



Independent Joint Anti-Corruption
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee (MEC)



Following up the implementation of
recommendations of the MEC report; “Ministry-
wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of
the Ministry of Education”.

Monitoring the Education Sector

First Quarterly Monitoring Report

April 30, 2018



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“A suicide attack isn’t the most dangerous thing for us, because a few people will die - Afghan mothers will have other children. It is the unprofessional and unknowledgeable teachers that are most dangerous for us because they kill the future of Afghanistan.”

Parent participant in Focus Group Discussion

Acronyms

Afs	Afghanis (Afghan currency)
CBE	Community Based Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization / Central Statistics Organization
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DED	District Education Department
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DP	Development Partner
DSMS	Directorate of School Management <i>Shuras</i>
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQRA	Education Quality Reforms for Afghanistan
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
IARCS	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
ID	Identity document
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring & Evaluation Commission
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOICT	Ministry of Information, Culture, and Technology
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MVCA	Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment
NCCP	National Citizen's Charter Program
NESP	National Educational Strategic Plan (also, NESP III)
NUG	National Unity Government
PED	Provincial Education Department
SMART	"Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound."
SMS	School Management <i>Shura</i>
TA	Technical Advisor / Technical Assistant
ToR	Terms of Reference
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical, Vocational, and Educational Training
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, Culture Office
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Executive Summary

On 26th October 2017, MEC released the “Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of the Ministry of Education.” Based on findings from this assessment, MEC identified key areas of vulnerability to corruption and issued 66 recommendations for improving different aspects of education and bringing much needed reform to the sector and the Ministry of Education. These were subsequently refined into 113 more specific recommendations. The current follow up report is the first Quarterly Monitoring Report on the implementation of the recommendations.

MEC actively monitors the implementation of its recommendations, proposed reforms, and the anti-corruption efforts in the education sector, and uses this information to prepare a Monitoring Report on a Quarterly basis. In the first period of Quarterly monitoring, MEC has conducted Provincial visits to Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kabul. MEC seeks evidence including documentation, direct observations, and interviews in order to verify data and responses from designated focal points.

In the first Quarter, MEC faced challenges in getting timely responses from the Ministry of Education, including difficulties and pushback in accessing information from the Ministry. MEC did not receive any reports from focal points by the initial deadline. Ministry leadership also sent emails to specific focal points, requesting them to respond to MEC. Some of these focal points neither replied to MEC’s emails, nor to the MOE leadership’s messages. While MOE leadership had been highly cooperative in the monitoring process, this weakness of communication from focal points was disappointing and caused unnecessary delays in preparing the first Quarterly Monitoring Report.

Since release of the MVCA, recruitment of all civil service employees was shifted to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC.) Following this change, MEC monitoring of recommendations related to teacher recruitment has also shifted from MOE to IARCSC. IARCSC leadership welcomed MEC’s recommendations, agreed on implementation, and has cooperated in MEC’s monitoring of these 17 specific recommendations that. Similarly, 14 of the original recommendations are associated with Development Partners (DPs), and the MEC monitoring team has actively engaged with their representatives for the follow-up process.

In first Quarter of monitoring 16 recommendations out 113 are considered to be fully implemented. These are related to IARCSC’s recruitment of teacher positions and a small number directly from actions in MOE. This progress includes transparency measures such as announcing all positions through their website, receiving online applications, digitalizing recruitment, and announcing the list of applicants and shortlisted candidates.

Another area of notable progress was regarding restructuring of MOE and reducing the overall size of the Ministry. MOE has developed and finalized a detailed Reform Plan and prepared Concept Notes for restructuring various elements of the Ministry. These changes include shifting responsibility for rural schools construction to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development and urban schools to the Ministry of Urban Development. Additionally, a Presidential Decree dictated that the Technical, Vocational, and Educational Training program be removed from the MOE structure with formation of an Independent Technical & Vocational Education and Training Board.

Regarding guaranteed female participation within the education system, IARCSC developed its “Policy on Increasing Women Participation on Civil Service;” notably, this is not only focused on education. This policy aims to increase the recruitment of women by 2 percent in Afghanistan’s civil service

workforce during 2018. MOE has also taken positive actions regarding implementation of this recommendation, allocating half of 8,000 teacher positions to female candidates.

MEC recommended that MOE leadership issue a public statement which highlights sector-wide reform and the Ministry’s fight against corruption, which is now considered fully implemented. The leadership of the National Unity Government has also declared the two coming years, 1397 and 1398, as Education Support Years.

In this period, MOE has also made substantial progress with revision of policies, documents and regulations. For instance, a Code of Conduct for all MOE staff to ensure Equity, Integrity, Right to Education, Accountability, and Trust is in place now. Community Based Education Policy and the Data Collection Guideline have been revised and the Education Quality Committee is functioning now.

12 diverse recommendations out 113 are achieved up to 50 percent. Based on MEC recommendations, MOE has now revised the curriculum framework, including specification that the number of textbooks for each grade would be reduced, as follow:

Textbooks of grades 1-3 from 6 to 3.

Textbooks of grades 4-6 from 14 to 6.

Textbooks of grades 7-9 from 17 to 7

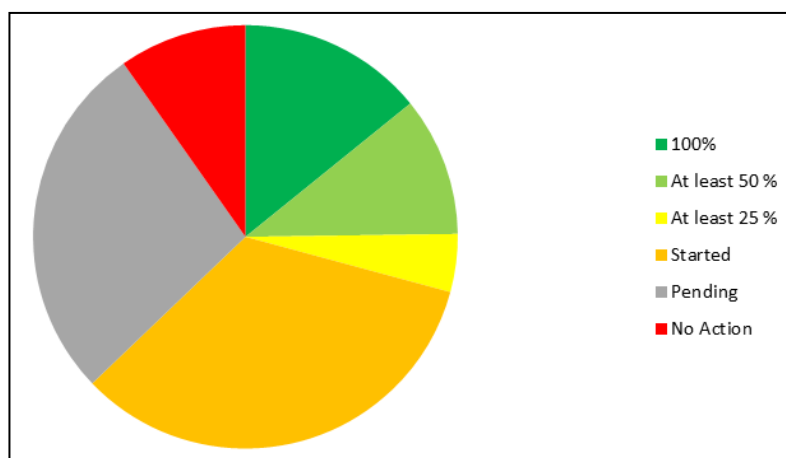
And textbooks of grades 10-12 from 15 to 12.

5 recommendations out 113 are achieved up to 25 percent. These include establishing a Complaints Handling System (by IARCSC,) conducting training to improve data quality in the Education Management Information System, and developing the MOE Anti-Corruption Plan.

In this Quarter, work and/or study has started on 38 of the MEC recommendations. A good example of this category is digitalizing the issuing of 12th grade Diplomas. Software for digitizing certificate data and issuing Diplomas has been developed and is now being piloted in Kabul City by the Kabul City Education Department.

On this monitoring quarter, 31 recommendations are considered pending, while no action was detected on 11 out of 113 recommendations. These recommendations also include a wide range of different topics. The status of recommendations summarized below:

Recommendation Status	Numbers
100%	16
At least 50 %	12
At least 25 %	5
Started	38
Pending	31
No Action	11
Total	113



Overall, MOE and the IARCSC made progress on their relevant recommendations. MEC expects MOE to accelerate the process of implementation of MEC recommendations in the coming Quarters, as well as implementation of their comprehensive Reform Plan. MEC will provide its second Quarterly Monitoring Report on reform by August 2018.

Introduction (Background)

On 26th October 2017, MEC released the Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of the Ministry of Education. MEC examined, in detail, the vulnerabilities to corruption across the Ministry of Education (MOE). Based on findings of this assessment, MEC identified key areas of vulnerability including; the overall size and scope of the MOE structure, recruitment, procurement, payroll, EMIS, curriculum, textbooks, Teacher Training Colleges, Technical, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET), and Adult Literacy programs.

In this Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment (MVCA), MEC spoke with teachers, head teachers, school principals, school *Shura* members, teacher educators, students, parents, MOE officials on central, Provincial and District levels, as well as donors and other stakeholders. In total, MEC carried out 542 interviews and conducted 160 Focus Group Discussions in Kabul, Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Faryab, Ghazni, Herat, Khost, Nangarhar, and Panjshir, including visits to 138 individual schools.

The purpose of the MEC MVCA was to gain a comprehensive picture of the corruption vulnerabilities in Afghanistan's education system (with the exception of pre-primary and higher education), and then to make recommendations for interventions and remedial action. MEC initially issued 66 recommendations for improving different aspects and areas of education and bringing much needed reform to the sector and the Ministry of Education. These recommendations, in the original MVCA, were grouped in the following categories:

- A. Citizen actions and other forms of civil and/or local oversight.
- B. Institutional reforms – to encourage effectiveness and discourage corrupt behavior.
- C. Organizational change leadership – how the Ministry, teachers, TTCs, DEDs and PEDs might be more effective at making institutional change happen.
- D. Legal and procedural changes – how to remedy failings in law or legal implementation; administrative sanctions; citizen complaints mechanisms.
- E. Signals of change to the population – specific actions, whether modest or substantial, that will indicate to the population that things are changing.
- F. International community and Development Partners (DPs) action.
- G. Information systems, control and inspection systems, and independent oversight.
- H. Transparency measures – how transparency of policy, of process and of practice and open publication of policies, standards, plans, budgets, results and reports, will contribute to reducing corruption.
- I. Enforcement – disciplinary measures, investigations, prosecutions, addressing impunity.
- J. Market-based alternatives to monopoly government supply of textbooks.

In section 6.b. of this First Quarterly Monitoring Report, the status for each of these categories of recommendations will be analyzed, to enable comparisons of progress across successive Quarters.

Reactions after publication of the MOE MVCA Report

The report was presented to H.E. the President of Afghanistan, to H.E the Chief Executive Officer, to the leadership of the Ministry of Education, and also to donors and other Development Partners. The President and CEO welcomed the findings of this assessment and were highly supportive of implementation of most of the accompanying recommendations. However, they were not in full agreement with a few of MEC's recommendations, specifically regarding outsourcing of the MOE recruitment process to a new entity. Their principle concern with this recommendation was the existence of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), which could oversee a more transparent teacher recruitment process without creating a new entity or undertaking extensive systemic and legal changes - which would delay reforms.

In addition, the President, CEO, and some Development Partners were concerned with attention to decentralization, where MEC seeks to engage school communities more actively in the process of teacher recruitment. Concern were raised related to the capacity of local school *Shuras* and other community members, as well as a potential shift of risks of corruption in recruitment – essentially relocating the vulnerability from MOE to communities. MEC has specified that it is open to hearing and addressing these valid concerns, but maintains that community engagement and participation are the objectives – and potentially in themselves mitigate corruption risks – of MEC's recommendation in this case; not merely shifting risks from one locus to another.

Generally, the leadership of NUG supported MEC's MOE MVCA findings and recommendations – directing the MOE to implement the recommendations in support of bringing widespread reform in the education sector. The President asked MEC to create a large M&E team (consisting of more than 10 people) to monitor the entire education sector's reforms and anti-corruption efforts. However, due to limited resources, MEC was only able to create a team of four people for the MOE follow-up process.

During February 2018, MEC established an MOE monitoring and follow-up team composed of national and international anti-corruption and education experts. This team initially consisted of four people: two international consultants (each part-time with limited days), one full-time national education officer, and one full-time MEC secretariat employee (part-time on this activity) as team leader.

The MOE also shared their responses about MEC's findings and especially about MEC Recommendations. Although generally supportive, MOE was not in full agreement with a few of MEC's recommendations. MOE explained that some of the MEC recommendations are not implementable in the current context, but could potentially be implemented in future. MOE also noted that some recommendations were entirely outside of MOE control, for instance, the recommendation calling for the reduction MOE's size. MOE explained that this should be first discussed with NUG leadership. In addition, for some recommendations to be implementable, changes would be required in law, for instance, involving local communities in the teacher recruitment process.

MEC also presented the MOE MVCA report to Development Partners and solicited their feedback in writing and through meetings, particularly about findings and recommendations. Given that MEC institutes an active monitoring as part of its MVCAs, it was always intended that during the follow-up process, recommendations would be further articulated, adapted, and refined based on the nascent recommendations presented in the initial MOE MVCA report.

As a result of feedback from MOE and DPs, MEC initially revised the MVCA report, and is continuing an ongoing process of revising and refining the recommendations. As part of this process, MEC is working to more clearly articulate the recommendations and develop SMART-tested indicators for measuring progress on their implementation (SMART indicators assure that targets and levels of implementation are “Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound.”)

MEC has revised the entire 66 general recommendations in the original report, 6 of which have been deleted based on stakeholders’ concerns and comments, as well as issues of relevance, applicability, and overlap-duplication. MEC has further articulated the original general recommendations into 113 specific recommendations. Additional recommendations have been added after consultations with stakeholders. MEC has sent the latest revised recommendations to MOE, to DPs, and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) for follow up.

Development Process: Follow-Up with Stakeholders

Although the MOE MVCA largely focused on what can be considered the remit of the Ministry of Education, some of the recommendations in the MVCA report go beyond the MOE and concern other Ministries and stakeholders. Alongside recommendations specifying actions to be taken by (or specifically in relation to MOE), some of the recommendations also involve the IARCSC, DPs, and the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

Subsequently, MEC has asked MOE, IARCSC, MOF and DPs to introduce their focal points for reporting and updating MEC in relation to relevant recommendations. In addition, MEC is pursuing engagement with cross-cutting governance mechanisms such as the Human Resources Development Board (HRDB) which has representation from MoE, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Health, and other ministries.

Introduction of Relevant Focal Points:

- There were several weeks of delay in MOE introducing a complete list of its focal points to MEC, although that process is much further along now.
- MEC has also asked MOE to form a “contact group” at the leadership level of the Ministry, including one main focal point and specific focal points for each area/department (applying MEC’s MOPH monitoring model) to coordinate more effectively and efficiently between the 34 individuals MOE has introduced as focal points.
- The IARCSC has introduced one of its Commissioners as a focal point.
- Although an initial meeting has been held with some DPs to discuss the recommendations with MEC, no focal points have yet been decided.

Follow Up With CSOs and Education Sector Organizations:

The process of monitoring and follow-up with these entities is discussed below in greater detail.

Follow Up With MOE

MEC asked MOE to introduce focal points for updating their relevant recommendations. In addition, MEC asked MOE to introduce one main focal point to coordinate between MOE Departments/thematic focal points, MOE leadership, and between MOE and MEC.

One month into the follow-up, MOE has introduced 33 specific focal points for updating their assigned recommendation(s). MOE, per MEC request, introduced its acting Chief of Staff and an Advisor as “main focal points”.

MEC decided on 24th March 2018, as the deadline for getting all updates from MOE focal points. Accordingly, MEC sent the revised and articulated recommendations two weeks before the deadline. MEC had not received any updates by the end of March, one week after the deadline. MEC sent several emails to MOE focal points requesting their updates and also sent emails to the MOE main focal points to help expedite the process. MOE leadership has also sent emails to specific focal points and asked them to report to MEC. Some of these focal points neither replied to MEC’s emails, nor the MOE leadership’s emails. This delay and lack of communication led to MEC contacting MOE multiple times. It also contributed to the need for follow-up meetings with MOE leadership to share MEC’s concerns about the delays in reporting.

Despite the challenges in getting timely responses from MOE focal points, MOE leadership has been highly cooperative and supportive in the monitoring and follow-up process in the first Quarter. Going forward, MEC has asked MOE to reintroduce its main focal points and also those focal points who have not reported to MEC.

Another worrying point was that MOE’s main focal point, responsible for convincing other MOE focal points about the importance of on-time reporting, has also not reported to MEC. In the first Quarter, MEC has faced several difficulties and pushback on access to information from MOE. The internal coordination and cooperation within MOE departments also seems very weak, especially considering the early enthusiasm from MOE’s leadership and the specific comments about education sector reforms from the NUG.

MEC shared its concerns with MOE leadership, especially with MOE’s new acting Minister, and sought solutions for these problems. MOE has subsequently assigned new focal points for reporting on implementation of MEC’s recommendations. MOE’s new acting Minister promised that he himself will be acting as a main focal point and emphasized his desire to improve cooperation between MOE and MEC. Finally, the MOE’s new focal points have collated all MOE follow-up data from the previous focal points’ updates and sent this to MEC on April 16th, 2018.

MEC has now reviewed all MOE updates on the MVCA recommendations. MOE’s updates on 40 of the recommendations required supporting documentation as evidence. MEC asked for these documents on April 21, 2018 and received them on April 23, 2018, showing a marked improvement in MOE’s responsiveness, compared to the start of the Quarter.

This first Quarterly monitoring report is based on the updates received from MOE and other stakeholders, as well as interviews with key respondents at national and Provincial levels, as detailed below:

Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission

IARCSC leadership has acknowledged and welcomed MEC’s recommendations and agreed on implementation of the recommendations relevant to them. Out of 113 specific recommendations, 17 required follow-up with IARCSC. The IARCSC has assigned one of its Commissioners as a focal point to MEC. MEC held a face-to-face meeting with the IARCSC focal point and collected the required information about the relevant recommendations.

Development Partners

“Development Partners” is a broad and general category and this sometimes causes confusion. Here, what we mean by DPs are those main international agencies who are working in Afghanistan’s education sector. In this case, these DPs include: Global Affairs Canada, DANIDA, DfID (and Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank. Of the current 113 specific recommendations, 14 of them also require engagement and follow-up with DPs. MEC is in the process of following these recommendations with DPs, including further articulation and refinement of recommendations and their indicators.

Provincial Visits

In order to verify data from focal points, MEC seeks evidence including documentation, direct observations, and interviews gathered through field missions. In this first period of quarterly monitoring, MEC has conducted Provincial visits to Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kabul. MEC collected data from stakeholders at the Province level including Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), District Educational Departments (DEDs), schools (school Principals and classroom visits), School Management *Shuras*, Provincial Councils, the IARCSC, and CSOs.

Appreciation

Those interviewed or sharing information with MEC – officials from MOE, IARCSC, DPs, PEDs, and parents, teachers and students – gave freely of their time and made this follow up report possible. Many made clear that education is of central importance for the future for their families and the country, and must be a top priority for the nation.

1. Methodology

MEC engages in two types of monitoring mechanisms; active monitoring and more typical ‘passive’ follow-up. The *passive* follow-up has relied on sending a list of recommendations to the focal points and requests written updates on the status of each recommendation. The MEC M&E Team updates the MEC M&E framework and provides a very general report about the overall status of recommendations. In *active* monitoring, MEC actively engages with the sector, not only relying on focal points updates, but also collecting evidence to support and verify the focal point claims, updates, and responses.

MEC’s M&E Team conducts field visits to verify and assess the status of each MOE recommendation on the ground. For instance, if a focal point in MOE claims that they have revised the School Management *Shura* (SMS) Terms of Reference (ToR), as well as involved *Shura* members in school monitoring, MEC verifies this claim through school visits and analyses of previous and revised ToRs, to check that the SMS ToR has actually been revised. MEC also interviews members of School Management *Shuras* to verify the degree of their involvement in school monitoring and overall understanding of the education *Shura* ToR. Additionally, MEC conducts semi-structured in-depth interviews and guided focus group discussions to collect further information about the status of recommendations.

The content of this report is based on evidence, including documents. MEC has taken great care to avoid a *perception*-based analysis; MEC actively engages with focal points, and verifies the data and the updates they provide as evidence.

Furthermore, MEC has also planned to monitor wider reforms and anti-corruption efforts in the education sector for two years (post-release of the MVCA report) – this is the typical duration of

MEC's active monitoring period for MVCA's. MEC will provide Quarterly monitoring reports on the status of recommendations and will submit these to the Government, the Afghan public, and the international community.

2. Development Processes:

Follow up Recommendations with Stakeholder Focal Points

The current follow up report is the first Quarterly monitoring report on the implementation of recommendations of the MEC report "Ministry-wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment of the Ministry of Education." This report has three main Sections:

- A. Section A of the report presents the status of all recommendations. This section explains the status of all 60 general recommendations and 113 specific recommendations based on documented progress. For instance, how many were 100% implemented? How many were at least 50% implemented? How many were at least 25% percent implemented? How many are 'under study' or are only at the initial stage, with work having been started? How many are pending for the future? And how many of do not have progress at all, or, are cases where the relevant entity did not take any action by the time of this report's preparation.
- B. Section B explains the status of recommendations in categories taken from the original MEC MVCA report. Those who are interested to know the status of recommendations under the categories of the original report are kindly referred to this section. The content and information will be the same, but analyzed and explained in a different way.
- C. Section C, the third part of the report is the MEC M&E framework for this monitoring, which includes all recommendations with detailed explanations of each recommendation. If you are looking for details of the status of a recommendation, you are kindly asked to study this section.

3. Findings & Analysis

a. Analysis of recommendations by status

i. Recommendations Which are 100% Achieved

On first Quarter of monitoring, 16 recommendations out 113 are fully implemented. These are mostly related to IARCSC's recruitment of teacher positions. Based on a Presidential Decree, number 1289, dated 18/04/1396 recruitment of all civil service employees have been shifted to IARCSC. Therefore, MEC recommendations regarding teacher recruitment have also shifted to IARCSC. The areas of this progress are explained below:

- **R6a:** According to IARCSC, they have categorized all teacher positions based on Province, District, school and subject, based on guidance from MOE. The positions have been announced at different levels, including IARCSC's announcement of teacher positions through its website, which was unprecedented in the history of IARCSC. Before this change, obtaining the job application forms was often problematic and complicated by requests for bribes, or the requirement of a connection within the Ministry. Through IARCSC, all positions had been announced up to the District level, with cooperation of MOE Departments and Provincial entities. IARCSC has also distributed the printed copies of vacancies in some Districts. IARCSC has now received around 260,000 applications for 17,000 positions (8000 out of 17,000 positions are teacher positions). MEC verified access to job application forms through a Provincial visit to Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. MEC confirmed that the IARCSC

announced the teacher positions through several methods, including the IARCSC and jobs.af websites, distribution of printed copies, and also through media and billboards.

- **R6b:** IARCSC has shortlisted applicants who met the criteria mentioned on the application form and submitted them to Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). MOHE Kankor¹ Committee has its own ‘quarantine’ mechanism to prevent any types of interference in the recruitment process. During this monitoring period, IARCSC remarked that, initially, many applicants had applied for more than one position and therefore the number of applicants had increased to 260,000. The MOHE system does not accept such duplication. The MOHE system shortlisted candidates only for one position. As a result, candidates who had applied for more than one position complained to IARCSC. IARCSC received more than 6,000 complaints regarding this issue, and ultimately gave a choice to candidates so they could select only one subject. In the end, the actual number of applicants for 17,000 positions decreased to 230,000 candidates. IARCSC acknowledged there were some technical problems, as the process was new (for instance, some candidates were shortlisted for a position which was outside of his/her field of study. They were given the chance to change it).
- MOE has published the exam dates and information with regards to recruitment process on its Facebook page, as well as the MOE website.
- MOHE coded/numbered all applications based on subject, school, District and Province, according to their own system. MOHE provided an ID number for each application form. MOHE scanned all applications to their system, including the photo attached to each candidate’s application. They have also offered District choices and language options for candidates. IARCSC has been working on development of a “questions bank” with support of university professors.
- ID cards were distributed to applicants. At this stage, the applicants were also registered through a standardized biometric system. On applicant ID cards, the position being sought by the applicant, the date, and the location of the test, were all specified.
- Applicants are also being checked through the biometric system to assure that only the actual applicant is entering the site of the test administration. Kankor Committee Members, based on ID cards, distribute the relevant test materials to the candidates. The questions in the materials are uniquely generated by machine for each candidate. Similar to the university entrance tests, applicants receive a “selection card” to write the vacancy code on it. Once the test is finished, all papers are collected, signed and locked in a box and transferred to MOHE main office. Only the Kankor Committee is allowed to open the boxes. MOHE uses an “Automatic Reading Machine” to check the result of the tests and upload them to the MOHE Kankor website. Applicant IDs permit them to check the result of their test through that website. IARCSC will reportedly disseminate the list of successful candidates into 34 provinces, by hard and soft copies, and MEC will monitor this to verify implementation.
- **R59:** The IARCSC and MOHE have changed teacher recruitment tests to multiple-choice questions, per MEC’s recommendation. Based on IARCSC updates, the testing materials are now specialized up to 60 to 70 percent. For instance, for a mathematics teaching position, around 60 percent of questions are from mathematics and the rest are from other subjects. This format reflects the approach taken on the IELTS test. Each aspect of applicant qualification and

1 University Entrance Exam

ability is considered and checked. The long answer questions cannot be checked by machine, and this remains a risk of corruption. The multiple-choice questions are used for teacher positions Grade 5 and 6. For higher positions (e.g., Grade 1, 2, 3), applicants are required to have an interview and long answers are provided in handwritten format.

- Once the result of the tests is announced, IARCSC will introduce it to MOE. MOE will also process the successful candidates' education documents through its normal procedure. For instance, 12th grade diploma documents are being checked by MOE; higher education diplomas/certificates are being checked by MOHE; candidates' health conditions are being checked by MOPH; criminal background checks are being conducted by appropriate authorities, and finally, work licenses are issued by the Human Resource Department of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled (MOLSAMD). These were the steps of the recruitment process, as reviewed by MEC. Reportedly, the result of this massive teacher recruitment will be announced in the very near future. H.E the President approved creation of 18,000 new teacher positions to be recruited for within this year. IARCSC will take this forward once the current process is concluded.
- **R6b, R6c:** Another MEC recommendation focused on transparency called for in publishing the list of applicants and shortlisted applicants. Both lists have been published on the IARCSC job website. MOE has published the examination dates and information about recruitment processes on its Facebook, page as well as the MOE website.
- MEC also verified that IARCSC has distributed around 700 printed copies of the list of shortlisted candidates to Districts. In Nangarhar province, which represents the Eastern zone of Afghanistan, IARCSC administered tests to 16,000 applicants for 720 teacher positions. *During the first Quarter, MEC determined that publishing the list of applicants through the MOE website was not feasible (with the IARCSC website performing this task), and this aspect of the recommendation is dropped from future monitoring.*
- **R6d:** MEC recommended recruitment results are published on an appropriate website. According to IARCSC, the recruitment results are currently being checked by Automatic Reading Machines and will be automatically uploaded and announced through the MOHE Kankor website. According to IARCSC, applicants will be able to check the results of their test on the website through using their ID cards.
- IARCSC developed an electronic recruitment system for all civil service employee recruitment processes. IARCSC reportedly will provide an account for each Ministry to insert their vacancies into a centralized system. The applicants would then apply only through online applications and email. The aim of IARCSC is a system that automatically performs the short listing and long listing, to prevent human intervention. This initiative is still at its initial stage. *MEC will closely monitor progress in successive Quarters.*
- **R7:** Another recommendation now considered fully implemented regards restructuring MOE and reducing the overall size of the Ministry. MOE has developed and finalized a detailed reform plan and Concept Notes for restructuring the Ministry. This includes MOE shifting responsibility for school construction to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MORRD) in non-urban settings and the Ministry of Urban Development (MOUD) in urban settings.

- Based on a Presidential Decree, number 11, dated 1/02/1397, TVET has been removed from the MOE structure and re-positioned under an Independent Technical & Vocational Education and Training Board. Ms Nadima Sahar has been appointed as Head of this autonomous entity.
- IARCSC is planning a Functional Review of MOE. In line with IARCSC plans for Functional Reviews of all main GoIRA entities, IARCSC will then develop a proposed reform plan for MOE to distinguish core functions from other non-core functions and activities of the Ministry – an objective of all Functional Reviews. The reforms would consist of jointly implemented work by relevant government entities; and in the case of MOE, reforms would be initiated by MOE, technically supported by IARCSC, and coordinated with other Ministries.
- Additionally, IARCSC plans to develop and implement a unified Human Resource Management Information System for all governmental Ministries and entities. According to IARCSC, these reforms are dependent on EQRA funding, though practical decisions on funding sources would likely be determined at a higher level in Government.
- **R8:** MEC recommended a specific percentage of the posts should be given to women candidates, in order to ensure guaranteed female participation within the education system. IARCSC developed a “Policy on Increasing Women Participation on Civil Service” (notably, this is not only focused on education). This policy aims to increase the recruitment of women by 2% in Afghanistan’s civil service workforce in 2018. This policy defined specific measures (positive discrimination) in pre-recruitment, recruitment, and post-recruitment phases.
- MOE has also taken positive actions regarding implementation of this recommendation. MOE allocated 17 PED Deputy Directors positions and half of 8,000 new teaching positions to female candidates. MEC verified this at the Province level. For instance, Kabul City Education Directorate allocated 55% of the new teaching positions/vacancies to female candidates. According to their Education Management Information System (EMIS), currently around 76% percent of Kabul City teachers are female teachers. Likewise, Laghman allocated 45% and Nangarhar 50% of their new teaching positions to women. Currently, the proportion of female teachers varies widely by Province.
- **R19:** MEC recommended that MOE leadership issue a public statement in order to signal that anti-corruption measures in the education sector are a top priority: *A lead objective of MOE is to resolve improper appointments of teachers within three years.* The goal of this recommendation has been achieved through a Presidential Decree, number 160, dated 30/03/1396, issued to assign ICARCS, MOHE, and MOE to conduct Kankor-type exams to resolve improper appointments of teachers. Likewise, the MOE leadership has issued a public statement on resolving improper appointment of teachers on several occasions, including the ‘School Bell’ (the first day of educational year).
- **R22:** MEC recommended that MOE leadership engage, at the Cabinet-level, in obtaining resources and support to implement education sector reforms. MEC has seen evidence of MOE advocacy at Cabinet-level. Subsequently, the leadership of the National Unity Government (NUG) has declared the two coming years, 1397 and 1398, as Education Support Years. As part of this decision:
 - MORRD has been assigned to construct 6,000 schools in rural areas in 2 years.
 - MOUD has been assigned to construct 100 schools in underserved Provinces each year by a “prefab” construction factory.

- MOF allocated 20 Million Afs to the Teacher Loan Fund.
- The Independent Directorate of Local Governance has been assigned to identify land for schools construction.
- Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology (MOICT) have been assigned to connect schools with the internet.
- The Chamber of Commerce promised to provide a specific percentage of tax revenues to support teachers.
- Most importantly, the President agreed personally to lead the MOE reforms.
- **R27a:** MEC recommended MOE to amend and revise the current Code of Conduct for all MOE staff to ensure equity, integrity, the right to education, accountability, and trust (MOPH has such a model in place for the health sector.)
- IARCSC has introduced a Code of Conduct to all Ministries and government agencies, including MOE. This Code of Conduct covers integrity and anti-corruption.
- **R29a, R29b:** After findings in the MVCA determined that MOE was overloaded with many non-core-function activities, MEC recommended that responsibility for implementation of all construction contracts in cities be moved to the Ministry of Urban Development and construction contracts in rural areas be moved to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development. Based on a Presidential Decree, number 3828, dated 21/11/1395, these responsibilities have now been shifted from MOE to MORRD and MOUD. *MEC will continue monitoring these developments for reliability, integrity, transparency, and community engagement.*
- **R40c, R40e:** Another fully implemented recommendation aimed to revise the Ministry's *Data Collection Guideline*. The *Data Collection Guideline* is now revised and has been reviewed by MEC. Additionally, MEC recommended that within 6 months, MOE would make EMIS data accessible to anyone visiting the MOE website. MEC verified that the 2017 dataset has been uploaded to the Ministry website and accessible to all (<http://MOE.gov.af/en/page/1831/3031>).
- **R44a:** MEC recommended establishing an Education Quality Committee. MOE has implemented this recommendation. Under the work of the NESP Steering Committee, three Coordination Committees and Working Groups were established, achieving MEC's objective: 1) Access, 2) Quality, 3) Effective Management. The Committees meet bi-monthly. The ToR of the Steering Committee has been reviewed by MEC. MEC will attend its meetings in future as an observer.
- **R4a:** MEC recommended MOE to carry out a policy review on lessons learned from Community Based Education. MOE has now completed the review, has begun to standardize the policy (*CBE Policy and Guidelines*, January 2018), and included revisions based on the lessons learned.

ii. Recommendations which are at least 50 % achieved

In the first Quarter of monitoring, 12 recommendations out 113 were achieved up to 50%. The evaluation of Quarterly status on each recommendation is being guided by achievement of indicators developed by the MEC follow-up team. These indicators will be further vetted with MOE

and key stakeholders for subsequent reports. The detailed status of each recommendation, based on these preliminary indicators, is explained below:

- **R1a:** MEC recommended involving local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in active monitoring and oversight of teacher recruitment for their respective Provinces in order to ensure transparency and build trust. As described above, the teacher recruitment process has now become mostly electronic. IARCSC also stated, *“Wherever there is an opportunity for civil society to monitor the process, they can monitor it.”* For instance, CSOs monitored the process of application form distribution to applicants and also the shortlisting process (performed in Kabul). The next steps of the recruitment process are electronic and therefore, there is no opportunity for CSOs (or other Provincial monitoring entities) to be engaged in those steps. The test is being administered by MOHE’s Kankor Department, according to their robust procedure. MOHE’s Kankor Committee consists of university professors and Intelligence authorities that do not allow any other officials to access the sites of the test. A member of a Provincial Council told MEC: *“...Everyone, including myself, tried to interfere and influence in the recruitment process. We have not succeeded. It means that the teacher recruitment process by IARCSC is reformed and improved. All the ways of corruption are blocked”*. MEC will continue its monitoring in this regard.
- The full scope of the original recommendation was reduced (e.g. by dropping the call for monitoring and oversight by *Shuras*) by MEC during an analysis of feasibility and to avoid duplication of efforts.
- **R2a:** The Terms of Reference for School Management *Shuras* (SMSs) is revised based on MEC’s recommendations. MEC will continue its monitoring to make sure that the revised ToR is disseminated to all SMSs and is being used effectively by them. The revised SMS ToR and SMS meeting journal are available at MEC.
- MEC interviewed SMS members in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kabul and found their engagement to be extensive, as they provided land, books, money and other types of support to schools. For instance, for the year 1396, SMSs in Kabul City had donated approximately Afs 50 Million to Kabul City schools. Some SMSs took part in repairing schools, building yards and toilets, and equipping schools. *By classifying this recommendation as “100% achieved,” MEC does not imply that all SMSs are effective, but there is evidence that they do play a key role, mostly in construction affairs, rather than monitoring schools (so far.)*
- **R2c:** According to MEC’s recommendation, SMS meetings should be documented, and this should include formal minutes. MOE’s Directorate of School Management *Shuras* (DSMS) developed *SMS Meeting Journals*, in both *Dari* and *Pashto* languages, and distributed these to SMSs to record the meeting agenda, minutes, and decisions. However, with a reported funding shortage, DSMS states they are not able to distribute the *Journals*, but will follow up with the schools to document the meeting minutes. MEC has verified the existence of *SMS Meeting Journals*. MEC will explore how to support DSMS efforts to identify funding to support this ongoing activity with the aim of promoting reliability, integrity, transparency, and community engagement.
- **R3b:** Regarding the MEC recommendation to “build schools using relevant aspects of indigenous design, adhering to MOE standards and universal design principles,” MOE Infrastructure Service Department (ISD) reported that they are using “standard designs,” which

are approved by World Bank, and have been discussed with the MORRD and MOUD. MEC will continue its monitoring to verify these designs are implemented. The ISD “standard designs” were shared with MEC.

- **R5:** Another MEC recommendation focused on expanding use of digital (electronic) methods for candidate examinations of general recruitment (in addition to teacher recruitment.) The IARCSC, as mentioned above, took some steps toward e-recruitment for the entire civil service of Afghanistan, including MOE. The IARCSC provided a software system and allocated one account for each Ministry to post their vacancies. The applicants can apply online and via email. The system will automatically conduct shortlisting and long listing. No deletions can happen among the received applications. MEC will continue its monitoring regarding this implementation since several Ministries are utilizing the system.
- **R10:** The MOE MVCA indicated that the current curriculum is too large and the teaching hours are too short, both being vulnerabilities to corruption. MEC recommended a reduction in the size of the curriculum, based on findings from a systematic review. MOE has now revised the curriculum framework, including specification that the textbooks for each grade would be reduced, as follow:
 1. Textbooks of grades 1-3 *from 6 to 3.*
 2. Textbooks of grades 4-6 *from 14 to 6.*
 3. Textbooks of grades 7-9 *from 17 to 7*
 4. And textbooks of grades 10-12 *from 15 to 12.*

Relevant to this, the general lack of textbooks in schools was another challenge. Since the release of the MVCA, MEC did not detect any improvements in the situation. The students in Kabul, Nangarhar, and Laghman still struggle without appropriate books: In Nangarhar, the students of grades 7, 8 and 9 reported they have been facing extreme lack of textbooks; student stated they have not received books from the Ministry in these grades for the past 4 years. MEC did observe that the private schools in these locations have enough textbooks. MEC heard reports of the books intended for MOE schools are being sold to private schools, with some students claiming that they’d bought the MOE textbooks from the Bazaar. Notably, on the cover-page of MOE-issued textbooks, it is printed: “*...selling and buying MOE textbooks are prohibited.*” Interviewees also suggested that the textbooks be distributed to students *at the end* of educational year, so that students could continue their education and get additional preparation time during holiday months.

- **R11:** Based on MEC recommendations, there was good progress on a functional review of TVET’s management and program structure. According to MOE, they have now proposed four possible scenarios to the President. One of the recommendations proposed that TVET becomes an independent entity. Recently, the NUG leadership decided to make TVET an Independent Technical & Vocational Education and Training Board. In the next Quarter, MEC will seek documentation of the functional review of TVET management to verify any other relevant aspects of the program structure that are still to be addressed by the Ministry (or by the newly established entity.)
- **R12c, R12d:** MEC recommended an extended scope and duration of teacher training courses to achieve an equivalent status to a Bachelor Degree (Diploma). MOE, in the month of *Dalw* 1396/January 2018, signed an MOU with MOHE to provide opportunities for teachers to upgrade their education level to a Bachelor Degree. MEC will continue monitoring the

implementation of this MOU with both MOE and MOHE and will provide updates in upcoming Quarters.

- Additionally, another MOU was signed with MOHE, aiming to provide practicum experience for teacher education students. MOE has included ongoing classroom support to existing teachers in its “*National Education Strategic Plan (NESP)*,” and EQRA-designated Academic Supervisors will also provide classroom support.
- **R13:** MEC recommended MOE to conduct a review of the management and structure of Adult Literacy Programs, including an examination of options to expand monitoring of enrollment and course quality. MOE reported that the Adult Education Directorate is established to provide the opportunities of continuing education for the literacy course graduates, especially women. Second, a Special Monitoring Manager role is being established in the Literacy Department. Third, the *Manual for Monitoring Literacy Courses* is now developed and has been provided to all the Monitors in the field. Fourth, participatory monitoring is started by the *Mullah Imams, Shuras*, influential members of the community, and local development monitors. Likewise, an agreement with the UNESCO to assign a third party for implementation of monitoring, via GPS, is agreed. *Evidence of each of these achievements are available at MEC.*
- **R14:** In order to have flexible Adult Literacy Programs for women, an agreement has now been signed with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA) to establish special literacy courses for women. The implementation mechanism is also prepared.
- MOE Deputy Ministry for Literacy signed another MOU with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MOLSAMD) to establish the literacy courses for women in its “Economic Empowerment of Women” program. Likewise, an agreement is signed with the MOF to include the objective on improving access to women’s literacy education in the Citizen Charter Program. The implementation of these MOUs requires further follow-up; MEC will continue monitoring these activities in successive Quarters at MOE, MOWA, and MOLSAMD.
- **R18:** MOE was asked to establish a system with integrity and transparency to conduct placement tests for returnees who claim to have studied in Madrassas in other countries. MEC has reviewed the guideline/procedure and verifies it is fully developed to facilitate placement tests for returnees who have studied in other countries. MEC will continue to monitor its implementation.

iii. Recommendations which are at least 25% achieved

5 recommendations out 113 are achieved up to 25%. The detailed status of each recommendation is explained below:

- **R12a:** To improve alignment of Teacher Training College (TTC) graduates with local market conditions, the Ministry of Education signed an MOU with MOHE to prepare a strategic plan to enhance qualifications of teachers. MOE, together with MOHE, made progress in establishing a functional Coordination Group for fulfilling the MOU. MOE has also stated that the Ministry will not enroll new students in TTC Pre-Service Programs: TTCs will only focus on training of existing in-service teachers. MEC will continue to monitor its implementation.
- **R25:** Regarding systematic management of complaints related to recruitment, a formal Complaints Handling System has been introduced by the IARCSC. It is implemented in all civil services of Afghanistan, including Ministry of Education. A general Complaints Handling Mechanism to address different types of complaints in the education sector, beyond the

complaints of teacher recruitment within IARCSC, was verified on the MOE website. MEC does not have more details in this regard and will elaborate this issue in next Quarter.

- At the Province level, though PEDs claimed during Provincial visits that they have assigned specific individuals as focal point for handling complaints, MEC's Provincial data collection indicated that teachers, students, parents did not know about the existence of such a system. Some education authorities in Provinces reportedly consider their Internal Audit Department (IAD) as an appropriate complaint handling mechanism, which goes counter to the stated scope of the ToR of IAD, where tasks are (largely) focused on financial transparency and accounting illegalities.
- **R40d:** In order to make MOE's Education Management Information System (EMIS) data more reliable, MEC recommended that 100% of Data Collectors (Enumerators) be trained in each area of data collection, documentation, and reporting techniques. There has been some progress in the first monitoring period; Data Collectors in the center are now fully trained. Data Collectors in Provinces and Districts will reportedly be trained in June 2018. *MEC will continue to follow implementation in upcoming Quarters.*
- MOE reported that the Ministry has trained Provincial Statistics Managers, Officers, and Academic Supervisors in 6 Provinces. They plan to expand this to all Provinces.
- MOE has described the process in detail: EMIS central staffs train Provincial and District Academic Supervisors, who in turn train Principals. District Supervisors orient Principals on data collection forms, which they complete and sign. District Academic Supervisors check if forms are accurately filled and reconcile the data with school logs, physically verifying specific indicators (teachers present, students present) and sign the forms. Forms are then sent to PEDs and Provincial Academic Supervisors for further checking and signing. The data from the forms is then entered into EMIS at Provincial level. Data entry is rechecked by a second person and their name is recorded in the system. *Each of these processes will be verified by MEC in upcoming Quarters.*
- In the First Quarter of monitoring, MEC interviewed EMIS Managers in three Provinces; they reported that the Principals are in charge of reporting school data to DEDs and PEDs. They send the data forms, which *"...often contain many mistakes due to lack of training,"* according to respondents. During MEC interviews, EMIS Managers proposed that MOE implement a 'punishment' system for reporting wrong data, such as cutting a portion of his/her salary. *It should be noted that MEC recorded these unsolicited comments from EMIS Managers, but does not endorse specific punitive measures such as this. MEC will continue to monitor this complex implementation process in upcoming Quarters.*
- **R42a:** Regarding the establishment of an Audit Review Committee, a ToR is now developed. MOE is planning to formally activate the Audit Committee soon. MEC will participate at the meeting of this Committee as an observer.
- **R46a:** MEC recommended to MOE to develop and publish its Anti-Corruption Strategy. MOE developed an *Anti-Corruption Action Plan* based partly on findings of the MEC Ministry-Wide Vulnerability to Corruption Assessment. MOE has also established an Anti-Corruption Committee to ensure that *Anti-Corruption Action Plan* is implemented. MEC will monitor the implementation and will provide detailed updates in upcoming Quarters.

iv. Recommendations in which study and/or work have started

In this Quarter, work and/or study have started on 38 recommendations. The detailed status of each recommendation is explained as below:

- **R3a:** To build schools using locally available materials, MOE reported that, they design projects according to each program request (owner of the projects), and their design is according to local material such as: stone masonry, I-Beam, Burn brick and mud Brick. Recently, MoE transferred the projects to MOUD and MRRD, based presidential decree.
- **R3c:** To contract local communities to provide unskilled local labor in construction of schools, MOE provided engineers to supervise the construction works and hired unskilled laborers for school construction projects. MOE reported that they will follow up with MORRD and MOUD to apply the same concept in the Citizen Charter National Priority Program projects as well. MEC will seek evidence of these claims from MOE, MORRD, and MOUD in upcoming Quarters.
- **R3d:** To enforce anti-corruption procurement policies and procedures in school construction, MOE demonstrated that they have a detailed section of procurement reform in its recently finalized *Reform Plan*. MOE leadership has assigned a support team to the Procurement Department to speed up the process and ensure transparency in all projects. However, with the recent shifting of school construction responsibility from MOE to MORRD and MOUD, MEC will continue to follow implementation of this recommendation with MORRD and MOUD in upcoming Quarters.
- **R3e, R39a:** To directly involve members of the local community (e.g., CSOs, *Shuras*) in active monitoring and oversight of school construction, MOE Procurement Department is to include a specific clause in the contracts to allow local communities and CSOs to monitor the works of contractors. As described above, following the shift of responsibility for school construction to MORRD and MOUD, MEC will monitor implementation of this recommendation with MORRD and MOUD in upcoming Quarters. *MEC will seek evidence of standardization of local community monitoring activities to assure that the processes are reliable and consistent.*
- **R9:** Discussions have taken place between MOE and MOHE to establish a Coordination Working Group among the MOE Curriculum Department, TTCs, and MOHE to better align school curricula and curriculum of teacher education programs for primary and secondary levels,. Based on these discussions, an MOU for alignment of curriculums of schools, TTCs and Universities is planned, but has yet to be developed and signed².
- **R12b:** To coordinate strategic plans between MOE and MOHE to achieve recommendations in “*The Competency Framework for Teachers in Afghanistan*,” MOE made progress in establishing functional coordination between the two Ministries. MOE stated they have signed an MOU with MOHE for alignment of strategic plans including revision of the education universities curriculum, based on MOE needs, and collaboration on developing a National Assessment Test for teachers. *MEC will continue monitoring implementation of the MOU in upcoming Quarters.*

² MOE clarified that a Curriculum Development Working Group was formed in 2017, under the Quality Coordination Committee of their NESP Steering Committee. The Working Group consists of relevant MOE Departments (Curriculum, Teacher Education, Academic Supervision, General Education), MOHE, DPs (UNESCO, UNICEF), and civil society. *MEC continues to recommend formal participation in this WG should include representatives from TTCs themselves, as they are engaged directly in the training of teachers.*

- **R12e:** MOE states they developed a Teacher Credentialing System. However, MOE also stated that before implementing it, “*the financial implications need to be sorted out.*” MOE also claimed that they have piloted the system, but MEC did not receive any evidence in the 1st monitoring period.
- **R12f:** To implement IT solutions for tackling teacher and school staff absenteeism, some basic, preliminary discussions have happened. An initiative which offers a feasible IT solution for teacher and staff absenteeism will be piloted in one Province and then based on the pilot’s lessons learned, a decision will be made concerning its implementation throughout the country. MOE is also seeking a mobile phone application solution for tackling school staff absenteeism.
- **R15:** According to the MOE MVCA, 53% of MOE staff salaries were being paid through bank and electronic means and 47% through cash at the time of the original research. MEC recommended that MOE expand the payment of salaries through the use of electronic means. In the intervening months since the release of the MVCA, this proportion of salary payments has increased to 62%. MOE reports that the Ministry, along with MOF and MOICT are continuing to expand electronic salary payments. MOE also reports that an M-Paisa Mobile Money pilot has now started in Nangarhar, Parwan and Kandahar.

In the Kabul City Education Department, 100% of teacher salaries are paid through bank accounts. They pay salaries for 4,200 support staff, 25,000 Teachers, and also M&E staff, - which is, in total, roughly 30073 staff within Kabul City.

In Laghman, only in the central part of the Province, teachers and administrative staff are being paid through bank accounts.

In Nangarhar, a very small percentage of staff are being paid through bank accounts. Nangarhar PED employees explained that bank fees are more than the fees charged by the traditional *mutamid* (cashier). MOE is going to implement an M-Paisa System through telecommunication companies. By this means, teachers should be able to get their salaries from these companies’ offices nearby their homes, without having to travel long distances to District or Provincial centers.

- **R16:** MEC recommended to MOE to implement the teacher professional development initiatives, as outlined in NESP III. Generally, there are two types of capacity building trainings for teachers, teaching methodology seminars and subject-based seminars; the former is for all teachers, but the latter is more specialized training for subject teachers (e.g. mathematics.)
- Both long term and short term training programs are being implemented to develop teacher professional capacity, with 7,297 teachers trained in in-service programs (25% females). Additionally 18,250 teachers participated in short term trainings (38% females).
- An MOU has also been signed with MOHE to support in-service teachers accessing Education Universities to enable them to complete higher education.
- Nangarhar PED and Kabul City Education Department said that they provide capacity building programs annually. Given the likelihood of substantial changes in the way that teacher education (both pre-service and in-service) is provided in Afghanistan - e.g. with a potential shift of pre-service teacher education from Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs, under MOE) to universities (under MOHE) – MEC will be monitoring this dynamic situation and providing updated recommendations and support for implementation accordingly.

- **R17:** To digitize the issuing of 12th grade Diplomas, a new procedure for processing certificates has been devised. Software for digitizing certificate data and certificate issuance has been developed and is now being piloted in Kabul City by the Kabul Provincial Education Department. After gathering lessons learned from this pilot, MOE states it will be expanded to other Provinces in 2018. MEC conducted a focus group discussion with Kabul City Education Heads and verified that a technical team is working on digitalizing the issuance of 12th grade certificates.
- In Nangarhar, MEC verified that the system in place was still the traditional manual method for certificates.
- MOE stated that the software for digitalization will be further upgraded, based on the pilot experience. Data entry for 50,000 graduates of 1396 of Kabul City is completed and certificates are being processed through the electronic system, including use of security paper. The data entry to enable use of the new system is ongoing for 10 Provinces, with student results for grade 10-11 currently being entered at the time of this monitoring report. *MEC will continue to monitor progress of this pilot.*
- **R21a, R21c:** MEC recommended establishment of a High Level Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor and press the reforms of the education sector. MOE established a Technical Committee on Reform, produced a *National Education Reform Paper*, and developed a related set of Guidelines on restructuring the Ministry. *At the time of this report's preparation it is not clear if the Ministry intends to form the High Level Oversight Committee.*
- **R21b:** MEC has also recommended that the High Level Oversight Committee include MOE leadership, DPs, CSOs, and other stakeholders. MOE reported that a number of consultations with DPs and CSOs are being done through the NESP Steering Committee and other MOE Working Groups. *In the second monitoring period MEC will analyze the ToR of the NESP Steering Committee to ascertain if this fulfills the intent of the original recommendation, and if engagement by the recommended stakeholders is taking place.*
- **R23a:** MEC recommended that MOE establish “reform networks” in each Province to coordinate, monitor, and press for sector-wide reforms. According to MOE, PED reforms is one of the indicators on which 21 newly recruited PED Directors will be held accountable. MOE has also instructed the new PEDs to do a situation analysis and come-up with Provincial priority reform proposals.
- **R26:** MEC recommended to MOE to ensure that a transparent system of accountability (punishments and rewards) is in place and functional for MOE staff. Although a system of punishments and rewards is technically in place in MOE, based on the Afghan Education Law and Civil Servants Law, MEC could not determine if these have been properly implemented in a consistent and widespread way across the country. MOE has promised to work on enforcement in an accountable manner, based on its reform agenda. *MEC will collect evidence on the implementation of this recommendation and provide an update in the next Quarter.*
- **R28b:** MOE Procurement Department’s revised *Tashkil* possess a separate unit under the name of Contract Facilitation Department whose role is to facilitate the contracts, through desk monitoring. MOE's other Departments, who are the “owner” of the projects, and have relevant technical expertise, are responsible to monitor the progress of all awarded contracts.

- **R31a:** MEC recommended that PEDs publicly share Provincial budgets and actual expenditures for each Province, each year. MEC observed at the Provincial level that PEDs have four budget codes: Code number 21 is for salaries, number 22 is for housing/building rent and services, number 24 is for expenses related affairs, and code number 25 is for other related costs, however, there is no separate Provincial budget. As a result, schools make requests to their District Education Department (DED) and then DED passes these along to PED according to these four codes.
- MOE, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, is working on a mechanism to clearly identify the budget for each Province, based on their plans, and publicly share the information in each Province..
- **R32a:** As noted previously, a few of MEC's recommendations involve Development Partners (DPs). MEC recommended that DPs to align donor programs around the meritocratic appointment of teachers. The issue has been discussed with DPs through a coordination group meeting (although it should be noted that this meeting mainly involved participation of USAID, with Canada joining towards the end of the meeting; no other DP's attended). USAID is doing this through the policy level and capacity building level as they have already included these measures in the EQRA program (which replaces the EQUIP program and, likewise, will be overseen by the World Bank). MOE, on this specific recommendation, reported that the recently finalized CBE policy addresses this issue of meritocratic appointment of teachers. Evidence in regards to the implementation of this recommendation is needed from both DPs and MOE.
- **R32b:** MEC also recommended to DPs to coordinate donor programs of meritocratic appointment of teachers. USAID has already focused on coordinating its programs through working groups and other mechanisms. Likewise, World Bank coordinated its programs through EQRA program.
- **R33:** MEC recommended DPs to expand the Capacity Building Activity initiative. According to MOE, the need for capacity development is highlighted in the NESP III. DPs were requested, through NESP III Steering Committee meetings, to support capacity development. Donors have expanded development plans. USAID says that they have been doing this, but evidence is needed.
- **R34:** To apply lessons learned from CBE to MOE schools, MOE has included lessons learnt from CBE to schools (e.g. more focus on engaging communities in education of children and school support, and recruitment and training of more female teachers) in NESP III. MOE recruited around 2,500 contract female teachers in rural areas (although it should be noted this recruitment has been focused on District centers, not the most rural and hard-to-reach communities) and this will be expanded to 5,000 in 2018. *MEC will also follow up this recommendation with DPs and the Human Resources Development Board (HRDB) in the next Quarter.*
- **R35a:** To standardize Technical Assistants' (TAs) ToRs to explicitly focus on MOE staff' skills development as a task, MOE has drafted a basic template for a ToR and the standardization of the ToRs is planned to be started jointly with related Departments, by May, 2018. USAID said this is already happening. MEC intends to review the draft ToR.

- **R37a:** To support the national anti-corruption organizational reform structure, DPs especially USAID and World Bank have been supportive. A detailed update will be provided in the next Quarter.
- **R40a:** As there are concerns about the reliability and timeliness of MOE school data, MEC recommended MOE to send EMIS enumerators to 20% of schools, twice per year (at the beginning and end of the school year) to verify EMIS. According to MOE, a plan for verification of 5% of schools is prepared and will be implemented by the Statistics Unit, after data collection for 2018 is completed.
- MEC discussed this issue with Nangarhar, Laghman and Kabul City Education Departments. PEDs distribute an eight-page form to all schools in their respective Provinces through their M&E staff and DEDs. PEDs ask for the form to be returned within 20 to 25 days. MEC was told that the returned form has been rejected four times, due to being improperly filled out. That's why there is a significant need for training.
- MEC asked School Principals and PED staff about the seemingly large discrepancy between school data and EMIS data. An interview respondent told MEC that, school data is dynamic, and that the numbers of students are changing weekly. This point needs to be considered when data collected at school level with EMIS. It was also suggested to MEC that the reason that Afghanistan's student population was at one time reported as being up to an unrealistic 12 million, was because of the World Food Program (WFP); as after 2001, for some years, WFP was providing food, (including biscuits, rice and cooking oil) for school students and therefore many families were sending their children to schools to get food, not for education. Once that program stopped, the enrollment numbers decreased dramatically. *MEC will further explore this explanation in additional Provinces in future Quarters.*
- MOE has been in discussion with Central Statistic Organization (CSO) for mutual collaboration and CSO engagement in periodic data verification of schools. An MOU is drafted and under review which will establish the basis for mutual collaboration on data quality.
- **R40b:** MEC recommended MOE to consolidate/collate MOE's EMIS, Human Resources Management Information System, and Payroll databases within one year. The work has reportedly begun. An Oversight and Technical Committee has been established and integrated software has begun to be developed. MOE reported that 'data cleaning' of different databases is going on to facilitate data consolidation (although evidence of this has not been shared with MEC). Currently in Kabul City Education Department and Laghman, there are no such systems in place.
- **R40f:** Regarding an external review of MOE data and MOE control systems, technical assistance is being provided by the USAID CBA project. Procurement, Payroll, HR, Internal control, Finance and EMIS data and control systems are being reviewed. MOE reported that actions have been taken to improve the control systems and develop the capacity of staff, however, MOE, as yet, has not shared evidence with MEC for verification of this.
- **R41a:** To increase the number of auditors inside MOE by 10% within two years, MOE has revised the Internal Audit Department structure and has made a request to the Office of the President for 12 new auditors. The issue is under discussion between MOE, the Office of the President and the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission. *MEC will provide an update in the next Quarter.*

- **R41d:** To ensure transparency, MEC asked MOE to publish 100% of MOE’s Internal Audit Department’s (IAD) routine reports from June 1, 2018 (This does *not* include publishing IAD’s Incident Reports or case files referred by IAD to AGO). MOE reported that based on the approved operational plan, during the first quarter of fiscal year 1397, (January 2018 until the end of March 2018), 9 audits at central and 13 audits at Provincial level were conducted; as a result 5 cases at central level and 2 cases at Provincial level were received by IAD – the rest are in progress. The reports will be published by June, 2018. *MEC will seek the operational plan and proof of the publication of these reports.*
- **R41e:** MEC recommended DPs to provide technical assistance to IAD, within one year, based on IAD-DP assessment of gaps. According to an MOE update, the assessment of gaps has already been done by MOE. As result, the types of technical assistance needed by IAD have been provided by Capacity Building Assistance (CBA). MEC has only received a list of training participants and will search for more information about specific capacity building and related activities.
- **R45:** To publicly share meta-data on the status of all teacher positions via a database, in detail, within 6 months, MOE has been working with IARCSC on a mechanism for sharing meta-data.
- **R50a, R50b:** To disseminate its Anti-Corruption Strategy to all 34 PEDs and DEDs. MOE has already planned to disseminate the anti-corruption strategy to the decentralized levels, including PEDs and DEDs. PEDs and DEDs in Kabul, Nangarhar, and Laghman had not, however, received this Anti-Corruption Strategy at the time of writing this report.
- **R51:** To establish a formal liaison to AGO. MOE reported to MEC that according to procedures, in compliance with Article 134 of the Constitution, IAD is referring all those cases that have criminal elements to AGO and a relationship of correspondence is maintained through sending and receiving official letters. In addition, in order to ensure on time actions regarding the referred cases, two focal points have been introduced between AGO, Supreme Audit Office (SAO), and MOE’s IAD. *MEC will interview the two focal points in the next Quarter.*
- **R53:** Lack of enough textbooks in schools is a big concern which has contributed to undermining the quality of education in the country. MEC recommended to MOE to study options for a ‘market solution’ for textbooks within 6 months. In this regard, MOE drafted a procedure manual. MOE is currently in the process of making its final decision.
- **R55:** MEC recommended MOE to conduct Anti-Corruption Forums for the 34 MOE Education Directors, media, and education sector stakeholders, emphasizing the fight against corruption in MOE. MOE provided MEC with an update that action plans for MOE’s National and Provincial Departments and Directorates include conducting anti-corruption forums in the PEDs.
- **R60:** MEC recommended teacher appraisals should be conducted on an annual basis. According to MOE, annual appraisals have been done for 29,499 teachers and that PEDs have been instructed to expand appraisals to all teachers by the end of this year. IARCSC is also addressing this recommendation. *MEC will monitor the implementation of this activity over the upcoming Quarters to determine the extent of achievement.*

v. Recommendations which no actions have been taken

In this monitoring Quarter, no action has been taken on 11 out of 113 recommendations. These recommendations are listed below:

- **R1e:** The IARCSC complaints mechanism regarding education sector should also engage representatives from the local community (e.g., CSOs, *Shuras*) to monitor and oversee the process. No detectable action has been taken in this regard.
- **R24a:** MEC recommended to MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] to document any contact and interactions from MPs with the Ministry. So far, no evidence for this has been shared with MEC.
- **R24b:** MEC recommended to MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] to keep a record of any attempts at illegal interference from MPs. MOE has not provided any update in this regard. PEDs, when MEC interviewed them during the MVCA, complained about MPs illegal interference. Reported interference from MPs varied and included: changing teachers from one school to another, asking PEDs to change specific teachers' shifts (e.g. from the morning to afternoon shifts), and interference in student affairs. PEDs welcomed the leadership's decision on shifting the teacher recruitment process from MOE to IARCSC to help free the process from MP interference.
- PEDs also mentioned that the rental of buildings for schools is vulnerable to corruption. During 1396, Kabul City Education had a budget of Afs76 million for renting houses for schools and they had rented around 152 buildings for this purpose. They also noted that corruption is occurring in different areas, like collusion between the owners of rental buildings and school principals and between school principals and District Education Managers. For instance, if the building rent is typically Afs50,000 per month, they may artificially increase this to Afs70,000 and pocket the difference. Kabul City Education Department emphasized that when the rental rate is not in alignment with the going rate, they are told there are no more houses or buildings to rent. The Education Department does not have M&E staff to monitor and verify actual rental rates.
- Second, the rental buildings/rooms are not standard. According to MOE, there should be room for 45 students in one classroom, however, some of the buildings rented as schools have rooms that only fit 15 students. So, a class of 45 students then must be divided into three classes, which then triples the costs as three teachers are needed instead of one. Due to this, Kabul City Education Department had to hire 4171 contract teachers to fill the gaps, at a cost of around Afs26 million for these contract teachers' salaries.
- **R24c:** MEC also recommended to MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] to collate the records of any attempts at illegal interference from MPs and report these to MEC monthly. No updated has, as yet, been provided by MOE.
- **R30a, R30b:** In order to build the trust of local communities in the education system, PEDs and DEDs were recommended to organize monthly dialogues with their local communities. It was recommended that participants represent the diversity of their communities (e.g., male and female, varied range of ages, different ethnicities, etc.). MOE has not yet provided an update on this.
- **R49:** MEC recommended to MOE [Department of Public Relations] to share positive stories and innovations in education related to anti-corruption. MOE states this is done "on a daily basis." *In upcoming Quarters, MEC will again request specific examples as evidence of the Public Relations Department sharing stories and innovations related to anti-corruption.*

- **R52:** MEC recommended to MOE to complete a review of all the existing sanctions, disciplinary measures, prosecution options, and other dissuasive mechanisms that are in place in MOE, within 6 months. MOE reported that they will soon start this review.
- **R56:** To empower School Management *Shuras* to receive, and act on, complaints and grievances from parents and students, DSMS has planned to include this issue in SMS capacity building training materials.
- MOE has also stated that the Ministry and MORRD have been working through the National Citizen Charter Program (NCCP) to improve complaint procedures to address grievances on education service delivery at community level. *MEC will consult with MORRD and the NCCP for more details and evidence of this in upcoming Quarters..*
- **R57:** To empower School Management *Shuras* to conduct monitoring and oversight of Adult Literacy Courses; MOE reports that the Directorate of School Management *Shuras* will include this task in the revised SMS's ToR. *MEC will follow this in upcoming Quarters to verify the changes to the ToR and its implementation.*
- **R58:** To explore the potential roles and remit of student unions as contributors to monitoring and oversight, MOE will conduct consultation and review the roles of student unions. *MEC will communicate with MOE to take actions on implementation of this recommendation for the next Quarter.*

vi. Recommendations which are Pending

31 recommendations out of 113 are pending for future implementation. Pending means that these recommendations depend on other steps and/or actions taking place prior to their implementation. These recommendations are described below.

- **R1b:** Pilot active monitoring and oversight of recruitment, in four diverse Provinces, for a period of 6 months. As the recruitment process has been shifted to IARCSC, IARCSC says that wherever there is an opportunity for civil society to monitor the process, they have done so. For instance, civil society monitored the process of distribution of application forms and also the shortlisting process, which was done in Kabul. *MEC seeks evidence of an active role for CSOs having been piloted in four diverse Provinces (meaning: outside of Kabul), and for a period of six months. MEC will further explore with IARCSC what these opportunities for active engagement could include.*
- **R1c:** The pilot should include recruitment criteria agreed among IARCSC and CSO umbrella organizations (e.g., gender balance, etc.)
- **R1d:** Lessons learned at all stages of the pilot should be documented and shared with education sector stakeholders.
- **R2b:** Ensure meetings between schools and communities take place according to the revised SMS Terms of Reference.
- **R4b:** Lessons learned from the MOE's analysis of CBE programs to be shared publicly. MOE stated that lessons learned had been presented to DPs in a workshop and CBE Working Group meetings, and that a brief bulletin will be prepared and disseminated publicly. MEC notes that "*Presented to DPs* " does not mean "*shared publicly,*" as recommended. *MEC will verify the implementation of the stated public dissemination of the "brief bulletin" in upcoming Quarters.*
- **R20a:** MOE and IARCSC should jointly establish a verifiable metric of the success rate of appointing teachers on merit. According to MOE, a mechanism to measure the success rate in

this area has been established, and after the completion of the recruitment process, the results will be published. *In upcoming Quarters, MEC will seek examples from MOE of publication of this success rate.*

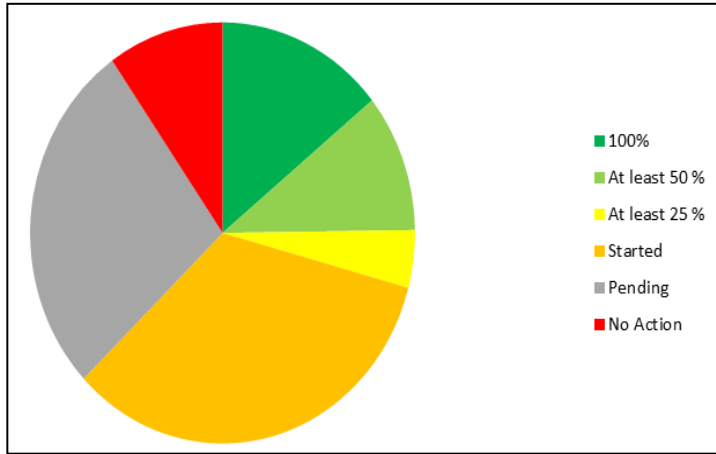
- **R20b:** This metric should be shared with education sector stakeholders on an ongoing basis to demonstrate improvements.
- **R23b:** Provincial Reform Networks should be composed of Provincial Education Directors, PED Management, DED Management and DP. MOE has proposed Provincial NESP III Steering Committee meetings include PEDs/DEDs and DPs. Monthly coordination meetings will take place at PEDs and support will be provided to PEDs to regularly conduct coordination meetings. *MEC will seek evidence of MOE claims that these meetings are taking place, and minuted, to establish a level of achievement.*
- **R27b:** MOE should inform all staff of the amended and revised Code of Conduct. MOE reported that they “will do it”. *MEC has reviewed the Code of Conduct and will monitor its implementation.*
- **R27c:** The amended and revised Code of Conduct should be publicly posted in all MOE facilities, including schools.
- **R28a:** Donor-funded contracts, including construction, should be regularly monitored by both DPs and MOE, following the standardized guidelines in the World Bank’s Best Practices of Contract Procurement.
- **R31b:** PEDs should publicly share District spending plans and actual expenditures for each District each year. MOE reported that they are working with MOF to establish a mechanism based on which the approved budget for the Provinces are clearly broken down to District levels and shared publicly.
- **R31c:** PEDs should publicly share individual school spending plans and actual expenditures for each school, at each school site, each year. MOE reported that they have planned to start a School Grants Program in 17 Provinces under the upcoming EQRA program.
- **R35b:** Conduct a formal assessment to determine if MOE staff acquired technical skills with support from their TAs. MOE reported that MOE’s General Directorate of Human Resource will develop the assessment tools based on the finalized ToRs and the assessment should be conducted in June 2018, by relevant Departments.
- **R35c:** Shift operational responsibilities from TAs to full time MOE staff. It is planned that TAs operational responsibilities will be transferred to MOE full time staff during the EQRA project’s implementation period.
- **R36:** DPs should provide support to MOE to outsource services where appropriate. According to USAID, the outcome of this recommendation is incorporated in new development programs, e.g., EQRA.
- **R37b:** Provide technical support for education sector reformers in each Province. According to MOE, PED Directors are recruited through CBR and are in the process of preparing reform plans for the Provinces. EQRA has included technical support components for reforms.
- **R38:** Improve institutional memory among DPs and within MOE. DPs are requested to consider long-term posting of their staff and proper handover and documentation of education sector knowledge and projects in Afghanistan. MOE is also working on to improve its

documentation processes. DPs, specifically Canada, are working with UNICEF to create an electronic database/platform for improving institutional memory and handover.

- **R39b:** 100% of school construction sites should be regularly monitored and overseen by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, during the construction phase. According to the World Bank, third party monitoring is considered in the design of EQRA for school construction and the process will be widened to consider more schools and deepened in terms of the quality of the monitoring process.
- **R41b:** Strengthen internal reporting lines of MOE Departments with MOE's IAD. In this regard, MOE reported that the IAD plans to share the draft ML with respective departments for their comments, and then the report will be shared with the Internal Audit Committee and by the Audit Committee with MOE authorities for consideration and approval. The final report will be shared with MOE's respective Departments.
- **R41c:** Strengthen the relationship between MOE Internal Audit Department and MoF. MOE reported that the relationship between MOE and MOF has not yet been strengthened.
- **R42b, R44b:** Regarding the composition of the High Level Audit Committee (noted previously) , the Committee should be composed of MOE leadership, MOE IAD, DPs, and other stakeholders. According to MOE, based on the ToR, the Audit Committee consists of at least three and a maximum of five members of the Board of Deputy Ministers and Directors. The Minister of Education is the Chair of the Committee. Each member of the Committee must be independent and they should be experts in financial and legal matters. Inclusion of DPs and other stakeholder is considered in the ToR. *MEC will participate in future High Level Audit Committee meetings as an observer.*
- **R42c, R42d, R44c, and R44d:** The Committee ToR should include reviewing all internal MOE audit reports, external MOE audit reports from SAO, and all other MOE audit-related reports from external bodies. The Committee's ToR should also include publishing an annual review of the quality of education in Afghanistan.
- **R43:** MOE should develop a standardized accreditation process for private schools. MOE reported that they have started discussions on this issue. According to MOE, this needs a lot of consultation with the private sector, government entities and parents, so it will take time to come up with a clear idea for an accreditation design.
- **R47:** MOE should report progress of the Anti-Corruption Strategy implementation, Quarterly. Suitable reporting mechanisms have also been discussed. The Anti-corruption Committee will prepare Quarterly reports.
- **R48:** MOE should publish all documents and reports according to the Access to Information Law and provide a mechanism to make data accessible to the public upon request. MOE reported that they are developing a method of publishing and making data otherwise accessible based on request.
- **R54:** Ministry of Finance should publicly share MOE's budget and actual expenditures for each year. *MEC will seek evidence of publication of MOE budget documents, including actual expenditures.*

vii. Overall Status of Recommendations

Recommendation Status	Numbers
100%	16
At least 50 %	12
At least 25 %	5
Started	38
Pending	31
No Action	11
Total	113



b. Analyses of recommendations by categories, as defined in the MVCA report

The status of MEC recommendations is displayed according to ‘reform-oriented’ categories described in the original MOE MVCA.

As the original MVCA noted, reducing the vulnerability to corruption of the education system is not an end in itself; it is one part of the overall objective of improving significantly the quality of education in Afghanistan. The problems of endemic corruption cannot be fixed solely on the basis of ‘anti-corruption’ reforms, but need take account of other contributing factors.

Some of the reforms to reduce corruption are the same as those required for other reasons, and many are likely to be of interest to a broad group of stakeholders, including from outside the education sector. In this context, a strategy would include analyses of actions to reduce the vulnerability to corruption and incorporate ‘normal’ quality improvement measures – typically institutional strengthening – and other measures that have a more explicit anti-corruption angle to them. Below, MEC presents the status of the revised recommendations and reform measures, according to the following ten generic types from the original MVCA:

Category A. Citizen actions and other forms of local oversight

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	0	0%	
At least 50%	0	0%	
At least 25%	1	8%	R1a
Study/Started	3	25%	R2c, R3e, R39a
No Action	4	33%	R30b, R56, R57, R58
Pending	4	33%	R1b, R1c, R1d, R2b
TOTAL	12	100%	

The initial observations from the MEC team indicate the vast majority of the opportunity to implement in this Category relates to the School Management *Shura*’s Terms of Reference, including revision, and agreement, and then implementation. The sole recommendation in this

Category with progress in the first Quarter is more narrowly focused on CSO engagement in the teacher recruitment processes now underway at the Civil Services Commission (IARCSC).

Category B. Institutional reforms

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	4	18%	R4a, R7, R8, R59
At least 50%	4	18%	R5, R10, R12c, R12d
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	14	64%	R9, R12e, R14, R15, R17, R21b, R21c, R23a, R28b, R29a, R29b, R34, R41a, R44b
No Action	0	0%	
Pending	0	0%	
TOTAL	22	100%	

The MEC team observed that in the First Quarter, the bulk of the institutional reforms with documented achievement were initiated (and sometimes already completed) in the timeframe of the release of the original MVCA: *A Joint Sector Review on CBE*, a formal curricula review, expanded digital examination methods for teachers, expanded use of electronic means for MOE salary payments, and increased use of practical teaching as part of the TTC development experience have all taken place. Other achievements demonstrate the beginnings of genuine reform since the launch of the MVCA, such as the development and approval of MOE's *Restructuring Plan*, the agreement with MOHE to extend TTC graduates to equivalence with a Bachelor's Degree, and specific attention to improving parity through gender quotas within recruitment at the Ministry.

Category C. Organizational change from the MOE leadership

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	1	9%	R22
At least 50%	1	9%	R11
At least 25%	1	9%	R12a
Study/Started	5	46%	R12b, R13, R21a, R44a, R51
No Action	0	0%	
Pending	3	27%	R23b, R35c, R41c
TOTAL	11	100%	

MOE leadership's effectiveness in guiding the Ministry's organizational change has been mixed in the first Quarter, despite enthusiasm about this reform process from the new Minister, Dr Mirwais Balkhi. The sole recommendation in this category that has been fully achieved is the one focused on the Minister articulating at Cabinet level the resources and supports MOE requires to fulfill this agenda.

The bulk of the recommendations in this Category are process- or relationship- oriented and require external cooperation (Universities, HRDG, MOHE, MOF, and the AGO), and are generally linked to larger initiatives (NESP III, *The Competency Framework for Teachers in Afghanistan*, shifting of TVET and the Adult Literacy Program).

Category D. Legal and procedural changes

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	2	15%	R8, R27a
At least 50%	0	0%	
At least 25%	1	8%	R25
Study/Started	7	54%	R2a, R3a, R3b, R3c, R29a, R29b, R60
No Action	2	15%	R1e, R52
Pending	1	8%	R43
TOTAL	13	100%	

As described in the Category above, several of the recommendations in this group are linked to external entities (MRRD, MOUHD, and IARCSC) and evidence shows that cooperation and coordination have started, at least from the MOE side. The limited successes at implementation recorded in the First Quarter were noted in areas where the Ministry was able to modify or establish new procedures (gender quotas, and revisions to the SMS Terms of Reference).

Category E. Signals of change to the population

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	0	0%	
At least 50%	0	0%	
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	3	30%	R19, R44a, R55
No Action	2	20%	R30a, R49
Pending	5	50%	R20a, R27b, R27c, R35c, R43
TOTAL	10	100%	

The initial observations from the MEC team indicate that this issue must be given higher priority by MOE leadership, urgently, to prevent a loss of the opportunity to keep the public engaged in the topic of education reform. MEC notes that several of these recommendations are identical to any other Ministry facing low levels of public confidence due to their limited sharing of information about ministerial actions focused on delivering reforms and improving transparency. MEC will be following any developments in this category especially closely in the coming Quarter.

Category F. Actions from development partners

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	0	0%	
At least 50%	0	0%	
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	7	58%	R32a, R32b, R33, R35a, R37a, R39b, R41e
No Action	0	0%	
Pending	5	42%	R28a, R35b, R36, R37b, R38
TOTAL	12	100%	

In the First Quarter, education sector development partners have sought further refinement in the recommendations within this Category.

Category G. Control and inspections systems, and independent oversight

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	1	8%	R40e
At least 50%	0	0%	
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	7	58%	R40a, R40b, R40c, R40d, R42a, R44b, R44c
No Action	0	0%	
Pending	4	33%	R20a, R20b, R42b, R42c
TOTAL	12	100%	

The MEC team observed the MOE's online access to its database, indicating a more open and transparent management of its policies and activities. Regarding the systems and staffing for collecting and managing MOE data, most recommendations in this category are being explored, or have begun at initial levels of activity for the first Quarter.

Category H. Transparency measures

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	5	19%	R6a, R6b, R6c, R6d, R40e
At least 50%	1	4%	R5
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	9	35%	R28b, R31a, R40f, R41d, R44d, R45, R46a, R50a, R50b
No Action	4	15%	R24a, R24b, R24c, R49
Pending	8	31%	R4b, R20b, R31b, R31c, R42d, R47b, R48, R54
TOTAL	27	100%	

The initial observations from the MEC team have verified that the fully achieved recommendations relate largely to the greater levels of transparency in IARCSC-managed teacher recruitment. Areas of particular concern, with no actions from MOE, are the transparency-related recommendations on Members of Parliament attempting to exert influence within the Ministry. Recommendations with limited action, or future/pending actions, are mostly related to external entities and transparency on finances, or, are linked to strengthening audit processes and outcomes.

Category I. Enforcement

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%	0	0%	
At least 50%	1	11%	R18
At least 25%	0	0%	
Study/Started	5	56%	R3d, R12f, R26, R28b, R60
No Action	1	11%	R52
Pending	2	22%	R28a, R41b
TOTAL	9	100%	

The initial observations from the MEC Team indicate a minimum of action on the recommendations in this category, with some implementation of the NESP III recommendations related to teacher trainings for increased professionalization, and *possible* achievement in the enforcement of standards for foreign *madrassa* graduates, but evidence in this latter case was not substantial. The vast majority of these recommendations are multi-staged interventions, or require system reform to take place first (e.g., procurement procedures, contracts monitoring, enacting NESP III, IT-related concerns), and MEC anticipates substantial evidence of more actions in future Quarters.

Category J. Market-based alternatives to monopoly government supply

	Number	Percent	Recommendations
100%			
At least 50%			
At least 25%			
Study/Started	1	100%	R53
No Action			
Pending			
TOTAL	1	100%	

MOE exploration of market-based alternatives for textbooks is currently underway.

Anti-Corruption and success stories in education during the first Quarter

MEC asked PED interviewees about their anti-corruption efforts/success stories within their departments/sector during the past 4 months which are explained below:

- Kabul City Education Department determined Saturdays as 'hearing days' for their clients. They receive all petitions, concerns, complaints and then share their decisions on each following Sunday. They announce the decisions in public gatherings. This is a new initiative to address problems more quickly.
- Kabul PED has eased the process of teacher placement according to the following criteria: A) education qualification of applicant; B) the date of applicants' request (the ones who request first are first priority); C) gender; and lastly, D) according to article 23 of the Civil Service Law, if there is a lack of teachers in that particular subject. So, based on these criteria, the PED makes selections and announces their decisions on each Sunday.
- Kabul City Education Department created a committee for conducting an education situation analysis. This committee consists of members of the planning, audit and other relevant departments. The committee will conduct a SWOT analysis with the aim of identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats within the Kabul City Education Department. They intend to develop a reform plan based on the findings of the analysis and also with consideration of MOE's general reform plan. In addition to that, they promise to engage citizens in education, intensify monitoring of schools, and conducting various events like seminars and workshops for school students.
- In a Nangarhar district, it was reported that a School Management *Shura* did well in raising school enrollment. They encouraged families to send their boys and girls to school, and therefore, the enrollment rate is very high in that specific school. This *Shura* has also built classrooms for the school. Another *Shura* has built 6 classrooms for a school. In addition to that, school female graduates have been utilized as volunteer teachers in schools; they teach without salary.
- Nangarhar PED has re-opened schools which were closed due to insecurity. In Hesarak District, despite ongoing security threats, they have female teachers.
- Nangarhar PED director issued a circular to all subordinate DEDs and Education Departments to not follow or process orders that are illegal and run contrary to the law.

Challenges and concerns in education from interviewee perspective

- Four months into the financial year; Kabul City Education Department has not received their budget for the year. Delays in receiving the budget undermine their daily activities.
- Renting buildings to use as schools (as mentioned previously) is a big challenge and a process which is vulnerable to corruption. This is not only a problem for Kabul City Education Department problem and a better, more permanent solution needs to be found for this issue.
- The standard teaching time (in a one hour period) is 45 minutes. But because of multiple shifts in schools (up to 3 shifts per day in some schools) due to a lack of school buildings, teaching

time is often reduced to 30 minutes or less. Likewise, according to MOE standards, the number of students for one class should be a maximum of 45 students, but interview respondents noted that some classes in their area had more than 60 students. Amongst other concerns, the long process of taking attendance in such large classes takes away from vital teaching time.

- Regarding procurement, there are some departments making purchases without first informing the procurement department and this creates problem for them. Specifically, they are not soliciting competitive price quotations and they are often purchasing materials at very high prices. This is also illegal. Procurement is the responsibility of Procurement department and so they must be involved. Interview respondents asked MOE leadership's consideration on this point so that everything can be done systematically and using proper processes.
- The school principals who are responsible for reporting school data to EMIS are often changing. This impact on EMIS data quality. Interview respondents asked that MOE assign one specific person to be responsible for school data.
- As mentioned previously, MPs' and other politicians' interference in different areas of education is a big challenge.
- Teachers' qualifications are very low and textbooks can be too complicated. For instance, often physics teachers in school struggle to teach their subject because the physics textbooks are too complicated.
- Nangarhar PED officials said that 4,700 new teachers were needed in the Province according to the MOE policy on teacher-student ratios.
- Security remains a big challenge in Nangarhar Province.
- According to Nangarhar PED, 50% of schools in this province do not have buildings.
- Many teachers who are supposed to have retired a while ago are still resisting retirement. MOE in cooperation with IARCSC should find a solution for this.

Some suggestions/ideas for improving education

- School Management *Shuras* should be technically supported by donors.
- Teachers should be deployed and recruited based on needs, e.g. students and classrooms.
- More teachers should be recruited.
- As 50% of schools in Nangarhar are reported as not having buildings, this affects the quality of education. Buildings schools should be a top priority for MOE and NUG leadership.
- There are unprofessional teachers, for example, hundreds of under-qualified Mullahs who are teaching physic and mathematics.
- An increase in salaries should be considered for rewarding and retaining teachers.
- Capacity building courses should be conducted for all teachers as part of a coordinated in-service teacher education program.

M&E framework

100 %	At least 50%	At least 25%	Work/Study Started	Pending/Future	No Action
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Recommendations	Status
R#1: A) R#1: Involve local CSOs in active monitoring and oversight of teacher recruitment for their Province.	
R#1: B) Pilot active monitoring and oversight of recruitment in four diverse Provinces for a period of 6 months.	
R#1: C) Pilot should include criterion agreed among IARCSC and CSO umbrella organizations (e.g., gender balance, etc.)	
R#1: D) Lessons learned at all stages of the pilot should be documented and shared with education sector stakeholders.	
R#1: E) The IARCSC complaints mechanism regarding education sector should also engage representatives from the local community (e.g., CSOs, Shuras) to monitor and oversee the process.	
R#2: A) Standardize the School Management Shuras (SMS) Terms of Reference.	
R#2: B) Ensure meetings between schools and communities take place according to the SMS Terms of Reference.	
R#2: C) SMS meetings should be documented with formal minutes.	
R#3: A) Build schools using locally available materials.	
R#3: B) Build schools using relevant aspects of indigenous design, adhering to MOE standards and universal design principles.	
R#3: C) Contract local communities to provide unskilled local labor in construction of schools.	
R#3: D) Strictly enforce anti-corruption procurement policies and procedures in school construction, according to the National Procurement Law.	
R#3: E) Directly involve members of the local community (e.g., CSOs, Shuras) in active monitoring and oversight of school construction.	
R#4: A) MOE to carry out a policy review on lessons learned from Community Based Education.	
R#4: B) Lessons learned to be shared publicly.	
R#5: Expand general recruitment processes that use digital (electronic) methods for candidate examinations, compared to baseline.	
R#6: A) Lists of vacancies should be published on MOE/IARCSC websites.	
R#6: B) Lists of applicants should be published on MOE/IARCSC websites.	
R#6: C) Lists of shortlisted candidates should be published on MOE/IARCSC websites.	
R#6: D) Recruitment results should be published on MOE/IARCSC websites.	
R#7: MOE, in consultation with NUG leadership, should develop a proposal outlining the steps and measures for restructuring the MOE and reducing the overall size of the	
R#8: To ensure guaranteed female participation, a specific percentage of the posts should be allocated to women candidates.	

100 %	At least 50%	At least 25%	Work/Study Started	Pending/Future	No Action
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R#23: B) Provincial Reform Networks should be composed of Provincial Education Directors, PED Management, DED Management and DP.					
R#24: A) MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] should document any contact and interactions from MPs with the Ministry.					
R#24: B) MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] should keep a record of any attempts at illegal interference from MPs.					
R#24: C) MOE [Office of Parliament Affairs] should collate the records of any attempts at illegal interference from MPs and report these to MEC monthly.					
R#25: Establish a general complaints handling mechanism for the education sector.					
R#26: Ensure that a transparent system of accountability (punishment and rewards) is in place for MOE staff.					
R#27: A) The MOE should amend and revise the current Code of Conduct for all MOE staff to ensure Equity, Integrity, Right to Education, Accountability, Trust (MOPH has such a model in place.)					
R#27: B) MOE should inform all staff of the amended and revised Code of Conduct.					
R#27:C) The amended and revised Code of Conduct should be publicly posted in all MOE facilities, including schools.					
R#28: A) Donor-funded contracts, including construction, should be regularly monitored by both DPs and MOE, following the standardized guidelines in the World Bank's Best Practices of Contract Procurement.					
R#28: B) Ministry of Finance-funded contracts, including construction, should be regularly monitored by both MOF and MOE, following the standardized guidelines in the World Bank's Best Practices of Contract Procurement.					
R#29: A) Responsibility for the implementation of all rural construction contracts be moved to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development.					
R#29: B) Responsibility for the implementation of all construction contracts in cities be moved to the Ministry of Urban Development.					
R#30: A) PEDs and DEDs organize monthly community dialogues with local communities.					
R#30: B) Participants should be drawn from a diverse members of the community (e.g., male and female, varied range of ages, cross section of groups, etc.)					
R#31: A) PEDs should publicly share Provincial budgets and actual expenditures for each Province each year.					
R#31: B) PEDs should publicly share District spending plans and actual expenditures for each District each year.					
R#31: C) PEDs should publicly share individual school spending plans and actual expenditures for each school, at each school site, each year.					
R#32: A) DPs should align donor programs around meritocratic appointment of teachers.					
R#32: B) DPs should coordinate donor programs of meritocratic appointment of teachers.					
R#33: DPs should expand the Capacity Building Activity initiative.					

100 %	At least 50%	At least 25%	Work/Study Started	Pending/Future	No Action
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R#34: Apply lessons learned from CBE to MOE schools.					
R#35: A) DPs should standardize Technical Assistants' (TAs) ToRs to explicitly focus on MOE staff's skills development as a task.					
R#35: B) Conduct a formal assessment to determine if MOE staff acquired technical skills from their TA.					
R#35: C) Shift operational responsibilities from TAs to full time MOE staff.					
R#36: DPs should fund MOE to outsource services where appropriate.					
R#37: A) DPs should fund MOE to support the national anti-corruption organizational reform structure.					
R#37: B) Fund education sector reformers in each Province.					
R#38: Improve institutional memory among DPs and within MOE.					
R#39: A) Standardize local CSOs and Shura active monitoring and oversight of schools construction.					
R#39: B) 100% of school construction sites should be regularly monitored and overseen by ARTF during the construction phase.					
R#40: A) MOE should send EMIS enumerators to 20% of schools twice per year (beginning and end of the school session) to verify entries in EMIS.					
R#40: B) Consolidate/collate MOE's EMIS, HRMIS, and Payroll databases within one year.					
R#40: C) Revise data collection guidelines covering all aspects of the data collection process.					
R#40: D) 100% of data collectors should be trained in each area of data collection, documenting, and reporting techniques.					
R#40: E) Within 6 months EMIS data should be accessible to anyone visiting the MOE website.					
R#40: F) An external entity should review MOE data and MOE control systems.					
R#41: A) Increase the number of auditors inside MOE by 10% within two years.					
R#41: B) Strengthen internal reporting lines of MOE Departments with MOE Internal Audit Department.					
R#41: C) Strengthen relationship between MOE Internal Audit Department and MOF.					
R#41 :D) Publish 100% of MOE Internal Audit Department's routine reports from June 1, 2018 (please note: This does not include publishing IAD's Incident Reports or case files referred by IAD to AGO)					
R#41: E) Development Partners should provide technical assistance to IAD within one year based on IAD-DP assessment of gaps.					
R#42: A) Establish an Audit Review Committee within 3 months.					
R#42: B) The Committee should be composed of MOE leadership, MOE IAD, DPs, and other stakeholders.					
R#42: C) The Committee ToR should include reviewing all internal MOE audit reports, external MOE audit reports from SAO, and all other MOE audit-related reports from external bodies.					

