INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:
Program/Activity Number: TBD

Program/Activity Title: Higher Education Program

Objective: 3 Investing in People

Program Area: 3.2 Education

Program Element: 3.2.2 Higher Education

Country/Region: Vietnam

Funding Begin: FY 2011 Funding End: FY 2015

LOP Amount: $20,000,000 Sub-Activity Amount: None

IEE Prepared By: Eric Johnson Current Date: June 27, 2011

IEE Amendment (Y/N): N

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)

Categorical Exclusion: X Negative Determination: 
Positive Determination: Deferral: 

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: (Place X where applicable)

CONDITIONS PVO/NGO: 

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This IEE is being prepared in advance of a new higher education program in Vietnam. Consistent with the current USAID/Vietnam higher education program (see IEE Asia 10-11 Vietnam-ETD Engineering Education Alliance GDA), and the USAID/Vietnam higher education strategy, the new activity will cover the following:

- Higher education management and administration reform
- Faculty development
- Curriculum reform
A mixture of technical assistance and training modalities will be used to achieve these goals -- with the exact academic subject or sector of this new program and future programs yet to be defined. This IEE finds that a categorical exclusion is warranted, based on 22 CFR 216.2c(2)(i) - Categorical Exclusion for education, technical assistance or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment -- given the nature of this project’s technical assistance modalities. No direct effect on the environment is anticipated.

This IEE covers the pending new activity and other similar higher education activities, if any, through the end of the current strategy, 2015. Future education activities, as indicated in the USAID/Vietnam higher education summary below, will have a similar focus and modality approach:

The goal of the education strategy is to improve the quality of Vietnamese higher education. The primary strategic approach will be to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of Vietnamese higher education institutions to develop and deliver education, training and applied research programs that underpin economic growth; responsive to the needs of the private sector; and conducive to increased employability for the recipients of higher education. In all programming efforts, priority will be placed on leaving behind institutional legacies capable of providing effective human and institutional capacity development after the conclusion of USAID funding. Preferred modalities will be technical assistance, university-private sector alliances, and higher education institutional partnerships.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Under an RFA for this program, USAID will invite applications that creatively address the higher education reform challenges posed above and contribute to the achievements of objectives and results in the USAID education strategies. USAID will not pre-define the focal area, but rather seek to tap into existing or new program ideas for innovative higher education reform. Applications might focus on one or more discipline or professional field and/or contribute to cross-cutting higher education management and administration reform. Each application will be required to propose a program that includes one or more of the following components:

Component 1: Higher Education Management and Administration Strengthening

Higher education management and administration that supports the development, delivery and sustainability of quality teaching, research and service is essential to improving the quality of higher education. Quality higher education depends on the ways management develops and implements policies and practices that are supportive of quality teaching and research. For example, effective personnel management practices – including matters related to faculty hiring, promotion and compensation – are vital to attracting and retaining the talented teachers and researchers needed to deliver quality programs. Governance approaches that support and reflect institutional autonomy enable universities and colleges to be more responsive and adaptive as they continue to shape academic programs to meet the needs of students and external stakeholders. Campus administrators that support faculty and private sector driven reforms to curriculum, teaching, and assessment are critical to incubating and growing reforms as they
develop. Finally, the absence of sound financial planning and management can undermine an institution's ability to develop and sustain academic programs, hire and promote faculty, and maintain facilities needed to support quality instruction and research.

By strengthening higher education management and administration, this program will help foster human and institutional capacity that is vital to the delivery of quality higher education.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance to selected Vietnamese higher education institutions aimed at improving higher education management and administration;
- Higher education partnerships aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of selected higher education institutions to function as autonomous institutions with effective financial management and resource development practices;
- Technical assistance to develop MOET's capacity to provide training and support to higher education managers and administrators throughout Vietnam;
- Technical assistance to MOET and select higher education institutions to improve approaches to faculty hiring, promotion and compensation;
- Higher education partnerships aimed at developing strong Vietnamese higher education leadership and management programs.

Component 2: Faculty Development

The development of professors and instructors who are able to employ effective teaching methodologies and practices is essential to quality higher education. In order to ensure that this happens in an ongoing manner, rather than in a piecemeal fashion, and in order to ensure such development is not concentrated in just a few locations or universities, Vietnam needs to improve and institutionalize faculty development programs system-wide.

By enhancing faculty development opportunities and programs, USAID will help Vietnam develop the capacity needed to ensure that their faculty - on an ongoing basis - can learn and employ effective instructional practices, thereby improving the quality of higher education.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance and/or higher education partnerships and exchanges aimed at building an effective faculty development programs system wide, including the development of strong, regionally dispersed faculty development institutions, or centers of excellence.
- Technical assistance to selected Vietnamese higher education institutions aimed at improving faculty development programs and practices.
- Incorporation of faculty development activities within other higher education assistance programs.
- Technical assistance to MOET aimed at developing MOET's capacity to provide incentives for and support to faculty development programs.

Component 3: Curriculum Development and Implementation
A key concern about higher education in Vietnam is that the curriculum used for instruction is not sufficiently relevant; students are being asked to learn matters that prospective employers do not need the students to know. Curriculum is too often developed in isolation from external stakeholders whose inputs could greatly enhance the value of the curricula content. Quality higher education depends on the use of relevant curriculum.

By supporting the development and use of relevant curriculum, and the capacity needed to continue such curriculum development in the face of changing knowledge and needs, USAID will help Vietnam ensure that students are learning that which is supportive of their aspirations, their employment prospects, and the country’s social and economic development needs.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance and/or higher education partnerships and exchanges aimed at a) developing more relevant curriculum in collaboration with prospective employers, b) fostering curriculum development practices that develop more relevant curriculum on an ongoing basis and in collaboration with prospective employers, and c) ensuring adoption and use of such curriculum by faculty at selected Vietnamese higher education institutions.
- Development and incorporation of institutional practices that foster and ensure faculty adoption and use of relevant curriculum within other higher education assistance programs.
- Technical assistance to MOET aimed at developing MOET’s capacity to provide incentives for and support to the ongoing development of relevant curriculum, as well as its capacity to support the nationwide dissemination, adoption and use of such curriculum and curriculum development approaches.

Cross-Cutting Components: Whatever the focal area of the program, and no matter how many of the above components are included, USAID will require that the following cross-cutting factors be present in all applications:

- Accreditation. The U.S. Government is committed to advancing accredited approaches to higher education in Vietnam and this program will be a part of that commitment. Any new curriculum or approach introduced by the program will be tied to a specific accreditation regime in the U.S. Further, to the extent the achievement of programmatic accreditation for programs in Vietnam is feasible, it will be pursued.

- Scalability. All applications must include plans for initial scaling (i.e. not focus on one university and/or a small group of individuals) and include plans for further scaling as the program progresses/transition. USAID seeks to make large, systemic impacts with its limited education investments, when possible.

- Relevance. USAID/Vietnam’s education programs must contribute to reform in areas of the higher education sector relevant to the economy and/or other aspects of USAID work in Vietnam. Illustrative areas of interest to USAID include, but are not limited to: health
CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

As described above, all components and activities of the project and strategy meet the criteria for categorical exclusion under 22 CFR 216.2c(2)(i) “Education, technical assistance, or training program except to the extent such program includes activities directly affecting the environment.” No anticipated activities are expected to directly affect the environment. Therefore, a categorical exclusion is recommended for this modified project and other such projects under the USAID/Vietnam higher education strategy.
APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Drafted: EJohnson, Activity Manager

CLEARANCE:
Mission Director: 
Francis A. Donovan
Date: 7/11

CONCURRENCE:
Bureau Environmental Officer: Robert Macleod
Date: 7/12/11

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:

GDO Director

Date: 7/11

Program Officer: By Email
Dung Pham
Date: 6/29/11

Regional Legal Advisor BKB By Email
Belinda Barrington
Date: 7/1/11
Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)

From: Pham Thi Le, Dung (HANOI/PDO)
Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2011 6:10 PM
To: Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)
Cc: Le Thi Hoang, Lan (HANOI/GDO); Handler, Howard R. (HANOI/GDO)
Subject: RE: IEEs for Education
Attachments: Ammended IEE for HEEAP_PDOrev_062911.doc; IEE for new education activity_PDOrev-062911.doc

Eric –

I made some minor edits in the attached IEEs. Please address my comments in the IEE Amendment for HEEAP.

With that, please put me down as having cleared these IEEs.

Regards,
Dung

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From: Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2011 9:06 AM
To: Pham Thi Le, Dung (HANOI/PDO)
Cc: Le Thi Hoang, Lan (HANOI/GDO); Handler, Howard R. (HANOI/GDO)
Subject: IEEs for Education

Dung,

As discussed, I am processing two IEEs for education: (1) an amendment to the HEEAP IEE to extend the time and dollar amounts; (2) a new IEE for the new education activity. I decided to do them separate, as the HEEAP one is simple and fits together with an existing package of documents. For the new one, I included funding, time, and other potential activities through the end of the strategy 2015. If it needs to be extended or modified then, it could. I did not want to seek more time or money ceiling that this, as I don’t have any reference documents or budget forecasts to support that.

Can you review and clear these two? I will then go to Mary Alice, the BEO, and Frank.

Thanks,
Eric
I clear the IEE for the new education activity and the amended IEE for HEEAP as attached (very slight modifications asserting no environmental impact.) Belinda

From: Barrington, Belinda (RDMA/RLA TDY)
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2011 5:35 PM
Subject: FW: IEEs for Education
Attachments: IEE for new education activity modified and cleared by RLA.doc; Amended IEE for HEEAP modified and cleared by RLA.doc

I clear the IEE for the new education activity and the amended IEE for HEEAP as attached (very slight modifications asserting no environmental impact.) Belinda

From: Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2011 8:33 AM
To: Barrington, Belinda (RDMA/RLA TDY)
Cc: Kleinjan, Mary Alice (RDMA/RLA)
Subject: RE: IEEs for Education

Hi Belinda,

Apologies for the incomplete package. Here you go:

**HEEAP**
- Amended IEE
- Original IEE
- AAD
  - Amended AAD

**New Education Activity**
- IEE
- AAD

Thanks!

-Eric

From: Barrington, Belinda (RDMA/RLA TDY)
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2011 5:40 PM
To: Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)
Cc: Kleinjan, Mary Alice (RDMA/RLA)
Subject: RE: IEEs for Education

Eric, I will need to see the original IEE for Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program and any amendments to that IEE, as well as the AAD and amendments to the AAD for that activity. For the Higher Education Program, I will need to see the AAD for that activity in order to clear the IEE. Thanks. Belinda

From: Kleinjan, Mary Alice (RDMA/RLA)
Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2011 11:51 AM
To: Barrington, Belinda (RDMA/RLA TDY); Johnson, Eric M (HANOI/GDO)
Subject: FW: IEEs for Education
ACTIVITY APPROVAL DOCUMENT
HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

I. Program Summary

USAID/Vietnam proposes a program to improve the quality of higher education in Vietnam by strengthening the human and institutional capacity of Vietnamese higher education institutions to deliver education, training and applied research programs that underpin economic growth, are responsive to the needs of the private sector, and are conducive to increased employability for the recipients of higher education. While the exact focal point of the program within the higher education system – whether it be one academic subject area or a certain set of universities – will be determined by the applications received, the selected program will contribute to strengthened higher education administration, improved faculty development systems, and the development of more relevant curriculum for Vietnam, no matter its focal area.

This program builds upon the Government of Vietnam’s (GVN) 2008-2020 Education Development Strategic Plan, the Mission’s 2009 education assessment, and the recently established 2010-2014 USAID/Vietnam and 2011-2015 USAID/Washington education strategies. Taken together, these documents outline an approach to higher education reform that is based on accredited, scalable, and private sector aligned interventions that ultimately result in graduates with a more relevant set of hard and soft skills needed for the competitive global economy.

The three-year, $2.5 million program is anticipated to run from late 2011 to late 2014. Given the desire of USAID/Vietnam to support an organization to carry out the public purpose of improving higher education in Vietnam, an assistance instrument is recommended. This award would be managed by the General Development Office.

II. Background

As Vietnam moves from lower to middle-income country status, its higher education system is under immense pressure to meet the needs of the rapidly changing economic landscape. Unfortunately, in its current state, it is not up to the task.

The shortcomings of the Vietnamese higher education system are myriad: insufficient institutional differentiation and autonomy poorly trained and underpaid professors, out-dated instructional methods, poor education management, and weak curriculum, among others. The demands of the highly competitive global economy require a mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are not consistently being developed by Vietnam’s higher education system. No matter what standard one applies – supporting the achievement of next-stage economic growth, meeting labor market needs, providing access to underserved populations, fostering valuable research, generating a culture of innovation, collaborating effectively with the private sector – Vietnam’s higher education institutions are not measuring up. Exceptions exist, but the general situation is sobering, and a variety of factors combine to constrain the quality and relevance of the system and its institutions.
Critical factors include:

- **Too few students progress past high school.** With a 15% higher education enrollment rate - well below the 24% average for middle income countries - there is unmet demand among a population that places high value on education for their children. An economy where the vast majority of the labor-force has a high school degree or less is not capable of meeting the country’s human capital requirements.

- **The system lacks rational differentiation between institution types.** A healthy education system has a pyramid shaped structure of institutions: community colleges, teachers colleges, technical and vocational schools, and professional schools in large number with regional universities and national universities, fewer in number, built on top of that foundation. In additional to differentiation by quantity, these types of institutions are ideally differentiated by roles, functions, and funding – providing a diverse set of entry and exit points for secondary school graduates.

- **Socialization has given way to commodification.** As the State has loosened some of its control on higher education, allowing for private entrants, systems are needed to regulate market competition and ensure quality. Recent years have seen a rapid rise in the commercialization of education, with universities attempting to lure students and resources through offering limited degree choices (i.e. business administration) in shortened programs and with cheaper inputs. Without an accreditation and quality assurance system, the State and public lack the ability to assess the merit of certain degrees. The larger higher education system is in need of a long-term quality assurance system to promote continued attention to institutional review and improvement.

- **Lack of private sector involvement.** Although the GVN has recently supported forums aimed at fostering new approaches and practices in private sector integration, the vast majority of universities, colleges and post-secondary technical and vocational education and training institutions do not actively collaborate with the private sector. Further, the ability of higher education institutions to conduct research and development for the government or private sector is severely limited, as evidenced by the dearth of patent applications and peer-reviewed research publications produced by Vietnamese scholars and universities.

- **The quality of curriculum and instruction is weak.** Higher education curriculum in Vietnam is often outdated, and reform is difficult to pursue or implement. Moreover, a large percentage of higher education institutions in Vietnam are mono-disciplinary institutions that focus on one field of study and fail to address inter-disciplinary thinking and soft skills (teamwork, problem-solving, communication, English, etc.) that are valued by the private sector. What is taught is typically taught didactically with a premium places on memorizing facts. The General Manager of a major multi-national corporation in Vietnam recently described his impression of Vietnamese university classrooms he has visited:
One of the first things you will see is that the vast majority of the classes are taught in Vietnamese. You will also see that the classroom has very little to no interaction between students and the teacher. Teachers teach and students listen, but they do not challenge the teacher, ask clarifying questions or have opportunities to present their ideas in the classroom. You will also see that almost every class is an individual learning experience with very little team based activities and team based projects.

The GVN has acknowledged many, if not most, of these problems and is making an effort to address them. Education sector priorities have been clearly set in the Vietnam Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2020 (Resolution 14 – 14/2005/NQ-CP), which calls for a “fundamental and comprehensive renovation of higher education.” The GVN has further elaborated on its goals for higher education in its “Higher Education Reform Agenda” (HERA) which shows commitment to improving the higher education system in a rapidly changing economic and social environment through: (i) improving the quality of teaching and research, with a view to integration into the increasingly globalized economy; (ii) extending the autonomy of higher education institutions, especially in academic and administrative matters, with a view to improving responsiveness to the needs of beneficiaries; and (iii) increasing private sector investment, vital in the fiscal sustainability of an expanding sector.

While some steps have been taken, many of the reform plans have not been seriously implemented. A 2009 Politburo report found that “educational management retains many weaknesses and is the principal cause of many other weaknesses.” A January 2010 Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) resolution concluded that, “sweeping, vigorous, and path-breaking responses” are needed to improve the quality of higher education in Vietnam.

This program seeks to assist the GVN in achieving its education reform goals.

III. Problem Statement

The type of long-term economic and political growth that the US Government envisions for Vietnam requires the right quantity and quality of human capital. Dramatic reforms to the higher education system in Vietnam will be needed to produce this human capital, but reform has been slow and often misguided. Given the world class higher education system in the US, the vast experience of USAID in higher education development, and our ability to access and leverage private sector resources, we are well-position to assist Vietnam with this development challenge.

IV. Development Rationale

This program is premised on the development hypothesis that education is both foundational to human development and critically linked to broad-based economic growth. Research has demonstrated that education raises individual incomes (every additional year of schooling has been estimated to increase income per worker by 8.3 percent, on average) and can contribute significantly to economic growth. Education helps ensure that growth is broad-based and reaches the poorest. Access to education is a crucial precondition to educational impact, but what matters most thereafter is the quality of education.
In the right enabling environment, education can contribute significantly to economic growth for a developing country. The acquisition of skills is central to building human capital, increasing labor productivity, and catalyzing the adoption of new technologies. In an economy open to trade and with well-functioning markets, workers can add not only to their own incomes, but to the country’s economic growth in a significant and sustainable way.

A society’s provision of quality education is also of vital interest to the private sector. Businesses invest significant human and financial resources in assessing education needs and problems, assisting in the development of policies, and in creating programs aimed at improving education. This makes business a key partner in efforts to define and address a society’s education needs.

V. Relationship to the Global and Country Strategies and Expected Results

In February 2011, USAID/Washington finalized its 2011-2015 Education Strategy, making bold decisions and prioritizing resources to achieve select, strategic goals. The strategy seeks to deeply focus USAID education resources by country context. The strategy states that for countries that demonstrate sustained economic growth and global economic integration potential, programs should be focused at the higher education level and on workforce development. Vietnam falls into this focal category and the conclusion is consistent with the 2009 Education Assessment conducted in Vietnam that suggested we focus on the niche area of higher education, rather than basic or continuing education.

USAID/Vietnam’s work on education development fits nicely with the USAID education strategy and is based upon the same underlying principles. The over-arching goal of the USAID/Vietnam 2010-2014 education strategy is to improve the quality of Vietnamese higher education. The primary strategic approach is to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of Vietnamese higher education institutions to deliver education, training and applied research programs that underpin economic growth, are responsive to the needs of the private sector, and are conducive to increased employability for the recipients of higher education. In all education programming efforts, priority is placed on leaving behind institutional legacies capable of providing effective human capital development after the conclusion of USAID funding.

In order to achieve this objective, the Mission seeks the following intermediate results a) strengthened higher education management and administration; b) enhanced faculty development programs system-wide; and c) the development and use of relevant curriculum.

Within the F Standard Program Structure, the Activity falls under the 3.2 Education, 3.2.2 Higher Education.

VI. Program Description

Under an RFA for this program, USAID will invite applications that creatively address the higher education reform challenges posed above and contribute to the achievements of objectives and results in the USAID education strategies. USAID will not pre-define the focal area, but rather seek to tap into existing or new program ideas for innovative higher education reform. Applications might focus on one or more discipline or professional field and/or contribute to
cross-cutting higher education management and administration reform. Each application will be required to propose a program that includes one or more of the following components:

Component 1: Higher Education Management and Administration Strengthening

Higher education management and administration that supports the development, delivery and sustainability of quality teaching, research and service is essential to improving the quality of higher education. Quality higher education depends on the ways management develops and implements policies and practices that are supportive of quality teaching and research. For example, effective personnel management practices – including matters related to faculty hiring, promotion and compensation – are vital to attracting and retaining the talented teachers and researchers needed to deliver quality programs. Governance approaches that support and reflect institutional autonomy enable universities and colleges to be more responsive and adaptive as they continue to shape academic programs to meet the needs of students and external stakeholders. Campus administrators that support faculty and private sector driven reforms to curriculum, teaching, and assessment are critical to incubating and growing reforms as they develop. Finally, the absence of sound financial planning and management can undermine an institution’s ability to develop and sustain academic programs, hire and promote faculty, and maintain facilities needed to support quality instruction and research.

By strengthening higher education management and administration, this program will help foster human and institutional capacity that is vital to the delivery of quality higher education.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance to selected Vietnamese higher education institutions aimed at improving higher education management and administration;
- Higher education partnerships aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of selected higher education institutions to function as autonomous institutions with effective financial management and resource development practices;
- Technical assistance to develop MOET’s capacity to provide training and support to higher education managers and administrators throughout Vietnam;
- Technical assistance to MOET and select higher education institutions to improve approaches to faculty hiring, promotion and compensation;
- Higher education partnerships aimed at developing strong Vietnamese higher education leadership and management programs.

Component 2: Faculty Development

The development of professors and instructors who are able to employ effective teaching methodologies and practices is essential to quality higher education. In order to ensure that this happens in an ongoing manner, rather than in a piecemeal fashion, and in order to ensure such development is not concentrated in just a few locations or universities, Vietnam needs to improve and institutionalize faculty development programs system-wide.
By enhancing faculty development opportunities and programs, USAID will help Vietnam develop the capacity needed to ensure that their faculty - on an ongoing basis - can learn and employ effective instructional practices, thereby improving the quality of higher education.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance and/or higher education partnerships and exchanges aimed at building an effective faculty development programs system wide, including the development of strong, regionally dispersed faculty development institutions, or centers of excellence.
- Technical assistance to selected Vietnamese higher education institutions aimed at improving faculty development programs and practices.
- Incorporation of faculty development activities within other higher education assistance programs.
- Technical assistance to MOET aimed at developing MOET's capacity to provide incentives for and support to faculty development programs.

Component 3: Curriculum Development and Implementation

A key concern about higher education in Vietnam is that the curriculum used for instruction is not sufficiently relevant; students are being asked to learn matters that prospective employers do not need the students to know. Curriculum is too often developed in isolation from external stakeholders whose inputs could greatly enhance the value of the curricula content. Quality higher education depends on the use of relevant curriculum.

By supporting the development and use of relevant curriculum, and the capacity needed to continue such curriculum development in the face of changing knowledge and needs, USAID will help Vietnam ensure that students are learning that which is supportive of their aspirations, their employment prospects, and the country's social and economic development needs.

Illustrative Activities:
- Technical assistance and/or higher education partnerships and exchanges aimed at a) developing more relevant curriculum in collaboration with prospective employers, b) fostering curriculum development practices that develop more relevant curriculum on an ongoing basis and in collaboration with prospective employers, and c) ensuring adoption and use of such curriculum by faculty at selected Vietnamese higher education institutions.
- Development and incorporation of institutional practices that foster and ensure faculty adoption and use of relevant curriculum within other higher education assistance programs.
- Technical assistance to MOET aimed at developing MOET's capacity to provide incentives for and support to the ongoing development of relevant curriculum, as well as its capacity to support the nationwide dissemination, adoption and use of such curriculum and curriculum development approaches.
Cross-Cutting Components: Whatever the focal area of the program, and no matter how many of the above components are included, USAID will require that the following cross-cutting factors be present in all applications:

- **Accreditation.** The U.S. Government is committed to advancing accredited approaches to higher education in Vietnam and this program will be a part of that commitment. Any new curriculum or approach introduced by the program will be tied to a specific accreditation regime in the U.S. Further, to the extent the achievement of programmatic accreditation for programs in Vietnam is feasible, it will be pursued.

- **Scalability.** All applications must include plans for initial scaling (i.e. not focus on one university and/or a small group of individuals) and include plans for further scaling as the program progresses/transition. USAID seeks to make large, systemic impacts with its limited education investments, when possible.

- **Relevance.** USAID/Vietnam’s education programs must contribute to reform in areas of the higher education sector relevant to the economy and/or other aspects of USAID work in Vietnam. Illustrative areas of interest to USAID include, but are not limited to: health sciences, environment and climate change, politics and law, economic growth, social work, and English language capabilities.

- **Private Sector Support.** USAID/Vietnam encourages private sector partnerships to (a) leverage limited US Government resources; and (b) seek additionality from the private sector partners, as they contribute to the reform effort in unique, substantive ways. All applications must include one or more private sector resource partners, ideally matching USAID funds at least 1:1, but at no less than 1:2.

- **Soft and Hard Skill Development.** Private sector employers have told USAID that they can train recent graduates and potential hires on their craft and the hard-skills needed by their industry. However, it is the soft-skills areas of critical thinking, problem solving, team work, leadership, and English languages skills that take years to develop and represent real challenges for employers. Whatever the focus of this program, it will be expected to advance critical soft-skill development in the program participants and throughout program outputs.

- **Gender.** Education is both a public and a private good, and equitable access to quality education for both genders is both a matter of good development practice and a matter of human rights. This program will require gender to be addressed by all applicants and be included as a cross-cutting component integrated into the activity. For example, under the current Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP), a USAID/Vietnam higher education activity, the programs seeks to increase the number of
women participating in engineering programs (currently at 4%) through developing strong female engineering professors (this year’s cohort of 30 faculty participants is 30% female) and by providing scholarships to young women for vocational engineering programs. Whatever the unique gender related aspect of the program funded under this AAD, it will similarly seek to increase higher education equity and equality.

- **Evaluation.** Consistent with new USAID guidance on evaluations, this program has been designed with evaluation in mind from the beginning. As such, there are two central tenants of evaluation that will be required of the eventual award made: (a) that the program has dedicated resources (human and financial) for rigorous baseline and final evaluations to be conducted; (b) that the “impact” be isolated by considering control and intervention groups in evaluations, including the baseline. It is likely that only a sub-set of curriculum, faculty, and administrators within a university, or a sub-set of universities within the system, will be targeted by the program, making for natural control and intervention groups, even if the distribution between groups is not random. Resources (human and financial) will be dedicated for evaluation of both target and non-target constituencies.

**VII. PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS**

Certain issues or considerations need to be built into the implementation of the program, these include:

- Strong buy-in from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is critical. Issues such as curriculum reform, faculty development, and higher education administration reform fall under the responsibility of MOET and will only be accomplished through their acceptance and support. Beyond simply gaining “no-objection” from MOET to program activities, USAID and the eventual implementer will seek MOET’s assistance in furthering program reform areas beyond the target beneficiaries of our actual program.

- If U.S. universities are involved, they should have some experience with and a firm understanding of work in Vietnam. It would help if they are registered in Vietnam, or at least known to MOET through previous in country work. If not, they will need to start immediately on project and office registration. The implementing U.S. university should dedicate the appropriate administrative resources (not rely solely on faculty) and establish an in country presence (not manage the program from the U.S. through frequent trip to Vietnam).

- To the extent that the eventual academic area of interest intersects with other USAID and US Embassy interests (i.e. in health, governance, or economic growth) an explicit and continuous attempt must be made to allow for inputs from these sectors into the education program. It is essential to leverage programs to contribute to a larger goal.
IX. Assumptions and Risks

- USAID assumes that focusing on a program and a group of universities that meaningful development can be achieved not only in the target area or with the target institutions, but within the larger education system as well. Program components can be put in place that focus on scaling – taking initial successes in one area and pushing them horizontally and vertically within the system – but this takes dedicated focus and resources. USAID will require this of their eventual grantee. As an example, under the current Higher Engineering Education Program (HEEAP), Arizona State University has grown the program horizontally by attracting more private sector and USAID resources to expand the program to more universities and to include a technical and vocational track. It has also included MOET and university leadership in a “Campus Champions” program meant to familiarize leadership with the HEEAP reforms and to encourage their replication.

- A risk, as outlined in the Program Considerations section, is that MOET could act as a counterweight to reform. If MOET either actively or passively impedes curriculum change and faculty development reform, it will endanger program goal achievement. This risk is mitigated by strong collaboration with MOET and the gaining of their support and buy-in for changes.

X. Gender Considerations

Women have generally increased their levels of participation in education in Vietnam across all education levels. Women and men make up approximately 48 and 52 percent of students currently enrolled in higher education respectively. However, based on data from a MOET University Survey, female students are concentrated primarily in the social disciplines, such as education and the social sciences, accounting for approximately 65 percent of total enrolment in these disciplines. Men continue to dominate in the more technical disciplines such as technology and sciences, constituting 70 percent of enrolment.

Under ADS 201.3.11.16, all USAID programs and activities must consider gender issues in their design. This program has gender as one of seven required program components or focal areas. Illustrative gender-related activities might include:

- Gender equitable participation in all phases of the activity;
- Gender sensitive criteria developed for training development; and
- Gender related topics and subject matter in materials developed, as appropriate.
- Scholarships or other incentive based measured to ensure equitable access to education.

To the extent possible, all indicator data will be disaggregated by gender.

XI. Program Implementation and Management:

The General Development Office (GDO) will manage the program on behalf of USAID under the supervision of the GDO team leader.
A. Projected Timeline for Legislative Research Program

AAD completed and approved .......................................July 8, 2011
RFA Issued .............................................................August 15, 2011
Applications Due ...................................................September 30, 2011
Proposals Reviewed By ................................................October 31, 2011
Cooperative Agreement Awarded .................................December 2011 or January 2012**

**This follows standard OAA lead times for a full and open assistance award.

B. Illustrative Budget: An Independent Government Cost Estimate is attached to this AAD

C. Award Management: One of the two education officers in the General Development Office will act as the AOTR for this activity.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Annual Report: During Year One, the Implementing Partner shall submit a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan with the first year work plan. The M&E Plan shall track USAID/Vietnam’s Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), as well as other indicators proposed by the Partner, including rigorous collection of baseline and impact data. The M&E Plan shall be monitored quarterly, and updated and revised as appropriate in collaboration with USAID. Each year, the Implementing Partner shall provide a separate Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report to USAID following 12 months of program implementation.

Illustrative Indicators for inclusion in the M&E Plan include:

- Number of administrators exhibiting improved management behaviors
- Number of higher education institutions with improved financial management
- Number of higher education institutions with enhanced revenue generation from sources other than tuition and student fees.
- Number of higher education institutions with improved approaches to faculty promotion
- Number of existing Vietnamese graduate programs in higher education leadership and management strengthened.
- Number of new Vietnamese graduate programs in higher education leadership and management developed.
- Number of professors introducing quality instructional practices after participating in a faculty development program improved or created via USAID assistance.
- Number of improved faculty development programs.
- Number of faculty development incentives provided by MOET
- Number of higher education institutions that incorporate and institutionalize approaches to the development of relevant curriculum, e.g. curriculum developed via collaboration with and the support and approval of prospective employers.
- Number of faculty using more relevant content (e.g. curriculum that reflects input from and has the support of prospective employers and is aligned with an accredited program in the U.S.).
XII. Financial Plans: The funding sources for this program are FY 2011 ($869,000), and FY 2012 ($1.631 million) funds. Congress will be properly notified prior to the obligation of any funds.

XIII. Procurement Plan: GDO recommends that this activity be implemented through a Cooperative Agreement awarded through a full and open RFA.