**Terms of Reference**

**School Sector Development Plan - Technical Working Groups (TWGs)**

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## Background

The Government of Nepal has developed the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016 - 2023) to continue its efforts to ensure equitable access to quality education for all. The SSDP was developed through a participatory process led by the Ministry of Education and is in line with the country's vision of graduating from the status of a low-income country to middle income country by 2022.

The SSDP’s theory of change is based on strengthening the school education sector in its core dimensions, through several key result areas within and across these dimensions, for the SSDP to achieve its goal, these dimensions are:

* *Equity*: To ensure that the education system is inclusive and equitable in terms of access, participation and learning outcomes, with a special focus on reducing disparities among and between groups having the lowest levels of access, participation and learning outcomes.
* *Quality:* To increase students’ learning through enhancing the relevance and quality of the learning environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), teaching methods, assessment and examinations.
* *Efficiency:* To strengthen and reorient governance and management systems in the education sector to make them robust and accountable to local governments while assuring agreed overall minimum standards in teaching and learning processes and the learning environment.
* *Governance and management:* To accommodate the political and administrative restructuring of the education sector in line with the identified needs and the federal context and to ensure sustainable financing and strong financial management by introducing a cost-sharing modality between central, provincial, and local governments.
* *Resilience:* To mainstream comprehensive school safety and disaster risk reduction in the education sector by strengthening school-level disaster management and resilience amongst schools, students and communities and to ensure that schools are protected from conflict.

## Implementation arrangements

The SSDP is supported by joint financing partners (JFPs), non-joint financing partners (N-JFPS) and other development partners (DPs) through a sector wide approach (SWAp). The SWAp is guided by the provisions that are agreed as part of the Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) and the Common Framework for Technical Assistance (2018).

Following the Constitution of Nepal (2015), education is understood as a concurrent right across all three tiers of government. The policy guidance for the implementation of the SSDP programme will be led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) whilst the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) is the executing agency for the SSDP at the federal level and local governments are the implementing agencies for the SSDP at the municipal level.

### Central level management structure

The governance and management of the SSDP program will be safeguarded by several institutional arrangements that have been established to provide policy guidance, implementation and monitoring support in line with the results-based programme approach:

1. An SSDP Steering Committee (SSDP-SC) is chaired by the MOE secretary and oversees the coordination, monitoring and to verify progress of the implementation of the SSDP programme and the external assistance. The steering committee has the mandate to create sub committees to support the implementation in thematic areas.
2. An SSDP programme implementation committee, headed by the CEHRD Director General with the heads of central level agencies as members with the mandate to (i) support programme implementation, and (ii) recommend utilization of TA to the Steering Committee.
3. The MoEST’s Development Assistance Coordination Section (DACS) comes under MoEST’s Planning Division and is headed by an under-secretary. The DACS serves as the government’s focal point for foreign aid and development partner coordination. The section handles all associated requirements for external partnerships, including budgeting, financing, program monitoring, and disbursement linked indicator (DLI) reporting, including the financial management and audit reports that are critical for the smooth functioning of external partnerships. DACS is the Secretariat for all TWGs.
4. The technical working groups have been established consisting of government representatives, development partners and technical experts to work as mandated by joint missions and meetings. The ToR of the TWGs has been jointly developed and thereafter approved by the SSDP SC. The specific objectives of the TWGs can be revised during the SSDP implementation based on the recommendations and outcomes of the SSDP joint reviews and consultations and is focused on specific result areas that have been identified as part of the SSDP reform agenda. The TWGs are envisioned as an advisory and knowledge sharing platform that allows for experts to review, discuss, and scrutinize possible solutions to presented obstacles and knowledge gap within the SSDP implementation.

## Coordination and management of the TWG

The TWGs are coordinated by a government lead, supported by a co-lead from the Development Partners. The TWGs are envisioned to meet a minimum of 6 times a year and develop joint recommendations and proposals based on the specific objectives in their respective ToRs and additional tasks that may be delegated to them as agreed within the joint reviews and consultations of the SSDP implementation, on the understanding that the TWGs are advisory in nature.

As part of its role of TWG secretariat, DACS monitors the progress of the groups by compiling the minutes and sharing the agendas of upcoming meetings, as well as by consolidating the key progress to be reported back into the Joint SSDP SWAp meetings.

## Technical group objectives

To further strengthen joint consultation and review of the SSDP implementation by the Nepal Local Education Group (LEG),TWGs have the following objectives:

* To offer strategies to overcome issues or accelerate change to be considered during the SSDP implementation, especially in the area of key results, including those selected for DLIs.
* To follow up on agreed actions from joint consultative and review meetings within their thematic area.
* To ensure continuous dialogue between experts from GoN, DPs and education stakeholders/Civil Society (CS) representatives within specific SSDP result areas.
* To have regular meetings for discussing strategies for addressing existing gaps and emerging issues that (are likely to) affect the SSDP implementation and the achievement of its goals and objectives within the themes as mentioned under the first objective.
* To have regular meetings for taking forward issues and actions agreed, as documented in the joint reviews and meetings, and any other jointly agreed SSDP action plans within the themes as mentioned under the first objective.
* To report in the joint meetings on the main discussions within the technical group and on the main progress/ main challenges within the theme of the group, including progress review and issues relating to all thematic areas during joint field visits.
* To review the sections of the ASIP/AWPB relevant within the theme of the group against the agreed actions from the joint SSDP meetings and SSDP MTR recommendations during the JAR, if needed.
* To provide any other technical supports as and when necessary (for example; review and support in finalizing the SSDP evaluation TOR and report and monitoring the implementation of MTR recommendations).

## Specific Activities

The specific activities that will be undertaken include the following:

* The TWGs will aim to meet a minimum of six times a year. TWG members are expected to attend and actively participate on a regular basis.
* The DACS will collect and compile TWG minutes for the SSDP SC to review progress and issues as and when necessary. They may mandate the TWGs to discuss additional items and the SSDP Steering Committee (SSDP-SC) member may be called upon by each TWG to attend specific TWG meetings as required.
* Minutes from each TWG will be shared amongst its members of the TWG for review. The minutes to include next meeting dates/venue and items required raising with SSDP-SC. They will be then forwarded to DACS, for wider dissemination through the DP focal point and among the Government Agencies. The DACS will provide briefs to the SSDP-SC. The SSDP-SC minutes once approved will then be forwarded to the DP FP/Co-FP for wider dissemination to members of the LEDPG.
* The TWG will consist of a core group, for which members have been appointed from the side of the Government and the DPs. Each TWG will have a coordinator/lead from the side of the GoN and a co-lead point from the side of the DPs and will have members that have been nominated based on their relevant expertise (r*efer to members’ list below*). No more than two persons from each agency will be nominated for the same TWG and alternative representatives will not be allowed so as to encourage regular engagement from the core members. Besides this, other members of the LEG will be invited to join the meetings and consulted as emerging issues and agenda of the TWG requires.
* The scope of the work of the technical working groups is limited to the issues or agendas, or agreed actions recorded in the aid memoires (including GAAP, CAP, JFA, Policy matrix) and JRM/BRM minutes. The groups will operate in line with the specific TWG objectives, which are mentioned below the members’ list.

**SSDP TWG Member List**

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| **Quality: Early Childhood and Educational Development (ECED)** |
| **Lead:** (Deputy Director General) | Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) |
| **Coordinator:** (Director) | CEHRD |
|  | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) |
|  | MOEST |
|  | Curriculum Development Centre |
|  | Education Review Office |
| **Co-lead:**  | UNICEF |
| Members: | UNICEF |
|  | USAID |
|  | EGRP |
|  | World Bank |
|  | World Bank |
|  | Plan International/AIN |
|  | Save the Children/AIN |
|  | WFP  |
|  | SSDP TA Team |

## TWGs Specific Objectives

### Quality; Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)

#### Overall focus:

* To support the Government in ensuring a rights-based approach to ECED/PPE programmes for developing the physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and moral potential of children below 5 years, and ensure school readiness.

#### Objectives:

* To support the Government in meeting the ECED/PPE related targets within the SSDP PRF and deliberate on critical emerging issues relating to early childhood education and development.
* To support the Government on revision of required curriculum, training packages and minimum standards (including ELDS, safe infrastructure and child friendly classroom environment) under the new pre-primary structure within basic education.
* To support the Government to develop a plan to ensure access to all 4-year-old children in ECED/PPE in line with the Education Act, including interventions forthose children in remote areas, from marginalized groups and with special needs.
* To support the Government to integrate health, nutrition, protection components effectively in ECED/ PPE.
* To support the Government (ERO) to develop assessment tools to confirm status of holistic development of children in ECED/PPE.
* To support the Government to compile best practices for various modalities of ECED/PPE, including community based ECD centers.