

**AFGHANISTAN SECOND EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (EQUIP II, TF 93962)**  
**Request for Release of Balance ARTF Funding of USD23 million**

**I. Introduction**

The Second Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP II) primarily has two sources of funding, IDA and ARTF. The IDA grant H354 in the amount of SDR 18 million (USD 30 million equivalent) was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors on January 31, 2008. For the purpose of co-financing the project, the ARTF Management Committee (MC) approved a blanket proposal of USD 158 million on April 14, 2009, of which a total of USD 135 million has been released to date. This paper presents the implementation status of the project, and requests the ARTF MC to release the balance USD 23 million to enable the continued implementation of the project.

**II. Background**

EQUIP is the single largest education sector program in Afghanistan and covers both primary and secondary education. It is implemented and managed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The project development objective is to increase equitable access to quality basic education especially for girls.

The EQUIP II builds on the IDA and ARTF funded EQUIP I. The program aims at (i) increasing access to schooling from Grades 1-12; (ii) strengthening the management capacity of communities to better manage teaching-learning activities; (iii) promoting institutionalized district based teacher training activities nationwide; and, (iv) prioritizing education for girls through a household scholarship scheme and the provision of high school teachers in underserved schools. EQUIP II is operationalized through three integrated components:

Component 1: School Grants (IDA US\$8.7 million, ARTF US\$92.89 million)

Sub-Component 1.1: School Grants for Quality Enhancement

Sub-Component 1.2: School Grant for Infrastructure

Sub-Component 1.3: Social Awareness and Mobilization

Component 2: Teacher and Principal Training and Education (IDA US\$16.7 million, ARTF US\$55.4 million, and USAID US\$22 million)

Sub-Component 2.1: Teacher Training

Sub-Component 2.2: Principal Training

Sub-Component 2.3: Increasing Female Teachers

Component 3: Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (IDA US\$4.6million, ARTF US\$9.7 million)

As noted above, the primary sources of funding for EQUIP II has been IDA and ARTF<sup>1</sup>. The IDA grant H354 in the amount of SDR 18 million (USD 30 million equivalent) was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors on January 31, 2008. On April 14, 2009, the ARTF Management Committee (MC) approved a funding commitment of USD 158 million for

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<sup>1</sup> USAID has provided a total of USD 22 million to MOE for implementation of the teacher education component in 11 provinces while EQUIP II covers the balance 23 provinces.

EQUIP II. The ARTF Grant Agreement for TF 93962 for the first tranche of USD 35 million was signed on April 14, 2009. With the release of the second and third tranches of USD 50 million each approved by the ARTF MC on June 27, 2010-and July 24, 2011 respectively, ARTF funding support for EQUIP II totaled USD 135 million.

### **III. Project Implementation Status and Results**

EQUIP II results have been impressive; they have met or surpassed nearly all of their performance indicators. Disbursement remains high: 95.94 % for IDA Grant H354 and 86.69 % for ARTF TF 93962 (as of March 2012).

As of December 2011, EQUIP II has supported the construction of 25 schools using National Competitive Bidding (i.e., larger, more technically complex buildings), construction [or rehabilitation] of 246 schools using Community Contracting (simple structures where construction is managed by communities), and there are a further 523 (CC and NCB) schools under construction.

Training of 92,831 teachers in In-Service Training INSET I and 63,852 in INSET II (grade one to six) has been completed. The School Management Training (SMT I) has been provided to 7,006 principals and headmasters/mistresses. SMT II training has been conducted for 4,689 principals/school managers. 3,351 scholarships have been awarded to female recipients enrolled in Teacher Training Colleges. It is estimated that 509,208 students are currently studying in EQUIP II supported schools, of this number 191,216 or nearly 40% are girls. Under EQUIP I and II, Social mobilization activities have been conducted in 11,087 communities which have resulted in setting up of 11,087 school shuras and the preparation of 10,939 school improvement plans nationwide. So far, 9,935 schools have received Quality Enhancement Grants for purchase of school supplies, laboratory equipment etc.

By the proposed closing date of September 2012, EQUIP would have met all its implementation targets and exceeded several. Targets for increases in girls and boys enrollment set at 3 million (currently 2.71million ) and 4.5 million (currently4.43 million) respectively, will be met. The target for school construction was set at 1,575, while the actual projected number is expected to be 1,659 (of this only 90 schools remain to be constructed). The target for teachers completing in-service training was 165,000, the actual number is projected to be 200,000. The target for School Management Committees established and trained was 11,900, the actual is projected to be 12,071. The target for school administrators was 7, 000 while the actual is projected to be 14,000. Scholarships awarded to girls for teacher training colleges is on target at 5,000.

The table below summarizes the project ratings with regard to project results, implementation progress, and project management performance.

Project Data		Project Performance Ratings	ISM Dec 2011
Board Approval:	January 31, 2008	Achievement of Development Objectives:	MS
Effectiveness Date:	March 20, 2008	Overall implementation progress	MS
Closing date:	September 1, 2012	Financial Management	MS
MTR date:	Original: May 2011 Revised: July 2011	Procurement	MS
Amounts:	H354 : USD 30 million ARTF: USD158 million	Project Management	MS
Amount Disbursed:	H354: USD 27.8 million IDA ARTF: USD 103.3 million ARTF	M&E	MS
Life of project:	4 years	Safeguard Compliance	MS

Ratings: HS=Highly Satisfactory; S=Satisfactory; MS= Moderately Satisfactory; MU=Moderately Unsatisfactory; U=Unsatisfactory

#### IV. Challenges Moving Forward

Mirroring the country's move from emergency to a more long-term development focus, and also planning for transition to be completed by 2014, the education sector has shifted from financing inputs to a more results focused approach. Since the Mid-term Review (MTR), MOE has focused primarily on ensuring quality at all levels: better construction standards for schools, a restructured social mobilization program, improved teacher education (including using more IT based teaching methods), developing an integrated monitoring and reporting system, putting in place a system of measuring learning outcomes, and most importantly a strengthened institutional structure for management of EQUIP.

While EQUIP results on the ground have been significant, much remains to be done. Demand for schools continues to grow, as basic education expands by approximately 500,000 new students each year. Almost half of the school age population remains out of school with significant gender and provincial disparities. Only 57% of schools have usable buildings. Funding support for school infrastructures development and cost-effective delivery of the teacher training program remain to be the strongest determinants of the education sector performance.

The institutional capacity of the Ministry both at national and sub-national levels is weak. Skill levels of staff in all areas have to be strengthened including financial management, procurement, human resource management, planning and budgeting, as well monitoring. Coordination

between national/ provincial/district levels have to be better managed with more responsibility transferred to the local level.

Insecurity plagues much of the nation and hinders not only implementation progress but also capacity for rigorous monitoring at all levels. While targeting of schools by insurgents has lessened significantly since 2006/7, threats against government employees, NGOs, as well as school shuras continue.

The Ministry has placed a great deal of emphasis on improving indicators related to girls' education and enrollment of girls has increased from almost 0% in 2002 to more than 2.7 million in 2011. Boys' enrolment in primary schools is nearly twice that of girls and three times higher in grades 7-9. Boys are almost four times more likely than girls to be enrolled at the higher secondary level, and ten times as likely to be enrolled in post-primary education. In rural areas, girls' participation declines precipitously and female teachers are rare, especially in secondary education. Overall, only 31% of teachers are female and are mostly located in urban centers. The MOE will continue to strengthen its focus on girls' education including by developing a comprehensive gender strategy and hiring senior level gender experts.

#### **V. Request for the Release of Balance USD 23 million**

Taking into account the project implementation status and results achieved to date, as well as the significant needs that exist, the release of the balance ARTF support of US\$ 23 million is crucial to enable MOE to proceed with its operational plan. The Table below provides a breakdown of the use of the final tranche :

<b>EQUIP II Components</b>	<b>USD</b>
School Grants	5.2 million
Teacher Training	13.0 million
Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	4.8 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 million</b>