

Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative

**Draft Synthesis Report
Volume 2 – Annexes
Annex F: Data, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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This report is based on the work of an independent evaluation team. It has been reviewed by the Evaluation Oversight Committee (EOC) which determined that it meets an objective set of quality standards for an evaluation of this nature (based in part on DAC guidelines and on DFID's quality assurance guidelines for programme evaluations) and that it sufficiently meets most of the EOC requirements for having satisfied the relevant portion of the terms of reference to be shared as a discussion document.

This determination in no way signifies the endorsement of the report's conclusions or recommendations by the EOC as a whole, by any of its individual members or by the agencies they represent. The analyses, interpretations and opinions expressed in this report are those of the evaluation team.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CF	Catalytic Fund
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSR	Country Strategy Report
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPDC	Education Policy and Data Center
EPDF	Education Program Development Fund
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GFATM	Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GIR	Grade one Intake Rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
IF	Indicative Framework
LDG	Local Donor Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OECD DAC	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development Development Assistance Committee
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs
PDDEB	The Ten Year Basic Education Development Plan
PCR	Primary Completion Rate
PFM	Public Financial Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

A. Introduction

- F1 This annex addresses two core issues from among the high-level questions:
- To what extent “*has FTI and its mechanisms/processes (e.g. Indicative Framework and the endorsement process) helped countries strengthen ... educational data/statistics*” [HLQ 2a]
 - Has the FTI had “*an adequate monitoring and evaluation framework*” that created “*regular, useful inputs to decision making*” [HLQ 3h]
- F2 The treatment of the first question takes into account two aspects:
- Did the FTI address issues of data coverage and quality (with emphasis on education data, as financial data are covered in [Appendix I](#) and [Appendix II](#)), in other words did FTI help improve the *supply of data* in FTI endorsed countries?
 - Did the FTI address issues of data use and analysis, in other words did FTI help strengthen the *demand for data* and the overall education sector monitoring and evaluation process in these countries?
- F3 The treatment of the second question focuses on FTI as an organisation. It concerns the arrangements that were put in place to collect and use information to assess the extent to which the FTI goals were being achieved and to help management take evidence-based decisions on the future directions of the partnership.
- F4 Section B provides the background on how FTI fitted in the broader movement for a greater results orientation in aid – and how its guiding documents reflect this interest in closing the data gap. Section C discusses the contribution of FTI to the supply of data and the outstanding issues with education data coverage and quality. Section D is concerned with the contribution of FTI to the use of data and the monitoring and evaluation of the education sector at country level. Section E addresses the monitoring and evaluation arrangements that were internal to FTI. Finally, Section F briefly introduces the issue of the eventual impact evaluation of FTI.
- F5 This Annex is complemented by other parts of the report. [Annex C](#) provides a review of the Indicative Framework. [Appendix I](#) comments on issues of data quality. [Appendix VI](#) addresses the issue of impact evaluation in detail.

B. Background

- F6 Development partners have strongly emphasised the need to improve the performance of their aid programmes in terms of development results rather than inputs such as disbursement rates. The 2002 Monterrey Conference had called for a new partnership in which developing countries would increase their commitment to policies that promote economic growth and reduce poverty, and developed countries would support them through more effective aid and trade policies.
- F7 In this context of shared responsibility, global attention has turned to appropriate management strategies. The 2004 Marrakech International Roundtable on Results elaborated the concept of *managing for development results*, which became one of the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration. It involved some pertinent commitments:
- Partner countries would “*endeavour to establish results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks that monitor progress against key dimensions of the national and sector development strategies*” and “*track*

a manageable number of indicators for which data are cost-effectively available” [supply of data].

- Donors would “rely, as far as possible, on partner countries’ results-oriented reporting and monitoring frameworks” and would work with partner countries “in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and demand for results based management” [demand for data; M&E at country level].
- Donors would “harmonise their monitoring and reporting requirements, and, until they can rely more extensively on partner countries’ statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems, [work] with partner countries to the maximum extent possible on joint formats for periodic reporting”. There would be joint objectives and targets linked to plans, performance indicators to monitor progress, collection of relevant data, and regular use of information to support evidence-based decision making. In this context, donors would be expected to set an example in using knowledge on what works to feed back into strategy development and operational decisions [M&E of the FTI].

F8 In the words of the 2004 *Framework*, the FTI partnership would be “the first global initiative to operationalise the Monterrey Consensus” (FTI 2004d, p.4). As the following sub-section shows:

- The FTI identified the challenge of improving education statistics as one of the four gaps that the FTI partnership should address – the data gap.
- The 2004 Framework argued that the process towards universal primary completion would be aided if FTI eligible countries set targets and monitored progress in their education sector plans. Prior to and in parallel with the FTI, there was a move towards sector wide programmes built on education sector plans in many countries. To assist this process, the FTI developed a list of indicators, the Indicative Framework, that countries were encouraged to monitor on the basis of their apparent link (“drawn from empirical analyses of a set of low-income countries”, p.6) to good education sector outcomes and in particular progress towards Universal Primary Completion.
- This benchmarking would be used to link FTI support to performance. If recipient countries demonstrated commitment to the goal of universal primary completion and adopted policies that addressed the issues raised in the Indicative Framework, then donors would commit to more, sustained, predictable, and flexible funding. The FTI partnership therefore needed to monitor and evaluate at two levels:
 - To assess whether the mutual commitments were followed through and, if so, whether they were helping produce better education sector outcomes; in other words, whether the assumptions on which the FTI partnership was built were valid.
 - To assess whether its own activities and operations, in the context of these mutual commitments, were being implemented according to plan and to identify areas for improvement.

FTI guiding documents

F9 The 2002 *Action Plan* (Strengthen education information systems and database, ¶22) envisaged particular actions necessary to reduce the weaknesses of

education statistics at the global and country level. Among the “actions to improve the tracking of EFA progress”, it listed the following:

- Make the primary completion rate the indicator for future monitoring of EFA, it being the one most closely associated with household demand for education, students’ learning progress and overall education quality. ... [E]stimates can ... be improved greatly in terms of both robustness and timeliness if national governments could be encouraged and supported to collect end-of-year data on the number of graduates.
- Significantly improve the quality, timeliness and management of education statistics in several elements: (i) strengthen the capacity of countries to collect and maintain accurate data; (ii) generate demand for good data by promoting policies and programs that are data-driven; (iii) develop indicators and maintain data on student learning achievement for all countries; and (iv) strengthen the technical capacity of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) as the lead agency in the collection and management of global education data. Support would include enabling UIS to tap into and use other data bases (...).
- Track the following five indicators for all EFA countries on an annual basis: (a) primary completion rate (disaggregated by gender) as the core indicator of EFA progress; (b) grade 1 intake as a leading indicator of enrolment trends and one of the best ways of tracking progress on gender goals; (c) gross enrolment ratio as a measure of immediate resource and construction requirements; (d) gender differences in primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment and completion; and (e) adult literacy rate. Countries will also need to track repetition and dropout rates closely.
- Monitor the gender gap as a core element of EFA progress. (...)
- Adopt a stronger outcome orientation under the international EFA monitoring framework (World Bank 2002).

F10 The 2004 FTI *Framework* included “*mutual learning on what works to improve primary education outcomes and advance EFA goals*” (FTI 2004d, p.3) as one of its high-level goals. The document reiterated the importance of monitoring and was also specific on the steps to be taken to support universal primary completion through, among others, improved monitoring and evaluation arrangements (pp.11-12):

The FTI aims at stronger development results, based on a framework of mutual responsibility and accountability. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the FTI at the country level has the following goals:

- transparent annual monitoring of indicative framework and other nationally-appropriate targets, agreed by countries and their donor partners;
- strengthening of statistical and analytical capacity and EMIS (Education Management Information Systems), to promote results-based management;
- transparent monitoring of donors’ progress in increasing the quantity and quality of their assistance to primary education in FTI countries against an agreed set of common coordination and harmonization indicators;
- comparative benchmarking of progress and performance across countries in the Initiative and rapid diffusion of global practice and lessons; and
- in-country monitoring of progress and dialogue to address non or under performance.

At the country level, the monitoring of FTI targets and outcomes, donor financing flows and progress in aid coordination, complementarity and harmonization will be built into existing processes of annual review of the implementation of the sector plan. Annual sector reviews are conducted by the recipient country and its donor partners in a spirit of peer reviewing and learning; it is good practice also to bring teachers’ associations, private providers, parents’ associations, and other civil society organizations into the review process. The results of each joint sector review are communicated to the FTI Secretariat in order to track progress

at the global level, in conjunction with UNESCO, and to foster cross-country diffusion of lessons and good practice.

At the global level, UNESCO holds the mandate for monitoring progress and overall coordination of the EFA process, of which the FTI is one element. As such, progress towards the MDG of universal primary education and the other Dakar EFA goals are monitored by UNESCO. UNESCO ensures full coordination between the FTI and the EFA High Level Group. The FTI partners with UNESCO to support the continued development of appropriate monitoring indicators.

The FTI Secretariat will also prepare regular reports to the FTI Partners on recipient country and donor performance and the lessons learned from the FTI, based on information drawn from annual country-level sector reviews.

F11 Finally, the 2006 *Guidelines for Appraisal of the Primary Education Component of an Education Sector Plan* envisaged that the plans would incorporate recommendations for donor action in four specific areas of which two were relevant to monitoring and evaluation (p.3):

(b) The monitoring process, including indicators to track progress on inputs, outputs and outcomes. The document could suggest themes for review during annual joint supervisions, as well as a process for assessing donor support and overall coordination;

(c) Critical knowledge or data gaps, as well as suggested arrangements to close them;

C. Data: availability and quality at global and country level

F12 This section discusses the following two issues:

- How did the FTI directly attempt to close the data gap? Two mechanisms are considered through which it could have improved the availability of data:
 - the use of the Indicative Framework in order to encourage the collection of information on key indicators; and
 - the use of resources from the Catalytic Fund and EPDF to increase the capacity of FTI countries to collect information.
- What are the outstanding issues in data coverage and quality?

FTI activities – Indicative Framework

F13 The FTI encouraged an agenda of indicative benchmarking through the use of the FTI Indicative Framework indicators “*to enlighten debate, in-country reporting on policies and performance, and mutual learning on what works to improve primary education outcomes*”. This was expected to provide a strong impetus for countries to focus on the collection of information on certain key indicators where these were not already being reported. **Annex C** discusses this issue in detail, including the debate around the primary completion rate and the various proxies for it. The FTI, which promoted the use of the primary completion rate in the belief that it would be more effective in focusing countries’ attention on results, contributed indeed to the indicator becoming better established in some countries (e.g. Burkina Faso, Yemen and Kenya, where the management information system was adjusted to enable its estimation) and towards stepping up efforts to report proxies, such as survival rates, more consistently. However, the conclusion (which is taken up later in this section) is that there has not been a widespread improvement in the collection of data on Indicative Framework indicators as a whole.

FTI activities – Catalytic Fund and EPDF (Objective 1)

F14 At the global level, since the FTI was established, a number of institutions have grown in stature in the field of (education and financial) data collection and analysis:

- The *UNESCO Institute of Statistics* (UIS) is now a recognised authority on global education statistics in a way which was not the case with the unit based in the UNESCO headquarters.
- Since 2002, the annual *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (EFA-GMR) has been making a major contribution to the monitoring of progress towards the EFA targets and, through thematic background papers, to the understanding of the constraints towards reaching those targets.
- The *Development Assistance Committee* (DAC) aid statistics have improved in consistency, have extended their coverage (at least from bilateral donors) and have become much more accessible to allow analyses of the priorities of development cooperation.
- The *Education Policy and Data Center* (EPDC) plays a valuable role in gathering analysing and providing access to education data from a range of global and country-level sources.

F15 As these institutions now have strong comparative advantage in the collection of data, the FTI has relied on their information and collaborates with them for its own reporting. For example, the profiles of FTI endorsed countries that now appear in FTI Annual Reports are provided by the Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC).

F16 At the country level, bilateral and multilateral donors have continued their activities aimed at strengthening M&E processes, including diagnostic studies and support to EMIS. A common theme from the country case studies is that the additional contribution of FTI to such activities has generally been minor. Nevertheless, resources from the two FTI funds have also been used to facilitate the collection of information.

F17 The *Catalytic Fund* has been used in some instances to address data gap issues explicitly. For example, among case-study countries, it is possible to identify Yemen (where resources were used for data collection and to increase capacity for monitoring and evaluation), Cambodia (where the school self-assessment approach supports bottom-up monitoring) and Ghana (where vehicles were purchased to help with data collection at the district level). However, these are a small part of ongoing activities in the FTI countries.

F18 The *EPDF*, under its Objective 1, has envisaged the provision of assistance to the preparation of sound and sustainable education sector plans. This could include actions to close the data gap. The following examples of EPDF projects carried out in case-study countries are indicative of the approach to addressing aspects of the data gap:¹

Yemen	Impact evaluation surveys for conditional cash transfer programme and school fee abolition; estimation of time on task in schools; household survey on causes of dropout and links to education quality
Cambodia	Impact evaluation of primary education scholarship programme to increase access for the poor

¹ For an extensive analysis of EPDF projects see Appendix IV.

Ethiopia	Analysis of food insecurity
Moldova	Early childhood development: evaluation of FTI interventions; study on household knowledge, attitudes or practices; EMIS.

F19 These projects, even if individually consistent with the EPDF objectives and valuable in their own right, appear fragmented in view of the big picture of outstanding data gap issues and were not targeted at improved reporting against Indicative Framework indicators in a systematic way. These gaps are discussed later in this section.

F20 There is little evidence that EPDF funding has been used to strengthen capacity on data collection and analysis around cross-cutting issues. An exception was a project in Cambodia that focused on the development of methodology and assessment instruments to screen for disability, a major issue that has received very little attention and needs a coordinated approach across countries.

F21 Overall, the effectiveness of EPDF projects in addressing, among others, the data gap cannot be assessed. According to the EPDF desk review (Bellew & Mook 2008, p.3):

Given the limits of the documentary information, we were unable to assess whether the EPDF-funded activities produced the outcomes captured by the four EPDF objectives. The most we could do was to draw inferences as to whether the EPDF is resulting in more countries with endorsed sector plans. We could not assess whether EPDF-funded activities have built country capacity in the various areas in which it intervenes, nor whether EPDF activities have strengthened donor partnerships at the country level, nor whether monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing activities have improved country policies and strategies.

F22 Reports to donors on the effectiveness of EPDF expenditure, as envisaged in the EPDF Concept Note, have been sparse. As noted in [Appendix IV](#), there appear to have been problems with the analytical monitoring of the fund, which has been the responsibility of the World Bank rather than the FTI Secretariat.

Coverage of data

F23 There are still considerable gaps in the data that are collected and reported (see, for example, Horn & Porta 2009). [Appendix I](#) discusses the Indicative Framework ‘resource mobilisation’ indicators. This sub-section focuses on some of the Indicative Framework ‘service delivery’ indicators that are related to quality and touches briefly on some other key education data areas identified in the FTI guiding documents.

F24 **Quality of learning environment.** The Indicative Framework included three quality indicators:

- Pupil-teacher ratio: This continues to be monitored in the Annual Report country profiles (albeit without the clarification whether this is exclusively for ‘publicly-financed’ schools, as specified in the Indicative Framework, or not).
- Non-salary primary education expenditure as a percentage of total primary education recurrent expenditure (which is a proxy for the attention paid by the governments to teaching-learning materials, grants to schools and stipends to students): There has been progress in

reporting these figures through the Country Status Reports, which have been supported by the EPDF, although it is not certain whether the progress made is sustainable (i.e. whether it is in-built in the country accounting and reporting systems) or whether it relies exclusively on the intensive data collection efforts that accompany these studies. In any case, the FTI Annual Reports do not report against this indicator.

- Annual instructional hours: This is a crucial measure, as discussed in Abadzi (Abadzi 2009), especially if defined as the estimated number of effective instructional hours of schooling, a measure that takes into account days when the school is closed for informal reasons, teacher lateness and absenteeism, time not spent on task and pupil absenteeism. However, relevant studies are resource-intensive endeavours with complicated design, requiring multiple and carefully-timed visits to schools throughout the year. The FTI Annual Reports have not been reporting against this indicator, while the FTI has not taken any major steps to promote improved measurement methods of instructional hours in FTI countries. The indicator has not featured significantly in the dialogue observed in the evaluation's case study countries.

F25 Given the existing knowledge about quality factors that promote learning, the focus on these three indicators (two of which have not even been monitored systematically) seems restrictive. It could have been useful for the FTI to promote consideration of what other indicators of quality are important and support efforts to measure them in a consistent way across countries (for example support to teachers and availability of instructional materials). This could complement the concern to monitor learning outcomes, which is considered next.

F26 **Learning outcomes.** The 2002 Action Plan urged partners to demonstrate their “*commitment to standardized assessment (initially at a national level, but eventually on an internationally standardized basis) to permit systematic tracking of learning progress*” (World Bank 2002, p.17). The 2004 FTI Framework noted that “*Indicative framework targets also need to be complemented by measurements of student learning and the quality of teaching*” (FTI 2004d, p.6). Regional initiatives are well established by now and some case study countries of this evaluation have been participating in them (e.g. Kenya and Mozambique in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Burkina Faso in the Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC), and Nicaragua in the Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (LLECE)) regardless of the FTI.

F27 The FTI, through EPDF, has directly supported some studies with learning assessment components (notably in India). At the national level, it has funded country participation in international assessments (e.g. in the case of Yemen with the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)) and the introduction of national systems (e.g. in the case of Cambodia through Catalytic Fund support).

F28 A task team on the quality of learning outcomes was established in 2007 to make proposals to the FTI Steering Committee in terms of “*proactive FTI guidelines and procedures in support of improved learning outcomes in partner countries*”. According to its terms of reference these could include “*proposals for FTI support to strengthening country level capacity for assessing student learning outcomes*”. This eventually led to an FTI memo (July 2009) to extend the Indicative Framework to include (i) monitoring of reading ability at the end of grade 2 and the end of the primary cycle; and (ii) reporting of a country's engagement in the measurement of learning achievement.

F29 **Other EFA goals.** It should be recalled that the Indicative Framework was somewhat less ambitious compared to the 2002 Action Plan, as it focused exclusively on universal primary completion and dropped references to other EFA goals, such as adult literacy rates. The FTI has not played an advocacy role on the measurement of quantifiable EFA goals other than the primary completion rate, such as literacy and early childhood development (with minor exceptions such as the support through EPDF to the management information system for the pre-school level in Moldova).

Quality of data

F30 Based on the IMF Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), UIS and the World Bank developed a framework in 2003 to assess the quality of education statistics systems, which was applied in 2004-2005 in some FTI-eligible countries. The framework reviews these systems according to their integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability and accessibility. It can be used to monitor progress in the quality of data systems, compare countries and help prioritise support activities.

F31 For example, the school census process differs widely across countries in terms of types of schools excluded, administration (self-response vs. enumeration), incentives not to report accurately (if school resources depend on reported enrolment), quality control procedures and timing. These differences have implications about the quality of data and the comparisons that can be made – but these differences are not well known or understood.

F32 A summary of concerns about various financial and education data series is presented in **Appendix I**. Weak processes leave at times doubts about the quality of data in a number of countries. At least from the point of view of awareness raising and advocacy, the FTI has not yet championed data quality issues such as:

- refining population (and sub-population) estimates and projections, focusing on the implications for (and the potential underestimation of) the number of out-of-school children;
- contesting alternative definitions and highlighting the implications of different measurement methods of the primary completion rate (e.g. reconciling estimates obtained through administrative and survey data respectively);
- interpreting national public expenditure data on education and agreeing improved processes and methods to assign expenditure by level and type.

F33 At country level, the evaluation's country case studies suggest that the FTI has made only a small contribution in improving data collection processes, even in countries where the information systems are known to be very weak. Some countries, such as Ghana, Cambodia and Zambia, had an established EMIS before the advent of FTI. Other countries have made some progress in this area. In Burkina Faso, data processing and dissemination were accelerated (including through the development of a new type of survey specifically designed for this purpose), while the EMIS was further developed in Ethiopia. However, neither development was related to an FTI intervention.

F34 In Yemen, where data collection was supported by the Catalytic Fund, the FTI worked in four pilot governorates to improve EMIS capacity but the approach is yet to be rolled out country-wide. In fact, the data collection processes of the Ministry of Education have continued to be fragmented (including two separate cycles of school census processes, a 5-year and an annual cycle) despite considerable support. In

other cases, too, previous problems persist. No progress was made to increase the coverage of the school census in Kenya to also include non-formal and private schools. In Mali, the system put in place through foreign technical assistance was not sustainable and ran into problems after the project was completed. The general perception from the case studies is that, except for isolated improvements of statistical capacity building projects often related to direct budget support programmes, data are produced in much the same way as prior to FTI.

Conclusions

F35 The FTI guiding documents aspired (for several improvements) to address the data gap. However, many of these improvements were expected to be brought about by the activities of individual partners and organisations rather than by the FTI partnership itself. For example, the 2002 Action Plan envisaged that the World Bank, rather than the future partnership, would “*enhance in-house capacity for data collection and also strengthen its ongoing financial and technical support with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics*” and “*sharpen measurement of progress on EFA*” (World Bank 2002, p.21).

F36 The role that the FTI partnership was expected to play in directly closing the data gap through support to data collection processes was therefore small and unlikely to make a major contribution to improving the coverage and quality of data. However, given its emphasis on the data gap, the FTI partnership might have done more to advocate necessary improvements in global education statistics. In particular, the FTI has not been able to ensure that countries monitor systematically the indicators of the Indicative Framework. This would have been necessary to enable an evidence-based discussion on the validity of the Framework and recommendations on whether and how it should be updated.

D. Data: use at country level

F37 This section discusses the following two issues:

- How did the FTI directly attempt to improve the monitoring and evaluation processes at country level? Two mechanisms are considered through which it could have improved the use of data:
 - the use of the education sector plan appraisal process as a way of highlighting the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation function if this had not received sufficient attention in FTI countries;
 - the use of resources from the EPDF to increase the capacity of FTI countries to use information from planning.
- What are the outstanding issues in the use of data?

FTI activities – education sector plan appraisal process

F38 The appraisal process called for agencies to assess education sector plans, among others on the basis of the quality of education sector data (including the Indicative Framework indicators) and the credibility of the proposals made to address the gaps. The process could therefore be used to exert pressure on countries to back their plans with good data and explicit monitoring arrangements.

F39 However, the evidence is that the contribution of the appraisal process to improving the quality of data has been rather small. A review by the FTI Secretariat (FTI 2008n) of 28 endorsed education sector plans examined their treatment of the four gaps (policy, finance, data and capacity development) along three dimensions

(clarity of issues, relevant strategy, and monitoring). Performance was found to be weakest in the coverage of data issues: only a few plans addressed these issues explicitly and even the best ones provided limited analysis and estimates of the costs of improvements. In a section on learning outcomes, for example, the review commented (p.16) that plans tended to be “*vague in describing what will be measured ... and how the data will be monitored and evaluated*”.

F40 Not surprisingly, some of the case studies undertaken for this evaluation corroborate the perception that appraisals were ‘light touch’ and therefore missed the opportunity to push through improvements. For example, in Burkina Faso “*the FTI appraisal was not used to highlight the country's 'data gap' and it therefore does not set out areas for improvement in M&E*” (Chiche et al 2009 ¶7.22). Even the 2009 ‘matrix of conditionality’ document, despite requirements for reporting on additional indicators, “*does not have a strong emphasis on improving the system for M&E in education and in this sense is not expected to be strongly relevant for determining the direction taken by M&E activities*” (¶7.29).

F41 Similarly, the appraisal of the Yemeni proposal did not “*point out institutional and management constraints in the area of data (e.g. data collection housed in different departments without incentive mechanisms for coordination) ... or ... the need to link-up lower basic education M&E framework with those initiated for MDG or PRSP*” (Duret et al 2009 ¶7.18). In Ghana, even though the appraisal raised the issue, the fact remains that “*there has been no detailed discussion about the financing of the M&E in either the ESP or in the final FTI proposal*” (¶7.38).

FTI activities – EPDF (Objective 3)

F42 Objective 3 of the EPDF (FTI 2005a) envisages improvements in monitoring, evaluation and knowledge sharing across countries to help understand the conditions under which particular policies may be successful. The following examples of EPDF projects carried out in case-study countries are indicative of the approach to promoting the use of data:²

Pakistan	Capacity building to carry out school census analysis.
Yemen	Support to M&E: (a) information for decision-making to policy makers; (b) stronger accountability functions; and (c) integrated information systems for equitable and cost-effective resource allocation.
Cambodia	Annual sector review and capacity building work plan.
Vietnam	Learning from other countries in providing access to full-day schooling

F43 These projects were well focused on improving the use of data in the FTI countries. However, they do not appear to form part of a broader, coherent strategy across FTI countries for strengthening the use of data in planning, an important overall FTI goal.

F44 By contrast, a coherent and positive contribution of EPDF resources was the funding of Country Status Reports, mostly in African countries, especially in cases such as Burkina Faso (2005-07), where the support that was provided by Pôle de Dakar focused on building capacity.

² For an extensive analysis of EPDF projects see Appendix IV.

Box F1 Country Status Reports

A Country Status Report (CSR) is a stock-taking exercise of the education sector (particularly primary and secondary education). They have been managed since 2000 and are the result of collaboration between the World Bank and/or Pôle de Dakar and the respective governments. The reports have been supported initially by the Norwegian Education Trust Fund and subsequently by the EPDF.

Using administrative and household survey data they focus on costs, finance and service delivery and their impact on learning achievement, in an effort to analyse areas for further policy development. The typical structure of a CSR includes the following chapters:

- Global contextual framework of the evolution of the education sector
- Analysis of enrolments
- Costs and financing
- Internal efficiency of the system and quality of education
- External efficiency associated with the production of human capital
- Equity and disparities within the education system
- Management (distribution of responsibilities, resources and personnel; school-based management)
- Crosscutting issues and estimation of a simulation model

A set of guidelines exists to guide CSR teams. These are currently being updated by the World Bank.

The following table shows all African countries that have completed or are expecting to do a CSR. A number of countries not listed below have completed partial reports (notes). Yemen has also completed a CSR in 2009.

	Completed	Due	Next		Completed	Due
Angola		2011		Liberia		2011
Benin	2002, 2009			Madagascar	2001	2009
Burkina Faso	2009			Malawi	2009	
Burundi	2007			Mali	2005, 2009	
Central Afr. Rep.	2008			Mauritania	2001, 2006	2011
Cameroon	2005			Mauritius		
Chad	2007		✓	Mozambique	2003	
Congo Rep.		2008		Niger	2000, 2004	2011
Côte d'Ivoire	2004, 2009			Nigeria	2004	
DR Congo	2005			Rwanda	2003	2011
Ethiopia	2005			Sierra Leone	2006	
Gabon		2010		Sudan (North)		2011
Gambia			✓	Sudan (South)		2011
Ghana			✓	Swaziland	2006	
Guinea	2005			Tanzania		2009
Guinea-Bissau	2009			Togo	2003, 2007	
Kenya	2004		✓	Zambia	2005	
Lesotho	2005					

Use of data

F45 The evidence from the country case studies is that the use of data remains limited and that the main audience continues to be the donor community. In Kenya, despite the introduction of an intricate set of monitoring processes in recent years (the results framework of the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme; two

annual joint sector reviews, the joint review of the education sector and the joint budget review; a log-frame for each of 23 investment programmes; quarterly financial monitoring reports; annual Country Information Form for the Catalytic Fund; and annual progress report on education to the central government National Integrated M&E System), there was little sign of improved national capacity to monitor progress in the education sector. Among the above processes, it is mainly the financial monitoring reports that are used to prompt follow-up actions (primarily because they trigger the release of tranches); by contrast, reports with education data do not seem to have a similar effect on education policy decision making.

F46 In Mozambique, there was *“little evidence that data collected is actually used for policy decision making, except for establishment of goals and targets”*. Data use and analysis have not improved nor have they influenced the planning and budgeting exercises, at least no more than the procedures already in place. There is no evidence that FTI has contributed to improving M&E of the targets adopted. In Cambodia, *“rather than prioritising or otherwise improving linkages between data monitoring and evaluation, the programme has avoided specific interventions related to M&E”*.

F47 In Yemen, the joint annual review mission urged that the statistical survey results be presented *“in a simplified analytical form to help decision makers understand them and benefit from them in designing policies, plans, programmes and making decisions”*. The emphasis on the supply of data was not matched with similar efforts to promote data use and analysis. In order to encourage the culture of evidence-based policy making, simple analyses are needed to help compare units (school or areas) against standards to inform remedial measures. The institutional framework for the management of information is not supportive and FTI endorsement did not lead to M&E becoming more prioritised by government outside the context of efforts for the preparation of the Country Status Report.

F48 In Burkina Faso, there remain many challenges in the use of data *“which indicate that the FTI has not yet been fully effective in influencing this area”*. While large amounts of data are collected it is still not certain that there is capacity to analyse them and internalise their implications. There is no evidence that FTI endorsement has resulted in increased expenditure on M&E by the government.

F49 In Nicaragua, the perception is that the outputs of the monitoring system were intended to be used mainly by donors to increase aid rather than by the government as instruments to improve policy and planning. There is a similar impression from the review in Mali, where statistics are used mainly for post-review instead of planning.

F50 The above examples focus on decision making at the central level. However, in the context of decentralisation, there has also been a significant increase in the need for downstream service delivery providers to use data. For a typical example, the increased emphasis on decentralisation to provincial and district level in Kenya *“poses a challenge since there is reported to be a shortage of qualified personnel to implement and monitor programmes”* (Thompson et al 2009a ¶2.25). In Burkina Faso, *“the linkages between the routine planning activities implemented by the regional and provincial directorates and the emerging ones at decentralized level have not been clearly thought through to improve the credibility of the annual planning exercise”* (Chiche et al 2009 ¶5.33). This is a major agenda. The FTI appears to be responding, as in the case of Cambodia, where the recently approved FTI programme *“will support school and district capacity development for decision-making related to ... data collection and targets through construction, provision of equipment and training for district and school management”* (Riddell et al 2009 ¶7.7).

Conclusions

F51 The above examples suggest that progress in the use of data at country level has been rather limited, and that the FTI's contribution to such progress has been minor. However, building country capacity to monitor and evaluate the implementation of plans and to encourage the use of data is a nuanced and protracted process and no simple solutions are on offer. The rate of absorption in projects aiming to build the monitoring and evaluation capacity of countries can be low, as reportedly was the case in Kenya.

F52 The FTI focused on an appraisal process to encourage countries to pay closer attention to monitoring and evaluation in their education sectors and complemented this with some EPDF projects. However, this process appears to have had rather limited effects. One reason might be that the appraisals could not be followed up with direct and ongoing support to Local Donor Groups and Local Education Groups to help them use available evidence to draw policy implications in the context of the joint annual review process. Another reason might be the weak capacity of the LDGs on data issues, the weak link with macro-level processes such as PRSP monitoring, general budget support monitoring, or the creation of national statistics institutes and plans and the lack of collaboration within aid agencies with colleagues in charge of the latter issues.

E. Monitoring and evaluation of the FTI

F53 The FTI and partner countries need to jointly monitor and evaluate the implementation of education sector plans to assess whether the expected results are being achieved. The FTI also needs to monitor and evaluate its own activities to assess whether they contribute to the FTI goals. This section discusses briefly how the FTI has reported progress and then addresses gaps in the way the FTI has monitored its own activities and used this information for management decisions.

FTI activities – Reporting

F54 According to the 2004 FTI Framework, the basis of reporting for FTI was expected to be the results of annual education sector reviews: "*The results of each joint sector review are communicated to the FTI Secretariat in order to track progress at the global level, in conjunction with UNESCO, and to foster cross-country diffusion of lessons and good practice*" (FTI 2004d, p.12). Most case study countries had such review processes already in place (although in some cases, as in Nicaragua, the FTI is credited with the introduction of the review). This is not surprising given that the FTI pilot countries were selected originally because they were already relatively advanced in terms of their commitment to universal primary completion and the processes needed to achieve it.

F55 The FTI Secretariat maintains some information on annual education sector reviews in FTI countries, although this has not been shared widely and it is not clear how the FTI Annual Reports have drawn on this information.

F56 In terms of FTI actual reporting:

- Until 2007, progress reports and status reports were prepared primarily for information within the partnership.
- The 2007 and 2008 FTI Annual Reports were prepared by the FTI Secretariat as "flagship" publications for wide distribution. This constituted a major improvement in terms of the visibility of the FTI. However, the documents mix up objective monitoring with advocacy in support of the FTI. Indeed, there is no formal distinction between the monitoring and advocacy functions in the

FTI administrative setup. There has been a tendency to imply incorrectly in these two reports that FTI should be credited for improvements. For example:

- Analyses often focus only on FTI-endorsed countries. This does not provide a sound basis for assessing the added value of FTI as it overlooks the fact that these countries were initially good performers and that there is therefore an inherent selection bias. As comparisons are not made with similar countries, the reader is implicitly led to believe that FTI-endorsed countries perform better thanks to the FTI.
 - According to the 2008 Annual Report (FTI 2008m, p.1) “*Grade One Intake Rate (GIR) trends are positive in most FTI countries – 26 of 35 countries achieved a GIR of 95 percent or above in 2006. In 2005, 24 FTI countries had achieved this level, as compared to only 17 in 2000.*” However, in practice the change from 1999 to 2006 has been equally rapid among those endorsed before 2006, those endorsed since 2006 and those under consideration in 2008-9 (see Table 5.2 of this evaluation’s Working Paper 3 (Carr-Hill 2009), which uses UIS data from 2008).
 - Also according to the 2008 Annual Report (FTI 2008m, p.1-2) “*overall enrollment numbers are up by 36 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, including a remarkable increase of 52 percent in FTI countries compared to 23 percent in non-FTI countries*”. The analysis omitted to explain that four of the six high population countries in that group (Madagascar in 2002, Ghana in 2003, Kenya in 2003, and Mozambique in 2005) had abolished school fees in the first half of this decade, leading to a surge in enrolments that was unrelated to FTI.
 - The FTI survey to review Paris Declaration indicators (FTI Secretariat 2009a, quoted in the 2008 Annual Report) was cited as demonstrating the effectiveness of FTI processes in the education sector. However, the survey was a snapshot at a single point in time and was based on endorsed countries only, and so such inferences could not logically be drawn. This does not mean that FTI had no effects, but the survey was not valid evidence for the effects it announced.
- There has been an excessive acceptance of FTI impact without sufficient recognition of external factors or pre-existing dynamics and without analysis of the *specific* added value of FTI.
 - The 2008 Annual Report (FTI 2008m, p.7) quotes the FTI’s Paris Declaration indicator survey finding of “*a positive impact of the FTI process, most evident in the core areas of sound and operational education sector strategies and results-oriented frameworks for their performance assessment, coordination of technical cooperation through the local donor groups, use of program-based approaches such as education sector-wide approaches (SWAps), joint field missions, and joint analytical work. The quality of country Public Financial Management (PFM) systems shows significant improvements since 2005. A total of 70 percent of the surveyed FTI countries have moved up at least 0.5 points on the World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) Scale*”. As already noted, conclusions about the FTI’s impact could not

logically be drawn from that survey and no other evidence is offered.

- In terms of monitoring donor performance, the Annual Reports have not elaborated beyond the use of the OECD DAC data (in collaboration with the EFA-GMR). In other words, apart from monitoring total donor commitments and allocations to basic education, the response of individual donors to endorsement has not been monitored, for example whether endorsement and grant allocations led to donors increasing or coordinating their support to particular countries.³
- In terms of monitoring recipient country performance, as mentioned in Section B, the country profiles presented as annexes in the 2007 and 2008 FTI Annual Reports do not report on any of the 'service delivery' indicators of the Indicative Framework (with the exception of the pupil teacher ratio). This can be traced back largely to the degree to which recipient countries adopted the Indicative Framework. Even so, the FTI could have led the way for specific indicators to be monitored (for example, the indicators around teacher salaries and contract teachers).
- The FTI Secretariat has developed a separate Country Information Form in response to a request by the Catalytic Fund Committee for reporting on financial and education data. Catalytic Fund applicants have been completing this form on an annual basis since 2006. However, the submission of these forms has not been universal, and often the data submitted are partial.
- Finally, in terms of reporting on lessons learned, the weak monitoring of donor and country performance identified above reduces the scope for learning lessons. When this is compounded by blurring the distinction between what constitutes objective evaluation and what belongs to the realm of advocacy and communications, it is more difficult for partners to draw the right conclusions on how primary education outcomes can be improved, and how the FTI itself can be made more effective.

FTI monitoring of inputs, outputs and outcomes

F57 FTI's design is such that its "inputs" can be very broadly construed. For example, they may include influence through the endorsement process and the scaling up of support by various donors, as well as the EPDF and Catalytic Fund inputs managed by the FTI itself. The previous discussion on reporting makes clear that the FTI has not paid sufficient attention to its management systems and basic monitoring of inputs, without which the monitoring of results cannot easily be linked to FTI activities. These shortcomings extend to the management information and analysis linked to its own Trust Funds. Thus:

- The analysis of the incidence of Catalytic Fund allocations was limited to simple tabulations by country and did not extend into substantive inquiries whether the resources were being distributed according to criteria of interest for the FTI, such as the number of out-of-school children.
- More generally, there was no regular and systematic monitoring of the "FTI compact". In practice, no real monitorable compacts were made (including the definition of individual agencies' undertakings), despite the fact that "transparent monitoring of donors' progress in increasing the

³ The FTI Framework anticipated that MOUs which embodied the reciprocal commitments of governments and donors would be made available on the FTI website, but this has not happened.

quantity and quality of their assistance to primary education in FTI countries against an agreed set of common coordination and harmonization indicators” was one of the objectives set out by the 2004 FTI Framework. This may have been an unrealistic design, but it was at the core of FTI's stated approach, and there should have been attention to the fact that this link in the design was not effective.

F58 There is a concern that FTI decisions are not sufficiently based on evidence. Annex B has identified weaknesses in the FTI governance design, including the weak resourcing and organisation of the Secretariat, and lack of clarity about its responsibilities, which have often been shared with task teams, the World Bank itself or other partner institutions.

F59 These constraints have affected the way the FTI monitoring and evaluation function has developed. This stands in sharp contrast with the prominence that monitoring and evaluation issues enjoy in several other global partnerships, such as the Global Environment Facility and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (from a rich documentation, see for example the GFATM (2009) *Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit*).

F60 According to the *Sourcebook for Evaluating Global and Regional Partnership Programs* (IEG 2007, para 2.6), in order to effectively monitor and evaluate partnerships it is a prerequisite to establish at the earliest opportunity a framework, which includes:

- Clear and coherent objectives and strategies;
- An expected results chain;
- Measurable indicators; and
- Systematic and regular processes for collecting and managing data.

F61 The FTI partnership has identified the goal (universal primary completion and other EFA goals). However, as explained in Annex B, in an attempt to accommodate and reconcile the different strategic perceptions of its partners, there has been some confusion over the appropriate responses and the division of labour between FTI and its individual partners.

F62 The lack of agreement over the responses may explain why there has not been meaningful discussion over:

- a results chain, namely an underlying theory linking inputs and activities logically to higher-level results – outputs, outcomes and impacts: this tool would help managers think through the extent to which their implementation activities have a reasonable probability of attaining the desired outputs and outcomes;
- the performance indicators at each level (notably at the level of inputs, activities and outputs) that would clarify how success is to be judged: Kusek and Rist argue the importance of a participatory and consultative process among partners since “*indicators cannot be simply turned over to technicians, because the political apparatus has to be consulted and has to agree on both goals and indicators*”. (Kusek & Rist 2004, p.58)

F63 Seen in these terms, the FTI currently lacks a monitoring and evaluation framework, which is agreed and owned by its partners. This issue is taken up in detail in Appendix VI where an M&E framework is proposed as a basis for discussion among partners. Such a framework would help clarify:

- the activities that the FTI should focus on to address some of the outstanding issues in terms of data, policy, capacity and financing gaps:

while the FTI partnership cannot achieve everything, it needs to decide on which issues (among its current set of complex intentions) it wants to make a real contribution to in the coming years;

- the sharing of responsibility for these activities – who will do what;
- the resulting implications for formalising partnership relationships in those activities that are to be shared – for example, in the case of the data gap, with the UIS, GMR and DAC; and
- the resulting implications for human and financial resources for the FTI's own management (depending on the scale of ambition and the decisions on the division of labour between partners).

Conclusions

F64 The FTI was launched before its partners had reached a consensus on how it would work and before corresponding governance and management arrangements were put in place. This lack of clarity about the activities that the FTI would directly take responsibility for coupled with the weakly resourced Secretariat has affected the quality of its reporting and the relevance of the information generated for evidence-based decision making. Hence, the FTI approach to the monitoring and evaluation of its own activities has broken down.

F65 Two of the core assumptions behind the FTI, namely that donors would respond by increasing and coordinating their support following endorsement of country plans and that these plans would have to focus on certain education policy agenda items expressed in the Indicative Framework, have not been monitored systematically. This means that the information needed to evaluate these assumptions has not been available.

F. Implications for FTI impact evaluation

F66 This mid-term evaluation reflects the desire of the FTI partnership to learn from the experiences so far and to adjust its course of action, if necessary. However, it was recognised that comprehensively assessing the impact of FTI would not be possible at this stage. Instead, according to the Terms of Reference, this evaluation should propose a monitoring and evaluation framework, *“building on the evaluation framework created for this evaluation, which will help frame future monitoring and evaluation efforts, including the assessment of FTI impact”* (¶15).

F67 Such undertaking involves both practical and methodological issues. During the first phase of this evaluation, a study was commissioned (White 2009). This considered the scope and options for conducting impact evaluations relevant to the FTI, and also clarified the concepts, terminology and data requirements of different approaches. Its findings were summarised in the Preliminary Report (Cambridge Education, Mokoro & OPM 2009b). During the second phase, a series of country case studies was undertaken. The studies conducted during the two phases have shown that:

- The data that would have been necessary to update the indicators and enable a testing of hypotheses implicit in the FTI Framework (such as donor performance or the FTI Indicative Framework) were not available.
- The management of FTI had neither the necessary resources nor the focus to collect the information that would enable such basic aspects of performance to be assessed.
- In any case, the FTI did not have a properly worked out and agreed results chain theory (linking the available inputs to the appropriate

activities and the desirable outputs and outcomes) to guide the monitoring and evaluation of its performance.

F68 In line with this evaluation's Terms of Reference, issues related to impact evaluation and the future M&E of the FTI are taken up in **Appendix VI**, which tackles the following issues:

- It reviews the methodological and practical issues of impact evaluation.
- It outlines a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the partnership, with clear roles and responsibilities for the FTI Secretariat and other parties.
- It shows how the Evaluation Framework used in this evaluation can be adapted to support future monitoring and evaluation, including the identification of key data that should be regularly collected (and by whom).
- It provides the FTI partnership with options and recommendations for future impact evaluation studies (including indicative costs).

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