IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

H841-MV

ON A

GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF SDR 6.7 MILLION

(US$10 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

REPUBLIC OF THE MALDIVES

FOR AN

ENHANCING EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ( P131331 )

December 24, 2018
CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS
(Exchange Rate Effective November 1, 2018)

Currency Unit = Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR)

MVR 15.46 = US$1

US$1.39 = SDR 1

FISCAL YEAR
January 1 - December 30

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BP Bank Policy
CAS Country Assistance Strategy
CPF Country Partnership Framework
CSU Coordination Support Unit
DHE Department of Higher Education
EEDP Enhancing Education Development Project
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GER Gross Enrollment Rate
GoM Government of Maldives
HRD Human Resource Development
IA Implementation Agency
ICT Information and Communications Technology
IRR Internal Rate of Return
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
MGT Multigrade Teaching
MNU Maldives National University
MoE Ministry of Education
MQA Maldives Qualifications Authority
NAI National Assessments of Learning Outcomes
NIE National Institute of Education
NPV Net Present Value
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP Operational Policy
PD Professional Development
PDO Project Development Objective
PPRS Policy Planning and Research Section
PTA Parent Teacher Association
QA Quality Assurance
QAAC Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
QAD Quality Assurance Department
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QATDA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Strategic Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>School-Based Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBPD</td>
<td>School-based Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIL</td>
<td>Specific Investment Loan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIQAAF</td>
<td>School Improvement and Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>School Self-Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Teacher Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTL</td>
<td>Task Team Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional Vice President: **Hartwig Schafer**

Country Director: **Idah Z. Pswarayi-Riddihough**

Senior Global Practice Director: **Jaime Saavedra Chanduvi**

Practice Manager: **Mario Cristian Aedo Inostroza**

Task Team Leader(s): **Harsha Aturupane, Mari Shojo**

ICR Main Contributor: **Hiran Herat, Abdul Hai Sofizada**
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#### BASIC INFORMATION

**Product Information**

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<th>Project ID</th>
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**Organizations**

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<td>Ministry of Finance and Treasury</td>
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**Project Development Objective (PDO)**

**Original PDO**

The project development objective is to enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality.
## FINANCING

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## KEY RATINGS

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## RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

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**SECTORS AND THEMES**

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<td>Standards, Curriculum and Textbooks</td>
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<td>ADM STAFF</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Vice President:</td>
<td>Isabel M. Guerrero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Director:</td>
<td>Diarietou Gaye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Global Practice Director:</td>
<td>Jesko S. Hentschel</td>
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<td>Practice Manager:</td>
<td>Amit Dar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Team Leader(s):</td>
<td>Harsha Aturupane</td>
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<td>ICR Contributing Author:</td>
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I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

Context

1. The Maldivian economy had experienced strong economic growth over the last two decades (1993–2013). The tourism sector has been the main engine of growth. The economy was critically dependent on a small number of sectors, with the following contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011: tourism (30 percent), government administration (13 percent), transport (9 percent), communication (9 percent), construction (7 percent), real estate (7 percent), wholesale and retail trade (4 percent), manufacturing (4 percent), education (4 percent), and several other relatively small sectors (13 percent). Transport and communication and other sectors including trade, construction, real estate, and business services were also linked to the tourism sector.

2. The Maldives had about 62,000 students and 6,000 teachers in approximately 220 public schools in 2012. In addition, there was a small number of private education institutions, which enrolled about 1,700 students. The Maldivian education system consisted of the following stages: primary education (grades 1–7, ages 6–12), lower secondary education (grades 8–10, ages 13–15), higher secondary education (grades 11–12, ages 16–17), and higher education (ages 18 onward). The overall net primary enrollment rate was high at 94 percent. There was also gender parity, with the net primary enrollment for boys at 94 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate for girls also at 94 percent. The net lower secondary enrollment rate was 81 percent, with boys’ net enrollment at 83 percent and girls’ net enrollment at 79 percent.

3. Despite these achievements, the education system faced a number of future challenges. There was a sharp drop in enrollment at the higher secondary education level. The higher secondary education net enrollment rate was a mere 19 percent, with boys’ net enrollment at 20 percent and girls’ net enrollment at 19 percent. Gross enrollment rates (GERs) in higher secondary education were 28 percent for boys and 31 percent for girls. This was one of the steepest falls between lower secondary and higher secondary education in the world. The main reason for the sharp drop in participation at the higher secondary level had been the limited number of schools offering education in grades 11–12. Out of about 220 schools in the Maldives, at that time, only 5 schools in Male provided higher secondary education. Enrollment in tertiary education was also low, just 3 percent. The Maldives lagged behind in higher secondary and tertiary education participation in relation to other small island nations. Policy action to expand higher secondary and tertiary education was needed urgently.

4. The quality of education at all levels was another major policy challenge facing the Maldives. For instance, learning outcomes in both primary and secondary education were modest and there were substantial regional disparities. National assessments of learning outcomes (NALO) at grade 4 and grade 7 showed that learning levels were unsatisfactory. At grade 4, the average score of students in the English language was 32 percent and in mathematics 38 percent. In grade 8, the average score of students in the English language was 29 percent and in mathematics 30 percent. The performance of students at national examinations was also inadequate. At the General Certificate of Examinations Ordinary Level (lower secondary) in 2010, only 33 percent of boys and 37 percent of girls passed.
5. The Government of Maldives (GoM) was aware of the challenges in the education sector. The Ministry of Education (MoE) had prepared an education sector development program to address these challenges. The MoE program increased the number of schools offering higher secondary education in atolls, where there were sufficient student numbers to make this expansion viable, to 38 schools: 4 schools in Malé and 34 schools in the atolls. The project assisted this process by supporting the expansion of physical facilities such as classroom blocks, multipurpose rooms, and information and communications technology (ICT) rooms, in about 10 of these schools.

6. The education development program was also addressing the low quality of education through several strategic initiatives. One such strategic initiative was the development of a system of regular NALO, which were meant to inform policy formulation and program development, such as curriculum design, teaching methods and teacher development, and the production of teaching-learning material. The MoE also developed a Quality Assurance (QA) system, containing both internal school-level QA reviews and action; and external reviews of quality. This QA system, especially the school-based QA protocols and processes, needed to be refined and scaled up throughout the country. The MoE was also seeking to improve the quality of teachers through suitable preservice teacher education and continuing teacher development programs, especially school-based professional development (SBPD) of teachers. In addition, the MoE was planning to strengthen the management and leadership skills among school heads, deputy heads and leading teachers, and the members of school boards. Further, the development of the education management skills of MoE staff, especially planning, administration, budgeting, and monitoring, was of key importance in the MoE program.
The theory of change underlying the EEDP is depicted in figure 1. The project development objective was to enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality. This was necessary to achieve the project objective of increasing access to education as well as to improve the quality of education.
improvement activities, and teacher development. The analytical work on which the project was based, the programmatic series of Maldives Education Sector Reports 2012, identified these education development initiatives as the priority initiatives for the Maldives at that time.

**Project Development Objectives (PDOs)**

9. The project development objective was to enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality.

**Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators**

10. The success of the project in terms of meeting its key objectives was to be measured by the following indicative outcomes:

   - Increased survival rate through higher secondary education (grades 1–12) (measure of increased access to secondary education)
   - System of National Assessments of Learning Outcomes Established and Operationalized (measure of improved quality of primary and secondary education)
   - Proportion of atolls in which a system of quality assurance self-evaluations is established, and findings incorporated in the implementation of school improvement plans (measure of improved quality of primary and secondary education)
   - Direct project beneficiaries (of which 49% female) (measure of increased access to secondary education)

**Components**

11. The EEDP was organized under three components: (a) national level education development; (b) school level education development; and (c) project coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and program development.

**Component One: National Level Education Development (Total US$8.55 million: IDA US$7.95 million and GoM US$0.6 million. Actual: Total US$7.81 million: IDA US$7.3 million and GoM US$0.5 million)**

12. The objective of this component was to promote strategic initiatives at the country level to strengthen and develop the education system.

1.1 *National Assessments of Learning Outcomes (NALO) for Policy and Program Development*

13. NALO have become one of the main vehicles for assessing education systems and formulating education policies in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and middle-income countries. The EEDP was to support the Maldives to develop the capacity of the country to design and implement NALO in grades 4 and 7, according to a regular cycle, for key subjects such as

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1 The difference is due to some construction activities that were completed using the Government’s own funds, due to procurement issues, where World Bank funds were not utilized, and due to exchange losses.
English, mathematics, and Dhivehi, and use the results and findings for education policy and program development.

1.2 Management and Leadership Development of Staff in the Education Sector

The EEDP was to assist the MoE to develop the human resources in the education sector, with a special focus on education of managers and administrators, school principals, and leading teachers who were expected to be potential future principals.

1.3 Learning Environment Enrichment of Secondary Schools

The Maldives had an atoll-wide network of schools that provide universal access to primary (grades 1–7) and secondary (grades 8–10) education. However, access to higher secondary education (grades 11–12) at the time was very limited, initially to one school in Malé, and then to four more schools in the atolls. The Government has now adopted a policy to expand access to higher secondary education through about 38 strategically selected schools, across the country, which were expected to serve as hubs for higher secondary education in the atolls and in Malé.

Component Two: School Level Education Development (Total US$1.15 million: IDA US$1.0 million and GoM US$0.15 million. Actual: Total: US$0.83 million; IDA: US$ 0.8 million; GoM: US$0.3 million)

The objective of this component was to promote strategic initiatives to improve the performance of schools. The school-level activities were to be implemented on-site in the schools by school officials such as principals and teachers. The following key subcomponents were to be supported under this component.

2.1 School-Based Management

The country had adopted a professional control model of school-based management (SBM), where the main decision-making authority has been devolved to principals and teachers. SBM was a new initiative in the Maldives, and members of SMTs of schools and school boards needed training and capacity building in the aims and objectives of SBM, the roles and responsibilities of the various school-level agencies, and the variety of actions that can be taken under SBM to improve the effectiveness and performance of schools. The project was to assist the MoE to train and strengthen the capacity of SMTs of schools and school boards to take the SBM initiative forward efficiently.

2.2 Modernizing Quality Assurance for School Improvement

The MoE was keen to develop and establish a QA system that encompasses internal self-assessments by schools themselves, consistent with international trends in QA in OECD and middle-income countries.

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2 There were some underruns in some activities and some of these funds were transferred to Component 3 to cover operating costs.
2.3 Strengthening School-Based Professional Development (SBPD) for Teachers and Other School Staff

19. The successful achievement of a high quality of education depends on the availability of an adequate stock of professionally educated, competent, and motivated teachers. School-based teacher professional development (PD) has been noted globally for its effectiveness. The MoE was aware of the importance of SBPD for teachers as a promising strategy for continuing teacher education and training.

2.4 School Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards (QATDA)

20. A system of School Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards (QATDA) were to be supported under the project. The QATDA was to assist school improvement activities through the implementation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and Annual School Feedback Forms, with a special focus on QA self-evaluations and school-based teacher PD.

Component Three: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Program Development (Total US$1.30 million: IDA US$1.05 million and GoM US$0.25 million. Actual: Total US$1.58 million; IDA US$ 1.48 million; GoM US$0.1 million)³

21. The objective of this component was to facilitate the coordination of project components, undertake monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of results and outcomes, and support the MoE to undertake program development to develop the education program in key areas for the future of the education system. The following key subcomponents were to be supported under this component.

3.1 Education Strategy and Program Development

22. The EEDP was to support the Government to develop future strategies and programs in priority areas through program development and technical assistance. The GoM had identified the following priority areas for strategy and program development with support from the project: (a) a model for MGT in Small Schools, (b) A Model for Expanding Multiple Curriculum Streams in Secondary Schools, (c) Continuing (In-Service) Training for Untrained Teachers and for Inclusive Education, (d) A Master Plan for Higher Education, and (e) Strengthening the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA).

3.2 Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

23. The EEDP was also expected to support the MoE to coordinate the project, as well as undertake M&E.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION (IF APPLICABLE)

Revised PDOs and Outcome Targets

24. The PDO and outcome targets were not changed.

³ There were some overruns in operating costs, as travel and subsistence to cover activities in atolls were greater than anticipated. The final disbursement figure under the project was SDR 6.4 million (US$9.6 million) out of the SDR 6.7 million IDA Credit, with a utilization rate of 96 percent (including loss on exchange), and SDR 0.3 million was cancelled.
Revised PDO Indicators

25. The PDO indicators were not revised.

Revised Components

26. Components were not revised.

Other Changes

27. Not applicable

Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

28. There were no changes to the project PDO, indicators, or components. As a result, there were no changes to the original theory of change.

II. OUTCOME

A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs

Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating

29. The relevance of the PDO is rated High. The PDO of the EEDP was to ‘Enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality’ and was relevant at the time of project approval and continues to be so today. The objective and related outcomes of this project reflect adequate diagnosis of the development priorities at entry and were strongly aligned with the World Bank’s engagement in the Maldives and are consistent with the country’s policy framework for education development that remains relevant at the time of the Implementation Completion and Results Report. The project was to assist the GoM to expand higher secondary education to meet the rising demand for sophisticated and high-level skills from employers. The project is also aligned with the World Bank Group’s current Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the Maldives for 2016—2019. The 2016–2019 CPF for Maldives identified three specific priority areas to promote growth, reduce poverty, and increase shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. The first priority area involved enhancing opportunities in tourism and fisheries for the Maldivian population. These opportunities were to be linked to regional and global value chains to sustain growth. The second priority area focused on enabling opportunities for new sources of inclusive growth, with emphasis on the investment climate, access to finance, and human capital. The third priority area focused on improving natural resource management, enhancing the efficiency and efficacy of public resource management, and reducing macro-fiscal risks. The project directly supports Priority Area 1 of the CPF, providing employability and economic opportunities for Maldivians. The Systematic Country Diagnosis, conducted under the CPF, posits that limited participation of the local population in the existing job market and entrepreneurial activities reduces the contribution of growth to poverty reduction. World Bank Group activities therefore sought to enhance employability and economic opportunities for Maldivians in the productive sectors, building on improved access to financial services and quality education.
B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

30. Overall, the project was successful in attaining its stated PDO and made a major positive impact through its various activities. The project laid out specific targets to be achieved over 5 years of implementation and made impressive progress toward these targets, with a close to 96 percent disbursement ratio. The PDO comprises the following two objectives: (a) enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and (b) enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education quality. The project achieved or exceeded all original indicator targets and made significant progress toward higher-level objectives. However, there were some minor issues during implementation (see paragraph 40). The overall efficacy is rated Substantial. The achievements are summarized below and detailed in annex 4.

Objective 1: Enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access

31. The project surpassed the end target on increasing survival rates through higher secondary education (grades 1–12) by 5 percentage points. By the end of the project period, the survival rate through higher secondary education (grades 1–12) was 32 percent, surpassing the end target of 27 percent. The achieved target of 32 percent was composed of 29 percent for boys and 35 percent for girls. The increase in the number of educated Maldivians will, in the long term, assist the sustained economic growth of the country by enabling a greater proportion of the human capital needs of the economy to be met from the domestic labor market, thus reducing the dependence on expensive expatriate labor.

32. Enrichment of learning environment of secondary schools. Support was provided to approximately 534 strategically selected higher secondary schools exceeding the target of 45, which included all 38 higher secondary schools in the country and some larger secondary feeder schools, to enrich their learning environments. For expansion of A-Level education at atoll education centers, the following were provided: new classrooms; classroom furniture; computer laboratories with computer systems; science laboratories including chemicals, apparatus, and storage facilities; state-of-the-art video conference facilities, including physical setup for virtual classrooms to link the smallest schools (10) in the outer islands with the Iskandhar School in Malé. With the expansion of physical facilities in outer islands, the GERs in higher secondary education rose from 26.8 percent in 2013 to 36.8 percent in 2017 (MoE: Statistics 2017). About 66,000 students benefited under the project, exceeding the target of 50,000 students. Of these students, 49 percent were females, exceeding the target of 48 percent.

Objective 2: Enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education quality

33. A system of NALO was established and operationalized. The objective of this activity of the EEDP was to support the Maldives to develop the capacity of the country to design and implement NALO in

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4 In total 57 schools were covered, of which 53 were funded under the project and 4 were completed using GoM funds.
grades 4 and 7 for English, mathematics, and Dhivehi according to a regular cycle and use the results and findings for education policy and program development. The PDO indicator target has been met and national assessments have been conducted in 2015 and 2017 for Grades 4 and 7 for Dhivehi, English, and mathematics. This will enable the government to measure learning outcomes and observe patterns and trends over time in the quality of education in core subjects. The actual beneficiaries of these two activities were more than 15,000 students and their teachers in grades 4 and 7 across the country.

34. Based on these NALO findings, it was not possible to compare the performance of students in grades 4 and 7, in English/mathematics/Dhivehi between 2015 and 2017, as there was a curriculum change between the first and second NALO. However, both NALOs provided useful and consistent information on learning outcomes. The findings suggested that girls outperformed boys in Dhivehi, English, and mathematics in both grades 4 and 7 across the Maldives. The better performance of girls compared to boys is a common finding in middle-income countries, including in neighboring Sri Lanka. In addition, the average level of learning outcomes across the atolls have been identified through the NALO. These studies have been used to set literacy and numeracy standards, as well for education sector analysis and the development of an education sector plan. Some of the learning gaps indicated in NALO studies was addressed through policy actions such as the initiation of programs to upgrade the English language skills of teachers, and to enrich mathematics skills of students.

35. As part of increasing the capacity and developing a national assessment network throughout the Maldives, a Master of Education in educational assessment course was developed in collaboration with the MNU. The 16 students who successfully completed the course in 2018 were assigned to the National Network on School Assessment, which was established in the same year, with the aim of assisting schools across the Maldives to conduct quality assessments in classrooms as well as conducting NALO nationwide. Further, as one participant stated, “… the knowledge gained from the program can be used in both my professional and personal life.”

36. The target relating to the proportion of atolls in which a system of QA self-evaluations is established, and findings are incorporated in the implementation of SIPs has been overachieved (target 80 percent). All atolls (100 percent) are conducting SSEs. 91 percent of schools (193) in all atolls are engaged in SSE activities. Under the theme of modernizing QA for school improvement, a QA system consistent with international trends was established with importance given to yearly internal self-evaluation. The SSEs in turn led to the schools developing their own SIPs for the following year, for submission to MoE for analysis and feedback. Under this activity, the most significant was the revision work carried out in 2017 for the School Improvement and Quality Assurance and Accountability Framework (SIQAAF) and the preparation of its implementation plan. School QATDA was introduced to strengthen the links between QA, SSE, and SIP. The schools were required to submit the necessary reports to become eligible to receive QATDA. A total of 193 schools received QATDA in 2017. Analytical reports have been concluded for 168 schools that had completed the external review in 2016 and 2017. As the SSE focal point person at the QAD explained “schools are conducting school self-evaluation on a regular basis because they have started realizing the benefits of it [and] they know how to do it.”
37. In addition, the EEDP also contributed to improving the quality of education under various activities discussed in the next paragraphs.

38. **Management and leadership development of staff in the education sector.** The project supported development of human resources in the education sector, with a special focus on education managers and administrators of the MoE, school principals, and leading teachers, as well as teachers who were potential future principals. Before the project, only 40 percent of the principals and SMT of the MoE were trained in their respective fields. However, by the completion of this activity, approximately 85 percent of them had been trained. A total of 132 staff were trained in both short-term and long-term courses, exceeding the intermediate target of 100. In terms of benefits, the participants believed that the training programs were quite beneficial to them for the future as one of the school heads explained that the “training received by the principals, teachers, and admin staff is beneficial for the schools, and the future impact on the education sector would be very high.”

39. **SBM.** To strengthen school governance and improve the quality of teaching to raise school standards in Maldives four activities were initiated under the project: (a) SBM, (b) modernizing QA for school improvement, (c) strengthening school-based teacher PD, and (d) QATDA to schools.

   (a) **SBM.** One of the goals of the EEDP was to strengthen SBM, which consists of principals, teachers, other members of the SMT, and the school board, through project-supported training. Training programs that the project supported, and the training by the National Institute of Education (NIE), with the assistance of TRC coordinators based at TRCs, included (a) the training of SMTs in school leadership and management skills, (b) training of school boards, and (c) the training of trainers for TRC coordinators. SBM training was conducted in all 20 atolls and Malé inclusive of all the 212 schools in the Maldives. A total of 586 participants, consisting of 175 principals, 207 SMT members, and 204 school board members, were trained. As a result of these trainings, many achievements were realized. The most notable of these trainings was the development of school-specific plans to strengthen SBM. Some of the participants acknowledged the importance of receiving these trainings on SBM and indicated that “understanding on how to make our school improvement plans was a huge step for us to make plans, implement and monitor them for the betterment of our schools”.

   (b) **Strengthening SBPD.** Under the EEDP a system for SBPD was initiated to enhance the capacity of PD coordinators and TRC coordinators, assist schools to embark on SBPD activities, and support the NIE in monitoring the execution of SBPD in schools. School-based mentoring, peer learning, peer coaching, individual consultations, and visits to classrooms in other schools and islands were activities involved in SBPD and covered training in all schools in 20 atolls. A total of 3,685 teachers benefited from this training program. Despite the challenges of having had to manage trainings with limited human resource capacity, particularly given that only 12 TRC coordinators had to deal with a large number of schools, many successes of SBPD were achieved through the said training. It made the schools cognizant of the policies, benefits, and areas of improvement in the schools in relation to SBPD. It also created know-how of critical elements of PD when planning for SBPD in schools that allowed them to incorporate and apply different methods of PD strategies in PD programs conducted in schools. Some of the participants believed “that these programs can
benefit to [their] schools for a long period of time as it is mostly related to staff development.”

(c) **QATDA to Schools.** Introduction of the QATDA was another activity implemented under the EEDP to provide financial rewards and promote school-based M&E and also to empower schools to work on their own improvement in an effective and organized manner. The main focus under this activity was on (a) developing students learning and soft skills, and (b) implementing the SBPD programs for improving teacher performance. Annual financial rewards for schools ranged between MVR 6,000 and 7,500 depending on the student population. In 2016, QATDA was given to all 212 government schools across the country. However, in 2017, a total of 193 schools were eligible to receive QATDA. The remaining schools were ineligible because they were unable to submit the 2016 expenditure reports.

40. **Education strategy and program development.** Five priority areas that supported this activity to improve quality were (a) a model for MGT in small schools, (b) development of a vocational education strategic implementation model, (c) inclusive education, (d) a master plan for higher education, and (e) strengthening the MQA.

(a) **A model for MGT in small schools.** Technical expertise was provided to develop a framework for MGT, which involved policy guidelines, a curriculum framework and a communications strategy to educate the stakeholders on the advantages of MGT. Further, it included plans for the training of teachers and preparation of teaching and learning materials and monitoring and feedback mechanisms to be used for MGT. The framework was implemented, and MGT was established in 44 schools, out of which 10 were financed by the EEDP. By the end of 2016, under the EEDP, 85 MGT teachers out of a total of 139 were trained, and the rest (that is, 54) were trained by the GoM. Many observed positive changes: language and leadership skills development among students and management and creative skills enhancement among teachers. The initial pessimistic view of parents toward MGT and the teachers’ fear of becoming redundant due to this new method of teaching changed to that of an optimistic one when they saw positive changes in the acquisition of knowledge as well as social and emotional development in the students as a result of the merging of grades. The Government also saw this as a successful teaching strategy for small schools. An MGT advocacy video has been developed to further promote and increase awareness of MGT in small school communities.

(b) **Development of a vocational education strategic implementation model.** Technical expertise was provided to develop a Vocational Education Strategic Plan and it was implemented in 2016. As a result, the very first vocational stream was introduced in all schools across the country. A modern **technology-based 'Youth Hub’** was established for students at the Maldives Polytechnic to provide youth-friendly services. A job portal for
youth was also established at the UFAA\(^5\) Office so that young Maldivians could register and apply to companies directly through this portal.

(c) **Inclusive education.** The NIE was provided with technical assistance under the EEDP to establish the delivery mechanism of inclusive education and a set of teachers with the training required for inclusive education. A total of 571 teachers were given in-service training on special education. In reflection of their own training, a participant expressed that they ‘got more knowledge about Special Educational Needs (SEN) classroom and helped to learn various teaching methods’\(^{1}\). To provide employment for the trainees, the MoE has created at least one post in each school for SEN teachers. A total of 55 SEN classrooms were established across the country in addition to the 4 specialized centers already set up in Malé.

(d) **A master plan for higher education.** The Master Plan for Higher Education (2017–2022) was launched and disseminated to all higher education providers in 2017. It is regarded as the nation’s blueprint for higher education for the next five years. The main intention of this master plan was to guide institutional and sectoral development of higher education. Its overall objective was to develop the key policies based on five main areas: the desired size and structure of higher education, governance of higher education, quality of higher education, economic and social relevance of higher education, and budget and financing of higher education. A Strategic Action Plan (SAP) with the costing for the master plan was completed in 2017 and implemented in the same year. According to the activities outlined in the SAP, the Department of Higher Education (DHE) has successfully implemented many noteworthy activities such as providing Vice Chancellors/Rectors to visit counterparts in Pakistan to see how higher institutions there are managed and providing academic staff training opportunities for all higher education institutions in the country to increase their human resource capacity.

41. **Strengthening the MQA.** MQA plays an important role in assuring the quality of teaching and learning at the higher education institutions in Maldives. The EEDP supported MQA to develop international benchmarks, standards, and review procedures for external quality reviews as well as guidelines for internal QA in higher education institutions. Training was conducted for the higher education institutions on how to conduct internal reviews. Additionally, the external reviewers were trained before starting the audit of the higher education institutions in 2017. The first seven higher education institutions were audited in 2017. So far in 2018, a total of five institutions have been audited and reports were shared with the stakeholders. A management information system for MQA was also developed and integrated with a similar system developed for the DHE.

**Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating**

42. The overall efficacy is rated Substantial based on high achievements of PDOs, which are either fully achieved or have exceeded all the indicator targets.

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\(^{1}\)Ufaa means “happiness” in the Maldivian language.
43. Both development objectives to (a) enhance and strengthen strategic dimension of education access and (b) enhance and strengthen strategic dimension of education quality were achieved. With respect to access, the GER and survival rates through higher secondary education improved dramatically. The quality of education improved greatly through initiatives such as NALO, SSE, SIQAAF, QATDA, SBM, and SBPD. Efficacy was not rated High due to some minor shortcomings in project activities. Some construction activities were somewhat delayed at the start of the project. In addition, there were some minor issues encountered with respect to the submission of QATDA reports from some schools during 2016-2017.

C. EFFICIENCY

Assessment of Efficiency and Rating
Rating: Substantial

44. The project achieved its objectives efficiently within the original time frame and budget, and no project extensions were required, and the achievements can be rated Substantial. Cost-benefit analysis was conducted with similar assumptions used at appraisal. Benefits from the following sources were qualified: (a) increased number of higher secondary school completers and graduates, which is expected to increase the quality of jobs and earnings of Maldivians; and (b) improved quality of the education system, which is expected to result in higher labor productivity and lifetime earnings. The sensitivity analysis using various scenarios shows that an NPV for the project benefits varies between US$17.6 million and US$21.3 million. Similarly, the internal rate of return (IRR) range remains positive from 27.3 percent in the low-case scenario to 30.7 percent in the high-case scenario. At appraisal, the incremental net present benefits of the project were estimated at US$22 million and the IRR was estimated at 30 percent. The analysis indicates that the project has yielded positive economic returns and thus was a sound investment. Over the project period, the Government demonstrated a strong commitment to the education sector by constantly allocating 10–12 percent of Government budget to education. The share of the EEDP in the total education expenditure during the project period ranges from 0.4 percent to 1.4 percent. The fiscal implications of the project were minor, and it had not been a burden for the Government to maintain expenditures over the project period.

D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

45. The overall outcome rating of the project is Satisfactory based on high relevance and substantial efficacy and efficiency, as discussed previously. The EEDP supported the overall education program of the MoE. The technical contents of the EEDP were supported by international evidence of good practices and rigorous analytical work on the Maldivian education system. In addition, the EEDP was prepared through an extensive process of nationwide consultation, covering policy makers, technocrats, government officials, principals, teachers, students, parents, academics, employers, and local community members. Hence, country ownership and commitment for the activities of the EEDP have been strong. The project

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6 A base case is built on the following key assumptions. There is a total of 4,534 additional secondary education graduates over the project period. The benefit stream is calculated over a 20-year time frame. Annual growth rate in wages is close to the average annual growth rate in GDP. A discount rate of 12 percent is assumed to calculate the NPV of project benefits. The labor force participation rate for secondary education graduates used for the base case scenario is 55 percent. Given that the project involved activities that were expected to improve the quality and relevance of education, it is assumed that secondary education graduates will experience an 8 percent quality premium over the existing wage premium.
was designed to be implemented by the education institutions of the MoE, in line with their institutional mandates and responsibilities. The activities of the EEDP were mainstreamed within the MoE structure. The project has built capacity of stakeholders and staff of the MoE. The capacity-building initiatives were introduced in a phased manner, giving time for adequate development of the capacity required, especially for schools in the outer atolls and islands. The MoE agencies now have the technical capacity and commitment to maintain and sustain the project’s development initiatives after the life of the project.

E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS (IF ANY)

Gender

46. There was no gender-specific initiatives under the EEDP. However, the project’s impact on gender was quite evident by the fact that the indicator (49 percent) monitoring the number of female beneficiaries who benefited from access and quality enhancing activities under the project exceeded the target. In addition, the findings of NALO for 2015–2017 suggested that Maldivian girls outperformed boys in Dhivehi and mathematics in both grades 4 and 7.

Institutional Strengthening

47. Institutional strengthening under the project was carried out at both the national (MoE and atoll education agencies) and school levels. These have been discussed at length under the Efficacy section.

Mobilizing Private Sector Financing

48. Not applicable

Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity

49. It is not possible to quantify the reduction in poverty or shared prosperity. However, it is important that socioeconomic status should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential. Equity in education will add tremendous value in the country. Public investment is most equitable at the secondary education level when measured in terms of participation rates across economic groups (based on the Lorenz Curve and the Gini index of education). This high level of equality at the secondary education level reflects the fact that enrollment across economic groups are almost equal. Public spending on primary education is also highly equitable. These results clearly support that children from households belonging to any economic quintile group equally receive the benefits from investment in primary and secondary education. The investment in education under the EEDP, by providing scholarships for degree and diploma programs, was expected to help address inequality through targeted policy interventions.

Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts

50. The Government has taken fundamental educational reforms to align the policy aspects to the national development agenda. Such reform initiatives included the implementation of a new school curriculum with special focus on skills development, setting up a diploma as a minimum qualification for teachers, and mandatory registration for school teachers. The very first vocational stream was introduced to all schools across the country. Along with this initiative, a modern technology-based ‘Youth Hub’ was established under the EEDP for students at the Maldives Polytechnic to provide youth-friendly services.
job portal for youth was also established at the UFAA Office so that young Maldivians could register and apply to companies directly through this portal. Strategies to improve utilization of enabling platforms such as e-learning in schools and the initiatives for school children health screening and child protection are outcomes of equal importance.

III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

51. The GoM was aware of the challenges in the education sector in the Maldives. The MoE had prepared an education sector development program to address these challenges. The Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for 2008–2012 and its Progress Report had underscored the significance of the development of Maldives’ education system. The CAS program identified the need for continued financial support for the education sector, based on past project work and underpinned by analytical work on education undertaken during the CAS period. The EEDP responded to that identified need with clearly defined objectives. The EEDP was designed to develop both national- and school-level education, project management, M&E, and policy analysis. The objective of the project, therefore, was to enhance and strengthen these strategic dimensions of education access and quality. The activities under the EEDP were prepared through a process of consultation and collaboration with the project implementing agency—MoE—together with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury; the atoll education units; public and private employers; public and private education institutions; academics; and school principals, teachers, parents, and students.

52. Several risks to the EEDP and their proposed mitigation measures were identified. The two major risks (substantial) identified were the capacity of the implementing agency and the delivery monitoring and sustainability aspect of the project. The project supported training and capacity building of school communities in the new initiatives, and these initiatives were in turn introduced in a phased manner. Further, procurement and financial management training was also provided to relevant staff, and provisions were made for procurement and financial management support at the Coordination Support Unit (CSU).

B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

53. The project had the Government’s commitment, and overall project implementation went smoothly. The project was completed within the original time frame, without any extensions, and within the original budget. The Development Objective rating for the project was maintained as Satisfactory throughout the project life. The project Implementation Progress rating was maintained as Satisfactory most of the project life, except for two occasions, when it was rated as Moderately Satisfactory due to procurement (delays in contract management) and environmental (delays in monitoring construction activities) issues. These issues were resolved quickly, and the ratings were upgraded to Satisfactory. In all instances, the original indicator targets were met or in many cases exceeded, and the following milestones were achieved during project implementation:

- The PPRS was supported by a Coordination Support Unit (CSU) established and in operation by the time the project became effective. The establishment of a strong CSU was
instrumental in the smooth project implementation, well supported by the PPRS. Given the
geography of the country with a large number of small islands, scattered over several
hundred miles, the logistics of implementing the program was quite daunting. The CSU
should be commended for the excellent job the staff did in coordinating and implementing
all the activities within budget and on time. However, it should be noted that there were
some initial teething problems during implementation with respect to procurement, as the
CSU was not familiar with the World Bank’s procurement procedures. This, however, was
quickly resolved with the assistance of the PPRS and close supervision by the World Bank
team.

- The final disbursement figure under the project was SDR 6.4 million (US$9.6 million) out of
  the SDR 6.7 million IDA Credit, with a utilization rate of 96 percent (including loss on
  exchange), and SDR 0.3 million was cancelled.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

M&E Design

54. The EEDP devoted special attention to the M&E of results and outcomes. The Project Appraisal
     Document had clearly identified the main objectives of the project and higher-level objectives to which
     the project would contribute in the long term. The relevant PDO and intermediate outcome indicators
     were identified after discussions with stakeholders and counterparts. The intermediate outcome
     indicators adequately captured activities relevant to each component and linked these to the overall
     project outcomes. M&E activities commenced from the beginning of the EEDP and continued until project
     completion to assess project inputs, processes, intermediate outcomes, and outcomes. A detailed Results
     Framework was developed for the project and was monitored and updated throughout the
     implementation period.

55. The overall project monitoring activities were undertaken by the PPRS of the MoE, with the
     assistance of the CSU. The M&E Officer of the CSU was responsible for the collection of all relevant data
     and preparing the M&E progress report. The other central-level MoE agencies monitored the
     implementation of activities under their mandates and responsibilities at atoll and school levels. For
     instance, the Education Supervision and Quality Improvement Division monitored the implementation of
     the internal QA activities at the school level, and the NIE monitored the implementation of the SBPD
     programs. The EEDP helped develop M&E skills among staff in the MoE. Research and evaluation activities
     were contracted out to independent private higher education institutions and individual consultants. The
     evaluations under the project included beneficiary feedback surveys, especially for school-level
     development activities.

M&E Implementation

56. Under the EEDP, the monitoring activities were carried out at three levels: national, atoll, and
     school. The overall project monitoring activities were undertaken by the CSU on behalf of the PPRS. Each
     relevant MoE agency also monitored the progress of EEDP activities at atoll and school levels and provided
     implementation support. The monitoring framework followed a cascade model where appropriate, with
atoll education officials and TRC coordinators assisting the national MoE agencies to monitor the activities in the atolls and islands. A considerable amount of work was undertaken by the CSU. All the activities were being monitored closely. The CSU was updating the monitoring template and sharing with the World Bank on a monthly basis. School visits for monitoring were also conducted by the CSU in various islands. The CSU also carried out several stakeholder feedback surveys.

M&E Utilization

57. The monitoring activities done by the CSU and MoE agencies contributed significantly to the smooth implementation of EEDP activities. The outcomes of the NALO studies were used to set literacy and numeracy standards, as well as in education sector analysis and sector plans. The CSU in collaboration with MoE agencies closely monitored activities at the school level, especially with respect to the implementation of SSE/SIQAAF, SBM and SBPD, and QATDA, and to assist the school SMTs to mainstream these programs in their schools. During the project period, the CSU worked with the NIE to prepare reports by the TRC coordinators to obtain beneficiary feedback and describe the impact of SSE and SBPD activities in improving school performance.

Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E
Rating: Substantial

58. The design, implementation, and utilization of M&E in the project served the purpose of systematically tracking project progress and providing relevant information on the results indicators on time. There were some shortcomings in design and implementation, which were addressed without significant delay. The project gathered substantial amount of data, which were analyzed and used in ways that ultimately improved overall project performance and provided sufficient evidence to assess the achievements of the project objectives. The beneficiary surveys provided feedback and useful information, especially with respect to school-level development activities. The quality of M&E is thus rated Substantial.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

59. The project was designed not to have any negative social impacts, as the project was focused on improved access to education and improvements to education quality across the country. Therefore, the project was considered to have the potential to produce considerable positive social benefits, which it did. The project did not trigger World Bank social safeguard policies on involuntary resettlement and indigenous peoples. The Maldives has a unique land ownership structure where all lands are under Government ownership. Thus, all Maldivians are entitled to shelter, and as a result, squatters are never found in public land or buildings. The project did not require triggering of OP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement. There were also no indigenous peoples in Maldives, and therefore, OP 4.10 - Indigenous Peoples was also not triggered.

60. The project financed construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and so on in existing school premises in the Maldives. However, the environmental impacts were expected to be limited. As a result, the project was categorized as a Category B project and the project triggered OP/BP 4.01 - Environmental Assessment. An Environmental and Social Management Framework was developed for the project to guide the safeguard process to be followed during project implementation to mitigate
and manage potential impacts anticipated from activities to be undertaken under the project, particularly related to physical facilities. At the time of the midterm review, the progress toward the compliant implementation of environmental safeguards was rated Moderately Unsatisfactory. This was due to a lack of staffing and changes in project implementation structure; the project did not have a designated Environmental Officer on board and the construction projects were being managed by engineering consultants. Once mitigation measures were implemented, the rating was changed to Satisfactory.

61. Overall, procurement activities under the project have been satisfactory. Throughout the project duration, there were 10 planned construction activities that were completed before project closure. There were some delays and cancellation of contracts due to contract variations requested by the MoE; however, these issues were resolved, and construction was completed on time and in some instances using the Government’s own funds. Midway through the project, the World Bank introduced a new online procurement system (Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement [STEP]). This led to some delays as the staff had to be trained on the new system and several completed and ongoing contracts had to be entered into the system. In addition, the new system did not offer much flexibility and the slow Internet speed available at the time was not helpful in implementing the process quickly. All goods and consultancy contracts were completed before closing. Based on the above observations the overall procurement performance of this project remains Satisfactory.

62. The financial management of the project was assessed as Satisfactory. There were no outstanding audit reports for the project, and all audit reports were found satisfactory by the World Bank. Quarterly interim unaudited financial reports were submitted to the World Bank on time. The project audits received ‘unqualified’ opinions, and no major systems and control issues were identified by the auditors during the audits in 2017 and 2018.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

Quality at Entry

63. The World Bank team worked closely with the Government during the preparation phase, including other stakeholders from the education sector to jointly define the project PDOs and all actions to achieve them. The design of the EEDP and the PDOs were highly relevant and remained so throughout the project implementation based on the initial and continuous policy dialogues with the concerned ministry and other relevant agencies and the analytical work of the World Bank. In addition, the World Bank was able to consider lessons learned from previous World Bank-funded projects in this sector in Sri Lanka as well as lessons learned in other countries.

Quality of Supervision

64. Quality of supervision was rated Satisfactory. The quality of supervision provided by the World Bank team was proactive and effective. Regular and well-planned supervision missions were carried out at least twice a year. The World Bank team had a high degree of continuity with the same task team leader (TTL) and some team members from the inception to the completion of the project, including adequate skills mix (technical and fiduciary). The World Bank team was proactive and was responsive to the Government’s requests for change (the Government opted to use its own funds to construct some school buildings instead of using project funds, due to procurement-related issues) when required, throughout
project implementation, and demonstrated flexibility and understanding in the use of project resources. With respect to the fiduciary requirements, effective and timely support from financial management, procurement, and environmental specialists from the World Bank team who assisted the CSU through training and handholding led to very satisfactory performance with no major issues encountered.

**Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance**

65. Overall, the World Bank was proactive and responsive to the client’s needs from the design stage through to project closing with close supervision. Based on the previous discussions, the overall World Bank performance in ensuring quality at entry and quality of supervision is rated Satisfactory.

**D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME**

66. The Government’s commitment and ability to continue with implementing their education reform program will sustain the achievements under the EEDP. The EEDP aimed at building and strengthening structures and processes at the institutional and school levels, which along with investments in facilities and equipment will pay off for several years. The proposed Enhancing Employability through Human Capital and Entrepreneurship Development (ECHED) project has a focus on tertiary level skills building for youth to obtain private sector jobs in key areas such as Tourism and IT and Services. The expansion of secondary education, and the technical assistance to prepare reforms on vocational training and to develop a Master Plan for Higher Education provide a strong foundation for the proposed new ECHED project.

**V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

67. The implementation experience of the EEDP has important lessons for the sustainability of education reforms and activities in a country with a large number of small islands scattered over several hundred miles.

- Direct school-level interventions, such as SSE, SBM and SBPD, are especially important for education development activities in the schools as mentioned under the Efficacy section of this report and need to be sustained cost-effectively.

- Continuous capacity building of atoll- and island-level education officials was very important during project implementation to ensure maximum technical and management support for schools to implement the education development activities under the project. In addition, it will help in sustaining the knowledge built up among the officials for future education activities to be implemented in the atoll schools.

- The QAD analysis of the external school review reports confirms the relatively high per capita cost of education service delivery to widely dispersed islands with small populations. Appropriate application of technology (such as the Video Conferencing facilities connecting all the atolls with Male’) has helped address this issue. However, continuous training and PD are needed to continue capacity building in a sustainable manner. As part of the feedback process, a participant under the program shed light on this by explaining that “without proper/additional training and resources the program is never going to be sustainable.”
• In terms of prior external supervision/inspection coverage in the Maldives, a remarkably high number of schools have been visited and reviewed by the QAD’s external school review teams. The external ‘whole school’ reviews have not been closely linked to SSEs and, hence, they do not serve the purpose of externally validating the SSE. If QAD’s short-term aim is to achieve synergy between SSEs and external school reviews through better alignment of internal and external evaluations, attention needs to be given to continued training on SSE and the preparation of school development plans. Since a key aim of the external reviews is to help continuous improvement of schools, there is a need to be concerned about the QAD external school review impact on the improvement of schools. In this context, it is especially important to provide sufficient support to underperforming schools.

• An online procurement system (STEP) was introduced midway during project implementation. This caused quite a few problems from a procurement point of view due to the lack of capacity at the implementation unit to take on the new system, inflexibility of the system, and slow Internet speeds. This hampered smooth project implementation. When new systems are introduced midway through project implementation, some thought should be given as to how the system can be introduced with minimum disruption to project implementation activities.

• Continuity of project staff is an important factor that contributes to successful project implementation. The World Bank team that prepared this project supervised it through to completion with the same TTL and several original team members.

• Given the unique geography, large shortage of skilled labor, high costs of delivery across the numerous islands, and inherent vulnerabilities, the logistics of implementing the program in over 20 atolls were quite daunting. The establishment of a strong CSU was instrumental in the smooth project implementation within budget and on time, well supported by the PPRS. The model adopted for this project, including the “multi-grade classrooms” should be considered for other projects that will be implemented in multiple far-flung locations with logistics problems.
### ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

#### A. RESULTS INDICATORS

##### A.1 PDO Indicators

**Objective/Outcome:** Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased survival rates through higher secondary education (grades 1-12)</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments (achievements against targets): The target has been exceeded. Survival rate for boys is 29% and for girls is 35%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct project beneficiaries</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>50000.00</td>
<td>66600.00</td>
<td>66600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female beneficiaries</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Objective/Outcome: Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Quality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of atolls in which a system of quality assurance self-evaluations are established and findings incorporated in the implementation of school improvement plans</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.00 01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100.00 30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The target has been exceeded. The target on female beneficiaries has also been achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System for learning assessment at the primary level</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>N 01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility of the learning assessment system</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.00 01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The target has been achieved. Schools in all atolls have been engaged in school self-evaluation (SSE) activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System for learning assessment at the primary level</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>N 01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility of the learning assessment system</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1.00 01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The final target has been achieved.
### A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators

**Component: Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Learning Environment Improved in Schools (number)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The target has been exceeded.

**Component: Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Quality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Original Target</th>
<th>Formally Revised Target</th>
<th>Actual Achieved at Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of targeted education sector staff progressively completing short courses, diplomas degrees, and postgraduate degrees</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>132.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01-Mar-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The target has been exceeded.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of atolls implementing School-Professional Development Programs (SBPD) informed by and related to QA reviews</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01-Feb-2013</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
<td>30-Jun-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments (achievements against targets):** The target has been achieved and schools in all atolls are trained and are currently engaged in SBPD activities.
B. **KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Outcome 1: Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Indicators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate Results Indicators</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Key Outputs by Component** (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1) | 1. Addition of class rooms in existing schools  
2. Provision of furniture, equipment, and learning materials for schools  
3. Addition of laboratories and video conferencing facilities |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Outcome 2: Enhance and Strengthen Strategic Dimensions of Education Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Outcome Indicators**                                                             | 1. System of National Assessments of Learning Outcomes Established and Operationalized  
2. Proportion of atolls in which a system of quality assurance self-evaluations is established, and the findings incorporated in the implementation of school improvement plans |
| **Intermediate Results Indicators**                                                | 1. Number of targeted education sector staff progressively completing short courses, diplomas, degrees, and postgraduate degrees  
2. Proportion of atolls implementing School Professional Development Programs (SBPD) informed by and related to QA reviews |
| **Key Outputs by Component** (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2) | 1. Training of teachers and stakeholders  
2. Expansion of curricular in vocational education framework developed.  
3. Master plan for higher education developed  
4. Short courses, diplomas, degrees and postgraduate degrees offered to education sector staff |
### ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION

#### A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsha Aturupane, Mari Shojo</td>
<td>Task Team Leader(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. W. Anjali U. Perera Vitharanage</td>
<td>Procurement Specialist(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernadeen Enoka Wijegunawardene</td>
<td>Financial Management Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Welch</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Lakshmi Fernando</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabha Kumari Perera</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandita Sijapati</td>
<td>Social Safeguards Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokshana Nerandika Wijeyeratne</td>
<td>Environmental Safeguards Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehana Wijesinghe Manathunga</td>
<td>Team Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. STAFF TIME AND COST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Project Cycle</th>
<th>Staff Time and Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of staff weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY13</td>
<td>19.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision/ICR</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>10.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY15</td>
<td>11.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>14.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY17</td>
<td>23.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>18.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY19</td>
<td>2.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Amount at Approval (US$, millions)</th>
<th>Actual at Project Closing (US$, millions)</th>
<th>Percentage of Approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Level Education Development</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level Education Development</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Program development</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.22</strong></td>
<td><strong>93</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economic Analysis

1. The economic analysis is an assessment of benefits and costs associated with the project using realized data at the end of the project. Following the standard practice, the economic costs and benefits are estimated over the project period relative to a counterfactual. Economic costs include total project costs and private costs that comprise direct household outlays as well as opportunity costs for schooling. Similarly, the benefits are taken to be those changes in the quantity, quality, and reduction in internal inefficiency of education produced over the period as a result of the project. Although there are different types of benefits from providing an individual with additional years of education, the cost-benefit analysis focuses on economic benefits.

2. A cost-benefit analysis was conducted with similar assumptions used at appraisal. Benefits from the following sources were qualified: (a) increased number of higher secondary school completers and graduates, which increased the quality of jobs and earnings of Maldivians and (b) improved quality of the education system, which resulted in higher labor productivity and lifetime earnings. The sensitivity analysis using various scenarios shows that the NPV for the project benefits varies between US$17.6 million and US$21.3 million. Similarly, the IRR range remains positive from 27.3 percent in the low-case scenario to 30.7 percent in the high-case scenario. At appraisal, the incremental NPV benefits of the project were estimated at US$22 million and IRR was estimated at 30 percent. The analysis indicates that the project has yielded positive economic returns and thus was a sound investment.

Financial Analysis

3. Over the project period, the Government demonstrated a strong commitment to the education sector by constantly allocating 10–12 percent of Government budget to education. The share of the EEDP in the total education expenditure during the project period ranges from 0.4 percent to 1.4 percent, as shown in table 5.1. The fiscal implications of the project were minor; it had not been a burden for the Government to maintain expenditures over the project period.

| Table 5.1. Total Government Expenditure on Education |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) | 3.8    | 3.5    | 4.5    | 4.3    | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| Government expenditure on education, total (% of government expenditure) | 12.8   | 10.2   | 12.7   | 11.1   | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| Total education expenditure (MVR, millions) | 2,081.1 | 2,039.9 | 2,691.6 | 2,711.6 | 2,749.3 | 2,786.9 |
| EEDP allocations (MVR, millions) | 7.5    | 24.8   | 8.6    | 29.4   | 39.6   | 27.6   |
| Share of EEDP in the total education budget (%) | 0.4    | 1.3    | 0.3    | 1.1    | 1.4    | 1.0    |

7 A base case is built on the following key assumptions. There is a total of 4,534 additional secondary education graduates over the project period. The benefit stream is calculated over a 20-year time frame. The annual growth rate in wages is close to the average annual growth rate in GDP. A discount rate of 12 percent is assumed to calculate the NPV of project benefits. The labor force participation rate for secondary education graduates used for the base case scenario is 55 percent. Given that the project involved activities that were expected to improve the quality and relevance of education, it is assumed that secondary education graduates will experience an 8 percent quality premium over the existing wage premium.
Note: Budget for 2017 and 2018.
ANNEX 5. BORROWER COMMENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The EEDP was a five-year project financed by the World Bank and implemented by the MoE. Within this five-year cycle (June 2013 to June 2018), with their technical as well as financial support, the World Bank supported and complemented various reform initiatives of the education sector to enhance the quality of education and increase the chances of survival to higher secondary education.

B. Objective of the Project

2. The main objective of implementing the EEDP in the Maldives was to enhance and strengthen strategic dimensions of education access and quality. Specific objectives include:

   • To promote strategic initiatives at the country level to strengthen and develop the education system;
   • To promote strategic initiatives to improve the performance of schools; and
   • To help the MoE undertake policy-oriented research and development activities, as well as strengthen project coordination and M&E.

C. EEDP Components and Subcomponents

3. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the project was broadly organized under three components, with several subcomponents under each category:

   a) Component 1: National Level Education Development

      The three subcomponents under this component are (i) National Assessments of Learning Outcomes for Policy and Program Development, (ii) Management and Leadership Development of Staff in the Education Sector, and (iii) Learning Environment Enrichment of Secondary Schools (civil works, goods, and equipment).

   b) Component 2: School Level Education Development

      The four subcomponents under this component are (i) School-based Management, (ii) Modernizing Quality Assurance for School Improvement, (iii) Strengthening School-based Professional Development for Teachers and Other School Staff, and (iv) School Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards (QATDA).

   c) Component 3: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Program Development

      The five subcomponents under Education strategy and program development are (i) Strengthening and expansion of MGT in small schools, and (ii) Development of a Vocational Education Strategic Implementation model, (iii) Inclusive Education; (iv) Developing Master Plan for Higher Education; and (v) Strengthening the functions of MQA.

8 This Annex is provided by the Borrower.
4. EEDP funds were allocated to these subcomponents to provide technical assistance, information sharing, and capacity building with the aim of enhancing and strengthening strategic dimensions of education access and quality.

5. These components and the activities under them were prepared through a process of consultation and collaboration with the MoE; the Ministry of Finance and Treasury; the atoll education units; public and private employers; public and private education institutions; academics; and school principals, teachers, parents, and students.

D. Project Beneficiaries

6. It was anticipated that the successful implementation of the EEDP would directly benefit 78,000 students, over 9,000 teachers, 212 school principals, and more than 800 educational managers and administrators in the Maldivian education system. It was also expected that the employers and the higher education and training sectors would benefit when the quality of education is improved.

E. Achievement of PDO Indicators

7. The PDO-level indicators of the project show that the overall targets have been reached. Survival rates from general education through higher secondary education (from grade 1 to grade 12) increased to 32 percent where the initial target was 27 percent. Increasing access to both higher secondary and tertiary education was one of the key areas of the EEDP. The GER in higher secondary education rose from 26.8 percent in 2013 to 36.8 percent in 2017.

8. The proportion of atolls in which a system of QA (SSEs, SIPs, implementation, and reporting) is established and findings incorporated in the implementation of SIPs exceeded its target from 80 percent to 91 percent of schools in all (100 percent) atolls. With regard to the standards and enhancing quality of school education, it is noteworthy to mention that, due to the continued investment from the Government with the assistance from the World Bank over the past five years and hard work of many in the education system of Maldives, now over 90 percent of students complete their secondary education by taking the General Certificate of Examinations Ordinary Level (lower secondary) examinations. This has also led to an increase in the students’ pass percentage in the five subjects of the General Certificate of Examinations Ordinary Level from 35 percent in 2013 to 77 percent in 2017.

9. Achievement of the target for capacity building of education sector staff under the long-term higher diplomas, degrees, and master’s degrees as well as short-term skill-building courses was also exceeded from 100 to 132. Enrichment of learning environment to facilitate single session as well as expansion of secondary and higher secondary studies also exceeded the original target of 45 schools to 57. The proportion of atolls implementing SBPD programs informed by and related to QA reviews also reached the target of 80 percent. Schools in 100 percent of atolls are trained and are currently engaged in meaningful SBPD activities.
F. Project Components in Detail

Component One: National Level Education Development

10. Raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools of Maldives was a key priority of the Government since 2014. Specifically, three education development programs were implemented to raise standards in Maldivian schools. These programs were (a) measurement and analysis of learning outcomes, (b) management and leadership development of staff in the education sector, and (c) Enrichment of learning environment of secondary schools (civil works, goods, and equipment).

1.1 National Assessments of Learning Outcomes for Policy and Program Development

11. The objective of this activity was to support the Maldives to develop the capacity of the country to design and implement NALO in grades 4 and 7 for English, mathematics, and Dhivehi according to a regular cycle and use the results and findings for education policy and program development.

12. As such, a system of National Assessment of Learning with the needed tools was developed and implemented in grades 4 and 7 of the schools over three years. Accordingly, NALO was piloted and then conducted in two consecutive rounds: 2015 and 2017.

13. The outcomes of these studies have been used to make literacy and numeracy standards, as well as in education sector analysis and sector plans. The skills gap indicated in NALO studies was addressed through policy actions such as the initiation of programs to upgrade the English language skills of teachers and to enrich mathematics skills of students.

14. As part of increasing the capacity and developing a national assessment network throughout the Maldives, a Master of Education in educational assessment course was developed in collaboration with the MNU and 18 scholarships were awarded for candidates nominated from various atolls to study at MNU in 2016. The 16 students who successfully completed the course in 2018 were assigned to the National Network on School Assessment, which was established in the same year with the aim of assisting schools across the Maldives to conduct quality assessments in classrooms as well as conducting NALO nationwide.

1.2 Management and Leadership Development of Staff in the Education Sector

15. The objective of the EEDP was to assist the MoE to develop human resources in the education sector, with a special focus on education managers and administrators of the MoE, school principals, and leading teachers as well as teachers who were potential future principals. The HRD programs supported by the project include (a) master’s degree programs in education administration/management (either full time or in block mode), (b) bachelor’s degree programs in fields such as education administration and education management, and (c) short-term courses and/or exposure programs for skills development.

16. Training opportunities were provided from institutions in various countries, such as the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines, and India to obtain bachelor’s and master’s degrees and complete short-term training courses. A total of 78 staff (including teachers and management staff from schools) were trained under long-term training courses and a total of 83 staff were trained under short-term
courses. With the help of this component, the MoE was able to raise the percentage of trained school heads from 40 percent to 85 percent by the end of the EEDP.

1.3 Learning Environment Enrichment of Secondary Schools

17. The project was designed to support approximately 45 strategically selected higher secondary schools, which included all 38 higher secondary schools in the country and some larger secondary feeder schools, to enrich their learning environments.

School Civil Works and School Furniture

18. In total, 10 schools benefited from construction of classrooms and multipurpose halls (2 schools). Each school received the accompanying classroom furniture and hall furniture (for the schools with halls).

Provision of Computer Labs with Furniture

19. A total of 32 schools received furniture for their computer labs depending on the need. A total of 67 schools received computer systems, some with printers based on the need.

Setup of Video Conferencing Facilities

20. State-of-the-art video conference facilities were set up in 20 atolls (10 newly setup and 10 enhanced for dual use) including physical setup for virtual classrooms to link the smallest 10 schools in outer islands with Iskandhar School in Malé.

21. These facilities provided the means to cost efficiently reach out to the schools in the outer atolls in important discussions, short training programs, and monitoring and feedback.

Enhancing the Science Laboratories

22. A total of 15 schools were provided with science lab apparatus, chemicals, and equipment of which 12 schools received lab storage cupboards based on their needs.

Resource Upgrading for MGT Schools

23. A total of 10 multigrade schools received 10 sound Systems as well as TVs as teaching learning resources. In total, 44 MGT schools received reference materials. An MGT unit at the NIE received the resources needed for the production of videos and other advocacy materials.

Resource Upgrading for Vocational Education Component

24. The UFAA Program Office was facilitated with renovation and repair of the Youth Hub site and received 8 laptops and custom furniture for its setup. In addition, flyers, banner stands, and an animation video were received for the marketing of the online job portal Guraha (www.guraha.mv).
Resource Upgrading for Department of Higher Education Student Support Area

25. The DHE was facilitated with the renovation of the DHE lobby area to create more student-friendly support services. Under this component, the DHE received furniture, information technology equipment, and a digital queue system to complete the space.

Component Two: School-level Education Development

26. Strengthening school governance and improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise the school standards in the Maldives was the main objective of developing education program. The four activities or education programs carried out under this component were (a) SBM, (b) modernizing QA for school improvement, (c) strengthening school-based teacher PD, and (d) QATDA.

2.1 School-Based Management

27. One of the objectives of the EEDP was to strengthen SBM, making principals, teachers, other members of the SMT, and the school boards more accountable in contributing for the improvement of their own schools. Training programs that the project supported, and the NIE, with the assistance of TRC coordinators based at TRCs, include (a) the training of SMTs (principals, heads/deputy heads, and leading teachers) in school leadership and management skills, (b) training of school boards (representatives of parents, local community, and teachers), and (c) training of trainers to continue the capacity building in a sustainable manner.

28. SBM training, provided for 3–5 days on five components namely, school board, PTA policy awareness, school community relationship, school planning, and strategic management, was conducted in all 20 atolls and Malé, inclusive of all the 212 schools in the Maldives. A total of 586 participants, consisting of 175 principals, 207 SMT members, and 204 school board members, were trained.

29. As a result of these trainings, many achievements were realized. The most notable of these trainings was the development of school-specific plans to strengthen SBM. At the end of each training session, the participants were required to prepare a plan to strengthen SBM in their respective schools. This exercise together with the sharing, among the participants, of the best practices in their own schools led to the enhancement of relationships among schools and between schools and the training provider—the NIE. Moreover, training augmented the motivation of the SMT.

30. To approach the strengthening of SBM in a more sustainable and holistic manner, a Bachelor of Educational Leadership and management course was tailor-made to upgrade the trained school heads (only 40 percent of school heads had the required qualifications). However, with this training program, the population of trained school heads rose to 86 percent by the end of the five-year EEDP.

2.2 Modernizing Quality Assurance for School Improvement

31. To develop and establish a QA system consistent with international trends, the MoE garnered EEDP support to establish a regular, annual QA system for schools, with importance given to internal self-evaluations. Under this component, a selected group of professional staff from each school was trained to carry out the QA cycle: to conduct the SSE, which in turn would feed into the SIP, and how to go about
with the implementation of the SIP as well as reporting to the concerned authorities at the end of the year.

32. The EEDP also supported the MoE to develop a Quality Assurance Framework: SIQAAF, which acts as the guiding document binding all school-level components, namely SBM, SBPD activities, and the school QA cycle.

33. The EEDP also supported the MoE with the preparation of an implementation plan for SIQAAF. Policies were formulated to operationalize the implementation plan, and tools for SSE were revised and shared with schools.

2.3 Strengthening School-Based Professional Development (SBPD) for Teachers and Other Staff

34. EEDP supported to enhance the capacity of PD coordinators and TRC coordinators, assist schools to embark on SBPD activities, and support the NIE in monitoring the execution of SBPD in schools. School-based mentoring, peer learning, peer coaching, individual consultations, and visits to classrooms in other schools and islands were activities involved in SBPD. It was mandatory for academic staff of all schools—public or private—receiving government funding to obtain a minimum of 15 hours (3 days) of PD every year.

35. Face-to-face orientation training sessions (training of trainers) for PD coordinators, and curriculum support and supervision training for middle management who support and supervise teachers were conducted across the country, covering all the schools in 20 atolls. In addition, the project supported the TRC coordinators to travel to the schools and conduct training programs in each school.

36. Despite the challenges of having had to manage trainings with limited human resource capacity, particularly given that only 12 TRC coordinators had to deal with a large number of schools, many successes of SBPD were achieved through the said training. It made the schools cognizant of the policies, benefits, and areas of improvement in the schools in relation to SBPD. It also created know-how of critical elements of PD when planning for SBPD in schools that allowed them to incorporate and apply different methods of PD strategies in PD programs conducted in schools.

2.4 School Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards (QATDA)

37. Introduction of QATDA was another activity implemented under the EEDP to provide financial rewards to reinforce the schools to work for their own school improvement and accountability. This award is given to all schools that complete the QA cycle: (a) conduct SSE, (b) prepare a SIP based on the need areas identified in the SSE, (c) implement the SIP, and (d) submit the report at the end of the year.

38. The main focus of the expenditures under this activity was on (a) developing students learning and soft skills and (b) implementing the SBPD programs for improving teacher performance. Annual financial rewards for schools ranged between MVR 3,400 and MVR 10,200 depending on the student population.
Component Three: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Program Development

39. The objective of this component was to seek financial assistance from EEDP to carry out policy-oriented research and development activities and strengthen project coordination and M&E. The two areas supported under this category were (a) education strategy and program development and (b) project coordination and M&E.

3.1 Education Strategy and Program Development

40. Five priority areas that were supported under this activity are (a) A model for MGT in small schools, (b) a model for expanding multiple curriculum streams in secondary schools, (c) continuing (in-service) training for untrained teachers and for inclusive education, (d) a master plan for higher education, and (e) strengthening the Maldives Qualification Authority.

A Model for MGT in Small Schools

41. The EEDP provided technical expertise to develop a framework for MGT, which involved policy guidelines, a communications strategy to educate the stakeholders on the advantages of MGT, plans for the training of teachers and preparation of teaching and learning materials and development of a monitoring and feedback mechanism to be used for MGT.

42. The framework was implemented, and MGT was established in 44 schools, out of which 10 were financed by the EEDP. By the end of 2016, under the EEDP, 85 MGT teachers out of a total of 139 were trained, and the rest (that is, 54) were trained by government funds. Training teams visited the schools and provided 14 days of training in a classroom setup not just for teachers, but for SMT members and parents too. This allowed them to have a greater deal of interactions among themselves. Consequently, many observed positive changes: language and leadership skills development among students and management and creative skills enhancement among teachers.

43. The initial pessimistic view of parents toward MGT and the teachers’ fear of becoming redundant due to this new method of teaching changed to that of an optimistic one. The Government also saw this as a successful teaching strategy for small schools. As such, MGT advocacy videos have been developed to further promote and increase awareness of MGT in small school communities.

A Model for Expanding Multiple Curriculum Streams in Secondary Schools

44. The project provided the MoE with technical expertise to develop a framework for strengthening multiple streams in secondary schools. Under this consultancy, current policies related to vocational education were reviewed and realigned affecting the formation of vocational education streams. As a lot of reform initiatives were being undertaken by the Government during this period, the remaining funds under the component were dedicated to support the establishment of a ‘youth friendly hub,’ which would give the vocational students the one-to-one support they needed to connect with job seekers, career guidance, development of job-related soft skills, and so on. In addition, the EEDP supported the Government to develop a web site to link the vocational education students with the job market. The project funds were also spent on providing resources to the schools under the BTECH program. It can be seen that vocational education is gaining acceptance as a viable alternative stream of education.
Continuing (In-Service) Training for Untrained Teachers and for Inclusive Education

45. The EEDP supported the NIE to establish the delivery mechanism of inclusive education and provide inclusive education teachers with the training required for special education needs. Areas in which EEDP assistance were provided under this component include (a) training of special education teachers, (b) SEN classroom setup and establishment of specialized centers for SEN, and (c) SEN teacher exchange programs.

46. The program for teachers mainly focused on training them to increase their awareness of inclusive education, its importance, and the need to implement it in their schools. A total of 571 teachers were given in-service training on special education. To provide employment for the trainees, the MoE has created at least one post in each school for SEN teachers. A total of 55 SEN classrooms have been established across the country in addition to the 4 specialized main centers already set up in Malé.

47. The SEN teacher exchange program was very popular among schools, as the teachers found it highly rewarding and motivating with support from their more able peers who are readily available to share best practices and challenges in this important area of teaching. From 2014 to 2017, a total of 75 teachers from 24 schools completed this program. Similarly, SEN curriculum adaptation training enabled teachers to adapt the curriculum content to cater for individual differences even in normal classroom settings.

A Master Plan for Higher Education

48. The project provided support for the technical assistance required for the development of a Higher Education Master Plan. This included provision of financial assistance for technical assistant(s) to carry on with the consultation process for the preparation of the master plan until its approval from the Higher Education Council and its dissemination. The master plan addresses issues such as the desired size and structure of the higher education sector, the governance of higher education, the roles of the public and private sectors, the quality of higher education, the economic and social relevance of higher education, and the costs and financing of the higher education sector.

49. The Master Plan for Higher Education (2017–2022) was launched and disseminated to all higher education providers in 2017. An SAP with the costing for a master plan was completed in 2017 and started its implementation in the same year. The DHE was also supported under the EEDP to develop a student database to manage and monitor student loans and scholarships.

50. According to the activities outlined in the SAP for the master plan, the DHE has successfully implemented noteworthy activities. For example, to strengthen the governance of the higher education institutions, the DHE has provided opportunities for the Vice-Chancellor/Vice-Rectors of the 2 universities and 8 colleges to visit their counterparts in Pakistan to learn how the higher education institutions are run and managed there. The DHE has also taken the initiative of providing academic staff training opportunities for all higher education institutions in the country to increase their human resource capacity according to the recommendation outlined in the higher education master plan. Many scholarship schemes and student loan opportunities have been increased as part of reaching the Government’s target of 60 percent in higher education GER by 2022. Hence, the GER in tertiary education also rose from 10 percent in 2005 to 21 percent in 2011 and 34 percent in 2017 (DHE: Statistics 2018). Under this
component, a ‘training needs assessment’ was conducted by the EEDP as a next step for the implementation of the master plan for higher education.

**Strengthening the Maldives Qualifications Authority**

51. MQA plays an important role in assuring the quality of teaching and learning at the higher education institutions in the Maldives. Hence, the EEDP has supported MQA to develop international benchmarks, standards, and review procedures for external quality reviews as well as guidelines for internal QA in higher education institutions. The tool kits and manuals for the external quality review have also been developed.

52. Training was conducted for the higher education institutions on how to conduct internal reviews. Additionally, the external reviewers were trained before starting the audit of the higher education institutions in 2017.

53. The first seven higher education institutions were audited in 2017. So far in 2018, a total of five institutions have been audited and reports were shared with the stakeholders. A management information system for MQA has been developed and integrated with a similar system developed for the DHE.

### 3.2 Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

54. Under EEDP funds, a CSU was established at the MoE to coordinate and monitor the components of the EEDP. The CSU consisted of two managerial and five technical staff working in project operations, monitoring, procurement, and financial management, who had supported all the implementing agencies involved in the EEDP over the past five years.

55. Individual implementing agencies were mandated to monitor the project activities under their purview, collect relevant data and enter them into the management information system, and submit progress reports to the CSU.

### G. Lessons Learned

56. Extra care taken from the project implementing partners is highly encouraged to avoid unnecessary process delays and documentation issues. As much as possible, it is important to have the PDO indicators in line with sector’s strategic policies and objectives.

57. A less cumbersome and more sophisticated procurement online system could have made implementation process a lot smoother. In addition, releasing funds in advance to project implementing agencies is risky in terms of management of funds. Therefore, taking lessons from the EEDP, this method of forwarding advances is highly discouraged in future donor-funded projects.

### H. Proposed Arrangements for Future Sustainability

58. Having a Project Steering Committee where a senior official chair the meetings gives more ownership for the implementing agencies of the line ministry. This would encourage continuity of the
project activities by the Government, which is very important for the sustainability of the new initiatives taken with technical and financial support from the donors.

I. Conclusion

59. In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciations to the World Bank for the generous support in the MoE’s education reform initiatives to enhance the quality of school education and increase access to higher secondary and tertiary education. In the same vein, we acknowledge the EEDP’s funding, technical assistance, and capacity building both in-house as well as the capacity of the system at large with the aim of enhancing and strengthening strategic dimensions of education access and quality.
Component One: National Level Education Development

1.1 National Assessments of Learning Outcomes for Policy and Program Development

1. The objective of this activity of the EEDP was to support the Maldives to develop the capacity of the country to design and implement NALO in grades 4 and 7 for English, mathematics, and Dhivehi according to a regular cycle and use the results and findings for education policy and program development. As such, a system of National Assessment of Learning with the needed tools was developed and implemented in grades 4 and 7 of the schools during the project. Accordingly, NALO was piloted and was then conducted in 2014 and 2016.

2. In addition, the findings of NALO show that Maldivian girls outperformed boys in Dhivehi, English, and mathematics in both grades 4 and 7 in primary schools across the Maldives. It was also found that grades 4 and 7 Dhivehi students in outer island schools consistently outperformed students in urban areas such as Malé which are perceived to have more qualified teachers and better resources. Similarly, few schools in the outer islands did better in English in grade 7 and mathematics in grades 4 and 7 than the schools in the capital city, Malé.

3. The outcomes of these studies, reportedly, have been used to set literacy and numeracy standards, as well as in education sector analysis and sector plans. The skills gap indicated in NALO studies was addressed through policy actions such as the initiation of programs to upgrade the English language skills of teachers and to enrich mathematics skills of students. A staff who was involved in NALO at the QAD said that “important and useful data has been collected and many lessons were learnt for the development of the education programs.”

4. As part of increasing the capacity and developing a national assessment network throughout the Maldives, a Master of Education in educational assessment course was developed in collaboration with the MNU and 18 scholarships awarded for candidates nominated from various atolls to study at the MNU in 2016. The 16 students who successfully completed the course in 2018 were assigned to the National Network on School Assessment, which was established in the same year with the aim of assisting schools across the Maldives to conduct quality assessments in classrooms as well as conducting NALO nationwide.

A staff from the QAD described the staff training for NALO as an investment saying that the “… funds received has been invested in building human resource capacity and to establish procedures that need to be followed.” Further, the majority of them were satisfied with the training received and felt it would help them personally as one participant stated “… the knowledge gained from the program can be used in both my professional and personal life.”

5. Therefore, the actual beneficiaries of these two activities were greater than 15,000 students and their teachers in grades 4 and 7 across the country. With regard to the implementation and outcomes of the said activities, 82.65 percent of NALO and 69.64 percent of the Master of Education in educational assessment were simply, highly, or extremely satisfied with the process.
1.2 Management and Leadership Development of Staff in the Education Sector

6. The objective of the EEDP was to assist the MoE to develop the human resources in the education sector, with a special focus on education managers and administrators of the MoE, school principals, and leading teachers as well as teachers who were potential future principals. The human resource development (HRD) programs supported by the project include (a) master’s degree programs in education administration/management (either full time or in block mode), (b) bachelor’s degree programs in fields such as education administration and education management, (c) diploma programs related to the functions of the MoE, and (d) short-term courses and/or exposure programs for skills development.

7. Before the project was commenced, only 40 percent of the Principals and SMT of the MoE were trained in their respective fields. However, by the completion of this activity of the EEDP, 85 percent of them had been trained. Training opportunities were provided from institutions in various countries, such as the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines, and India to obtain diplomas and advanced diplomas and bachelor’s and master’s degrees. A total of 139 staff were trained in both short-term courses (that is, 61 staff) and long-term courses (that is, 78 staff).

8. Further, as noted by the CSU, the actual targets for HRD exceeded the initial targets set by EEDP.

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9. In terms of benefits, the participants believed that the training programs were quite beneficial to them for the future as one of the school heads explained that the “training received by the principals, teachers and admin staff is beneficial for the schools and the future impact on the education sector would be very high.” In a similar fashion, a participating teacher highlighted that the “trainings given to the teachers definitely would help them in the long run to achieve the goals of the schools and that of MoE.”

10. As far as the satisfaction level of the participants of these courses was concerned, short-term training opportunities ranked the highest at 77.94 percent followed by diploma in educational management, 72.55 percent; Master of Educational Management and leadership, 70.18 percent; Master of Educational assessment, 69.67 percent; Bachelor of Education, 67.92 percent; and Bachelor of Educational Management, 62.07. The participants confirmed that the training programs in general provided great benefits for the education sector as they have highlighted that “these programs have enhanced the standard of teaching-learning ... [and] would also help strengthen the school governance and accountability.”
1.3 Learning Environment Enrichment of Secondary Schools

11. The project was designed to support approximately 45 strategically selected higher secondary schools, which included all 38 higher secondary schools in the country and some larger secondary feeder schools, to enrich their learning environments.

12. As such, 42 classrooms and 36 toilets for A-level expansion at atoll education centers along with a number of computer laboratories were established with computer systems supplied to 48 schools, printers to 34 schools, and furniture to 32 schools. Similarly, 15 science laboratories including chemicals, apparatus, and storage facilities were added to the schools. Provision of chemicals and lab equipment was appreciated by the receiving school staff who highlighted that the “laboratory chemicals and equipment provided to schools are so good and now we can engage students to do the practical.”

13. With the expansion of physical facilities in the outer islands, the GER in higher secondary education rose from 26.8 percent in 2013 to 36.8 percent in 2017 (MoE: Statistics 2017). State-of-the-art video conference facilities were set up in 20 atolls (10 newly set up and 10 enhanced for dual use) including physical setup for virtual classrooms to link the smallest 10 schools in outer islands with Iskandhar School in Malé.

14. The beneficiaries of this component were quite positive about the benefits of the virtual classroom setups as one of the participants stated that the video conferencing facilities would enable them to “link with other teachers in outer islands” and another participant explained it as an avenue for “exchange of knowledge.” It was also described as a “great opportunity to learn and experience” (a participant from a school in Malé). The participants also acknowledged the importance of the availability of such facilities in schools as it would help them “… to deliver subject details wisely and guide the students to implement the things they have learned in their daily life”.

Component Two: School-level Education Development

15. Strengthening school governance and improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise the school standards in the Maldives were the main objectives of developing the education program. The four activities or education programs carried out under this component were (a) SBM, (b) modernizing QA for school improvement, (c) strengthening school-based teacher PD, and (d) QATDA to schools.

2.1 School-Based Management

16. One of the objectives of the EEDP was to strengthen SBM, which consists of principals, teachers, other members of the SMT, and the school board, through project-supported training. Training programs that the project supported, and the trainings of the NIE), with the assistance of TRC coordinators based at TRCs, included (a) the training of SMTs (principals, heads/deputy heads, and leading teachers) in school leadership and management skills, (b) training of school boards (representatives of parents, local community, and teachers), and (c) the training of trainers for TRC coordinators.

17. SBM training, provided for 3 to 5 days on five components, namely school board; Parent Teacher Association (PTA) policy awareness; school community relationship; school planning; and strategic management, was conducted in all 20 atolls and Malé, inclusive of all the 212 schools in the Maldives.
total of 586 participants, consisting of 175 principals, 207 SMT members, 204 school board members, were trained.

18. As a result of these trainings, many achievements were realized. The most notable of these trainings was the development of school-specific plans to strengthen SBM. At the end of each training session, the participants were required to prepare a plan to strengthen SBM in their respective schools. This exercise together with the sharing, among the participants, of the best practices in their own schools led to the enhancement of relationships among schools and between schools and the training provider—the NIE. Moreover, training augmented the motivation of the SMT. Some of the participants acknowledged the importance of receiving these trainings on SBM and indicated that “understanding on how to make our school improvement plans was a huge step for us to make plans, implement and monitor them for the betterment of our schools.” Formulation of a Bachelor of Educational, leadership, and management course was another success that ensued from training. More than 70 percent of the participants were satisfied with the training they received.

2.2 Modernizing Quality Assurance for School Improvement

19. To develop and establish a QA system consistent with international trends, the MoE garnered EEDP support to establish a regular, annual QA system for schools, with the importance given to internal self-evaluations. The SSEs would, in turn, lead to the SIPs for the following year. Under this activity, the most significant action was the revision work carried out in 2017 for SIQAAF and the preparation of its implementation plan.

20. Policies were formulated to operationalize the implementation plan, and tools for SSE were revised and shared with schools. Along with SSE training provided to all 212 schools in Maldives, its implementation was completed in 193 (91 percent) schools. These same schools, subsequently, devised their own SIPs and submitted them to the MoE. As well as the analysis of and the provision of feedback to the 193 schools that completed and submitted SSE reports in 2017, the QAD of MoE was also engaged in following a three-year cycle of external review of schools. As such, analytical reports have been concluded for the 168 schools which had completed the external review in 2016 and 2017. The SSE focal point at the QAD explained “schools are conducting SSE on a regular basis because they have started realizing the benefits of it [and] they know how to do it.” Supportively, a school teacher explicated the benefits of self-evaluation as “it is important for school improvements and provides a better understanding of the fluxes in the education system, not only now, but also in the future”.

2.3 Strengthening School-Based Professional Development (SBPD) for Teachers and Other Staff

21. Financial assistance was obtained from the EEDP for the development of the system for SBPD to enhance the capacity of PD coordinators and TRC coordinators, assist schools to embark on SBPD activities, and support the NIE in monitoring the execution of SBPD in schools. School-based mentoring, peer learning, peer coaching, individual consultations, and visits to classrooms in other schools and islands were activities involved in SBPD. It was mandatory for academic staff of all schools—public or private—receiving government funding to obtain a minimum of 15 hours (3 days) of PD every year.

22. Face-to-face orientation training sessions for PD coordinators and curriculum support and supervision training for middle management who support and supervise teachers were conducted across
the country, covering all the schools in 20 atolls. In addition, TRC coordinators travelled to all the schools in 15 atolls, and depending on the school population, two to three days of training was conducted in each school. A total of 3,685 teachers benefited from this training program. The remaining 5 atolls that have not yet been covered are Haa Alifu, Shaviyani, Kaafu, Dhaalu, and Laamu. However, by the end of the project impact assessment period, the NIE or the training provider received the SBPD activity reports from only 49 (or 23.1 percent of) schools.

23. Despite the challenges of having had to manage trainings with limited human resource capacity, particularly given that only 12 TRC coordinators had to deal with a large number of schools, many successes of SBPD were achieved through the said training. It made the schools cognizant of the policies, benefits, and areas of improvement in the schools in relation to SBPD. It also created know-how of critical elements of PD when planning for SBPD in schools that allowed them to incorporate and apply different methods of PD strategies in PD programs conducted in schools. Some of the participants believed “that these programs can benefit [their] schools for a long period of time as it is mostly related to staff development”.

2.4 School Quality Assurance and Teacher Development Awards (QATDA)

24. Introduction of the QATDA was another activity implemented under the EEDP to provide financial rewards and promote school-based M&E and also to empower schools to work on their own improvement in an effective and organized manner. The main focus under this activity was on (a) developing students learning and soft skills, and (b) implementing the SBPD programs for improving teacher performance. Annual financial rewards for schools ranged between MVR 6,000 and 7,500, depending on the student population. In 2016, QATDA was given to all 212 government schools across the country. However, in 2017, a total of 193 schools were eligible to receive QATDA. The remaining schools were ineligible because they were unable to submit the 2016 expenditure reports. Nevertheless, 82 of the recipients of this award expressed satisfaction, which demonstrated that the award had a positive impact on them. Many of the participants explained that the “financial reward that you get through this QATDA is small, but it is a self-rewarding exercise.”

Component Three: Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Program Development

25. The objective of this component was to seek financial assistance from the EEDP to carry out policy-oriented research and development activities and strengthen project coordination and M&E. The two activities that supported this component were (a) education strategy and program development and (b) project coordination and M&E.

3.1 Education Strategy and Program Development

26. Five priority areas that supported this activity were (a) a model for MGT in small schools, (b) a model for expanding multiple curriculum streams in secondary schools, (c) continuing (in-service) training for untrained teachers and for inclusive education, (d) a master plan for higher education, and (e) strengthening the Maldives Qualifications Authority.
A Model for MGT in Small Schools

27. EEDP provided technical expertise to develop a framework for MGT, which involved policy guidelines and a curriculum framework of, and a communications strategy to educate the stakeholders on the advantages of, MGT. Further, it included plans for the training of teachers and preparation of teaching and learning materials for, and monitoring and feedback mechanisms to be used for, MGT.

28. The framework was implemented, and MGT was established in 44 schools, out of which 10 were financed by the EEDP. By the end of 2016, under the EEDP, 85 MGT teachers out of a total of 139 were trained, and the rest (that is, 54) were trained by the GoM. At the beginning of the project, trainings were conducted in Malé. However, later training teams visited the schools and provided 14 days of training in a classroom setup not just for teachers, but for the SMT and parents too. This allowed them to have a greater deal of interactions among themselves. Consequently, many observed positive changes: language and leadership skills development among students and management and creative skills enhancement among teachers.

29. The initial pessimistic view of parents toward MGT, and the teachers’ fear of becoming redundant due to this new method of teaching, changed to that of an optimistic one. The Government also saw this as a successful teaching strategy for small schools. A teacher from an island school viewed that the “schools are able to use this resource to maximize learning and enhance teaching ... and provide more opportunities for students.” As such, an MGT advocacy video has been developed to further promote and increase awareness of MGT in small school communities. According to the participants, “MGT project can run successfully without much problems ... [and] our staffs and parents fully understood the concept.”

30. However, continuous training and PD are needed to continue the MGT in a sustainable manner. A participant shed light on this by explaining that “without proper training and resources the program is never going to be sustainable.”

A Model for Expanding Multiple Curriculum Streams in Secondary Schools

31. The EEDP provided technical expertise to develop a Vocational Education Strategic Plan, and it was implemented in 2016. As a result, the very first vocational stream was introduced to all schools across the country. The UFAA Office of the MoE was mandated with the overall coordination and monitoring of the school technical and vocational education and training stream students and their assessments. A modern technology-based ‘Youth Hub’ was established for students at the Maldives Polytechnic to provide youth-friendly services. A job portal for youth was also established at the UFAA Office so that young Maldivians could register and apply to companies directly through this portal. In agreement with the above, one of the participants reflected that the “physical infrastructure development is vital for young people who can use the facilities to apply for the services that they need ... [and] would be used for the interest of younger adults of that age.”

Continuing (In-Service) Training for Untrained Teachers and for Inclusive Education

32. The NIE has been provided with the technical assistance to establish the delivery mechanism of inclusive education and a set of teachers with the training required for inclusive education. The program for teachers mainly focused on training them to increase their awareness of inclusive education, its importance, and the need to implement it in their schools. A total of 571 teachers were given in-service
training on special education. In reflection of their own training, a participant expressed that they “got more knowledge about SEN classroom and helped to learn various teaching methods.” To provide employment for the trainees, the MoE has created at least one post in each school for SEN teachers.

33. A total of 55 SEN classrooms have been established across the country in addition to the 4 specialized main centers already set up in Malé. For example, Kalaafanu School has been promoted as a hub for visually challenged children. Jamaluddin School has been providing support for children with hearing impairment. In addition, Aminiyya School was developed as an inclusive model school in the Maldives. Aminiyya School initially started with 37 students in 2015 and gradually increased from 55 in 2016 to around 125 students at present in SEN inclusive education program. The SEN teacher exchange program was very popular among schools, and therefore, 66 percent of participants expressed satisfaction with the program. From 2014 to 2017, a total of 75 teachers from 24 schools completed this program.

34. The importance of training for SEN teachers and provision of resources in schools were highlighted by the participants. As such a participant explained that “when a person is trained in a specialized field like SEN, the impact on the school and school community is significant because it provides a common platform for all students to involve and learn.” Consistent with this view, another participant expounded that “the training I received on SEN curriculum adaptation can be used throughout my school life.”

**A Master Plan for Higher Education**

35. The Master Plan for Higher Education (2017–2022) was launched and disseminated to all higher education providers in 2017. It is regarded as the nation’s blueprint for higher education for the next five years. The main intention of this master plan was to guide institutional and sectoral development of higher education. Its overall objective was to develop the key policies based on five main areas: the desired size and structure of higher education, governance of higher education, quality of higher education, economic and social relevance of higher education, and budget and financing of higher education.

36. In participants’ view, the master plan for higher education was a “very beneficial document as it provides opportunities for the DHE to make plans effectively.” An SAP with the costing for a master plan was completed in 2017 and started its implementation in the same year. The DHE was the implementing agency. The DHE was also supported under the EEDP to develop a student database to manage and monitor the student loans and scholarships.

37. According to the activities outlined in the SAP for the master plan, the DHE has successfully implemented noteworthy activities. For example, to strengthen the governance of the higher education institutions, the DHE has provided opportunities for the Vice-Chancellor/Vice-Rectors of the 2 universities and 8 colleges to visit their counterparts in Pakistan to learn how the higher education institutions are run and managed there. The DHE has also taken the initiative of providing academic staff training opportunities for all higher education institutions in the country to increase their human resource capacity according to the recommendation outlined in the higher education master plan.

**Strengthening the Maldives Qualifications Authority**

38. MQA plays an important role in assuring the quality of teaching and learning of the higher education institutions in the Maldives. Hence, the EEDP has supported MQA to develop international
benchmarks, standards, and review procedures for external quality reviews as well as guidelines for internal QA in higher education institutions. The tool kits and manuals for the external quality review have also been developed. Training was conducted for the higher education institutions on how to conduct internal reviews. Additionally, the external reviewers were trained before starting the audit of the higher education institutions in 2017.

39. The first seven higher education institutions were audited in 2017. So far in 2018, a total of five institutions have been audited and reports were shared with the stakeholders. A management information system for MQA has been developed and integrated with a similar system developed for the DHE. A staff of MQA also reflected on the benefits indicating that “there were no policies or standards for institutional audit. But now the training manuals and standards have been developed so we have completed 7 institutes last year and this year so far 5 have been completed.”

3.2 Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

40. A CSU was established at the MoE to coordinate and monitor the components of the EEDP. The CSU consisted of experts in operations, monitoring, procurement, and financial management, who had supported all the implementing agencies involved in the EEDP over the past five years. Individual implementing agencies were mandated to monitor the project activities under their purview, collect relevant data and enter them into the management information system, and submit progress reports to the CSU. One of the participants said that “… I always receive help from the staff regarding the financial and administrative work of the project. CSU staff was really attentive and helps clear all doubts regardless of the difficult situations.”