

Type of Review: Annual Review

Project Title: Girls Education South Sudan

Date started: 1 April 2013

Date review undertaken: 21 March 2014

Instructions to help complete this template:

Before commencing the annual review you should have to hand:

- *the Business Case or earlier project documentation.*
- *the Logframe*
- *the detailed guidance (How to Note)- Reviewing and Scoring Projects*
- *the most recent annual review (where appropriate) and other related monitoring reports*
- *key data from ARIES, including the risk rating*
- *the separate project scoring calculation sheet (pending access to ARIES)*

You should assess and rate the individual outputs using the following rating scale and description. ARIES and the separate project scoring calculation sheet will calculate the overall output score taking account of the weightings and individual outputs scores:

Description	Scale
Outputs substantially exceeded expectation	A++
Outputs moderately exceeded expectation	A+
Outputs met expectation	A
Outputs moderately did not meet expectation	B
Outputs substantially did not meet expectation	C

Introduction and Context

What support is the UK providing?

The UK will provide £60 million over 6 years (2013-2018) to transform opportunities for a generation of girls in South Sudan through education. UK support will provide incentives to households to offset the cost of keeping girls in schools and cash grants to schools to improve the learning environment, impacting on the quality of learning for both girls and boys. UK support will also create an enabling environment for girls' education by extensive community engagement and delivering behaviour change communication in collaboration with government, non-state and private sector actors. The implementing agency is BMB Mott McDonald with consortium partners BBC Media Action, Cambridge Education, Winrock, and Charlie Goldsmith Associates.

What are the expected results?

Impact

The impact of the programme will be to transform the life chances of a generation of children in South Sudan, especially girls, through education.

Outcome

The outcome is expected to be acceleration of girls' enrolment, retention, completion and improved learning outcomes at primary and secondary levels of education in South Sudan. It is hoped that increased support to government systems can result in greater utilisation of government service delivery mechanisms by end of the programme.

Outputs

Output 1: Enhanced household awareness of, and support for, girls' education

- 1,000,000 girls in households reached through behaviour change communication to families, communities and leaders
- 2,000,000 adults reached with girls' education radio outputs
- 80% of bomas reached with community mobilisation activities

Output 2: Effective partnerships between Government and local organisations to deliver a community based school improvement programme

- 150,000 individual girls in primary and 50,000 in secondary directly supported by the programme through receiving a cash transfer
- At least 3,125 primary schools and 275 secondary schools directly supported by the programme through receiving a capitation grant from either Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) or DFID funds
- 2,600 schools benefitting from a wider package of community-based school improvement activities
- 40 pilot classrooms constructed by community groups with programme assistance
- 300,000 individual girls benefit from programme's broader package of support
- 400,000 boys also benefit from programme's broader package of support to schools

Output 3: Increased knowledge and evidence available to policy makers of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan

- At least 9 major research and evaluation studies conducted and disseminated to policy makers
- Maths and English Learning Assessment administered to a sample of schools across the five years of programme implementation
- 80% of all schools regularly reporting pupil and teacher attendance through the South Sudan School Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS)

What is the context in which UK support is provided?

South Sudan, the newest country in the world, is also one of the poorest. Years of conflict causing erosion of physical and social infrastructure and death and displacement of millions of people have made South Sudan one of the most underdeveloped regions in the world. Poverty is widespread. Just over half (51%) of the 8.3 million South Sudanese live below the national consumption poverty line, most (92%) in rural areas. Of the 1.4 million who live in urban areas, 24% are below the national consumption poverty line.

South Sudan has some of the lowest educational indicators in the world. Girls' health and education indicators are particularly poor. Women and girls in South Sudan are more likely to die at childbirth than to complete primary education. There are only seven girls for every 10 boys in primary school and five girls for every 10 in secondary. In the whole country, only five hundred girls are in the last grade of secondary school. Just 12% of teachers are female. Literacy rates for girls are 40% compared to 60% for boys. Girls' access to educational opportunity has been exacerbated by certain cultural practices and by internal and external conflict. Whilst education is voiced by many communities as a

priority, opportunity costs in girls' education mean that demand is actually low

These problems occur within a fragile state, where education provision, which was extremely limited during the civil war, continues to be disrupted by ongoing oil-related conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, as well as internal political and tribal conflict within South Sudan since 15 December 2013. The tension with Sudan led the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) to shut down their oil wells in 2012, which, as oil was providing around 98% of GRSS revenues, led to austerity budgets and a cut-back in spending on education, affecting teachers' salaries. Austerity was due to be lifted in January 2014, though funds have now been again diverted from education to the army amidst the recent internal conflict.

The recent internal conflict has led to widespread instability in the greater Upper Nile region causing disruption to the reopening of schools for the 2014 academic year in many places, as well as leading to a rapid increase in the numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) requiring humanitarian support. Educational outcomes are therefore bound to be affected, various GESS activities planned for 2014 have already been delayed, and it is unclear in some areas how many of the planned interventions will be possible over the next year of the programme.

Possible security scenario trajectories, and their impact on the programme and education sector, are seen as follows:

Most likely: sporadic fighting in Greater Upper Nile continues throughout 2014 and in the run up to the 2015 election date, most of the rest of the country continues to operate as normal

- Through the resilient model of GESS' 'State Anchor'¹ NGO sub-contractors, GESS operates a full programme in seven out of ten states, with work in Greater Upper Nile constrained by access and security constraints
- Schools operate largely as normal in the seven unaffected states, though with teacher constraints due to military recruitment
- Schools in Greater Upper Nile only operate in safe areas where teachers are paid; those in rebel held areas drift behind
- The most resilient aspects of the programme – cash transfers to girls, capitation grants to schools and radio broadcasting – can largely continue in Greater Upper Nile, though school- and local government-based improvements fall behind due to State Anchors' access constraints

Possible: fighting flares up and spreads again in mid-2014 as more politicians and army leaders join the rebels, Juba is again evacuated by internationals and more states become unstable as the Equatorians pick sides in the fight

- Even given State Anchor resilience and flexibility, GESS work in most or all of the states would be constrained by access and security concerns
- The national school system would be heavily affected, with the teacher payroll sporadic and politically compromised, and large-scale military recruitment reducing older pupils' enrolment and teacher recruitment
- Cash transfers, capitation grants and radio broadcasting could continue on track being managed remotely, though would be dependent on the number of schools open and whether banking and mobile phone systems remained operational
- GESS management would be forced to withdraw to Kampala, managing those most resilient aspects of the programme remotely

Least likely: the Addis Ababa talks succeed quickly and all combatants lay down their arms in mid-2014, Great Upper Nile again becomes accessible and state and county level government returns to normal

- GESS returns to operating a ten-state programme from mid-2014, with State Anchors in the Greater Upper Nile states re-establishing offices
- Greater Upper Nile schools re-open, and teachers' pay begins to flow again everywhere, with

¹ The 'State Anchors' are GESS internal nomenclature for NGO sub-contractors, one in each of the ten states of South Sudan. They act as implementation leads at state level in full collaboration with the State Ministries of Education.

possible re-grading of salaries upwards to provide added incentives for combatants to demobilise and become teachers – GESS supports rapid training of these teachers

- GESS logframe assumptions and targets can be maintained unchanged – the full portfolio of planned activities could proceed as normal everywhere.

Resilience and flexibility have therefore become watchwords for GESS in Q1 2014. An Interim Strategy was prepared in January 2014 with the proposed way forward being to deliver under the first security scenario above. This is now being followed to ensure that activities continue as normal where they can, but that in affected areas GESS support is tailored to the humanitarian context and support to vulnerable groups is given in line with DFID's Country Interim Strategy. A close watch is being kept on security developments and GESS remains ready and flexible to adapt to any of the scenarios above as necessary.

However, it is crucial to note that in line with HMG policy on the equity of aid distribution, the 'do no harm' principle, and the need to remain completely non-partisan to the current political divisions in South Sudan, GESS will aim to continue provision to all ten states of the country. This will avoid creating any perception that the programme favours a particular state or tribe, which might stoke conflict. It should also be noted that at the time of review, the national Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) has at no point during the current conflict suggested that government support to the education system would be withheld from any geographical area. .

The Interim Strategy as agreed by DFID in Q1 2014 will necessitate revision of the project logframe, as well as a re-thinking of some of the output areas to ensure resilience, so the targets, milestones and project expectations originally laid out in the Business Case and initial logframe are likely to change. This would again be the case if the security situation drastically changed for the better or worse.

It should be noted that that the GESS Programme started in April 2013 with an Inception phase of 6 months, and implementation began from end of September/early October 2013. So all the first key milestone targets are set from September 2014, and thus the Annual Review assessed how much on track the programme is to reach the expected milestones for each Output by September 2014.

Five key events during the Inception phase are worth noting :

- a) The setting up of the GESS Steering Committee chaired jointly by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST) and DFID, and joint GESS/MOEST technical committees consolidating ownership by government.
- b) The official public launch of GESS in Juba in May 2013
- c) The successful procurement of State Anchors for each of the 10 states, who will play a key role in implementing GESS at state, county and payam level
- d) Successful development of all key implementation strategies demanded in the Inception Phase ToR, plus Risk Management framework, updated logframe and Programme Manual all of which have now been revised and approved by the GESS Steering Committee
- e) Successful piloting of capitation grants and cash transfers in Lainya County in Central Equatoria.

Section A: Detailed Output Scoring

Output 1: *Enhanced household and community awareness and empowerment for supporting girls' education*

Output 1 score and performance description: C

Output 1 which is largely managed by BBC Media Action within the GESS consortium was

delayed by two months; and research components have delayed further. The radio programme broadcast delay was from February to March 2014; community mobilisation strategizing and beginnings of implementation were delayed from January to March 2014; both due to lack of activity during the violence and disruption in Dec 2013/Jan 2014, and more work being needed in both areas to finalise quality. The research baseline has been delayed from March to September 2014 due to lack of activity in moving it forward and then accessibility being constrained by the May-October 2014 wet season. Two of the outputs have their first major milestone targets in 2016, with baseline for Output 1.3 planned for March 2014. This will now only be completed in late 2014 with a result available in early 2015. The baseline for Outcome indicator 4, originally planned for February 2014, will be similarly delayed. The one milestone target that is meant to be achieved by September 2014, (for Output 1.2) may not be fully achieved.

According to the project work plan, during the first year of the project contract Output 1 work was aimed at the following:

- recruitment and training of staff
- further research into the barriers to girls' education and planning how best to tackle them through the Output 1 activities
- providing steer to sub-contractors (State Anchors) in the ten states on how best to conduct community mobilisation activities appropriate for each state, and producing a community mobilisation strategy as a result of this exercise
- procuring a research service provider and design of research into the impact of the Output 1 activities
- beginnings of implementation from 2014: radio broadcasts, community mobilisation activities and research baseline

Over the past year, BBC Media Action has developed a high quality, entertaining radio programme to contribute to the goal of the project – to keep more girls in school by adopting a social and behaviour change approach. Ten local radio producers were recruited from across South Sudan to develop the radio programme, *Our School*, by bringing to light stories of best practice and education excellence in their states. In the light of varied capacity and experience, journalists from BBC headquarters in London have been brought in to build the local producers' capacity to make not just quality programmes, but ones that inspire and encourage people to act in a way that supports girls in school. **This style of programming – in which real people are used as role models – is unprecedented in South Sudan, and has meant a change in the way in which the producers think about radio.**

The crisis that started on 15 December 2013 caused the evacuation of all international staff, as well as most of the BBC Media Action Juba-based local staff, and also meant it was not secure for producers to be travelling around to gather stories. One of the BBC Media Action producers was able to escape from Jonglei to Juba, while two others – in Unity State and Upper Nile – are still trapped in insecure situations. While this situation obviously caused a delay in broadcast and impacted BBC Media Action operations in the three conflict states, BBC Media Action has, however, been able to work with partner radio stations to start broadcasting the programmes.

Some of the key messages being aired in the radio broadcasts include :

- How parents can raise money to send their children, including girls, to school
- The importance and usefulness of educating the girl-child – role models like nurses, businesswomen, doctors, journalists, lawyers
- How to register your daughter at school
- Making a balance between housework and homework, brothers helping sisters and vice versa
- Gender-based violence at home and impact on girls' self-esteem and prospects

On the other hand the **Community Mobilisation** aspect of Output 1 has moved a little slower, partly due to initial issues of clarity on the output. With the radio programmes on air on ten radio stations across seven states and in five different languages, BBC Media Action is now looking to strengthen the capacity of the State Anchors to use this content to reach out to more communities. A workshop organised by BBC Media Action in December 2013, brought State Anchors together to learn from BBC

Media Action outreach experts about different approaches to Community Mobilisation. In addition trainers were brought from India to focus on social change awareness, strategies and techniques at community level. Experienced practitioners within UNICEF and UNESCO in South Sudan have also provided useful inputs including a set of peace-building tools/posters from UNESCO, given the needs in the current context. BBC Media Action will continue ongoing training for State Anchors so that they have a range of tools with which to reach communities, and a better understanding of how to deliver a social and behaviour change strategy.

Progress against expected results:

Two out of three of the first Output 1 indicator milestones are set in 2016 in the logframe and it is expected that the baselines for Output 1.3 and Outcome 4 will be finalised by end of September 2014, and then an intermediary milestone set for September 2015. However, these baselines will be delayed by between seven and nine months after their targeted completion date, and there is little evidence to confidently claim that the one milestone target set for September 2014, that of Output 1.2 on community mobilisation, will be met.

Output indicator 1.1: Number of adults reached with girls' education radio outputs

The baseline is zero and the first milestone is 1,400,000 adults reached with girls' education radio outputs by 30 September 2016. This first milestone is 20 months after the planned start date of the radio broadcasting in February 2014, so at the time of review, approx. 140,000 adults should have already been reached following two months of broadcasting. However, in reality, broadcasting only began on 10 March, and there has been no survey yet into numbers of listeners.

Once the baseline survey is completed in later 2014, a more accurate estimate of listeners to date will be obtained, and an intermediate milestone will be set for September 2015.

- Currently this is based on estimates, calculated using secondary data, similar to the BBC Media Action health programme (which broadcasts on a comparable network of radio partners). The baseline quantitative survey will provide GESS with detailed media consumption data for the potential radio audience.
- Ten radio producers, one for each state, were recruited during the Inception Phase (July 2013), and trained (August 2013) in production of radio programmes. They all travelled to the states to be based there, and began work on a bank of 50 programmes against planned topic areas from October 2013. This all ran according to schedule as per the work plan, though only 47 programmes were produced before conflict began on 15 December 2013 and halted production.
- Research was conducted into barriers to girls education (August 2013) and to messages that could be broadcast/promoted to tackle those barriers. Research already conducted in the design phase was consulted and built upon. A schedule of programmes was agreed. The first five topics to be covered were decided, targeting the building of audience interest and trust, and therefore will not yet target more involved economic and cultural issues until after the initial months of broadcast.
- Radio broadcasting was delayed by a month by the onset of the crisis which influenced internal deadlines, and also by the delay in the start of the school year. However, the delay was also seen as an opportunity to improve the production process and quality of the content. BBC Media Action brought in production expertise from the BBC in London to work more intensively with the state producers. There has also been increased editorial support from the BBC Media Action team in London, which will be ongoing.
- Broadcasts started the w/c 10 March 2014 and ten radio stations across the country are now broadcasting in five different languages. Two additional radio stations will start broadcasting the programmes w/c 24 March 2014, and that is expected to increase as others reopen.
- Currently there are no radio stations broadcasting in Upper Nile and Unity states, and Jonglei FM has only just returned to the air. BBC Media Action's assumption at present is that by end of 2014, stations will have returned to normal, and this will not impact negatively on the reach..

- Radio programmes and the scripts have been shared with State Anchors to use in their community mobilisation activities. BBC Media Action has also trained State Anchors in how to set up listener groups, enabling them to reach people living in media dark areas (where no radio networks reach).

Output indicator 1.2: Number of bomas² reached with community mobilisation activities

The baseline is zero and the first milestone is **20% of bomas** reached by community mobilisation activities by **30 September 2014**. This is eight months after the planned start date of community mobilisation activities in February 2014, so by the time of the review, 5% of bomas should have been reached following two months of community mobilisation activities. However, in reality, no activities have yet taken place.

State Anchors in at least three states are restricted in their movements due to the security situation, and Community Mobilisation activities have been delayed and may have a narrow window of operation once the rainy season starts. Because of these two issues, it is unlikely that the State Anchors will reach the target of 20% of bomas nationally by September 2014.

- The start of Community Mobilisation (CM) activities was delayed as this required a more in-depth discussion to assess the role of State Anchors in CM, to see what support would be required to develop state-specific Community Mobilisation strategies, and to assess how they would reach the target of 20% of the bomas in the first year. A four-day workshop was held in December 2013. A technical workshop initially planned for February 2014 was postponed to March due to the conflict situation. This has narrowed the window of operation for CM implementation as the wet season will start in April/May.
- In order to respond to this change in circumstances and to provide increased support, BBC Media Action is increasing its staff capacity to work with State Anchors so that they can more efficiently target bomas in their states, and are more effective in their social and behaviour change activities.
- BBC Media Action is also working with UN agencies and other NGO partners to increase the ability of the State Anchors to include peace-building and gender equality messages in their community mobilisation activities.
- A community mobilisation coordinator was to be hired in early 2014. This has not yet happened due to the onset of conflict, but is essential to provide more steer to this sub-output and ensure stronger linkages between community mobilisation activities and the audio programme content. Stronger leadership is required to push this sub-component forward faster..

Output indicator 1.3: Percentage of people in the sample study who demonstrate awareness and understanding of the elements of the school system that support girls' education

The baseline is still to be identified and will be determined in **September 2014**, and the first milestone is a **5% increase** from the baseline of people **demonstrating awareness and understanding of elements of the school system that support girls' education by September 2016**. The reason for this longer period for milestone targeting is the complexity of carrying out accurate and meaningful audience research on this topic in the local context, and the timescale needed for a change in people's attitudes and understanding. As the baseline has not yet been determined, there is no measurable achievement to date on this Output, and no way of telling how likely meeting the 2016 milestone is.

- The original baseline target date was set for 31 March 2014 as being pre-wet season and the end of the first year of the contract. This allowed dry season time between November 2013 and March 2014 to pre-test the research methods, procure a research service provider, and both prepare and carry out necessary field work.
- Whilst pre-testing was carried out in November 2013 in Juba, the conflict that began on 15 December 2013 delayed the rest of this process by three months at the time of review. In the original planned timings, a research service provider would have been procured by the end of

² A 'boma' is the smallest geo-political sub-division in South Sudan. Several bomas make up one 'payam', with several payams making up one 'county'. A rural boma can typically contain only one village or a few houses.

January 2014 and field work conducted before the end of March 2014.

- An internal review into the practicalities of conducting the baseline study in the current context of conflict and imminent onset of the wet season has been conducted. The recommendation is that due to changed attitudes, a context that now includes IDP communities, looming accessibility problems in many areas, and security issues that will push up costs at the present time, the field work for the baseline is now proposed for September 2014. By September, GESS can provide a much clearer picture of the composite used to measure knowledge and awareness of the school system, as featured in the radio programmes and Community Mobilisation.
- Radio programmes are a key mechanism for passing information to families and communities about the school system, for example, exams and term times, and how to join a PTA. The assumption is that the radio broadcasts will work together with community mobilisation activities to ensure that listeners and communities better understand the information, and can act on it.

Recommendations:

- 1) The radio programme content should support other areas of GESS, such as the capitation grants payments to schools and cash transfers to girls. The radio programmes need to raise awareness of other key components of GESS, thus being more integrated in the programme overall.
- 2) The programmes should also take account of the challenges brought about by the recent conflict and identify ways not only to increase girls' self-esteem and confidence but also **address trauma of both boys and girls and issues of gender, inclusion and reconciliation. However it appears that BBC Media Action are already working with UNICEF/UNESCO and the Education Cluster to address this very issue.**
- 3) More linkages need to be seen between radio programme content and community mobilisation activities targeted by the State Anchors at state-level and in school communities
- 4) This requires a full time community mobilisation coordinator to be recruited as soon as possible to provide steer to community mobilisation quality and synchronised roll-out.
- 5) Revision of some logframe targets may become necessary to take into account the changed context due to the conflict, and the attendant increased difficulty and risk in projecting behavioural change outcomes.

Impact Weighting (%): 25

Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Risk: Low/Medium/High Medium to High

Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Output 2: *Effective partnerships between GRSS and local organisations to deliver a community-based school improvement programme*

Output 2 score and performance description: A

Output 2 – This output, which is the combined responsibility of Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Cambridge Education, with support from Winrock, is mostly on track; some activities requiring schools to be open were delayed by around one month. Cash transfers are on track to be set up to start in mid-2014; capitation grants cycle of approval is on track with approvals given on 10th of January, February and March; capitation grant payments were slightly delayed due to GRSS cash flow and DFID holding back approval due to the violence and resulting politics; girls mentoring strategy and teacher needs assessment were slightly delayed by around a month; school supervision, teacher professional

development and learning materials policy development are on track.

According to the project work plan, during the first year of the project contract Output 2 work was aimed at the following:

- detailed strategizing and preparation for cash transfers for girls, school capitation grants, improved school supervision from payam level, improved school governance, teacher professional development, in-school mentoring for girls and improving teaching and learning materials
- piloting cash transfers to girls, school capitation grants and attendant school governance improvement in Lainya County
- national roll-out of school governance and capitation grant preparation trainings to school level
- capitation grant communications ahead of first payments
- preparing and starting implementation of a Teacher Needs Assessment (TNA)
- payam school supervision policy development
- girls mentoring manual updated and finalised
- information gathering on teaching and learning materials currently in use
- policy development for community school construction pilot
- attendant education sector coordination in all of the above

Most of the targeted work has been achieved on time, and targets are on track to be met: capitation grants to schools and cash transfers to girls are on time and on target, with the majority of quality **education interventions more or less on time in their development before roll-out**. The few delays to some of the strategizing has largely been caused by the necessity to coordinate all planning with Government of Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the entire sector, as well as the recent conflict in South Sudan and the impact of that on staff being able to implement in-country. The capitation grants pilot target was missed by two schools, and given the changed context since 15 December 2013, the fact that the capitation grants process has remained precisely on track against work plan, and is on track to achieve the 30 September 2014 milestone, **is a great achievement that is beyond expectation**. All other areas are broadly on track against logframe, though with a few delays against originally planned timings.

The fact that GESS is collaborating with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and Ministry of Finance, Commerce, Investment and Economic Planning (MoFCIEP) on the capitation grant system, and that the first joint disbursements went out on time in February/March 2014 (government grants to primary schools, and GESS grants to secondary schools) is an achievement in itself given the current economic and security context. The main challenges ahead will include

- the continued ability of government to pay out the capitation grants for primary schools, given the demand for military spending,
- the development of Mobile Money as other methods are more costly and harder to track,
- the correct messaging to communities so that parents are not discouraged from continuing to contribute to their children's education.

Progress against expected results:

Two of the Output 2 indicator milestones are set for **30 September 2014**, so whilst at the time of review six months of implementation remain until this target date, and if the security situation remains as expected, **these milestones will be met and possibly exceeded**. Of the remaining two milestones to be achieved, the one set for **2015 is on track**, while the milestone for community construction for **2016** may be affected by the likelihood of deprogramming this component for possible savings because of increased costs of doing business related to the security context. All baselines were set by **1 October 2013**. For additional scrutiny of performance, progress against additional lower activity expected results in the project work plan and Interim Strategy have also been considered.

Output indicator 2.1: Cumulative number of (unique, individual) girls receiving cash transfers

The baseline is zero, and the first milestone is 50,000 individual girls to have received at least one cash transfer from DFID funds by 30 September 2014. The planned start date of payments

of cash transfers is July 2014, and so has not yet been reached at the time of review. The projected payments will happen in Q3 2014, and planning these payments is on track against planned timings.

The 30 September 2014 milestone target is therefore likely to be reached. In 2012, there were around 75,000 girls in eligible year groups. If the recent conflict makes too many locations inaccessible, or depresses enrolment/retention, the option would then be to include P5 girls as has been mooted by DFID and GRSS.

- The cash transfers strategy paper was produced during the Inception Phase, on time (September 2013).
- Cash transfers: implementation progress: strong enrolment in the South Sudan Schools Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS) which makes use of mobile technology gives a solid foundation of eligible recipients; regulatory go-ahead for Mobile Money is on a critical path for most cost-effective payment execution, and is running late; so GESS has successfully piloted back-up options.
- Strong SSSAMS enrolment. GESS expects up to 1m pupils to be enrolled in SSSAMS in 2014, of whom an estimated 50,000 girls in P6-S4 would be eligible on current design.
- Strong government backing: decision for P6-S4 girls as eligible group for now, but enthusiasm to widen to P5-S4 – and if there has been a drop off in enrolment as a result of insecurity, may be necessary to activate that sooner rather than later.
- The Lainya Cash Transfer Pilot was successful in terms of the lessons learnt and experience gained to enable the system to be rolled out on a larger scale in 2014 144 girls received transfers of 125 SSP each. 29 girls in 3 schools received through the Eden Bank Cash transfers; 115 girls in 3 other schools received funds through the school's bank account. 'Know Your Customer' process and validation of the girls took place through chiefs and parents identification. Girls spent the cash on education enabling items including books, shoes and uniforms.
- M-Money is on the critical path for the most cost-effective and secure cash transfer implementation; World Bank, MoFCIEP and Central Bank of South Sudan (CBoSS) have delayed on drafting regulations.
- Delay in implementation reduces the effectiveness of cash transfers. However as an alternative option, if Mobile Money continues delaying, the methods successfully used in Lainya such as Western Union style money transfers and bank transfers could be used economically and without excessive burden on State Anchors.
- The rigour of registration, verification and electronic transfer disbursement procedures was pilot tested, all of which were found to be robust, though with a high level of support given to the process by the GESS team.

Output indicator 2.2: Cumulative number of schools receiving capitation grants

The baseline is that 16 schools should receive capitation grants as part of the pilot. The first milestone is that 2,800 primary schools should receive capitation grants from GRSS funds by 30 September 2014, and 200 secondary schools should receive capitation grants from DFID funds by 30 September 2014. The planned start date for payments was January 2014, so the first milestone target refers to nine months worth of payment progress. Expected progress at the date of this review, after three months of planned payments, is therefore 933 primaries and 67 secondaries. Both these extrapolated targets have been exceeded at time of review.

The 2014 milestone is expected to be met or almost met; the 2014 milestone delivers 90% of final cumulative target

- **Current achievement is** : 1,056 primary schools and 84 secondary school have been approved for payment at date of review, against a log frame of 2800 primaries (GRSS-funded) and 200 secondaries (GESS funded). This represents an exceeding of extrapolated targets for three months worth of payments at time of review. In both primary and secondary school target

cases, and with six months still to go, the project is already just under 50% of logframe milestone target, and therefore on track to meet or exceed the target. The 30 September 2014 milestone is also 90% of the cumulative target for 2018, so achievement of milestone despite the current security conditions makes substantially exceeding final target in 2018 highly likely.

- The GRSS 60m SSP budget for FY 2013-14 closes 30/6/14 and as much as possible of these funds will be sent to schools before then. Monthly processes to review and approve disbursements will continue to 10 June.
- The GESS Secretariat will transfer the secondary school capitation grants for January and February 2014 in the week of 24th March. 45 secondary schools will receive this grant at that point. The remaining 39 will be paid soon afterwards.
- A Capitation Grants strategy paper was produced during the Inception Phase, on time (September 2013).
- **14 schools** in Lainya County received pilot capitation grant payments as planned (September 2013), having been trained on school governance structures, production of school development plans and school budgets, and the verification and approvals process for accessing grants. The computerised School Budget Reporting Tool (SBRT) was tested through the pilot, with budget and cash ledger forms needing to be created in hard copy and loaded onto the system to meet the conditions for grants to be transferred.
- The Lainya 2013 pilot grants to schools strongly supported the theory of change; funds were used well, reported on, and enrolment in 2014 is noted to have increased substantially – by one third in one school. A full report and analysis on the pilot will be completed in March 2014.
- Training was carried out across the country with school governing bodies to prepare schools for accessing, receiving, spending and accounting for capitation grants.
- Six ‘hurdles’ were clearly established so that the roll out would focus on the key tasks to support school activities. The required steps for eligible schools to be approved for a capitation grant are: 1. Register on SSSAMS, 2. Report attendance on the system, 3. Establish a school governance committee, 4. Draft an annual school development plan, 5. Develop a school budget, 6. Open a bank account. The hurdle to begin reporting through SSSAMS was waived for Tranche 1 approvals due to the application period being in school holidays. Revisions have been made by GRSS in Q1 2014 so that schools in conflict-affected states do not, in 2014, need to pass the hurdle which requires a bank account.
- Training of school management committees commenced on time in October 2013, and is continuing through Q1 2014 with little disruption from the recent conflict. .
- Security: GESS has ensured the programme holds its resilient design – thus it is not necessary to go to each school to manage capitation grants, they are strongly incentivised: no budget plan or no report = no more money.

Output indicator 2.3: Cumulative number of schools receiving full package of community-based school improvement programme

The baseline is zero, and first milestone is also zero on **30 September 2014**, while the second milestone is **1,000 schools to have received the full package of community-based school improvement by 30 September 2015**. There are 5 sub-components to the ‘package’ so in order to judge progress of this output based on the logframe, the results of sub-activities and their milestones were used to assess progress. Planned start date of these activities was February 2014 at the start of the 2014 academic year. The 1,000 school target is therefore expected to be met over twenty months of implementation, meaning on average 50 schools should receive the package every month. At the date of review, two months after the planned start date, 100 schools should have received benefits under this Output, though to date no school-level work has started due to the late beginning of many schools.

However, although delayed by a couple of months due to the conflict, planning and set-up work for all planned results is now back on track. If the security situation remains as planned for in the Interim Strategy, the 2015 milestone target is expected to be met.

RESULT (i): Empowered and fully functional school governing bodies leading the school development process:

Milestone 2015: 1000 empowered and partially functional school governing bodies leading the school development process

- MoEST Technical Working Group on school governance established including development partners (Global Partnership for Education Programme (GPEP) –UNICEF. and Room to Learn Programme (R2L)- USAID)
- Development of policy on school governance ongoing, planned to be finalised by the end of April 2014.
- School governance toolkit drafted, pre-tested and awaiting review, expansion and printout.
- 1600 school governing bodies (SMC/BoG) established and able to elaborate school development plan.
- Upload of school governing body election protocols (including details of SMC/BoG composition) ongoing.
- School-based training for school governing bodies planned to start in Q4 of 2014.
- Target for 2015 is to improve functioning of 13 school governing bodies per county to successfully lead the school development process.

RESULT (ii): Payam Education Supervisors with the capacity and motivation to provide feedback and practical support to schools.

Milestone 2015: Payam Education Supervisors with the capacity and motivation to provide feedback and practical support to schools.

- Mapping of existing 502 Payam Education Supervisors integrated with GESS baseline Payam survey keeping costs down.
- Discussions on what ‘school supervision’ means and how it fits within a school Quality Assurance system disrupted by the non-presence period now scheduled to commence.
- Close cooperation between GESS and GPEP continues. GESS awaits GPEP consultant to be mobilised.
- Capacity building needs assessment of SMOEs and CEDs designed. Pre-test starts on 20.03.2014.
- Training of Payam Education Supervisors to start in late Q3 of 2014.
- Target for 2015 is to empower all Payam Education Supervisors to actively support at least 2 schools per Payam.

RESULT (iii): Teachers empowered to deliver quality lessons and effective learning processes.
Milestone 2015:

Teachers participating in school-based teacher professional development (TPD) in 1000 schools and empowered to deliver improved lessons.

- Teachers’ needs assessment (TNA) designed, consulted and awaiting clearance for the pre-test.
- TNA implementation planned for April and analysed by the end of May.
- Cooperation between GESS, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), ConnectTeaching established. Non-duplication strategy under discussion.
- Discussions on identification of facilitators of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) process at school and Payam level to start in Q3 of 2014.
- Initial training to TPD facilitators planned for Q4 of 2014.
- Target for 2015 is for each State Anchor and County Liaison Officer to support 13 schools to establish a functioning TPD at school level (2 schools per Payam Education Supervisor).

RESULT (iv): To increase access, retention and completion of learners in the school cycle by developing a comprehensive school-based mentoring programme

Milestone 2015: To increase access, retention and completion of learners in the school cycle by developing a comprehensive school-based mentoring programme in 1000 schools.

- MoEST Technical Working Group on mentoring for learners established.
- Coordination of efforts between the development partners initiated.
- Review current state of mentoring materials in use in schools initiated.
- Post-15 December 2013 consultations with MoEST, MGCSW and other key stakeholders to feed into strategy planned for April 2014.
- Mentoring manuals drafted and under revision to include topics affecting learners' participation post-15 December 2013.
- Training for mentors planned for Q3 of 2014.
- Target for 2015 is to establish mentoring programme in 1000 schools. Each SA CLO will support Payam Education Supervisors to facilitate this process in 2 schools per Payam.

RESULT (v): Learners and teachers have access to and are effectively using appropriate learning materials

Milestone 2015: Learners and teachers have access to and are effectively using appropriate learning materials in 1000 schools.

- State Anchors in the process of collecting examples of low-cost, locally available teaching and learning materials for literacy and numeracy.
- Strong cooperation with GPEP established. GESS awaiting deployment of GPEP consultant to start working on learning kits for literacy and numeracy.
- Recommendations from TNA to inform the strategy on low-cost teaching and learning materials. Strategy development planned for Q1 of 2015.
- Target for 2015 is for 1000 schools to effectively use available teaching and learning materials, including recently distributed textbooks and supplementary materials.
- Target for 2016 is for 1500 schools to develop and use low-cost supplementary teaching and learning materials.

General observations :

- The training carried out across the country with school governing bodies to prepare schools for capitation grants also contained elements of school governance training, so all schools that qualify for capitation grants (1,140 schools at the time of review) have already benefited from one aspect of the community-based school improvement package. Whilst one aspect of the package cannot be taken to count as achievement and exceeding of the milestone target, this is a good indication of the coverage that has already been achieved due to the fact that each school accessing a capitation grant must have received training on the capitation grant access **criteria. This has been possible despite the current security circumstances, and would therefore suggest that GESS will not struggle to meet the 2015 milestone for access reasons.**
- In November and December 2013, in accordance with the work plan, the Teacher Needs Assessment (TNA) instrument was developed by an external consultant working in collaboration with a wide group of stakeholders, including GRSS, teachers, children, academics and professional teacher trainers. The instrument was designed and then shared with GRSS and development partners for review.
- Payam school supervision policy development was carried out on schedule in Q4 2014, and continues in Q1 2014 despite the conflict. This has been closely aligned with the work of VSO and GPE in GRSS and the education sector as a whole, and has included defining school supervision, developing a job description for a Payam Education Supervisor (aligned closely with the school inspection framework, and clarifying the responsibilities of School Inspectors and Payam Education Supervisors), and developing tools for the School Inspectors' and Education Supervisors' mapping exercise, which will be carried out on schedule in the first half of 2014.
- A review of "A Guide for Secondary School Mentors" and development of "A Guide for Primary School Mentors" was targeted for completion before the 2014 school year began. This was done on schedule in October and November 2013, and content of both guides was approved by GRSS before the conflict broke out in December 2013. The conflict has disrupted the planned

timeline of Arabic translation and wider stakeholder consultation on the content, as well as piloting in upper primary schools as planned. **It has also highlighted the need for additional content on mentoring in conflict situations, and so the guides are now undergoing further development at the time of review.** This represents a slight delay of around one month, though again will not threaten the 2015 milestone.

Output indicator 2.4: Cumulative number of classrooms constructed using community pilot construction model

The baseline is zero, the first milestone is also zero on **30 September 2014, the second milestone is 20 classrooms constructed using the community pilot construction model by 30 September 2015.** Again, as the 2014 milestone is zero it becomes harder to judge progress of this sub-output based on the logframe, so sub-activity timings as planned in the project work plan are also used to assess progress.

- Little progress was targeted on this sub-output in the Inception Phase or before 2014. Consequently little activity in this sub-output area was observed in 2013.
- From early in the project contract it was clear that this sub-output required more discussion with GRSS, from whom there were many questions regarding the 'pilot' nature of the design, the targeted use of 'local' materials which has negative connotations to many, and the usefulness of this sub-output when there is so much else to be achieved in the rest of the programme.
- These discussions were held in meetings between DFID and GRSS towards the end of 2013, but were then postponed due to the conflict that began on 15 December 2013. Since then, little progress has been seen, and the discussions are still outstanding.
- Initial trainings of Community Construction Engineers (CCEs) that had been planned for January 2014 therefore did not take place, and are delayed until after the sub-output has been further discussed by DFID and GRSS.
- **Most recently, and following an assessment of the additional costs that sub-contractors will incur as a result of the changed operational and security circumstances following the recent conflict, DFID has suggested that this sub-output be de-programmed for the time being, and the budget redistributed across the other Outputs. This has met with some resistance from GRSS, but it is likely to go ahead and therefore this output as it stand may be removed from the logframe.**

Recommendations:

- A consolidated effort is required by GESS, DFID and GRSS personnel to push M-Money regulations through as quickly as possible. These are critical for the best value payment execution method for cash transfers come June 2014, and open up new possibilities for direct humanitarian support to IDPs and those affected by the conflict. This could be taken forward by DFID and other partners as a cross-sectoral drive, given the multiple aid delivery uses M-Money could be put to use in an environment that demands a high level of resilience and flexibility.
- The community construction component should be deprogrammed so that additional funds can flow to capitation grants (which also enables small-scale construction to take place) and cash transfers that could include P5 girls.
- Urgent discussion on the future of the community school construction pilot sub-output is required between GESS, DFID and GRSS.
- The communications to schools and communities on capitation grants need to clarify that while registration fees should no longer be a barrier to children attending school, the capitation grants will not be sufficient for all school requirements, and communities should still support their children's education in various ways.
- Options for extending cash transfers to P5 girls should be explored with DFID and GRSS.
- Extra effort is required to ensure that schools receive adequate school governance training to be able to access capitation grants as quickly and easily as possible, especially given the recent conflict and the need for resources to become available for reconstruction and resilience.
- GESS should also explore how some form of capitation grants could be provided to temporary schools, camps and shelters in the 3 states most affected by conflict.
- On the capitation grant system, GESS, DFID and GRSS should work with EU on their IMED

programme and USAID on their Room to Learn to see if complementary coverage can be made across all 3 programmes and their geographical areas, in such a way that there is no duplication and inequity. Opportunities for delegated co-operation should be explored..

Impact Weighting (%): 60
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Risk: Low/Medium/High Medium to High
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Output 3: *Increased knowledge and evidence of what works to promote girls' education in South Sudan*

Output 3 score and performance description: A

Output 3 – This Output which is a particular responsibility of the Winrock Consortium partner, supported by Charlie Goldsmith Associates **is mostly on track**. It also included Education for Change a UK-based consultancy which after designing the strategy, has now transitioned to Forcier Consulting which is exceptionally strong on the ground in South Sudan for implementation. The learning assessment baseline was delayed to the end of the academic year 2014. KER studies were set up and implementation is now going ahead with some delay due to the violence and disruption in December 2013 – March 2014. Only the learning assessment baseline will be delayed until September/October 2014 as it is a survey of knowledge at the end of an academic year and must be carried out in the third term of the year. The SSSAMS roll-out is still progressing well; data entry has not been delayed by the violence, though collection of Pupil Attendance Registers (PARs) and data entry is taking longer than expected. Live reporting of attendance is still in its infancy at time of writing.

According to the project work plan, during the first year of the project contract Output 3 work was aimed at the following:

- design, piloting and nation-wide roll-out of the South Sudan Schools Attendance Monitoring System (SSSAMS), targeting enrolment of all schools on the system by the start of the 2014 school year, as well as attendance reporting
- design, baseline, piloting and roll-out of a school/county/payam survey, learning assessment and household survey between October 2013 and March 2014
- additional surveys and data analysis activities

Roll-out of SSSAMS began during the inception phase (July 2013) and has arguably been the most constantly well implemented area of GESS to date, sub-contractors being clearly instructed and heavily involved right down to school level since October 2013. However, pace of roll-out by sub-contractors, and uptake of the system by schools, has been slower than expected, flagging the need for intensified work here in Q2 and Q3 to ensure the milestone target is reached. Research and survey design was initiated promptly in late 2013 with a high degree of GRSS involvement and ownership beyond expectation, though unfortunately this has led to a delay to the learning assessment quality baseline by six months beyond the originally planned timings out of necessity to measure learning towards the end of a school year. However, this will still not impact on the logframe milestone of 30 September 2014, as this is when the survey will be delayed until. Other surveys will be completed in 2014 as planned and before the milestone target date, despite the conflict situation, which is again beyond expectation.

Progress against expected results:

All three **Output 3 indicator milestones** are set for **30 September 2014**, so whilst at the time of

review six months of implementation remain until this target date, it is still relatively easy, given the rate of progress in the sub-outputs to date, to **judge that all these milestones will be met**. All baselines were set by 1 October 2013. For additional scrutiny of performance, progress against additional lower activity expected results in the project work plan and Interim Strategy have also been considered.

Output indicator 3.1: Cumulative number of relevant research and evaluation studies conducted and disseminated to policy makers

The baseline is zero, and the first milestone is that **three studies must be finalised and disseminated to policy makers before 30 September 2014**.

Indicator will be met or possibly exceeded – School Survey, Household Survey, State Survey make three, plus County and Payam Survey, and Education PFM Survey will all be completed well before 30/9/2014. Initial presentation of results from **School Survey due April 2014**.

- Knowledge, Evidence and Research (KER) strategy paper was completed on schedule during the inception phase (September 2013), as was a KER Literature Review. Strategies were developed in close collaboration with GRSS, and though this took longer than planned, the engagement and ownership is beyond expectation. The Literature Review will be updated annually, with the first update before 31 March 2014.
- School survey: state level sub-contractors were trained in December 2013 and February 2014 and are conducting surveys and uploading to form a hub in March 2014 and the first half of April 2014. This is a delay of two months from the original work plan, but has been caused by the recent conflict and will not affect a report that will contribute to the 2014 milestone being published in Q2 2014.
- Household survey: the Forcier Consulting survey team, that has recently joined the GESS consortium at the time of review, will administer this survey starting in April 2014. This is again a two-month delay from the original work plan, but again has been caused by the recent conflict, and will be back on track by the end of Q2 2014, well in time to contribute towards the 2014 milestone.
- State, County and Payam surveys: tools development was started on schedule in October and November 2013, though roll-out was delayed by the end of the school year and the onset of conflict in December 2013. Roll-out of these surveys by state-level sub-contractors is expected to be in May 2014, so whilst a three-month delay from the original work plan, results will still be ready to contribute towards the 2014 milestone.
-
- Public Financial Management survey: a pilot conducted in Western Equatoria was presented to the GRSS LSS Education Technical Working Group in December 2013, to acclaim from a wide range of GRSS personnel and development partners. This survey will be conducted at country-wide scale in states, selected counties, payams and schools, with a report by the end of April 2014, again contributing to the 2014 milestone.

Output indicator 3.2: Mathematics and English learning assessment administered to representative sample of schools

The baseline is zero, the first milestone is that the **first assessment should have been carried out by 30 September 2014**.

The logframe milestone target will **either be met or narrowly missed by a month** due to the delay until the third term of 2014. Whilst the survey will most likely have been started by **30 September 2014**, the final report may take another month or so beyond this deadline

- Learning assessment tools were developed and successfully piloted on schedule in late 2013, with strong GRSS leadership of design and testing. There is also strong co-ordination with UNICEF through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
- However, time constraints on GRSS staff, and earlier than normal finish of the 2013 academic year meant it was too late to conduct the baseline in late 2013.
- Because of the changed security situation since December 2013, some schools due to form

part of the sample will be inaccessible, insecure, or closed. The learning assessment will therefore be conducted in all sample locations that remain accessible.

- Because of term dates, to get a comparable learning assessment across the country, the survey needs to be conducted simultaneously across the country towards the end of the academic year – in other words the third term in September/October/November. It is therefore necessary to delay roll-out of this assessment until later 2014.

Output indicator 3.3: Percentage of primary and secondary schools with SSSAMS reporting attendance of pupils and teachers regularly

The baseline is zero, the first milestone is that **50% of schools that have been enrolled on SSSAMS need to be reporting regularly on the system by 30 September 2014.**

For enrolment, the milestone was already exceeded in 2013, with 2700 schools (out of 4400 identified) enrolled with a complete pupil list. In 2014, GESS is targeting 3500 schools enrolled. For reporting, in 2013, 305 schools made at least one report – unsurprisingly low, given that the majority of schools’ enrolment data was only received after the end of the school year; in 2014, schools can report attendance any time from 3/3/14, even before the Pupil Admission Register has been uploaded. So it is likely the milestone can be achieved.

- SSSAMS roll-out was quick off the starting blocks from the inception phase onwards, and has been kept up at an impressive rate of roll-out for an innovative system that most schools in South Sudan had never experienced before.
- Pupil Admissions Registers (PARs) have been widely distributed, and returned through State Anchors, with over 2,700 schools (out of a national total of around 4,400 identified) now enrolled on the computerised database with a full pupil list. This was assisted by sub-contractors setting up their own state-level data entry teams. The 2014 version of the PAR has been revised so that information for the enrolment of each pupil links with the previous year’s record, ensuring that data entry is quicker, while also tracking retention of pupils, and movement. Teachers’ lists are integrated in the same booklet.
- However, there is no logframe indicator for enrolment. Attendance is supposed to be reported by schools through either SMS text messages direct to the database, or through collection of their paper Daily Attendance Records (DARs), or registers, by GRSS personnel or GESS sub-contractors, for uploading to the system – in 2013, 305 schools made at least one report – unsurprisingly low, given that the majority of schools’ enrolment data was only received after the end of the school year.
- Several adjustments have been made to encourage better attendance reporting though: schools can report attendance any time from 3 March 2014, even before the PAR has been uploaded to the system; and free SMS reporting is now available with the MTN and Zain networks. The cost of SMS sent from other networks is refunded by texting credit back to the sender.
- The phrase “regularly reporting” in the indicator is not defined. GESS suggests that the simplest definition of this would be ‘at least two correctly formatted reports received in the previous month of school’ – meaning that to meet the milestone target on 30 September 2014, 50% of schools enrolled on the SSSAMS system will need to have filed two reports on SSSAMS in the first month of the third school term of 2014, August/September.
- Impact of security situation on achievement of the milestone target: in 2013, the greater Upper Nile states had the lowest SSSAMS enrolment rate: thus, GESS expects the security situation to have limited impact on achievement of the milestone – and possibly to reduce the denominator, viz. the number of operational schools in the country.

Recommendations:

- Preparations must be made to roll-out the learning assessment as soon as the third term begins in August/September 2014 to have a chance of making the milestone target at the end of September.
- Additional effort is required to encourage attendance reporting through the SSSAMS system to

ensure the milestone target is met.

Impact Weighting (%): 15
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Risk: Low/Medium/High Medium
Revised since last Annual Review? *N*

Section B: Results and Value for Money.

1. Progress and results

1.1 Has the logframe been updated since last review? *N*

No

1.2 Overall Output Score and Description:

Based on the Impact Weighting the overall score is an **A**,

1.3 Direct feedback from beneficiaries

Cash transfers pilot

Reports from County Education Department, schools and individual recipients are positive: about 40 of the girls who received the cash were interviewed over the Christmas season by the County Inspector about how they intended to use the money, and indicated that they were keeping the money safely so that they could use it when schools open, on enabling items. The County Inspector also reported strong interest in the cash transfer mechanism and expected that there will be higher enrolment in schools in Lainya when the schools reopen in February as a result of having seen it in action, reporting specifically that some pupils who had dropped out are also expected to return to school.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) at national, state and county has demonstrated a huge sense of ownership, from the Minister, Undersecretary down to county and payam education officials, calling it often 'our programme', For example the leadership by the Undersecretary and attendance of senior officials from MOEST at Steering and Technical Committee meetings has been consistently good For example The South Sudan Attendance Monitoring System (SSAMS) was referred to as 'our attendance monitoring system' at a development partners meeting early in the Design Phase (April 2013). In particular the synergies between GRSS and GESS on capitation grants have been seen as a major pioneering step forward by any donor in supporting systems development, and effective decentralised financing of education. There is also a strong appreciation of the way the GESS team members, including State Anchors, engage with the government partners regularly in a constructive and capacity building manner, for example MoEST officials regularly accompanying GESS team members on field trips for training and roll-out work.

Other donor partners are extremely impressed with both the design and implementation of the programme. GESS has engaged with Global Partnership of Education managed by UNICEF to collaborate effectively, and also with USAID on possible linkages with their Room to Learn programme. More recently, EU with their IMED programme are looking to use the capitation grant principles and framework developed by GRSS/GESS and disbursement channels of GESS to handle their own capitation grants, thus creating a great opportunity for harmonized support to a system.

1.4 Summary of overall progress

Overall, GESS is performing to the standards expected in the initial logframe, which were set before the onset of the recent conflict, and so in several areas performance is probably beyond expectation given that in the changed context many of the assumptions of the logframe have changed, which should cause some targets to be reduced in scope. SSSAMS and capitation grants have been highly **successful project areas and have been rolled-out more or less on schedule, despite the situation, which is a great achievement, especially given the extent to which these outputs are now considered 'MoEST programmes' at such an early stage of the programme. The quality education interventions are still developing to schedule, but require more inputs from staff at all levels to ensure they are implemented as planned, and the radio programming element of the programme, despite delays due to the conflict, has now begun and will run to timetable. However, the community mobilisation area has suffered from a lack of steering and timely strategizing, and is still to be started, which unless corrected will lead to a missed milestone target in September 2014. Community mobilisation needs to integrate much more with the radio programming to ensure the joined-up nature of Output 1, and the radio programming also has to complement the other outputs closer, creating an enabling environment for them through behavioural change communications.**

Efforts in Output 1 need to be redoubled therefore while ensuring the stronger areas of the programme continue on track and on target.

1.5 Key challenges

- **Security and political situation after 15 Dec 2013:** accessibility, politics of coverage, addressing IDPs and vulnerable groups, changed attitudes amongst beneficiaries, lack of bank accounts and electronic payment execution methods
- **Consortium and sub-output internal coordination:** sharing, communication, meeting structure and frequency, common goals and understanding between consortia.
- **GESS Secretariat staffing:** capacity may need to be reviewed and scaled up from Q2 2014. Actions are already being taken on this with recruitment of an experienced education specialist.
- **Communication with the state-level sub-contractors (the 'State Anchors') and capacity building/financing of State Anchor management:** A lot is being demanded of State Anchors and there are a number of areas where communication may need to be streamlined, and also strong capacity building and, where necessary, additional budgeting provided to support their work in increasingly difficult environments.
- **Effects on timeline of close collaboration with GRSS:** if close partnership with government is desired, activities take longer – this has resulted in delays to M-Money, learning assessment baseline, and broadcasting of capitation grants messages
- **Education sector coordination:** still difficult in a very 'crowded marketplace', but progress being made
- **Staffing for the community mobilisation component and moving this forward:** Recruitment of a full-time community mobilisation specialist important and need to put greater emphasis on the links between radio programming and community mobilisation
- **Balance and cost of cash transfer payment execution methods that are available:** M-Money won't cover everywhere, other electronic methods are not available everywhere, and there are accessibility difficulties due to wet season and insecurity in some places. So more alternatives need to be considered.
- **Mitigating fiduciary risk of capitation grants:** Follow-up needed on how the schools have used funds, and how well communities are aware of what the capitation grants have been spent on.
- **Ensuring all school-level training is appropriate:** length, content, timing, language, facilitator, frequency
- **SSSAMS roll-out:** lack of SMS coverage, lack of knowledge of SMS, lack of knowledge of reporting regularly, literacy levels, differing term times, amount of time needed by state anchors to support data entry

1.6 Annual Outcome Assessment

Although the outcome indicators are not measured as part of this annual review there are a few key points worth making for future reference :

Outcome indicator 1: Weighted average promotion rate for upper primary and secondary (P5-S4)

The latest national statistics (EMIS data) on promotion rate are usually not officially out when these reviews take place. However, this target is likely to be affected by disruption to the school term dates, closure and occupation of schools, large number of displaced students leaving some schools and enrolling in others in host communities – all because of the post-15 December 2013 conflict.

Outcome indicator 2: Number of girls enrolled in upper primary and secondary schools (P5-S4)

Again national statistics (EMIS data) on promotion rate are not officially out at the time of reviews. EMIS Quick Count 2013 was available to GESS at the time of review, and though no disaggregation is given for year groups in primary school, in secondary school total female enrolment = 18,163. However, future targets are likely to be affected by disruption to the school term dates, closure and occupation of schools, large number of displaced students leaving some schools and enrolling in others in host communities – all because of the post-15 December 2013 conflict.

Outcome indicator 3: Average girls' attendance rates at upper primary and secondary schools (P5-S4)

Baseline is to be decided, pending 2013 final SSSAMS enrolment figures. All targets and milestones are still to be decided.

Outcome indicator 4: Percentage of adults in the sample study who place importance on sending girls to school

Baseline is to be decided in February 2014 by BBC Media Action research studies. First milestone is a 5% increase on the baseline in 2016.

Fieldwork to measure the baseline was originally planned for March 2014, however, this has been delayed until October 2014 (all preparations for fieldwork will be done in the months preceding to ensure data collection occurs as soon as the rains stop).

The key issues are:

- The current insecurity impacts BBC Media Action ability to achieve a robust, representative sample in more than four states
- A significant proportion of the population are also still living in temporary situations
- Attitudes and perceptions to be measured may have shifted dramatically with the insecurity
- Carrying out fieldwork in the wet season is likely to double the amount of time the team is in the field, and therefore increase costs.

By carrying out the survey in October, better access will be achieved to seven states (and therefore achieve the representative sample. In the months prior to fieldwork, BBC Media Action will review and score proposals sent in by research agencies which have tendered for the fieldwork and finalise the questionnaire (a draft of which has already been completed). Key sections of the survey will be cognitive tested, ready for piloting before baseline fieldwork.

Although BBC Media Action will not have data by September 2014, GESS will have a very clear picture of the composite we will use to measure whether someone places importance on education or not (i.e. what attitudes, knowledge and supportive practices will we be asking about). This has built on the formative research carried out in August 2013.

2. Costs and timescale

2.1 Is the project on-track against financial forecasts: Y

The approved Business Case (December 2012) cost forecasts were as follows:

(£m)	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	TOTAL
TOTAL	4.4	13.3	13.8	12.2	12.0	4.3	60

These forecasts assumed that the project's implementation would continue directly following its design phase, with an overall project length of 6 years starting April 2012. There was, however, a delay in approval for project implementation such that although the design phase was completed on time, the inception phase did not begin until April 2013. This created a 6-month gap between design and inception.

This delay meant there was no implementation spending in 2012/13 and the projections for the following financial years were out of line with the project's new timeframe.

At the start of the project's inception phase in April 2013 BMB Mott MacDonald submitted updated spending forecasts for 2013/14, with a forecasted annual spend of £6,213,800. These forecasts are updated monthly – in the latest forecasts (March 2014) the total projection for 2013/14 remains very close to this total at £6,228,626.

Actual spend to date, with one month still to be invoiced, is £5,703,385. As such the project is almost exactly on track against its financial forecasts for 2013/14. However, there needs to be a formal updating of the forecasts for future financial years used in the Business Case – these became inappropriate given the delayed approval process of the project.

Within these forecasts some parts of the project have overspent and some components have underspent against projections. The development of a national attendance monitoring system for students and teachers has required more spending than envisaged, meaning Output 3 has overspent against its projections. Counterbalancing this, the implementation of Output 2c has progressed slower than expected meaning that this component has underspent against projections.

2.2 Key cost drivers

The cost drivers identified in the Business Case were as follows:

- The disbursement of cash transfers and capitation grants
- The procurement of materials for school construction
- Fee rates and expenses across the project

The first and third of these continue to be the main cost drivers for the project. However, the procurement of materials for school construction will no longer be a major cost driver as this project component is planned to be discontinued, to allow for more effective delivery of other project components in response to the deteriorated security situation in December 2013.

The level of disbursements of cash transfers and capitation grants remains broadly equivalent to that envisaged at the design stage of the project. Exact levels are dependent on the specific numbers of girls enrolled in school as well as the total number of schools eligible for capitation grants. Full projections are outlined in the respective strategy papers. There is a possible plan to increase the level of cash transfers disbursed such that girls in P5 also become recipients. However, this would require significant budget re-allocation from elsewhere within the project.

The administration costs for delivering cash transfers and capitation grants are very much on track to remain within the VfM parameters set for them. Progress for this is outlined in detail in the VfM section of this review.

Fee rates and expenses across the project have been kept very much under control. Overall project management costs have been restricted to 8% of the project's total budget, compared to the 9% envisaged in the Business Case. State Anchor indirect costs have been restricted to below 25% of their total budgets, compared to the 30% envisaged in the business case.

In the immediate period following the deteriorated security situation in December 2013, the project kept its expenses under control by the extensive use of remote management techniques. This has meant that GESS implementation continued even during a period when GESS staff were less able to travel. Within Output 3, the changed security environment also accelerated the transition from Education for Change (EfC) an international specialist firm that delivered the KER strategy and detailed tools, to Forcier Consulting, a South Sudan based firm. This has kept costs under control despite the potentially more expensive operating environment, by amongst other things, reducing the amount of international flights that need to be budgeted for the implementation of this component.

2.3 Is the project on-track against original timescale: Y

Output 1 – mostly delayed by about two months; research delayed further

Radio programme broadcast delayed from February to March; CM strategizing and beginnings of implementation delayed from January to March – both due to lack of activity during violence and disruption in December 2013 – March 2014. Research baseline delayed from March to October 2014 due to lack of activity in moving it forward and accessibility then being constrained by the May-October 2014 wet season.

Output 2 – mostly on track; some activities requiring schools to be open delayed by around one month

Cash transfers on track to be set up to start in mid-2014; capitation grants cycle of approval on track with approvals given on 10th of January, February and March; capitation grant payments slightly delayed due to GRSS cash flow and DFID holding back approval due to the violence and resulting politics; girls mentoring strategy and teacher needs assessment slightly delayed by around a month; school supervision, teacher professional development and learning materials policy development on track.

Output 3 – mostly on track; learning assessment baseline delayed to the end of the academic year 2014; SSSAMS taking longer than expected to be fully established

KER studies set up and implementation now going ahead with little delay due to the violence and disruption in December 2013 – March 2014. KER team has changed in Q1 2014 – this may result in slight delays, though baselines still targeted for Mar/Apr 2014. Only learning assessment baseline will be delayed until Nov/Dec 2014 as it is a survey of knowledge at the end of an academic year. SSSAMS roll-out still progressing well; data entry has not been delayed by the violence, though collection of PARs and data entry is taking longer than expected, and live reporting of attendance is still in its infancy.

3. Evidence and Evaluation

3.1 Assess any changes in evidence and implications for the project

The main sources of evidence are the technical committee minutes, Steering Committee minutes, Quarterly reports, field visits to Lainya County, the Strategy Papers, and feedback from State Anchors, GESS team members and Ministry personnel. It is hoped in the next review that a number of the research and evaluation studies will be completed to add more weight to the evidence base.

3..2 Where an evaluation is planned what progress has been made?

A mid-term evaluation is scheduled for 2016, but smaller evaluations of impact are planned for 2015 on impact of the programme on girls' and parents' responses, as part of Output 3.

4. Risk

4.1 Output Risk Rating: Low/Medium/High

Medium to High

4.2 Assessment of the risk level

The recent conflict in South Sudan from 15th December 2013, has increased a number of risks to the programme. First of all there are the increased security risks of working in Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity States and neighbouring states/counties, Then there is the economic uncertainty which may impact on GRSS ability to pay teachers, operational grants to states and counties, and capitation grants to primary schools. There will be an increased number of IDPs and vulnerable groups to cater for which will impact on the budget. There is also the likelihood of increased costs of doing business in all 10 states, and also higher turnover of government and programme staff. BMB Mott Macdonald have to some extent addressed these issues in their 2014/15 interim strategy, and will also need to update their risk management framework, as well as reviewing programme implementation regularly in the monthly and quarterly meetings and reports.

4.3 Risk of funds not being used as intended

This risk has arguably increased due to the heightened insecurity, and the lack of proper banking facilities (in some cases, banks being destroyed in the 3 particularly conflict-affected states).. Capitation grants and cash transfers in this higher risk environment will require GESS programme strategies to address this to avoid beneficiaries suffering violence, intimidation or further insecurity. Anti-corruption measures in particular may need to be strengthened, even though the safeguards and criteria in place are quite robust, and where possible increased audit and targeted visits may need to be carried out.

5. Value for Money

5.1 Performance on VfM measures

In the Business Case a detailed Value for Money framework for the project was established. This will be reported on in full annually in October as part of the project's annual report. This is such that VfM can be assessed after each year of full project implementation, in line with reporting on the project's logframe.

At this stage (less than six months into implementation), there is only data on a limited range of the indicators. However, the project has made an impressive start in terms of its performance on VfM.

The project's headline VfM achievements to date are:

- Leveraging close to £10m government investment in capitation grants for 2013/14. This represents around 7 times the value of GESS's own investment in capitation grants for the year. At the time of project design no government investment was realistically expected. Despite the acute budget pressures since the escalation of conflict in South Sudan since December, the government successfully released its first ever capitation grants to schools in early 2014.
- All schools receiving capitation grants (outside of conflict zones, where requirement is waived) are opening school bank accounts, keeping non-disbursement transaction costs of grants to 2-3% only.
- Significant progress has been made in pushing forward the development of South Sudan's mobile money market. This could be used for a large proportion of cash transfers, with non-disbursement transaction costs being less than 1%.
- Successful partnerships developed with GPE and Room to Learn for the delivery of GESS's school improvement component (2c) will increase the extent of quality improvement that can be achieved compared to just the inputs from GESS's own budget.
- Similar value-enhancing partnerships are being developed for the delivery of GESS's community mobilisation component and the use of the UN's Radio Miraya for broadcasting of GESS radio programmes.
- Overall management cost of GESS reduced from 9% assumed in Business Case to 8% in actual implementation.
- State Anchor organisation indirect costs limited to 25% of their budgets (totalling £14m) compared to 30% as targeted in Business Case.

The remainder of this section 5.1 reports against the entirety of the original Value for Money framework from the Business Case. It summarises those indicators for which initial performance can already be assessed, as well as giving a wider indication of the project's Value for Money beyond the indicators foreseen in the Business Case.

Economy (the cost of inputs):

Indicator 1 - Cash transfer unit cost per recipient

First cash transfers will be paid in June. This indicator will be reported on by October. However, note the considerable progress in ensuring administration costs will be kept to a minimum (see efficiency indicator 2 below).

Indicator 2 – Cash transfer recipient cost in collection

To be reported on with data collected by October following initial transfers in June.

Indicators 3-5 relate to construction component 2d, which is expected to be discontinued to allow for consolidation of project resources in response to changed security environment since December 2013.

Indicator 6 – Capitation grant unit cost

The first capitation grant payments are in the process of being released. This indicator will be reported on by October. However, note the considerable progress in ensuring administration costs will be kept to a minimum (see efficiency indicator 3 below).

Indicator 7 – Learning materials unit cost

Implementation of this aspect of component 2c is not yet underway. However, the updated design following the inception phase envisages supporting schools to source low-cost locally available learning resources for literacy and numeracy. This has the potential to significantly lower unit costs compared to the central procurement of learning materials.

Indicator 8 – Teacher support unit cost

Implementation of this aspect of component 2c is not yet underway.

Indicator 9 – Unit cost per household reached by communications campaign

This indicator will be initially estimated in October, once the reach of Output 1 for the year can be calculated. However, a number of contributing factors to this economy rate can already be reported on:

- GESS has leveraged the relationship built by BBC MA's health project to gain below market rates for broadcast air time. Current advertising rates for 15 minutes are in range of \$80-100. GESS has been able to negotiate a rate of \$50. This will save the project in the region of \$10,000 per year.
- GESS has been able to take advantage of the corporate relationships established by the BBC with suppliers to source quality broadcast equipment and software at below market rates.
- GESS has built its Juba studio in a cost-sharing arrangement with BBC MA's other operations in South Sudan. GESS paid 25% of the costs of establishing the studio, which was around £15,000. The alternative would have been for the project to rent time at another commercial studio in Juba at a cost of £100/hour with a total estimated cost of around £70,000 over the course of the project. As such the cost-sharing arrangement has saved GESS in the region of £55,000.

Economy measure not currently included in VfM framework:

GESS will monitor schools' spending of capitation grants and assess the consequent unit costs.

- Schools have to both submit budgets and report on outturn expenditure to receive capitation grants, which is providing a uniquely detailed source of data on input prices for education quality. GESS is preparing an initial review of key comparable unit costs, both for disaggregate units (e.g. bags of cement, textbooks) and for aggregate units (classrooms, latrines).
- Initial impressions from pilot schools is that schools were able to deliver new infrastructure and, in particular, maintenance, at unit costs that were far lower than those typically seen from programmes where an external provider is contracted at a national level to deliver improvements at a number of schools. This will be reported on more fully by October.

Efficiency (the conversion of inputs into outputs):

Indicator 1 – Proportion of overall programme costs spent on management, administration and overheads

Through negotiations before the start of project implementation, the management costs for GESS were reduced from the 9% assumed in the business case to just 8%. In its contracting of state anchor organisations to deliver GESS activities across all 10 states of South Sudan, the project negotiated State Anchor indirect costs to be no greater than 25%. This is 5% lower than the 30% target assumed in the business case.

Indicator 2 – Proportion of cash transfer unit cost which is not disbursement

First cash transfers will be paid in June. This indicator will be reported on by October. However, the target of keeping administration costs below 20% is very much on track. Significant progress has been made in pushing forward the country's nascent mobile money market. This will enable transaction costs to be below 1% the value of transfers. Through its work in developing payment systems for capitation grants, the project also has an alternative option of paying cash transfers through school bank accounts, where transaction costs would be in region of 2-3% of the value of transfers.

There is a far wider economic benefit to South Sudan through the project's work in building a market for payment execution in general and specifically the development of regulation and a market for mobile money. This is a service that - far beyond its use for cash transfers - has been shown to significantly reduce the costs and complexity of doing business in other countries in the region.

Indicator 3 – Proportion of capitation grant unit cost which is not disbursement

Given the project's insistence on schools opening a bank account to receive their capitation grant payment (with an exception made for those schools in areas where the banking system has fallen apart

in the recent violence), transaction costs are likely to be in region of 2-3%. This should mean the project will stay within its target of keeping non-disbursement costs of capitation grants below 23% of total spending on this component.

Again the project's efforts in pushing access for schools to the banking system within South Sudan has far wider benefits beyond the delivery of capitation grants. It is driving financial inclusion and leveraging commercial investment from the private sector: GESS' careful work on informing the commercial banks has seen a number of commercial banks establishing, at their own expense, mobile teams to visit schools to help them set accounts up. As those teams move, banks are taking advantage of the synergies of supporting companies and individuals to open accounts as well. We have also seen commercial banks bringing forward investments in the Counties, on the back of the 'starting load' that capitation grants offer.

Indicators 4 & 5 refer to aspects of component 2c that are not yet underway but will be reported on by October.

However, more broadly 2c has performed well in terms of efficiency to date, particularly in terms of coordinating with other Development Partners. GESS has been an active member of the donor's education cluster as well as joint-donor technical working groups such as on school governance and quality assurance in schools. GESS has developed specific partnerships with GPE and Room 2 Learn for their collaborative investment in areas directly supporting the delivery of the project's Output 2c. This combined and harmonised approach with other partners should lead to a greater performance at Output level for the level of individual input GESS can provide.

Indicators 6-8 relate to construction component 2d, which is expected to be discontinued to allow for consolidation of project resources in response to changed security environment since December 2013.

Indicator 9 – Proportion of leakage of capitation grants and cash transfers

This will be reported on in October after first round disbursement is complete. However, the level of grants and transfers not reaching expected beneficiaries is expected to be minimal due to electronic transfer systems being used wherever possible (expected to be at least in 70% of cases) and will be closely monitored by GESS, including those grants delivered by Government.

Indicator 10 – Unit cost per extra household which states intent to send girl to school as a result of communication campaign

This indicator will only be reported on once a baseline and then midline have been completed for Output 1. This will not be until 2016. The indicator may also be reformulated slightly depending on what research question is most feasible, as will be established at baseline.

Nevertheless, a number of contributing factors to this efficiency rate can already be reported on:

The reach of Output 1's radio programmes is expected to be significantly enhanced through the completion of an ongoing negotiation with Radio Miraya to broadcast GESS programmes nationally in return for training of their local staff. This UN radio station has the biggest audio footprint in South Sudan but to date has not accepted any productions which it did not produce itself.

The reach of the radio programmes is further being extended at no cost to GESS through their distribution to NGO partners such as War Child Holland which is interested in placing them on their Connect Teaching Tablet, which is a teaching and teacher development tool being piloted in schools in Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei.

GESS is also developing partnerships with other development partners in South Sudan, such as GPE and AET, to collaborate on community mobilisation implementation, including the sharing of materials that have already been produced. Such partnerships should increase the level of community mobilisation activities that can be achieved with the existing GESS budget.

Efficiency measure not currently included in VfM framework:

Leverage of government investment into capitation grants

At the time of the Business Case development, it was not considered realistic to expect direct government investment into Capitation Grants for schools. As such this indicator was not included in the original Value for Money framework.

However, perhaps the standout Value for Money success of GESS implementation to date has been the successful leveraging of a government commitment to invest about £10m in capitation grants in the financial year 2013/14. At the date of review, the first 1,056 schools to be paid out for this commitment are in the process of being paid. This has been accompanied by an outline commitment to not only continue, but also to increase this level of funding in future financial years. The strength of leverage and policy commitment achieved is demonstrated by the execution of the government's first ever school capitation grants in early 2014, despite the highly acute budget pressures caused by the recent escalation of conflict in South Sudan.

The commitment of government resources for 2013/14 is in the region of 7 times the size of investment the project will make in capitation grants. Despite this greater magnitude of capitation grant payments, the project has kept its level of management costs for capitation grants within the estimates for the original project budget.

Further to government investment, the project is also currently in discussions with the EU who may also be able to fund school capitation grants using the system that GESS has established.

Effectiveness (the conversion of Outputs into Outcome and Impact):

Indicator 1 – Learning improvement

This indicator will be first reported on in the third term of the current academic year 2014, which is in September/October/November 2014. This indicator was the only VfM trigger point emphasised in the Business Case framework – “If there are no gains in learning for girls, then the project will no longer represent value for money.” Experience from other projects, however, has shown that it takes time for learning gains to become apparent which would caution against a rushed judgement on progress against this indicator, and would suggest that a milestone target set too early might not be realistic and would not show the programme in its fullest light.

Indicators 2 & 3 – Student attendance

GESS has successfully developed the country's first ever student and teacher attendance monitoring system. These indicators will be reported on in October.

Indicator 4 – This indicator relates to construction component 2d, which is expected to be discontinued to allow for consolidation of project resources in response to changed security environment since December 2013.

Indicator 5 – Repetition and drop-out rates

This indicator will be reported on in October using latest EMIS data. Initial findings from the project's capitation grants pilot in Lainya show that in a number of schools where capitation grants were provided there have been significant enrolment increases (as much as 1/3) from 2013 to 2014. A full analysis of the pilot will attempt to identify the extent to which this rise is due to new enrolments or re-enrolments of children who had been out of school as opposed to, for example, abstraction from other schools.

Indicator 6 – Overall government investment in education

GRSS budget for education increased significantly in between 2012-13 and 2013-14, from 454m SSP in 2012-13, to 611m SSP – the great majority of this increase being the 60m for capitation grants, and the other new transfers as part of the Local Services Support programme. This increase was despite a reduction in the total GRSS budget from 12.5bn SSP in 2012-13 to 9.2bn SSP in 2013-14, reflecting the extended period of austerity. This represents an increase in the government's allocation to education from 3.6% of its budget to 6.6%.

Indicator 7 – Increase in proportion of communities exposed to behaviour change and communication campaign actually sending girls to school (vs. comparable non-exposed communities)

This indicator can only be reported on once there has been both a baseline and midline for Output 1. This will not be until 2016. The indicator may also be reformulated slightly depending on what research question is most feasible, as will be established at baseline.

Cost-effectiveness:

Indicator 1 - Overall programme unit cost per extra girl year in school

An update on how this indicator will be captured will be included in the October VfM report once the project's main research baseline is complete.

Equity:

In the October report GESS will report on how equitable its delivery of inputs and outputs in the first year of its implementation has been. This data will be related particularly to the location of beneficiaries – e.g. grouping supported schools into the following categories: Juba; State Capital; Accessible by road all year; Accessible by road part of the year; not accessible by road.

GESS has retained its national, non-discriminatory focus as envisaged in its design. An escalation in conflict in some parts of the country has increased the challenges of operating in every state. Nevertheless, for motivations of equity and to adhere to DFID's do no harm principle, GESS will continue to retain its national focus. This will avoid creating any perception that the project favours a particular state or tribe, which might stoke conflict.

5.2 Commercial Improvement and Value for Money

In the negotiation for the implementation contract, DFID reduced the project's management costs from the 9% assumed in the Business Case to just 8% of total project budget.

In response to the rapidly deteriorating security environment that materialised from December 2013, the project developed an interim strategy outlining how it would optimally respond to the changed implementation context. This strategy emphasised the in-built resilience of the project to a worsened security context as well as the opportunity to harness the systems already developed by the project (particularly the frameworks for cash transfers and capitation grants) to increase DFID's support to those affected by the conflict.

Given the fixed costs associated with delivering cash transfers and capitation grants, there are economies of scale to delivering these components at a greater level. As such any increased investment should increase the value for money of DFID's overall support.

5.3 Role of project partners

The project's main partner is the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. In the immediate term they are directly responsible (in partnership with GESS) for the achievement of the logframe indicator for capitation grants. In the latter stages of the project they are also responsible for the achievement of the logframe indicator for cash transfers. Beyond this their collaboration is essential for all other aspects of project delivery, although they are not directly relied on for the delivery of any other logframe targets.

To date the project's relationship with the government has been excellent. The collaborative manner which GESS has adopted both at national and state levels has enabled a very close working

relationship to be possible. The project seems to be held in high esteem by government counterparts. It should also be noted that MoEST has never, at any stage during the current conflict, officially suggested that schools and teachers would no longer be supported by the national government in any geographic area. GRSS is therefore continuing to demonstrate equity in distribution of its resources, and GESS equity is therefore in no way compromised by continuing to work closely as partners of MoEST in delivery of GESS. However there will be need to keep a watchful eye on how consistent GRSS is in its actions and policies.

As already outlined in the first section on VfM the leverage of government resources for capitation grants has been highly impressive and the logframe target for 2014 should be achieved.

5.4 Does the project still represent Value for Money : Y/~~N~~

At this early stage in project implementation, the initial visible performance against the project's extensive VfM framework in particular demonstrates that the project is, to date, representing good value for money.

5.5 If not, what action will you take?

6. Conditionality

6.1 Update on specific conditions

With the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan in December 2013, the whole operating context has become immediately more challenging in terms of security risks, costs, travel, monitoring and evaluation, levels of relationship with government, and handling issues of coverage, marginalisation and equity. This will be a major test of the programme's flexibility and the skills of the implementing agency and the consortia. The positive aspect is that the design of GESS is very much built on decentralised delivery and adjustment to local conditions, and therefore there is greater adaptability and flexibility built into the programme. Another major asset is the experience and knowledge of BMB Mott MacDonald, their consortium partners, and the State Anchors in terms of the conditions of living, working and delivering in South Sudan. This should help the programme adapt to the changed social, economic and political conditions in the country.

7. Conclusions and actions

Overall, the GESS programme has been professionally managed and has demonstrated its flexibility in identifying strong new staff and leadership skills when changes due to illness, capacity or competency issues have arisen. Their ability to adapt to changing conditions has been demonstrated, not least in the excellent Interim Strategy prepared and the manner in which the response to the conflict was carried out, including duty of care issues. Armed with this strong management and local knowledge, the team has developed excellent relationships across development agencies and ministries, and across states and counties. In some components the programme is already making real progress, particularly the work on capitation grants, research, and SSSAMS. Both the quality education interventions and the BBC Media Action radio programmes contain exciting innovations and possibilities, but there are now some key actions that need to be taken to ensure the strong start of the programme is maintained :

1.Improve the collaboration, synergy, supportive environment and complementarity of the different GESS consortia and their deliverables. Avoid silos – team management and team-working can be raised to a higher level to ensure that all components are delivered successfully.

2. Strengthen the community mobilisation part of the programme and integration with the radio programming. This doesn't only involve the recruitment of a CM specialist but ensuring that State Anchors and their local partners are given a wide range of support and skills.

2. Identify measures to safeguard cash transfers and capitation grants while exploring all the options available for delivery.

3. Come up with an action plan for working in the 3 main conflict-affected states in terms of grants, radio messaging and community mobilisation, trauma management, IDP issues, and quality interventions in partnership with UNICEF, Education Cluster, and other humanitarian partners

4. Make use of the latest opportunity to co-ordinate with EU and USAID and in particular the possibility of EU funds being managed through the GESS programme to complement the capitation grant programme.

5. Ensure that schools and communities receive clear and unequivocal messaging about the use of capitation grants and their role in school governance and support to their children's school.

6. Give stronger support to State Anchors in terms of clear communication channels, adequate training and budgets, and try to avoid overburdening their roles. There needs to be a reflection on relationship with government at all levels, and how to deal with incentives and allowances in collaboration with other development partners.

8. Review Process

This review was carried out as a desk review in Juba, South Sudan due to the ongoing security context and its impact in terms of limits on travel and use of external consultants. The review has been able to gather information through interviews with key GESS personnel, national MoEST personnel (including the former Undersecretary Deng), programme transcripts, personal notes from visits to the Lainya County pilot, GESS Strategy papers, BBC Media Action radio programme transcripts and CDs, source material from all the other GESS components, including economic analyses, quarterly reports and Steering /Technical Committee minutes. The co-operation and helpfulness of all involved is much appreciated.