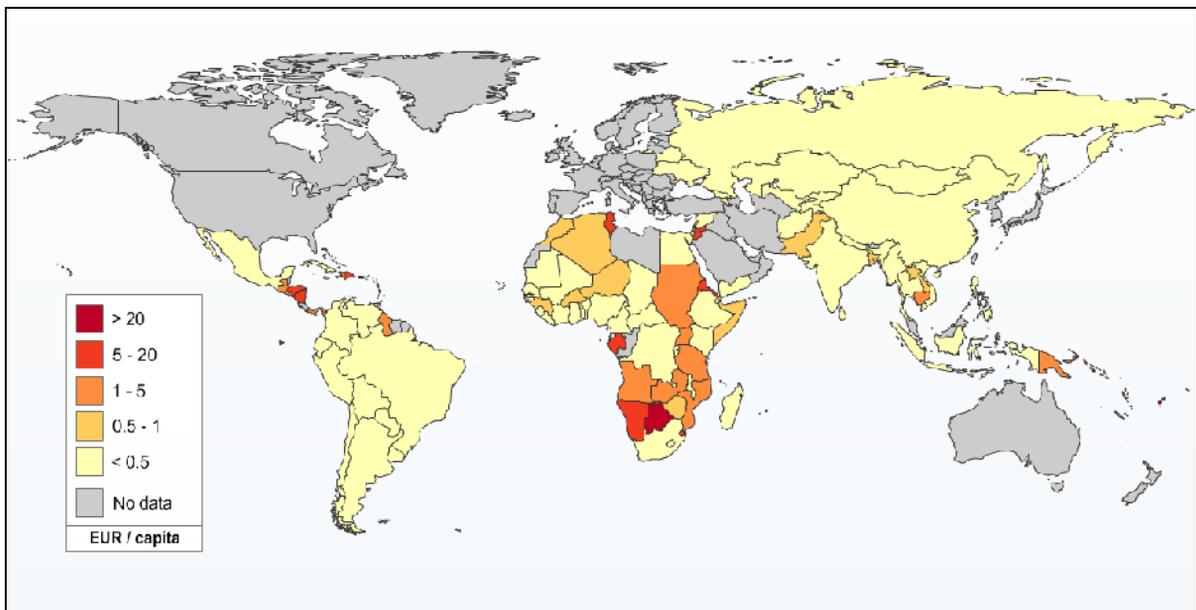
<sup>35</sup> It should be borne in mind that the per capita picture is slightly distorted, given that EC support, especially under the project modality, may have focused on a few in-country regions and not on the entire country. This, however, is not feasible to develop in the form of a graph.

Figure 4: Total direct support to basic and secondary education (2000-07)



Source: Based on inventory data

Figure 5: Total direct support to basic and secondary education, € per capita (2000-07)



Source: Based on inventory data

As for **aid modalities**, **SBS** was by far the **main modality** used (47%, € 894 million) between 2000 and 2007, followed by individual projects (22%), support to sector programmes excluding SBS (21%) and financing of Trust Funds (10%). Over the period considered, while it is difficult to identify an overall trend in terms of use of modalities, SBS is characterised by three main evolutions: a multiplication by 10 of the support from 2001 to 2002 (from € 20 million to € 200 million); followed by a continuous decrease to a level of € 10 million in 2005; and again an increase to levels of € 327 million and € 143 million in 2006 and 2007. It should be noted that a number of bigger SBS were committed after the period under evaluation, such as the Primary Education Sector Policy Support Programme in South Africa (€ 120 million, 2010-13), or other education SBS in *Paraguay* and *Ecuador*, indicating the rather recent trend towards SBS in Latin America.

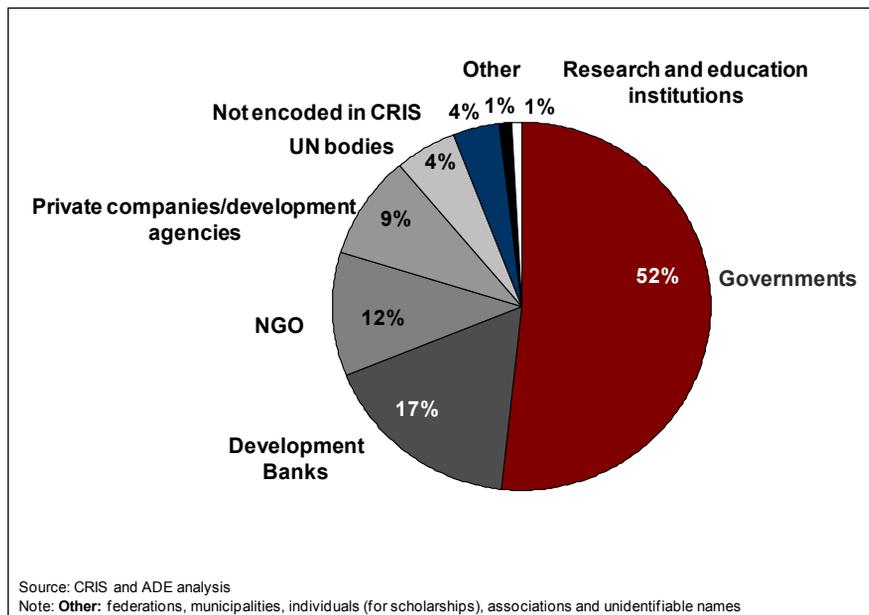
Other forms of sector support, here categorised as “*support to sector programmes*”, make up 21% of total commitments to education between 2000 and 2007. These include, for instance, programmes such as PEDP II in *Bangladesh* (€ 103 million), to which by far the highest amount was committed. Overall, **all forms of sector support represent 68% of the EC’s direct support to basic and secondary education.**

However, the **project modality** continues to be used. While remaining at levels between € 19 million and € 54 million until 2005, considerable commitments using the project approach were made in 2006 (€ 104 million) and 2007 (€ 56 million). For 2006, this increase is mainly due to two major projects in *Pakistan*, channelled through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF<sup>36</sup> in support of Earthquake Emergency Assistance in the earthquake-affected districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and North Western Frontier Province (NWFP, € 40 million), and to three major Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) projects in *Bangladesh*, with a total commitment of € 28.3 million. For 2007, the major commitments concern two large projects.<sup>37</sup>

Financing **Trust Funds** are a rather recent development and only started to be used in 2005<sup>38</sup>; up to the end of 2007, a total of € 204 million had been committed. They cover mainly EC contributions to the Fast-Track Initiative Catalytic Fund (FTI-CF) (€ 89.6 million) and contributions to the Education Construction Trust Fund in *Eritrea* (€ 32.4 million).

The EC used different **channels** to implement its “direct” support to the education sector. More than half (54%) of the funds go through governments, which is in line with the relative weight of SBS, while Development Banks (mainly WB and ADB) are the second most important channel (17%). Other main channels used are: NGOs, private companies/development agencies acting as such, and United Nations (UN) organisations such as UNICEF or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Figure 6: Breakdown by channel used by the EC to deliver its aid contracts (€ million), education sector without HE and VET, 2000-07



In terms of **disbursement**, the overall level of direct support to education was 74%. However, disbursement rates varied by region, modality and channel. Research and education institutions show the highest disbursement rates (91%), followed by private companies or development agencies acting as such (86%), while the rates through governments and NGOs are 80% and 73%, respectively. Development banks (66%) and UN bodies (55%) rank among the lowest rates. The disbursement rate through development banks mainly concerns contribution to the FTI Catalytic Funds managed by the WB that were been contracted at the end of the evaluation period (2006 and 2007) and might not yet have been fully disbursed at the date of the data extraction.

Further breakdowns, using combinations of the various dimensions illustrated above, are presented in Annex 2. Some major elements can be summarised as follows:

- Concerning the parts of the education sector covered by this evaluation, the main focus in ACP was on support to the entire education sector of a country (sub-sector “education, level

<sup>36</sup> United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

<sup>37</sup> “Tackling child labour through education – Tackle”, channelled through the International Labour Organisation (ILO, € 14.75 million) and “Improving access to quality basic education in Burma/Myanmar” (UNICEF, € 10 million).

<sup>38</sup> The EC has not defined trust funds as one of the aid modalities; the classification, however, was needed in the context of this evaluation to classify the EC contributions to the FTI Catalytic fund managed by the WB. All other contributions to WB Trust Funds specific to the education sector have also been classified under this category.

*unspecified*) and on basic education (62% and 37%, respectively, of the total amount contracted in the region), which includes mainly primary education.

- In *Asia*, a large majority of funds went to basic education (81%), while in ENP-TACIS, shares of comparable magnitude went to both basic education and “*education, level unspecified*” (44% and 54%, respectively).
- **Secondary education** is relevant only in *ENP-MEDA* countries (16% of total commitments to education), with *Tunisia* having received the single highest amount in this sub-sector for an SBS. Secondary education plays virtually no role in any of the other regions. Secondary education elements might, however, be included in broader sector support.
- As for **modalities**, SBS is the main modality used globally, and is also the main modality used in each region, except *ENP-TACIS*, where project support prevails (35% of the total amount contracted in *ACP*, 55% in *Asia*, 72% in *ENP-MEDA*, and 49% in *Latin America*).

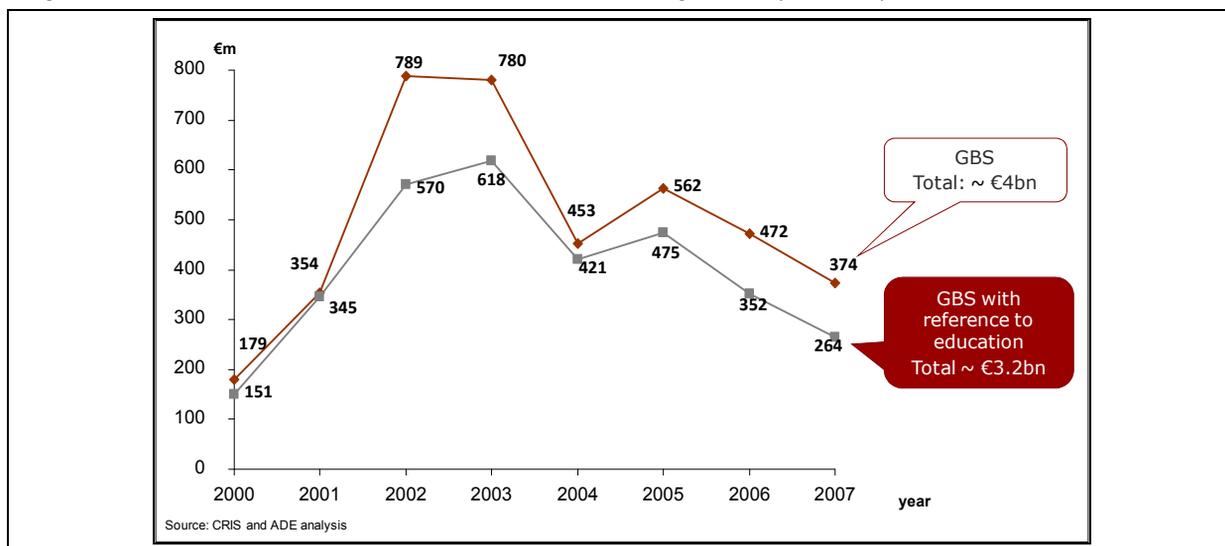
Further analysis shows that post-secondary education plays a prominent role, especially in Latin America and ENP-TACIS, while the share of VET is considerable, especially in ENP-MEDA countries and in Latin America. This allocation reflects the focus of the different regional policies outlined above.

### 3.1.3 EC’s “indirect” support to the education sector: General Budget Support

During the period 2000-07, the EC has financed a total of 98 GBS operations in 43 countries<sup>39</sup> falling within the geographical scope of this evaluation. The total amount actually transferred to the beneficiary countries’ national treasury for these GBS operations was around € 4 billion<sup>40</sup>. Out of these 98 GBS operations, 73 had a reference to the education sector expressed by their performance indicators, when available in the FA, or by their stated objectives. This concerned 37 countries. In financial terms, the 73 GBS represented around € 3.2 billion (81%) of the total funds transferred by the EC through GBS. **It should be re-emphasised that, as it concerns General Budget Support, no statement can be made on the share of the € 3.2 billion that went in effect to the education sector.**

The figure below shows the trend in the amounts transferred through GBS between 2000 and 2007. It presents separately all the GBS operations (98, for a total amount of € 4 billion) and those referring explicitly to the education sector (73, for a total amount of € 3.2 billion).

Figure 7: Trend in the amounts transferred through GBS (€ million), 2000-07



Financing of GBS operations increased from 2000 to 2003, reaching an annual amount of around € 780 million for the years 2002 and 2003. From 2004, financing through GBS funds decreased (except for an increase in 2005) until 2007, when it was € 374 million. GBS that have a reference to the education sector followed the overall trend.

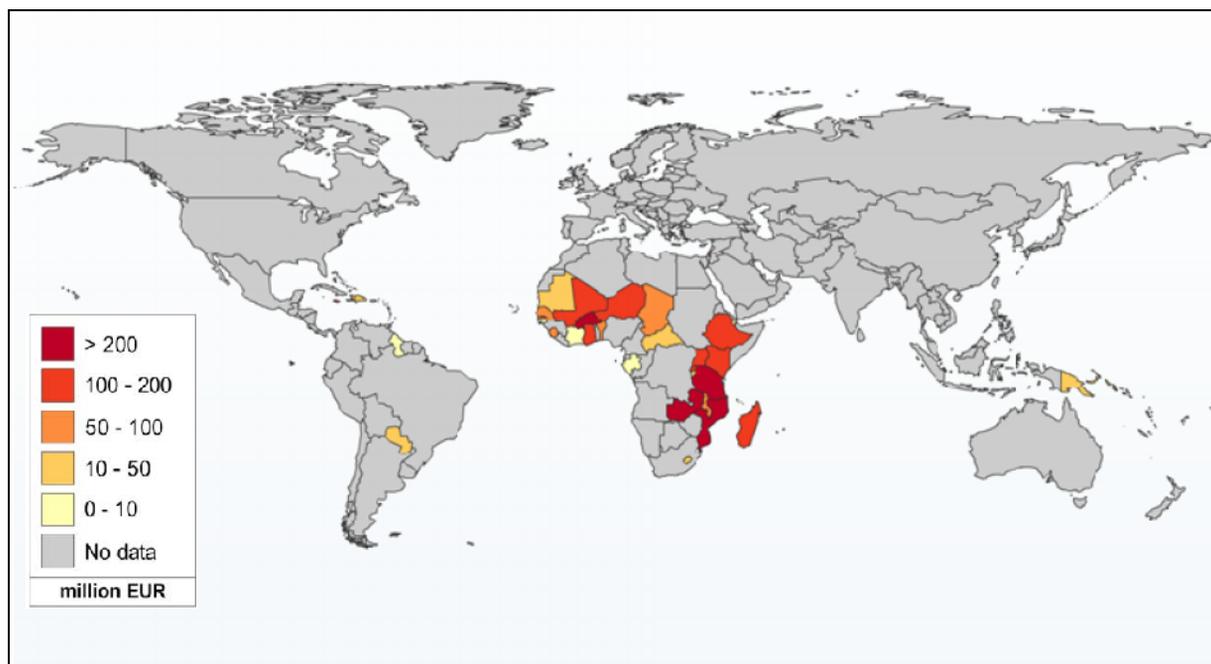
According to the inventory made, the great majority of the GBS funds (total € 3.196 billion) with a reference to the education sector were transferred to *ACP* countries. Out of the 37 countries that bene-

<sup>39</sup> In some countries, more than one GBS operation has been financed.

<sup>40</sup> This amount represents the funding that the beneficiary countries have actually received in their national treasury in order to support their national development strategy. It does not include the amounts contracted by the EC for technical assistance, audits or evaluations linked to the GBS.

fitted from GBS with a reference to the education sector, 35 are ACP countries, one is located in the ENP–MEDA region, and one is in Latin America (Paraguay). The six main beneficiary countries accounted for nearly 50% of GBS referring to education.

Figure 8: GBS with a reference to the education sector (2000-07)



Source: Inventory data

Table 8: GBS with a reference to the education sector: The top-20 recipients (2000 – 2007)

| Region/Country | Amount transferred (€ million) | % on total amount transferred | Region/Country                 | Amount transferred (€ million) | % on total amount transferred |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mozambique     | 370                            | 11.59%                        | Madagascar                     | 118                            | 3.70%                         |
| Burkina Faso   | 314                            | 9.84%                         | Ethiopia                       | 118                            | 3.69%                         |
| Zambia         | 279                            | 8.72%                         | Jamaica                        | 102                            | 3.20%                         |
| Tanzania       | 226                            | 7.07%                         | Occupied Palestinian Territory | 98                             | 3.07%                         |
| Ghana          | 182                            | 5.68%                         | Benin                          | 88                             | 2.75%                         |
| Mali           | 173                            | 5.43%                         | Sierra Leone                   | 77                             | 2.41%                         |
| Niger          | 155                            | 4.84%                         | Senegal                        | 75                             | 2.36%                         |
| Rwanda         | 145                            | 4.52%                         | Malawi                         | 63                             | 1.97%                         |
| Uganda         | 157                            | 4.90%                         | Chad                           | 54                             | 1.69%                         |
| Kenya          | 137                            | 4.29%                         | Burundi                        | 43                             | 1.35%                         |

Source: Inventory data

## 3.2 EC response to basic and secondary education needs

### 3.2.1 Emerging strategic shifts in EC support to education

Education is focal sector of EC country strategies in a significant number of countries, and the CSPs also reveal that basic and primary education are most frequently the highest priority. Generally speaking, there has been a shift in EC support towards a smaller number of focal sectors. This has meant that the number in which education is a focal sector has been reduced. This is especially the case in the ACP region, despite a constantly high need, while in Asia there has been more continuity. The trend in the ACP region goes hand in hand with the increasing use of GBS, especially the use of the MDG Contract. The argument may be made that GBS also supports education, but this support is to be understood as indirect. However, in contrast to education, the relative share of direct support to health has remained much more stable, despite it being just as much a focus in GBS and MDG Contracts.

The following table summarises allocations in the new programming cycles for all regions; where possible, and on the basis of the original source, an attempt is made to specify the share of basic education.

Table 9: EC estimated support to education in the new programming cycle (regions only)

| Estimated EC ODA to education        | Period  | Total envelope | Allocation for education (million €) | % specific to education out of total envelope | Focus of education support | Amounts related to BE & E (million €) | Number of countries | N° countries with education as |           |     |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----|
|                                      |         |                |                                      |   |                            |                                       |                     | Focal                          | non focal | GBS |
| Asia <sup>1</sup>                    | 2007-10 | 2,600          | 594.0                                | 23.5  | BE                         | 434.0                                 | 8                   | 10**                           |           | 1   |
| Latin America <sup>2</sup>           | 2007-10 | 1,200          | 383.5                                | 29.1  | BE & VET                   | 237.5                                 | 4                   | 4                              | 3         | 1   |
| MEDA <sup>3</sup>                    | 2007-10 | 2,960          | 348.0                                | 12  | E                          | 348.0                                 | 7                   | 11                             | 1         |     |
| Caucasus & Central Asia <sup>4</sup> | 2007-10 | 1,473          | 170.7                                | 11.6  | E                          | 170.7                                 | 5                   |                                |           |     |
| ACP country programming <sup>5</sup> | 2008-13 |                | 258.7*                               | 2.3   | E                          | 258.7                                 | 12                  | 12                             |           |     |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                   |         |                | <b>1,974.9</b>                       |   |                            |                                       |                     |                                |           |     |

Note: The figures cover the programming period 2007-10 for non-ACP and 2008-13 for ACP countries.

<sup>1</sup> Basic Education: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar; Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan; Higher Education: Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand; GBS: Laos.

<sup>2</sup> Basic Education: Nicaragua, Ecuador, Paraguay, Argentina (+ VET), El Salvador, Costa Rica, Region Mercosur; Higher Education: Mexico, Brazil, Chile + Regional (€ 103.4 million, of which ALFA = € 60 million, Erasmus Mundus = € 41.6 million; GBS: Honduras.

<sup>3</sup> Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Syria (non-focal), Lebanon; Higher Education: Algeria.

<sup>4</sup> Moldova (HE), Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Central Asia = € 190 million.

<sup>5</sup> Botswana, Comoros, Gabon, Jamaica, Liberia, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Dominican Republic.

BE = Basic Education, E = Education, VET = Vocational Education and Training

\* Figure from DEV B3, June 2010; \*\* Higher Education in three countries

Source: DG Aidco

### 3.2.2 Organisational set-up and staffing

The period 2000-07 is also characterised by substantial organisational changes in EC external aid and in efforts to improve aid delivery by institutionalising quality assurance. In terms of organisational changes, the roles and responsibilities were divided between the new structures of DG EuropeAid, DG Dev and DG Relex; and in terms of quality assurance, a number of quality support groups (iQSG<sup>41</sup> & several oQSGs<sup>42</sup>) were established, and the ROM system was created and operationalised.

According to a survey-based EC Services study<sup>43</sup> commissioned in 2009, the EC provides direct support to education in 76 countries around the world; 44 countries have education as a focal sector in the programming cycle 2006/07-13, and the performance assessment frameworks for all 43 GBS recipients mentioned in the survey include education-related indicators.

According to this survey, a total of 88 people are assigned responsibilities for education within the EUDs, but not all of these are assigned solely to work in the sector. The percentage of their time spent on education-related work varies considerably, with an overall average of 34%. Of the 43 GBS recipient countries, only 23 appear to have a staff member assigned specifically to education. According to the study, the staff entrusted with responsibility in the education sector are usually "generalists", and very few of the EC's staff have specific qualifications in education planning, education economics or comparative education. Moreover, in terms of the profile of EUD education personnel, the EC relies heavily on contracted-in staff for its work in the education sector.

<sup>41</sup> An inter-service Quality Support Group (iQSG) was set up in 2001 to ensure the coherence and the quality of EC external co-operation aid. The Quality Support Group (QSG) is interdepartmental in character. The task of the iQSG is to ensure that the main EC external co-operation programming documents are coherent and of consistently high quality. The members of the Group are senior representatives of all the Commission's Directorates General and offices involved in the management of the EC's relationships with developing countries (DG DEV, DG RELEX, DG Trade, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, DG Enlargement, ECHO, EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the Joint Evaluation Unit).

<sup>42</sup> Within EuropeAid, a number of office Quality Support Groups (oQSG) were created. They aim to improve quality, i.e. the design of external aid measures, by providing guidance, already at the identification and formulation stage, building on in-house expertise, as well as on best practice from previous and ongoing measures. With management responsibilities having been devolved to the EUDs, the QSGs also aims at being a mechanism for exchange of information between Brussels and the EUDs on the preparation of planned measures.

<sup>43</sup> The European Commission's capacity to support education in its partner countries. Summary of a survey of EC delegations, Draft June 22, 2009.

The following two tables show the staffing situation in terms of full-time equivalents (FTE) in EUDs for the programming cycles 2002-07 and 2007/08-13, including GBS (please note that the FTE categories used by the study are not fully comparable).

Table 10: EUDs with education as focal sector (programming cycle 2002-07; 2007/08-13 including GBS)

| EUDs with education as focal sector (programming cycle 2002-07) |                |   | EUDs with education as a focal sector (programming cycle 2007/08-13, including GBS) |                |  |
|---|----------------|---|---|----------------|--|
| Full-time equivalent per office                                 | Number of EUDs | People with qualifications in education (including teaching qualifications) | Full-time equivalent per office   | Number of EUDs | Persons with qualifications in education (including teaching qualifications) |
|   |                |   | 1.5 – 2   | 8              | 5  |
| 0.5 - 1.4   | 11             | 4   | 1 – 1.5   | 5              | 4  |
|   |                |   | 0.5 – 1   | 10             | 2  |
| 0.3 – 0.5   | 6              | 1   | 0.1 – 0.5   | 8              | 1  |
| 0.04 – 0.2  | 8              | 2   | 0   | 16             | -  |
| Part-time   | 5              | 0   |   |                |  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>28</b>      | <b>7</b><br>(only two with specific education-related degrees)              | <b>Total</b>  | <b>44</b>      | <b>12</b>  |

Source: The European Commission's capacity to support education in its partner countries. Summary of a survey of EU Delegations. June 22, 2009 See also Annex 21

Over the period evaluated, the workload of EUD staff related to education has shifted from a focus on project monitoring towards increasing time spent on sector policy dialogue, now often encompassing not only primary, but also other levels of education. During the same period, EUD survey respondents also indicated that there was a significant increase in workload related to education (*India, Botswana, Argentina, Nicaragua and Indonesia*). Apart from the demands placed on staff in relation to policy analysis in the education sector, the responses show that attending and actively participating in sector working groups and policy dialogue is perceived as taking up a great deal of staff working time.

In order to cope with the demands on EUD staff, the EC has contracted some new staff, and conducted trainings and thematic meetings at HQ level. In addition, there is of course "learning on the job", which, according to respondents to the evaluation's survey, includes regular participation in policy dialogue, and maintaining close contacts with relevant EC staff in Brussels.

### 3.3 Global financing gaps in basic education

Successive issues of the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) have drawn the attention of the donor community to the gap between aid levels and the level of financing required to meet the Dakar targets. The 2010 issue indicates that the "revised global cost estimate suggests the gap is far larger than previously assumed. Any prospect of accelerated progress towards the 2015 targets depends critically on a scaled-up donor effort. The bottom-line message to emerge from the costing exercise is that two-thirds of the additional resources required will have to be provided through aid." The same exercise also emphasises that the financing gaps are large (at USD 16 billion annually) and unlikely to be eliminated by current donor pledges.

The following table summarises the calculation, showing the financing gap that remains once prospects for additional domestic resources have been exhausted, and provides a breakdown of the financing deficit by education sector and region.

Table 11: Average annual financing gaps towards EFA in low-income countries, 2008-15

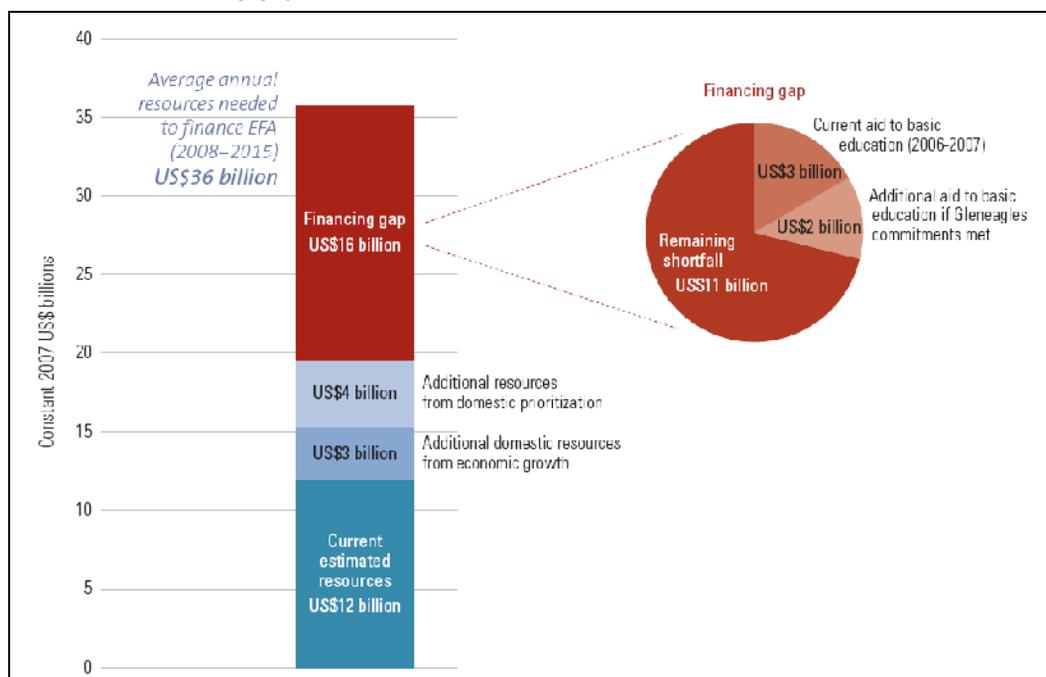
| Education level               | Financing gap (constant 2007 USD billion) | Sub-Saharan Africa (%) | South Asia (%) | Conflict-affected countries (%) |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Pre-primary                   | 5.8                                       | 66                     | 23             | 29                              |
| UPE                           | 9.8                                       | 68                     | 28             | 48                              |
| Adult literacy                | 0.6                                       | 42                     | 37             | 51                              |
| Basic education financing gap | 16.2                                      | 66                     | 27             | 41                              |
| Lower secondary               | 8.8                                       | 60                     | 35             | 42                              |
| Total financing gap           | 25.0                                      | 64                     | 30             | 42                              |

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2010, p. 130

The report's conclusions from various analyses are:

- Previous EFA estimates must be rectified as the gap for basic education is about 30% higher than the previous global estimates. It becomes apparent that **the gap is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa**.
- Assuming that **all low-income countries reach the 'best effort'<sup>44</sup> thresholds by 2015, the aggregate average annual financing gap in basic education for the low-income countries covered is equivalent to about 1.5% of their collective Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**. The cumulative deficit for basic education, calculated on a country-by-country basis, is around USD 16 billion annually from 2008 to 2015.
- Current aid levels cover only a small part of the Education for All financing deficit. For the low-income countries included in the calculation, development assistance for basic education amounts to USD 2.7 billion (see figure below). **The report concludes that a six-fold increase in aid to basic education will therefore be required if the basic education goals are to be achieved.**
- Looking at the **regional financing gap**, *Sub-Saharan Africa* accounts for about 66%, or USD 10.6 billion.
- **Adding the costs of lower secondary education would increase the gap to USD 25 billion** – a figure that illustrates the enormous increase in resources required if countries are to universalise access. The report also highlights that increased investment in post-primary education is unlikely to be equitable, or lead to the skills improvement that governments and parents demand, if the financing gaps at the basic education level are not being addressed, thus building strong learning foundations.

Figure 9: Financing gaps towards EFA



Source: EFA GMR 2010, p. 129

The authors of the report conclude that the deficit gap will have to be covered by increased development assistance. This shortfall is shown to be rising up to 2015, before scaling-down as the domestic resource base expands and the need for additional capital spending declines.

There are only five years remaining to the target date for the Education for All goals and the wider Millennium Development Goals. The report provides a scenario holding constant the distribution of aid between low-income and middle-income countries, and between different levels of education, and concludes that full delivery of the 2005 commitments would still leave a deficit of USD 11 billion. Thus, it indicates that there is a need for an *“urgent re-assessment of aid commitments and distribution patterns”*.

<sup>44</sup> The EFA GMR's analysis defines the Education for All financing gap as the difference between the total investment requirement indicated by their costing exercise and the domestic financing capacity of governments making a 'best effort' to channel resources to education.

While acknowledging limitations and uncertainties associated with its global financial costing models, the report concludes by indicating that *“in the absence of an urgent, concerted effort to make new and additional resources available for education, there is little prospect of the world’s poorest countries getting on track to meet the 2015 targets. If the policy goal is to ensure that all the world’s primary school-age children are in education systems by 2015, the investment cannot be delayed. The global costing exercise underlines the importance of low-income developing countries and donors doing far more.”* There is a need to critically review scenarios for meeting resource requirements/gaps of partner countries (especially the poorest ones) linked to accommodating MDG 2 amid conditions of austerity and given that the global economic crisis demands overall budget cuts. The fact that economic growth figures in some Sub-Saharan African LDCs are encouraging may change the resource (re-)distribution agenda of partner governments and, linked to this, of EC and other DP support.<sup>45</sup> The poorest countries are not capable of meeting the recurrent budget increase requirements originating from filling the financing gap; without economic growth, and a subsequent increase in fiscal resource generation capacity, filling gaps will only create larger gaps, which will work against any vision of sustainability. However, *“it is clear that the role of donors is critical because governments in the poorest countries lack the resources to close the Education for All financing gap”*. Section 5, on conclusions and recommendations, takes these needs into account in light of the evaluation findings discussed below

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<sup>45</sup> Distinction may therefore be required between countries that have created conditions for economic take-off/recovery and other, more static countries. This may have implications both for modalities and for the volume of resources.

## 4 Answers to the Evaluation Questions

### 4.1 EQ1-relevance: To what extent is EC support aligned to education development objectives in national development plans, such as PRSPs, and ensures coherence between EC development co-operation policies on education and other EC policies affecting education?

National Development Plans, in particular PRSPs, often provide the overall framework for donor support in a country. PRSPs aim to provide the crucial link between national public actions, donor support, and the development outcomes required to meet the internationally-agreed MDGs. The EC has committed itself to working towards improved national ownership, harmonisation of aid delivery mechanism, and enhanced mutual accountability.

The purpose of this EQ, and the analysis through which it is answered, is to assess the extent to which the EC has followed up on its commitments towards alignment in its support to the education sector in partner countries. Moreover, the question also covers the issue of coherence in its two different meanings. On the one hand, coherence is looked at in terms of its meaning as an evaluation criteria, looking at the extent to which the EC's different interventions in the education sector (particularly at country level) do not contradict one another. This understanding of coherence could thus also be coined as 'internal coherence'. The second meaning of coherence could be termed 'external coherence'<sup>46</sup>, and is based upon the definition of coherence within the 3Cs<sup>47</sup>. It refers to the extent to which aid development aid has not been contradictory or contradicted by other EC policies and external actions (i.e. Policy Coherence for Development - PCD).

The answer to this EQ is built on the following judgment criteria (JCs):

- JC11: Degree to which EC education interventions are relevant to and aligned with PRSP or similar national policy or strategy objectives.
- JC12: Degree to which EC education support is harmonised and transparent in supporting PRSP or similar national policy or strategy objectives.
- JC13: The EC has ensured the overall coherence of its education support.

#### *EQ1 on relevance – Summary Answer Box*

The evidence collected and analysed during the evaluation provides a clear indication that major advancements have been made in terms of aligning the EC's support to education with partner countries' national priorities and policies over the course of the period evaluated. This increase in alignment occurred in conjunction with the greater use of modalities such as SBS and GBS, which, by their inherent characteristics, entail a high level of coherence with, and alignment to, national policies. In cases where no education sector policies or national frameworks existed, the EC has made an effort to support their development. Understandable exceptions to these overall developments are fragile states, where national structures and policies are inadequate.

As EC support to education has increasingly been delivered through more "joint" approaches – that is, sector support programmes, budget support, and trust funds – there has also been an increase in the harmonisation of this support with other donors and the partner government. Both the increase of alignment and the harmonisation are also reflected in a drastic decrease of parallel PIUs.

EC support to education is generally coherent in terms of the various DGs involved, the various financing modalities employed, and the various levels at which it was targeted. However, room for improvement remains, particularly in terms of coherence between the geographic and thematic instruments in

<sup>46</sup> The two different meanings are tackled through different Indicators, as is explained in the related text in Annex 1. Internal coherence is dealt with by I-131, I-133, I-134. External coherence is assessed by I-132

<sup>47</sup> 3Cs – Co-ordination, Complementarity and Coherence – refer to the Maastricht Treaty modified by the Amsterdam Treaty (articles 177 up to 181):

**Coordination** (article 180): 1. The Community and the Member States shall coordinate their policies on development co-operation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes including in international organisations and during international conferences. They may undertake joint action. Member States will contribute if necessary to the implementation of Community aid programmes. 2. The Commission may take any useful initiative to promote the coordination referred to in paragraph 1.

**Complementarity** (article 177): Community policy in the sphere of development co-operation, which shall be complementary to the policies pursued by the Member States, shall foster: (i) the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries, and more particularly the most disadvantaged among them; (ii) the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy; (iii) the campaign against poverty in the developing countries.

**Coherence** (article 178): "The Community shall take into account the objectives referred to in article 177 (*Community policy in the sphere of development co-operation*) in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries."

support of education.

#### 4.1.1 JC11: Major advancement made in terms of aligning EC support to education with national priorities and policies

Based on the desk review of CSPs, CSEs, ROM reports and other studies and evaluations, including the survey of selected EUDs, a number of clear trends emerge in terms of alignment of EC support to education with national policies, PRSP and national development plans. In general, these trends have been confirmed during the field phase.

Taking into account all the information obtained and considered during the course of the evaluation, it is evident that, generally speaking, the EC has made efforts to base its strategy in support of education on a careful consideration of the in-country situation, even if the depth and scope of the analyses conducted to understand this situation may have varied.

**At the level of overarching programming, EC support to education has been relevant to, and aligned with, PRSPs or similar constructions in line with national policy thrusts and strategies.**

The most significant evidence for this is found in the CSPs and NIPs, as almost all CSPs analysed relating to the period 2000-07 and onwards show that the EC's support to education was planned to be undertaken in the framework of the countries' Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) or equivalent documents. The CSPs provide clear indication that the priorities of EC support to education have been set to match the country's own priorities, and this is confirmed by the EUD questionnaire survey and field visits.

Furthermore, **over the course of time (2000-07), alignment with sectoral and national plans has generally increased**, in line with the commitments made in the Paris Declaration. This finding is supported by a variety of sources analysed and related to:

- the consideration of in-country situations and beneficiary requirements in EC response strategy (e.g. Dominican Republic and Pakistan), in which the shift from project support to more joint approaches (SBS, GBS) was gradual and implemented in direct correlation to government priorities and the situation in the country (particularly taking into account the flexibility needed in the response to the earthquake in Pakistan);
- the percentage of EC aid to the education sector that is provided either as budget support or using programme-based approaches for supporting PRSP objectives (for example, over the course of the period evaluated, the number of countries where SBS and programme approaches are employed, and the overall percentage of support to education that is delivered through these modalities, have increased substantially);
- the reduction, over time, in the number of project implementation units (PIUs) running parallel to government institutions within the education sector (e.g. for 2003: seven out of 14 EUDs indicated one parallel PIU; 2007: two out of 15 EUDs indicated one parallel PIU; and all the other respondents indicated that no parallel PIUs exist any more).

Particularly significant in this regard is the assertion made during the initial desk review that the overarching move towards greater use of sector-wide approaches and budget support has contributed to increasing alignment. This was confirmed by further evidence gained during the field phase – for example, in *Pakistan* and the *Dominican Republic*, where the new aid modalities have taken into account the in-country situation (mainly, earthquake and decentralisation) and have been very closely tailored to address national priorities.

Exceptions to these trends are primarily in countries that are either not official aid recipients, such as *Russia*, or where the governments have not formulated national poverty reduction strategies or comparable policies, which is mainly the case in *fragile/failed states*.

#### 4.1.2 JC12: Increased harmonisation with various actors occurred in correlation to the shift towards the new and more 'joint' aid modalities

According to the documents analysed, and underpinned by the survey results, progress towards **joint field missions and shared analytical work** appears to have improved to a certain extent in the sample and field visit countries. The incidence of joint field missions and joint analytical work has certainly increased over the period, even if the information at hand does not fully allow for the quality of such work to be gauged.

While no clear regional patterns emerge, a correlation with the dominant type of aid modality employed in each country leads to the finding that, generally speaking, joint missions and analytical work (particularly in the form of joint reviews) are more common in a context of joint funding mechanisms (e.g. FTI-CF) or sector-wide support (particularly SBS). Thus, the witnessed increase in joint missions and analytical work may, in large part, be due to the increasing use of more joint funding mechanisms.

Not surprisingly, in terms of the **existence and level of joint and harmonised assistance strategies**, the findings are similar to those from joint field missions and shared analytical work. Over the period evaluated, it appears that the EC has made efforts in many countries (for example, in *Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Pakistan, Uganda and Tanzania*) to increase support, thus following up on its commitments towards more harmonised support in the education sector and in ODA in general.

Based on the information analysed, a number of **enabling factors** emerge, which contribute to a conducive environment for harmonised assistance strategies, even if these factors are not “*directly determining factors*”. The type of financing modality emerges as such a factor. Moreover, it appears that the shift towards aid modalities, such as SBS and programme-based approaches, has also facilitated greater harmonisation between donors, especially in countries where there are a large number of donors active in the education sector.

- In countries where **sector support including sector budget support (SBS)** has been employed, donor assistance has become more harmonised through donors using the same financing modality and developing joint positions on key issues. For example, this is the case in *Vietnam, Indonesia, India and Bangladesh*, where sector dialogues related to sector support, the move towards Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAs), and common arrangements for co-financing have gone a long way towards encouraging extensive harmonisation. However, it is not always the case. For example, in *Namibia*, the ETSIP (Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme) was prepared primarily by the government and the WB, without input of the other development partners (DPs), including the EUD – despite its very active involvement in the education sector in the country.
- As for **GBS**, in a number of instances, including the cases of *Uganda and Tanzania*, the use of this modality has been accompanied by the creation of the very broad and high-level Joint Assessment Framework and Joint Assistance Strategy. In these countries, the JAS takes into account all donor assistance to the countries, providing an overarching framework of harmonised assistance. In other cases, such as *Niger*, there is harmonisation of support to the sector, with donors applying different financing mechanisms. Although all 15 education sector DPs supported the strategy of the PDDE (Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation – harmonisation), different financing mechanisms were applied. A small group of donors set up a common fund, using national procedures. Since 2003, the EC has provided GBS, with education indicators for flexible tranche release incorporating its specific support to FTI within GBS. Harmonisation is further enhanced by the EC playing an active role in the joint PDDE reviews, with the participation of 15 DPs. Moreover, the EC GBS indicators for flexible tranche release are analysed during these joint reviews.
- Where there has been mainly EC support implemented through the **project approach**, the degree of harmonisation between EC support and national policies and strategies is found to be rather low. This is the case, for example, in *Somalia*, where the Country Report of the Evaluation on Aid Delivery to CSOs from 2008 found that, as a result of its fragile status, its fragmentation and limited capacities, the introduction of extensive programme, sector or budget support approaches in the education sector was not feasible at present.

Apart from the financing modality, a number of other enabling factors emerge, which equally may not so much “cause” harmonisation, but which contribute to an **enabling environment for greater harmonisation**:

- The existence of active donor co-ordination mechanisms provides a venue for the enhancement of harmonisation.
- The emergence or existence of a sector strategy has usually led to enhanced donor harmonisation, via sector working groups or similar (e.g. *Vietnam, Ghana*).
- If there is no existing sector strategy, but the priority accorded to the education sector by the partner government is high, the EC has often assisted in the development of sector policies, which, in turn, provide a common framework for harmonised sector assistance (e.g. *Tanzania, India*).
- Transparency of financial affairs (good PFM practices) went a long way towards helping to ensure harmonised dialogue, and thus harmonised education strategies (e.g. *Vietnam*).

Overall, the evaluation's findings reveal that joint work between DPs and partner governments, as well as harmonisation between them, have increased over the evaluation period, and that the EC has played a proactive role in these developments. Not surprisingly, there is a correlation between these developments and the shift towards more common funding mechanisms, such as sector support, SBS and GBS.

#### 4.1.3 JC13: EC support to education is generally coherent, but room for improvement remains

Although no data is available to identify shifts over time in the degree to which various DGs have worked together in designing education-related strategies and programmes, the findings of the evaluation do reveal that there is an operational **working relationship** between the DGs of the Relex-family (i.e. DG Dev, DG Relex, DG EuropeAid) with regard to the education sector. Some form of closer co-operation with the EC Directorate General on Education and Culture (DG EAC) has begun.

In terms of the **coherence between the EC's political and development responses**, a highly diversified picture emerges. While it is difficult to arrive at generalisations, there appears to be a degree of coherence between the political dimensions at play and the response strategy in terms of support to the education sector, particularly with regard to the aid modalities employed. For instance, in the case of several fragile states/conflict situations, the EC has a dual approach in terms of its focus of intervention, aiming directly at the support for peace and stability on the one hand, while also engaging in human development, including education-related efforts. This was evident in the cases of the *Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan and Somalia*.

With regard to the coherence between the legal/financial instruments employed in support of education, it is clear that the vast majority of education support is provided through geographic instruments (ALA, TACIS, MEDA), EDF and, more recently, the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) and ENPI – and their related budget lines. **The financial contributions under these geographical budget lines cover approximately 90% of the total amount contracted for the education sector analysed in the inventory. The remaining 10% is from thematic budget lines.** Among the thematic budget lines, more than 90% came through the NGO co-financing budget lines (PVD = pays en voie de développement; ED = éducation développement). Other thematic budget lines with minor contributions to education support are those on rehabilitation/refugees, the EIDHR (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights), decentralised co-operation, an older budget line on 'Education', among others. More recently, the Thematic Programme "*Investing in People*" has been launched (basically, after the period under evaluation) and contributes in various ways to support to education.

Due to the fact that geographic budget lines are primarily targeted through bilateral programming (i.e. CSPs/NIPs) at the EUD level, while thematic budget lines are to some extent managed and demand-driven, there is a structural risk to coherence between the two in terms of education support. The staff of the EUD to *South Africa* illustrated this situation poignantly, stating that "*any coherence of their support to the NGO/NSA<sup>48</sup> sector with that to Government would have been entirely coincidental*", since the support to NGOs originated from Brussels, "*not conceptualised in consultation with the EU Delegation*". However, the situation apparently varies widely between different countries. For example, as the focus group discussion revealed, in complementarity to the SBS in *Cambodia*, the EC has continuously supported NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to fill the gaps in the implementation of governmental policies, especially in remote provinces.

Based on the desk review, it is evident that the **EC has balanced bilateral policy approaches in different regions according to the different needs and performance of every country**. And at the country level, interventions often target various levels coherently to achieve education sector outcomes – for example, by providing technical assistance (TA) at central and, to a lesser degree, sub-national/local levels, to achieve consistent capacity building results throughout the education system.

In this context, it should be mentioned that **EC education support at regional level** (i.e. transnational geographic level) appears to be focused on promoting Higher Education, while basic education plays only a very minor role. This can be seen as justified, given that basic education policies are defined and implemented at national levels, while issues related to higher education may require more elements of harmonisation and co-ordination across countries. This is valid for all regions, with varying programmes being implemented related to higher education:

- Asia-Link<sup>49</sup>,
- Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window (EMECW)<sup>50</sup>,
- TEMPUS<sup>51</sup>,

<sup>48</sup> Non-State Actors (NSA)

<sup>49</sup> The Asia Link was set up by the European Commission in 2002 to promote regional and multi-lateral networking between higher education institutions in Europe and developing countries in Asia. The programme aimed to develop new and existing partnerships between European and Asian universities.

<sup>50</sup> The European Commission is funding the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (Action 2) programme, formerly known as Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window (EMECW). Its main objective is to promote individual mobility of students, professors and researchers, with a view to promoting understanding between people worldwide, as well as contributing to fostering sustainable development and reform in line with the Millennium Goals.

- ALFA<sup>52</sup>,
- ALβAN<sup>53</sup> and
- Mercosur.<sup>54</sup>

Taking into account all the accumulated and synthesised information on the related indicators, it is evident that the EC made efforts to achieve coherence in its own education support at all levels, including coherence between various actors (through efforts at harmonisation) and between the various areas of its external actions (PCD). However, there are limits to such coherence, and there are variations across countries.

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<sup>51</sup> TEMPUS is the European Union's programme that supports the modernisation of higher education in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region, mainly through university co-operation projects.

<sup>52</sup> ALFA (América Latina – Formación Académica) is a programme between higher education institutions of the European Union and Latin America. Since 1994, ALFA has aimed to improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of higher education in LA and contributes to the process of regional integration in LA.

<sup>53</sup> Alβan was a programme of the European Union to reinforce the co-operation in the field of higher education between the EU and Latin America. Alβan ended in December 2006, and a new co-operation programme in the field of higher education scholarships, between the EU and LA, has been established within the framework of Erasmus Mundus.

<sup>54</sup> The EC supports higher education within the framework of regional support to the Mercosur.

## 4.2 EQ2-access: To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving access to basic education?

This EQ highlights the problems faced in many partner countries of providing all children, boys and girls alike, with basic education, and shows how EC support is assisting these countries in addressing the problems.

Millions of children are still out of school, and even for those in school, progression through primary grades and school completion remains an important concern. The question focuses on the degree to which the EC's strong support has yielded tangible results, in terms of partner countries having made visible progress in achieving EFA targets 2 and 5 and MDG goals 2 and 3.<sup>55</sup>

### EFA

EFA Goal 2: Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and are able to complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality.

EFA Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

### MDG

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION - Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

This evaluation question on access incorporates issues related to overcoming obstacles to access, as well as issues relating to the regulatory framework for non-discriminatory provision of basic education for all, including regulations on compulsory and free primary education. However, it will not cover a full range of pro-poor policies and the financing of and public expenditure issues on education, which are dealt with in EQ 6 on service delivery and resourcing. In addition, this question is complemented by EQ 3, dealing with transition to secondary level (both lower and upper). In this way, the expanded view of basic education covering primary and lower secondary education is addressed, as well as the consequences of higher primary enrolment – in line with MDG2 – for the progression of students to secondary education.

Apart from focusing on EFA and MDG progress, the country sample compares countries at different stages of economic development in different regions, and it also includes "least developed" countries and "fragile states".

The answer to this EQ is built on the following JCs:

- JC21: All children access and complete a full course of primary schooling – (MDG 2 and EFA 2)
- JC22: Gender parity in enrolment to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education – (MDG 3 and EFA 5)
- JC23: Primary schooling is compulsory and free of costs to all pupils
- JC24: Provisions to enhance access to education by disadvantaged groups

### EQ2 on access – Summary Answer Box

MDG2 has been achieved in only a few countries. However, EC support has helped partner countries to progress towards the goal. From the findings, the evaluation team concludes that the EC has contributed to enhancing not only access but also completion. However, the time span for EC interventions becoming visible in terms of increased completion rates stretches beyond the evaluated period. EC support has extensively contributed to construction and rehabilitation in post-conflict or post-emergency situations (*Eritrea, Somalia, Liberia, Pakistan, Nicaragua*) and in meeting the shortfall in school provision in certain regions (*Ghana, Dominican Republic, South Africa*). Apart from reaching out to the non-reached areas, partner governments have to cope with population growth sometimes nullifying progress in school enrolment.

Design of EC-supported programmes and projects, and their implementation, has been attempting to remove barriers to girls' enrolment with support to a variety of measures, including training of female teachers. In general, the performance indicators in pro-poor education sector support programmes, and SBS, are gender-disaggregated, but this is far from being the general rule for GBS. However, in addressing the fact that many parents – especially poor ones – give preference to boys when investments are required, EC-supported measures stimulate the enrolment of girls, e.g. in *Tanzania, Bang-*

<sup>55</sup> See Annex 22 for a list of these.

## EQ2 on access – Summary Answer Box

*ladesh and Pakistan.*

Compulsory education is fully within the realm of partner government responsibility. EC support to partner countries linked to this domain is – within sectoral support, SBS and, indirectly, through GBS – fostering pro-poor policies and strategies with resource allocations linked to the PRSP. Nevertheless, the EC has contributed, together with other development partners, to the abolishment of fees in a number of countries, such as *Tanzania* and *India*. It has also given extensive support to non-formal education (especially in *Asian countries*), has assisted in removing poverty-linked barriers (especially in *Vietnam and Pakistan*), and, through GBS, has provided resources to governments (mainly in *Sub-Saharan Africa*), allowing fiscal space to be created to cater for education in rural areas.

It appears that the EC, in its support programmes, has made efforts to identify discrimination or under-provision, and to help enable the implementation of strategies to overcome these.

The evaluation found evidence that EC support – through various modalities – to partner governments has yielded good results in pro-poor education sector reform programmes, such as in *Cambodia and Tanzania*, or through projects implemented by NGOs and complementing partner government provisions with non-formal education (*Bangladesh*), including a focus on remote, hard-to-reach areas, or on vulnerable ethnic groups, tribes and scheduled castes and on inclusive education for children with disabilities (*India*, Education Guarantee Scheme).

However, EC support was mainly through programme approaches and focused on government ownership, with an emphasis on increasing the capacity of formal education systems to enrol and retain growing numbers of pupils, especially girls. Around 10% of children are still categorised as hard-to-reach, often from ultra-poor and disadvantaged groups. Given the economic austerity limiting partner governments' funds, or, in some countries, the lack of political will to allocate the required funds to basic education for disadvantaged segments of the population, these groups could often not be reached. Altogether, despite considerable progress related to EFA2 and MDG 2 and 3, the combined efforts and financing by partner country governments and donors (including the EC) have not been sufficient to ensure that targets set in the early 2000s will be met by 2015.

#### 4.2.1 Some general trends related to MDG2 and MDG3

Access to education has improved in developing countries, based on extending the outreach of the education system and on declining adolescent fertility. However, the need for partner governments to provide facilities to cope with increased enrolment through population growth is still putting a burden on the system.

Overall, progress towards UPE has accelerated since the Dakar Conference. *Sub-Saharan Africa* has made particularly impressive strides, with many governments increasing the priority attached to basic education. However, the impact of these achievements has been reduced by a continuing high rate of pupils dropping out of primary education, compounded by a low quality of provision. There are also very large disparities linked to disability, location and income. Africa is not on track to achieve neither MDG2 (universal primary completion) nor MDG3 (gender equality).<sup>56</sup>

MDG in *Asia and Central Asia*<sup>57</sup> notes that more than 600 million people, or two-thirds of the world's poor, live in Asia, and that Asia and Central Asia comprise many Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and low income countries (e.g. *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan* and *Tajikistan*). The document indicates the following particular concerns on the MDGs:

- **MDG2** (primary education): Primary school completion rates throughout the region are low, especially in South and South-East Asia. These rates have not yielded improved literacy and sufficient basic education skills (see EQ5). They are mainly caused by poverty, overall poor education quality, and drop-outs (see EQ 4);
- **MDG3** (gender equality): Gender parity in secondary (see EQ3) and tertiary education.

There has been impressive progress towards gender parity at primary and secondary levels. Yet many countries failed to achieve the goal of parity by 2005. Countries in *South Asia* and *Sub-Saharan Africa* feature strongly in this group. Gender gaps in education are often reinforced by other indicators of disadvantage, such as poverty and ethnicity. However, according to the EFA GMR 2009, country experience suggests that parity can be achieved if there is strong national commitment accompanied by policies targeting the main constraints.

<sup>56</sup> See e.g. EU-Africa Millennium Development Goal (MDG ) Partnership ((2009): Priority Action Plan 4: Education, Current State of Education in Africa

<sup>57</sup> Delivering as one Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Road map 2008-15, multi-donor report (2008) <http://www.mdgasiapacific.org/delivering-as-one>

A defining feature of the EFA agenda is that it treats the six goals as part of a single comprehensive, integrated framework. In this respect, the Dakar Framework is far broader than the Millennium Development Goal framework, which addresses only UPE and gender parity.<sup>58</sup> EFA also is clearer on improving quality of education, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

This is in line with the Commission Staff Working Document, *“More and Better Education in Developing Countries”*<sup>59</sup>, which emphasises the broader agenda of access linked to quality and skills development as follows: *“Supporting basic education means improving quality and developing effective ways to measure and monitor improvements, as well as widening access to basic education to deliver MDGs 2 and 3.”*

Another Commission Staff Working Document, *“Progress made on the Millennium Development Goals and key challenges for the road ahead”* (2010), stresses that MDG3 on gender equality is a necessary prerequisite for substantially progressing on all MDGs. It also notes solid progress made, as well as considerable constraints remaining, and asks for particular attention to be paid to the situation in failed/fragile states.

#### 4.2.2 JC21: Access considerably increased with EC support, but completion still fairly weak (MDG2 and EFA2)

This JC focuses on whether the EC’s support related to MDG2 has yielded tangible results, in terms of strengthening partner country capacity to create facilities, policies and procedures for all children to access and complete a full course of primary schooling.

The evaluation adopted standard indicators for measuring access, such as trends in the net enrolment rate (NER) and primary completion rate (PCR). Data analysis yielded a significant amount of information on **increasing universal access to primary education during the evaluation period**. However, there are wide discrepancies between the regions.

In general, at the end of the evaluation period, access to primary education no longer appeared to be the greatest concern, with most countries among the sample countries having enrolment rates of over 80%.<sup>60</sup> *European Neighbourhood countries*, including *Tunisia*, Morocco and Jordan, are well on track. Yet, despite investments made and progress achieved, progress is insufficient and uneven. Several sources, including EFA GMR 2009 and 2010 and the Commission Staff Working Document on MDGs (2010), illustrate this situation, revealing that enrolment in primary education reached 88% in 2007 (up from 83% in 2000) and that major breakthroughs have been achieved in *Sub-Saharan Africa* and *Southern Asia*. Still large gaps remain in access to education and in completion rates. MDG2 targets will not be achieved in numerous Sub-Saharan countries – including sample countries such as *Burkina Faso*, *Mozambique*, *Niger*, but also Ethiopia, and *fragile/failed states* such as *Eritrea* and *Somalia* (also Liberia) in Africa, and *Pakistan* in Asia.

Analysis of earlier evaluations<sup>61</sup> revealed strong evidence that the EC, in co-operation with other development partners, supported partner governments’ attempts to provide primary education of a reasonable quality to all children, including the poorest ones. Successes in that regard are reflected, for instance, in meeting targets related to access indicators agreed upon in EC Financing Agreements.

This support has been through a **variety of means**, with varied efforts and successes in the countries supported:

- The EC has played a major role in contributing – often in close co-operation with development partners – to partner country programmes in support of their commitment to achieving MDG2 and EFA 2 targets. Without EC support, least developed countries in particular would not have made this progress towards achieving MDG 2. Reference can be made to *Niger* and *Burkina Faso*, but also to fragile states such as *Eritrea* and *Somalia*.
- EC support has helped to **address gaps in enrolment**, through strengthening the capacity of education systems to enrol and retain students, and through construction and rehabilitation of schools and classrooms, thus contributing to partner country governments’ efforts embodied in PRSPs, MDG plans and education sector strategic plans to provide access to primary education to all school-aged children. Substantial EC support was given to most partner governments

<sup>58</sup> Annex 22 depicts all EFA goals and indicators, and the MDG targets and indicators related to education, attempting to show how they fit together, and overlap.

<sup>59</sup> European Commission (2010): Commission Staff Working Document: More and Better Education in Developing Countries. SEC(2010)121 final, Brussels, February 4, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> UNESCO classifies a net enrolment rate as universal primary education (UPE) being achieved at a level of 95%.

<sup>61</sup> This is apparent in most CSEs analysed, but emerges in particular in the CSE Indonesia, and in several other evaluations, e.g. Joint Review of the Primary Education Development Plan, Tanzania, 2004.

through financing education system engineering, school construction and rehabilitation, and improving monitoring and supervision systems, including *South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Bangladesh* and *Dominican Republic*. In fragile states, EC support combined physical infrastructure development and rehabilitation with system re-engineering.

- Moreover, EC support to **physical infrastructure** development in low coverage areas, usually by means of project support, has in a number of cases been very helpful and successful – for example, in *Eritrea* and *Northern Pakistan*.
- At present, through **sector support, SBS and, indirectly, GBS**, the EC support is contributing to improving access to basic education<sup>62</sup>. This is substantiated by improved and sustained access-related indicators in the programmes being analysed. However, the reliability of these indicators is in some instances questionable because of unreliable demographic data, including school aged population, based sometimes on an outdated and unreliable population census, and with extrapolations based on assumptions about population growth.
- The EC provided education support to countries in **post-emergency and post-conflict periods** through physical infrastructure development and rehabilitation and education system re-engineering. This type of assistance was provided in *Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea* and *Pakistan*, helping to get children back into schools that had been destroyed or damaged and re-engineering education systems.
- Apart from the shift towards budget support, education sector support increasingly mobilises **Multi-Donor Trust Funds**, especially where large civil work components are involved.

**Most sample countries reviewed reveal progress in terms of PCR between 2000 and 2007**, apart from a few exceptions, such as *Bangladesh* and *Pakistan*. It should be noted that some major EC interventions – for example, PEDP in *Bangladesh* and the budget support to the Sindh Provincial Government in *Pakistan* – started only towards the end of the period under evaluation. The NER in both *Bangladesh* and Sindh Province have shown improvements, and the EC contributed to this by supporting a range of measures, including physical infrastructure development and rehabilitation, text book development and provision, and stipends.

Through sector support, SBS and, indirectly, GBS, the EC support is continuing to contribute to improving access to basic education (for more information on the modalities, see EQ9), as the following table indicates for a number of sample countries. This is substantiated by improved and sustained access-related indicators.

Table 12: Trends in access indicators in the sample countries<sup>63</sup>

| Region | Country   |
|--------|---|
| Asia   | <i>Bangladesh</i> . The NGO Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) support succeeded in reaching out to more than 1 million children under the NFPE programme, and, under the PEDP period from 2004 to 2009, progress towards access targets is on track. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) was set at 98% by 2009 and reached 97.6% in 2008; the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was set at 90% by 2009 and reached 90.8% in 2008 <sup>64</sup> . Universal completion of primary education will probably not be achieved by 2015. It should also be noted that these access indicators mask considerable variations in different districts and poverty groups. |
|        | <i>India</i> . In DPEP I enrolment has increased by about 285,000 (about 6%). The Sector Policy Support Programme “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” shows that the enrolment drive has been accelerated, with nearly universal enrolment in terms of children being in school, and there being schools in every habitation as a result of spreading the net of Education Guarantee Schemes (EGS) and alternative school centres. The Programme for the Enrichment of School Level Education (PESLE 1998-2007) focused on drawing in marginalised groups and keeping them in the system. PESLE’s partner NGOs reached more than one million children.                    |

<sup>62</sup> As the emphasis has been moving towards partnership and government ownership of reforms, it becomes more difficult to attribute these improvements directly to EC support.

<sup>63</sup> The evaluation follows national definitions of primary/basic education.

<sup>64</sup> The NER is one of the most robust instruments for measuring how far a country is from achieving UPE. It captures the share of primary school-aged children officially enrolled in school. Countries that consistently register NERs of around 97% or more have effectively achieved UPE, since it means that all children of the appropriate age are in primary school and are likely to complete the cycle.

The GER indicates a high degree of participation, whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100% indicates that the country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its primary school-aged population, but it does not indicate the proportion of that population actually enrolled. In order to achieve UPE, the number of under-aged and over-aged pupils would need to decline in order to free places for pupils in the official primary school age group.

| Region                           | Country   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Sub-Saharan Africa               | <p><i>Burkina Faso.</i> The EC has supported the implementation of a Ten-year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB), through PASEB and ABRP (GBS). The ECA Audit refers to the final evaluation report of PASEB, which, with regard to EC contribution to enrolment, noted that a positive evolution of the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) and GER was observed. PCR was an indicator of the ABRP 2005-2008 and it proved that the PCR increased from 32% in 2004 (compared to an objective set at 28.8%) to 36.4% in 2006 (compared to a target of 35%).</p>   |
|                                  | <p><i>Ghana.</i> The EC has supported various GBS (total: € 182 million), currently through the Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS). According to the Overseas Development Institute – Centre for Democratic Development (ODI-CDD) MDBS evaluation of 2007<sup>65</sup>, access to education services in Ghana has improved significantly over the lifetime of the MDBS. A key factor in the expanded utilisation of primary education services, in particular in the more disadvantaged areas, has been the implementation of the Capitation Grants Scheme and the abolition of levies. Moreover, the School Feeding Programme has also had an impact on improving access for poorer pupils.</p>   |
|                                  | <p><i>Niger.</i> Through PDDE, the number of primary pupils increased between 2000 and 2008 from 656,589 to 1,554,270 (a 137% rise) and the number of primary teachers from 15,682 to 34,339 (+119%)<sup>66</sup>. The funding of such a rapid increase of primary education would not have been possible with domestic fiscal resources alone, and GBS has been a major tool for efficiently supporting education expansion. The EC is a key contributor to GBS, by far the most active among donors in Niger. The SOUTEBA programme (Programme de soutien à l'éducation de base - Programme of support to the basic education sector) had an impact on access level, and the GER increased by 34% between 2004 and 2008 (compared to a target set at 30%).</p>  |
|                                  | <p><i>Tanzania.</i> The PEDP review of 2004 noted that much was achieved between 2001 and 2004, in that funding has reached school level, in increasing the number of classrooms constructed, textbooks procured, and teachers trained. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) publication on Basic Statistics in Education for 2004 indicates that both gross and net enrolments have expanded substantially between 2001 and 2004, with the GER rising from 85.4 in 2001 to 106.3 in 2004.</p>  |
|                                  | <p><i>Uganda.</i> Since the establishment of UPE in 1996, great achievements have been made in terms of a skyrocketing enrolment rate and in achieving gender parity. From 2004, however, there is a pattern of consolidation and a slight decrease in enrolment. Support to Universal Primary Education (SUPE) arranged for 23,549 classrooms (+39%) to be built, and the EC has assisted the Uganda government to maintain the momentum related to primary enrolment that had started with the launch of UPE in 1997, and to keep costs for all pupils as low as possible (through, for example, school capitation grants). While the achievements related to improved access (even though consolidating, rather than growing) are positive, the picture is far from positive with regard to completion.</p>  |
| Caribbean                        | <p><i>Dominican Republic.</i> EC support has helped by increasing budgetary resources available for innovation and investments, and in the specific case of reconstruction of schools in the Eastern Region, by providing school access to highly disadvantaged children. Moreover, SBS provided by the EC, and the TA provided with the implementation of <i>Programa de Apoyo Presupuestario Sectorial para la Educación</i> (PAPSE), have contributed to improving access rates by substantially increasing financial resources invested in education and allowing for the provision of added value to national investments.</p>   |
| European Neighbourhood countries | <p><i>Tunisia.</i> The core objectives of access to basic education were achieved before the Dakar Conference. The basic education support of the EC (SBS) was mostly oriented towards quality improvements. However, as highlighted by the Country Note, some specific components of the support were dedicated to vulnerable children, whose access and retention has improved during the course of the support – namely, children living in remote rural areas, pupils from low socio-economic background, and children with a physical handicap.</p>  |
| Fragile/failed states            | <p><i>Pakistan.</i> In Sindh province, the EC – through SBS support with extensive TA component – has assisted the provincial government in establishing conditions for improving access and retention in general, and to rural girls in particular. This has happened through its Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs)/sub-programmes related to access and retention: District Terms of Partnership (between Provincial &amp; District Government); Improving efficiency and quality of school rehabilitation; Stipends for girls in public schools; Public Private Partnership in education; and Leveraging the private sector to extend service delivery to underserved areas. Moreover, in Northern Pakistan, through the efforts of the Aga Khan Foundation, enrolment went up by 27.2% in the Northern Areas and by 36.2% in Chitral over the project period. The increase added about 2% to the NER in the areas covered by the project.</p> |

The field visits yielded evidence of EC support focusing on low coverage areas through the construction and rehabilitation of schools and classrooms to address gaps in enrolment. This has contributed to partner country governments' efforts, embodied in PRSPs, MDG plans and education sector strategic plans, to provide access to primary education to all school-aged children. Examples mainly con-

<sup>65</sup> ODI (2007): Joint Evaluation of Multi-Donor Budget Support to Ghana, London 2007.

<sup>66</sup> Banque Mondiale, Niger RESEN, 2009, version provisoire

cern Asia, where NGOs have been used, such as the Aga Khan Foundation and BRAC in *India*, *Northern Pakistan* and *Bangladesh*. This aspect of EC support has not played such a prominent role in other regions of the world.

It should also be noted that, increasingly, **pre-primary education** is becoming formalised and sometimes part of EC sector support programmes. Where no pre-primary provisions are institutionalised, the indicator for the number of new entrants in primary GIR<sup>67</sup> is inflated by under-aged children. Especially in *Sub-Saharan Africa*, big increases in GIR are notable. In several countries across Sub-Saharan Africa – including *Ethiopia* and *Tanzania* – the elimination of school fees has pushed enrolment rates upwards. In all countries, an increase was noticed in the GER, sometimes matched by a decreasing gap between GER and NER.<sup>68</sup>

Similar to Sub-Saharan Africa, in *South Asia* as a whole the system still incorporates a large amount of **over-aged pupils**. Primary completion rates appear to have been rising in most states (apart from fragile states) over the evaluation period, but not as steeply as the enrolment rates. Poverty is seen as detrimental to primary completion, as it discourages enrolment, timely entrance and permanency in schooling. Given this situation, it is clear that **PCR has become an indicator frequently used in GBS and SBS programmes**.

In the evaluation period, the EC – in line with its policies as, for example, set out in the 2002 Communication on “*Education and Training in the context of Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries*” (COM2002 116 final) – has extensively supported partner governments’ main objectives of attaining Education for All, thus striving towards quality education for all eligible children through improving and supporting equitable access. EC support, especially through programmed approaches, budget support and sector support, has assisted all partner countries that benefited from such support in implementing their EFA/MDG agenda, which was monitored through policy triggers and indicators. Especially in South Asia (*India* and *Bangladesh*), the EC complemented support to partner governments with project support to NGOs targeting non-reached areas and target groups.

- In *South Asia*, sector support programmes or SBS were targeted, combined with non-formal provisions catering for hard-to-reach or remote groups. This is the case in *Bangladesh* (PEDP II and BRAC), *India* (DPEP / Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, PESLE), and *Pakistan* (Sindh Education Plan Support Programme, SEPSP (Sindh Education Plan Support Programme), and Northern Pakistan Education Programme).
- Support has also been given with the aim of filling gaps in infrastructure – for example, in *South Africa* (School Infrastructure Support Programme), or through the Schools Reconstruction Programme in the *Dominican Republic*, or EC support to education in *Eritrea*.
- The EC also supported emergency rescue programmes such as those in *Nicaragua* after Hurricane Mitch and the Earthquake Emergency assistance projects in *Pakistan*.

In the sample countries, GBS/SBS programmes supported through EDF in *Niger*, *Burkina Faso*, *Ghana*, *Ethiopia*, *Tanzania*, *Uganda* (and *Madagascar*) had access-enhancing measures, including the abolition of fees in Ghana, which were monitored by performance indicators related to access and completion. In *Cambodia*, a specific target of the SBS programme was the extension of non-formal education, especially in remote and rural areas. Many of those programmes combined emphasis on access with quality and enhancing capacity for service delivery.

The relationship between enrolment and completion is not clear-cut. In general, increased access ultimately enhances increased completion. In that sense, there is no doubt that EC support to access – including construction and rehabilitation of schools and support to pro-poor policies by removing barriers to poor children enrolling – has contributed to improving completion.

**In summary, the MDG goal of all children accessing and completing a full course of primary schooling has been reached in only a few countries.** However, **EC support has helped partner countries to progress towards the goal.** This has been **through a variety of means**, and with varied efforts and successes in the countries supported. While **major success stories** can be found – for example, in *India* and *Tanzania*, where the EC can be said to have been a major contributor – it appears that **in situations of political instability and conflict or post-conflict, there are major bottlenecks with regard to accommodating MDG2.** Nevertheless, **innovative approaches have been applied to implement sector budget support** in close co-operation with a Development Bank (in *Pakistan*), which, by applying a strictly performance-based approach, is yielding interesting results.

<sup>67</sup> Intake indicates the capacity of the education system to provide access to grade 1 for the official school entrance age population.

<sup>68</sup> This indicates, and this will be explained in a broader way as it involves more EQs, that the EC is moving towards comprehensive support programmes based on government ownership assisting partner governments to create and sustain conditions for improved access to quality basic education.

The link between poverty and governments' failure to generate sufficient revenues to meet basic education resource requirements and the capacity to meet MDG goals is exemplified by LDCs, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

From the analysis made, it appears that the **EC has contributed to enhancing not only access but also completion. However, the time span for EC interventions becoming visible in terms of increased completion rates stretches beyond the evaluation period.**

#### 4.2.3 JC22: Progress in gender parity (MDG3 and EFA5) supported by EC

Much progress has been made in accommodating MDG3 on gender equality and target 3A, aimed at eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. As for the sample countries selected for this evaluation, considerable progress in terms of achieving gender parity in 2007, compared to 2005, was noticed in the majority of the 23 countries. In *Bangladesh*, gender parity in primary and secondary has been achieved during the period under evaluation. However, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) secondary remains at low levels in the *fragile states Eritrea, Somalia and Pakistan*, as well as *Burkina Faso and Niger*. There seems to be a strong relationship between low overall primary enrolments and an under-enrolment of girls. This indicates that the demand for girls' schooling is lower in poorer countries, which may reflect parents' perceptions of lower net benefits set against high opportunity costs. This relationship between low enrolment and under-enrolment of girls is apparent in *Burkina Faso and Niger*, and in the fragile states of *Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia and Pakistan*. However, there are exceptions to this general rule, such as *Mozambique*, which has reasonable enrolment figures, but has deficit in girls' enrolment, as reflected by a low GPI of 0.87.

The major intervening variable detrimental to girls' enrolment is poverty. Making education free – including auxiliary costs, providing food for pupils, and stipends for poor girls – may reduce barriers to girls' education. Moreover, cultural barriers with regard to the role of women in society require a mind-set transformation, certainly in traditional segments of society. Especially in poor countries, prejudice against female teachers is a major obstruction, with male teachers seeking to maintain their dominance of the profession, particularly in rural areas. While lots of progress has been made in training and recruiting female teachers in many countries, especially poorer ones, the gender parity index for the teaching staff is still low, and in lower and upper secondary education it is even worse.

Evaluation findings show that, where the partner country education sector support programme, policies and strategies are pro-poor and pro-girls, this may yield the effect of **enhancing girls' enrolment in primary education**, if combined with strategies aimed at making education completely free for girls, through such measures as stipends for female pupils.

As well as highlighting improvements, data analysis also showed that girls are still strongly over-represented among out-of-school children and early school leavers. Nationwide improvements obscure big discrepancies between urban and rural areas, regions, and between classes and castes. Design of EC-supported programmes and projects and their implementation is trying to remove those barriers with a variety of measures, such as: in school rehabilitation projects, through separate toilets for boys and girls; in girls' education projects, through separate schools, sometimes boarding schools, for girls in secondary education, and through training of female teachers for those schools (for example, PROMOTE - Programme to Motivate, Train & Employ Female Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools - in *Bangladesh*). In general, sector support programmes, through SBS, are gender-disaggregated, but for GBS gender-disaggregation is far from a general rule. Hence, access indicators set as a basis for monitoring compliance and subsequent disbursement in SBS capture progress made related to MDG3, while GBS support is still sometimes applying aggregated indicators for access and completion.

The EC is also supporting partner governments in giving stipends for girls, especially for their enrolment and retention in secondary education (for example, the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan*), while general pro-poor measures are being implemented, including arranging for education that is really free of costs to parents. These measures stimulate enrolment of girls, given the fact that many parents give preference to boys when investments are required. At a more specific level, the following underpins the general findings:

- Overall, in *Asia*, two out of four sample countries benefited specifically from EC support to assist partner governments to accommodate MDG3 – in *Bangladesh* through the NGO BRAC and through PEDP, and in *India* through DPEP and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Bangladesh reached gender parity in primary and secondary education – a remarkable achievement, to which the EC contributed. In *ACP Sub-Saharan African* countries, EC support to education, focusing on gender issues, has been tangible and significant in *Tanzania*. It has shaped gender issues in **dialogue with partner governments and development partners**, as reflected in

this key priority in all countries where education is a focal country. Influence on the policy agenda related to gender and equity issues is strongly apparent in *Botswana* and *Namibia*.

- EC support to fragile states has been strongly demand-driven, and one of these demands has been to assist partner governments in **increasing access to primary and secondary education for girls**. This was especially the case in Pakistan, where the EC addressed the issue through its budget support to the Provincial Government of Sindh, including stipends for girls, contributing to enhancing girls' enrolment in secondary education, especially in backward districts.

#### 4.2.4 JC23: Support to making education free of cost has yielded some tangible results, but cost still constitutes a major problem

While all sample countries have made provisions for compulsory primary education and sometimes beyond, many barriers to access still need to be removed to ensure that primary education is free of charge, especially to poor parents. Apart from fees, the cost of textbooks, contributions to school development and additional tuition, uniforms, and the opportunity costs of children (in some countries, such as *Bangladesh*, especially for boys) not participating in gainful activities make the education of their children unaffordable for poor parents. In many countries, perhaps most, the problem occurs of school fees being charged illegally. The effect of lifting barriers such as fee-charging has proved to be a significant trigger in boosting enrolment to such a level that governments cannot sustain the additional resources required for quality education, hence leading to a decline in enrolment in subsequent years. The example of *Tanzania* shows that the abolition of primary school fees in the framework of the EC supported PEDP caused primary school enrolment to jump from 1.4 million to 3 million in 2004. The reform included the introduction of free primary school education for all, through the abolishment of school fees, alongside legislation that prevents a school from turning away any pupil who is unable to cover the additional (hidden) costs, such as school uniforms. Similarly, in *India*, during the lifetime of the EC co-funded Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed in support of the government's aim to reduce out-of-school children by at least 9 million by 2012, with an increase in enrolment, in the process of universalising elementary education.

Compulsory education is fully within the realm of partner government responsibility. EC support to partner countries linked to this domain is fostering pro-poor policies and strategies with resource allocations linked to the PRSP. This has happened within sectoral support, SBS and, indirectly, through GBS. Evidence of this was found in *Tanzania* as an effect of the support from the EC and other development partners as part of PEDP 1. EC support to recruitment of female teachers (for example, EC support to PROMOTE in Bangladesh) tried to overcome one of the strong barriers to girls' education – the lack of female teachers, especially in secondary education. Some of these measures are visible through costed measures within Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) fostering a decrease in costs for poor families to enrol their children in primary and secondary education. **School capitation grants and stipends** have been among the measures within EC programmes of support to the primary and secondary education sector (especially in *Pakistan*, *Tanzania*, and *Bangladesh*).

Taking all the related findings into account, the EC has contributed, together with other development partners, to the abolishment of fees in *Tanzania* and *India*, stipulated in the FAs for PEDP (*Tanzania*) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (*India*); supported early primary education schools in *Tunisia*; given extensive support to non-formal education (*India*, *Pakistan*, *Bangladesh*); assisted in removing poverty-linked barriers, through girls' stipends (Pakistan) or, most importantly, through GBS-provided resources to governments to cater for education in rural areas, such as in *Niger*, and thus contributed to bringing out-of-school children into formal education.

#### 4.2.5 JC24: Some successes in reaching disadvantaged groups, but mainly focusing on Asia

The key EC development thrust is its focus on poverty eradication, and within that thrust it is obvious that poor children have a fundamental right to access and complete basic education. There is a strong link between poverty and missing out on schooling. For poor families, the opportunity costs of schooling are high, and hence many children are working and many of those remain out of school. The EC Staff Working Document, "*Combating Child Labour*", stressed that global efforts to ensure education for all and the progressive elimination of child labour are mutually supportive objectives. This is reiterated in the Council Conclusion on Child Labour and is a component of the thematic programme "*Investing in People*".

In quantitative terms, the problem of unreached children is also significant, given that eight countries (Nigeria, *India*, *Pakistan*, Ethiopia, *Bangladesh*, Kenya, *Niger* and *Burkina Faso*) each have more than 1 million out-of-school children, and that four in 10 children not in school live in these countries.

While it is clear that large gaps still remain, particularly for the most disadvantaged groups, progress has nevertheless been made, particularly when viewed against the backdrop of the 1990s, when out-

of-school numbers were rising in some regions. For example, with EC support, *Tanzania* and *India* have good track records with regard to **reaching out to out-of-school youth**.

- Since 1999, the *Tanzania “National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty”* (NSGRP), or MKUKUTA, has put poverty reduction high on the country’s development agenda and is aimed at achieving quality education. Through non-formal education for out-of-school children in 2005, about 480,000 school-age children were enrolled in NFE centres, with EC support within the framework of the PEDP 1 programme (EDF 8). The programme supported the Government of Tanzania to reform its primary education system through the Primary Education Development Plan 2002-2006 (PEDP). More specifically, the EC programme under the 8<sup>th</sup> EDF was intended to support the PEDP in its objectives of expanding enrolment, improving the quality of teaching and learning processes, and building capacity and strengthening the institutional arrangements that support the planning and delivery of education services. Tanzania has reduced its out-of-school numbers from more than 3 million in 2001 to less than 150,000 in 2005 through policy interventions that included the abolition of primary school fees in 2001, and through increased public investment and measures to enhance education quality.
- In *India*, the EC assisted the government to break through thick separation walls between mainstream Hindu groups and scheduled castes and tribes, often living in remote areas. The number of out-of-school children aged 6-14 was reduced from 25 million to 14 million between 2001 and 2006 in India as a whole, and the percentage of out-of-school girls declined from 7.9% (2005) to 4.6% (2009).

These are two examples of impact through systematic EC support aimed at getting more children into schools, in environments where previously there often were no schools. This fully fits within a pro-poor approach that seeks to pay more attention to groups in society who are the most disadvantaged – such as people in rural or semi-rural areas, ethnic, social or cultural minorities, or those disadvantaged by, for example, HIV/Aids. Such an approach – usually stressed in CSPs, but also in programme documents – provides a foundation for selective EC support to mainstreaming disadvantaged groups. During the period under evaluation, the EC also funded NGO programmes complementing partner country government efforts to provide education for all. These programmes reached out to hard-to-reach disadvantaged groups through non-formal education provision.

Increasingly, strategies are being developed by governments (for example, in *Cambodia*) to reach out to these groups. In some cases, reforms concentrate on the formal system, incorporating innovative methodologies and approaches developed by NGOs (*India*), or putting emphasis on mainstreaming NGO non-formal education provision (*Bangladesh*). However, as shown by the examples below and the overall analysis, it appears that the issue of NGO provision and equivalency programmes is predominantly supported in *Asian countries*. In *Africa*, there are hardly any large NGOs implementing a nationwide agenda of non-formal education. It appears that the EC, in its support programmes – especially, though not exclusively, in *Asia* – has made efforts to identify discrimination or under-provision, and to help enable the implementation of strategies to overcome these.

- In *Bangladesh*, the EC-supported programmes reached out to children in difficult-to-reach areas (such as urban slums and the Chittagong Hill Tracts) with quality education. The three NGOs implementing the project reached 330,000 of the most vulnerable children from poor households and ethnic minorities, providing a full cycle of primary education. Access to primary education for children from disadvantaged groups in Northern *Vietnam* has been boosted through the “*School Attendance Programme for Ethnic Minority Children in Bac Ha*” project and the “*Early Childhood Development in Remote Mountainous Ethnic Minority Communities in Northern Vietnam*” project.
- In *Niger*, the EC supported a project on access to regular primary schools for children with physical handicaps in the Niamey area. In *Botswana*, dialogues between the EC and the government have played a role in shifting the partner country agenda towards disadvantaged groups. In *Tunisia*, through EC support within the framework of the basic education SBS, 50 schools were rehabilitated in order to make them accessible to children with handicaps. Specific efforts have also been made in deprived areas to provide schools with electricity and safe drinking water as well as heating systems.
- In *Pakistan*, the Northern Pakistan Education Programme, implemented by the Aga Khan Education Services, improved access, quality and sustainability of education for in-school and out-of-school children, including females. It resulted in increased gender equity and participation of communities in Northern Areas and Chitral. Moreover, the programme arranged non-formal education opportunities for some 22,486 mainly female and out-of-school children.

**In sum**, the evaluation found evidence of **EC support impacting on the partner governments’ MDG2 and 3 agenda. Different modalities were used in support for pro-poor sector reform programmes** (for example, in *Tanzania* and *India*). **NGOs were funded, complementing partner gov-**

**ernment provisions with non-formal education, including a focus on remote, hard-to-reach areas, vulnerable ethnic groups, tribes and scheduled castes (South Asia), and inclusive education for children with disabilities.** However, given the emphasis on programmed approaches and government ownership, and the circumstances of austerity limiting partner governments' funds for basic education, the **emphasis remained on formal education.** Hence, the 10% of children who are in the not-reached category, and who often are ultra-poor and from disadvantaged groups, have not been a key focus of EC support.

Finally, fragility is an ambiguous concept, sometimes being perceived as lack of or restricted capacity for system transformation and implementation of a pro-poor education agenda. This perceived weakness often leads to support modalities applying the project mode, which does not change existing weak structures. Performance-based and innovative EC approaches impinging on partner government capacity to substantiate progress on MDG 2 and 3 have been applied in *Pakistan* and *Eritrea*. Such approaches if yielding performance may enhance equal partnership approaches.

### 4.3 EQ3-secondary: To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving transition to secondary level (both lower and upper)?

This question assesses the success of countries in improving transition rates (internal efficiency) from Primary to Lower Secondary to achieve EFA goals, as EFA's expanded view of Basic Education incorporates Lower or Junior Secondary education. Several countries have adopted basic education, sometimes referred to as Elementary Education (e.g. *India, Pakistan*). Moreover, especially in middle-income countries, lower secondary education is compulsory. The EQ also assesses transition from Lower (Junior) Secondary to Upper (Senior) Secondary (internal efficiency), which is important when considering the linkage between education, skills acquisition and employment (external efficiency). In general, most countries – especially poor ones – and the EC's education-related support have given priority to primary education, and assessment will be made of whether EC support has complemented its support to the primary sector with support especially to lower secondary education. Given the austerity conditions pertaining, the private sector has complemented public efforts, but is, in general, not accommodating equity and pro-poor considerations in its provisions.

Given the progress made in many countries towards the achievement of universal primary education, there are increasing demands from students for further education – in response to which, adequate facilities, staff and financial resources need to be provided. A focus on secondary education thus becomes an increasingly relevant issue and demands specific attention in the context of the various implementation modalities of a Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP).

External efficiency is a central issue and relates to one of the most crucial impacts of EC assistance to education as represented in the intervention logic. It is well described for *Tunisia*: In the EU/Tunisia strategy paper 2007-13 and NIP 2007-10, the major problem identified in the education sector is linked to the employability of school leavers at all levels. Even earlier, EC support to basic education had aimed at improving the quality of secondary education – since, even as early as 2000, Tunisia had already achieved the objective of Education for All, as well as gender parity.

The answer to this EQ is thus built on the following JCs:

- JC31: Internal Efficiency of the school cycle from Primary to Lower & Senior Secondary
- JC32: Capacity of secondary institutions to accommodate potential enrolments and to meet expected rise in demand for enrolment (especially at lower secondary level)

#### EQ3 on Secondary Education – Summary Answer Box

EC support with regard to secondary education has rather been focused on medium human development countries with secondary education policies and strategies, on supporting secondary school construction and rehabilitation, especially in fragile states in post-conflict or post-emergency situations, and on removing barriers to female participation. Total EC support directly to secondary education amounts only to € 41.5 million, which represents 2% of the total directed towards basic and secondary education (3% for the sample countries). Most of this amount was directed towards the secondary education SBS in *Tunisia*, which is the only SBS support that has focused exclusively on secondary education. It has contributed to the increase of the transition rates (TR) to lower secondary and upper secondary by supporting the government policy of reducing repetition and drop-out rates at primary level.

The figure mentioned does not include other SPSPs where secondary education is part of the support to basic or elementary education, often incorporating lower secondary education. However, the degree to which EC funds are targeted at lower secondary is not always sufficiently clear, given the varying definitions of basic/primary and secondary education. Given the fiscal resource requirements for universalising primary education, most sub-Saharan African countries have lagged behind on secondary education. Overall, EC support has so far not significantly focused on strengthening the capacity for delivering pro-poor secondary education, and the role of such support in EC sector support (covering also other sub-sectors) is still small. However, with the relatively small investment, and within particular country contexts, the support has been cost-effective, having made some contribution to improving transition to secondary education (both lower and upper), including in remote areas and for disadvantaged pupils.

#### 4.3.1 JC31: Only partial progress with EC support to improve low internal efficiency: still too little throughput and too high wastage

Enrolment in primary education increased sharply between 2000 and 2007, and, as noted in EQ 2, EC support has played a solidly supportive role in partner countries. EFA's expanded view of Basic Education incorporates lower or junior secondary education, constituting a minimum package of learning required to proceed to further education or employment. However, this minimum package of learning does not yet reach large sections of those enrolled in primary education. Completion rates still lag behind, hence affecting transition to secondary education. As a result of this lag in transition to secondary education, many young people do not acquire the competencies that would help them to proceed to further education or find gainful employment. The challenge is whether children everywhere can

complete primary education of sufficient quality, and whether they can continue learning in lower secondary education as a foundation for meeting their basic learning needs. In many developing countries and in most Sub-Saharan African countries, these challenges are far from being met. The problem of targeting secondary education – apart from partner countries where lower secondary is part of basic education – is exacerbated by the fact that it has not featured prominently in the educational agenda of developing countries. This is beginning to change, particularly in those countries where near-universal primary school enrolment is creating pressure at higher levels. The country pattern observed in relation to transition to lower secondary, and hence progress made towards universalising basic education, seems to be strongly determined by the state of economic development and the progress made towards achieving MDG2.

In LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa*, low primary completion is combined with low transition and a low GER for lower secondary. *Niger*, *Burkina Faso* and *Mozambique* are far off track in meeting the MDG2 target, replicating this pattern for lower secondary, with low transition of the relatively few proceeding to secondary education (even though at improved levels in 2007, compared to 2000) and with small numbers of pupils at lower secondary education level reflected by low GERs, such as *Niger* (15), *Burkina Faso* (21) and *Mozambique* (26). *Botswana*, *South Africa* and *Ghana* (moving towards mid-income status) combine a high PCR with solid transition and enrolment in lower secondary education.

In *Asia*, *Indonesia*, *Tajikistan* and, increasingly, *India* have solid **PCR and transition**, but *Bangladesh* still lags behind, despite having made good progress. *Latin American* countries in general fare well with regard to PCR and transition to secondary. *European Neighbourhood countries* have solid track records in universalising basic education, including lower secondary. This applies to *Tunisia* and, to a lesser extent to the *Russian Federation*. In the fragile states, strong advances were made in *Eritrea*, especially in lower secondary GER, from 39 in 2000 to 65 in 2007. The PCR is still low (47), but among those completing primary, the progression to lower secondary is relatively high. The reason for the rise in GER is unclear, unless it is caused by large numbers of delayed entrants as a result of lower secondary schools having been constructed. In *Somalia*, secondary education shows a GER of less than 2%, with under-representation and underperformance of girl – although that applies probably to secondary education as a whole. *Pakistan* lags far behind, with low transition and with low PCR leading to a GER of 65, comparable to Bangladesh. Transition rates in Pakistan from primary to lower secondary have slightly improved over the period under evaluation

Enrolment in upper secondary shows that middle-income countries have made progress, while upper secondary in LDCs remains reserved for a privileged minority. Within poor countries, socio-economic status – such as class and family income – determines access to upper secondary. Poor countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, provide very limited access to upper secondary, with low GERs in countries such as *Niger* (4), *Burkina Faso* (8), *Mozambique*, whereas large participation is noted in middle-income countries such as *South Africa* (96) and *Botswana* (64), as well as in *Caribbean*, *Latin American* and *European Neighbourhood countries*.

Even though good cost calculations are lacking, it is clear that expanding upper secondary education is much more expensive than lower secondary, which is more general and requires less specialised teachers and classrooms.

EC support is generally demand-based and linked to the capacity of partner governments for ownership of their own reform agenda. Hence, the partner country has to assign priority to secondary education as a specific sub-sector, or as part of a sector-wide approach, identifying access, quality and staffing requirements and costing them. The partner country also has to identify existing provision – including private provision – and determine its role towards all providers (in terms of accreditation, quality maintenance, monitoring).

In understanding trends in EC support to secondary education, some constraints – which may, in some cases, be legacies of the past – have to be addressed:

- Definitions of secondary education are changing, and this has implications for statistics. What is called secondary education in the context of this evaluation<sup>69</sup> may in some partner countries refer to a combination of basic education and secondary education.
- It is difficult to identify sub-sectoral allocations to lower secondary within sectoral budget support and sector support programmes following a SWAp.
- It is not possible to determine the effect that compliance with indicators related to secondary education in GBS has on the budget for secondary education programmes. That applies also, to a much lesser extent, to indicators related to variable tranche release in SBS programmes.

<sup>69</sup> Secondary education is defined here as Lower Secondary (usually Years 1-3) general education immediately after transition from the primary cycle, and Upper Secondary (usually Years 4-5) is the phase of education leading to matriculation. This definition is based on UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education 1997.

- In many countries, the private sector is a strong actor in terms of secondary education provision. The position of the EC vis-à-vis support both to public and private actors in education delivery is not crystal clear.

In countries with low primary enrolment and completion rates, partner governments – and hence EC efforts – have concentrated mainly on universalising primary education, given the scarcity of resources. This is the case in almost all *Sub-Saharan African* countries. Moreover, secondary education has traditionally been much less of a focal area for government intervention, and much more of an arena for private provision, which may not cater for equity considerations

Overall, as highlighted in the inventory, **total EC support directly to secondary education amounts only to € 41.5 million**, or 2% of the total directed towards basic and secondary education (3% for the sample countries). However, the figure does not include other forms of SBS and SPSPs where secondary education is only part of the support. Lower secondary education is often part of sector support programmes, but it proved to be difficult to quantify specifically the share of EC support to secondary education in such a situation.

Only four out of 23 sample countries benefit(ed) from EC support directly geared only towards secondary education; support to the SBS in *Tunisia* was the only significant EC support, accounting for 97.5% of the total EC support to secondary education. EC support to secondary education focuses especially on lower-income and middle-income countries, and where partner countries have increasingly given priority to secondary education through moving towards a sector-wide approach in education. This data reflects the fact that the emphasis of EC support to education has remained on assisting partner countries in universalising primary education. Apart from *Tunisia* (SBS), only *Niger* (support to a private secondary institution), *Bangladesh* (PROMOTE) and *Russian Federation* received direct EC support to secondary education.

- In *Bangladesh*, the EC supported PROMOTE (€ 28.82 million, 1996-2005), a programme with the aim of facilitating a more gender-sensitive and equitable society by promoting girl-friendly secondary schools. Some 5,000 female secondary teachers were trained and employed, and 11 resource centres and 162 hostels for female secondary teachers were set up. Overall, by stepping into a key area affecting quality, access and retention of girls in secondary education, EC support has played a direct role in enhancing girls' enrolment in secondary education, and also has contributed to changing the mindset among potential female teachers, and in society as a whole.
- In *Tunisia*, the SBS (€ 30 million, 2006-08) aimed at improving secondary education performance (grades 10-12), with a view to closing the gap between Tunisian education and the best international standards, and to diversifying strands after grade 9, in order to improve the capacity of students to find a job or to enter higher education. While the SBS was perfectly in line with the government policy, the analysis within the Country Note indicates that this policy overestimated the capacity of general secondary education to prepare school leavers for the job market, and underestimated the merits of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in such a role. An evaluation in 2008 found mixed results, particularly in the domain of TA mobilisation.

While the EUD survey stressed the role of the EC in encouraging sector dialogue as the most important EC added value (*Nicaragua*, *Uganda* and *Pakistan*) with regard to support to secondary education, respondents also confirmed that the EC is not very active in the sub-sector of secondary education (*Vietnam*, *India* and *South Africa*). However, this perception should be put into perspective: several sector support programmes, such as in *Botswana*, *Pakistan* and *India*, have applied a sector-wide approach, including primary and lower secondary education. From the analysis made, it appears that in cases where partner governments are giving priority to secondary education, **SBS and GBS variable tranches will usually incorporate indicators related to secondary education outputs/outcomes.**

Among the sample countries, *Burkina Faso*, *Dominican Republic*, *Ghana*, *Jamaica*, *Mozambique*, *Niger*, *Tanzania* and *Uganda* have received **GBS** with reference to the education sector (see also EQ9). In the release triggers for the **flexible tranches, the most typical performance indicator in the education sector is net primary school enrolment rate, usually gender-disaggregated. PCR is also a typical indicator**, but sometimes the transition rate from Primary to Lower and Upper Secondary constitutes one of the performance targets of EC support and government programmes – for example, in *Uganda* and *Tanzania*. In *Uganda*, secondary education indicators were incorporated in the performance indicators of GBS support – that is, in EC support to the Poverty Alleviation Budget Support programme 5 (PABS5; total for Budget support between 2000 and 2007: € 157 million). Reference is made in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) to the launch in February 2007 of Universal Secondary Education (USE), which subsequently increased the P7 to S1 transition rate from 22% to 46.9%. Despite this success, Uganda still has a long way to go in terms of achieving USE. When

looking at all the sample countries together, it seems that those receiving substantial **SBS** funds had rather a limited focus on secondary education, apart from *Tunisia* and countries that have SWAp-like approaches (*India, Indonesia and Pakistan*).

In the case of *India*, after progressing from DPEP to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the objective became the implementation of universal elementary education covering primary class 1-5 and upper primary class 6-8, aiming to provide education of quality to all children in the age group 6-14. Jalan and Glinskaya<sup>70</sup> claim that EC support to DPEP had a positive impact on primary school completion and progression to secondary education. They state that the average impact of DPEP 1 is greatest for “cohort progression”, suggesting that the programme may have been instrumental in substantially reducing drop-out rates among attending students. A similar effect can be found in EC-supported DPEP districts, where the completion rate of primary education increased by more than 6%, compared with only marginal improvement in non-DPEP districts.

These examples show that **EC support, although relatively small in size, has given good value for money in terms of assisting in improving transition from primary to secondary education and removing barriers to girls’ enrolment and retention in secondary education**. However, the general pattern in LDCs and most fragile countries may be characterised by low internal efficiency and high wastage of investments, through students dropping out and by the fact that those completing primary but not proceeding to secondary have little prospect of improved livelihood.

Partner countries and the EC may both face a dilemma about whether to resolve the problem of access and quality in primary education before placing secondary education on the agenda, or whether to pursue both goals simultaneously. Given government ownership of reform and support, that dilemma is particularly relevant to the EC, in terms of its role being to support government policies or to encourage required shifts in emphasis towards basic education through dialogue.

#### **4.3.2 JC32: Limited emphasis in EC support on secondary education, with a view to accommodating more pupils**

The effect of increased access to primary education will, in most countries, remain limited unless secondary education increasingly accommodates primary school leavers, thus better preparing young people for life and gainful employment. The EC’s own analysis in the recent Staff Working Document<sup>71</sup> stresses that the provision of quality basic and post-basic education is severely constrained by present levels of resources devoted to education. It is estimated that at least USD 16 billion of additional aid is required annually to finance UPE, early childhood programmes and literacy in low-income countries. Much more is required if all EFA goals are to be met (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010). This is based on the assumption that domestic resource generation for the education sector is consolidating or growing, which can be measured by three indicators (see EQ 6)<sup>72</sup>. For the vast majority of sample countries, indicators are not met – often scoring far below the benchmarks.

Given that budgetary allocations to education do not meet requirements, it is clear that poor countries in particular cannot shift funding for primary to the secondary sub-sector. With the countries’ constrained finances, the education budget does even not meet the needs of the primary education sub-sector alone. In general, most countries, especially poor ones, have given priority to primary education, thus consuming the majority of the budget for education, with secondary education a neglected area, leaving a vacuum for the private sector to fill. As for the **EC contribution to possible changes regarding the enrolment capacities of secondary institutions**, the evaluation found a broad variety of situations, which, overall, can be characterised as focusing on middle-income countries or fast-growing economies with a policy framework for secondary education in place, or focusing on removing-gender related barriers to girls’ enrolment in secondary education. Many studies have observed the existence of uneven distribution of secondary education opportunities between poor and non-poor regions, especially in rural and remote areas. This situation of strong disparities can be seen as a general characteristic observed in almost all countries, including *Tunisia, Dominican Republic* and all countries in *Sub-Saharan Africa*. However, where secondary education is part of a SWAp and a secondary education policy/strategic plan has been made, Education Management Information System (EMIS) data can be generated on lower and upper secondary education provision (schools, colleges), such as enrolment by district. In *Pakistan*, this is being done in Sindh province with EC TA support, through combining data from the Annual School Survey with Geographical Information System (GIS) data. Where lower secondary education is not part of country priorities, EMIS will focus on data on primary education only.

<sup>70</sup> Jalan, J and Glinskaya, E (2005), Improving Primary School Education in India. An Impact Assessment of DPEP I, Washington, DC, World Bank

<sup>71</sup> Commission Staff Working Document, More and Better Education in Developing Countries, Sec (2010)121 final

<sup>72</sup> These indicators are: “Share of GDP to education”, “Share of public expenditure for education”, and “Share of public expenditure by level of education (primary, secondary, higher)”.

While specific characteristics of EC support could be identified for *Tunisia* and *Bangladesh*, it is more complex to attribute improvements in enrolment to secondary education institutions to EC support within programmes covering both primary and secondary education (*India, Pakistan*). It constitutes an even greater challenge in GBS applying secondary education performance indicators (especially *Ghana* and *Uganda*).

However, the example of *Tunisia* shows that EC support has helped in actively promoting geographical equity. While there are enough schools with sufficient capacity to accommodate all children entering junior and senior secondary education, the government, for regional equity reasons, accelerated the creation of new establishments in deprived regions during the lifetime of the secondary education SBS.

The EC support in the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan* is based on an emerging SWAp approach and on targeting primary, middle and secondary education. The EC TA plays a crucial role in support of the Government of Sindh. Even though the programme has so far not significantly focused on strengthening the capacity for delivering pro-poor secondary education, EC-supported TA can be effectively used to prepare for it, thus extending EC support beyond primary education. One of the sub-programmes is stipends for girls in public secondary schools, with the indicators: “*Share of beneficiary girls that received stipends; Number of low transition rate talukas (sub-districts) with higher differential stipend program (DSP)*”. On the other hand, the example of *Ghana*, which benefited from various GBS funding (total € 182 million, currently through the MDBS – Multi-donor Budget Support), shows a typical pattern that emerges in the context of rapid expansion of secondary education facilities.

- In *Pakistan*, the Government has no focus on secondary education reform. Only about 25% of primary school enrolments proceed to middle schools. Private sector enrolment in middle schools is 29%. The content of the curriculum is weak, and there are large discrepancies between urban and rural areas in terms of secondary education facilities. In the EC-supported Sindh SBS, the annual school surveys in Sindh, combined with information from the GIS, indicate that adequate allocation of schools and resources by district for middle and higher secondary can be identified. EC TA is assisting in adequately linking the District Education Management Information System (DEMIS) and Secondary Education Management Information System (SEMIS) to GIS. The discrepancies are particularly apparent between urban and rural districts. The Sindh SBS tries to address those discrepancies by arranging for low-cost private sector provision through the Sindh Education Foundation, including both primary and middle schools (lower secondary).
- In *Ghana*, according to the ODI-CDD Multi-donor Budget Support evaluation of 2007, access to education services has improved significantly over the lifetime of the MDBS, and especially in 2005 and 2006. The authors emphasise that the MDBS instrument has contributed to such changes. For instance, the total gross enrolment rate in Junior Secondary Schools reached 72.8% in 2004-05, exceeding the target of 68.30%. But while increases in enrolments in Senior Secondary Schools (and at tertiary levels) have also been substantial, the increase in pupil numbers in primary and junior secondary schools has meant that some critical inputs are stretched beyond capacity. Overall, according to the evaluation report, **the rate of increase in enrolments has simply been too fast for education sector inputs to keep up.**

Moreover, the fact that **secondary education is starting to receive more attention** is also demonstrated by the case of the *Dominican Republic*, where, according to the Country Note, starting from 2009 several investments (including the EC PAPSE II SBS) have been made to increase coverage and to facilitate access to secondary education.<sup>73</sup>

**In conclusion, the EC contribution to secondary education has been small, but influential.** Secondary education is indirectly targeted in sector policy support programmes where support to basic education has been implemented. EC support to such programmes paved the way for further support to partner countries, complementing priority resource allocations to basic education with support to secondary education.<sup>74</sup> The move towards secondary education has been prepared in several EC-supported SPSPs in mid-income countries during the period under evaluation, but leading to implementation mainly after the period under evaluation. However, in least developed countries, given limited resources, the EC faces the same dilemma as those partner countries: either to maintain a strong focus in terms of resource allocations to pro-poor support to MDG2, or to diversify support more in line with the extended view of basic education.

<sup>73</sup> Its specific objective is to provide quality education for all, by addressing the low performance of the educational system and achieving a deep long-term reform. It will be based on a system of indicators related to access, equity and quality as well as education management, and is supposed to start in 2011

<sup>74</sup> In India, the Government launched in March 2009 a nation-wide Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), focusing on secondary education for people aged 14-18. A formulation mission for EC support to this new initiative is being planned in 2010.

#### 4.4 EQ4-quality: To what extent has EC support to education contributed to improving the quality of education?

Globally, substantial progress has been achieved in access-related issues. However, good quality is essential if investments in education are to yield a high rate of return in terms of poverty reduction and sustainable economic and social development. EFA 2 stresses that all children – particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities – should be able to complete primary education of **good quality**. The Dakar Framework of Action presents an expanded definition of quality, which is quite difficult to achieve in the context of societies faced with austerity. Parameters of quality are: desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula), and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). Qualified teachers, effective teaching methods and well-trained school leaders are key determinants of effective schools and learning.<sup>75</sup>

The purpose of the question is to assess how far EC support to education has helped to improve the quality of education. It also addresses strategies to enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

Quality improvement is a process of change leading to improved learning achievements, through improving the professional standards of teachers, school inspection processes, provision of curricula and materials, and system issues such as career development. The process must begin with a vision of what quality improvement is needed, and then be translated into a well-formulated series of activities. Improving the quality of primary education is essential to increase the transition rate to subsequent levels of education and to lay the foundation for more qualified and employable graduates.

The EQ addresses the quality of education through four judgment criteria:

- JC41: Availability of strategies and resources to enhance quality of learning and teaching;
- JC42: Quality-related efficiency measures;
- JC43: Qualifications and competencies of teachers and school leaders enhanced;
- JC44: Provisions made to ensure minimum quality education for children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities.

##### EQ4 on quality – Answer Summary Box

EC support combines approaches to improving access with support to strategies for quality improvement. However, in line with the conclusion emerging from the survey of EUDs, the impacts of EC support on increasing quality are found to be rather limited in the vast majority of countries that have received quite substantial support. This is based on the paucity of government funds for basic education. Within these limits, most are concentrating on sustaining and improving access, including meeting recurrent budget requirements for recruiting the necessary additional teachers. While the EC has provided support yielding good results related to improved management of the sector impinging on quality (see EQ 6), direct education quality improvement measures have hardly been addressed so far. Given the paucity of funds, least developed countries in particular have little room in the budget for covering non-salary costs of quality improvement measures.

The evaluation's analysis showed that support through GBS sometimes has assisted governments to meet the bare necessities for education system survival, including recurrent budget financing of teacher salaries and textbooks. In other cases, such as in *India* and *Niger*, contract teachers were recruited and budgeted outside the recurrent budget to meet teacher requirements related to expanded enrolment or to cater for teacher recruitment in remote areas. Without such support, education provision would have further deteriorated. SBS and sector support programmes, especially in middle-income countries, have assisted partner country governments in accommodating quality improvement strategies system-wide.

Middle-income countries avail of more resources and increasingly concentrate on an international competitiveness agenda, requiring quality improvement of basic and secondary education. Especially where the government was not in the position to ensure quality, EC support to NGOs following a project mode assisted either in reaching out to under-reached areas or establishing bridges to facilitate mainstreaming of quality improvement strategies (*India, Bangladesh, Pakistan*, and mainstreaming NGO methodologies and innovations in Indonesia). EC support in addressing post-conflict and post-emergency situations, through MDTFs or NGOs, covered not only construction and rehabilitation, but also system re-engineering and methodologies to enhance learning.

There has not been a specific focus on hard-to-reach children in EC support. These children will remain marginalised, even though the EC has assisted those partner countries which have given priority

<sup>75</sup> See EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005. Apart from referring to quality as defined in Jomtien and Dakar, reference is made to UNESCOs and UNICEFs conceptualisation of quality.

## EQ4 on quality – Answer Summary Box

to creating minimum quality conditions for such children.

Overall, EC support to quality has been important, but has only in few cases contributed to system-wide quality improvements. Medium-growth economies (e.g. *Tunisia* and *India*) are gradually moving from an emphasis on access to embarking on quality approaches. EC support is playing a solid role in that respect. Where the EC has used the NGO channels, improvements can be noted, but these are not systemic and nation-wide.

#### 4.4.1 JC41: EC support is moving from an emphasis on access to access combined with improving quality

It was found that **most EC-supported education sector support programmes include a quality-related component**. This applies even to programmes concentrating on meeting access requirements through school and classroom construction and rehabilitation. However, investments in strategies aimed at yielding improved quality are long-term in nature. They require much more than just providing new schools and classrooms; they also require, for example, better conditions of service for often lowly-paid teaching staff (demanding civil service reform), large-scale competency-building related to supervision and pre-service and in-service teacher training, improved curricula, and provision of textbooks as part of a comprehensive longer-term approach. However, **government budgets often constrain the implementation of quality aspects** and, hence the focus may be on improving access, which is a much more short-term approach, but can quite quickly generate measurable success. Underpinned by evidence from the EC-supported programmes assessed, it was found that EC support, in general, addresses both access and quality, but that real quality improvements do not always occur. Quality indicators are increasingly being set in all support modalities, but in addition to reliability issues related to data, too little emphasis is placed on budgetary consequences of meeting these indicators. Overall, assessment of the indicators does not yield positive results.

Analysis shows that the interface between access and quality is complex. Increased enrolment may result in further crowding of already **overcrowded classrooms**, or needs to be matched by school/classroom construction, which then requires **recruitment of new teachers**, whose salaries place a further burden on the recurrent costs budget of education departments. The EC has been supporting partner governments in covering these costs. This applies to a large number of countries in a wide range of modalities. For example: the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan*; GBS in *Niger*, where numerous contractual teachers were hired; project support in *Eritrea*, or in *Bangladesh*, where female teachers were recruited, trained and temporarily paid in order to enhance enrolment and retention of girls in secondary education.

While availability of teachers is a condition sine qua non for learning, recruitment of teachers in an attempt to meet the tranche release indicator **Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) leaves less room for quality initiatives related to recurrent budget**, given the resources available. The policy benchmark set to achieve UPE by 2015 is that one-third of the recurrent budget for education is directed towards non-salary costs. This should enable most low-income countries to meet basic needs in this respect. Even with the scarce data available for the sample countries, it becomes apparent that this target is met only in a few cases, such as *South Africa*, *Argentina* and the *Dominican Republic*, the first two countries ranking relatively high on the HDI. However, it should be stressed that meeting the target of non-salary recurrent budget can be met only if already-low teacher salaries are further decreased (see contract teachers *Eritrea*), or by enhancing the non-salary budget through large-scale investment programmes, as happened with EC support to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in *India* and the Sindh SEPS in *Pakistan*.

Given the low qualification level of teachers in most countries, the EC has frequently provided support to **teacher upgrading**, and here the urban-rural divide is very apparent, leading to restricted quality improvement approaches being reserved for the better-off in urban areas. Positive examples are EC-supported teacher training and upgrading in *India* (through DPEP and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), *Bangladesh* (PEDP II), *Niger* (SOUTEBA), *Somalia*, *Eritrea*, *Liberia*, and *Pakistan*, the latter in an initial phase but having established a merit-based policy to recruit teachers with appropriate qualifications.

Countries scoring relatively high on the HDI, such as *Botswana*, *Tunisia*, *Indonesia* and *India*, are, with EC support, systematically attempting to improve quality as a basis for improving their international competitiveness. Increasingly, they are participating in international learner assessment tests to see whether their education meets international benchmarks. Within SBS, EC support can be specifically earmarked for quality-enhancing strategies. This has been the case in *India and Tunisia*, and is currently the case in *South Africa*. Tunisia and India can be ranked as successes, while South Africa needs time for the EC investment to yield the expected return.

During the period under evaluation, in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa*, the EC channelled part of the GBS support to education. This support often helped in meeting recurrent costs of education systems

in terms of subventions for teacher salaries and textbook provision (including in *Niger, Uganda, Burkina Faso and Mozambique*). **A major value added by GBS lies in ensuring that social sectors remain part of the overall policy dialogue with partner countries. But successes in that regard are mixed, with an impact on improving enrolment rates, but as yet no positive implications for quality.**

Apart from broad nation-wide system support to both improved access and quality, the EC has mobilised NGOs (BRAC in *Bangladesh*, Aga Khan Foundation in *India and Pakistan*) to enhance quality. All assessments reviewed reveal that these have used effective quality improvement strategies, including teacher training, and have applied child-friendly approaches, as a result of which learning improved significantly. This approach has rarely been used by the EC in regions of the world other than *Asia*. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this might be explained by a relative absence of such large NGOs.

In *fragile/failed states*, analysis revealed interesting EC approaches to quality improvements in *Somalia* (through the Strengthening of the Capacity of Teacher Training Programme – SCOT), in *Liberia* (ECSEL) and in *Eritrea and Pakistan*, where support was linked to major World Bank investment programmes. For example, in EC support to the Sindh Province in Pakistan (which started only towards the end of the period under evaluation) quality of education and of teacher competencies is a major part of the support, comprising indicators for tranche releases related, for instance, to issues such as adherence to merit-based teacher recruitment policy, development, approval, and gradual implementation of a teacher education and professional development programme, and introducing a system of regularly monitoring teacher attendance. As not all benchmarks set had been met, the payment for the first tranche of EC SBS had been put on hold in 2009. Since then, it has been released.

Overall, it is widely acknowledged that quality improvement strategies are difficult to design, monitor and implement on a large scale. Findings clearly show that **linking EC TA through a project mode to SBS/GBS can be considered as a key trigger** in support to partner country governments. Examples could be shown especially for EC SBS in *Pakistan, Tanzania, Cambodia* and the *Dominican Republic*. This feature is less prominent in EC-supported GBS with education-related indicators, mainly due to their focus being only partially on education.

**In sum**, in all countries studied, the EC has been supporting **education policies and strategies** developed by governments. In some instances, such in *Pakistan* and the *Dominican Republic*, EC supported TA has been instrumental in drafting such strategies.

**In Asia, there was extensive support** in *India* by the EC and other development partners, first to selected states and districts within states (DPEP), then nation-wide to elementary education (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), and in *Bangladesh*, through PEDP II and BRAC, for both increased access and improved learning. In *Indonesia*, through mainstreaming innovations (UNICEF) and setting up systems for decentralised delivery of quality education, the foundations for further quality improvements – within the framework of a SWAp with EC SBS – were laid during the period under evaluation.

**In Sub-Saharan Africa, results are more mixed.** In *Niger, Namibia and Tanzania*, EC support consisted of assisting the government in developing and implementing strategies aimed at reinforcing quality of education. In *Burkina Faso*, PASEB (2000-05) contributed to improving living conditions of teachers. In *Uganda*, under SBS, the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) monitoring mechanisms were improved, although this did not lead to improved quality. However, all these efforts did not yield evidence of improved quality of learning and teaching. In *South Africa*, the EC has provided support and resources to strategies aimed at improving educational quality, but the SBS currently being implemented is too new to see the impact on quality as yet.

In the *Caribbean*, PAPSE 1 in the *Dominican Republic* successfully supported policy emphasis on quality in the drafting of the Strategic Plan 2008-12. In *European Neighbourhood* countries, the EC-supported SBS in *Tunisia* aimed to generalise the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) in the nine grades of basic education, covering the three main domains of study (Arabic, French and Mathematics), and with a more “professional” approach to in-service training of education staff (headmasters, supervisors, teachers, and administrative staff). In general, in-service training of educators proceeded as planned, but the CBA has not been rolled out as planned.

Compared to other countries, *fragile/failed states* represent an even greater challenge for EC support to help establish strategies for improving quality of teaching and learning. **The EC has applied flexible needs-based arrangements**, including the Sindh SBS linked to a World Bank investment credit. Despite only starting up in 2007, it has established a foundation for performance systems, including quality-related systems.

**In general, countries ranking higher on HDI are more successful with EC support that complements partner government resources in meeting quality challenges<sup>76</sup>, while fragile states need flexible approaches, which show encouraging results.**

Analysis of numerous documents (including CSEs), along with the field visits, revealed a **wide range of quality-enhancing strategies, but these were seldom of a systemic character**, or implemented on a system-wide basis. The evaluation identified that quality indicators are set for both EC SBS and some GBS programmes, which is a marked improvement on the almost sole emphasis on quantitative access-related indicators in the past. This reveals that priorities have shifted for the EC. However, while it appears that, **in general, GBS support is assisting partner governments in focusing on essential pre-conditions for quality** – sometimes including teacher salaries, housing, school construction and text book development – **it does not focus sufficiently on variables for quality improvement**, such as improved teaching methodology. Here, **SBS turns out to be more comprehensive in supporting quality improvement strategies.**

When looking at the development of a number of quality-related indicators, the evaluation finds that **EC support related to assisting partner countries in accommodating consequences of enrolment increases has been important**, even though not succeeding in significantly improving key indicators, such as PTR, and reducing the share of teacher salaries in the recurrent budget. **It is clear that, given increases in enrolment, these indicators would have deteriorated without EC support. However, the assessments indicating that EC support does not lead to achievements of quality-related targets may, in some cases, be due to unrealistic target setting.**

#### **4.4.2 JC42: EC support: a mix of system survival and support to reducing the number of drop-outs and repeaters**

In combination with the gross intake rate to grade 1, the drop-out rate at Primary G1 is the indicator that shows best the degree to which the education system can cater for new entrants in primary. Primary school retention is enhanced and drop-out rates reduced by providing children with relevant and good quality education in an environment conducive to learning. This influences parental decisions to keep children in school, as they see a good return on investment in their children's education, irrespective of opportunity costs. Where pre-primary provisions are part of the formal system, children having gone through pre-primary start primary education better prepared. Pre-primary, though, is hardly institutionalised in countries facing low PCRs, and given the state of affairs at the end of the period under evaluation, MDG2 goals will not be achieved. In those countries, there will be many under-aged children in grade 1 – parents using the school as a “*parking place*” for their children – and hence will automatically become repeaters. The large discrepancy in many countries between the GER and NERat primary level may to a large extent be based on over-aged students re-entering the system after having dropped out temporarily. Large-scale new enrolments of over-aged children in primary education is only noted where governments are succeeding in reaching out-of-school children, many of whom may be over-aged (e.g. *India*), but is common in fragile states such as *Liberia* and *Somalia*, where post-conflict situations mean that over-aged students are starting or resuming primary education interrupted by war.

Drop-out is a complex phenomenon to address, given that student retention in many cases is determined by economic factors. Poor students are faced with costs of education that are too high an investment for their families, particularly in view of lost opportunity costs. EQ 2, JC 23 on compulsory and free education for all students outlined pro-poor measures that will not only increase enrolment but also decrease drop-outs. These include decreasing or abolishing costs for parents, and providing stipends, food for pupils, and school capitation grants. Through these measures, plus School Improvement Programmes (SIPs), making education more child-centred and attractive may lead to decreased drop-out and repetition rates. However, the problem is that, given the drain on the recurrent budget by teacher salaries to accommodate enrolment increases, little is left for introducing these measures. Decreasing drop-out and repetition rates increase both internal efficiency and the cost-effectiveness of investments in primary education, ensuring the throughput of students in the shortest time and at the lowest possible cost per student.

Under the commonly-used UNESCO definition, dropping out or early school leaving is understood as referring to leaving education without completing the started cycle or programme. EMIS systems, faced with capacity-building requirements and shortage of staff, sometimes have drop-out and repetition rates within their standard data capture formats, but the reliability is doubtful, given less-than-optimal registration by schools and lack of interest in openly revealing drop-out issues. Moreover, monitoring in most cases does not include a follow-up to show the causes of dropping out. Education

<sup>76</sup> One of the exceptions is certainly *South Africa*, which is embarking on quality improvements but is still faced with a quality crisis.

thus becomes “compulsory” only in a token way, and applying decreases in drop-out and repetition rates as release indicators is dubious with regard to reliability and validity.

According to the statistics, the repetition rate in *Burkina Faso*, *South Africa*, *Nicaragua* and *Eritrea* is alarmingly high. Drop-out rates for grade 1 are especially high in *India* (though decreasing between 2000 and 2006), *Mozambique*, *Dominican Republic*, *Nicaragua* and *Pakistan*. However, the desk study analysis and the field visits, backed by the analysis of ECA reports, found that the data available is frequently far from being complete or reliable. Reasons for this can be found in the lack of capacity in national statistical services and EMIS, in outdated population census data, in a lack of reliability of population growth prognosis, but also in the efforts of services aimed at providing figures to meet targets set. While the situation is worrying, several countries have implemented quality-related efficiency measures aimed at reducing drop-out and repetition rates.

In *Asia*, EC-supported programmes in *Bangladesh* (BRAC) and *India* (DPEP)<sup>77</sup> show that effective monitoring and supervision systems have increased survival rate, and BRAC systems helped to reduce student absenteeism.

In *Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Botswana* (benefiting from EC SBS support) is examining regional drop-out patterns, concentrating on regions with the highest rates. *Niger* combines low PCR with low primary GER, but repetition rates improved. GBS support to PDDE did not enhance key indicators such as PCR primary, and the amount of resources allocated to quality inputs remained low (11.7% of expenditure). In *Tanzania*, drop-out rates are low, with a clear improvement after 2007. EC-supported school capitation grants initiated during PEDP 1 funded essential teaching and learning resources. Pupil-based capitation grants were disbursed to schools through Local Government Authorities. With these grants (approximately USD 10 per pupil), schools could cover administration costs, school level maintenance, classroom furniture and accessories, toilets, textbooks, pens and pencils. Without this support, classrooms would have remained bare and lacking in basic facilities for teaching and learning.

In the *European Neighbourhood countries*, *Tunisia* scores well with regard to drop-outs and, with EC support, is strengthening the liaison with TVET and the world of work, which may have contributed to a high degree of retention in the system. In *Latin America*, *Nicaragua* is faced with high drop-out rates, but the main constraint is the low government allocation to the education sector, which the EC SBS tried to address. *Argentina*'s drop-out rate has remained low over the period evaluated, but the repetition rate scores only medium. The EC, since late 2005, is supporting FOPIIE<sup>78</sup>, part of the national policy for equality and inclusion aimed at ensuring quality education for all.

As for *fragile/failed states*, in *Somalia*, drop-out, retention and completion rates are extremely worrying and point to poor quality and performance levels in the system. Attempts to rectify these constraints with the SISED (Somali Integrated Secondary Educational Development) by, for example, (re)constructing school buildings, meant that some provision was made for ensuring a minimum quality of education for children in difficult circumstances<sup>79</sup>. However, the huge demands in Somalia were far beyond the reach of limited project interventions, and EC support appeared merely to be scratching the surface of meeting actual needs in the country. In *Pakistan*, through the EC SBS for Sindh province, retention is being enhanced through decentralising the Sindh Education Management Information System (SEMIS) with EC TA support and through stipends for girls in secondary education in support of girls' enrolment and retention.

In sum, it is highly complex for partner governments, through EC GBS support to directly enhance quality-related efficiency measures leading to counteracting low internal efficiency and wastage. Through this modality, partner governments were assisted to ensure the survival of education systems in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa* in coping with budgetary constraints. A similar situation applies to a lesser degree in *Nicaragua*. There, EC sector support programmes and SBS could more directly im-

<sup>77</sup> Jalan, Jyotsna and Glinskaya (2003): Improving primary school education in India: An impact assessment of DPEP-Phase 1

<sup>78</sup> Fortalecimiento Pedagógico de las Escuelas del Programa Integral (PIIE) para la Igualdad Educativa (FOPIIE)

<sup>79</sup> Contract Signed: 27/12/2006, Start Date Planned: 01/01/2007, end date: 31/12/2008, commitment: € 3.5 million, disbursed: € 2.69 million (June 2009), implementing partner: Africa Educational Trust (AET). This programme supports secondary schools and secondary teacher training. It is providing new classrooms, textbooks and equipment and teaching materials as well as training secondary school teachers. 50 new classrooms were planned to be built, new materials were to be provided in English (with support from the BBC), a six-week bridging programme was to be instituted, and in-service teacher training, pre-service training and an examination project were all part of this project's remit. The follow-on programme was entitled 'Strengthening of Secondary Education and Teacher Training (SOSETT)' and started implementation in July 2008 with a commitment of € 1.7 million. In terms of achievements, according to ROM data for SOSETT, it was generally agreed that SISED failed to meet its female enrolment targets or achieved enough qualified women on leaving the schools to enter teaching (and other) profession/s, and that access could not be improved, especially in Somaliland, without an expanded classroom building programme and an increased output of trained teachers.

pinge on factors enhancing improved internal efficiency, as seems to have been the case in *Botswana, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan*. As confirmed by the EUD survey, SBS appears to be a more appropriate modality for addressing quality issues, including efficiency-related quality measures, with more success than GBS or any other modality when looking at system-wide reforms related to quality. Considering the emphasis on SWAp and budget support, the government should be the main channel for EC support to quality improvement, but the EC can support only if strategies for quality improvements are incorporated in the PRSP.

#### 4.4.3 JC43: Some progress yielded through EC support for more and better teachers and school leaders, mainly focused on Asia

At the systems level, teacher development strategies are long-term and ongoing, but they depend on school-based in-service programmes that should link training and upgrading to a career path structure. Enhanced school leadership and management will create a climate for change to promote school effectiveness and education quality.

Qualified teachers are key to improving quality. In many countries, enough teachers are available to meet minimum thresholds for the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), but there are big discrepancies between urban and rural areas – and even bigger in terms of fully-qualified teachers. The discrepancy between centre and periphery is not only striking in terms of access to education, but even more so in terms of access to quality education and availability of qualified teachers. In several EC-supported sector support programmes, including SBS, one of the approaches used to arrive at a fair distribution of teachers is **redeployment**.<sup>80</sup> This has been the case, for example, in *India* and *Pakistan*. In India, during DPEP (1994-2003), it proved to be a cumbersome exercise, even within the same district, as teachers are not willing to move with their families to another residence. However, whether or not supported by incentives, redeployment is complex, and the strong position of politicised teachers' unions is often detrimental to those efforts.

A second approach is to **recruit and train new teachers to meet the demand in rural and remote areas**. Most EC sector support programmes, including SBS, and GBS, provide support to partner governments to be meet budgetary requirements in situations (especially in LDCs) of extreme budgetary austerity. This leads to the dilemma of both long lead time for training qualified teachers and further adding to the teacher salary aspect of the recurrent budget, which already leaves too little resources left for quality approaches (for instance, targeted budget support in *Cambodia* faced this dilemma). Based on these considerations, contract teachers or assistant teachers are recruited at lower cost, meeting the requirements of the enrolment expansion. Among the countries applying this with EC support are *Niger* and *India*. Several countries, with EC support, have embarked on accelerated programmes for teacher qualification (*Tanzania, Bangladesh*), requiring qualification as a basis for teacher accreditation and linking this to salary level.

Unfortunately, little or no statistical information is available for numerous countries with regard to indicators such as the percentage of trained primary school teachers. In virtually all sample countries, training and properly budgeting for qualified teachers is a great problem. Moreover, concerns remain over often low percentage of trained teachers to pupils. In addition, national average PTRs and percentages of trained teachers can conceal large disparities, as, for instance, between rural and urban areas in *Eritrea, Tanzania* and *Uganda, Liberia* and *Pakistan*.

In general, there is a need for more or better teacher training that can be sustained in the long run. However, while **in-service upgrading teacher qualification** programmes are part of many EC interventions, the necessary government funds to sustain and institutionalise the training are often lacking. In several EC-supported programmes, such as DPEP/Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in *India*, Basic Education Trust Fund (BEC/TF) in *Indonesia*, Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) *Tanzania*, cluster or block-based in-service training has been applied, and cluster resource centres or, in *India*, block resource centres, have been established.

EC support to **teacher and school leader training** is usually embedded in broader sector support under the umbrella of SPSP or SBS (*India, Bangladesh, Tunisia*), but is also still given at project level, as in *Eritrea* and *Liberia*. On the other hand, it seems that there are no triggers and indicators related to the teacher workforce in the EC-supported GBS programmes screened.

In terms of achievements of EC support in relation to improving qualifications and competencies of teachers and teacher's management the following can be **summarised**:

<sup>80</sup> Redeployment refers to a process of reallocation and transformation aimed at shifting teachers from schools with too many teachers to schools where there are vacancies. See e.g. UNESCO, Institute for Statistics (2006): Teachers and educational quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015. See also: Govinda, R. (1999): Reaching the unreached through participatory planning; School mapping in Lok Jumbish, India. UNESCO, IIEP, 1999.

- From the analysis made, it appears that **EC support in Asia has yielded positive effects with regard to improving management of teachers and improvement in teacher qualifications in Bangladesh and India.** In *Bangladesh*, the shortfall of untrained teachers (teachers without Certificate-in-Education training) was reduced significantly. EC support assisted in strengthening teachers' competencies and school principals' capacity. In *India*, EC support to DPEP assisted with the improvement and additional staffing requirements of district-located pre-service teacher training centres and to State governments in recruiting para-teachers required to address the shortfall caused by the expansion of schooling provision to out-of-school children, often in remote areas. Moreover, in-service training was supported by the EC through strengthening the Block and Cluster Resource centres, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan established in-service training norms. All of these effects are linked to sector support, indicating the possible leverage effect of such support.
- **In Sub-Saharan Africa**, while data is sketchy, **the percentage of the trained teacher force might have increased in a number of countries, all of which have received substantial GBS support (Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Tanzania).** Niger managed to cope with additional teacher requirements through contract teachers, and within the framework of the SOUTEBA programme 2005-09, the EC has supported the upgrading of three Technical Training Centres in the pilot regions covered by the project, in which in-service teacher training also was organised (4% of the country's teaching staff involved). The SUPE SBS in *Uganda* focused on the development of a Teacher Development Management System and a decentralised staff development programme. Among other effects, it yielded improvements in the provision of advisory support to schools.
- **For the Dominican Republic**, the findings of the field visit point to a lack of on-the-job follow-up after the training of teachers and school leaders. However, **EC support through PAPSE I has played a role by providing a better level of resources to be invested, and the training of teachers has also increased, though still not enough.**
- It should be emphasised that the EC provided **support in fragile states to teacher training, which was significant in Eritrea and Somalia**, as it helped to train considerable numbers of teachers, at middle school and primary school levels, respectively. In *Eritrea*, through EC support, cascade training for teacher trainers is being given, as well as school management training through distance education modules. EC support is also in the process of helping to improve teacher competencies in the Sindh Province in *Pakistan*, where quality aspects are a major part of the support.

#### 4.4.4 JC44: Hard-to-reach children remain marginalised, but the EC has sometimes assisted partner governments in trying to ensure minimum quality education for children in difficult circumstances

There has not been a major focus in EC support to partner countries in reaching out to children in difficult circumstances or from ethnic minorities to provide access to schooling and minimum quality of education. EC support matches PRSP priorities, and it proved that in most countries the focus of education support is still very much focused on the mainstream, rather than accommodating the requirements of the 10%-20% not enrolled, often living in remote areas. Still, EC support could be observed in the construction and upgrading of schools in areas not adequately covered so far, in providing incentives to teachers to enhance willingness to work in these areas, facilitating part of education being provided in a mother tongue, and arranging for education to meet minimum quality requirements. Broadly, there are **three categories of EC support**:

- **Support** matching political and economic priorities **linked to broader participation of minorities in the fabric of society.** This involves different modalities – sector support (DPEP, *India*), SBS (*Uganda, Tunisia, Pakistan*), GBS (*Niger and Dominican Republic*), but also project support in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (*Bangladesh*);
- **Support through NGOs** implementing projects reaching out to target areas and groups, e.g. BRAC Education Programme under NFPE in *Bangladesh*, or the Northern Pakistan Education Project in *Pakistan*;
- **Post-conflict and post-emergency projects**, for instance in *Somalia, Liberia, Eritrea and Pakistan*.

The upgrading of school buildings and construction of additional classrooms with EC support has been implemented in *India* within the framework of EC DPEP support to the Education Guarantee Scheme

in the EC-supported State of Madhya Pradesh<sup>81</sup>, where small multi-grade schools have been established as a low-cost way of improving children's access in rural areas. In *Bangladesh*, ethnicity, poverty and post-insurgency are all factors in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with EC support to an education component including school construction and improved learning conditions for tribal children from poor and marginalised communities. Post-emergency and post-conflict rehabilitation has generated EC support in *fragile states* such as *Somalia*, *Liberia*, *Pakistan* and *Eritrea*, but also in the *Dominican Republic* and in *Uganda*. In *Pakistan*, the EC-supported Aga Khan Foundation implemented the Northern Education Project in Chitral and parts of AJK, establishing community schools with community self-help.

Moves towards teacher rationalisation and redeployment have been made in many partner countries – in general, with little success. Alternative measures have been applied for girls (mostly) from remote villages or ethnic minorities who went through secondary education to be trained as teachers for remote schools, and to build teachers' quarters, often with community support. This applies to *India*, with the expansion of enrolment to cover remote areas and often small villages, but especially also to the state of Madhya Pradesh, where, with EC support, such enrolment has been achieved by recruiting and training a cadre of informal assistants at low rates. Also, the *Pakistan* Education Programme in the earthquake-affected districts of NWFP and AJK (EC/UNICEF) recruited and trained additional “para-teachers” to ensure adequate staffing of temporary schools. Their salaries are to be covered for a fixed period of time, with a clear phasing-out strategy (see Country Note).

**Many countries stress the importance of children learning in their mother tongue or home language, but education systems seldom reflect linguistic diversity.** According to the EFA GMR 2010, about 221 million school-age children speak languages that are used at home but not recognised in schools or official settings. In *Bangladesh*, BRAC, with the support of the EC, undertook an education programme for the ethnic minority in Chittagong Hill Districts to provide primary education in the mother tongue. In *India*, in the EC-supported DPEP state Madhya Pradesh, assistant teachers from the local community were recruited and trained, and the local language was used as a basis for further teaching and learning Hindi. Extending education to remote villages with ethnic minorities is proved to benefit from recruiting teachers speaking the local language.

The case of *Niger* highlights potential difficulties that a policy of introducing vernacular languages might face, and that EC support has to address policy changes. It should be noted that Niger is one of the few counties where provisions have been made for consideration of different mother tongue languages within a country, through the EC-funded SOUTEBA project.

In *India*, in relation to EGS in the EC DPEP sponsored state of Madhya Pradesh, the great majority of teachers are working with multi-grade classes, with the EGS approach specifically designed for. The new integrated materials for all schools incorporate some aspects of a more inclusive approach, while not fundamentally adapting the formal syllabus, since the latter is a longer, more complex process. In *Pakistan*, support through the Aga Khan Foundation in the Northern Area and Chitral (Northern Pakistan Education Project) arranged for many quality-supporting strategies, including head teacher training, and subject training in mathematics and science

**Overall, it appears that, during the period under evaluation, the EC has been assisting in drafting policies and strategies that include safeguards that minorities are not overlooked. The actual implementation of these measures has often been left to NGOs, whether or not supported by the EC** – such as the EC-supported BRAC (*Bangladesh*) and the Aga Khan Foundation in the Northern Pakistan Education Project (*Pakistan*). In addition, EC-supported sector programmes, such as DPEP in *India*, helped by establishing alternative schools (several states) and Education Guarantee Schemes (Madhya Pradesh). Moreover, **in the post-conflict and post-emergency support**, and separate from school and classroom construction and rehabilitation, **EC support focused on education system re-engineering, including teacher training and quality-enhancing measures**, such as in *Pakistan*, *Eritrea* and *Somalia*.

From the findings, it appears that **in most cases where EC support relied on projects implemented by NGOs, these approaches have worked well**. As for other modalities, GBS has assisted in meeting recurrent cost expenditures in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa*, which, apart from teacher salaries, may include important quality enhancing variables, such as textbook production and distribution; and SBS, as shown by the examples from *Tunisia* and *India*, has helped partner governments to tackle quality issues in a systematic way.

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<sup>81</sup> In India, scheduled castes (SC) and Tribes (ST) are scattered on the periphery of several states, but there is a large concentration in the largest state, Madhya Pradesh.

#### 4.5 EQ5-skills: To what extent has EC support to education contributed to enhancing basic education skills, especially literacy and numeracy?

This question focuses on the degree to which basic education prepares pupils for further education, adulthood and gainful employment. Major achievements have been noted in the drive to improve access to education, leading to a substantial decrease in the number of out-of-school children. This now has to be matched with a quality drive to ensure a proper return of investments in education through the mastery of literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Hence, there is increasingly emphasis on measuring learning achievements – not only to measure what is actually being learned, but also how well the education system is working.

**Serious data constraints exist for the monitoring of education quality across countries, and the scale of the problem is increasingly apparent.** Absolute learning levels are so low in many developing countries that millions of children complete primary school without acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. International learning assessments point to very large gaps between developed and developing countries. These gaps are mirrored by large within-country disparities in learning achievements. **Given this very heterogeneous situation, the following approach was applied:**

- A proxy for basic education skills so far is the Primary Completion Rate (also accepted by FTI). See EQ2 and 3 for a description of PCR in the sample countries (especially section 4.3.1). However, the shortcomings of this proxy are obvious – hence, the evaluation team will not further elaborate on this indicator.
- For literacy and numeracy enhancement (JC 51), some results from surveys were studied, and some data on primary school-leaving examinations was also collected during field visits.
- Some data related to improved core learning achievements (JC52), through pass rates for final examinations in maths and sciences, have been examined.
- Data from international surveys on literacy, numeracy and life skills was collected during the field visits and is presented in Annex 25.

The answer to this EQ is built on the following JCs:

- JC51: Literacy and numeracy enhanced
- JC52: Improved core learning achievements

##### EQ5 on skills–Summary Answer Box

With regard to basic education skills, analysis showed that the focus of EC support is on out-of-school illiterates, on early school leavers prone to relapse into illiteracy, and especially on strengthening low-quality education. It is here that the EC is providing support through a wide range of modalities, using government and non-state actors as channels of support to programmes bringing out-of-school children into school. Successes can be noted in *India and Tanzania*. It is to be noted that functional literacy<sup>82</sup> of adults is within the mandate of UNESCO, and the EC is not giving emphasis to literacy acquisition for adults in its support. However, through improving access and quality of schooling, the EC is enhancing literacy acquisition of future adults.

EC support for generating basic literacy and numeracy skills among school-aged youth concentrates on strengthening the capacity of education systems to provide schooling to out-of-school youth, on strengthening NFE provisions, on quality improvement and internal efficiency measures to improve retention, on providing young people with an adequate package of competencies for further education, and on preventing relapse into illiteracy. In addition, the EC selectively provided support to basic education literacy acquisition through NGOs, especially in *Asia*.

All efforts have not so far yielded improved learning achievements in almost all partner countries studied. Examination of results of international and regional surveys of learning achievements, as well school-leaving examinations, depicted a gloomy picture, which has either consolidated during the period under evaluation or even further deteriorated.

The diagnosis of a quality crisis was also confirmed by targets related to learning achievements often not being met where included in SBS and GBS indicators for flexible tranche release. Setting such indicators, which seems increasingly to be happening in *ACP* countries since the start of EDF 10, is a good step forward. However, these indicators influencing tranche release reveal the disappointing nature of achievements. Improving the situation remains challenging, and will require a comprehensive approach involving curricula, textbook development and teacher training. SBS, with

<sup>82</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics defines functional literacy as follows: “A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community’s development.”

### EQ5 on skills–Summary Answer Box

its relationship to education sector plans, combined with EC TA such as in the Pakistan Sindh province SBS, may trigger and support necessary reforms aimed at better approaches for learning assessment. This is more difficult with GBS, where, given partner country ownership, the EC is not in a position to steer funding to programmes directly relevant to enhancing learning.

The results indicate that the yield on EC investments to enable all children to enrol and complete basic education of sufficient quality may be seriously jeopardised unless high priority is given to improving quality of learning.

#### 4.5.1 JC51: EC support focuses on literacy and numeracy retention in schools

**The pattern of adult illiteracy did not significantly change between 2001 and 2007**, with the problem especially concentrated in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa* and *South Asia*, and with significantly more adult females being illiterate. There is a correlation between low adult literacy and low enrolment, i.e. in those countries where enrolment is still far from meeting MDG2, adult illiteracy remains high. Less than 50% of adult females in 2007 were literate in *Niger*, *Burkina Faso* and *Mozambique* in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh* in South Asia. Even though some progress has been made in reducing illiteracy among youths, a similar pattern occurs with relatively large numbers of still illiterate youths in *Sub-Saharan Africa* (28%) and *South Asia* (21%). Females are over-represented in the group of illiterate youth. Data is extremely sparse and sometimes scarce, but *Niger* and *Burkina Faso* can be referred to as illiterate societies, both for youth and adults.

There is a strong correlation between the number of non-enrolled school-aged children and the rate of illiteracy among young people. *Bangladesh*, *Pakistan* and, to a lesser degree, *India* had large numbers of out-of-school youth. In *Bangladesh* (BRAC and PEDP 2), and especially in *India* (*Education Guarantee Scheme*), these children were given access to education with the help of EC support. When partner countries are given priority and allocating resources for outreach to out-of-school children, this will affect the statistics on illiterate youth only in the medium-to-long term, and so the effects of EC support may also become visible only in that timescale. Apart from out-of-school illiterate children, early school leavers are prone to relapse into illiteracy, while some low-quality education systems produce graduate primary school leavers with poor literacy and numeracy skills. It should be stressed, however, that adult literacy and, in some countries, youth literacy often fall outside the mandate of the Ministry of Education – for example, responsibility may lie within the Ministry of Labour or other line ministries.<sup>83</sup>

The EC is giving emphasis to literacy acquisition for out-of-school illiterates, on early school leavers prone to relapse into illiteracy, and especially on improving low-quality education. It is here that the EC is providing support through a wide range of modalities, using both government and non-state actors as channels of support to programmes bringing out-of-school children into school. Successes can be noted in *India* and *Tanzania*.

Direct support to basic youth literacy acquisition is mainly through project support to NGOs. In a number of cases, budget support has supported literacy acquisition, with some countries, such as *Burkina Faso*, having literacy-related indicators in their GBS agreements.

In *Asia*, considerable increases in literacy can be observed, some of which can be linked to EC support. In *Bangladesh*, EC support through PEDP II has been focusing on improving quality of education and retention, and hence literacy and numeracy acquisition. BRAC and NGOs reaching out to out-of-school youth. In *India*, through DPEP and Sarva Shiksha Aabyan, primary school completion is being improved – contributing, as a side effect, to decreased illiteracy levels in DPEP districts. The number of out-of-school children aged between 6 and 14 declined from 39 million in 1999 to 25 million in 2003.

In *Sub-Saharan Africa*, some positive effects that may relate to EC support are noted in terms of improved youth literacy rates – for instance, in *Burkina Faso*, *Ghana* and *Uganda*. However, the progress is still slow (in *Tanzania* there is consolidation rather than progress), and it seems that urban rural discrepancies remain. In *Burkina Faso* and *Ghana*, the literacy rate is among the indicators for education-related flexible tranche releases of GBS. It is not clear whether, in the case of compliance, disbursement from the treasury to the ministry takes place directly in support of literacy acquisition, given government ownership. In *Burkina Faso*, for instance, literacy rates do not comply to set targets, and it is hoped that urban-rural discrepancies in literacy acquisition will decrease due to EC GBS fostering access to primary education in rural zones. In *South Africa*, the EC supported basic literacy through its Technical Support to the Department of Education (TSP-DoE, € 17 million, 1997 to 2004)

<sup>83</sup> In *Bangladesh*, functional literacy linked to co-operative development for rural poor co-operatives in Rashai province came under the Rural Development Board. The programmes of basic and functional literacy in 15 languages in *Ghana* came under the Literacy House of the Ministry of Education, while functional literacy in the workplace came under the Ministry of Labour, as did rural gainful activities linked with functional literacy.

for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), even though this initiative suffered from lack of institutionalisation.

In *fragile states*, available data is scarce. Progress was noted in *Pakistan*, but cannot be linked to EC support.

**Overall, EC support to literacy and numeracy acquisition of adults and young people outside the school system has been small and indirect, even though, through EC GBS with literacy-related release indicators, literacy in some Sub-Saharan African countries may have been enhanced.** Education sector support programmes often prioritise reaching out to out-of-school youth (e.g. *Tanzania, India*). In these programmes, the EC indirectly supports literacy acquisition and retention, as it does through support, for example, to formerly excluded people (e.g. EGS India), through fostering student retention and adequate mastery of literacy and numeracy skills on completion of primary schooling, and hence decreasing of the rate of relapse into illiteracy. Where this happened, successes were noted in reaching out-of-school youth and in reducing the number of drop-outs (see EQ 4).

#### 4.5.2 JC52: EC support is not (yet) counteracting achievement crisis

According to the Commission Staff Working Document, *“More and Better Education in Developing Countries”*, the **“quality of schooling is found to account for 38%-42% of the income difference between the richest and poorest quintiles of countries, as opposed to the 21%-24% that accounts only for years of schooling”**. This means that the quality of education, rather than just access to education, is among the major reasons for income differences. Moreover, the Working Document clearly acknowledges the need for improved core learning achievements. To assess these in a comparative perspective, international surveys of learning assessment constitute a good source. Several sample countries have participated in international and regional learning assessments. *Tunisia* and *South Africa* participated in several assessments, and the results of these – and of those in *Indonesia, Botswana, Niger, Burkina Faso and the Dominican Republic* – have been assessed.

Scores on **learning assessment tests and final examinations** are the only valid quality-related outcome indicator. They are, however, very rarely applied as a basis for in-depth monitoring, but increasingly as indicators for flexible tranche release. It can be stated that, given the quality crisis, EC support to quality improvements (see EQ 4) so far has not yielded sufficient results in terms of improved learning. Based on available data from the field visits and desk study, complemented by insights obtained from the ECA audits, **the mastery level of literacy and numeracy in most countries is alarmingly low, revealing a serious quality crisis, with no significant improvements found between 2000 and 2007**. Several countries, including *Niger, Burkina Faso, Namibia, South Africa* and the *Dominican Republic*, reveal low achievement scores based on international and regional learning assessment tests, and the results rather tend to deteriorate than to improve. The picture related to quality of education, as measured by international and regional learning assessment tests, is gloomy in countries benefiting from substantial EC support to improve their education system performance in terms of quality.

However, the link between EC support and improvements in learning, as measured by tests, is complex. EC support can not be assessed in terms of discrete support for setting up systems for learner assessment, but should cover an integrated approach to quality improvement, including curricula, setting up minimum levels of learning, upgrading teachers in terms of pedagogic approaches and diagnostic continuous assessment, and subsequently learner assessments and examinations. Such an approach is so far lacking, even though it could be observed in an embryonic form in the *Pakistan Sindh SBS*. In some of the countries analysed by the evaluation team and by the ECA audits, the pass rates for final national examinations in mathematics, sciences and in the main language at Lower/Upper Secondary and at School Leaving Examination levels are part of the outcome indicators of the government and the EC support, in programmes of sector support such as in ETSIP in *Namibia*, SBS in *Botswana* under EDF 10, and in *Tanzania, the Dominican Republic and Pakistan*. They also increasingly form part of GBS indicators for education-related flexible tranche release in *Burkina Faso, Niger and Uganda* (EDF 9). It should be stressed, however, that the incorporation of data related to examination results as key indicators is relatively recent, – in most cases, starting under EDF 10. However, these indicators may only reveal a quality crisis, rather than suggest solutions to the crisis.

**Almost all countries covered are low achievers in terms of results of international and regional learning assessment tests.** In *Burkina Faso*, PASEC studies show that the proportion of pupils who achieve at least 40% of good answers to a set of questions was 60% in 1997, whereas it was only 34.8% in 2007. The ECA report concludes that, even if a direct comparison cannot be made, the quality of learning appears to have decreased, while the number of teachable children increased. In *Niger*, the surveys indicate that the level of pupils' performances is very low by international (and regional) standards. In *Namibia*, many students are leaving school without the minimum educational skills. In

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) mathematics assessment, 90% or more of students from *South Africa* and *Ghana* did not reach the low international benchmark. In SERCE<sup>84</sup> grade 3 assessment, the *Dominican Republic* has been classified as the lowest level of all other countries studied (average scoring in mathematics is lower than the overall average). Students from the Dominican Republic score below level one, meaning that they have not been able to complete the most simple tasks in mathematics. For *Botswana*, low scores are noted in TIMSS on mathematics and science, but are still better than in *South Africa and Ghana*. In *Tunisia*, the poor results of Grade 4 pupils in TIMSS 2007 may indicate a decline in Tunisia's position after the introduction of the reform. *Indonesia* saw a significant rise in reading performance in OECD-Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2006, compared to PISA 2000, but still, from a comparative point of view, ranks low.

**This pattern of low achievements in international surveys is matched by Primary and Secondary national School Leaving Examination results.** For *Botswana*, CSE stated that results in the 2007 Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) examinations were disappointing, and that recent trends of small annual improvements have been reversed. The 2007 Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results show a deterioration in performance at Grades A-C, compared to 2006 and 2005. In *Namibia*, the ETSIP contains two key performance indicators related to core learning achievements in mathematics, science and English. The percentages rose between 2006 and 2008, and in 2008 were above the targets set, except for English. In *Niger*, national exam results and learning levels in mathematics and French are part of the internal efficiency indicators of the PPARP (Programme Pluriannuel d'Appui à la Réduction de la Pauvreté, 2006-08). The ECA report says the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in French and mathematics has decreased since the start of the EC-funded PPARP programme. In *South Africa*, the pass rate at senior secondary level has improved over the period, but disaggregated figures reveal extreme disparities between learners from poor and better-resourced backgrounds, which partially still follow ethnic lines. In mathematics, fewer than 3% of candidates achieved a pass good enough to gain access to university courses such as engineering and accounting.

The improvements in *Tanzania*, on the other hand, showed that there have been increases in exam pass rates for Standards 4 and 7, with 49% of primary school leavers passing their final year exam in 2004 – more than double the rate in 2000. However, these good achievements could not be consolidated. The examination pass rates deteriorated after 2004. Also, the ECA report states that, despite the government's efforts, the performance of secondary school students in national examinations is still modest – as indicated by the low performance of pupils in sciences, mathematics and languages. After an initial increase, the Standard/Form 4 examinations pass rate decreased to 26.7% in 2007/2008, which is far below the target set at 70% by the MKUKUTA (National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty). In *Uganda*, EC support to PABS 5 incorporated a mastery level performance indicator – that is, the “percentage of pupils reaching the defined level of competency in literacy and numeracy” – linked to variable tranche releases. It seems that full amounts have been disbursed. In the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF GBS programme, “Competency and Literacy Levels in P6” has been selected as one of the education indicators. For the first variable tranche, the target was comfortably achieved, dropping in subsequent years. However, according to the ECA report, neither the government nor the EC commented on how this high level of performance was achieved. It is not the achievement of the target in itself that is insightful, but the process towards accommodating targets and their reliability. With regard to the second tranche, the outcome showed only a very marginal improvement, while no target was set for 2005-06.

The EC has played a catalytic role in assisting the provincial Government of Sindh (*Pakistan*) to become the first province to have developed assessment tools and put them to the test. However, a lot still remains to be done in terms of developing competencies related to sample drawing, the development of an item bank, and assessment processing and interpretation. This is the subject of an Action Programme currently being implemented with EC TA assistance. Moreover, the SEPSP (EC SBS) contains triggers and trigger indicators on “learning assessment”.

**Overall, results of international comparative assessments of learning achievements and final examinations reveal a quality crisis restricted not only to poor Sub-Saharan African countries. EC support is trying to address the impact of education on learning, by increasingly applying examination results among the indicators for flexible tranche release. However, this reveals the crisis without applying curative measures. The results indicate that the yield on EC invest-**

<sup>84</sup> LLECE - Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of the Quality of Education - Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (SERCE) 2006 - Second Comparative and Explanatory Study on Students' Performance in Mathematics, Spanish and Sciences.

**ments to enable all children to enrol and complete basic education of sufficient quality may be seriously jeopardised unless high priority is given to improving quality, as indicated by improved learning.** Beyond the timescale of the evaluation, such priority seems to be given by the EC, as expressed, for example, in policy documents such as the Commission Staff Working Document, *“More and Better Education in Developing Countries”*<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> European Commission (2010): Commission Staff Working Document: More and Better Education in Developing Countries. SEC(2010)121 final, Brussels, February 4, 2010.

#### 4.6 EQ6-delivery: To what extent has EC support to education helped in improving education system service delivery and resourcing?

This question focuses on service delivery and the necessary increase in, and pro-poor targeting of, resources for effective and inclusive service delivery. Improving system service delivery requires adjustments to the legal, regulatory and institutional framework – not only sector specific but also linked to decentralisation and public finance management in general.

Moreover, implementing pro-poor education sector reform also requires the development of capacities both at central and sub-national levels. In order to effectively implement pro-poor sector reform, systems need to be in place in terms of procedures, guidelines and formats, and staffing. With a view to become ready for the massive tasks ahead, competency gaps need to be filled and new mandates established with regard to decentralisation down to the school level. Innovative forms of system re-engineering towards the poor, and catering more for accountability, are dependent on public sector reform and improved public finance management, as well as strong inter-linkages between development partners and development banks.

In this context, education finance needs to be both adequate and predictable to ensure long-term sustainability. The failure to link policy, planning and budgeting is the single most important cause of poor education budgeting outcomes in developing countries.

The key judgment criteria of this EQ are<sup>86</sup>:

- JC61: Sound pro-poor policy framework in place
- JC62: Resource allocations in line with education sector requirements
- JC63: Evidence of linkages between education sector reform and broader national reforms; decentralisation, civil service reform and public finance management reform
- JC64: Increased capacity for addressing education reform and management issues.

##### **EQ6 on service delivery – Summary Answer Box**

EC support, particularly in its willingness to move to budget support in education, has played a catalytic role in partner countries, in some cases, accelerating their efforts towards putting in place systems and tools that will help to improve education sector service delivery and resourcing. Education strategy frameworks and procedures are being established in many partner countries, and the operationally more demanding Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), as results-based budgeting tools, have been established by a smaller group.

In its support to the education sector, the EC has worked towards creating conditions for effective service delivery in partner countries – that is, by helping with the establishment of pro-poor and gender-responsive policy frameworks favouring primary, lower secondary and non-formal education and supporting measures for education governance and institutional and financing reform. The EC, within constrained resource environments, has contributed financing to ensure appropriate education sector allocations in line with the costed PRSPs. Capacity development support is intended to help partner governments to fulfil competency requirements of education staff at various levels, and hence to help partner governments to accommodate targets for tranche release. Efforts are being made to arrive at appropriate linkages with broader nation-wide reforms, but their effectiveness depends often on the strength of national leadership support for education, and the position of the Ministry responsible for education within the national power hierarchy

Resourcing prerequisites – that is, funding of the education sector at the minimum benchmark level of at least 3% of GDP – are met by most countries, again with budgetary assistance from the EC. Actual delivery of education services on the ground was found to have been improved where reform efforts in the education sector were integrated into a wider governance reform agenda in the partner country. There is, within EC support, more emphasis on decentralisation and public finance management reform assisting in creating favourable conditions under which EC budget support, be it SBS or GBS, could translate into actual improvements in service delivery in the schools.

With regard to capacity development support, the EC has frequently been successful in helping partner countries to establish or improve their Management Information Systems for the education sector. In other instances, where EC support went beyond the Ministry responsible for Education, enhancing linkages with the Ministry of Finance and Interior Affairs, significant challenges were encountered. This

<sup>86</sup> The judgment criteria have been selected to relate to the eligibility criteria for General Budget Support: A “stability-oriented” macroeconomic policy is in place or is being put in place, exemplified by an approved three-year Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement with the IMF; a well-defined national policy and strategy is in place or is being put in place, such as a Poverty Reduction Strategy; a credible Public Finance Management (PFM) programme is in place or under implementation – i.e. further progress is being made in strengthening PFM.

### EQ6 on service delivery – Summary Answer Box

has been the case, for example, with reforms of Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS) linked to the education sector for reforms aimed at decentralised service delivery, and for Civil Service reforms required for improving working conditions of teachers.

In the case of modality mixes and their propensity for enhancing service delivery, it was found that GBS is assisting partner governments in meeting budgetary requirements – originating from the enrolment increase in Sub-Saharan Africa – through different modalities of Poverty Alleviation Budget Support. Even though this support seems to be essential for system survival, it does not in itself enhance conditions conducive to effective system delivery. GBS, combined with EC TA through a project modality, might address some of the constraints encountered by GBS in assisting partner governments to improve service delivery. SBS, based on eligibility criteria, sometimes in combination with EC TA through a project modality, seems to pay off in terms of assisting partner governments to meet the system transformation requirements for complying with triggers and indicators.

Overall, EC support has impacted on service delivery through providing resources, supporting the design, implementation and monitoring of pro-poor education systems, and through increasing transparency and accountability.

#### 4.6.1 JC61: Operational MTEFs as a basic tool remain a challenge

In the majority of countries, the appropriate (broad) policy frameworks have been drafted, including PRSPs with social sector chapters that cover education. PRSPs are often costed, thus enabling monitoring of the budget and implementation of pro-poor education measures. An operational PRSP is a prerequisite for GBS.<sup>87</sup> The PRSP is to be linked to an education sector policy framework and strategy, preferably medium term. However, co-ordination and consistency problems can arise with the co-existence of parallel policies and sometimes elusive policy objectives (mainly in relation to financial resources available). Most countries – apart from *Somalia* and *Eritrea*, and, to some degree, *Pakistan*, where a stable state and overarching pro-poor policy framework is lacking – have in place a more or less adequate pro-poor policy.

MTEFs constitute the “next step-up” in the development of a results-based programming and planning framework. Everywhere, processes aimed towards increasing budget transparency are taking place, but **MTEFs are in different stages of development and implementation**. In many countries, including *Niger* and *Burkina Faso*, working out the details of the operationally-demanding MTEFs has at times met with considerable challenges. Experience from the sample countries shows that the **existence of an MTEF does not guarantee its actual significance in budgeting or activity planning**. Challenges can arise from low country ownership of the documents – that is, when the MTEF is not sufficiently integrated into the planning and budgeting procedures of the partner country, as is the case in *Vietnam*. Adequately linking the MTEF to sector plans and policies is another challenge (e.g. in *Ghana*). The significance of the MTEF can also be reduced if alternative funding sources provide considerable financing outside of the expenditure framework, or if funding – particularly donor funding – remains unpredictable.

The MTEF mechanism worked reasonably well in only a minority of the sample countries. In *Tunisia* and *South Africa*, in particular, the MTEF helped to increase efficiency of sector spending, in both cases with EC support. For the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan*, the Country Note indicates that while no MTEF was operational during the period under evaluation, a Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) was being developed. Here, the EC TA is involved in reviewing the budget, among other things, in order to monitor additionality.

However, it is not solely the responsibility of the partner countries to ensure that the conditions are in place for MTEFs to function well. Donors must ensure that they play their part in creating an enabling environment for sound financial planning in the sector. Aid predictability has been proved to be an important factor in this regard (e.g. in *Niger*).

Preparedness for EC budget support implies a costed Poverty Reduction Strategy being operational and monitored, and a PFM reform plan being in place. These preconditions for budget support provide a foundation for system development linked to improved education sector management. **From the findings, it appears that receiving more flexible support in the form of sector or general budget support has acted as an important incentive for countries to engage in efforts to enhance budget predictability and to develop an MTEF**. EC-financed TA has complemented the main financial support.

<sup>87</sup> See ‘Guidelines on the Programming, Design and Management of General Budget Support’, AIDCO DEV RELEX, January 2007

#### 4.6.2 JC62: Resource allocations linked to, but not meeting, overall education sector requirements

The share of public expenditure for education varies considerably across countries, reflecting both the emphasis put on education as a key factor for development and the difficulties in finding sufficient resources that are not lost in the system. In 1996, the Delors Report set a benchmark of 6% of GDP for public expenditure on education. However (see EQ 6), only *Botswana* (8%) and *Tunisia* (7%) are meeting this budgetary norm. Most countries spent only 3% of GDP on education, but the capacity of middle-income countries is obviously much higher – hence, 5% of GDP in *Mozambique* implies a much more restricted capacity for service delivery than a similar percentage for *South Africa* and the *Dominican Republic*.

With regard to the total public expenditures on education as a percentage of total government expenditures, as a general guideline/norm, 18% has been set. *Pakistan* and the *Dominican Republic* (both 11%) score low, and *Argentina* (14%) and *Bangladesh* (16%) are also below the benchmark.

The benchmark for public expenditure on education, as a percentage of GDP, is 3%. Most sample study countries meet this level of expenditure, with several exceeding it (*Botswana*, *Tunisia*, *Mozambique*, *Argentina* and *South Africa*). *Eritrea* and the *Dominican Republic* are the only countries lagging behind, with 2% in 2007. The countries that are performing best in terms of education expenditure as a percentage of GDP are *Botswana* (8%) and *Tunisia* (7%). Part of the resourcing prerequisites are thus met by most countries, again with budgetary assistance from the EC.

It is highly complex to fully assess modality mixes and their propensity for enhancing service delivery, including appropriate resource allocations. It was found that GBS, through different modalities of Poverty Alleviation Budget Support, is helping to address budgetary requirements originating from the enrolment increase in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa*. Even though this support seems to be essential for system survival, it does not in itself enhance conditions that are conducive to effective system delivery. **GBS, if combined with EC TA through a project modality, might address some of the constraints related to compliance with education sector indicators for flexible tranche release.** GBS, combined with education TA, may thus assist partner governments in improving service delivery. SBS, being linked to an education sector policy framework and budgeted education sector plan, in combination with EC TA through a project modality, seems to pay off in terms of assisting partner governments in meeting the system transformation requirements for complying with triggers and indicators.

#### 4.6.3 JC63: Linkages between education sector reform and broader national reforms, decentralisation, civil service reform and public finance management reform are emerging, but complicated to manage

Education sector reforms often happen parallel to decentralisation processes. However, the degree to which both arenas (educational policy and decentralisation) are linked varies significantly. In *Indonesia*, for example, the government, with EC support to Basic Education-Sector Capacity Support Programme (BE-SCSP) 2, created clear linkages between both, with the intention of ensuring that the local authorities can and will take on their new roles in planning or service delivery. For example, line ministries, including the Ministry of Education, are asked to provide sub-national entities with Minimum Service Standards (MSS) to make certain that service delivery at local level continues to adhere to nationally-sanctioned criteria. *Pakistan*, however, provides an example where deficiencies at sub-national level, with regard to available skills and other aspects of organisational capacity, have prevented decentralisation efforts from really becoming meaningful for the delivery of education services on the ground. However, this problem is being addressed by the SBS decentralised support to the provincial government of Sindh Province and the provincial government of the North Western Frontier Province.

**In countries where decentralisation is sufficiently advanced, budget support offered by the EC can, in fact, benefit the education system at local levels.** In *Uganda*, a combination of public sector reforms – including performance assessment, a sound sector policy, and an effective inter-governmental fiscal transfer system – are forming a reasonably effective system that is trusted by donors and the government. The example of *Tanzania* shows that public sector reform can result in the decentralisation of responsibility for the implementation of primary education, as the functions of the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture are now confined to policy making. However, the complex procedures introduced seem to be taking time to be fully understood and implemented effectively and efficiently at local level. In the *Dominican Republic*, past reforms also have developed government structures that can form the basis for future EC support to a decentralised education system. Even in traditionally highly-centralised systems, such as in *Tunisia*, the sub-national structures have gained in stature over the last few years.

Advances in reforming and improving the management of public finances are essential for ensuring progress in government-led reforms in the education sector, including the improvement of service delivery. In *Namibia* and *South Africa*, benefits from a robust PFM system overall “spilled over” into the education sector, in the form of a high degree of fiscal integrity and low levels of corruption. In the *Dominican Republic*, EC-supported reforms in the education sector were anchored in (albeit slow) parallel reforms of public finance management overall. Not surprisingly, the **significance of overall reforms of public financial management for the education sector in fragile states is found to be low.**

#### **4.6.4 JC64: Urgently needed capacity for addressing education reform and management issues addressed**

Capacity building is a common element in EC-supported education programmes, across modalities and regions. One of the most common, and also one of the most successful, types of support is the development of Management Information Systems for the education sector (EMIS.). EC-supported programmes have promoted the development and use of these tools in many of its partner countries across different regions. In *Asia*, EC support to sector programmes has helped countries such as *Bangladesh* (PEDP II) and *India* (DPEP 1) to improve their EMIS systems, which has improved the availability of data for sector planning, monitoring and evaluation. The *Dominican Republic* also is pursuing the establishment of such a system with EC assistance. In other cases (e.g. *Tunisia*), the promotion of the concept of a Management Information System (MIS) in the education sector has at least increased the willingness of the partner government to consider such a project. Also in fragile states, such as *Pakistan*, the EC support – jointly with the World Bank through the SBS – for the provincial government of Sindh has enhanced the further development and capacity building of provincial and district staff through EC TA capacity building, in co-operation with USAID. Training of staff at all levels (i.e. centrally and decentrally) is intended to ensure the adequate use of the EMIS tools. However, challenges to the successful implementation of these tools can stem from over-complicated systems and software that impede the actual use of the database by target groups (e.g. in *Vietnam*).

#### **The EC has been comparatively less successful in supporting reforms of existing administrative structures in Ministries of Education – that is, outside the fairly well-delineated area of MIS.**

In *Burkina Faso*, for example, a broad programme to provide institutional support to the Ministry of Basic Education was not implemented, partly because the development of a ministry-owned plan for capacity building was so delayed that unused funds had to be decommitted after three years. In *Namibia*, the functionality of a general Institutional and Capacity Building Support Facility was also negatively affected by the lack of a sufficiently detailed strategic vision for capacity development in the Ministry, and intermittent lack of funds. In other countries, such as *Liberia*, implementation problems have often also been caused by over-optimistic assessments of the prevalence of necessary prerequisites for reforms, and, linked to that, over-ambitious timetables for the changes – often coupled with insufficient resourcing.

**A related challenge for the EC has been to ensure that partner governments feel that they have the level of ownership of the reforms that is needed to push institutional changes forward.** Lack of ownership has led to cancellations, or at least delay, of a number of initiatives and their components (e.g. in *Tanzania*). Low institutional ownership often expresses itself in the absence of an adequate strategic capacity development framework on the part of the government. In a few cases, such as *Namibia* and *Mozambique*, this ultimately has prevented individual activities adding up to overall improvements at the organisational and system level. The EC experience has also shown that the use of PIUs can be problematic, even when they are situated in the relevant sector Ministry itself. Staff in PIUs often work under dramatically improved conditions, which leads to envy and low motivation among their colleagues in the Ministry overall (see *Niger*).

While most of the TA support to capacity building was until recently targeted at the central level – that is, national Ministries of Education and related departments – a shift seems to have started, with TA being provided, or planned to be provided, to the sub-national level (e.g. in *Cambodia*, *Indonesia*, *Pakistan*, *Papua New Guinea* and *Fiji*). Such a shift would help to bring competencies for service delivery to where education sector implementation takes place.

**Overall, with its support to the education sector, the EC has worked towards creating conditions for effective service delivery in partner countries – that is, by helping in the establishment of pro-poor policy frameworks, and, within constrained resource environments, by contributing financing to ensure appropriate education sector allocations in line with the costed PRSPs. Capacity development support was intended to help partner governments to fulfil competency requirements of education staff at different levels. Efforts are being made to arrive at appropriate linkages with broader nationwide reforms, but their effectiveness depends often on the strength of national leadership support for education, and the position of the Ministry responsible for education within the national power hierarchy.**

**It is clear that the EC's shift from project support to sector and budget support, due to its emphasis on systemic reform, has assisted partner countries in creating important institutional preconditions for improved delivery of education services. The effectiveness of this assistance has been enhanced with the help of technical assistance alongside SBS (Cambodia, Pakistan, Tanzania) or GBS, either specifically to the education sector or to Ministries dealing with education sector capacity building. This includes the Ministry of Finance (PFM, FMIS) and Ministry of Interior Affairs (capacity building for local-level education administrators, and costing Minimum Standards of Service).**

#### 4.7 EQ7 – transparency: To what extent has EC support to education helped in strengthening transparency and accountability of the management of education service delivery?

This question aims at addressing the key issue of transparency and accountability in the management of service delivery. This is being done through exploring whether operational, institutional and procedural frameworks exist, including budgetary control systems and procedures to detect leakages. The question covers the central system, civil society as a whole, and local government, proceeding further down to the community level and schools. Decentralisation and devolution of funding to lower levels of education administration and schools is further fostering the need for transparency and accountability.

The question is to consider how EC support to education has helped the partner government in these areas and the extent to which EC practices contribute to improved sector governance and transparency. Analysis will focus on the education sector, but it is clear that transparency and accountability are macro issues impinging on the education sector, rather than emerging from it and hence involve EC support to, for example PFM.

The EQ refers particularly to key EC policies. COM (2002) 116 describes a two-way dependency between education and good governance: education enables people to claim greater transparency and accountability on the part of the authorities and to be empowered to take active roles, but conversely it notes the need for good governance as an essential condition for successful education development. The discourse on “governance” has developed since 2002 in the EC and other agencies, and is of higher profile and more detailed in *The European Consensus*, with its explicit mention of transparency, corruption, the role of civil society, and improving performance indicators (which can facilitate accountability). In keeping with the participatory imperatives of EFA and MDGs (in which public consultation and participation is identified), EC policy for education recognises the importance of civil society and its role in building accountability frameworks around service delivery.

The answer to this EQ is built on the following JCs:

- JC71: Strengthened and operational institutional and procedural framework in the education sector related to transparency and accountability issues at national and sub-national levels
- JC72: Strengthened role and involvement of non-state actors, civil society and local government in education sector management processes
- JC73: Strengthened staff competencies related to accountability issues
- JC74: Degree to which EC support for education is promoting mutual accountability and predictability of funds with partner countries

##### EQ7 on transparency – Summary Answer Box

Much remains to be done by EC-supported programmes to establish fully operational institutional and procedural frameworks related to transparency and accountability. The importance of the transparency and accountability agenda, stressed in CSPs and reflected in the high Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of most countries analysed, indicates strong perceptions of proneness to corruption. The EC's contribution to the definition of roles between government stakeholders on issues of accountability and transparency remained rather limited, as was also the case with regard to staff competencies for accountability in the education sector. However, the EC has contributed to decreasing fiduciary risk through supporting improved control systems, such as internal and external auditing. These are part of standard systems required both for SBS and GBS. In many countries, the internal audit functions in particular remain inadequate. Through EC co-financing, Public Expenditure Review (PERs) and Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) have been implemented, revealing leakages, misuse of funds and teacher absenteeism to be frequently occurring problems. However, accountability is now on the agenda. The EC has played a noteworthy role in some countries in helping to strengthen the role of NSAs in education sector policy dialogue. It was also found that EC GBS support has, in some cases (e.g. *Ghana* and *Mozambique*), led to significant progress in the participation of civil society. Moreover, civil society surveillance and monitoring accompanies, with some success, the EC SBS in Morocco and Ecuador. However, a systematic EC-NSA interface in policy dialogue and critical monitoring could be further enhanced. Joint sector reviews, including budget reviews, periodically take place in most of the countries analysed, thus contributing to increasing transparency. The EC plays a key role in these. The EC support for decentralisation of education sector management processes has had a mixture of successes and difficulties. In particular, the creation of School Management Committees (SMCs) at local level, involving representatives of teachers and parents' associations, has been enhanced by EC support linked to local-level democracy, but has had mixed results in setting up and training of SMCs – for example, in *India*, *Niger*, *Liberia*, *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh*. This support showed mixed results in *Bangladesh* and *Niger*, while it appears to have been successful in *Pakistan*. However, there appears to be a limited proportion of education budget that is fully managed at the decentralised level. A num-

### EQ7 on transparency – Summary Answer Box

ber of countries have been moving in that direction – for example, *Indonesia* and *Liberia*.

Delays in aid disbursement frequently occur, and the main reasons can be found in non-compliance with triggers and indicators (GBS and SBS), often as a result of the complexity of EC procedural rules and the weak capacity of national staff. While efforts have increasingly been made by the EC towards aligning its support to the partner countries' fiscal cycles, predictability risks (e.g. political changes, lack of predictability in the MTEF) are detrimental to alignment. Alignment of EC funding to a partner country's fiscal cycle has thus been frequently undermined by failure to comply with indicators essential for disbursements to be released, thus leading ultimately to a reduced alignment to the financing cycle and reduced predictability of financing.

#### 4.7.1 JC71: Mixed successes of EC support related to strengthened and operational institutional and procedural framework in the education sector related to transparency and accountability issues

From the review of CSEs, field visits, and the ECA reports and further analyses, it appears that much remains to be done to establish fully operational institutional and procedural frameworks related to transparency and accountability in the education sector. The importance of the transparency and accountability agenda is stressed in CSPs and reflected in most countries analysed having a high ranking on the Corruption Perception Index. However, some progress has been made with **EC support**, which has assisted in the **alignment with national procedures and policies** (such as in *India*) and **PFM reforms** linked to prerequisites for SBS and GBS in many of the countries analysed. In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, in *Burkina Faso* and in *Tanzania*, Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments were the basis for supported PFM reforms. In *Ghana*, the EC support to various budget support operations has contributed to the adoption of important policy reforms in the area of PFM. In *Namibia*, the PFM system is deemed to be robust, and current practices ensure that the MoE benefits directly from the budget support. In *Liberia*, with regard to support to PFM reforms, the EC contribution to IMF Technical Assistance is intended to allow for a more transparent, efficient and effective management of public resources.

It is also evident from the EUD survey and the field visits that **issues of transparency and accountability should, and do, form part of policy dialogue**, be it at sectoral or general level. Such forums often help to keep the issues on the agenda and pave the way for stronger accountability – as, for instance, in *Tanzania*, or in *Cambodia* and in *India*. It appears that the EC has managed to use policy dialogue with national governments, within the framework of sector programmes and SBS, to tackle the transparency and accountability issues, such as in *Cambodia*, where policy dialogue with the ministries dealing with the EC-supported SBS aims to enable the use of SBS in a country that faces corruption problems. This was also reflected in PERs and PETS regularly organised in co-operation with the World Bank and IMF.

One other means of enhancing transparency and accountability within the framework of budget support consists of **adopting indicators relating to the subject**. Such indicators appear to be more widespread in *Asia*. In *Pakistan*, the EC/WB disbursement in the framework of SEPSP has been linked to indicators with built-in accountability checks. In *Cambodia*, additional indicators related to the improvement of management processes are planned to be introduced in the SBS.

**Clearly-defined roles between government stakeholders** are a prerequisite for good governance. Both the desk study and field visits did not find sufficient information to be fully conclusive about the EC's contribution to defining roles and responsibilities between government stakeholders involved on issues of accountability and transparency. Nevertheless, it became apparent even from the evidence found that the EC contribution to this definition of roles has remained quite limited. In *Tanzania* and *Botswana*, progress has been achieved towards the **decentralisation** of education decisions and management. The roles as defined in *Pakistan* have not been operationalised.

Corruption also manifests itself in leakage at all levels - from the treasury through the central ministry to decentralised units, and down to schools. Establishing **improved control systems** to increase accountability and transparency is still a major challenge for numerous partner countries.

However, the EC has contributed to decreasing fiduciary risk through supporting improved control systems, such as internal and external auditing. These are part of standard systems required for SBS and GBS. In many countries, internal audit functions in particular remain inadequate. Through EC co-financing, PERs and PETS have been implemented, revealing leakages, misuse of funds and teacher absenteeism as a frequently occurring problem. Findings suggest that GBS support is the modality that has helped in establishing such institutions.

In *Asia*, accountability measures concern the introduction of **“assurances” and conditionalities** related to transparency and accountability into budget support, as in *India* and most other SBS and GBS countries, where operational financial systems and auditing are among the conditionalities. In *Sub-*

*Saharan Africa*, all countries analysed struggle with issues related to corruption. The governments seem to have made efforts to address related problems, but with varying commitments. Leakages still occur, as noted for *Cambodia*, *Tanzania*, *Niger* and *Uganda*. The occurrence of leakages is decreased by **establishing procedures** and **supporting the monitoring of public expenditures**, which occurred in several countries, such as *Uganda*.

Sound budget and expenditure management systems, with the budget system being transparent and open to public scrutiny, have been put in place in many developing countries in the context of PRS. In most countries, **education budgets are publicly available, even though not always easily accessible**. In some countries, such as *India*, Annual Workplans and Budgets (AWPBs) are used to monitor progress towards accommodating reform indicators, and budget release and expenditures are available for monitoring through Joint Review Missions. In recent years, implementation tools such as Education MTEFs and AWPB have become more frequent, especially in large-scale education sector support programmes such as ESDP in *Tanzania* and DPEP and SBS for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in *India*. It should be noted that these AWPBs, as well as State and District AWPBs, are published and available. The EC, in preparing for and monitoring sector support, including SBS, has (in partnership) played a solid role in ensuring that AWPBs linked to MTEFs are available for monitoring of education sector plans. The desk study and field visits suggest that, in quite a number of cases, SBS in particular has been used successfully for strengthening the move towards increased budget transparency in the education sector. However, progress is not advanced everywhere. In *Botswana*, for instance, National Development Plans (Vision 2016/NDP9 and 10), as well as a Revised National (25-year) Policy on Education and an Human Resources Development (HRD)-Strategy, do not allow for any monitoring of the education sector system and its development, as they contain neither budget allocations nor expenditure forecasts.

In many cases, improvements in general **procurement systems** supported by the EC within the framework of GBS have contributed to enhancing transparency and accountability, thus reducing the incidence of misprocurement in the education system. Among others, this has happened in *Uganda*, and appears to have been particularly successful in the *Dominican Republic*.

**Teacher absenteeism, often exposed through PETS, is a significant problem in many countries analysed and directly affects learning time and outcomes, as well as national education costs and spending.** Reasons for teacher absenteeism are mainly poor teacher motivation and a broken accountability chain. Experience has shown that better monitoring, complemented by sanctions for non-performance, can cost-effectively improve attendance and performance of frontline staff. **The EC support aimed at reducing teacher absenteeism has been quite limited in the countries analysed, apart from assisting in commissioning PETS.** In *Niger*, GBS has helped to reduce absenteeism, insofar as GBS has been reducing recurrent shortages of money at the budget level. In *India*, the EC support to DPEP and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has not adequately addressed the problem of teacher absenteeism, and failures in the “*accountability chain*” between service providers, clients and politicians are thus noted.

#### **4.7.2 JC72: EC support increasingly manages to strengthen the role and active involvement of NSAs and civil society in education sector management processes, but progress regarding decentralisation of sector management seems to be stalling**

Strengthening the role and involvement of civil society and local government in education sector management processes is crucial if accountability and transparency are to be raised. A number of ways have been used by EC support to strengthen role and involvement of non-state actors, civil society and local government in education sector management processes.

Interestingly, **civil society surveillance measures** (watchdogs) have been financed – for instance, in *Ecuador* and, indirectly, Education Watch in *Bangladesh* – and seem to have been successful in collecting, commenting on and publishing the achievements made within the education sector.

**Public scrutiny mechanisms** can help to enhance accountability and transparency of governments. How well a government informs its population about key information related to the sector – for example, about the budget – also constitutes a major element of transparency. In the context of shifts towards SBS and GBS, functioning mechanisms become increasingly important. Such measures go well beyond the core of the education sector, and clearly show that support to the sector needs to be embedded in overall government efforts to strengthen its accountability. In that respect, **EC GBS support certainly has much more leverage than sector support alone**. From the findings, it appears that, in *Uganda*, EC GBS support has contributed to enhancing the participation of civil society in general governance and policy planning processes. However, when it comes to sector-specific public scrutiny, the examples of *Morocco* and *Ecuador* show the leverage effect that such financially small projects can have on public scrutiny, and thus transparency, directly within the education sector.

The EC has played a noteworthy role in strengthening, in some countries, the **role of NSAs in education sector policy dialogue**. It was also found that EC GBS support has in some cases (such as *Ghana* and *Mozambique*) led to significant progress in participation of civil society. Moreover, civil society surveillance and monitoring, with some success, accompanies EC SBS in *Morocco* and *Ecuador*. However, systematic EC-NSA interface in policy dialogue and critical monitoring could still be enhanced.

**It becomes increasingly apparent that NSAs can be an important ingredient in policy dialogue and service delivery.** However, this has materialised in only a few cases. Here, it is important to note that, especially in SBS, EC support sometimes manages to involve NSAs as a kind of watchdogs to support EC efforts towards strengthening transparency and accountability. This happens, for instance, through local contracts with NSAs, such as through calls for proposals, as happened in *Morocco* and *Ecuador*. In *Uganda*, the CSE 2009 and the ECA report stated that EC support has been particularly successful in contributing to strengthening NSAs and in developing their capacity to participate in policy dialogue with government. The EC support in *Uganda* also enabled NSAs to acquire increased access to national and international financing, and thus to play a major role in service delivery. The *Dominican Republic* constitutes an interesting case in that regard, as the EC successfully supported initiatives contributing to involving NSAs in policy dialogue and education service delivery.

The EC, through GBS, SBS and SPSP, can play an important role in helping to establish **general frameworks for strengthening the role of NSAs in education sector management** as part of policy dialogue focusing not only on state partners but also on NSAs.

With regard to issues related to the **decentralisation** of education sector management processes, examples from *India*, *Vietnam* and *Tunisia* highlight the difficulties faced – such as weak accountability and limited capacity at local level – when the EC seeks to support such processes. The track record of EC support in that regard appears rather mixed. Even if decentralisation in the education sector is firmly on the agenda of EC strategies, in many partner countries, such as *Tunisia* and *Indonesia* (through BE-SCSP 2), it seems that it has not yet fully materialised. In *Vietnam* and *India*, EC-funded programmes have helped in building and strengthening capacities in the education sector at decentralised level, but this does not appear to have produced significant progress in terms of transfer of capacity to decentralised levels.

The **decentralisation of school management** and the involvement of school stakeholders aim to reinforce schools' ownership and self-governance. The information available highlights the difficulties faced, and the rather mixed track record of EC support. In many countries, the EC supported the setting up and training of SMCs at local level, involving representatives of teachers and parents' associations – for example, in *India*, *Niger*, *Liberia*, *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh*. This support still showed mitigated results in *Bangladesh* and *Niger*, while it appears to be successful in *Pakistan*.

However, there appears to be a limited proportion of education budget that is fully managed at the decentralised level. A number of countries have been moving in that direction – for example, *Indonesia* and *Liberia*.

**Overall, the EC increasingly acknowledges the need for generating a more active involvement of NSAs in the education sector at all levels** – including in policy dialogue. **However, this was noted only in a few countries.** The EC support for decentralisation of education sector management processes has been faced with a mixture of successes and difficulties, EC support helped in building and strengthening the education sector at decentralised level, but this, so far, has not produced significant progress in terms of transfer of capacity to decentralised levels. In particular, while the creation of **SMCs at local level**, involving representatives of teachers and parents' associations, **has been enhanced by EC support** linked to local level democracy, and such institutions have been established and chartered, **they often lack adequate capacities.**

#### **4.7.3 JC73: EC support has contributed to strengthened staff competencies related to accountability issues, but efforts still need to be made**

Strengthening staff competencies in relation to accountability and transparency issues is of utmost importance to improving education sector management processes. Many countries need to develop comprehensive capacity building and training programmes for audit staff. This could include specific education and training for professional accounting qualifications, training on audit standards and practices, risk assessment techniques, and computer-assisted techniques.

In sum, it appears that EC support has not convincingly tackled weak staff competencies related to accountability in the education sector. **In Asia, EC support appears to show mixed results in addressing issues of staff competencies related to accountability.** In *Bangladesh*, PEDP II, co-funded by the EC, supported the creation of a Programme Liaison Unit (PLU), which provides technical capacity-building as well as expertise to improve financial management. However, in *India*, the CSE stated that neither the DPEP nor the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan successfully addressed the problem

of weak accountability mechanisms at the local level. It should be stressed that even though *India* did not want to avail itself of EC TA, impressive results were achieved through capacity-building institutions organising cascade-type headmaster training. **In *Africa*, EC support contributing to strengthening staff competencies related to accountability issues does not seem any more successful.** In *Niger*, the objective of PDDE related to the strengthening of institutional capacity of the relevant ministries has not been achieved satisfactorily. In *South Africa*, EC support in the form of training and TA has often been useful, but the main governance failures seem squarely located at lower levels of government, and the EC has not provided much support to date. With TA support to PAPSE in the *Dominican Republic*, the EC appears to have contributed to the “diffusion” of a culture of accountability and to increasing planning capacity – a fact that the Country Note acknowledges as being one of the most important results of the TA.

With regard to the issue of increasing **accountancy and bookkeeping competencies** at different levels, it became apparent, even from the rather small amount of evidence found, that the EC contribution has remained very limited. EC-supported SBS in *Tunisia* did not include any specific areas of indicators related to accountancy and bookkeeping competencies, as Tunisian capacities in this respect were already adequate. In *Pakistan*, efforts vary between the different types of support. In the NGO-driven Northern Education Project, such support is strong and even directly linking to the local government. It is done in a somewhat piecemeal fashion in the earthquake-related education sector approach, and in the sector-wide approach of the Sindh SBS SEPS.

In most **SPSPs/SBS**, independent technical monitoring missions are standard, and are regularly organised to conduct an independent review of progress. These missions link with and support the partner country ministries in charge of budget cycle and the **annual joint review process**. In *India*, for instance, according to the EUD survey, the Joint Review Mission (JRM) is currently considered to be the vector for donor co-ordination, with twice-yearly meetings to review progress of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and with active participation of the EC as a member of the core group. In *Botswana*, the SBS indicators are assessed on a yearly basis in Joint Annual Appraisal (JAA) exercises, in which the EC is described as an “active member”. **GBS support also often serves as a vehicle for jointly reviewing sector progress**, in various forms, sometimes before the overall GBS review, sometimes in the form of review meetings, sometimes in the form of missions. In *Mozambique*, annual and mid-year sector reviews are carried out, feeding into the annual joint review of overall performance of the GBS and into its mid-year review. These are occasions for extensive policy dialogue related to GBS indicators. Such education sector dialogue related to GBS seems also to occur in a systematic manner in *Uganda*, *Vietnam* and *Tanzania*, where working groups meet regularly to discuss the sector performance.

At **sub-national level**, joint review missions equally may also take place – for example, in *Pakistan*, where three major donors (the WB, the EC and USAID) work in education in Sindh province. The WB and the EC hold regular consultations, through their JRMs, of the Sindh Education Plan Support Programme. Moreover, Joint Sector Reviews, including budget reviews, are scheduled twice a year under GoS leadership, thus showing that the GoS is well capable of managing a programme of this scope and intensity through its established Reform Support Unit.

As confirmed by the EUD survey, **where forms of sector budget support are being implemented in the education sector, there has usually been a fair degree of harmonisation related to various forms of joint field missions** (e.g. in *Bangladesh*, *Tanzania*), such as JRMs/Monitoring Missions, and relevant stakeholders are being involved. A good example is *Tanzania*, where the EC is involved in the education sector donor group that annually assesses, jointly with the government and CSO representatives, the performance of the sector. The EC seems to have played an instrumental and catalytic role in improving consultation and co-ordination between partner country governments and development partners, and in ensuring that joint sector reviews, including budget reviews, periodically take place.

#### 4.7.4 JC74: Still a long way to go to arrive at mutual accountability and predictability

Budget support constitutes an important source of revenue for governments in many countries. Poor predictability of inflows of budget support affects the government’s fiscal management in much the same way as external shocks impact on domestic revenue collection. Both shortfalls in the total amount of budget support and delays in the in-year distribution of the inflows can have serious implications for the government’s ability to implement its budget as planned. The extent to which direct budget support can be predictable depends largely on the form of the instrument that donors use in providing budget support funds. Where the budget support is linked to prior reform actions that the government must take, the onus rests on the government to satisfy the actions for predictability to be assured.

The evaluation’s findings indicate **rather weak performance in terms of aid disbursement according to agreed schedules**, mainly due to major delays, complexity of the procedural rules of the EC,

weak capacity of national staff, and non-compliance with targets or indicators for tranche release. Also, with regard to education support through the **project modality**, **disbursements have been significantly delayed** – as, for instance, in *Eritrea* and in *Niger*.

Under the **SBS modality**, the example in *Tanzania* indicates that **moving to SBS may require governments to go through a learning curve to be able to provide substantiated requests for disbursements**. Moreover, the example of the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan* shows that achieving compliance with performance-based Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) may be feasible in a fragile state.

As for **GBS**, the example of *Uganda* points to the fact that the **predictability** of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF programme was, a priori, **reduced** by the fact that up to 50% of the programme was to be channelled **through variable tranches** where disbursement depended on the achievement of targets set for specific performance indicators. In *Niger*, the proportion of disbursements in the GBS that is delayed is quite significant, due to the **weak capacities** of staff required to produce all the documentation aimed at corroborating achievement of the indicators. In *South Africa*, weak capacities of South African officials is also one of the reasons for major challenges in ensuring predictability and, to a lesser extent, accountability in the delivery and management of education assistance.

**Alignment by the EC to a partner country's fiscal cycles appears to remain a considerable challenge.** Efforts are being made by the EC, but they risk being frequently undermined by the likelihood of disbursements on compliance with indicators not being made, thus leading to a reduced alignment to the financing cycle, as scheduled resources in such cases will not be available. In some countries, adoption of the SBS and GBS modality enabled a gradual alignment of EC disbursements to the country's fiscal cycles – as, for example, in the *Dominican Republic*. However, the disbursement of current and forthcoming SBS and GBS tranches remains exposed to the political situation in the country after the 2010 elections. In fact, budget support seems to be a modality that is particularly exposed to political decisions. In *Niger*, the degree of alignment of the EC programming and financial cycle to the partner country's fiscal cycle is weak. An MTEF is supposed to be available, but it has a low predictive value. In *Botswana*, compatibility of financial years is usually not given, which results in rather weak predictability of disbursements under the SBS support.

A good standard practice can be highlighted for *Uganda*, where the EC provides projections of future GBS disbursements over the three-year MTEF period, to ensure that the financial resources from the EC's GBS programmes are fully taken into account in the Government of Uganda (GoU) budget preparation process. However, in all these cases, predictability is at risk if indicators are not met and tranches are not released.

#### 4.8 EQ8-co-ordination & complementarity: To what extent, and how, has the EC contributed to improving co-ordination, complementarity and synergies with Member States and other donors in the education sector, in line with the Paris Declaration?

This question focuses on how efforts in support of the education sector were co-ordinated – within the EC, between the EC and the Member State (MS), and with other donors and funding agencies – and whether this led to complementary emphasis and approaches.<sup>88</sup> With the increasing acceptance of programme and sector approaches to education sector support, donor co-ordination and complementarity have become increasingly important. The advancement of joint approaches of Development Partners and Development Banks towards budget support means that donor co-ordination is even more essential.

Several policy documents and evaluations suggest that the EC is well placed to take a co-ordinating or even leading role<sup>89</sup>, due to the special nature of the relationship between the EC and the EU MS, and through experience with and major involvement in the education sector worldwide.

Co-ordination and complementarity issues are also very much related to the issues of alignment and harmonisation as spelled out, for instance, by the Paris Declaration's indicators related to these issues. In addition to country co-operation, the EC uses financing channels such as Development Banks to finance the FTI-CF or other Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs). This question, therefore, also endeavours to analyse synergies between such channels and other EC modes of supporting education.

The answer to this EQ is built on the following JCs:

- JC81: Donor co-ordination mechanisms are in place or being set up with the EC providing value added
- JC82: Complementarity between the interventions of the EC, the EU Member States and other donor agencies active in the education sector
- JC83: Level of synergy between EC-supported trust funds and banks and EC support at country level

##### *EQ8 on co-ordination & complementarity – Summary Answer Box*

The EC has been an active player when it comes to co-ordination of donors in the education sector in partner countries, and was seen as co-ordination groups' lead donor in several countries. The role of the EC can be characterised frequently more significant in those countries that are using SBS, or in countries that are in the process of introducing SBS or a more systematic sector approach.

Different co-ordination mechanisms are in place at various levels (technical/administrative, political), at different times during the programme cycle (planning - programming - implementation), and between the various stakeholders – that is, between donors alone, the EC and the MS with a view to ensuring complementarity and division of labour, with governments, and with civil society. Sector working groups and Joint Review Missions seem to be the most relevant ways to improve co-ordination at this level. Though more difficult to organise, joint activities at the planning level, also seem to be instrumental in enhancing co-ordination.

Beyond these specific mechanisms, it seems to be crucial that partner governments increasingly lead existing aid co-ordination activities. In this context, it has been found that SBS has a considerable potential at sectoral level to strengthen effective co-ordination with the government, but also among donors – provided that specific support is planned to develop the capacity of the government to take on this role, and that adequate human resources are available within the EUDs.

Overall, it has to be recognised that a key area of EC added value lies in promoting better and more efficient co-ordination and relevant mechanisms among donors, and especially MS. This is sometimes achieved by actively supporting the alignment or resources.

While EC support to the FTI-CF increased towards the end of the period under evaluation, co-ordination, at the country level, between support provided by the FTI and EC support is very limited. With regard to channelling through MDTFs with Development Banks, the quality of co-ordination can be rated as rather good, and complementarity is usually a given. FTI or MDTFs seem to have the ca-

<sup>88</sup> In doing so, the EQ addresses two other elements of the 3Cs – namely, co-ordination and complementarity, while coherence as understood in the 3Cs is already included in the analysis of EQ1.

<sup>89</sup> See e.g. Mid-term Review: "The EU's Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals – Halfway to 2015", report by Alliance 2015. The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "Keeping Europe's Promise on Financing for Development", Com (2007) 164final. See also: Treaty of Amsterdam, Article 180; and, for instance: Evaluation Services of the European Union (2004): The Treaty of Maastricht and Europe's Development Co-operation. Triple C Evaluations, No. 1.

**EQ8 on co-ordination & complementarity – Summary Answer Box**

capacity to facilitate the move towards EC sector support where a comprehensive approach is lacking, or where only limited co-ordination mechanisms exist. Yet, overall, the use of FTI or MDTFs does not seem to have played a significant role in preparing for a rapid shift towards a wider EC support to the sector.

**4.8.1 JC81: The EC has provided significant added value in the establishment or the strengthening of donor co-ordination mechanisms, especially in the framework of a strategic shift towards more budget support**

In recent years, the EC has made considerable efforts to improve co-ordination with EU Member States and other donors. This has been particularly the case for co-ordination during the programming phase. The evaluation team gathered substantial evidence on the fact that the drafting of recent Country Strategy Papers was done in close consultation with EU Member States and partner countries. The survey of EUDs points to an overall improvement in the quality of dialogue with EU Member States, other donors or partner governments during the programming phase.

The co-ordination efforts have been enhanced by the adoption by the EC of the new aid paradigm, which stresses the need to support national and sectoral policies and to move towards budget support-type mechanisms.

This **shift in strategic focus** has created a need for the EC to link up more closely with the work of other donors through a variety of mechanisms – such as sector working groups or consultative groups, informal meetings, multi-donor committees in charge of public finance management and budget support.

Co-ordination also relates to various forms of dialogue that take place between the EC and the EU MS, other donors or the government. The field visits and the EUD survey provide clear indications that EC **dialogue** with all three of these target groups **has significantly improved** between the first and the second programming period covered by the evaluation.

From the various analyses, it emerges that the level and quality of co-ordination is influenced by the status of the education sector as a focal sector, and by the number of Development Partners and EU MS involved in the sector. Moreover, requirements for co-ordination – and hence operational mechanisms – rarely exist when projects are the dominant modality.

A specific case of donor co-ordination is **joint planning and division of sector activities** among donors, which is increasingly proposed from the programming period 2007 onwards. It is worth mentioning that Joint Assistant Strategies or Joint Programming Frameworks are already in operation in a number of countries (e.g. *Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Somalia and South Africa*).

Co-ordination requirements increase when several donor agencies are providing discrete sector support, when using pooled funding, SBS, GBS with variable tranches based on education indicators, or when a combination of SBS and education-related GBS is provided. More specifically, evidence gathered and analysed shows that:

- **Countries that benefited from GBS had established a range of mechanisms**, such as various GBS platforms, which created a space for dialogue among donors and the partner countries' governments – in turn, facilitating co-ordination among stakeholders. Most commonly, the government has taken the lead in overall donor co-ordination meetings, while sector working groups are at times led by individual donors, such as the EC (e.g. in *Tanzania, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua*). However, in countries with mainly GBS with education-related indicators, involvement of EC staff in **sector-level** discussions with the relevant ministries turned out to be **rather limited**.
- In countries where EC support has been mainly delivered through SBS, the **EC has usually been a strong promoter of effective donor co-ordination mechanisms** throughout the period under evaluation, and has been instrumental in facilitating governments' ownership and control of sector programmes. In quite a number of cases, the **EC played an active role in steering sector discussions and co-ordinating donor activities**, and working groups.

It can be concluded that SBS, provided that adequate human resources are available in the EUDs, has considerable potential at sectoral level to strengthen effective co-ordination with the government, and also among donors.

In this context, it is clear that co-ordination between the EC (and DPs) and government very much depends on the quality of governments' process management. The assessment clearly reveals that a strong leadership **role of the government** is beneficial for the co-ordination of support in the country, and that institutional weaknesses or lack of willingness to co-ordinate from the governmental side sometimes turned out to be major obstacles.

Overall, the analysis reveals that the most common EC added value lies in promoting better and more efficient co-ordination and relevant mechanisms among donors. This can be achieved by, for instance, convincing other donors, and especially MS, to align resources.

It also has to be highlighted that the **availability of human resources dedicated to the education sector constitutes a bottleneck in terms of the capacity of EUDs to engage in policy dialogue and co-ordination**. In particular, the turnover of staff in the EUD and the lack of specific competences of EUD staff (e.g. specific knowledge on SBS procedures) have been seen as problematic. Furthermore, it should be stressed that preparing for SPSP/SBS/GBS requires a strong presence in EUDs, adding to the workload in terms of preparing (ToRs) and monitoring sector-specific missions, but also missions on other specific issues, such as PFM.

#### **4.8.2 JC82: A fairly good level of complementarity has been reached between the interventions of the EC, the EU Member States and other donor agencies active in the education sector**

There are clear indications of the EC's willingness to share knowledge and to provide relevant actors with updates on programme activities. From the different sources analysed, and the field visits, it emerges that, in most cases, processes existed to ensure complementarity at the education sector level, and that a fairly **good level of complementarity** has been achieved.

The use of new aid delivery methods, such as **SBS**, appears to have considerable potential to support the development of effective co-ordination with the government, and naturally **simplifies issues related to complementarity**. Among the findings from the focus group, there is indication that, at the level of the education sector, dialogue was extensively used with a view to explaining the SBS modality to the main stakeholders in the sector and to making the governments confident with this new modality.

Donor co-ordination and complementarity can be significantly influenced by **external factors**, such as a change of the in-country situation to which donors have to react – for example, a shift in the government's education strategy (see *Namibia*). The country situation of *Somalia*, which can also be seen as an external factor, made it necessary for the international aid coming into the country to be co-ordinated by a co-ordination forum – with a special secretariat, established under the UN and based in Nairobi – to ensure effectiveness.

From the various analyses made, it emerges clearly that the scope for building complementarities can be reduced by various **limiting factors**. In particular, there is a marked difference between the EC contracting process and broader EU and donor co-ordination because of its lengthy nature, particularly during the identification stage. In situations where timely action is required, the heavy administrative workload might not allow the EC to remain updated on new priorities to respond in a timely manner to structural needs, or to follow the lead provided by certain member states.

It is noteworthy that the EC has actively participated in a number of **trust fund** agreements with UN organisations, Development Banks and bilateral organisations. The financing of trust funds has increased during recent years, with an overall contracted amount of € 197 million until the end of 2007, representing about 10% of overall sector financing. However, most of these funds relate to FTI support via the World Bank, with funds originating from the EDF and the general budget. The EC rightly claims that it today belongs to the core group of active donors. However, the EC's contribution represents less than 6% of total pledges. The Netherlands, the UK and Spain provide each an average contribution of € 267 million, far above the EC's contribution of € 89 million (committed until the end of 2007). Apart from FTI-CF support, a variety of other major trust fund agreements in the education sector have been identified in countries where the EC had established an agreement with either Development Banks or the WB.<sup>90</sup>

#### **4.8.3 JC83: Although EC-support to the FTI-CF and to other trust funds through development banks (especially Asian Development Bank) seems complementary to other EC support at country level, the interaction between these types of support has appeared rather weak**

This JC seeks to elaborate on synergies between the EC's support to the trust funds (FTI-CF and others) and its support at the country level, which is usually implemented within the framework of the

<sup>90</sup> It is to be noted that, in addition to trust fund agreements, quite a number of financing agreements exist also with UN organisations (including UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, ILO), with a total funding of € 121 million. However, while being channelled through these organisations, these agreements have to be considered rather as service delivery contracts between the EC and a service deliverer, and not as trust funds. Therefore, they are not being dealt with as a separate category.

Country Strategy. However, due to overlaps, EQ9 JC95 deals with value added through EC support to development banks.

In relation to **co-ordination with FTI** at the **planning stage** of EC support, the EUD survey indicates that such co-ordination has been very limited in the countries that benefited from FTI support during the period under evaluation. The lack of co-ordination is made evident by the rarely existing dialogue and co-ordination between FTI representative entities and EUDs for both CSP programming cycles. Reasons lie mostly in the fact that FTI became relevant only after the first programming cycle. Moreover, where such dialogue took place, the EUD survey results indicate a “low” quality, as perceived by the EUDs. However, despite this lack of active co-operation at an early stage, it seems that there is a clear relevance of, and complementarity with, the FTI in relation to the existing EC support.

Moreover, with regard to **co-ordination directly related to the FTI**, a number of such mechanisms exist in the sample countries<sup>91</sup>. The most commonly used are donor discussion groups, which include a planned agenda for FTI issues (the groups may also include the government). Other co-ordination includes “formal agreements” or informal and ad-hoc exchanges that take place within the framework of existing sector co-ordination groups, and does not always include a specific FTI point on the agenda.

As for co-ordination (and other mechanisms) related to **trust funds other than the FTI-CF**, evidence of the widely varying quality of the implementation and outcomes serves to highlight the fact that co-ordination and complementarity depend very much on individual settings. Here, an inherent problem of MDTFs is that the different and often incompatible rules and procedures of donors cause severe delays in the launching phase. However, the *Indonesian* example of an inter-agency partnership modality for funding an MDTF and Contribution Agreements illustrates a way of overcoming this problem.

From the findings, it appears that **neither the FTI-CF nor any other MDTF has played a significant role in preparing a wider EC sector support**. In fact, most of the sample countries considered in this evaluation channelled their funds through modalities that had already ensured a certain level of co-ordination. However, it appears that sector trust funds have the capacity to facilitate the move towards EC sector support where a comprehensive approach is lacking, or where only limited co-ordination mechanisms exist, such as in *Tajikistan*.

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<sup>91</sup> *Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda, Vietnam, Tajikistan and Nicaragua*. Only *Ghana* states that there exists no consultation mechanism.

#### 4.9 EQ9-modalities: To what extent have the various aid modalities and funding channels and their combinations, in particular GBS/SBS/SSP/projects, been appropriate and contributed to improving access, equity and policy-based resource allocation in education?

The choice of modalities and channels used by the EC has received increasing attention during the last decade. The three high level forums, in Rome (2003), Paris (2005) and Accra (2008), have been especially instrumental in entrenching the principle of using country systems as the first option for aid programmes in support of activities managed by the public sector.

The EC has been a strong backer of all three statements and, as the focus predominantly is on activities managed by the public sector; this has also had serious ramifications for the support granted to the education sector. A key part of operationalising the commitments made in Rome, Paris and Accra has been to focus on the aid modalities and channels by which the EC supports partner countries. In particular, the EC has aimed to harmonise and align its assistance as much as possible with domestic procedures and systems. This question seeks to an answer to whether this focus has been appropriate for achieving the core education objectives of the EC.

The EC uses various aid modalities, channels and instruments in order to achieve its objectives in the education sector. It is assumed that each of these should serve specific objectives and be selected for use based on specific national context requirements. Over the course of the evaluation period, there has been a significant shift in the type of modalities employed in terms of support to the education sector. As demonstrated in the inventory, and confirmed by the various analyses undertaken (CSE analysis, focus group video-conference, analysis of ECA reports), SBS and other forms of sector support are now key aid implementation modalities and constitute the majority of support in terms of funding. Moreover, GBS with education-related indicators receives considerable amounts. It should be noted that 90% of the CSPs analysed that have shifted to forms of budget support for the period 2008-13 justify this move as a way of further increasing the sense of local ownership and raising the level of transparency and predictability.

Currently, the situation in terms of the proportional use of various aid modalities in support of education is as follows: Direct support to the education sector, which is channelled through the partner country government, amounts to 52% of all direct support in the period 2000-07, which corresponds to approximately € 1 billion; in addition to this, the education sector was supported indirectly, through parts of the € 3.2 billion spent via general budget support with reference to the education sector in GBS Financing Agreements.

Especially in Asia, sector budget support has been the preferred modality – mainly due to India, which is by far the single largest beneficiary of EC education assistance in absolute terms.<sup>92</sup> This may reflect the fact that budget support operations are generally well-developed (and have a longer track record) in ACP countries, and hence GBS may have absorbed a substantial part of funding that would otherwise have been disbursed as SBS. Country-level analysis further finds that the level of fragility and the share of project aid seem to be correlated.

This question seeks to address whether the choice of aid modalities has been based on a sound analytical basis, appropriate to the context, and has contributed to the education outcomes and objectives as stated both globally and locally. To this end, five judgment criteria have been established:

- JC91: Improved analytical thoroughness in the selection and implementation process of aid modalities and channels (e.g. discussion of alternatives)
- JC92: Contribution of EC GBS and SBS to policy-based resource allocations and pro-poor objectives in the education sector
- JC93: Increased efficiency of EC aid delivery
- JC94: EC's contribution to the FTI provides added value to EC support at country level
- JC95: EC support to development banks provides added value to EC support to education at country level

#### **EQ9 on aid modalities – Summary Answer Box**

The EC, in its support to the education sector, has generally used aid modalities and channels that were adjusted to the local contexts and followed international best practices. Its aspiration of aligning as closely as possible to that of its domestic partners is outstanding and probably unmatched, but seldom leads to uncritical adoption of budget support, if conditions are not conducive. The leading position in alignment of aid modalities is thus still backed up by reasonable analytical underpinnings. In

<sup>92</sup> Clearly, when compared to aid per learner, India is not the main beneficiary of the EC's education assistance.

### EQ9 on aid modalities – Summary Answer Box

most places where feasible, the EC has opted for either SBS or GBS, which has enabled it to work in partnership with domestic stakeholders on addressing issues related to access, equity and policy-based resource allocation. However, in the partnerships that SBS and GBS has provided space for, the focus of the EC has been too skewed towards improving access, with insufficient attention to quality issues. The clearest manifestation of this is the indicators, which in turn have been strongly influenced by the MDG and EFA targets. Clearly, the issue is beginning to appear on the agenda of the international education community, including the EC, and while there may often be a certain initial trade-off between access and quality, the challenge is now to minimise this in order to progress especially on the quality front.

There are, nevertheless, still instances where the EC is not using government systems. In non-fragile states, full alignment can be undermined if there are significant deviations between the policies of the local partner and those promoted by the EC. In other cases, poor governance quality (either at central level or at service delivery level) can also undermine the EC's ability to fully align to government systems. The option has often been to use NGOs as alternative channels both for mainstream education and pilots of new concepts. The results, efficiency and effectiveness have often been impressive and have delivered on reducing gender disparities, enhancing learning outcomes, and improving access, not least in *South Asia* (e.g. *Bangladesh*). This could, arguably, serve as inspiration for EUDs to analyse alternatives to state provision of education.<sup>93</sup> However, there are challenges surrounding the use of non-state education providers – accreditation and compatibility for transition being among the major ones. In cases where service delivery at frontline level is corroded by weak governance – which, unfortunately, is a widespread occurrence, given the high teacher absenteeism rates in most of *South Asia* and *Sub-Saharan Africa* – EUDs should probably have considered using non-state channels when the government is unable or unwilling to address these widespread governance failures, which are often related to wider political economy issues at both local and national levels – such as, teacher unions' influence in national politics, and head teachers' collusion with local elites. Effectively addressing governance failures at service delivery level is probably the single biggest omission in the EC and EUD analytical work that underpins the aid modality choices. Consequently, this is also an area that warrants more analytical efforts aimed at adjusting the aid modalities. In this context, it is important to note that the EDF offers substantial flexibility in combining various approaches and instruments, including the strategic use of NSAs. However, it will also be important to get government ownership, and ensure a high degree of alignment.

In fragile contexts, there is often no, or only rudimentary, government structures to support, and fiduciary weaknesses often undermine the ability to align. Research suggests that shadow alignment may be an option that could be pursued. In countries with eroded governance quality, the challenge is to avoid funding (and hence reinforcing) the status quo, and instead galvanise support for change – either by addressing the governance weaknesses head-on or, if not feasible (e.g. due to the political economy of such changes) seek to channel support in ways that by-pass the areas/sectors where the governance failures are most damaging.

#### 4.9.1 JC91: The EC has improved the analytical thoroughness in the selection and implementation process of aid modalities and channels

Desk analysis indicates that the aid modalities are being analysed and discussed both internally in the EC as well as in the various forums where development partners meet locally, regionally and internationally. Moreover, the trend towards budget support has allowed for **more strategic discussions of systemic issues hindering the achievement of education outcomes**, such as the examples of *India* (but within limits), *Uganda*, *Ghana* and *Burkina Faso* evidence.

Findings from the field visits (e.g. in *Pakistan*, *Niger* and the *Dominican Republic*) help corroborate that the **EC is clearly devoting increased analytical efforts into both how it delivers its educational assistance and which channels it is using**. While the explicitness varies, Country Notes indicate that this issue is gaining prominence, with accelerated analytical efforts being allocated. The aid modality analysis is clearly related to the broader aid effectiveness ambitions, with the analysis seeking to identify the appropriateness of using SBS or GBS. Concerning the channel selected, both the focus group video-conference and the field visits indicate that, while government is the most used channel, **NGOs seem particularly relevant in situations of governance fragility or in cases of emergence**. However, bypassing government can create challenges in terms of compatibility and sustainability. It is difficult to provide exact estimations on the share of **EC assistance using national procurement systems** (see, for instance, the EUD survey in Annex 3), but the accelerated adoption of GBS and SBS has clearly increased the use of such systems. It is thus not surprising that strength-

<sup>93</sup> While the state may not be the provider, it could still be the financier, as is the case in many countries. This would also ensure greater sustainability.

ening procurement procedures and execution is assuming critical importance in several countries, such as *Uganda*, *Pakistan* (at provincial level) and the *Dominican Republic*, often as a part of a larger PFM assistance.

In conclusion, while there is a consistent (and, in the evaluation team's view, legitimate) ambition to aim for SBS and GBS modalities using government channels, the EC is nevertheless basing its decisions on mostly sound and thorough analytical underpinnings, which also may cause it to deviate from its preferences under sub-optimal circumstances, as shown by, for example, the Sindh SBS in *Pakistan*. However, when deviating, the EC is increasingly seen to be providing assistance that will allow for the future use of more aligned modalities and channels, again suggesting a high level of analytical efforts.

#### 4.9.2 JC92: EC's support to GBS and SBS has assisted in sharpening pro-poor objectives in the education sector

Globally, governments benefited from just over half of the education assistance, whereas development banks and NGOs had a share of 17% and 12%, respectively. It should be noted that the high share of funding towards development banks is in large part due to the EC's substantial contributions to the FTI -CF, which are recorded as being channelled to the World Bank (€ 89.6 million committed by the end of 2007, out of which € 58.25 million had been paid by June 2009). However, these funds cannot be viewed as a country-level input.

**There are substantial variations at country level pertaining to the use of these channels.** Concerning the contribution of EC GBS and SBS to policy-based resource allocations and pro-poor objectives in the education sector overall, during the period under evaluation a total of 98 GBS operations were financed by the EC. Of these, 73 had a reference to the education sector (amounting to € 3.2 billion). The desk study looked at eight GBS recipient countries in particular<sup>94</sup>, where, on average, 25%-30% of the variable tranches was linked to education-related indicators. While tranche release triggers were often linked to pro-poor education support (e.g. net primary school enrolment rates), indicators less frequently related to the quality of education.

The release of fixed tranches appears to be more linked to macro-economic issues and fiscal governance. As such, they cannot directly be linked to pro-poor objectives, but they can be viewed as an aspect of the ambition to ensure a macro-economic framework that allows for better educational pro-poor planning.

There seems to be **strong focus on education in the GBS operations of the EC, with a typical intervention being centred on PFM, health and education**, thus at least in part overtly addressing the social sectors, MDG goals and pro-poor objectives. At the same time, while **GBS also provides a forum for policy dialogue on education targets, SBS has allowed for a more in-depth dialogue on the sector**, not focused only on identifying desirable outcomes. The CSEs analysed (e.g. *Nicaragua*, *India*, *Ghana* and *Tanzania*) and the survey to EUDs confirm this, revealing that SBS-related policy dialogue incorporates financing, accountability and capacity development measures in the education sector, which is much less the case in GBS operations.

The combined evidence (including field visits) suggests that there is an **increased focus on broader educational policies and their pro-poor implications**. In GBS operations, this is clearly evident, as much of the policy dialogue centres around poverty reduction, also in relation to education. However, if the objectives and indicators are too closely linked to the achievement of education MDGs, as was the case in *Niger* and *Burkina Faso*, outcomes will often disappoint as realism might often have been lacking. Moreover, governments may also feel that the documentation needed to prove pro-poor allocations is onerous and incurs a transaction cost (e.g. *Niger*). Nevertheless, GBS is viewed by many observers (including EC and EUD staff) as a suitable instrument to assist in focusing education policies on pro-poor objectives.

Unsurprisingly, SBS tends to allow for more detailed and substantive focus on educational targets and policy measures, not least if indicators and triggers are relevant and realistic. The cases of *Burkina Faso*, the *Dominican Republic* and *Uganda* show that there has been a learning curve in which partners had to fully adjust to the new modality and find appropriate ways to structure the dialogue (including indicator setting). The evidence also suggests a tendency towards improved dialogue as all stake-

<sup>94</sup> *Burkina Faso* – GBS from 2000, 2001, 2002 (ongoing) and 2005 (ongoing); all refer to education sector; *Dominican Republic* – GBS from 2006 (ongoing) refers to education sector; *Ghana* – GBS from 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2007 (ongoing); all refer to education sector; *Jamaica* – GBS from 2000, 2001, 2004 and 2004 (ongoing); all refer to education sector; *Mozambique* – GBS from 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2006 (ongoing); all refer to education sector; *Niger* – GBS from 2000, 2003 and 2005 (ongoing) do refer to education sector. 2002 and 2002 do not; *Tanzania* – GBS from 2001, 2003 and 2006 (ongoing); all refer to education sector; *Uganda* – GBS from 2002 (ongoing) and 2005 (ongoing) both referring to education sector

holders learn to operate within the new aid modality. This dialogue has also focused on the disturbing issue that indicates a potential trade-off between access and quality – that expanding access often undermines quality. Clearly, both SBS and GBS have the ambition of providing entry points to an enhanced policy dialogue on broader systemic issues, often related to financing, accountability and capacity development. In the view of the evaluation team, the evidence from both the desk and field phases, complemented by the results of the video-conferences, unambiguously validates the superiority, in terms of policy dialogue, of both instruments, vis-à-vis project support. Not least, SBS offers entry points for holding dialogue on the systemic sector-specific issues. **However, project support channelled through large NGOs, such as has been the case in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, offers possibilities to focus, for example, on disadvantaged groups or on subjects not sufficiently covered by government efforts, and that SBS or GBS in those specific contexts have not been able to fully cater for. Often, NGO support has also been used to pilot new initiatives, as seen, for example, in India and Bangladesh.**

A recurrent **challenge for both SBS and GBS is the need to define appropriate, relevant, realistic and informative indicators** that provide evidence of the degree to which allocations and policy measures are pro-poor. This is, arguably, a continuous learning process for all partners. Sufficient evidence from a diverse range of countries (including *Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso* and *India*) exists to suggest that especially SBS, but also GBS, are contributing to having a more transparent and accountable debate on educational priorities – which is not an insignificant point, given the way that budget formulation and discussion is conducted in many of the supported countries. Indeed, SBS and GBS lend some credence to the saying that *“If you’re not a part of the solution, you’re a part of the problem”* – in the sense that education aid via numerous and ill-coordinated projects outside of government’s planning and accountability systems can undermine the ability to undertake proper planning and render policy making less effective – as can be seen, for example, in the case of *Bangladesh*, where many fragmented interventions historically have undermined the government’s capacity. Too often, the various project implementation units pursue their own strategic objectives and tend also to poach the best staff from, for example, government, thus undermining bureaucratic quality.<sup>95</sup>

#### 4.9.3 JC93: Efficiency of delivery of EC support to education has improved

As for the issue of efficiency of EC aid delivery, disbursement rates have been analysed and contextualised with qualitative information from the CSEs, other secondary sources and field studies. In terms of aid modalities, surprisingly, projects had the highest **disbursement rates**, followed by support to sector programmes, SBS, and trust funds. However, these trends may in part be due to introduction of the latter modalities only at a later stage of the period evaluated. Overall, the field studies indicated the existence of a short but comparatively steep learning curve involved in migrating from project to forms of budget support, during which transaction costs were still high and efficiency correspondingly below expectations (see below).

In many partner countries with severe resource constraints, such as *Niger, Ethiopia* or *Burkina Faso*, achieving optimal efficiency in the allocation of education budgets is critical in expanding access to, and improving quality of, education. For this reason, many partner countries have started making education part of medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF). Indications are that MTEFs have improved efficiency of education resources, and to the extent that the EC uses government budget this will, all things being equal, also increase efficiency of EC support to education. However, for an MTEF to be effective, governments will have to develop a reasonable **forecasting capacity and a degree of predictability in future resource flows** – something that can be compromised either by governments themselves (due to capacity constraints or high volatility in revenues) or by education donors by-passing the national budget. Assuming the above mentioned constraints are overcome, SBS and GBS appear to be efficient instruments. However, continued SBS/GBS efficiency is preconditioned on reasonably conducive partnership relations between the EC and the government. Failure to develop such relations can lead to substantial efficiency losses – as has been the case, for instance, in *Niger*, where fragmentation among the donor group increased complexities, as different donors adopted different aid modalities, thus increasing aid transaction costs and undermining harmonisation and alignment efforts.

The EC has also used the UN as a channel in fragile contexts where there were few alternatives. This may explain the comparatively low disbursement efficiency of this channel because fragility imposes implementation challenges as the local context can be insecure and rapidly changing. In contrast, NGOs have a higher disbursement efficiency, perhaps as a reflection of their procedures and guidelines being much more focused on correctly handling financial issues (and, if necessary, changing) to

<sup>95</sup> Knack, Stephen, Rahman, Aminur (2004): Donor Fragmentation and Bureaucratic Quality in Aid Recipients’ World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3186.

satisfy EC requirements. NGOs have provided efficient support both in fragile contexts – such as in *Somalia* in general, or in *Pakistan* in the Earthquake Emergency Assistance in AJK/NWFP – and in terms of education delivery through non-formal education provision, such as in parts of the Northern areas of *Pakistan*). Comparable support with considerable impacts has been managed by NGOs in situations where confidence in partner governments has been undermined, such as in *Bangladesh*, where the EC correctly determined that government was not the most effective provider of education services to a specific group, i.e. to primary and secondary school girls. Finally, under GBS and SBS, efficiency is closely related to compliance with the triggers and achieving the related indicators, as can be seen in examples from *Tanzania* and *Uganda*, where compliance with performance indicators improved disbursement timeliness and volumes. Unfortunately, there is also evidence – for example, from *Niger* and *Burkina Faso* – to suggest that aligning triggers to MDG indicators is often inappropriate and may make relatively robust performance and progress look like a failure. Conversely, there are also examples of indicator setting being too lenient, such as in *Uganda*, where indicators were so unambitious that they provided very weak incentives for improving performance. Both situations call for contextualising the process of establishing ambitious, yet realistic, indicators.

**The shift from project to budget support thus holds substantial potential for improving the EC's aid efficiency**, especially in well-established partnerships where initial start-up challenges have been overcome, and where there is a reasonable level of mutual trust between the government and its development partners. **Channelling considerable amounts through UN organisations and NGOs appears appropriate in contexts with limited options for SBS and GBS, such as in fragile states.**

#### 4.9.4 JC94: Despite significant EC support, FTI's potential has not yet been fully realised

The EC has been a major partner in the FTI, with substantial involvement, particularly at headquarter level and through the Catalytic Fund. EC involvement in FTI processes at country level has been quite limited due to a number of reasons, including the timing of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF – whereby country programmes had been established and funds already committed, just before the FTI process. In principle, FTI endorsement should be conducive to allowing for future EC SBS support, but the endorsement process (which triggers funding) is often not synchronised with support from the EC, or other donors. In many instances, sector programmes had already been started before the FTI endorsement process was initiated. Therefore, **FTI has played only a minor role in preparing countries for EC SBS support**. This does not imply that the FTI has been irrelevant; rather, its impact has been in pinpointing specific challenges, often related to planning, as a part of the endorsement process. However, this planning focus may have come at the expense of implementation and service delivery. As a corollary, the dialogue with FTI is also centred on planning aspects, and it is most intensive in the pre-endorsement phase. On the other hand, dialogue is rather limited with FTI in the post-endorsement process – a point that is also corroborated by the findings of the mid-term evaluation of FTI.<sup>96</sup> The dialogue and consultations between EUD and EC HQ are similarly focused on the endorsement process, but the limited evidence base precludes the evaluation team from making any firm conclusions on the quality and outcomes of these consultations.

The **main added value from FTI** stems from three areas: the dialogue and focus (mostly on planning) that the endorsement process entails; the cross-country benchmarking through the indicative framework; and the additional financing the CF provides. In other areas – such as capacity development, M&E and, not least, implementation and service delivery – FTI has not delivered the added value that it was expected to produce (e.g. in *Niger* and *Ethiopia*). There have also been issues of the quality and inclusiveness of the governance of FTI – again, for example, in *Niger*, where the WB unilaterally withdrew FTI support from a common pooled funding modality, instead insisting on using it solely under its own discretion using WB procedures). The mid-term evaluation of FTI largely validates these findings.

#### 4.9.5 JC95: Mixed evidence with regard to added value of EC support to pooled funding agreements managed by development banks

About 17% of all EC support to education is channelled through development banks (about € 334 million), the main ones being the World Bank (including for the FTI-CF) and the ADB (€ 137 million).<sup>97</sup> However, *Pakistan* and *Bangladesh*, in particular, benefited from EC assistance through the ADB, as did *Indonesia* towards the end of the evaluation period. Overall, **consultations between and co-operation with development banks** (in particular ADB and WB) **appear to be**

<sup>96</sup> Cambridge Education et al. (2010): 'Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative', February 2010. Several Volumes.

<sup>97</sup> FTI is not a World Bank initiative but a global one that is residing in the Bank's HQ and draws extensively on the Bank's expertise. However, EC has tied its aid to FTI to the World Bank in the sense that the Bank must be the supervisory agent of the EC funds. Hence, FTI is included in this section.

**commensurate with the level of ambitions and engagements the EC has with the banks.** Procedural challenges have, in some instances, undermined the speed at which the EC could deliver assistance through the banks – which has been particularly unfortunate, for example, in the emergency situation in *Pakistan* – and has thus not delivered the added value expected at the point in time required. Nevertheless, concerted efforts, including extensive consultations, have usually been able to overcome these challenges.

It is instructive to note that the most effective engagements with the banks would appear to be those that included a broader audience – not least, national development partners, such as governments at various levels. Thus, there are informative and contrasting experiences of the EC with ADB in *Bangladesh* (PEDP II) and *Pakistan* (Earthquake Emergency Assistance Project) and with the WB in the Sindh Province in *Pakistan*, where the involvement of the government in Pakistan produced better outcomes than were achieved in Bangladesh. In the latter, donors struggled to engage with the government in the framework of establishing a collaborative environment in which donors and government could work harmoniously to agree on procedures and modalities. In contrast, too much effort was invested in discussions about eligibility criteria, and disbursement modalities – not only between government and development partners, but also between the EC and ADB – which clearly did little to promote aid effectiveness. This points to the need to ensure that national stakeholders with a clear incentive to improve performance (e.g. governments or NGOs) take part in the discussions, and that donors on their part are able to reach consensus internally on procedures and process issues. If they fail in the latter, the value added of using development banks rapidly diminishes.

**Overall**, there is robust evidence of the **appropriateness of the EC's use of various aid modalities and channels**. Its aspiration to align as closely as possible to that of its domestic partners is outstanding and probably unmatched, but seldom leads to uncritical adaptation of budget support, if conditions are not conducive. This **leading position in alignment of aid modalities** is thus still backed up by reasonable analytical underpinning. In most places, where feasible, the EC has opted either for SBS or GBS, which has enabled it to work in partnership with domestic stakeholders on addressing issues related to access, equity and policy-based resource allocation. One weakness is that the focus has been too skewed towards improving access, with insufficient attention paid to quality issues. Clearly, the issue is beginning to appear on the agenda of the international education community, and while there may often be a certain initial trade-off between access and quality, the challenge is now to minimise this trade-off in order to progress, especially on the quality front.

The dilemmas facing the EC are far greater in **fragile contexts and in crisis situations**. Here, it is often necessary to **compromise on the alignment aspirations**, opting instead for a more pragmatic approach that holds the promise of offering short-term to medium-term support. However, promoting transition to a more stable environment will often involve planning for more aligned approaches, and here the EC is still struggling to operationalise emerging concepts of shadow alignment. This is clearly a challenge facing all development partners with the ambition of engaging in education assistance in fragile countries.

Finally, there are also instances where fragility is not the main cause preventing the EC from using government systems. Here, it is either the government policy or governance quality (or both) that may undermine the robust partnership necessary for alignment. In such a context, the option has often been to **use NGOs as alternative channels both for mainstream education (e.g. Bangladesh) and pilots** (many places). The results, efficiency and effectiveness have often been impressive and point to viable alternatives to state *provision* of education. However, there are challenges surrounding the use of non-state education providers – accreditation and compatibility with transition being among the major ones. Where service delivery at frontline level is corroded by weak governance (which, unfortunately, is widespread, given the high rates of teacher absenteeism in most of *South Asia* and *Sub-Saharan Africa*), the EC and EUDs should still consider using non-state channels if the government is unable or unwilling to address widespread governance failures that are often related to wider political economy issues at local and national levels (for example, teachers unions' influence in national politics, and head teachers' collusion with local elites). Effectively addressing **governance failures at service delivery level** is probably the single biggest omission in the EC and EUD analytical work that underpins the aid modality choices, and is consequently also an area that warrants more attention.

#### 4.10 Overall assessment of the EC Strategy

The EC has successfully managed to translate the post-Millennium policy shifts to which it is committed into new approaches and policies for supporting the education sector. In the light of these shifts, and the existing needs in partner countries, EC support to basic and secondary education has been highly **relevant** in the period under evaluation. The considerable amounts of EC funding – € 1.9 billion for direct support, excluding higher education and VET – reflect the strength of the commitments made. Although EC support incorporated access and quality aspects, only access to education (including for girls) could be significantly enhanced in a good number of countries, with successes more pronounced in Asia than in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and in fragile states.

Moreover, GBS has been used especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, and has mainly helped partner countries to meet the budgetary demands implied by increased access rates, but has provided much less help in improving **quality**. All other forms of support yielded positive outcomes in terms of access, rather than quality – except where support through large NGOs and SBS in Asian countries had a positive impact on quality. **Quality of education** – as reflected in, for example, learning achievements and evidenced in international surveys – **remains a major concern that requires increased attention**. **Impacts** of EC support efforts in that regard have remained limited, as have efforts to ensure that children are adequately equipped either to continue education or ultimately to find gainful employment.

**Efficiency** of EC support has improved with the introduction of the new aid modalities. However, although delays – caused both by procedural complexities and by non-compliance issues – are decreasing following the introduction of SBS and GBS, they still remain a matter of concern. Setting realistic and achievable targets and indicators in that regard remains a challenge, especially as non-achievement of such indicators has a serious impact on the predictability of EC support.

The **EC's value added** has certainly been evident in its allocation of considerable financial resources, but is also related to the fact that, despite often rather limited education-related human resources in EUDs in the partner countries, EUDs have managed to play significant roles in donor co-ordination related to the sector. This has mainly been in sector support modes, but applies also in terms of education-related indicators within the framework of GBS. In the ongoing quest for increased **co-ordination and complementarity**, including with EU MS, the EC has thus been among the key drivers.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

From the findings and the analysis made, three clusters of conclusions emerge related to:

- Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes (six conclusions);
- Service delivery/Government take-up (five conclusions);
- Managing the aid modalities (three conclusions).

#### 5.1.1 Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements

##### 5.1.1.1 Conclusion 1: Adaptation to the rapidly changing policy context (overarching)

**Conclusion 1: The EC policy framework for supporting education in partner countries has adequately evolved and been adjusted in a way to allow the addressing of existing and currently emerging needs.**

The past decade has seen a profound and rapid change in the context in which aid is provided to development in general, and to education in particular. The EC has adapted to the rapidly evolving context by gradually building or adjusting its overall policy and funding framework related to education, but also related to the broader developments. This is reflected in the publication of EC policy documents that, at the time, were highly relevant to the international discourse on the education sector – such as the Communication on *“Education and training in the context of the fight against poverty in developing countries”*, COM (2002)116, or, at a more operational level, numerous guidelines related to the preparation and implementation of the various aid modalities. The following are examples of the changes in context that they address:

#### **Commitments to specific education-related goals:**

- The commitment to the MDGs, with MDG2 and MDG3 specifically relevant to education;
- The international community’s commitment to reaching six EFA goals by 2015, covering most levels of education, from early childhood care to secondary education, as well as adult literacy;
- The realisation in the later part of the 2000s that the quality of education may suffer where focus is just on access/enrolment.

#### **Changes in the way development assistance is delivered:**

- The commitment to the 2005 Paris Declaration and, although outside the period under evaluation, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action towards greater alignment and aid effectiveness, encouraging DPs to align to national education strategies and plans and to harmonise their aid policies, in an effort also to act in a spirit of complementarity;
- PRSPs that seek to link and bridge national public actions and external support with the development outcomes needed to meet MDGs;
- The emergence/affirmation of new aid modalities– such as SWAp, SBS (SPSPs) and GBS – being designed from the early 2000s onwards in order to support governmental strategies and plans;
- New funding mechanisms, such as the FTI-CF or other MDTFs, to which the EC contributes financially, but also politically (FTI).

The EC’s involvement in support to education has been guided by these new paradigms. The basis of EC support is the conception of national education strategies and plans (within the framework of national policies/PRSPs), and their support through a variety of instruments. In that new context, SWAps and budget support in particular have emerged as tools for building a framework for donor response to particular country-level challenges in the light of international education targets.

The information gathered during this evaluation clearly highlights the effort made by the EC to cope with the evolving situation. This process is still ongoing, and a recent example that illustrates education sector needs, and the EC’s understanding of them, is the Commission Staff Working Document *“More and Better Education in Developing Countries”*<sup>98</sup>, which emphasises the broader agenda of access linked to quality and skills development.

<sup>98</sup> European Commission (2010): Commission Staff Working Document: More and Better Education in Developing Countries. SEC(2010)121 final, Brussels, February 4, 2010.

### 5.1.1.2 Conclusion 2: Increasing alignment with partner country priorities (EQ1)

**Conclusion 2: Over the period under evaluation, the EC has successfully increased the alignment of its support to education with partner country policies and priorities**

The evidence collected and analysed during the evaluation shows that alignment of EC programming with national policies and priorities has increased considerably over the period covered by the evaluation. During the second programming cycle under consideration (2007-13), EC country strategies are consistently related to national development strategies and poverty reduction plans, and EC support to education is targeted in line with national sector policies and priorities. The increase is linked not only to greater consideration of country needs and increased policy dialogue, but also to the shift towards greater use of more 'joint' aid modalities (i.e. sector support, budget support, MDTFs) that go hand in hand with the development of sector plans, and thus give a clearer articulation of priorities by partner governments. These positive findings on alignment demonstrate progress the EC has made in terms of its commitments as set out in the Paris Declaration, at least in its support to education.

Exceptions to these general trends in alignment are primarily in countries where the governments have not formulated national poverty reduction strategies or comparable policies, which is mainly the case in *fragile/failed states*. In such cases, the needs of the countries are often addressed through a two-pronged approach of supporting peace and stability, as well as making efforts related to human development, including education – often through the delivery channel of NGOs.

### 5.1.1.3 Conclusion 3: Resource allocation for meeting MDG and EFA targets still required

**Conclusion 3: While direct and indirect EC support to education have both increased over time, the relative share of direct support has decreased when compared to other sectors**

As shown by the inventory, over the period 2000-07 the EC contracted a total amount of around € 1.9 billion for direct support to the education sector (excluding HE and VET) – that is, an average of € 250 million per year, using the modalities as defined in this evaluation (support to sector programmes excluding GBS; SBS; individual projects; and financing of Trust Funds). Commitments over the period under evaluation increased considerably, thus reflecting policy commitments made. Around € 1.4 billion (74% of the total amount contracted) was disbursed over the same period.

A substantial part of the GBS provided by the EC can be considered as indirect support to the education sector. Over the period 2000-07, a total of around € 4 billion was transferred to national governments of beneficiary countries under GBS operations. Out of this total, around € 3.2 billion concerned GBS that refers, among other sectors, to the education sector.

The EC's total contribution is substantial and significant, and there has been a clear shift in the share of education support from direct to more indirect support. In terms of the relative share for education among all sectors directly supported, there was a decrease especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, in comparison with other sectors. It could be argued that this is justified, given the fact that GBS with education-related indicators is supposed also to contribute to changes in the education sector. However, in contrast to education, the relative share of direct health support did not decrease substantially. In other words, the health sector was increasingly supported through GBS, while its share of the growing EC aid budget in terms of direct support did not shrink. This suggests that health has become a higher priority than education in EC co-operation.

### 5.1.1.4 Conclusion 4: FTI has not consistently delivered on its compact and alignment aspirations (EQ9)

**Conclusion 4: The FTI has not consistently delivered on its compact and alignment aspirations, which in turn has undermined the partnership and accountability ambitions**

FTI has not consistently delivered on its compact and alignment aspirations. There remains a need to accelerate ongoing reform efforts of its architecture and focus in order to strengthen the mutual accountability aspects of FTI and to reduce aid fragmentation. This conclusion is based not only on this evaluation's findings, but also on the evidence presented in the recently complemented mid-term evaluation of FTI, which similarly concluded that *"the FTI's contributions have fallen short of its ambitions and of its reasonable expectations"*, with disappointing results both globally and in most countries. Furthermore, the mid-term evaluation also validates a key finding of this evaluation – that *"FTI has remained a weak partnership, with weak accountability, and has not delivered the 'compact' to which it refers"*. (February 2010)

Hitherto, most efforts related to FTI have been directed towards drawing up the plan required for accessing funds, while focus on implementation, capacity development and M&E has been correspondingly neglected. Moreover, the (at times unilateral) governance configuration of FTI has also been

problematical (WB procedures and policies taking precedence by default), and has not fully reflected the compact and partnership principles that should form a core ingredient of FTI engagements.<sup>99</sup> While FTI has been valuable in pinpointing specific issues (often related to planning) and providing additional funding, it has not fulfilled the aspirations that its funders (the EC included) aimed for. There is still an unfinished agenda around reforming and aligning FTI, and it is therefore suggested that the EC supports such reforms.

#### 5.1.1.5 Conclusion 5: EC investments successful in increasing access, but quality of education and learning achievements remain in crisis (EQ2, EQ4, EQ5)

**Conclusion 5: The EC has effectively assisted partner countries to accommodate an enrolment expansion, thus improving their capacity to meet MDGs. However, LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states lag behind. Moreover, quality of education is often lacking, and learning achievements remain in crisis**

**The EC is committed to Education for All, including for poor and marginalised groups**, as well as to the MDGs, of which Goal 2, “*Achieve universal primary education*”, is particularly relevant for education enrolment and quality. Following up on its commitments, the EC has contributed substantially to key development thrusts in the education sector, concentrating on partner countries accommodating MDG 2, 3 and EFA goals. Considerable progress was noted in terms of achieving gender parity (MDG 3) in the majority of the 23 sample countries. These goals are often restrictively defined in quantitative terms, with an emphasis on enrolment. Target 3 is about primary completion, which would implicitly capture quality. However, quality considerations are not always well defined or adhered to in primary completion.

However, **investments in education** at macro and individual levels **pay off only if learners complete primary education with sufficient literacy and numeracy competencies** to proceed to further education or as a basis for further training and gainful employment. In order to arrive at such a situation, the quality of education is crucial.

EC support in all its programmes, proceeding through different channels and applying different modalities, has been supporting both access and quality, without being able to generate real quality improvements. **Comparative international and regional learning assessment surveys and school leaving examination results reveal poor scores**, and hence illustrate that the quantitative boom is compromised by a quality crisis. Several countries, including *Niger, Burkina Faso, Namibia, South Africa* and the *Dominican Republic*, score low on international and regional learning assessment tests, and the results have rather tended to deteriorate than to improve. The evaluation team found **evidence of a differentiation between LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa**, increasingly receiving EC support through GBS, **and countries that score quite high on the HDI**, which tend to receive EC support through sector support and SBS. The latter countries, like *Indonesia, India, Tunisia* and *South Africa* systematically attempt to improve quality, efficiency, and to reach out to out-of-school youth.

Especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, EC support appears to have been used mainly to meet the bare necessities of system survival. Poverty is a determining factor in education quality, with LDCs lagging behind and, within all countries, urban youth being in a much better position to access quality provisions than poor ones in rural areas. EC support has effectively assisted partner countries in accommodating enrolment expansion, but bringing into operation more schools has not consistently resulted in better learning. Therefore, a key issue at this stage is for the EC to play a catalytic role with partner countries moving towards a quality improvement agenda.

The EC has already made steps in this direction. **From the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF onward, a clear shift is seen in SBS and GBS education-related indicators for flexible tranche release**. While earlier frameworks emphasised outcome indicators related to access, the new ones **include quality indicators**, such as outcome indicators related to learning achievements<sup>100</sup>. The use of such indicators has yielded insights on the different degree to which quantitative and qualitative targets are being met, and certainly, in the case of GBS, provide a diagnosis of the education system – including the fact that some learners complete school without a minimum package of literacy and numeracy skills. However, these indicators and related insights alone do not provide a recipe for recovery.

The information gathered during this evaluation clearly highlights the effort made by the EC to assist partner governments in coping with the quality crisis. However, given the requirement of government ownership (also requiring political will) and the lack of adequate funding, it seems that, without a stronger EC response to this crisis, existing patterns of further deterioration will continue unabated.

<sup>99</sup> While the EC is legally obliged to use the Bank as the supervisory agent efforts should be made to encourage the Bank to use the most aligned aid modality feasible.

<sup>100</sup> E.g. *Uganda, Niger, Burkina Faso, Namibia* and *Botswana*.

### 5.1.1.6 Conclusion 6: Emphasis on primary education should now shift to basic education, including lower secondary education (EQ3)

**Conclusion 6: EC support focused on the primary level, with only a small share of overall support providing direct assistance to secondary education, mostly in medium human development countries. The EC has contributed to secondary school construction, but mainly in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa and in fragile states. It has become clear that secondary education systems in most countries are not ready to accommodate students everywhere.**

The Commission Staff Working Document, “*More and Better Education in Developing Countries*”, reiterates that achieving the MDG concerning UPE is not sufficient, and that all children need access to quality education at all levels. Primary education is no longer enough to ensure personal prosperity, and a balanced education sector is necessary for economic growth. **The evaluation found that the enrolment increase is not fully matched by increasing completion rates and that the progression rate to secondary is still low**, especially in LDCs in *Sub-Saharan Africa*.

The problem of targeting secondary education is exacerbated by the fact that it has not featured strongly on the education priority agenda of developing countries. This is beginning to change in countries where near-universal primary school enrolment is creating pressure at higher levels. The pattern observed in various countries related to transition to lower secondary is strongly determined by the state of economic development and the progress made towards achieving MDG2.

**Increasingly, countries adopt the concept of elementary education, covering primary and lower-secondary education.** Nevertheless, education sector analysis largely concentrates on primary education, and thus little insight is available either on resource requirements (both fiscal, staff and physical) or on the potential for secondary education to overcome the classical divide between urban and rural areas. While government in general is the main provider for primary education, the private sector is a key actor in secondary education, which can have implications for equity. **Within the EC, there is not a solid foundation of analysis related to secondary education on which systematic interventions in support of secondary education can be warranted.** However, through support to sector reforms, the EC indirectly caters for secondary education.

## 5.1.2 Cluster 2: Service delivery/Government take-up

### 5.1.2.1 Conclusion 7: Integration and linkage required to wider public sector reforms for successful education reforms (EQ6)

**Conclusion 7: Successful reforms in the education sector depend on their integration and linkage with public sector reform in the partner country, such as decentralisation or overall PFM reform**

Reforms of governance structures or public finance management in education have a higher chance of success if they are accompanied by, or tied to, more comprehensive governance reforms in the partner country. This is political in nature, and hence requires dialogues with and support of key stakeholders. Possibly more importantly, synergistic linkages between institutional reforms in education and governance reforms, such as decentralisation, foster conditions that allow EC budget support to improve the delivery of educational services at local level. In *Uganda*, for example, a combination of public sector reforms – including performance assessment, a sound sector policy, and an effective inter-governmental fiscal transfer system – are forming a reasonably effective system that is trusted by donors and the government. The example of *Tanzania* shows that public sector reform can result in the decentralisation of responsibility for the implementation of primary education. The functions of the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture are now confined to policy making, standard setting, accreditation and quality control.

Likewise, reform efforts outside of education also can lead to the “spill-over” of benefits into the education sector. Benefits from a robust PFM system, for example, can create conditions in the public sector overall that translate into reduced levels of corruption and higher fiscal integrity in government in general – a development that also benefits the management of public resources in education.

### 5.1.2.2 Conclusion 8: Shift to budget support as a catalyst for improved resource management, but operational MTEFs as a basic tool remain a challenge (EQ6)

**Conclusion 8: The EC shift to sector and general budget support has acted as a trigger for EC partner countries to set up education sector resource management systems, including sector strategies, policy frameworks and MTEFs. However, ensuring that MTEFs are operational and used appropriately in sector budgeting, planning and implementation remains a challenge for most countries**

Many of the partner countries benefiting from EC budget support either have management systems in place (including procedures and staffing) or are in the process of developing them. In all countries, EMIS systems are operational, but not always linked yet to FMIS. Processes towards increasing budget transparency are taking place in most countries, but MTEFs are in different stages of development and implementation.

Preparedness for EC GBS implies a costed Poverty Reduction Strategy being operational and monitored, and a PFM reform plan in place<sup>101</sup>; for SBS, it requires an education sector policy to be in place. This provides a foundation of system development linked to improved education sector management. The EC, in some countries, started the process of system development, and receiving more flexible support, in the form of sectoral or general budget support, has acted as an important incentive for countries to engage in this effort. Eligibility for budget support stipulates the existence of a policy framework and plan incorporating elements related to system development. In the process of policy and system reform supported through budget, support indicators and policy triggers for budget release provide benchmarks for monitoring the process of system development for improved service delivery. Technical Assistance financed by the EC has complemented the financial support and has provided, at least in some cases, important guidance for the development and improvement of new approaches to tools such as EMIS, FMIS and PETS.

Not surprisingly, efforts to put in place such tools and frameworks tend to lag behind in fragile states, such as *Somalia*, but in *Pakistan* these systems are being set up in the Provincial Government of Sindh with EC SBS and TA support, combined with a World Bank investment loan. The absence of a stable policy framework in education reflects the overall weakness of these countries' political and administrative environment.

In many countries, including *Niger* and *Burkina Faso*, working out the details of the operationally demanding MTEFs has sometimes met with considerable challenges. Experience from the sample countries shows that the mere existence of an MTEF does not guarantee its significance in budgeting or activity planning. Challenges can arise from low country ownership of the documents – that is, when the MTEF is not sufficiently integrated into the planning and budgeting procedures of the partner country, as is the case in *Vietnam*. Adequately linking the MTEF to sector plans and policies is another challenge (e.g. in *Ghana*). The significance of the MTEF can also be reduced if other alternative funding sources provide considerable financing outside of the expenditure framework, or if funding, including in particular donor funding, remains unpredictable. The MTEF mechanism worked reasonably well only in a minority of the sample countries. In particular, in *Tunisia* and in *South Africa*, the MTEF helped to increase efficiency of sector spending, in both cases with EC support.

It is not solely the responsibility of the partner countries to ensure that the conditions are in place for MTEFs to function well. Donors also have to ensure that they play their part in creating an enabling environment for sound financial planning in the sector. Aid predictability has proved to be an important factor in this regard (e.g. in *Niger*).

### 5.1.2.3 Conclusion 9: Matching capacity development and ownership (EQ6)

**Conclusion 9: EC capacity development support geared towards improving the delivery of educational services, also at decentralised levels, is often impeded by the lack of adequate resources and realistic timetables. Resultant operational pressures can have adverse effects on the degree of ownership of the capacity development agenda felt by the partner government**

In particular, efforts that are geared towards reforming existing administrative structures are often based on over-optimistic assumptions regarding the prevalence of sufficiently favourable conditions for these reforms and lack of political analysis (capacity). Experience from the sample countries shows that the mere existence of an MTEF, or any other scheme linking strategies and planning to budgeting, does not guarantee its actual significance in budgeting or activity planning. Challenges can arise

<sup>101</sup> EC TA can play a crucial role in supporting the partner government to comply with policy triggers and meet targets related to indicators. New "tools" included improvements in EMIS, FMIS, PFM and the establishment of integrated policy matrices, e.g. in *Cambodia*, *Pakistan*, *Dominican Republic*.

from low country ownership of the documents – that is, when the MTEF is not sufficiently integrated into the planning and budgeting procedures of the partner country, as is the case in *Vietnam*. Adequately linking the MTEF to sector plans and policies is another challenge (e.g. in *Ghana*). The significance of the MTEF can also be reduced if other alternative funding sources provide considerable financing outside of the expenditure framework, or if funding – including, in particular, donor funding – remains unpredictable. The MTEF mechanism worked reasonably well only in a minority of the sample countries. In particular in *Tunisia* and in *South Africa*, the MTEF helped to increase efficiency of sector spending, in both cases with EC support.

In other words, the quality of existing structures is overestimated, and the costs and time necessary for additional improvements is (partly as consequence) underestimated. These factors impeded reforms in a number of the sample countries (e.g. in *Liberia* and *Burkina Faso*).

#### 5.1.2.4 Conclusion 10: Strengthening the monitoring/watchdog role of NSAs (EQ7)

**Conclusion 10: Support to NSAs, aimed at strengthening their monitoring role, can provide value added to EC mainstream education support**

The emphasis on transparency and accountability necessitated by budget support demands that the ultimate beneficiaries of EC education sector support at all levels become aware of its proper utilisation. In this context, it is becoming increasingly apparent that NSAs can be an important ingredient in enhancing government accountability and transparency. Moreover, EC support in some countries has helped in setting up or providing general frameworks for strengthening the role of NSAs in education sector management. Support has been given in sector support programmes under the umbrella of different aid modalities, including SBS, and within those, or accompanying them, the project modality was applied (e.g. through calls for proposals).

- In *Morocco* and *Ecuador*, NSAs' involvement has been supported through **SBS programmes**, with a range of performance indicators, including a role for NSAs in **monitoring** policies and activities in the education sector. In *Ecuador*, the EC-funded civil society watchdog project, being part of the SPSP, seems to be very successful in collecting, commenting on and publishing the achievements made within the education sector.
- In *India*, NSAs are seen as key partners in the delivery of state sector programmes, and the EC has been able to use thematic budget line projects and programmes, aimed at enhancing NSA participation in dialogue and monitoring, to complement SBS in education to support the national policy framework. To ensure a high degree of complementarity in projects chosen with SBS, thematic calls for proposals have been designed in consultation with SBS teams.
- Local-level democracy is enhanced through EC support to setting up – in line with legislation – SMCs that sometimes have control over head teachers. Hence, parents can monitor whether there is adequate learning for their children and proper utilisation of resources. At national and sub-national level, NSAs may assist EUDs in education sector support becoming more visible and controllable.

#### 5.1.2.5 Conclusion 11: Enhanced support to government-led co-ordination mechanisms (EQ8)

**Conclusion 11: The EC has actively participated in a number of co-ordination mechanisms related to education and involving the governments in partner countries. While the increased role of the government proved to be key in strengthening co-ordination mechanisms in most cases, little support was directly provided to enhance the capacity of the partner government to assume a leading role in the co-ordination of the development activities**

Following the adoption of several guiding principles related to these issues over recent years, the EC has achieved better complementarity and co-ordination with EU MS and other donors. Moreover, co-ordination mechanisms were strengthened by the increased use of common approaches covering the whole sector. In this context, the partner government was naturally given a greater role in the co-ordination activities. While in many cases the increased involvement of the government has proved instrumental in strengthening co-ordination, little has been done to really support this increasing role – such as by giving specific support to the development of precise co-ordination mechanisms in agreement with the Government (e.g. preliminary agreement on a co-ordination agenda, the people to be involved, the nature of the meetings' outputs), a joint monitoring system led by the government, or other capacity-building activities related to development and donor co-ordination.

### 5.1.3 Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities

#### 5.1.3.1 Conclusion 12: Qualified staffing for policy dialogue (and education sector management) (EQ8)

**Conclusion 12: The introduction of GBS and SBS provides great potential for increased co-ordination and policy dialogue on education-related issues. Yet this also means a stronger capacity is required at EUD level to deal with the new elements of these types of aid**

The increased focus on, and use of, GBS and SBS has clearly created policy dialogue platforms. SBS allows for more in-depth dialogue and focus on subject matters, whereas GBS operations probably provide a better link to wider macro-economic and PFM issues also affecting the education sector.

Both types of budget support are more instrumental than projects in providing entry points for policy dialogue. Moreover, there are clear indications that useful benefits, such as initiating reforms relevant to the sector, are enhanced by, among other means, policy dialogue<sup>102</sup>.

However, it is often a challenge for EUDs to fully take advantage of the opportunities provided by the new policy dialogue platforms. Policy dialogue requires time, and specific resources need to be allocated to it. A problem often mentioned relates to the heavy workload at EUD level, and also the rather low FTE staffing levels in EUDs having to deal with education. EUD staff usually have to manage a certain portfolio, which can limit the time that can be allocated to fostering formal or informal discussions with key stakeholders involved in the education sector. It is also noteworthy that there is no officer specifically assigned to the education sector in several EUDs that are following up the implementation of important EC-funded programmes related to education. The lack of specialists in education can contribute both to the lack of time available for policy dialogue and to a lack of specific technical competence to deal with education-related issues. In addition, EUD staff need to deal with the new requirements that arise from the increased use of budget support, especially GBS. As highlighted earlier, additional competence is required to deal with macro-economic and PFM issues – aspects that are very different from the issues dealt with so far by the officers in charge of the social sector in EUDs. Although progress appears to have been made in this respect, the situation still represents an important challenge.

#### 5.1.3.2 Conclusion 13: Aid modalities selection process (EQ9)

**Conclusion 13: The selection of modalities is increasingly anchored in robust analysis of country context. While the EC has the ambition to align as closely as possible with its partner government, this has not been translated into forms of mechanistic selection on a particular aid modality (e.g. GBS). However, the choice of aid modality in fragile states is still a challenge, both for the EC and for other development partners.**

The EC and EUDs are investing more analytic efforts in the choice of aid modalities. These efforts, nevertheless, still face challenges in having appropriate modalities that can ensure (future) alignment for fragile states. The drive to improve alignment and harmonisation has clearly prompted the EC and EUDs to enhance these analytical efforts. The consistent ambition of the EC and EUDs is to align as closely as possible to national systems, and both the desk and field phases of the evaluation validated that the EC is probably one of the most coherent and persistent development partners in this respect. While the quality, depth and documentation levels may vary, there is a clear tendency towards improving the evidence base for aid modality choice through enhanced analysis.

There are still significant challenges in states characterised by fragility, poor governance, or where confidence in government is low. These challenges also highlight that there is still an unfinished agenda on determining when the EC should insist on using the government as a service provider or find alternative channels (NGOs or private providers). Whichever provider channel is chosen, there is still a need to provide a sound analytical base for establishing the role of government (including its future role, in case of extreme fragility) as, for example, an accreditor and regulator. Here, there may still be some unaddressed issues, as the recommendation in section 5.2.3.2 also suggests.

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. *Uganda*, where GBS has fostered greater participation in policy dialogue, and where arrangements for co-ordinated instances of dialogue at cross-sector and sectoral levels have facilitated an increasingly coherent dialogue and allowed donors to support the government's reform agenda.

### 5.1.3.3 Conclusion 14: Appropriateness of indicators (EQ9)

**Conclusion 14: The introduction of GBS and SBS have deepened the dialogue on systemic issues, but it is a learning process and often not efficient in fragile contexts**

The increased focus on, and use of, GBS and SBS has clearly created a policy dialogue platform that has allowed for engagement on wider and systemic issues related to resource allocation and achieving pro-poor educational outcomes. However, challenges continue to persist in defining appropriate indicators and triggers that can provide appropriate structure to the dialogue. Thus, the establishment of indicators and triggers is an important issue, as these tend to structure and focus the dialogue and subsequent implementation efforts. Aligning too closely to internationally-defined goals (MDGs) may not be realistic or conducive to reaching an appropriate balance between increasing access and improving (or at least maintaining) quality in education. Clearly, this area has seen substantive improvement as both the EC and partner countries have learned from initial processes of indicator setting, and many have also learned from international experience. SBS allows for more in-depth dialogue and focus on subject matters, whereas GBS operations probably provide a better link to wider macro-economic and PFM issues also affecting the education sector. Nevertheless, both types of budget support usually provide better entry points for policy dialogue than project support, being focused on more systemic issues, whereas EC projects have often entailed a disproportionate focus on procedural issues.

Over time, the use of SBS and GBS can promote efficiency, as can NGOs in fragile contexts. While SBS efficiency is potentially high, it is associated with considerable learning costs, and has to be based on a robust partnership. Thus, for SBS to work, domestic and external development partners have to invest in defining agreeable disbursement modalities, indicators, M&E systems and consequences of failures to adhere to agreements. This in turn works best in an environment characterised by shared commitment to the same objectives, mutual trust and transparency. These are also core underpinnings of robust partnerships. In the absence of such partnerships, NGOs can often be efficient channels.

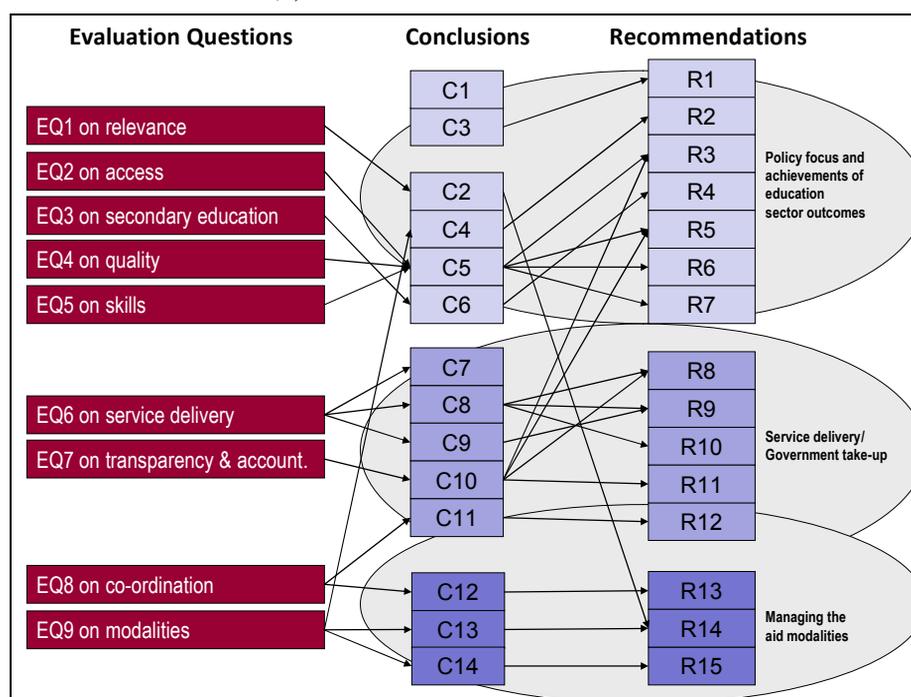
## 5.2 Recommendations

The following key recommendations emerge from the conclusions. They are presented in the same clusters used for the conclusions in the preceding section, namely:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Recommendation 1 to 7   | Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes |
| Recommendation 8 to 12  | Service delivery/Government take-up                        |
| Recommendation 13 to 15 | Managing the aid modalities                                |

The linkages between EQs (findings), conclusions and recommendation, are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 10: Links between EQs, conclusions and recommendations



The table below provides an overview of the level of priority in terms of importance of the recommendations and the urgency (agenda) of their realisation. This information is also provided schematically in the following figure.

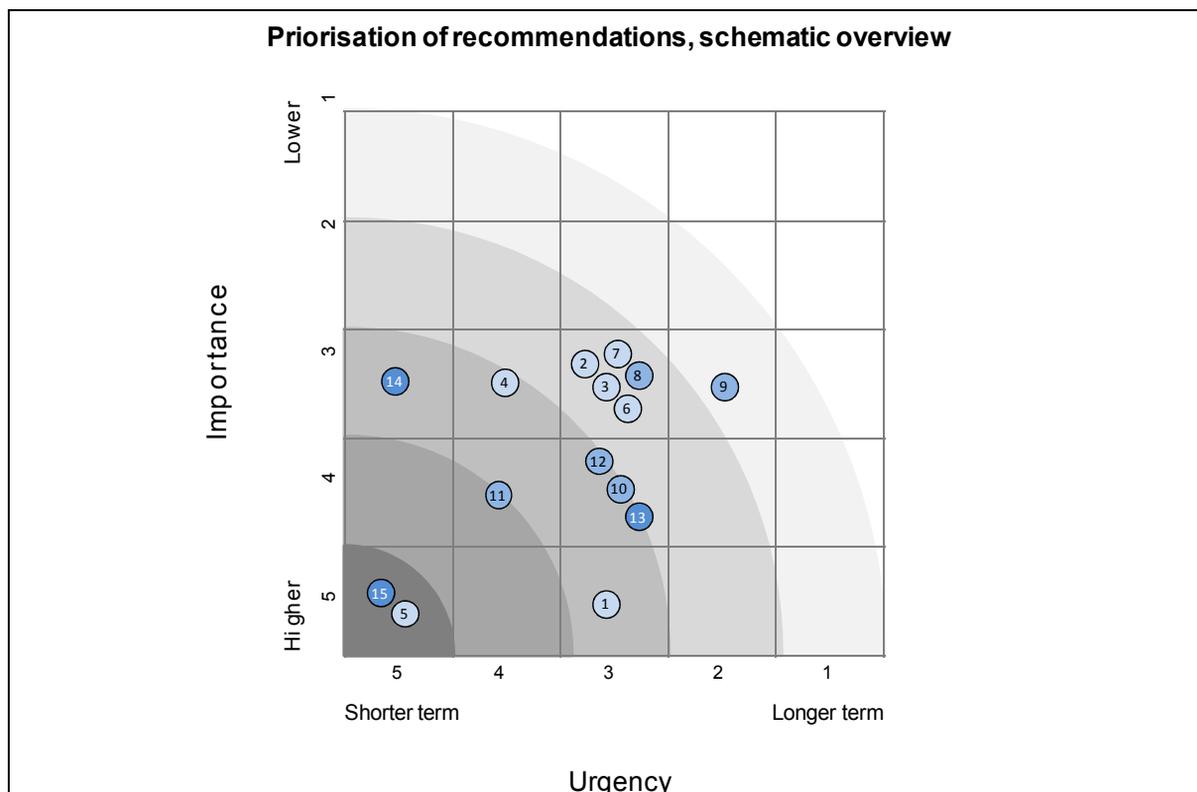
Table 13: Prioritisation of recommendations

| No. | Issue  | Importance* | Urgency* |
|-----|--|-------------|----------|
| 1.  | Reconsider sector priorities and overall funding   | 5           | 3        |
| 2.  | Engage more actively with FTI  | 3           | 3        |
| 3.  | Retarget EC education sector support   | 3           | 3        |
| 4.  | Empower the age cohort completing primary to proceed to lower-secondary in SWAps, through SPSP and SBS         | 3           | 4        |
| 5.  | Increase focus on quality improvement  | 5           | 5        |
| 6.  | Reconsider internal efficiency indicators for variable tranche release   | 3           | 3        |
| 7.  | Reconsider indicators related to examination results for variable tranche release                              | 3           | 3        |
| 8.  | Integrate overall governance issues into support to education sector reform                                    | 3           | 3        |
| 9.  | Encourage countries in the establishment of conditions for budget support, accompanied by capacity development | 3           | 2        |
| 10. | Support MTEF process in struggling partner countries   | 4           | 3        |
| 11. | Continue efforts to strengthen NSA watchdog role in education sector   | 4           | 4        |
| 12. | Support partner governments' lead role in sector co-ordination   | 4           | 3        |
| 13. | Enhance EC capacity to engage in education sector dialogue   | 4           | 3        |
| 14. | Improve analysis being used for aid modality selection   | 3           | 5        |
| 15. | Reconsider and refine indicators for budget support  | 5           | 5        |

\* 1 = low, 5 = high

The following figure depicts this assessment graphically.

Figure 11: *Prioritisation of recommendations, schematic overview*



Addressing these priorities requires interventions by different actors. Therefore, each recommendation includes suggestions for operational steps for putting it into practice, and identifies implementation responsibilities (IR). These are categorised as follows:

Table 14: *Suggested implementation responsibilities for recommendations*

|       | <i>Actor</i>  |
|-------|---|
| IR-A: | EC education sector specialists in HQ, particularly in DG AIDCO and DG DEV  |
| IR-B: | EC Desk officers in DG AIDCO, DG DEV and DG Relex   |
| IR-C: | EUD services in charge of education and/or GBS support  |
| IR-D: | EC services in charge of relations with the trust funds   |
| IR-E: | EC services in charge of specific expertise (e.g. thematic budget lines, within the different DGs, Aid Delivery Methods, o-QSG) |
| IR-F: | EC services responsible specifically for financial and contractual aspects; mainly within AIDCO                                 |
| IR-G: | Other EC DGs  |

The recommendations are further annotated with cross-references to the supporting conclusions.

## 5.2.1 Cluster 1: Policy focus and achievements of education sector outcomes

### 5.2.1.1 Recommendation 1: Increase overall funding towards the education sector, possibly by reconsidering sector priorities

| <b>Recommendation 1: Possibly reconsider sector priorities and overall funding to education in the framework of the upcoming programming cycle</b>  |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Based on conclusion 3   | Implementation responsibility: IR-B |
| <p>Given the dire funding situation in relation to meeting EFA and MDG goals for education, the EC may want to reconsider its overall priorities, in terms of the share of development aid allotted to the various sectors. This is not to say that the amount of funding going to education currently is small, but when compared to the overall budget for development, as well as other sectors of support, the relative share of funding to education could be reconsidered. While it is outside the scope of this evaluation to make a judgment on which sector(s) need greater support, particularly between the social sectors of health and education, it is clear that there is a great need in education that is currently not being met by the international community. The EC has made very clear commitments to address the goals raised</p> |                                     |

above. If even greater efforts and resources were invested to follow up on them, this would certainly further increase the EC's credibility as a sincere and committed development partner.

Furthermore, there is a risk that achievements made through EC contributions to increasing access and enrolment may remain relatively meaningless if the quality of education and learning achievements do not increase as well (see also below).

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- **Assessing the relative share of EC support to various sectors:**
  - in light of international commitments made;
  - in light of funds already invested in expanding enrolment.
- **Possibly reconsider sector priorities for upcoming period:**
  - in the formulation of the new/revised financial instruments;
  - in country-level programming and choices made on focal sectors.

#### 5.2.1.2 Recommendation 2: Engage more actively with FTI

##### Recommendation 2: Engage with FTI, at both HQ and country levels, to promote ongoing reforms and honour the implicit commitments in the compact

Based on conclusion 4

Implementation responsibility: IR-A IR-E

FTI's goals and ambitions remain relevant and worthy of EC support. However, its governance, implementation practices and accountability structures and orientations have in the past been sub-optimal, thus making ongoing adjustments and reforms fully warranted. FTI has failed to use consistently the most aligned implementation modalities available – something that needs to be improved by engaging with the World Bank, which is, by default, the supervisor of EC funds.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements, which mainly aim at promoting FTI relevance and impact. The EC should address these recommendations at both global level (e.g. through the FTI steering committee) and at country level engagements.

- **Strive to improve the mutual accountability aspects of the compact.** There is clearly a need to strengthen mutual accountability within FTI. This should involve designing a commonly-agreed framework for monitoring and evaluating the FTI's own activities, and for providing accountability for aid commitments at local level and how these commitments are being monitored. The same should apply at global level, where the aspect of mutual accountability on aid commitment has been too weakly implemented.
- **Aim to make FTI's alignment efforts more ambitious, as the EC itself has done.** FTI was designed when SWAps were the main instrument for alignment. In the meantime, more aligned aid modalities, including SBSs and GBS, have been tested – often successfully. It is imperative that FTI, like the EC, has the explicit objective of aligning as closely as possible to national procedures. In a few instances, FTI has used the most aligned modality available, but too often this has not been the case, as the evidence from this evaluation and the FTI mid-term evaluation amply shows. The unambitious efforts in terms of alignment partly stemmed from the past management and governance structures, and efforts are needed to support on-going attempts to correct these.
- **Explore expanding FTI's focus beyond planning for endorsement.** The EC should encourage FTI to provide untied support (e.g. capacity development) beyond the planning phase. It has been somewhat implicitly assumed that once endorsement was achieved, other funding sources would be catalysed (hence, the name Catalytic Fund). In practice, this has not materialised to any significant extent – as, for example, shown by the FTI mid-term evaluation. Hence, there is a need to strengthen this aspect.

Implementing this recommendation will be within the remits of those in EC HQ dealing with FTI at global level. At the field level, EUDs where FTI is, or may become, active will have to strive to encourage a multiplicity of options for managing FTI, and for ensuring that FTI uses the most aligned modality possible. This includes taking into account previous analytical work – carried out on, for example, the fiduciary risks of SBS – even if not undertaken by the WB.

### 5.2.1.3 Recommendation 3: Retarget EC education sector support

**Recommendation 3: The following strategic options for differential targeting of EC education sector support should be considered with a view to re-targeting support: 1. Further differentiate between support to LDCs, fragile states and medium-growth economies in terms of resource packages and modalities; 2. Gradually, within SWAp approaches, shift resource share from primary education to secondary and TVET; 3. Within SBS, develop new approach focusing on pro-poor system reform**

Based on conclusions 5 and 10

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D

EC support has been successful in assisting partner countries' efforts to achieve MDG 2 and 3 targets. Overall, there seems to be a need now to stress the quality dimension in EC support (with a combined agenda of access and quality). Moreover, there seems to be an opportunity to provide EC support in a flexible manner to cater for requirements of middle-income countries and emerging economies (focusing more on increasing their competitiveness). This differential targeting already exists, but needs to be sharpened in view of the new economic realities and resolutions/working documents related to fragile states and LDCs in Africa.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

1. **Increase overall share of education sector support to LDCs in sub-Saharan Africa:** Here, the main modality mix could be GBS with education indicators for flexible tranche release, complemented by SBS<sup>103</sup>. In addition, where relevant, consider strengthening the capacity of ministries responsible for education through sector support programmes, thus enabling them to design, plan, budget and monitor pro-poor education sector improvement programmes for the implementation of sector support programmes for which SBS funding is mobilised. The focus should be on primary education, with more emphasis on quality improvement, and on lower-secondary education. Moreover, approaches should be considered for EC support to education in fragile states, applying MDTF and SBS linked to broader development bank investments.
2. **In terms of employing SBS, complement the existing approach focusing on pro-poor quality-driven system reform:** Education system delivery is increasingly part of a decentralisation agenda being implemented by many partner countries and demanding the development of systems, procedures and competencies among sub-national level staff. EC SBS can support the capacity of sub-national administrations to design, plan, implement and monitor decentralised basic education system reform, fostering quality improvement.

### 5.2.1.4 Recommendation 4: Empower the age cohort completing primary to proceed to further education

**Recommendation 4: In close dialogue with partner countries and DPs, shift resource shares in sector-wide programmes**

Based on conclusion 6

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D

1. In EC support to medium human development countries, a shift is noticed towards a more comprehensive approach that takes into account the whole sector – for example, in *India* and *Indonesia*, but also in *Tanzania*.
2. This support is often co-ordinated, with the EC playing a major role, and participation including Member States, other DPs and development banks. However, the share of resources allocated to what was formerly primary, lower secondary and (upper) secondary education is hard to identify. There is a need for a more clear and transparent picture of allocation of national resources (including SBS funds) to the whole sector. Unit costs have to be calculated and insight obtained on the share of GNP allocated to primary and secondary education (which then would constitute part of elementary), and be reflected by an increased share in the MTEF.
3. The character of secondary education, whether general or diversified with technical and vocational strands, will have to be examined. Assistance in strengthening not only general but also practically-oriented secondary education would enhance the possibility of graduate secondary school leavers finding gainful employment.
4. Given the strong role of private actors, the role of the government will increasingly concentrate on standard setting, quality control, and accreditation. Hence, support would have to cover capacity building in relation to these roles.

<sup>103</sup> See European Commission (2010): Green Paper from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions; The future of EU budget support to third countries. COM(2010) 586 final. P. 5 refers to GBS and SBS often used in tandem.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following key issues to be considered:

1. **Gradually shift resource share from primary education to secondary and TVET within SWAps:** EC support to medium human development countries should assist partner countries to make a shift from the enrolment agenda to quality improvement, and from primary to secondary education and TVET (when part of diversified secondary education). EC support may research partnership opportunities with EU Member States, other DPs and Development Banks in general in broad consortia, and sector support modalities, including SBS, should be applied.
2. **Mobilise TA support with expertise in secondary education**
  - o Where appropriate, mobilise EC-financed secondary education expertise, and attach short-term EC TA on secondary education finance, quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of EC support to secondary education.
  - o Assist partner governments within SWAps to identify and specify resource envelopes for the different education sub-sectors, and link these to sub-sectoral policies and plans.
3. **Renew emphasis on capacity building linked to Public-Private Partnerships and sector-wide approaches**
  - o Strengthen capacity-building support efforts through different modalities, focusing on accreditation and quality control of public and private institutions as a basis for resource allocation.
  - o Assist in strategic planning for a viable SWAp approach, including physical infrastructure requirements, human resources needs, and insight into demand, taking demographic and economic considerations into account.

#### 5.2.1.5 Recommendation 5: Increase focus on quality improvement

| Recommendation 5: Consider new approaches to focus EC support to ensure that the support is triggering quality improvements   |   |
|---|---|
| Based on conclusions 5 and 10   | Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D, IR-E, IR-G |
| <p>Without further significantly increasing direct support to education, especially in LDCs, the impact of EC support on improving quality will remain limited. However, apart from simply increasing resources, current commitments could be made more effective in terms of their support for quality improvement through focusing policy dialogue and performance assessment on quality, revealing education issues and challenges. Indicator-related targets should be disaggregated in order to reveal disparities. Such an approach might yield a higher return on investment in quality improvements. Where TA is linked to EC SBS, there is a good chance that this will have a multiplier effect in terms of assisting partner governments to design and monitor quality improvement programmes.</p> |   |

This recommendation consists of the following three dimensions that may be considered and addressed to target EC support in an alternative and/or complementary way in order to arrive at a stronger focus on quality improvement:

1. Examine the possibilities of EC participation in MTFDs with a focused sliced area approach, comparable to BEC-TF in *Indonesia* concentrating on 10% of the districts. In such an approach, a quality improvement agenda may yield better results and provide a basis of experience and capacity built for extending the piloted approaches nation-wide.
2. Further focus SBS on quality issues. In a move towards emphasising partner government ownership, SBS has in some cases been de-targeted, without the explicit focus on pro-poor and quality-enhancing strategies that was applied in targeted SBS (e.g. *Cambodia* and *Uganda*). In the design and formulation of such programmes, care should be taken to make them explicitly focused on quality improvements, as measured by compliance with relevant and realistic quality-related indicators. A key point in SBS eligibility could be partner government commitment and capacity to design and implement agendas for ensuring education of minimum acceptable quality for all of its pupils. Selectively incorporating TA based on strong demand (hence, not conditional), along the lines of the SBS models in *Pakistan*, *Tanzania* or the *Dominican Republic*, may give support to governments in creating conditions encouraging compliance with set quality-related targets.
3. Based on specific demand, possibly provide TA to ministries of education in GBS recipient countries. In some countries, GBS plays an important role in EC assistance contributing to system survival strategies, and has set quality-related indicators for flexible tranche release. Government officials in the Ministries responsible for education sometimes feel sidelined by GBS. They have to cater for compliance with some GBS indicators, but cannot be sure about

disbursements, which are made through the Treasury and/or Ministry of Finance. EC education-related TA in GBS recipient countries (where there are education indicators) could assist MoEs with their quality improvement agenda. They could also provide MoEs, which sometimes enjoy only low levels of influence, with more “power” in dialogue and negotiations concerning the release and utilisation of GBS funding.

#### 5.2.1.6 Recommendation 6: Reconsider internal efficiency indicators for variable tranche release

##### Recommendation 6: Assess the reliability, interlinkage and budgetary implications of targets related to internal efficiency as indicators for education-related flexible tranche release in GBS and SBS

Based on conclusion 5

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-E

Almost always, PTR is used as an indicator for flexible tranche release, while in some cases (e.g. FTI) completion rate is used as a proxy indicator for quality. Indicators related to drop-out rates and non-teacher salary share of the recurrent education budget are also used. PTR and non-teacher salary share of the recurrent budget impact on the overall budget.

A decrease in PTR (e.g. to below 40) requires budgeting for additional teachers. It also requires costing of additional teacher training, and consideration of lead time for teachers to be trained. This again impacts on the capacity of governments, with already constrained resources, to increase the non-teacher salary budget in the recurrent budget.

There is a need to assess reliability and validity of internal efficiency indicators for flexible tranche release, and their budgetary implications if partner governments have to meet the targets.

The recommendation has two strands that could be followed:

- **Design, formulation and preparation for sector support and budget support:**
  - Assess partner country quality improvement strategies, and potential strategies for efficiency gains and linked indicators.
  - Assess reliability of key indicators and whether they are being captured through EMIS.
  - Calculate measurement costs for each indicator and establish its adequacy as a valid indicator for flexible tranche release.
  - Assess competency-building requirements for quality improvement strategies, and incorporate these in the design of a pro-poor, quality-related education system reform.
- **In ongoing sector support programmes and SBS and GBS with learning achievement indicators, and during monitoring missions for compliance, or prior to MTRs:**
  - Assess partner country strategies for quality improvement, including related quality-enhancing efficiency measures.
  - Assess the budgetary implications and the consequences for other targets of quality indicators under review, and revise targets if evidence demands.

All this should lead to quality-related indicators that are reliable, realistic in their targets (as they have been properly calculated), and free more funds in the recurrent budget for enhancing quality and learning.

#### 5.2.1.7 Recommendation 7: Reconsider indicators related to examination results for variable tranche release

##### Recommendation 7: There is a need to assess the validity and usefulness of examination results as indicators for education-related variable tranche release in GBS and SBS, as well as to develop approaches to enhance these as triggers for quality improvement.

Based on conclusion 5

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-E

Increasingly, examination results are used as an education-related outcome indicator for SBS and GBS flexible tranche release. In most cases, targets are not met, which may indicate that they have been set in an unrealistic way. The system’s capacity to yield adequate learning may also be restricted. While insight has been gained on reliability issues related to access indicators, insight and expertise related to learning achievement indicators seems to be lacking in the design and formulation process related to budget support. Examination systems are sometimes understaffed, and staff are often not sufficiently qualified (e.g. in *Tanzania*), yielding results that are questionable in terms of validity, and thus provide a weak foundation for disbursement decisions.

Due to the nature of GBS, usually no expertise is available to design and implement strategies for fur-

ther improvement. The situation is somewhat more favourable in middle-income countries where examination units are better staffed, and when SBS can mobilise the required expertise (both in-house and external) to assist partner governments in improving learning assessment and the underlying factors detrimental to learning. Finally, among the indicators are secondary school leaving examination results, which even though highly relevant, are in many countries capturing learning results of only a small segment of those having originally enrolled in grade 1 of primary education (see EQ 3). For all these reasons, the validity and usefulness of examination results as indicators for flexible tranche releases needs to be carefully investigated and possibly reconsidered.

Implementing this recommendation would entail follow-up on three strands:

- **Design, formulation and preparation for sector support and budget support:**
  - Assess partner country learning assessment and examination systems at grade level, and school leaving examinations for primary and secondary education including validity and reliability issues.
  - Possibly design programme(s) for capacity building of staff, based on specific demands of the partner government, and upgrading of facilities related to examination services, and include them in FAs and TAPs. Capacities required are those available in learner assessment services in Europe, including linking the curriculum to test items, developing item banks, developing diagnostic assessment tools, sample drawing, and assessment processing and interpretation. First and foremost, a state-of-the-art study on examinations and continuous assessment could be commissioned to obtain insight into bottlenecks pertaining to learning assessment institutions, their staff and resources, and pre-service and in-service training of teachers in developing countries and emerging economies. In cooperation with DG EAC, insight might be obtained into developments related to learner assessment in Europe, given the growing importance attached in European countries to international competitiveness with regard to quality of education – as reflected in their ranking on, for example, PISA tests. For this, the services of Eurydice, the Information Network on Education Systems and Policies in Europe, may be called upon. Moreover, an in-depth assessment of results on international and regional surveys on learning assessment would certainly be helpful to get further insights into trends in scores, gender and urban-rural discrepancies and differences between LDCs and mid-income countries.
  - Implement capacity-building training, based on set modules, including test item design, validation, and setting up test item banks.
- **In ongoing sector support programmes, as well as SBS and GBS with learning achievement indicators, and during monitoring missions for compliance or prior to MTRs**
  - Assess partner country learning assessment and examination systems at grade level and school leaving examinations for primary and secondary education.
  - Assess their scope, standardisation and validity. Based on that, decide whether examination results can be used as a valid indicator for flexible tranche release.
- **Mobilise TA support with expertise in learning assessment**
  - Attach short-term EC TA on learning assessment in partner countries with GBS,
  - Examine approaches in current SBS to improve the capacity for examinations and continuous assessment (such as the TA support to PEACE in SEPSP *Pakistan*).

## 5.2.2 Cluster 2: Service delivery/government take-up

### 5.2.2.1 Recommendation 8: Integrate overall governance issues into support to education sector reform

**Recommendation 8: Integrate efforts to promote overall governance reform into support to education sector reforms, particularly including decentralisation and public finance management (PFM) reform**

Based on conclusions 8 and 10

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C

EC experience has shown that efforts to promote reforms in the education sector benefit from solid integration into an overall, cross-sectoral reform agenda. Decentralisation and PFM reform stand out as two change processes that are of particular importance. The EC, having already played a key role in supporting PFM reform plans, should increase its efforts to capitalise on these synergies and link its own support efforts in education more strongly to other ongoing reform efforts in other sectors or the government overall.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- At EUD level, conduct a strategic review of areas where linkages between education sector reforms and other reforms – such as decentralisation, PFM and civil service reform – can be strengthened. Further strengthen co-operation and exchange among project staff in EUDs, based on such reviews.
- Reinforce country-level contacts with other donors and other stakeholders, including civil society and parliament, that are supporting relevant governance reforms in the respective countries. If required, include this topic in relevant country-level co-ordination platforms.
- Formulate operational guidelines for increasing synergies between education sector reforms and governance reforms overall.

#### 5.2.2.2 Recommendation 9: Encourage countries in the establishment of conditions for budget support, accompanied by capacity development

##### Recommendation 9: Encourage countries to produce suitable conditions for effective use of budget support modalities, accompanied by adequately resourced and timed capacity development efforts

Based on conclusions 8 and 9

Implementation responsibility: IR-B, IR-C

In the past, the willingness of the EC to move to general or sectoral budget support for education has served as an incentive for the EC's partner countries to start, maintain or increase their efforts at putting in place sector frameworks, MTEFs and other important prerequisites for this type of support. This has often had positive effects on planning, budgeting and monitoring, and hence on governance in the education sector. The EC should continue to use these types of incentives to support committed governments, as well as those whose reforms are lagging behind, to step up their efforts in the future.

EC experience has also shown that capacity development support can play an important role in stimulating the necessary reforms, but that this support has to be resourced adequately and based on a realistic timetable.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- Assess which countries need additional encouragement to pursue the respective reforms in the education sector or overall.
- Commence and maintain an open and constructive dialogue with the sector ministries, but also with other stakeholders in governance reforms (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Interior, etc.).
- Make available appropriate capacity development support – possibly, but not exclusively, through highly-skilled TA – to help advance the technical aspects of the reform agenda. Capacity development resources need to be dedicated exclusively to this task, to avoid their absorption into operational responsibilities.
- Although timetables attached to the reform and the corresponding introduction of budget support are important, stress (*vis-à-vis* the partner governments) that the real yardstick for success is not the passage of time, but the actual achievement of agreed procedural benchmarks.

Apart from the EUDs, which can be seen as the main stakeholders in addressing these recommendations, implementing them will also require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS.

#### 5.2.2.3 Recommendation 10: Support the process of development of strategic multi-annual planning and budgetary tools in partner countries

##### Recommendation 10: Step up efforts to work out the operational details of strategic multi-annual planning and budgetary tools in countries that are struggling to make these tools work appropriately, orienting these efforts solely towards specific persistent challenges in those countries

Based on conclusion 8

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C

A large number of countries have formally introduced MTEFs or other strategic multi-annual budgeting tools. A smaller group, however, has successfully operationalised MTEFs linked to a policy framework and to planning and budgeting systems in education. It is important for the EC to intensify its assis-

tance, to prevent the legitimacy of these tools being hampered by lack of legitimisation in the political and administrative processes in these countries. The recommendation reflects the SPSP guidelines<sup>104</sup>, which stress the link between policy and budget, and the need for coherence of sector budget and sector policy, and subsequent proceeding to policy-based budgeting. The guidelines indicate that the development of a sector MTEF is a gradual process.<sup>105</sup>

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- Conduct an in-depth review of country experiences in introducing results-based budgeting frameworks / MTEFs in education.
- Disseminate the findings of this review to EUDs/staff working in countries that are at the critical stage of piloting MTEFs as budgeting and planning tools in the education sector.
- Disseminate, along with these findings, guidelines and case studies on “best practices” for supporting the operationalisation of MTEFs (building on the SPSP guidelines), including types of support that can be offered and a description of skill sets that TAs should ideally possess to support these efforts in partner countries.

Addressing these recommendations would have to start at HQ level.

#### 5.2.2.4 Recommendation 11: Continue efforts to strengthen NSA watchdog role in education sector

##### Recommendation 11: Continue and enhance efforts aimed at strengthening the watchdog role of NSAs in the education sector

Based on conclusion 10

Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-C, IR-E

Enhance efforts by EUDs aimed at strengthening the monitoring role of NSAs by acting as “watch-dogs” through, for example, civil society surveillance projects. Moreover, there is a great opportunity to enhance NSA involvement in education sector monitoring and evaluation.

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- On the basis of the ODI study<sup>106</sup>, develop guidelines on principles and good practices for the involvement of NSAs in the education sector. This can include specific tools, such as NSA mappings at the sectoral level, NSA consultations and capacity building, and tools related to the different aid modalities (SBS, GBS or separate projects/programmes) to support NSA engagement. In particular, these guidelines could be developed with regard to the following issues that have been identified by the ODI report, and be applied to the specific case of the education sector:
  - o EC recommendations for conducting mapping exercises.
  - o EC consultations guidelines.
  - o Checklist for good quality consultations.
  - o Factors to consider to increase the impact of Participatory Poverty Assessments.
  - o Guidelines on capacity building of NSAs in the framework of a GBS.
  - o Guidelines on the use of complementary financing mechanisms to support NSAs.
- Further strengthen the involvement of NSAs in education sector monitoring and evaluation – for example, in mid-term and final reviews of donor support or in Joint Review Missions of SBS programmes. According to an ODI study<sup>107</sup>, this is still a new and emerging area for NSA involvement, but it has a large potential for NSAs, particularly those with expertise and knowledge of budget monitoring (e.g. budget watchdog organisations, media), research, and data collection and analysis (e.g. independent think tanks and research institutions), and organisations specialised in participatory and consultative processes, including facilitators and mediators. The participation of NSAs in education sector monitoring and evaluation is a way of enhancing accountability of governments to citizens, while from the donors’ perspective, the key

<sup>104</sup> EuropeAid (2007): Support to Sector Programmes covering the three financing modalities: Sector Budget Support, Pool Funding and EC project procedures. Tools and methods Series. Guidelines No. 2.

<sup>105</sup> In that process, there should be a focus on building sound bases, such as a credible annual budget, mechanisms to ensure that all expenditure programmes are prioritised within the existing resource envelope, agreed national and sectoral policies, and the definition of aggregate fiscal objectives.

<sup>106</sup> Overseas Development Institute (2009): Engaging non-state actors in new aid modalities, Final Draft, Bhavna Sharma, Marta Foresti and Leni Wild. December 2009

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

added value of NSAs in monitoring and evaluation is to provide the link with the beneficiaries of education services and to articulate their needs and views, in order to improve efficiency and impact of education programmes. Such an involvement should be sought systematically by EUDs (and DPs). Joint Review Missions of GBS and SPSP could be a key entry point for the engagement of NSAs.

- Where such NSAs do not (yet) exist, strategies for strengthening them might have to be devised. This could include arranging for information on EC education sector support in national newspapers, combined with commissioning studies. In a next step, calls (international and/or local) for proposals might be a useful instrument, helping to develop a range of NSAs possibly focusing on various subjects.

Implementing this recommendation will require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with NSAs, SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view, and by EUDs.

#### 5.2.2.5 Recommendation 12: Support partner governments' lead role in sector co-ordination

| Recommendation 12: Develop additional efforts aimed at improving the capacity of the partner government to assume a leading role in the co-ordination of the development activities at sectoral level  |   |
|--|---|
| Based on conclusion 11   | Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D, IR-E |
| Accelerate efforts aimed at improving the capacity of the partner government to assume a leading role in the co-ordination of the development activities, in particular those related to the education sector. In the context of co-ordination, harmonisation and alignment, an important lesson emerging in recent years is that there is often not enough leadership, and that this is precisely why development partners need to become effective partners of the government. When leadership is not adequate, it needs to be built. Government is more likely to exercise or strengthen its leadership when DPs define and agree on effective co-ordination mechanisms that keep capacity building as the key focus of development assistance. This is especially relevant in countries that are at a relatively early stage of development co-ordination. |   |

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- Recognition at the (pre-)programming stage of an increasing role of the government in co-ordination mechanisms.
- Allocation of sufficient resources (time and staff involved in the implementation of the intervention) to work on improving co-ordination (to be planned at an early stage, during the design of the intervention).
- Establishment of clearly-defined co-ordination mechanisms around a sector plan/strategy, including a corresponding framework for monitoring and reviewing.
- Clarification of the process to follow, and of the institutional channels and platforms to be used for communicating and agreeing on issues related to the joint strategy/plan. This could include the development of, and agreement on, a concept note outlining the main aspects of the sectoral and national co-ordination model and principles, and defining the roles and responsibilities of DPs and government. In this model, a special effort should be made to highlight the various types of dialogue necessary – in particular, different solutions should be found to provide space both for high-level dialogue and “technical” exchanges of information.

Apart from the EUDs, which can be seen as the main stakeholders in addressing these recommendations, implementing them will also require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view, and by staff in charge of MDTF.

### 5.2.3 Cluster 3: Managing the aid modalities

#### 5.2.3.1 Recommendation 13: Enhance EC capacity to engage in education sector dialogue

| Recommendation 13: Further build EC capacities to engage and intervene in enlarged multi-actor dialogue related to the education sector  |   |
|--|---|
| Based on conclusion 12   | Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D, IR-E, IR-F |
| Important results can be achieved through adequate policy dialogue. The EC should further develop its capacity to successfully use the platforms for policy dialogue created by new aid delivery methods. This could be achieved through: (i) an increase in, and better planning of, the available resources; (ii) the further development of staff competence. |   |

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- Allocation of sufficient resources to allow the necessary time to participate in policy dialogue. In addition to policy dialogue taking time, a continuous presence is required. Thus, it is important to assess the resources required at an early stage (in the programming phase), and to ensure adequate resources over the long term.
- It is important to highlight that specific resources are required, and that these should combine capacity both for dialogue and technical expertise. Staff should be able to engage actively and effectively with partners that sometimes can call on the expertise of highly-qualified specialists (see Development Banks).
- Build specific capacities related to policy dialogue through, among other activities, the capitalisation of experience with regard to policy dialogue. This will help to address an issue often faced in some EUDs: the high turnover of staff. Moreover, it will help to fulfil an important requirement for effective policy dialogue: the in-depth understanding of the stakeholders and the contextual factors influencing the development of the education sector in the country.

Implementing them will also require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view and by services in charge of human resources. This work will need to be done in close collaboration with the representatives of the EUDs.

#### 5.2.3.2 Recommendation 14: Improve analysis being used for aid modality selection

| Recommendation 14: Accelerate efforts aimed at improving the analytical basis for the choice of the aid modality   |   |
|--|---|
| Based on conclusion 2 and 13   | Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-E |
| Accelerate efforts aimed at improving the analytical basis for the choice of the aid modality, taking into account country needs and the state of the education sector. This is especially relevant within a fragile context and where indicators are divergent. The global ambition to align as closely as possible should be maintained. |   |

Implementing this recommendation would include the following elements:

- **Sound analysis and documentation related to each major intervention on the choice of aid modality, explicitly discussing the degree of alignment possible.** Clearly, there should be some proportionality in the analytical efforts invested, vis-à-vis the size of the intervention. However, for major interventions, it would be reasonable to have a higher degree of explicitness in the modality analysis. An area that clearly would warrant more emphasis is whether to engage with government as the sole provider of education. In many contexts, weak government commitment to provide minimum governance levels at service delivery levels has resulted in non-state actors increasingly providing education services (e.g. in South Asia and South Africa), which clearly warrants more analysis.
- **In fragile contexts, ensure that the chosen modality and channel are not undermining current or future system (or state) building.** Here, shadow alignment may be useful, implying that the focus should be on what government systems ought to be, so that the transition is smoother when they are rebuilt. Clearly, this is not an easy challenge. Policy alignment can often be achieved in assisting in the design (or implementation) of an interim/transitional strategy that sets out the path to more permanent policies. System alignment (e.g. how to align to national procedures and funding channels) is often harder, and in many cases is deferred to later stages. Looking forward, it would be important to address the question openly and directly, including the levels of fiduciary risks that the EC is willing to take in contexts of fragility.

- **Consider disaggregating alignment so it does not become an “either/or” question of providing budget support or projects.** In some instances, there may be robust arguments for combining several aid modalities. This could involve piloting new concepts – for example, on effectiveness of service providers other than government (such as NSAs), and redefining the role of government in terms of being the provider. However, mixing several aid modalities can result in significant aid fragmentation and increased transaction cost, and consequently should be thoroughly analysed prior to such mixing.

In this context, the recommendation is to define a threshold (e.g. for education programmes of more than € 5 million), beyond which all proposals for new interventions should provide an explicit aid modality analysis, and discuss the possibility of disaggregating alignment, as well as the need to provide pilots.

Moreover, it is recommended that further improvements should be made in the analysis of the feasibility of supporting non-state actors in contexts of weak commitment to improve governance at service delivery level.

### 5.2.3.3 Recommendation 15: Reconsider and refine indicators for budget support to focus incentives on outcomes that are both realistic and ambitious

| Recommendation 15: Enhance efforts aimed at defining appropriate indicators, and draw lessons from successful GBS/SBS operations and establish realistic indicators   |   |
|---|---|
| Based on conclusion 14  | Implementation responsibility: IR-A, IR-B, IR-C, IR-D, IR-E |
| Continue to use GBS and SBS as an entry point for policy dialogue, but enhance efforts aimed at shaping indicators, to provide structures, incentives and guidance that are both ambitious and yet realistically achievable.  |   |
| Reduce the “learning curve” when introducing SBS and GBS by drawing on lessons learnt from successful GBS/SBS operations and by establishing realistic indicators. Continue considering the use of NGOs in a fragile context. |   |

Implementing the first part of the recommendation would include the following elements:

- **Consider accelerating the use of SBS and GBS to legitimately gain entry into discussions on improving country-wide challenges.** This is clearly preconditioned on having a reasonable degree of trust in the government’s commitment and ability to promote shared educational goals. However, once there is some level of policy alignment, system alignment should follow, which in turn will bring the benefits of having more legitimacy in the policy dialogue. Once entry has been gained, it is important to maintain a consistent focus on the key challenges, even if this requires addressing contentious issues.
- **Use that entry to address potentially contentious areas affecting service delivery.** This often relates to access undermining quality, teacher absenteeism, and other governance challenges. Here, it is important to have EUD staff who insist on having a professionally-focused dialogue, with high integrity, being able to address all relevant aspects of education challenges.
- Resist mechanistic adoption of global goals as country indicators (e.g. MDG2), but anchor indicator-setting in the local context so as to structure incentives appropriately. It is, therefore, important that these indicators are based on robust knowledge of prevailing conditions (i.e. the “baseline”) and the capacities and resources available, so that indicator setting does not become a simplistic exercise in applying internationally-defined goals at national level.

Apart from the EUDs, which can be seen as the main stakeholders in addressing these recommendations, implementing them will also require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view, by those involved in UN agreements dealing with education, and by staff in charge of FTI.

Implementing the second part of the recommendation would entail:

- **When introducing an education SBS, seek to learn from other SBSs in the country, and from similar SBSs in other countries, to avoid the pitfalls that lead to unnecessarily low efficiency.** The overwhelming evidence suggests that there are many lessons to be learned in setting up efficient SBS and GBS mechanisms. These include disbursement calendars, dispute resolution mechanisms, budget support donor dialogue forums and indicator establishment.
- **Related to this, establish indicators and triggers that promote efficiency.** This again calls for having robust knowledge of prevailing conditions on core indicators and of the current level of capacities and resources available. Combined with analysis of how other countries have performed, realistic indicators and benchmarks can be established. Indicators based purely on as-

pirations, with limited realism (perhaps linked to the MDGs), are not likely to promote efficiency, but will rather breed cynicism and cause disappointments.

- **In a fragile context, NGOs with local knowledge and legitimacy should (continue to) be considered.** NGOs can be efficient channels, not only for disadvantaged segments of society, but also in providing more mainstream basic education services. The key again is to make sure that support is “shadow aligned” – for example, that NGO support is consistent with the emerging policy framework, such as on accreditation and transition, thus ensuring that the education provided is widely used and recognised.

Implementing this recommendation will require strong involvement at HQ level, especially by those services dealing with SBS and GBS from a conceptual point of view, and by EUDs, especially those involved in SBS and GBS operations, but also those in fragile states.