

BEST Basic Education Sector Transformation

Six-Monthly Progress Report January–June 2015

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACTRC	Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre
ALS	Alternative Learning Systems
BEST	Basic Education Sector Transformation
CHED	Commission of Higher Education
DepEd	Department of Education
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
D-NCBTS	Developmental – National Competency-based Teacher Standards
DO	Division Office
GAD	Gender and Development
K–12	Kindergarten to Grade 12
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OPS	Office of the Planning Service
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
PBE	Philippine Business for Education
PBSP	Philippine Business for Social Progress
RCTQ	Research Centre for Teacher Quality
SY	School Year
TA	Technical Assistance
TEI	Teacher Education Institute
SHS	Senior High School
UIS	Unified Information System

Executive Summary

The first semester of 2015 set in place the necessary foundations and mechanisms for sustainable Program gains. In general, Program activities were geared towards strengthening cooperative interaction between and among BEST implementers. This is particularly important since implementing partners did not start at the same time and are now coming together as one program. Specifically, efforts focused on the following:

- > Partnerships with DepEd and non-DepEd partners were strengthened. BEST Technical Specialists and Technical Assistance (TA) were able to engage target groups from DepEd. More engagement allowed for a more common agenda and strategies especially on teacher development.
- > Baseline and / or research studies were started. Documentation of pre-Program situation will provide unique understanding of the education barriers preventing learners from accessing quality education, and bottlenecks in education services that may be pushing learners out of school.
- > Series of meetings, focus group discussions, and conferences were conducted with key target groups to ensure common understanding and appreciation of strategies and issues.

In Component 1, the assistance was concentrated towards supporting DepEd implementation of the K–12 curriculum and the launching of the Senior High School (SHS) program for school year (SY) 2016–2017. These include teacher development, resource materials development, classroom construction, and context specific learning systems. The technical assistance was geared towards strengthening DepEd to develop frameworks, road-maps and / or guidelines that illustrate directions and strategies of DepEd units under Programs and Projects. One of the major areas supported is the formulation of the Department Order (DO) No. 8, series of 2015 or the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment.

In Component 2, BEST also provided major technical and resource support to DepEd. Online facilities for the registration and tracking of learners enrolled in Alternative Learning System (ALS), private schools, and state universities and colleges were operationalised under the Unified Information System (UIS). Key technical support were provided in fine-tuning DepEd's rationalisation plan, and in managing transition from old structure to the new organisational arrangements in DepEd.

The first six months of 2015 provided the groundwork necessary for capacity and capability building programs that will be implemented in the second year of BEST.

1 Introduction

The second Six-Monthly Progress Report covers the implementation period from 1 January 2015 to 30 June 2015.

Specifically, this Six-Monthly Progress Report provides the following information:

- > Implementation status of activities, outputs delivered, financial utilisation and projections. Description of the major outputs by all partners which include DepEd units, Assessment Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Philippine Business for Education (PBE), Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and Research Centre for Teacher Quality (RCTQ).
- > Initial gains derived from the outputs delivered. These include learners directly benefitting from the school building program, schools including teachers and school heads using the Learner Information System, education supervisors from the schools divisions and regions, and DepEd Central Office staff.
- > Updates on program management strategies which include the Unified M&E, gender and inclusive education strategies, environment strategy, and risk management.
- > Documentation of significant observations, key issues and management responses.
- > Recommendations for improvements, broader sharing of lessons learned, and ways to achieve broader Program impacts.

The Six-Monthly Progress Report is prepared by Cardno in coordination with the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education and other BEST implementing partners.

1.1 Background

BEST is a collaborative effort of the Governments of the Philippines and Australia to improve the quality of education outcomes and increase access to quality education services. An enabling objective is to improve delivery of basic education services through better governance.

BEST supports DepEd's implementation of the K–12 program. Implementing the new curriculum requires changes in curriculum and assessment, reviewing teacher standards and training, and revision of learning resources. An additional two years will also be introduced after Grade 10. Grade 11 will be introduced in SY 2016–2017 and Grade 12 in SY 2017–2018. The first batch of students to go through Senior High School (SHS) will graduate in March 2018. Existing public and private schools, including those currently dedicated to higher education and / or technical-vocational education, may offer SHS. In addition, interested corporations or individuals may build new standalone SHSs. To prepare for the SHS program, DepEd engaged a variety of stakeholders to develop the SHS curriculum that will prepare students for a range of exit points, employment, higher education, entrepreneurship and middle level skills development. DepEd will also require building the necessary infrastructure, work immersion programs, hiring and training of new teachers and the development of relevant teaching and learning materials.

BEST supports organisational development of DepEd to enable them to implement K–12 effectively and efficiently. DepEd's Rationalisation program was approved and overall restructuring of DepEd's central and field unit organisations in line with *Republic Act 9155* – the framework for governance of basic education are ongoing. Critical activities to finalise the restructuring and develop synergy and cohesion in the new structure include upskilling the staff, building greater capacity and competence for education planning and creating dynamic support systems.

BEST covers a period of six years from July 2013 – June 2019. The Program is a national program with intensive support to six Regions: (i) National Capital Region (NCR); (ii) Region V or Bicol Region; (iii)

Region 6 or Western Visayas; (iv) Region VII or Central Visayas; (v) Region VIII or Eastern Visayas; and (vi) Region X or Northern Mindanao. BEST also works in limited capacity in other regions, for example, on classroom construction in consideration of Philippines Government's priorities. Some supported initiatives have national significance (K–12, assessment, policy etc.).

The Facilitating Contractor started mobilisation in August 2014. Other implementing partners were able to start their activities earlier – PBSP started in August 2013, ACTRC and RCTQ were previously established through the Australian Public Sector Linkages Program that was consolidated in BEST. PBEEd, on the other hand, commenced in December 2014.

1.2 Goal and Objectives

Goal: Girls and boys have the competencies and skills to make an increased contribution to the economic growth and stability in the Philippines.

BEST objectives will contribute to:

- > improved quality of education outcomes in the Philippines;
- > more equitable access of all people at all levels of education in the Philippines; and
- > the education system in the Philippines being well managed.

1.3 Outcomes

The major outcomes of BEST are focused on:

1. More children able to demonstrate improved mastery of basic education curriculum competencies (especially in English, Mathematics, and Science) and difference in learning outcomes for boys and girls are reduced in target areas.
2. More boys and girls participate in and complete basic education in target areas.

The BEST Theory of Change postulates that more boys and girls will complete basic education when all boys and girls at the entry level age of each segment are enrolled in school, when fewer boys and girls drop out of school, when fewer boys and girls repeat and are retained in the grade level.

A foundational outcome enables the two major outcomes. As a foundational outcome, it is a precondition to achieving the above two outcomes. It builds on DepEd's decentralised organisational structure composed of the Central Office, Regions, Schools Divisions and schools. This third outcome is:

3. DepEd is better able to deliver basic education services that are more gender responsive, inclusive, and with greater decentralisation of management and accountability to the field offices and schools.

The three major Program outcomes are linked and form the first part of the BEST Theory of Change. The foundational outcome is focused on DepEd's capacity to deliver basic education services which is based on the ability of DepEd to decentralise management according to the different roles and responsibilities of the different levels of governance – its Central Office, Regional Offices, Schools Divisions and schools. A fully functional DepEd will mean that Central Office business processes and policies are responsive, the Regions are able to customise policy and provide for inclusive education programs, the Schools Divisions are able to efficiently allocate resources and the schools effectively engage the learners. If all levels are fully functioning and delivering education services, this should result in more boys and girls participating and completing basic education. If there are more boys and girls participating in school, this will enable DepEd to ensure that more children master the necessary competencies expected at their grade level.

1.4 Intermediate Outcomes

To keep track of the Program's progress towards achieving its outcomes, intermediate outcomes have also been defined to monitor initial gains during the implementation stage. Intermediate outcomes are short and medium-term outcomes that help predict whether the long term outcomes will be attained. *Using Republic Act 9155 or Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001* as basis, the intermediate outcomes are organised according to the different levels of DepEd governance and these include:

- > **More learners have access to quality basic education services.** The Program aims to improve learners' access to quality teaching and learning materials through the Learning Resource Management and Development System, and access to education facilities within the prescribed DFAT and DepEd standards. These include access for children and youth with disability, environment and safeguards, and others.
- > **Teachers demonstrate the skills required to teach the K–12 curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students in target regions.** Outcomes for teachers include their ability to deliver the K–12 curriculum, demonstrate pedagogic skills that promote participation, creativity and critical learning of learners, use of formative assessment in identifying learning gaps, and their ability to contextualise the teaching and learning process based on different needs of learners.
- > **Education leaders and managers are better able to manage education learning systems.** Through BEST, DepEd aims to develop the competencies of school heads on instructional supervision to teachers, their ability to work effectively with community and education stakeholders, ability to respond to learners in different learning contexts, and ability to prepare and implement school improvements.
- > **Schools Divisions are able to provide needs-based or demand-driven technical and training assistance to all schools.** This outcome includes strengthening the Schools Divisions' capability to provide instructional support to schools and assistance to schools on school-based management, education planning and monitoring and evaluation, as well as to provide technical assistance to schools in the implementation of the K–12 curriculum, including the SHS program of DepEd.
- > **Regions are able to timely customise and / or adopt policies and programs according to the requirements of different divisions.** Intermediate outcomes at this level will focus on the Regions' competencies to do research and evaluation work, develop evidence-based policies, the quality assurance system, and improve the Regions' capability to manage programs and policies based on different needs or learning contexts.
- > **Central Office is able to operationalise the core 'business' processes and accountability systems for a more responsive and inclusive basic education program.** Key outcomes to be achieved at the Central Office level include the following: (i) policies supporting the K–12 Program are in place; (ii) programs and policies are inclusive and responsive to gender issues and concerns; (iii) core business processes of the Department are operational; (iv) integrated planning, budgeting, and M&E systems are operational; and (v) all DepEd units under the Rationalisation Plan of DepEd are operational.

1.5 BEST Components

BEST has two main components. Component 1 focuses on improving the teaching and learning process and directly addresses learners, teachers, schools and school heads. The strategies and activities under this Component are directly linked to increasing access and improving quality of basic education services.

- > **Pre-Service Teacher Education:** This subcomponent is designed to improve the quality of teachers entering the public sector service. It focuses on the graduates of the Pre-Service Teacher

Training system in the Philippines with the aim of ensuring the capacity to yield more teacher-graduates ready to support K–12 curriculum implementation.

- > **In-Service Teacher Education:** BEST supports the strengthening of teachers' teaching skills and building teacher content knowledge in English, Mathematics and Science. It also includes strengthening capacity of DepEd units to implement and sustain teacher development programs.
- > **Education Leadership and Management:** This subcomponent focuses on improving education leadership and management, including Schools Division Superintendents, education supervisors and school heads to provide effective mentoring to teachers.
- > **Curriculum and Assessment:** BEST supports the implementation and enhancements of the K–12 program. Specifically, this subcomponent supports the implementation of curriculum, improvements in classroom assessments, national assessments, general learning strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and the implementation of the SHS program.
- > **Teaching and Learning Materials:** This subcomponent includes strengthening capacity of DepEd to ensure equitable access to quality teaching and learning strategies and resources for all learners.
- > **Education Facilities:** In partnership with PBSP, this subcomponent is designed to address the issue of classroom congestion and lack of facilities for learning in selected BEST areas. It also includes provision of access to clean water and toilets.
- > **Context Specific Learning Systems:** This subcomponent addresses the priority needs of children from indigenous peoples and Muslim communities, children with disabilities, and those in remote communities.

Component 2 focuses on strengthening systems in DepEd and its capability to sustain provision of basic education services.

- > **Evidence-based Policy, Planning and Management:** This subcomponent focuses on strengthening DepEd's capacity to do evidence-based policy development, program planning, and management of service delivery. Specifically, it supports the development of business processes for policy and research, planning, and M&E.
- > **Unified Information System:** BEST supports the integration of DepEd's different information systems into a Unified Information System (UIS) and upgrading of the Department's information and communication technology infrastructure.
- > **Gender Equality Mainstreaming:** This subcomponent includes strengthening DepEd's capacity to develop its gender strategy, and support capacity to mainstream Gender and Development (GAD) concerns in planning, M&E, budgeting and policy development.
- > **Organisation Development:** The final subcomponent for Component 2 centres on the provision of key technical support to the implementation of DepEd's Rationalisation Program. This also includes strengthening capacity for managing and institutionalising change, and in communicating the K–12 reform agenda.

2 Implementation Progress

Significant progress has been made in all components of BEST over the last six month reporting period. The Program has transitioned from mobilisation and planning to implementation. Consultation and collaboration with DepEd and between implementing partners has been a feature. There is demonstrable evidence of implementation through workshops, research activity, classroom construction, procurement and contracting of service providers.

2.1 Component 1. Improving Teaching and Learning

In addition to providing technical support on a range of areas, the program also invested time in strengthening partnerships with DepEd offices, CHED, PEd, ACTRC, and RCTQ to work together on directions and strategies in improving teaching and learning as well as ways of working together to ensure desired outcomes are achieved.

2.1.1 Pre-Service Teacher Education

Commission on Higher Education

CHED developed a Master Plan for Pre-Service Teacher Education in order to strategically coordinate the development of key initiatives which can support the successful implementation of the K–12 reform. During Annual Plan 1, BEST worked collaboratively with CHED to identify ways in which the CHED Master Plan could be implemented. A series of consultative meetings and workshops with DepEd and CHED stakeholders were undertaken to establish strategic priorities to support the K–12 reform.

Within CHED, BEST engaged with the Technical Panel for Teacher Education (TPTE) consisting of representatives from Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). A series of consultative meetings were held in order to support the panel develop strategic plans to assist capacity building in the priority areas. A strategic planning workshop in May 2015 served as a venue to discuss a systems approach to the reform of pre-service teacher education, develop outcomes-based education in pre-service programs, pre-service teacher standards, new masters programs for in-service teachers and new routes into teaching.

In this systems-based approach, the establishment of new pre-service standards for teachers is seen as an essential component which will support the development and implementation of all other components. Therefore, establishing the Developmental-National Competency Based Teacher Standards (D-NCBTS) with the four career stages which has been developed by RCTQ and validated nationally, at the request of DepEd, will be key focus for the work of BEST. The pre-service standards should then inform the development of the pre-service curriculum and in service programs. The outcomes-based standards are K–12 compliant and also support lifelong learning, essential areas in order for the Philippines to demonstrate compliance with required frameworks for ASEAN integration. BEST research suggests value in strengthening teacher competency and understanding of content in at least some areas of the new curriculum. Pre-service reform is required in order to enable newly qualified teachers to teach the new curriculum effectively. In this regard, it is also imperative that the Licensure Examination for Teachers qualification reflects changes in pre-service curriculum and the identified priorities for developing high quality new teachers.

The following areas have been identified as priorities by the CHED Commissioners, some of which technical support has already commenced:

Development of a new pre-service curriculum

The TPTE and committees have been tasked to develop a new K–12 compliant, Outcomes-Based Education / lifelong learning based curriculum for TEIs. The deadline for this draft curriculum framework is mid-October 2015 and will be supported by BEST. The Commissioners believe the NCBTS needs to align better with the K–12. At the request of the Commissioners, BEST contracted RCTQ through the University of New England, to provide consultant technical support to work with the TPTE in June 2015 to support this area. The consultants produced Report 1 which focuses on considerations of what could / should make a Framework. Included in Report 1 is a preliminary draft of a new Curriculum Framework. The second report is a preliminary draft of a new Curriculum Framework in Report 1, so it is available as a separate document. The third report is built around the D-NCBTS and the practicalities of its use by CHED and TEIs. It offers: a position paper, a template to map coverage of Beginning Teacher Indicators across a program, two styles of a course syllabus template, and a completed course syllabus template.

The reports were written for the use and consideration of the Commissioners. The next step in the process is a shared workshop between CHED and BEST which will examine the work undertaken by the TPTE and consider what further work needs to be undertaken in order to ensure a suitable curriculum framework is completed by October 2015. Therefore, funding has been identified for Annual Plan 2 (AP2) which can support this if needed.

Creation of new routes into teacher training

The introduction of Senior High School (SHS) in the Philippines in 2016 will require 80,000 teachers in 2016 and 2017 for the initial cohorts of G11 and G12. Whilst some of the SHS teaching positions may be filled by JHS staff transferring to SHS, or staff from TEIs transferring into SHS positions, there will still be a significant gap in both the SHSs and JHSs. It is envisaged that some of the necessary teaching positions may be filled by graduate professionals teaching part time in subjects matching or close to their own professional field, for example doctors, nurses, engineers and other vocational professions. It is also possible that positions may be filled by graduate professionals whose educational background is not education, but who have decided to shift to the teaching profession and hence would want to teach full time.

Traditionally in many countries, the route into teaching has been through an accredited teacher-training program usually awarding a full degree at its completion with qualified teacher status. The addition of Post Graduate Certificates in Education allows graduates with a relevant first degree to undertake a full time training program, usually over one year, to achieve qualified teacher status. In recent years, some countries have experienced a shortage of teachers generally or in certain subject areas and have examined other possibilities for developing routes into teaching. Graduate entry into the teaching profession has taken a variety of forms in countries such as England where the Graduate Teacher Program and the Teach First Program allowed graduates with a first degree in a specified subject to begin work in school; whilst at the same time undertaking a period of part time training to achieve qualified teacher status. The advantage of such programs is that they allow governments to strategically prioritise recruitment in key areas of the curriculum and geographically within a country. Evaluations of these programs indicate that they can be very successful if two key factors are in place – Graduate teachers are supported by:

- > experienced and skilled mentors in their schools; and
- > an effective part-time teacher training program closely linked to the curriculum which they are teaching and supporting the development of effective pedagogical skills.

When these factors are not in place, graduate teachers often find it difficult to develop a solid understanding of pedagogy, classroom management, planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Owing to the challenge of recruiting so many teachers in SHS, one strategic response is to develop an entry route into teaching based on graduate entry. This program would be an employment based route towards achieving qualified teacher status, created in order to respond to the shortage of trained teachers able to teach in SHS.

The program would need to contain some key features.

- > Before beginning teaching, all participants receive a short intensive training program (perhaps two–four weeks). Some of this would be delivered by TEIs, some would be organised at divisional level. This might cover some of the introductory units required to achieve qualified teacher status.
- > Once they start work, participants would be on a reduced timetable – this means that they would have a lighter teaching load than normal. This would create time for them to observe other teachers, visit other schools and attend unit sessions delivered by TEIs to allow them to achieve their qualified teacher status (one day a week, or half a day a week over a fixed time period).

- > The content of the program would need to be designed by CHED / DepEd / TEIs working in partnership together. There would need to be key inputs, both at school, and at TEI level to address the issues highlighted above to ensure that participants develop
 - good subject content knowledge in their discipline, which reflects the new curriculum;
 - good planning skills;
 - good classroom management skills; and
 - good pedagogical skills which enable them to teach in a fully inclusive classroom to diverse groups of learners.
- > Participants working in different tracks would need to be accommodated through the provision of different pathways. For example there may be a number of core units which are compulsory for all participants, combined with a range of units which are linked to subject specialisms or the previous experience of participants.

Participants would need to be graduates / professionals with skills relevant to the curriculum area they are applying to work in. There may be exceptions to this, such as in the Sports track where a prospective teacher may not be a graduate person but an experienced practitioner. In these cases, there would need to be a specific pathway created to allow non-graduates to complete enough credits to be awarded both a degree and a teaching qualification.

The opportunity for participation in the program should be marketed as a Special Scheme to attract applications. This would need to be organised per track, perhaps targeting those most likely to apply. For example, in the STEM track, it might be that nurses and engineers would be interested in applying; in the ABM track, it may target those already employed who wish to augment their income; in Sports and Arts, the target group might be musicians who generally work during the evening and those with PE qualifications / experience who perhaps only work on certain days of the week.

The program should be marketed as attractive to graduates on the basis that it will be recognised as awarding fully qualified teacher status whilst allowing participants to teach and earn a salary on a full- or part-time basis. Once participants have achieved fully qualified teacher status, they will also be eligible to apply for the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

The main benefit to the sector is to contribute to the recruitment of teachers, particularly in shortage subjects. By targeting these subjects linked to related professions / graduate areas, the program can contribute to the cross sector initiatives to raise the status and quality of the teaching profession. One of the strengths of the program is that it locates teacher training within the workplace and emphasises the importance of workplace learning for education professionals. This supports the wider paradigm shifts within the sector to move teacher training closer to schools. By basing the development and training of teachers on core competencies and broad career based standards, the program can also support CHED and TEIs in developing new and innovative strategies for raising the quality of teacher training for pre-service teachers.

The program represents a paradigm shift in the way that the Government of the Philippines approaches Teacher Training. Experience from other countries indicates that such shifts are likely to experience a range of challenges. These may include concerns raised as to whether such a shift to school-based teacher training can provide the correct level of quality required in new teachers. There may also be concerns raised about the implications of allowing unqualified teachers to work in classrooms. These are reasonable concerns and should the program be operationalised then it will be important to address these. Where there are recruitment shortages, the main argument which has been used in other countries is that it is better to have a graduate specialising in the subject area they are teaching in, than no teacher or a non-specialised teacher who does not have a good understanding of the curriculum content. Through discussions with DepEd and CHED commissioners, BEST was asked to facilitate the

introduction of this priority area to the TPTE. The goal to establish this initiative by June 2016 is challenging.

Development of career pathway accreditation for In-Service Teachers

Concerns have been raised about existing provision for Masters Programs in Education. These concerns range from worries about the quality assurance across different programs currently being offered; the relevance of programs to the K–12 reform and to the improvement of teaching and learning and the raising of educational standards; the relevance of programs to teacher career pathways and the professionalisation of teachers.

BEST was asked to produce a possible model for consideration by CHED based on the experiences of other countries who have attempted to implement a nationally designed unified Masters program specifically aimed to improve the quality of teachers in the classroom.

This initiative would aim to ensure that teaching is a Masters level profession by working with schools and universities to develop and to introduce a new qualification, based on the K–12 reform and closely linked to teachers' career stages. The new qualification would build on existing Initial Teacher Training and Newly Qualified Teacher induction programs with the intention of supporting the development of a highly professionalised workforce capable of delivering even better outcomes for children and young people. The program would need to encompass a suite of routes through to a Masters level qualification which could also address the challenge of raising teacher competency in certain identified weak areas, such as the teaching of Maths, Science, English and Filipino at High School level. It is envisaged that a new Masters program could

- > raise teacher competency in specified areas;
- > support the recruitment and retention of newly qualified teachers;
- > create a structured approach to support professional development; and
- > improve professional practice through developing collaborative cultures in schools and synergising with the reform of in service teacher development through school and locally based initiatives such as the Learning Action Cell (LAC).

The new program would be innovative in that it would be delivered jointly by schools and Universities / TEIs, providing the opportunity for the focus to be school needs driven but underpinned by research and thorough use of evidence bases.

The key aspects of the Program would be:

- > It is partly school and practice-based program aimed at improving teacher effectiveness in the classroom with direct impact on pupil outcomes and attainment.
- > It is a personalised program, with the pathways through the content areas (see below) mapped out between the school, student and TEI tutor. The MTL would be completed over three years to six years.
- > The model could include Masters level coaches who are school-based. They would be a teacher whose classroom practice is recognised as very good and who will be trained to work at Masters Level and will either have a Masters degree themselves or working towards one. Coaches would be trained by the Universities / TEIs through a commonly agreed program.
- > Professional Standards for teachers and Nationally Approved, Quality Assured Masters level criteria would be developed and integrated in this model so that the MTL becomes one of the main form of professional development for teachers and so that it links and supports all other aspects of ongoing Professional Development Activity.

- > Teaching and learning would be a rich combination of taught input delivered by the University with additional support from within the school (this might also include district / division / regional support). Further learning opportunities will be orchestrated within schools through the creation of action learning sets in school, drawing on in-school expertise, consultants and subject advisors, subject association courses, and through case studies or scenarios reflecting the student's own context. The LAC would be seen as a central part of this process.
- > Assessment would be innovative and reflect actual practice such as presentations, critical commentaries and case studies as well as shorter 'scholarly' pieces of writing, with an emphasis on work place learning, action learning critical use of evidence.
- > There could be a set focus on specialised / shortage / priority curriculum areas.
- > Students would be supported through virtual learning interfaces and Distance Learning as one key interface between student, school, Universities and other groups of students as well as LACs, school-based action learning sets or groups who meet regularly to support one another.

As with the other identified priority areas, BEST was requested by the Commissioners to facilitate the introduction of this priority area to the TPTE. BEST has continued to plan strategically with the commissioners and will be seeking to identify opportunities to guide the panel and committees in developing this program during AP2. The goal to establish this K–12 compliant, strategically planned Masters Programs by June 2016 is challenging.

Development of a teacher research agenda

The development of a teacher research agenda has been identified as crucial to the success of the K–12 reforms. This takes two forms. One is the ongoing development of robust evidence bases which can feed into the ongoing implementation of the reforms. RCTQ and ACTRC are continuing to identify new areas for longitudinal and short term field research. The second area is related to the paradigm shift in approaches to teacher training and teacher development which requires the development of teacher identity and efficacy based on the concept of teachers as action learners and agents of change through their ongoing participation in active communities of practice. Through the in-service work of BEST to support DepEd in institutionalising the LACs and the use of D-NCBTS as a central pillar of support to re-professionalise teachers, there have been ongoing discussions with the TPTE to consider ways in which a teacher research agenda can be supported through CHED, both at pre-service and in-service level. Whilst some members of the panel still view teacher research as something undertaken by universities with teachers as subjects, there is a wider recognition that teachers positioned as participant action researchers can be supported to become powerful change agents driving the education reforms from a local level. In order to support the TPTE in identifying ways in which they can facilitate this process, BEST specialists have engaged in a number of discussions and meetings with the Panel and Committee members to identify strategic activity for AP2. It has been agreed that BEST will support the planning for a Teacher Education Research Conference to be hosted by the University of the Philippines in 2016. The aim of this intervention is to ensure that there is synergy between the in-service work being undertaken by DepEd through the LACs and pre-service work of CHED in preparing new teachers to be active researchers in their own classroom, able to reflect, analyse, evaluate and plan their practice.

Philippine Business for Education

The activities of Philippine Business for Education's Scholarships for Teacher Education Programs to Upgrade Teacher Quality in the Philippines focused mainly on three major activities which include advocacy, recruitment and selection of scholars. The specific accomplishments are tabulated below:

Table 1 STEP-UP Completed Activities and Outputs

Output	Accomplishments
Partnerships	
Partner Teacher Education Institutions	Eight memorandum of agreements with Teacher Education Institutions signed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mariano Marcos State University ▪ Philippine Normal University-Manila ▪ University of Santo Tomas ▪ Ateneo de Naga University ▪ Cebu Normal University ▪ West Visayas State University ▪ Ateneo de Cagayan- Xavier University ▪ University of South-eastern Philippines-Obrero and Tagum Campuses
Ayala Cinemas	Ayala Cinemas to air STEP UP 30-s video in all its cinemas nationwide for two months.
Communications	
PBEEd School Hops	Total of 4,322 public and private high school and college students oriented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1,231 Males, 3,091 Females ▪ 1,917 expressed interest in pursuing teaching as a career after orientation (44% of total students oriented) At least 45 schools visited in seven provinces: Naga, Laoag, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Cebu and Catarman At least 250 posters and 2,900 flyers distributed to high schools, universities, vocational schools, DepEd offices, Public Employment Service Offices, career centres, mayor’s office in seven provinces
Radio plugs on Bombo Radyo Philippines (aired in March-April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total of 462 radio plugs aired two–three times a day in Laoag, Manila, Naga, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, and Cagayan De Oro ▪ 294 33-second radio plugs ▪ 168 time check plugs
TV features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TV Patrol segment (aired March 6) ▪ 40-minute live interview on CNN (Cable News Network) Philippines’ Serbisyo All Access (aired on May 12)
Online marketing materials	Video balloon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seen by 647,658 unique viewers ▪ 8,091 redirected to STEP UP website ▪ Click–through rate of 0.65% vs benchmark Click through Rate of 0.2–2.75% Lightbox <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seen by 753,602 unique viewers ▪ 19,189 engaged with the ad ▪ 4,242 redirected to STEP UP website ▪ Click through Rate of 0.45% vs benchmark 0.5-1.0% ▪ Engagement rate of 2.14% vs benchmark 1–2% STEP UP Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 21,380 page views ▪ 6,863 unique views Facebook, Twitter, Instagram <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2,138 Facebook likes, 39 Twitter followers, 34 Instagram followers
Video airing in cinemas and YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Four videos produced and set for airing ▪ One in all Ayala cinemas, aired twice a day for two months (free) ▪ Three videos promoted on YouTube
Newspaper ads (March-April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sunstar and Panay News Classified Ads ▪ Davao, Cagayan, Cebu, Iloilo

Output	Accomplishments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philippine Daily Inquirer NCR
Tarpaulins (installed in February)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three tarpaulins installed in Laoag
Recruitment	
No. of scholarship applications received	<p>Total of 703 unique applications (72% female and 28% male scholars):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 380 applications from incoming freshmen, 86 of which were Indigenous Peoples (23% of applicants) 206 applications from incoming juniors 117 applications from Certificate in Teaching Program
No. of scholarship applications accepted	<p>Total of 215 scholars (163 females, 52 males) passed the screening and awarded contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 (78 female, 22 males) incoming freshmen, 12 of which are Indigenous Peoples (12% of Freshmen Scholars) 90 (67 females, 23 males) incoming juniors 25 CTPs (18 females, 7 males) <p>Note: PBEEd is still processing the applications for the 10 Juniors and 25 Certificate in Teaching Program slots. The final list of scholars will be finalised in August.</p>

Research Centre for Teacher Quality (RCTQ)

RCTQ assists in the implementation of the K–12 reform by providing nationally consistent policy advice focused on teacher quality. On pre-service teacher education, key outputs for the RCTQ team for the period include:

- > research activities conducted on the pre-service teacher development needs study;
- > a multi-stakeholder partnership investigation involving the World Bank; and
- > informal agreements reached with CHED Commissioners on a number of future studies on pre-service education, teacher practicum programs and accreditation of teacher education programs and institutions.

Table 2 RCTQ Completed Activities and Outputs in Pre-Service Teacher Education

Output	Accomplishments
Pre-service Teacher Development Needs Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the results country-wide testing of 3944 fourth-year graduating students of Bureau of Elementary and Bureau of Secondary Education with co-operation of 10 Normal Schools (National Network of Normal Schools) from the different groups including the Presidents of the 3NS, CHED and National Educators Academy of the Philippines. Technical report completed for presentation to CHED and the Presidents in February 2015. Agreement from all stakeholders that the results will inform future TEI curriculum planning. Final Report completed June 2015.
Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships	
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership arrangements agreed with World Bank for linking their Public Expenditure Tracking Survey Study with RCTQ's Teacher Development Needs Study. Short-form of RCTQ content knowledge papers to assess Grade 6 and 10 teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge in Mathematics, Science, English and Filipino developed for World Bank—assess the effectiveness of teachers in public schools sampled in their study. Produced Training Manual for World Bank survey contractors and trained enumerators.

Output	Accomplishments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitored and evaluated the use of the assessment tools in sampled schools in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. ▪ 387 Teachers in Elementary Schools and 982 teachers in High Schools tested in the Short form of the content knowledge papers. ▪ Final Report completed and submitted June 2015.
CHED	Informal agreement reached to collaborate on a number of future studies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an Outcomes-based Pre Service Education program; ▪ an Outcomes-Based Practicum program; and ▪ a Review of the Accreditation of Programs and Institutions for Teacher Education based on Typology.

2.1.2 In-Service Teacher Education

Metrobank Foundation

BEST supported Metrobank Foundation in their *Strengthening Leadership and Teaching Excellence Skills* Program that was able to develop re-entry action plans for eight teachers who were awarded short-term study visit to Australia. The Program had four components which include:

- > Pre-departure Briefing: provided the participants with a program overview and orientation. It included preliminary dialogue on K–12, re-entry action planning, international research, inclusive education, and international benchmarking.
- > International benchmarking: included workshops on leadership development, introduction to theories of world’s best practice in education, and the two-state benchmarking visits and attendance to a conference in Sydney. The leadership programs dealt with issues of establishing effective leadership teams, collaborative professional learning, professional conversations and managing conflict.
- > Re-Entry Action Planning: focused on the finalisation of REAPs in conjunction with the participants’ supervisors in Manila to ensure a shared understanding, participants shared the knowledge gained throughout the program with the supervisors. This was achieved through group discussion of mind maps of their leanings.

Some of the insights and recommendations include: (1) the use of the effective school model was an operative umbrella framework for the program as it described qualities of schools and teachers in key areas and was then used as an observation framework which led to the development of evidence-based observations by awardees; and (2) presence of the supervisors / principals during the re-entry action planning is a strategic approach in ensuring that their REAPs are aligned to the goals of their respective schools.

BEST has worked closely with DepEd and partners such as the RCTQ to establish strategic priorities to support the K–12 reform. This has included detailed discussions on ways in which the paradigm shift towards school-based teacher development can be sustained effectively. BEST has also:

- > Supported activities of the National Assessment sub-working group on Teacher Assessment in order to facilitate the national validation of the D-NCBTS (professional teacher standards) and associated tools to support the assessment of teacher quality. This involved providing a small amount of funding to enable members of the group to visit the field and assess the effectiveness of existing tools.
- > Provided technical advice to support the capacity building and effectiveness of National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP); this involved regular meetings with the Directors of NEAP to share and discuss strategic planning for a series of ongoing issues including developing Quality

Assurance processes for cascade training, strategy for teacher assessment including DNCBTS and RPMS, planning for priority BEST activity in AP2.

- > Provided technical advice on the development of effective approaches to mass training of teachers.
- > Provided technical advice on the development of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) National Policy; This included re-drafting different versions of the policy and preparing a comprehensive set of guidelines for schools.
- > Funded a national workshop to produce guidelines to support the LAC National Policy. Representatives from different regions including those with experience of LAC implementation were asked to support the drafting of the policy and guidelines.

On in-service teacher education, key outputs delivered by RCTQ were:

- > Three research activities conducted including: a) the Teacher Development Needs Study; b) D-NCBTS; c) Teacher Education Development Needs Study /
- > Informal agreements reached with senior personnel in NEAP to collaborate on tools for teacher professional development.

Table 3 RCTQ Accomplishments in In-service Teacher Development,

Output	Accomplishments
Teacher Development Needs Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grades Six, Eight and Ten Curriculum Content Knowledge Papers in Mathematics, Science, English and Filipino completed ▪ 3889 teachers surveyed across 17 regions undertook content knowledge tests and the shortened form of the Teacher's Strengths and Needs Analysis ▪ All test papers coded by Philippine Normal University and RCTQ staff with data sent to SiMERR for Rasch analysis. Initial results produced for discussion at DepEd and CHED program meetings ▪ Database containing Teacher's Strengths and Needs Analysis data from 60,800 teachers and current data from the national testing and the Pre-service Teacher Development Needs Study testing available for inclusion in the UNIS
Developmental – National Competency Based Teacher Standards (D-NCBTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft design clarification process completed with two survey instruments developed, each containing 78 questions, representing a random sample of the D-NCBTS indicators ▪ Surveys administered to 2242 teachers from Region 4a and Region 2 ▪ Survey data analysed ▪ 37-item standards-based self-assessment tool for teachers as basis for professional development needs has been drafted ▪ Report outlining the first three stages of Phase 1 of the study presented to the DepEd Program Committee on September 24, 2014 ▪ Final validation study to cover all regions in the Philippines approved and completed April 2015 ▪ Final Analysis to be completed 19 June 2015
Multi-Stakeholder Partnership with NEAP	<p>Informal agreement reached to collaborate on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Self-assessment career stage tool relevant to teacher skills and experience to inform teacher professional development; ▪ a Classroom Observation Instrument that recognises career progression for use in monitoring and enhancing teacher performance; and ▪ a RPMS teacher position and competency profile for use in the evaluation of teachers' yearly performance.

2.1.3 Education Leadership and Management

The Educational Leadership and Management technical assistance provides competency and capacity development activities for NEAP and for school heads to ensure effective implementation of K–12 Program and senior high school levels. A major result under this technical assistance is the development and approval of the Educational Leadership and Management Curriculum Framework and Content for school heads. The program directly contributes to DepEd strategic priority of strengthening school-based management and to the success of K–12 and senior high school implementation. This competency building program complements the continuing support of the Australian Government for the Superintendents Leadership Program¹, a one-year intensive leadership and management course to provide strategic and operational competencies. The two programs are priority initiatives to ensure that instructional leadership and operational management of the schools and the support provided to schools translate to access and quality of education for the learners. Strengthening NEAP, moreover, is crucial in implementing DepEd's mission on ensuring continuous learning for its teaching and non-teaching staff.

Completed activities under this assistance includes:

- > final curriculum framework, topics, content and delivery strategies for the 13 modules which includes senior high school content and implementation, instructional leadership, planning and continuous improvement, partnership and networking, financial management and self-mastery;
- > nationwide consultation meetings, workshop and discussions on the roles, current realities and competency and support requirements of school heads;
- > module and program designs for Career Guidance and Counselling to support DepEd's Career Advocacy Program;
- > workshops and meetings with regional heads on the design and roll-out of the leadership and management program for school heads. These activities ensure their support for the program and for the different projects and initiatives of school heads as outputs of the leadership and management modules;
- > orientation of the selected 85 learning facilitators from all regions on the school heads leadership and management program. These facilitators will be trained to implement the 13 modules;
- > training and coaching toolkits for the 85 learning facilitators;
- > workshop on Strategic HRM conducted for NEAP staff from different regions;
- > support for the Superintendents Leadership Program is through providing the program with resource speakers, learning facilitators and process documenters.

The synergy of the two programs for school heads and school superintendents significantly increases the impact of these programs on school governance, and on access to quality education. The synergy also creates several opportunities in identifying and implementing relevant and strategic programs and projects that directly address school and learner outcomes. Challenges in implementing the school heads program and in strengthening NEAP therefore must be addressed. These challenges and risks include:

- > Competing priorities at the schools and division levels that require attention of school heads and superintendents. Focus in completing the course work may be challenging. This is mitigated however by providing clear policy directives for school heads and superintendents to complete the course and its required outputs that will benefit the schools.

¹ This program is supported initially under the Philippine-Australian Human Resource and Organisation Development Facility, and currently supported by BEST.

- > Challenge of DepEd to harness sources of funds within the different Offices given the more modest funding available through BEST in 2015.2016. This will be addressed by facilitating cross-functional (inter-office) discussions on the benefits of the programs and looking for appropriate budget items that can support specific areas in the program.
- > Low level of project completion. Project implementation is required by the program course work for both school heads and superintendents. This risk is mitigated by ensuring that projects are directly related to issues and concerns at the schools and division levels so that outputs immediately respond to needs and plans.

Brigada Eskwela

'Brigada Eskwela,' is a DepEd-led school maintenance activity in line with the Department's mission to provide safe and clean learning spaces for Filipino learners. Carrying the theme '*Tayo Para sa Kalinisan, Kaligtasan at Kahandaan ng ating mga Paaralan*', the week-long school maintenance practice, which began May 18, is aimed at preparing schools for the coming school year and to promote volunteerism among the members of the community.

The BEST Program participated in the recent Brigada Eskwela, by providing a total of P1.2M worth of construction materials to five (5) public schools: Pasay City (Maricaban Elementary School, Cuneta Elementary School, Marcela Marcelo Elementary School), Taguig City (Taguig Elementary School), and Pateros (Capt. H. Francisco Elementary School) identified by the Australian Embassy, and one school in Region 10 (Mambajao Central School, Mambajao, Camiguin Province). The materials were identified by the schools Brigada Eskwela committee and submitted to the Program for procurement.

BEST worked closely with DepEd and the Australian Embassy to plan and implement the initiatives. Personnel from the Australian Embassy, including the Ambassador, participated in activities to enhance the schools. The activity attracted members of the media and included an interview on television.

The Program team also volunteered in cleaning and painting classrooms at the Capt. H. Francisco Elementary School in Pateros on May 19. At the regional level, the BEST Program donated PH10,000 worth of construction supplies and participated in the cleaning and painting of the Mambajao Central School in Mambajao, Camiguin province. On both occasions, they were joined by the DepEd staff from the Central Office and the Region X office.

2.1.4 Curriculum and Assessment

BEST support to DepEd in curriculum and assessment has been offered through the combined work of the sub-contracted team of Technical Assistants from the Office of Programs and Projects and BEST specialists and through research and technical input from the Assessment, Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC). Technical support has focused on inclusive education through further contextualised curriculum development and review, implementation and monitoring of the K–12 Curriculum and Assessment systems, senior high school implementation, teacher and school leadership training and development and formulation of related issuances and policies.

The research work undertaken by ACTRC informs DepEd through curriculum, teaching and assessment research based on empirical data on curriculum innovation and implementation. Synergies with BEST activities have been mapped and are being further explored through the scope of work in the 2015–2016 annual plan.

Inputs during the period January to June 2015 have provided technical support and advice to DepEd in the form of planning, meetings, policy consultations, workshops and forums with relevant DepEd bureau officers resulting in the following outputs.

K–12 Curriculum

- > Completion of the K–12 curriculum and the development of protocols regarding curriculum contextualisation and alignment for the Alternative Learning System (ALS), multi-grade program, special education program, technical-vocational education, Indigenous People's education and special curricular programs under Senior High School.
- > Formulation of the K–3 language mapping protocol and the accompanying policy coverage (draft Department Order completed).
- > Review of modules in Early Grade Reading Training Materials.
- > Alignment of ALS curriculum with K–12 Curriculum.
- > Language alignment in English for Grades 3 and 4 and 6 and 7.
- > Formulation of the K–12 draft M&E framework.
- > Formulation of draft internal and external communication plans and protocols for K–12 roll out.

Assessment

- > Formulation of the draft system-wide architecture of the K–12-assessment system. Further articulation per subsystem details system assessment, national assessment of student learning, teachers and supervisors' assessment and classroom assessment. An omnibus policy on classroom assessment, DepEd Order 8 s. 2015 was promulgated in April 2015. Different sub-technical working groups are drafting policies for the remaining components.
- > Assessment of 21st century skills – ACTRC has been working closely with DepEd and DepEd National Education Testing and Research Centre on the development of a 21st century skills framework. This was followed by a skills audit of the curriculum. A map was developed showing frequency of integration of 21st century skills within K–12 curriculum. ACTRC has continued collaboration with the National Education Testing and Research Centre in development of assessment items through the first half of 2015.
- > Review of draft items for Grade 6 National Achievement Tests, incorporating 21st century skills to ensure validity and reliability of items.
- > Review of current Principal entry examination for NEAP to ensure validity and reliability of items.
- > Synergies with ACTRC and BEST identified and discussion on possible use of ACTRC assessment tools and research to support BEST M&E Plan on student achievement and teacher practice in formative assessment.

Senior High School Program

- > Completion of SHS program implementation plans in all 17 regions and their respective schools divisions. The SHS targets, tracks and strands offering, partnerships, learning resources and learning environment requirements were fine tuned in all regions and divisions.
- > Draft of SHS Partnerships Handbook outlining procedures, legal requirements and protocols for business / school partnerships to support 80 hours of work immersion for all Grade 12 students.

Policies, Planning and Protocols

- > Formulation of the policy coverage and operational guidelines for the implementation of learning action cells.
- > Articulation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-in-education standards and protocols for learning and teaching materials, facilities and assessment.

- > Articulation of a comprehensive training program on early language literacy and numeracy for all K–3 teachers and school heads.
- > Articulation of draft omnibus policies for special education program, multigrade education program, teacher induction program on early language literacy and numeracy, Indigenous Peoples education, materials development protocol (including textbook development guidelines).
- > Completion and quality assurance of a multiyear plan (3–5 years) and the *General Appropriations Act*– required annual work and financial plans of bureaus, centres and offices under the supervision of the Under Secretary for Programs and Projects.

Assessment, Curriculum and Technology Research Centre

Research carried out by ACTRC provides evidence to guide the development and implementation of curriculum and assessment activities within DepEd. The following summarises ACTRC's outputs funded directly through DFAT during 2014–2015:

- > **21st century skills assessments:** ACTRC continues to work with DepEd National Education Testing and Research Center to develop understandings around test construction of these general capabilities, and to work with DepEd staff to develop items for piloting with students. Presentations on this work have been made at an international conference on 21st century education in Singapore, and will be made locally in July in Manila.
- > **Mother Tongue Based – Multilingual Education:** Write up of Phases 1–3 has continued and strategies have been identified to support implementation of Mother Tongue Based – Multilingual Education in various contexts in the Philippines. Preparations are under way for Phase 4, which involves identifying associations between school factors and student learning outcomes. Presentations on the work have been made at an international conference in Japan, and will be made locally in July in Manila.
- > **LearnARMM:** The second longitudinal data collection was successfully concluded in February, with the data analysed subsequently. Presentations have been made in Mindanao to both Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee non-government organisation and to DepEd Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The report on this activity will be provided to DFAT prior to a scheduled forum in August. A Filipino version of the tests has been developed, and is ready for use.
- > **Science Inquiry Skills:** Alignment of Intended, Implemented and Assessed Science Curriculum Focusing on Inquiry Skills (Science Inquiry). The Science Inquiry Study was designed to identify teacher understanding and use of science inquiry practices in the classroom, and to explore degree of alignment between such practices and the intended curriculum. In addition, a science inquiry skills test was developed and piloted with junior high school students. From the pilot data, four levels of functioning were identified in student performance.
- > **Formative Assessment Phase 1:** Classroom observations data collected in 2014 were analysed for themes and patterns in the use of formative assessment. These analyses were used to identify facilitators and blockers to changes in practice by teachers in classroom. The report has been written up and is in press.
- > **Tablets:** An evaluation of factors associated with stakeholder use of tablets in classrooms was completed, using a case study approach. The participating schools were drawn from a pilot study implemented with Australian Aid funding and undertaken by University of the Philippines Open University.
- > **Students with additional needs in the Philippines Phase 1:** A validation study of an assessment tool for use by teachers with students with additional needs was undertaken through the auspices of ACTRC and by the University of Philippines in collaboration with the Assessment Research Centre. The tool was found to function very similarly to its use in Australia, with only a couple of items to be modified. This study provided evidence that the tool can be used in the Philippines.

Activities relating to the development of the K–12 assessment system and associated policy development is ongoing. The policy relating to guidelines for classroom assessment (DO8) was promulgated in April 2015. The Assessment Technical Working Group and its sub-committees are continuing work on refining assessment policies relating to system assessment, national assessment, and teacher and supervisor assessment.

2.1.5 Teaching and Learning Materials

BEST worked with DepEd's Instructional Materials Council Secretariat to revise and further develop guidelines and streamline processes to support improved access to teaching and learning materials. Activities included the articulation of processes for the development and procurement of Grades 4, 10 and 11-12 textbooks and orientation of publishers to DepEd's K–12 curriculum content, instructional design frameworks and procurement procedures, in readiness for text book calls.

Outputs under this subcomponent are detailed below:

- > development and distribution of learner materials and teacher guides for Grades 4 and 10;
- > procurement for additional program materials (Wikahon) for the revitalised multi-grade program;
- > draft protocols for the development of the SHS learning packages;
- > review of Grade 1 learners' materials and teachers' guides;
- > processes for the development and procurement of Grade 11–12 text books being finalised through on-going meetings and workshops;
- > initial discussions on a tablet option for Grade 11 and 12 texts which engaged stakeholders from DFAT, DepEd, Technical Advisers representing the senior high school team and ICT in education, ACTRC researchers, specialists from the UIS and Curriculum and Assessment subcomponents resulting in a paper outlining benefits and disadvantages of funding a tablet pilot study; and
- > forty-three (43) publishing companies oriented on DepEd requirements for K–12 teaching and learning materials.

2.1.6 Education Facilities

The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) constructed a total of 187 classrooms in 87 elementary and high schools in Regions V, VI, VII, VIII, X, NCR and typhoon Pablo-affected areas in Visayas. Each classroom was furnished with 45 armchairs, 40 of which were right handed and five were left-handed. These were made of wood and metal and procured and delivered after completion of building construction. Each classroom was also provided with a set of teachers' table and chair, and a blackboard. Overall, a total of 8,440 chairs, and 211 sets of teacher table and chair were procured and distributed. On water systems, 49 were installed in each recipient school to ensure the availability of water for the toilets.

Another 72 classrooms are being constructed and are in various stages of completion. The procurement of contractors that aim to construct nine classrooms is ongoing. Another 12 multi-storey classrooms will be built in one school. The list of recipient schools is attached in Annex A.

- > The Parents and Teachers Associations (PTA), School Heads of the beneficiary schools and the Local School Boards of the host municipalities were trained. Specific details are provided below: 92 PTA trained on Strategic Planning which resulted in the formulation of their three-year Strategic Plans;
- > 92 PTA have undergone team building and personal effectiveness activity aimed to foster stronger partnerships and working relationships;
- > 92 PTA completed their leadership training aimed to enhance project implementation capabilities;

- > 92 schools assisted on how to review their School Improvement Plans to guide in improving school's education performance;
- > 30 Local School Boards assisted on development of their Municipal Education Agenda which was used as basis for appropriating the Special Education Fund) and other resource mobilisation activities of the local government units; and,
- > 30 Local School Boards trained on innovative financing —real estate tax collection.

2.1.7 Context Specific Learning Systems

BEST supported the Indigenous Peoples' Education Office and strengthened the capacity of DepEd Region, Division offices and schools to act as front-liners in the implementation of Indigenous Peoples Education. Technical assistance resulted in the following outputs within January–June 2015:

- > Development of the system to provide financial support to 1,600 pupils enrolled in non-profit learning institutions offering K–6 education programs for indigenous learners.
- > Training of staff at 1,365 schools serving indigenous learners.
- > Issuance of permit to operate / certificate of government recognition of 55 schools serving indigenous learners.
- > Continuous updating and training of Indigenous People's focal persons in the Region and Schools Division level.

2.2 Component 2. Systems Development

Similar to Component 1, BEST has transitioned from mobilisation and planning to implementation in terms of system support in DepEd. Work commenced to support the development of a planning framework for DepEd, major procurement of hardware for DepEd's data centres was progressed, databases were enhanced, gender equality discussion paper completed and significant progress in implementing DepEd's Ratplan. Evidence-Based Policy, Planning and Management

2.2.1 Policy and Planning

The activities implemented under Policy and Planning are: Strengthening and Harmonising DepEd Planning System, Strengthening Policy Research and Development at Department of Education, and Strengthening the Implementation and Management of School-Based Management. These activities are preparatory in nature, focusing on baseline missions and key informant interview sessions to aid in the development of one coherent system of planning, budgeting, policy research and development, school-based management and M&E. Information from baseline missions will feed into the development of the planning framework. The framework, on the other hand, will serve as input in the identification of specific capacity building activities needed to support its implementation.

Activities identified in the annual plan and their status are provided below.

Table 4 Accomplishments in Policy and Planning

Activities on Planning in AP1	Status
Analyse baseline situation in the six BEST Program Regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baseline missions in BEST Regions have been conducted to determine capacity of key DepEd personnel to a) develop strategic and operational plans, b) formulate policy and develop research, c) and implement school-based management have been conducted.
Process documentation of the Planning system of DepEd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key informant interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) have been conducted with key DepEd personnel across governance levels (central, region, division, school) involved in planning, policy and research development, and school

Activities on Planning in AP1	Status
	effectiveness to document current processes related to planning, policy, research, and School-based Management.
Prepare a National Education Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of the National Education Plan will follow after the finalisation of the planning framework to ensure that the NEP is aligned with the framework.
Capacity building of Policy Research and Development Division staff on planning and policy analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All capacity building activities have been put on hold pending the finalisation of the planning and policy frameworks. ▪ Initial support on policy and research development was provided through the finalisation of the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF) guidelines.

All implemented activities thus far are meant to support the development of a unified, relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable DepEd planning framework and system. Information gathered from the baseline mission and process documentation of the planning system will serve as input to improve the delivery of basic education services in DepEd that are built on strengthened capacity for planning, evidence-based decision making, policy formulation and policy research and development.

Capacity-building activities will follow upon finalisation of the DepEd planning framework. The planning framework, once approved, will pave the way for the development of the education plans across governance levels and the identification of specific capacity building initiatives to support the implementation of the DepEd planning framework and the development of strategic and operational plans. Initially scheduled to be finalised by December 2015, the planning framework is expected to be ready for approval of DepEd management by September 2015.

One of the risks relating to the implementation of the planning and policy intervention is the rationalisation plan. As DepEd is currently rationalising functions in the department, targeted personnel from intended offices for capacity building may no longer be part of these offices after rationalisation. To mitigate this, capacity building activities, moving forward, are geared towards regional and division offices where the rationalisation plan has already been implemented. Further, DepEd is receiving support from the Organisation Development subcomponent team to expedite the implementation of the rationalisation plan at the central office.

Another key risk is related to a more modest program budget than expected. Given this, certain planned activities may be delayed. Specifically, capacity building activities at certain governance levels in the BEST regions may need to be postponed. However, to mitigate this, the program is exploring other funding sources within DepEd to enable the program to implement all activities of the intervention.

Finally, the risk of a change in government administration in 2016 undermines potential impacts of the program, should the next administration reverse major reforms put in place. An example of this is the National Education Plan, a six-year education plan which aims to pro-actively address the future needs and challenges in the basic education sector, may easily be reversed by the next administration. To address this, the program is putting up systems embedded and accepted by DepEd. Specifically for planning, the framework being developed will align and streamline planning across governance levels to make it effective, efficient, and relevant to DepEd.

Technical support to strengthen DepEd's capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation work during the period covered four areas: (i) baselining activities; (ii) regional mobilisation on M&E work; (iii) training on M&E; and (iv) procurement of services. Interactions were mainly with the Office of the Planning Service (OPS), Program Management Services (PMS), and the Quality Assurance Division in the six BEST Regions.

- > **Baseline Activities** – The activities on baseline work were divided into two major parts: (i) conduct of baseline studies determined by the DepEd CO; and (ii) inventory of competencies and work

processes on M&E.

- > The School Profile Baseline Study aims to document the School Divisions operationalisation of basic education program, document the public school's practices on teaching and learning and school based management that influence access to basic education, and document public kindergarten education implementation in all six priority Regions. Using the baseline information, BEST program can develop a profile of the six BEST Regions on the management of basic education service and subsequently compare the results of future monitoring and evaluation efforts in order to measure impact and change. This will be implemented by the De La Salle University – Lasallian Institute for Development and Educational Research (DLSU-LIDER). Target completion date is February 2014.
- > The Case Studies on Transition from Grade 6 to Grade 7 aims to document and analyse the backward and forward links between elementary and high schools, evaluate their referral and learner seeking strategies. Results of this study will provide inputs to the Divisions and Schools on crafting programs for Grade 6 to 7 transition. The second baseline study is commissioned to the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). Target completion date is February 2014.
- > **Inventory of Competencies and Work Processes.** In order to ensure a more holistic and sustainable M&E system, an inventory of current M&E practices in the six Regions of BEST were started in May 2015. This will provide valuable inputs on the technical design of the M&E system. The scope of the inventory are:
 - > Inventory of all regional, division and school activities per month, covering one school year. This inventory is expected to provide critical and insightful information on their regular activities including implementation bottlenecks within DepEd, external issues or barriers, support received or needed, and other factors. This will provide technical, social, organisational and political context to be considered in the design of the system
 - > Documentation of M&E practices which include data collection strategies, tools and techniques, report requirements, usage of information systems, and how data and information collected are used for policy and program enhancements, improving plans, and making corrective actions.
 - > Inventory of Competencies on M&E. Includes assessment of skills of education supervisors on doing M&E work, as well as evaluation of M&E process owners on managing and maintaining the M&E system. The M&E inventory is expected to be finished by November 2015.
- > **Regional Mobilisation:** Priority assistance on M&E were given to the Regional Quality Assurance Division. This newly staffed division is expected to manage, implement and maintain the quality assurance mechanisms, and the M&E processes and requirements in the region, divisions and schools. In the long term, they are also expected to build capacities of DepEd field staff on doing M&E work. Series of small group consultations, workshops, and mentoring sessions were conducted by the BEST M&E Field Specialists in the six Regions.
- > **M&E Capacity Building for DepEd:** Training and technical assistance were customised by the BEST M&E Field Specialists depending on the current capacity of the Region to perform M&E work. Based on initial assessment of the six BEST Regions on M&E, the three Regions (Regions VI, VII, and VIII) previously supported by the Strengthening the Implementation of Basic Education in the Visayas (STRIVE) Program -, were assessed to be more advanced in terms of M&E practices and training. Region X staff, on the other hand, received inputs on M&E through the *Philippines' Response to Indigenous Peoples' and Muslim Education* Program. Finally, the regional staff of the NCR and Region V received very little or no inputs on M&E work.

Training conducted on M&E are as follows:

- > Basic Course on M&E. A three-day introductory course on M&E for Regional Supervisors of NCR and Region V.
- > Introductory Course on Use of the MEPA Technology. This is a three-day course on M&E which focused on building competencies on evidence-based decision making using insights, lessons, information and data generated by the M&E system. This outcomes-based training builds on the capability building program provided by STRIVE (Regions VI, VII, VIII).
- > Course on Monitoring Program Readiness. Requested by Region 10, this course equipped the Regional and Division education supervisors with skills in facilitating startup or mobilisation of DepEd programs and projects, including use of tools and techniques.

A total of 177 Regional Education Program Supervisors (EPS), and 93 Division EPS were trained on M&E. Series of mentoring and coaching sessions will be provided by the BEST M&E Team especially on the operationalisation of the MEA / MEPA technology in their respective regions and SDOs.

Table 5 M&E Courses Participants from Regions and Divisions

Regions	Course	Regional Staff		Division Staff		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
NCR	Basic Course on M&E	10	15	-	-	25
Region V	Basic Course on M&E	7	21	-	-	28
Region VI	Introductory Course on Use of MEA / MEPA Technology	10	15	15	15	55
Region VII	Introductory Course on Use of MEA / MEPA Technology	8	13	4	19	44
Region VIII	Introductory Course on Use of MEA / MEPA Technology	19	25	-	-	44
Region X	Course on Monitoring Program Readiness	7	27	13	27	64
Total		61	116	32	61	260

- > Procurement of Services. The BEST M&E Team assisted the OPS in the procurement of service provider for the major baseline studies. Assistance includes the development of the Request for Proposals and tendering for three baseline studies developed together with OPS. In close coordination with the OPS, the Request for Proposal for the School Profile, Kindergarten implementation, and Transition from Grade 6 to Grade 7 were developed and processed. The status of the tendering process for the three studies are as follows:
 - > Contracting and approval of the Inception Plan for the Case Studies on Transition from Grade 6 to Grade 7 completed
 - > Contracting and approval of the Inception Plan for the School Profile baseline which will include the Kindergarten implementation completed
 - > Proposals for a Kindergarten Education Implementation profile were not accepted and components of the research were instead incorporated into the design of the School profile research

2.2.2 Unified Information System

The Unified Information System subcomponent achieved the following major initiatives: completion of online facilities of the Learner Information System to include learners in the Alternative Learning System and private schools; procurement of server and network components; and continuing maintenance of DepEd's information systems.

Learner Information System for Alternative Learning System (ALS) and Private Schools

The online facilities for the registration and tracking of learners enrolled in the Alternative Learning System, private schools and state universities and colleges were completed, deployed and implemented at the beginning of school year 2015. These facilities will enable the reporting of enrolment by individual learner increasing the scope of learner database, to substantiate the following SY 2014 data:

Table 6 Number of learners from ALS, private schools, and state universities and colleges registered in Learners Information System

	No. of Schools	Enrolment (SY 2014)		
		Male	Female	Total
Public	46,624	10,825,558	10,216,692	21,042,250
Elementary	38,648	7,885,583	7,228,625	15,114,208
Secondary	7,976	2,939,975	2,988,067	5,928,042
Private	15,994	1,490,247	1,441,062	2,931,309
Elementary	10,562	813,317	764,672	1,577,989
Secondary	5,432	676,930	676,390	1,353,320
ALS	4,400			128,142
State Universities & Colleges				41,159
Elementary	35			9,064
Secondary	120			32,095
Total Enrolment	-	-	-	24,142,860

The implementation of these systems will increase access to and quality of information for enhanced resource planning, implementation of learner-centred programs and projects and other decision-making activities at all levels of the education management system (i.e. school division, region and central offices), stakeholders and partners. Moreover, besides providing a more accurate picture of participation and other basic education indicators, the inclusion of learners from these systems will also improve the tracking of learner movement in the different school systems and learning centres, allowing schools and education managers to take implement programs and projects to bring and keep learners in school.

Improved technology infrastructure

The server and network components to support the development and implementation of the UIS have been procured. These technologies aim to enhance governance and delivery of education services. The installation of an enterprise-grade network and wireless access points at the central office will allow campus-wide internet accessibility and enhance communication and collaboration among knowledge workers within the department. Moreover, installation and operationalisation of a state-of-the art 'converged server' technology will increase DepEd's capacity to efficiently secure and maintain its data on schools, learners, and personnel. The increase in storage and processing capacity will also allow increased access to information and technology for better decision-making at all levels of education management.

Availability, accessibility and security of information systems being implemented

The continuing maintenance of DepEd's information systems which includes the Enhanced Basic Education Information System, Learner Information System, Learning Resource Management and Development System Portal, DepEd Website, Online Applications System (Human Resources Information System employment application component) involves performance monitoring, troubleshooting, configuration and program adjustment by a team of ICT Technical Advisers. The

technical assistance provided also involves a minimum of 12x5 technical support provided to users at the school and field offices.

Increased capacities for the implementation and use of UIS

In the development and implementation of the different UIS components, capacity building activities through direct training, coaching and mentoring of target groups generated the following outputs.

Table 7 Completed Capacity Building Activities on UIS

Training	Outputs
Trainers trained on the use and implementation of the Learner Information System in public and private schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13 Education Management Information System Division personnel consisting of Education Program Specialists and Statisticians
Trainers trained on the use and implementation of Learner Information System for ALS in community learning centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 Education Program Specialists from the Bureau of ALS
Trainers coached and mentored on the training of region and division implementers for Learner Information System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13 Education Management Information System Division personnel consisting of Education Program Specialists and Statisticians ▪ 10 Education Program Specialists from the Bureau of ALS
Region and division personnel oriented on the use and implementation of the Learner Information System and Enhanced Basic Education Information System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 17 Regional Planning Officers ▪ 17 Senior Program Specialists – Regional Planning ▪ 17 Regional Information Technology Officers ▪ 17 Education Program Specialists for ALS ▪ 17 Education Program Specialists for Private Schools ▪ 220 Division Planning Officers ▪ 220 Education Program Supervisors for ALS ▪ 220 Education Program Supervisors for Private Schools ▪ 220 Division Information Technology Officers

2.2.3 Gender Equality Mainstreaming

The Australian Government has committed to remaining a firm and persistent advocate and practical supporter of gender equality, and has identified gender equality as a critical cross-cutting theme across the aid program. Three of the ten development objectives of An Effective Aid Program for Australia specifically address gender equality and the empowerment of women. These are: empowering women to participate in the economy, leadership and education; saving lives of poor women through provision of quality maternal health care services; and enabling more girls to attend school. Gender equality is central to economic and human development and to supporting women’s rights. Equal opportunity for women and men supports economic growth and helps to reduce poverty.

To deliver real results and improve the lives of women and men, their families, and their communities, Australia will organise the work on gender equality and women’s empowerment around four pillars:

- > Gender inequality denies individuals their human rights. The international community has recognised gender equality as an important human rights issue and has collectively made commitments to promote and protect the rights of women and girls.
- > Gender inequality also imposes costs on families, communities, and states. At a national level, for example, gender inequalities cost the Asia and Pacific region up to USD47 billion every year.
- > In an increasingly globalised world, gender inequality makes countries less competitive, and the cost of not reducing gender inequality is rising.

- > Gender equality is a development objective in and of itself as recognised in Millennium Development Goals 3 and 5: to promote gender equality and empower women, and to improve maternal health respectively.

It is also critically important to achieving other development objectives, and to improving efficiency of efforts to reduce poverty and support economic growth. The benefits are not just for today's women and men, their families, and their communities, but for all generations to come. (DFAT 2011)

A Gender Specialist contributed to the first steps in developing a Gender Strategy. A brief discussion paper was prepared on gender issues in the Philippines in general and in the Education sector in particular and how these issues have undermined development outcomes in the sector. The paper described in the status of DepEd's progress in implementing gender mainstreaming and discussed the facilitating and constraining factors that have led to the current situation. It assisted in identifying activities that are required in the preparation and implementation of a five-year Gender Strategy for DepEd through the BEST program.

The discussion document will assist in discussion with relevant parties within and outside DepEd.

2.2.4 Organisation Development

The Organisation Development assistance aims to provide strategic and foundational capacities and competencies for DepEd to ensure that the Department can improve learning, teaching and operational processes and practices in at least 20,000 schools and 214 schools divisions by 2017. Moreover, the continuous improvement of competencies, capacities and practices will target business processes across functions and structural levels (from central office to schools) to ensure decentralised, accountable and systematic delivery of services to the schools and learners.

Implementation of the DepEd Rationalisation Plan: Technical Assistance for Change and Transition Management and Structure and Work Process Strengthening

This technical assistance supports the continued implementation and fine-tuning of DepEd's Rationalisation Program by providing change management support as different structures transition from previous to new roles, functions, work processes and systems. A major part of this assistance is improving workflow processes within and across bureaus, divisions, units and sections from central office to divisions and schools. The major target strands for this activity are: Governance and Operations Strand; Curriculum and Instruction Strand; and Strategic Management Strand.

Initial change management strategies have been developed and implemented for recruitment and selection. Structure strengthening and physical movement of offices from old to new physical spaces have been done. Competency building activities were provided to assist central office to undertake effective recruitment and selection activities, and job applications.

Under this initiative, the following outputs and activities have been completed:

- > Recruitment and Selection for Central Office and Region 7
 - Workshop on Practical Tips in job application; conducted for internal applicants at the Central Office: 7 batches for central office personnel
 - Workshop on Hiring the Right People; conducted for the Office of Selection Committee: 6 batches for central office
 - Workshop on Hiring the Right People; conducted for Personnel Selection Board: Region 7 with 4 batches
 - Review, modification and analysis of Job Description for 1000 positions (teaching and non-teaching posts)

- Recruitment sourcing activities and events for specific central office positions (from Administrative and Technical posts to Director level posts)
 - Guidebooks, knowledge management products and manuals for recruitment and selection, applying for a job
 - Report: Analysis and recommendations for improving the recruitment and selection system of DepEd
- > Managing the Transition Process of Structure Change
- Report: Status of the nationwide implementation of the Rationalisation Plan (analysis and recommendations included)
 - Activities completed for the Curriculum and Instruction Strand to define roles and responsibilities of roles and functions under the new structure, and identify important work processes in the key results areas of the strand
 - Change management strategies and targeted change management plans for specific offices at the Central office. Strategies and plans cover physical movements and transitions, work process improvement, structure alignment and team strengthening
 - Activities and reports: analysing organisation development requirements of the Governance and Operations Strand to support the implementation of the K–12 Program and the Rationalisation Plan full implementation until December 2015.

Total Quality Management & Strengthening of Processes through Continuous Improvement

This component provided two technical assistance: documentation and evaluation of the on-going continuous improvement projects in the original 34 model schools, and the 2,000 expansion schools², and the development of a nationwide pool of internal experts on continuous improvement.

The first technical assistance aims to consolidate the monitoring and evaluation results of the 2-year continuous improvement assistance to DepEd. The results served as inputs to the technical assistance BEST for the nationwide implementation of the continuous improvement in all structural levels of DepEd. The second technical assistance aims to develop and implement competency development framework for continuous improvement to ensure a synergised and harmonised manner of strengthening critical business processes, especially at the schools division and school levels. This activity focuses on developing and enhancing competencies of DepEd process owners / counterpart teams in the application of continuous improvement tools and approaches through training, coaching and quality certification.

Under this initiative, the following activities have been completed:

- > Report: Evaluation of the Continuous Improvement Program of DepEd implemented from 2013 to the 1st quarter of 2014, and the expansion of continuous improvement in 2000 schools in five regions.
- > Five case studies on the different aspects of continuous improvement projects in the 34 model schools
- > Final Trainer's Toolkit for the Enhanced School Improvement Plan: Integration of continuous improvement tools and approaches in the enhanced School Improvement Plan.

² The 34 model schools were provided with continuous improvement competencies from 2013–2014 through the Philippine-Australian Human Resource and Organisation Development Facility (PAHRODF). The expansion schools were provided with the same competencies through DepEd trainers and facilitators from the 34 model schools. The expansion was not covered by the PAHRODF assistance.

- > Training design and work plan for the competency building of at least 100 learning facilitators to roll out the School Improvement Plan nationwide.
- > DepEd approved continuous improvement competency development framework with a 12-month work program to implement the competency development plan for approximately 2,500 participants from regions, school divisions and schools.

The initial training for continuous improvement facilitators and trainers was not implemented within target date under the Annual Plan 1 due to change in DFAT policy on unspent funds before 30 June 2015. All evaluation, documentation and case studies under the first technical assistance are completed.

Communication and Marketing Support for Senior High School Implementation

The assistance provided capacity for DepEd to launch, implement and ensure sustained information campaign on SHS through effective messages, communication packages and events. Activities completed under this assistance include:

- > Conference on K–12 for federation leaders of parent-teacher associations nationwide to ensure that parents are effectively informed and updated on the progress and plans for senior high school implementation
- > Public campaign events on K–12 attended by more than 5,000 participants from different DepEd regions, divisions and schools, and DepEd partners in the government and private sectors: One in Metro Manila and one in Cagayan de Oro (Region 11)
- > Conduct of Speakers Bureau training for K–12; conducted for regional and division officers: three workshops conducted in Metro Manila (for Luzon participants), Cebu City (for Regions 6,7 and 8), and in Cagayan de Oro City (for Mindanao participants)
- > Design and production of communication strategies and standards, including needed packages and activities on and in support of SHS (ongoing)
- > Production of a tele-serie on SHS (7 mini-series ready for airing in television networks) and SHS Game Application for students (on-going).
- > K–12 and SHS posters and videos shown in national and local conferences of DepEd nationwide

Performance Monitoring and Coaching for the Department of Education

The technical assistance was a transition activity to support the current results-based performance management system (RPMS) of DepEd³. It is aimed at developing the coaching and facilitation competencies to implement the RPMS nationwide by late 2015.

The entire assistance was completed last 30 June 2015. The following has been completed:

- > Training on Coaching for RPMS Roll-out conducted: 4 workshops for Superintendents; 8 workshops for DepEd HR Facilitators
- > Four (4) Orientation Workshops on RPMS for Executive Officers (Central Office, Regions, Divisions)
- > RPMS Orientation for Union Leaders
- > Coaching manuals for RPMS for Human Resource Facilitators completed

Installation of Human Resource Management and Development Systems and Strengthening of

³ The system was designed and piloted in 2013–2014 through the Philippine-Australian Human Resource and Organisation Development Facility

Bureau of Human Resource and Organisation Development

This assistance aims to review, design or enhance, and install Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) systems in the organisation that are responsive and strategic. With the creation of the BHROD unit in DepEd, assistance is needed in strengthening its structure, defining and developing its competencies as well as strengthening its capacity to deliver the required support to the employees of the organisation in order to achieve its mission and vision.

Activities completed and on-going under this assistance are:

- > Baseline Study to assess the current state of all HRMD Systems (on-going). The results of the study will provide more solid bases for the review and design or enhancement of HRMD systems, as well as provide direction for the strategies to be employed in strengthening BHROD.
- > Training on Strategic HRMD for all current and prospective members of the new Bureau: 3 workshops for all regions. This training aims to provide foundation concepts, principles and guidelines in HRMD and Organisation Development, in preparation for BHROD's full operation.
- > Designing and installing an internal communications system

Designing and installing an Internal Communication System: Development of Internal Communications Campaign to Promote the Vision, Mission, Core Values (VMV), the Organisational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF) and Strategic Priorities of the Department of Education

The development of internal communications campaign is a major initiative to support DepEd in building key messages for internal communications and building stronger support for the K–12 implementation. It enabled DepEd to define its key reform messages and package these within a brand that will unify the purpose of the reforms into an attractive, user-friendly, catchy and universal look, feel and message. The assistance consisted of three components: i) Creation of a brand design and message; ii) Development and production of designated media mix; and, iii) Diffusion of the brand in several events and platforms.

Activities and outputs completed last 30 June 2015:

- > Approval of DepEd's social brand: 'Tayo para sa Edukasyon'.
- > Rendition of the social brand in different formats: logo, posters, shirts, peripherals, videos.
- > Manual for brand use and management; distributed nationwide.
- > Brand testing and diffusion on various platforms and events: speeches and appearances of DepEd executives, national teachers training, Palarong Pambansa, Brigada Eskwela, National Conference of Federation of Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), and the recruitment event of DepEd for central office, among others.
- > Monitoring report of brand impact and brand diffusion.

The initial plan to develop an internal communication system was discontinued due to the on-going implementation of the rationalisation plan that affects the position of regional and division level information and communication officers and the lack of personnel for the communications unit under the Governance and Operations Strand.

Due to a more modest 2015 / 2016 BEST budget for the next financial year, DepEd have identified resources from within their own budget to allocate to the BEST supported OD activities.

3 Cross-Cutting Themes

There are a number of themes⁴ that cut across all activities of BEST. BEST enables a process to consider the impact of activities on gender, disability, environment and child protection and how to enhance outcomes for each. These themes are considered, strategies planned and implemented and aim to be embedded across all activities of all subcomponents. Please note that in the design of BEST, gender is a stand-alone cross cutting theme and represented under sub-component 1.6.

3.1 Environment Strategy

The Program engaged an Environment Specialist to develop an Environmental Safeguards Plan aimed at identifying strategic environmental issues that need to be addressed; describing how disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are integral elements of BEST, minimising vulnerability and exposure and preparing stakeholders to respond to any disasters that may occur; identifying applicable legal, regulatory and administrative regime of the Philippines and DFAT; and recommending appropriate environmental management process that will be applied in BEST.

A draft of report was completed in June 2015 which outlines the requirements for assessing, implementing, monitoring and managing all the environmental issues from all the activities under BEST. It sets out policy and legal setting applicable to Australian Government in partnership with the Philippine Government; and the required steps to environmental assessment, mitigation and enhancement, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It also incorporates disaster risk reduction and management measures and climate change adaptation in the applicable activities under BEST. One of these key activities is classroom construction. The Environmental Safeguards Plan aligns BEST with the Department of Education managing all the environmental issues from all the activities.

The draft Environmental Safeguards Plan is currently being reviewed for finalisation. An activity to facilitate discussion with key stakeholder within DepEd with a view to informing policy and activity is planned for 2015 / 2016.

3.2 Child Protection

Two fundamental concepts to be applied throughout the life of BEST are those of inclusive education and child protection both of which emanate from the United Nations Convention on Human Rights (1948) and related conventions relating to the Rights of the Child and to the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The concept of Inclusive Education recognises the right of every child regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender and physical or intellectual attributes or disabilities to receive a full basic education. Applied in an education system this means that the ultimate goal must be for as close to 100 percent as is possible of all children to access, participate in and achieve as much as possible from their basic education and to do so without discrimination of any kind. In many countries such as Sweden, Germany, the UK, USA and Australia, the percentage of children accessing and successfully completing elementary education is already at levels close to 99 percent. This should be the target for every education system worldwide.

Alongside this concept of inclusive education and 'schooling for all', sits the concept of child protection. It is fundamental to the UN's Rights of the Child convention that each child has the right to a life free of exploitation and abuse and that certain standards should apply in areas such as health and education. In brief, the school environment should present at all times a place of safety and security.

Cardno has a Child Protection Policy, updated in 2013 to reflect Australian Aid's new Child Protection Policy, which has the objective to create and maintain productive environments for children to the delivery of Australia's overseas aid program. All Cardno personnel, national and international are

⁴ Gender is represented in a stand-alone sub-component 1.6

screened for their suitability to work closely with children and trained in this policy and in ways to identify and deal with cases of abuse and exploitation that may occur. The BEST team will work with all partners to ensure the most supportive, safe and productive schooling environment for all children – an environment based on respect and equality. Similarly, the other implementing partners also have Child Protection Policies consistent with the requirements of Australian aid programs.

The principle of child equality will apply across all program activities and very specifically in the development and application of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policies and processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies and practices at all levels and at all stages, and by all in the education system whether policy makers, administrators, school principals or classroom teachers.

The BEST Quality Assurance Management Manual was adopted last January 2015. It included child protection policies that apply to all BEST employees (international and local), contractors and subcontractors. The ability of the preferred candidate to provide a police clearance form part of the requirements prior to finalising an employment contract. The Induction Program included a briefing and distribution of policy on Child Protection. Where advertising is to be undertaken, Cardno will ensure advertisements contain a statement regarding the child protection and other relevant policies and contain the closing date for applications. Compliance to relevant provisions on child protection are contained in employment and sub-contract agreements. Program personnel are required to secure approval for the use of Images through a consent form and / or video and photographic release form.

3.3 Disability

The Program engaged two disability consultants, one local and one international, to support a review of the Program Design and provide advice on ways in which all aspects of the program can support DepEd in becoming compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A mission was fielded in May where the following activities were completed by the consultants in coordination with BEST specialists and partners in DepEd,

- > Analysed and identified the progress in developing inclusive policies and approaches to the inclusion of all children with disabilities in schools.
- > Developed a detailed activity plan to support the inclusion of all children with disabilities, to be included in the BEST annual plan 2015–2016.
- > Provided a brief summary which provides an overview of the policy development and examples of successful provision for children with disabilities in the Philippines and make recommendations for strategic development.

Consultative meetings were completed with DFAT, DepEd, Council for the Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities, Assessment Curriculum and Technical Research Centre (ACTRC), Community of Learners Foundation, National Council on Disability Affaires, Save the Children and elementary schools.

4 Risks, Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

The Program did not encounter any major risks in the last six months. On a case-by-case basis, activities of some sub-components, especially on capability building related activities were not fully implemented pending the designation and / or appointment of staff under the Rationalisation Plan of DepEd. These were mitigated by adjusting activities and schedules.

The Risk Management Matrix was reviewed and updated (see Annex B). Below is a summary of the changes made to the risk register:

Risks identified from Moderate or High to Very High:

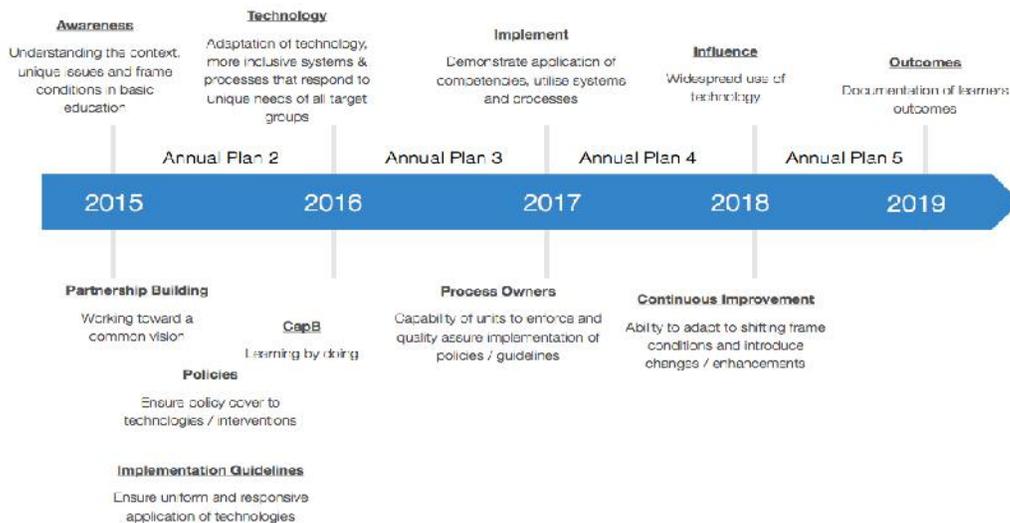
- > Somewhat limited capacity building occurring with organic staff of DepEd due to the need in this first phase of the program to accelerate initiatives and hiring process for new positions are still ongoing (e.g. UIS, SHS communication).
- > To address this risk will mean engaging DepEd organic staff in capacity building strategies and specific skill transfer processes by BEST. With the proposed treatment measure in place the risk rating goes down to High.
- > There is a delay in the development of the collaborative working practices required to enable Capacity Building to transition CHED and TEIs into an Outcomes- Based Education Quality Assurance System.
- > There is a delay in developing a collegiate and strategic approach to the management of the large number of TEIs resulting in some TEIs not implementing changes required to support K–12 reform.
- > There is resistance on the part of some teacher educators to review existing practice and adopt new organisational and pedagogical approaches required to support the K–12 reform.

5 Evaluative Summary

5.1 Initial Gains and Benefits

For a more systematic documentation of program benefits and results, the Program is adopting the concept of progress or outcome markers. These represent desired changes that may take place during BEST implementation. These changes will also serve as early warning signals that will show the efficacy of policies, systems, training programs, and other initiatives under BEST. Figure 1 below illustrates the timeline of the outcome markers.

Figure 1 BEST Program Outcome Markers



Program outcome markers are divided into two categories, sustainability outcomes which are manifested through the Program implementers, and learners' outcomes. Sustainability outcomes serve as the major Program milestones, and increases probability of achieving learners' outcomes.

The following Program outcome markers will be adopted:

Sustainability Outcomes – DepEd and partners

- > **Awareness and understanding of education policies, issues and frame conditions:** There is increased realisation and common understanding of the education barriers hindering learners' participation, and bottlenecks pushing out learners from school.
- > **Partnership building:** There is collaboration and integration of efforts between and among stakeholders in the basic education sector. There is sharing of efforts as well as resources in delivery of education services and mitigating the adverse effects barriers to learners, and in resolving bottlenecks in the system.
- > **Adaptation of technology:** Program designs, systems and processes are more inclusive. Program designs and / or system designs are demand responsive, directly addressing the education barriers and bottlenecks.
- > **Policies are in place:** Ensure proposed technologies have policy cover with clear implementing guidelines that will assure uniform and responsive application of technologies.
- > **Demonstrates application of competencies and / or utilisation of systems:** DepEd personnel are able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from training programs in their respective areas or assignments.
- > **Manage systems:** Designated process owners of systems are able to operationalise and manage the systems and processes.
- > **Influence:** DepEd personnel are able to influence and / or transfer skills to non-recipient of training programs allowing for a more widespread use of technology and assistance.
- > **Continuous improvement:** DepEd personnel are able to adapt to shifting frame conditions and introduce changes or enhancements to systems and processes.

Indicators at learner level

- > Learners access to education services. More boys and girls are in school.
- > Learners' access to basic education resources. Includes learners' access to qualified teachers, conducive learning facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, learning materials, water and sanitation facilities, safe environment, recreational and gender responsive facilities.
- > Learners' performance. More boys and girls are able to improve their performance in English, science and math.

Table 8 below enumerates the initial benefits derived by DepEd staff and learners from the BEST interventions after 11 months of implementation.

Table 8 Initial Gains and Benefits as of 30 June 2015

Outcome Markers	Intermediate Outcomes	Initial Gains for the period January – June 2015
Policies and implementing guidelines are in place Increase awareness and understanding of education policies, issues, and frame conditions	Policies supporting the K-12 Program implementation are in place and communicated to DepEd implementers <i>(Intermediate Outcome E)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DepEd implementers are aware and informed of the policies supporting the K-12 Program implementation. ▪ Technical assistants and specialists assigned to the Office of the Undersecretary for Programs and Projects provided technical assistance that resulted in the promulgation of the omnibus policy on classroom assessment, DO 8 s. 2015, last February 2015 and the dissemination of the same to all DepEd regions and divisions. They were also instrumental in the development and distribution of learning materials and teacher guides for Grades 4 and 10 to the regions.

Outcome Markers	Intermediate Outcomes	Initial Gains for the period January – June 2015
Demonstrates application and / or utilisation of technologies introduced under BEST	Information Systems are in place and operational (<i>Intermediate Outcome E</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of SY 2015–2016, the Learners Information System is fully operational and being used by all public schools as a mechanism for tracking and documenting learners performance
Learners access to basic education resources	More boys and girls have access to quality basic education services (<i>Intermediate Outcome A</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77,603 learners have direct access to new classrooms and facilities as a result of the BEST classroom construction initiatives with PBSP. More boys and girls from Regions V (Albay), NCR (Taguig), VI (Iloilo), VII (Cebu, Bohol), VIII (Northern Samar), and affected by Typhoon Pablo in 2012 (Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Misamis Oriental and Agusan del Sur) have now access to more conducive classrooms with chairs and tables, and have access to clean water and clean toilets as a result of the water system 11,820⁵ learners also were recipients of BEST support under the Brigada Eskwela program of DepEd.

5.2 Evaluative Findings

This section evaluates the performance of the BEST Program in the last six months in terms of relevance, and response to frame conditions.

Table 9 Evaluative Findings

Elements	Context	Accomplishments / Response
Relevance	The BEST Program implementation coincides with the implementation of the K–12 Program and the operationalisation of DepEd's Rationalisation Plan. This transitional period of curriculum and organisational reform presents both an opportunity and challenge for the BEST Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BEST TAs were focused on assisting DepEd implement the K–12 program, and operationalise the reorganisation efforts of the Department. Assistance is heavily geared towards supporting the rollout of the K–12 curriculum including resources (teachers, learning materials), implementation of the SHS program, and context specific learning systems. On the reorganisation efforts, BEST is providing major support to operationalise the Rationalisation Plan as well as build capabilities and capacities of newly created / formed units.
Effectiveness	At this stage of implementation, Program activities should be able to lay down the necessary mechanisms or foundations that will ensure relevance and sustainability of Program gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant technical outputs were delivered to support K–12 implementation. To ensure a demand-driven and relevant interventions of BEST, activities on baselining were started. These include assessment of skills (teachers, staff), documentation of current work practices and processes, and documentation of issues and frame conditions. Research and / or baseline studies are on-going which can provide insights and lessons to DepEd's strategies
Efficiency	AP1 provided strategic directions for the first year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing Partners did not start at the same time. BEST focused on building synergies across the different implementing partners and DepEd and CHED counterparts and building common understanding of directions and education issues. There is significant efficiencies in having moved towards common governance arrangements, planning and reporting systems (from previous stand-alone process per implementing partner).
Monitoring and Evaluation	The design of BEST was formulated in 2010, while the implementation started in 2014.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of the BEST M&E was further re-defined as a result of the work undertaken by each specialist or TA. The thrusts and priorities provided by DepEd in AP1, the ADDs that were subsequently developed

⁵ Based on Total School Enrollment, 2014 (DepEd, Enhanced Basic Education Information System)

Elements	Context	Accomplishments / Response
	Many of the deliverables outlined in the original MEF needs to be validated.	<p>in 2015, and the directions of AP2 allowed for an updating of the MEF – Output Level and the BEST Implementation Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baseline studies are on-going. These should provide documentation of pre-BEST conditions. ▪ The AICS was developed for a more systematic tracking of outputs and results. Changes will have to be incorporated given the decision to discard the ADDs. ▪ The Decision Support System is currently in the data build-up stage. It is expected to be fully operational by December 2015. ▪ The Program will introduce a results-based M&E system in DepEd. Previous programs limited their interventions on M&E to progress monitoring.
Sustainability	As in previous programs of DepEd with DFAT, the Department takes the lead in direction setting and program implementation. With the more modest budget from the Australian Government, DepEd has been increasing their share of counterpart funds for activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The BEST Program utilises DepEd systems and processes. It follows DepEd protocols. ▪ BEST will also provide dedicated capability building program to process owners instead of the usual one-size fits all programs. Under Component 1. Systems, the Specialists are working closely with units or functional divisions who are expected to manage and enhance these systems and processes. ▪ DepEd CO units and regions have committed to increase their share in counterpart funds for activity implementation. The main rationale for doing baseline studies is to document best practices of DepEd, especially in areas previously covered by DFAT programs such as STRIVE and Philippine Response to Indigenous Peoples and Muslim Education. BEST interventions are expected to build-on and continue these practices.
Gender Equality	Previous programs of DFAT and DepEd have implemented gender equality strategy that needs to be further supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development of the Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy commenced during the reporting period. It will progress work in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – developing a more holistic GAD framework; reconstituting the composition of GAD training teams – stabilisation of the membership in GAD focal committees – formulation of a GAD plan and budget that complies with the requirements of Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) – orientation of student councils and student organisations to align their activities with GAD principles – establishment of a system to ensure collection and utilisation of sex-disaggregated data – pre-service training for future teachers on gender sensitivity
Risk Management	Possible changes in management structure and priorities by June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Program Management Committee will be conducted quarterly. This will allow for a more timely response to implementation bottlenecks and issues. ▪ BEST also utilises Technical Working Groups which serve as forum for discussing content, strategies, and issues. ▪ Risks factors are regularly considered and updated.
Innovation and Private Sector	Embedding of TAs in DepEd units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using DepEd's structure and system, it poses a challenge for BEST to operate as efficiently as it could. DepEd is the biggest bureaucracy in the Philippine public sector. The Program can be subjected to inherent delays inherent in the system. ▪ However, the idea of embedding TAs to DepEd units should counteract this factor.

6 Priorities and Recommendations for the next reporting period

The following list details some of the major priorities and recommendations for BEST over the next reporting period:

- > Engage in the strategy and planning of DepEd with respect to transitioning to a possible new administration in mid-2016. This will include sustainability strategies for key initiatives such as the K–12 and SHS implementation, embedding the Unified Information System, leadership development at all levels.
- > Engage in discussion and planning with DepEd and DFAT with respect to transitioning some major support from 'in-line' work to capability building and skills transfer to the 'organic' members of DepEd. This includes curriculum and assessment, Unified Information System and Policy and Planning.
- > The Program Management Committee will be conducted quarterly to allow for a more timely response to implementation bottlenecks and issues and reprogram unused funds.
- > Begin the process to develop a two year plan for BEST in collaboration and alignment with DepEd strategic direction and complying with DFAT policy.
- > Reaching agreement on a monitoring and evaluation framework and strategy with DepEd and DFAT. These are distinct but related activities. One being the capability building within DepEd to institutionalised monitoring and evidence based planning and the other, the evaluation of the progress and effectiveness of BEST.
- > Prioritise support to DepEd in establishing a strategic planning framework.