



Using Medium Term Sector Strategies to Support Nigerian Educational Planning

Practice Paper

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Abstract

This Practice Paper describes the ways that ESSPIN has supported and strengthened state and local government-level planning in six Nigerian states, using the Medium Term Sector Strategy framework. It explains the evolution of approaches to state-level education planning over the period 2008 to 2016 and points to ways in which it can be sustained after completion of ESSPIN's work.

Introduction

ESSPIN's Institutional Development work has supported major changes in the six ESSPIN-focus states and their LGEAs since 2008. This work has had two main strands – supporting evidence-based planning and strengthening the resources, including human resources, needed to deliver those plans. This Practice Paper focuses on the first of these. Since its outset, ESSPIN has encouraged and supported states to make use of Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSS) as the basis for strengthening state-level education planning.

The aim of a Medium Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) is to improve the connection between policy making, planning and medium-term budgeting, especially so as to facilitate better implementation of a state government's policies.

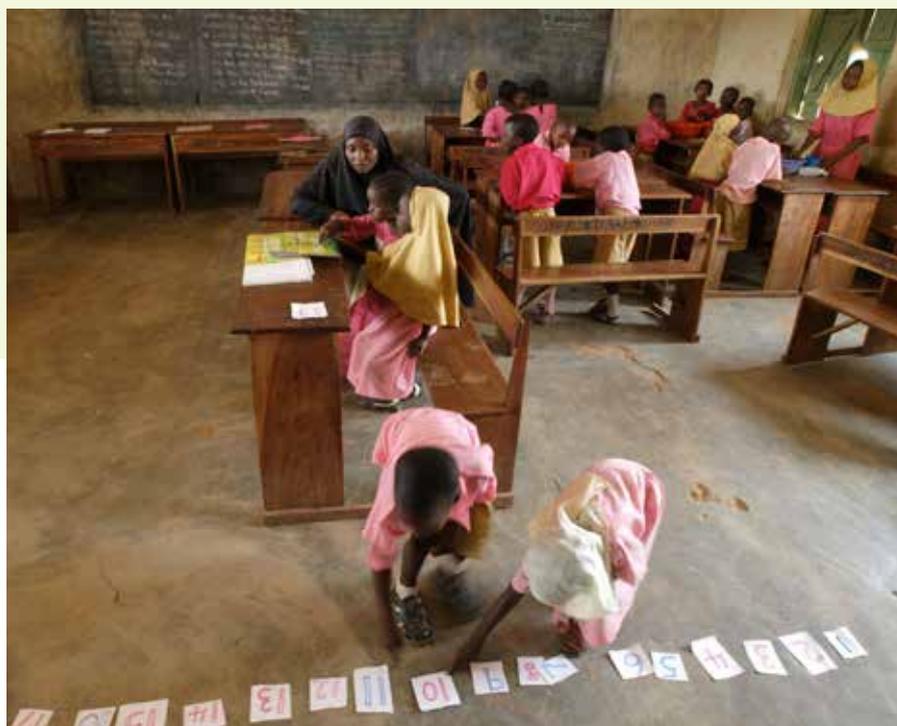
SPARC Guide to developing medium-term sector strategies, 2012.

Initial Challenges

The Paper describes the MTSS approach and its components. It goes on to discuss the initial challenges faced by states as they sought to improve their schools by strengthening their planning systems. It notes the difficulties faced in applying evidence-based planning when available evidence was initially lacking or of doubtful quality, and it reviews the steps taken to strengthen the evidence base.

The Paper goes on to describe how and why the approaches to preparing and using MTSSs in the six ESSPIN-focus states evolved and changed, and relates those changes both to state-wide policies and to ESSPIN's own development in understanding state needs and effective support mechanisms. Finally, the Paper explores ways in which states and local governments can build on the work of the past eight years and use medium-term planning even more effectively to improve the quality of basic education provision across the states.

The Nigerian Federal Government promoted the use of the MTSS as a basis for state-wide planning as early as 2005 but ESSPIN found little or no evidence that this advice was being followed by the states with which it began work late in 2008. Some states had been supported by CUBE, ESSPIN's predecessor DFID-funded programme, to prepare long-term (ten-year) Education Sector Plans, but these were little more than visionary aspirations with insufficient evidence as to the current situation and the priority needs.



Right
Numeracy time:
Children learn to arrange numbers and visualise the sequence. Children learn better when education planning is child-centred

ESSPIN focused on the development of an operational MTSS from the outset (in December 2008), as an essential first requirement for improving state planning and budgeting. The intention was to help states prepare a 3-year rolling strategic and operational plan, fully costed and drawing on, where relevant and available, the Education Sector Plan (ESP). This would in turn inform ESSPIN's investment support for each State. MTSS support offered an entry point for working with states in ways that involved multiple stakeholders.

Key Elements of an Education MTSS (from ESSPIN MTSS Guidelines, 2015)

1. The Medium Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) represents a process through which strategic policy priorities are determined and aligned with resource allocation, within the context of forecast information on the State's macroeconomic and financial outlook.
2. At the level of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), MTSS represents medium-term expenditure estimates based on clearly defined sector policies. The aim is to allocate resources towards strategic State goals and objectives within the constraints implied by the overall fiscal targets.
3. The MTSS concept involves an application of activity budgeting with a view to improving strategic prioritisation and the efficiency of public expenditures
4. It focuses on a single sector – in our case Education from Early Childhood to Higher and Adult Education. It contributes with the MTSS of the other sectors to the organization-wide Medium Term Expenditure Framework.
5. It includes a detailed annual plan and budget for Year One and less detailed frameworks for Years Two and Three.
6. It is updated annually, drawing on monitoring and evaluation evidence and emerging State-wide and national budgetary constraints and opportunities, so that during Year One the Year Two framework is reviewed and adjusted to become the new Year One annual plan/ budget, while a new Year Three framework is added to the next MTSS.
7. It comprises two closely-linked activities – planning and costing, to be undertaken by State Ministry task groups including those whose work responsibilities/ job descriptions specify these activities



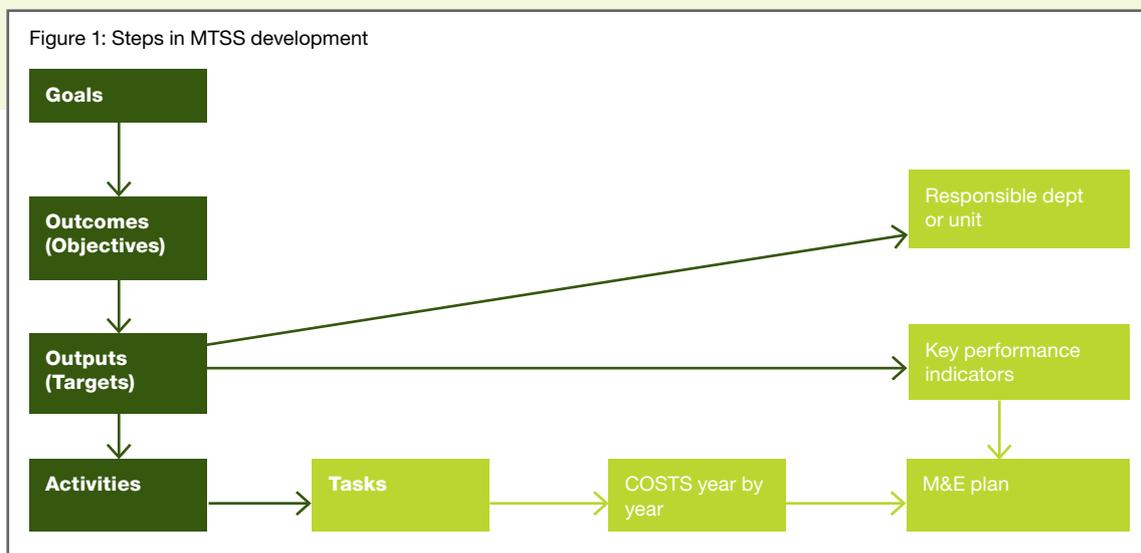
Left
Children support one another through peer learning.

ESSPIN initially worked with its sister DFID-funded programme, the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) to agree on a framework for operationalising the MTSS that was consistent with Federal Government guidelines but would require solid evidence as to needs and priorities. This framework was used by two ESSPIN planning teams (north and south) working across five states in 2009, to prepare the three-year plans central to an MTSS for the period 2010 to 2012. Enugu came on board in 2010, preparing a 2011-2013 MTSS.

The planning teams applied a common support strategy, agreed guidelines and a specified and report structure for these three-year rolling plans. The recommended steps in preparing an MTSS are summarised in Figure 1. Training was provided to all states in planning, costing, preparing key performance indicators (KPIs) and report-writing.

Northern states experimented in 2009 with a planning simulation model developed by UNESCO, and substantial training was provided for all states in use this EPSSIM model. However, this was abandoned in 2010 because it required heavy, expensive and continuing technical assistance (TA) and the outcomes did not justify the efforts - the model was generic and required substantial modifications to fit the specific planning and financing needs of the states.

Since then, ESSPIN has explored the possibilities of adapting or developing a planning and financial management simulation model to support MTSS development, but existing models do not have the flexibility demanded by Nigerian states and the states are sufficiently different for any generic tailor-made model to be applicable.



ESSPIN Responses and Progress

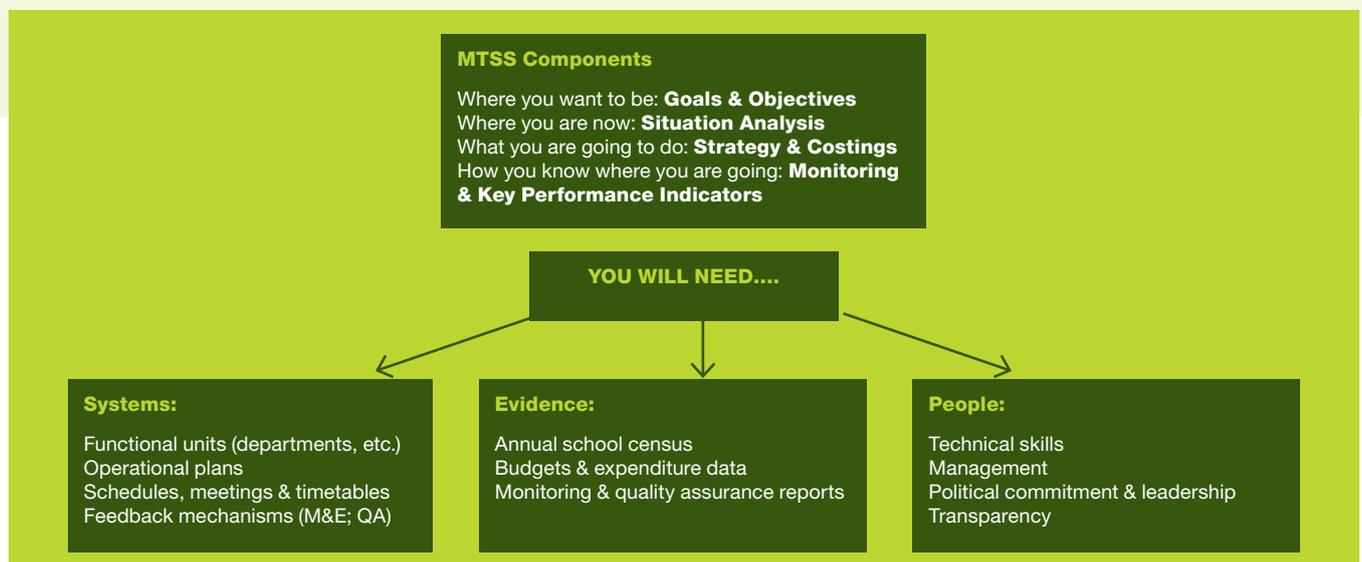
The most important lesson learned in supporting the preparation of the first three-year plans was that there was simply not enough evidence available on which to build relevant plans. ESSPIN worked with each state to improve the volume and quality of data as a basis for planning. This led to substantial investment in the preparation of annual school censuses (ASC) for every state, funded initially by ESSPIN.

Further investment in political engagement with the most senior decision-and policy-makers led to those policy-makers insisting that accurate financial information was collected and analysed – not least so that they could make quarterly financial reports to the regular meetings of Education Commissioners and SUBEB Chairs from the six states.

ASC data need to be aggregated, collated, analysed and then published in formats that decision-makers can use. To achieve this, ESSPIN invested in the development of Education Management Information System (EMIS) Units in every state to deliver the census data and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Units to use it in preparing Annual Education Sector Performance Reports (AESPRs). Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate the linkages between these activities and the MTSS.

The framework employed by ESSPIN in supporting states is summarised in Figure 2. It required significant investment in each aspect shown in this diagram. Annex 1 indicates the specifications for an MTSS report, a framework still largely operational in all six states. However, ESSPIN also strongly supported the development of state systems, through functional reviews and preparation of strategic and operation plans. ESSPIN also invested in initial ASCs, budgeting, and QA systems; and most importantly provided the training in technical and management skills and undertook structured political engagement to build commitment to this approach to school improvement.

Figure 2: Preparing an MTSS



¹Throughout Nigeria, basic education is managed at state level by State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs). These are subservient to but largely autonomous from the state Education Ministries and are part-funded by direct Federal Government subventions from a fixed percentage of the country's oil income.

A major purpose of an MTSS is to shape budget submissions in line with broader government policies, so that Year One of the three-year plan should be adopted as the next year's education budget. This did not happen at first. The MTSSs were overly ambitious, especially when ESSPIN's advice to keep within available resources was ignored. Last-minute changes to supposedly agreed state MTSSs by special interests led to inflated bids that were ignored when building budgets. In states where the education sector budget included higher education, the tertiary education institutions proved particularly intransigent in reining in their demands, even where the tertiary education budget component far exceeded the basic education component.

On the positive side, the major stakeholders across the education sector came together to identify priorities, to argue for changes away from the traditional incremental approaches to budgeting and to recognise the need for evidence to back their claims. These processes also revealed confusions in the roles and responsibilities of key officers in Education Ministries and SUBEBs. In some areas there were overlapping and conflicting responsibilities; in others no-one seemed to be in charge. This stimulated the work of that area of ESSPIN's work in support of human resource development, conducting functional reviews and job analyses. ESSPIN also supported reviews of the legal framework at state level and between states and their local governments, identifying areas of non-compliance and inaction.

Over the next couple of years these issues were addressed in preparing the 2011-13 and 2012-14 MTSSs. An immediate priority was to ensure that the MTSS and the state budget included allocations for the ASC, the preparation of the AESPR, the HR development and training programmes and the establishment of EMIS and M&E Units in each state. A second priority was to ensure that the MTSS was prepared in time to shape the education sector budget proposal, a tight deadline dictated by the annual planning cycle (Figure 3). If MTSS preparation is not completed by the time (normally September) when State Finance Ministries require the spending Ministries to submit their bids for the following year, the submission will not be based on the current MTSS.

Right
Closer contact:
Teachers are now able to deliver lessons to children almost one-on-one, enabling children learn better.



Linked to this, was the need for the MTSS to be realistic. This was helped when State Finance or Economic Planning Ministries began, under pressure from SPARC, to provide indicative figures for the next year's budget allocations as early as April or May in the planning cycle. The quarterly reports required by Education Commissioners also injected a degree of urgency into MTSS preparation. Nonetheless, it has been consistently difficult in most states to finalise their MTSS in time for budget preparation, so that updated figures from 'Year Two' of the previous year's MTSS have on occasions to substitute for the new Year One data.

ESSPIN's technical assistance (TA) for MTSS preparation has reduced year by year from 2011 onwards. In part this reflected a shift of emphasis within ESSPIN. Initially ESSPIN's central focus was to improve schools by reforming the state and local government systems through which schools are managed and funded. However, with a change of government in the United Kingdom in 2010, the emphasis shifted towards service delivery and more hands-on school improvement, by emphasising investment in teachers and head-teachers and some school-building. Some resources initially available for state-level reforms were reallocated to more direct school improvement interventions.

At the same time, ESSPIN took steps to actively break down any tendency towards Output silos, by re-orienting team members working on federal, state and local government strengthening to directly face the challenges of school improvement, equitable access and improved learning outcomes.



Above
Green big, beautiful: Adjectives describe nouns and tell their qualities.

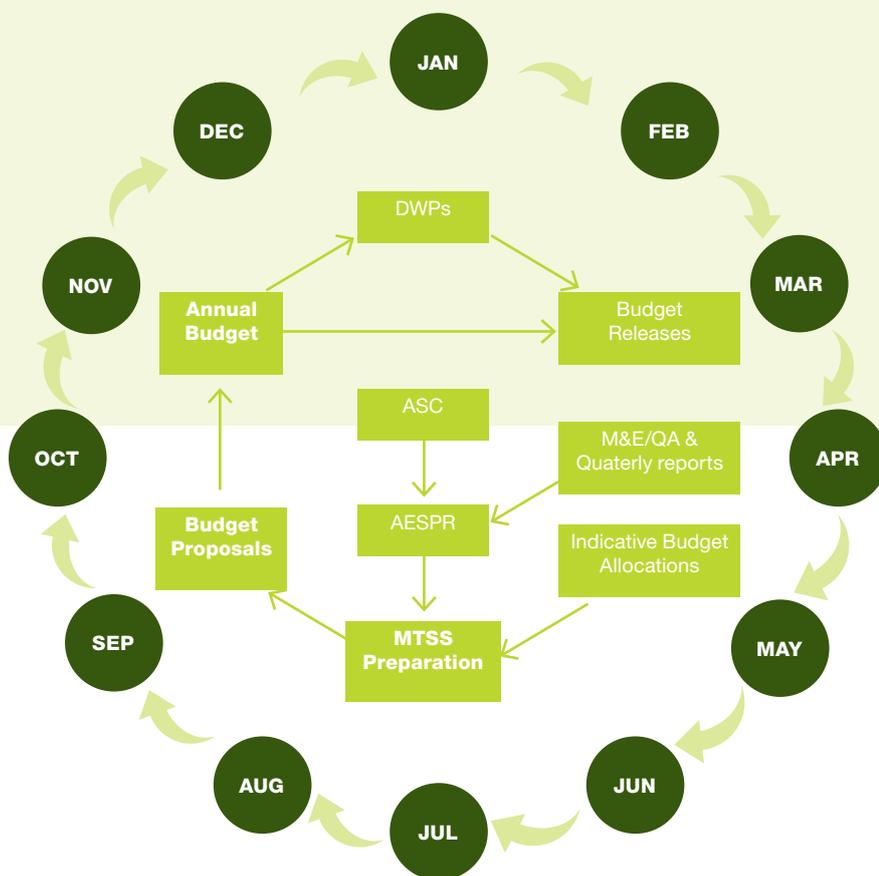


Left
Recognition of shapes: Children are taught to describe shapes and name their properties.

The steady reduction in the amount of TA provided by ESSPIN year on year was also an explicit method of avoiding aid dependency, it was an endorsement of the improved capacity of states to plan, and of the enhanced capabilities of key officers in state Education Ministries and SUBEBs. With functional EMIS and M&E Units in operation, the MTSS has increasingly drawn upon the Annual Education Sector Performance Report (AESPR) to identify key needs and focus on the main elements sought in the next year's annual budget.

And with SPARC support, the Education MTSSs were used as models by State central planning Ministries for encouraging or requiring all Ministries to base their budgets on an MTSS. In at least four states (Enugu, Kano, Lagos, and Kaduna) all Ministries are now required to develop and submit their MTSS as part of their budget preparation.

Since 2014, Education Ministries and SUBEBs in all six ESSPIN-focus states have taken full responsibility for each element of their education planning, with only limited technical support from a single ESSPIN state specialist. The preparation of the MTSS remains central to this, and most states have resisted occasional temptations to avoid MTSS preparation in some years, on the grounds that a three-year plan exists, so last year's Year Two plan could be adopted as the new Year One plan. Nigeria's political, economic, and educational environment is too volatile for this approach to work.



Left
A typical planning cycle for an improved education sector.

Lessons Learned

The central lesson is that the MTSS can be a powerful instrument for educational policy and planning reform. At least four elements are crucial for it to succeed:

Early focus on training and professional development followed by structured withdrawal;

Establish and embed well-structured systems and procedures

Evidence-based planning needs evidence, so ensure that evidence is accurate, up-to-date and in formats that decision-makers can use.

Planning needs a clear vision of the future, backed by achievable goals and objectives.

Training & Structured Withdrawal

A dual strategy of technical and political engagement is essential to embed MTSS reforms. Technical skills at state and local government levels were enhanced with major investments in training and professional development in the early years. Training needs to be reinforced with mentoring and on-the-job-support and repeated when those who have been trained retire or are transferred to new posts.

Political engagement with the key state and local government policy-makers needs to go hand in hand with this technical support. Only when the key decision-makers understand the purposes of the reform agenda and agree with the benefits will the technical advances in planning, budgeting, organisational reform, monitoring and quality assurance be sustainable. This requires extensive penetration into the political/policy system. It is necessary but not sufficient to have at least one reform 'champion'—Commissioner or SUBEB Chair. Individual influence is almost always short-term and to make a lasting impact the system as a whole must be engaged with, including local government chairs and the State Houses of Assembly.



Above
Teacher assist pupils to learn the capacity of containers and tell the difference between sizes of containers.

It is important that initial interventions are scaled back as quickly as possible, but with residual support at key times in the planning cycle. This has been provided by the ESSPIN State Specialists in each ESSPIN-focus state. Much effort was expended in countering the initial views in the states that the initiative was an “ESSPIN MTSS”. Responsibilities for leading the processes were placed directly on the key officers – the Directors of the Planning, Research & Statistics Departments (DPRS) in Ministries and SUBEBs. And training, mentoring and other forms of professional development were provided to support those Directors in taking on their responsibilities.

Systems and Procedures

The second requirement is that a well-structured set of procedures is established and embedded into normal government systems and timetables. The procedures employed in developing state an MTSS vary slightly from state to state but are broadly similar. The process normally begins with the selection of the MTSS Preparation Committee by the DPRS of the Ministry of Education. The Committee initiates:

Logistics, timetable and relevant sub-committees;

Strategy sessions to review strategic documents including the AESRP and ASC Report, and agree objectives, programme outputs and KPIs;

Costing of programmes and initiatives, normally by a specialist Costing Sub-Committee;

A Report-writing/ Drafting Sub-Committee to produce a draft MTSS Report;

Stakeholder meetings to consider the draft reports;

A Policy meeting by political leaders to agree programmes and initiatives; and

Publication of the final document, initially as an electronic draft and then as a formal state document.

The sub-committees carry out their assignments independently and then report to the MTSS committee at larger meetings.

Initially, most of these stages were carried out in workshops facilitated by external technical assistance in areas including costing and report-writing. However, states have developed capacity and are now able to carry forward the process as part of their routine work (and in their job descriptions prepared with ESSPIN support as part of the human resource development reforms).

However, one consequence of the integration of MTSS preparation within the normal programme of government activities is that these activities can be displaced by crises, political interventions and officer transfers or retirements. Hence the slippages in the timescale referred to above, leading to problems in completing the MTSS in time for budget submissions.

The framework for preparing the MTSS report has become more rigorous. A 38-page set of guidelines now establishes a common structure and specifies the procedures required. Annex 1 summarises those guidelines. As the Annex demonstrates, the MTSS covers the whole education sector from pre-primary through to tertiary education and the needs, priorities and budget plans for each sub-sector are incorporated in the MTSS report.

Evidence-based Planning needs Evidence

The third requirement is that evidence-based planning needs evidence – and this needs to be accurate, relevant, up-to-date and presented in formats that decision-makers can understand. The evidence base required for effective MTSS planning is substantial. It answers the question of “where you are now”, so that weaknesses can be identified and priorities set. The most vital element is the annual school census. Planners must have basic and up-to-date information about the schools for which they plan. Back in 2008 states did not even know how many schools they had, let alone the numbers of teachers and pupils in them. Now they have that information, along with data on the infrastructure, facilities and equipment, the qualifications of their teachers and, increasingly some information on the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Below
Learning through play: Children learn creativity through drama and social activities.



The raw census data needs to be aggregated, analysed and then digested for use by planners and policy-makers. With five or six years of ASCs available, planners can now plot trends and identify the impact of their policies as specified in their earlier MTSSs. Some states have tried to avoid the significant expenditure on the annual school census, but this should be resisted, particularly at a time of major internal migration movements in Nigeria and international concerns about the numbers of children not in school at all.

An MTSS is, therefore, dependent on the information provided by the EMIS and M&E Units - and this is in turn dependent on the capabilities of those staffing and managing those Units. The annual performance reviews and reports, using census and other data, provide evidence of needs and priorities. The quarterly financial monitoring reports provide data on costs and resources deployed that feed into MTSS costings and budget calculations. The central M&E tasks follow a results-based approach, with budgets, activities and results routinely monitored through quarterly monitoring reports (QMRs) that are summarised annually into a Summary Monitoring Report.

The M&E responsibilities for AESPRs have evolved from being just an analysis of state-level ASC data to encompass a broader range of data sources, providing a more robust picture of the whole education sector, including basic, secondary, and tertiary education.

Visions, Goals and Objectives

The provision of evidence as to where you are now is only of value in planning terms if you also know where you want to be. In parallel with support for MTSS development, ESSPIN also assisted Education Ministries, SUBEBs and local government education authorities (LGEAs) to prepare strategic plans based on a clear vision, a mission statement, and identified goals broken down to specified objectives.



Left
Act-out the adjectives: Children understand words better when they have the opportunity to demonstrate them.

These provided the answers to the question “where do you want to be in three years” that enabled those preparing the MTSS to analyse the gap between the current situation and the desired future. The three-year plan was developed to bridge that gap.

Mechanisms are then needed to assess whether and to what extent progress is being made in gap-bridging. An MTSS contains key performance indicators (KPIs) with which, for each of the three years or even quarter by quarter, progress towards specified targets can be measured (see Annex 1). These are likely to involve the application not only of quantitative data from M&E Units but also qualitative data, collected by those responsible for quality assurance (QA) at state and local government levels.

The ESSPIN-focus states have faced major challenges in building the QA systems and linking them to state and LGEA planning. ESSPIN has supported the incorporation of QA reports within the EMIS so that qualitative evidence about school improvement can be related to the quantitative data from the ASC. In this way, state resources can focus on the priorities analysed in QA reports.

The involvement of local government in planning reforms started in Kano in 2010 and extended to all states in 2011. SUBEBs were encouraged to support LGEA action plans and incorporate them in SUBEB planning and the MTSS. It has taken time and significant investment in training to bring LGEAs and SUBEBs to the point where the aggregation and analysis of LGEA plans form integral components of each SUBEB’s contribution to the MTSS. The next stage in this process of ‘bottom-up’ planning, where LGEAs aggregate and analyse school development plans, is only just beginning.

Below
Number combinations: A teacher guides pupils to make two-digit numbers from one-digit number flash cards.



Looking Forward: The Evolving MTSS

Now that the eight years of ESSPIN support for and involvement with state education planning has come to an end, some trends can be discerned concerning the place of the MTSS in the future. ESSPIN has encouraged and supported states to take ownership of the MTSS and adapt it to meet their distinctive needs. The financial framework has been strengthened, as Annex 1 demonstrates, with highly specific targets and close integration with the state budget system. This varies from state to state and, in consequence, the MTSS is itself morphing into rather different planning tools across the states, while maintaining the basic objectives, procedures, and standards. In Kaduna it has been re-badged as an “Education Sector Implementation Plan” and in Enugu as the “Medium Term Sector Plan (MTSP)”.

In Lagos the MTSS follows a standard format specified by the Lagos State Government’s Ministry of Economic Planning & Budgeting, using a slightly different template prescribed by SPARC and aligning the MTSS with the State’s Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). This in turn is monitored by a state-wide M&E framework. New state governments in 2015 have reviewed and revised their planning frameworks and the MTSS is now perceived as a central planning tool across Government.

The Nigerian Governors’ Forum has published “How to Prepare a Medium Term Sector Strategy: a Step by Step Guide” with the help of SPARC and, when used by central State Ministries, Education Ministries have and will adapt their approaches and some of the terminology in line with state-wide requirements.

Right
My own life story:
Children also learn to trace their basic identity with simple activities in school.



¹⁴ Street children

¹⁴ Tsangaya - is a traditional form of Quranic religious education where originally the teacher moves with his pupils in the belief that an itinerant life is essential for them to fully concentrate on their study. The itinerant children attending tsangaya education are sometimes called almajirais.

Devolution

A second trend is the move towards greater devolution, both within Ministries and SUBEBs and from states to local governments. ESSPIN has encouraged and supported the establishment of Departmental Work Plans (DWPs) across Education Ministries and SUBEBs. Based upon the relevant sections of the MTSS, these plans specify the ways, time and resources needed to deliver the MTSS, normally quarter by quarter. The DWPs, therefore, constitute requests for budget releases at the appropriate times in order to undertake the activities approved in the MTSS.

They are important delivery mechanisms, especially as the traditional line budgets approved by state governments do not identify departmentally-based activities. The MTSS is, therefore, the definitive document with which departmental activities and expenditure can be approved and monitored. DWPs provide a clear link between the activity-based MTSS and the line-based budgeting system.

ESSPIN has worked to strengthen the important role of LGEAs in representing school and community needs to state governments. One mechanism for this is to ensure that LGEAs can contribute to MTSS planning. The aggregation of LGEA plans into SUBEB planning has been referred to above.

But this is of little value if the quality of those LGEA plans is suspect and they are not based on school development needs. Two vehicles have been developed with ESSPIN support to enhance the quality of LGEA planning and to provide a voice for schools and communities in the MTSS: integrated school development planning (ISDP) and self-assessment.



Right
Teaching aid: A teacher uses flashcards to teach verbs in class.

The ISDP process is based mainly on the ASC. Its conceptual framework is based on three components, using ASC data: School capacity - a measure of the degree to which a school is equipped with the physical facilities, the teaching and learning material and the institutional development to be an effective provider of teaching and learning; Programmes – initiatives of the SUBEBs, LGEAs and other bodies to enhance school capacity; and Performance – outcome measures of the effectiveness of the school in delivering quality teaching and learning. These are used to create a School Capacity Scoring System to identify the schools with the highest composite needs, measured against specified benchmarks, and the LGEAs with the largest concentrations of these schools.

Given that state budgets are nowhere near sufficient to tackle all school needs at one time, the ISDP procedures enable specified categories of need in groups of schools and LGEAs to be identified in the MTSS, so that resources can be committed to meeting those needs over a three-year period. It is then possible to monitor the benefits of this investment, whereas traditional approaches that spread available resources very thinly across all schools and LGEAs led to no discernible improvements at all.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment was introduced at state level in 2011 and at LGEA level in 2015 as an annual activity. It was designed as a collaborative mechanism for stakeholders to quantify their qualitative assessments of progress (or otherwise) in a large number of ESSPIN-supported activities, including MTSS development. Initially it was developed to measure qualitative ESSPIN logframe outputs but it quickly became one of the significant internal state monitoring tools.



Right
Science
construction:
Children using
flashcards to build
correct sentences.

When undertaken by LGEAs, it provides valuable comparative data on LGEA progress in areas including planning and budgeting, human resource development and quality assurance. This data can then help to direct MTSS planning, so that the resources can focus on the LGEAs in greatest need, while the KPIs in the MTSS can measure the extent to which those LGEAs use resources effectively.

SUBEBS have taken responsibility for organising LGEA self-assessment exercises and those state decision-makers involved at state level in 2016's self-assessment work emphasised strongly that they would continue these annual reviews in 2017 and beyond. This will enable the MTSS in subsequent years to draw on evidence both of what has been achieved over the past year and what is needed in subsequent years.

Assuming that the self-assessment exercise takes place in June or July each year, the evidence feeds directly in MTSS planning, even if other evidence sources such as the AESPR are not yet available.

Activity-Based Budgeting

The problems faced when using traditional line budgets has been referred to above. Activity-based budgeting has long been advocated and should be a logical consequence of MTSS-based planning. However, for a variety of reasons this has not yet been achieved. The main problem is with recurrent expenditure.

The classification of education expenditure is normally based on education level rather than activity and the chart of accounts tends not to classify expenditure by level, so that overheads and personnel costs, whether for primary or secondary schools, appear on the same budget line. Capital expenditure is normally classified by education level but the activities for which those resources are committed are not identified, without cross-reference to the MTSS.

Achieving a shift from line budgeting to a budgeting structure where money is distributed by programme or functional areas and based on the nature of activities performed is still resisted by central Finance Ministries.



Right
Dramatising reality:
Children sing and play
as learning strategies
in school.

Conclusions

But the MTSS will not operate as a powerful financial management tool until it is aligned with budget structures and extra work is needed when preparing the MTSS in converting the previous year's line budget into an activity-based budget – and then concerting it back to a line budget at the end of the process.

Nigeria's systems for planning and funding basic education are seriously flawed. The vision of 'education for all' in Nigeria is in theory backed by a solid structure of federal, state and local government partnerships, through which resources flow to the primary and junior secondary schools. This model is not operationalised. ESSPIN has, over the past eight years, taken steps to support states in overcoming some of these weaknesses. A central step has been the establishment of an annual planning cycle with an MTSS or equivalent medium-term planning toll at its heart.

The MTSS has provided a basis for identifying and prioritising the basic education system's key needs over a three-year period and reconciling these with the state budget system. It has enabled states to acquire the basic evidence about their schools, teachers, pupils and their needs. And it has stimulated the implementation of key components of the planning system that process this evidence, including M&E and EMIS Units and reformed QA Units (or Bureaus).

All this has taken time. Reforms on this scale are not instant: after eight years it would be unwise to claim that they are yet completed. The distinctive ESSPIN philosophy of support to the system through a focus on school improvement is sound but slow.

Right
Peer learning: Pupils share items on how to build up numbers.



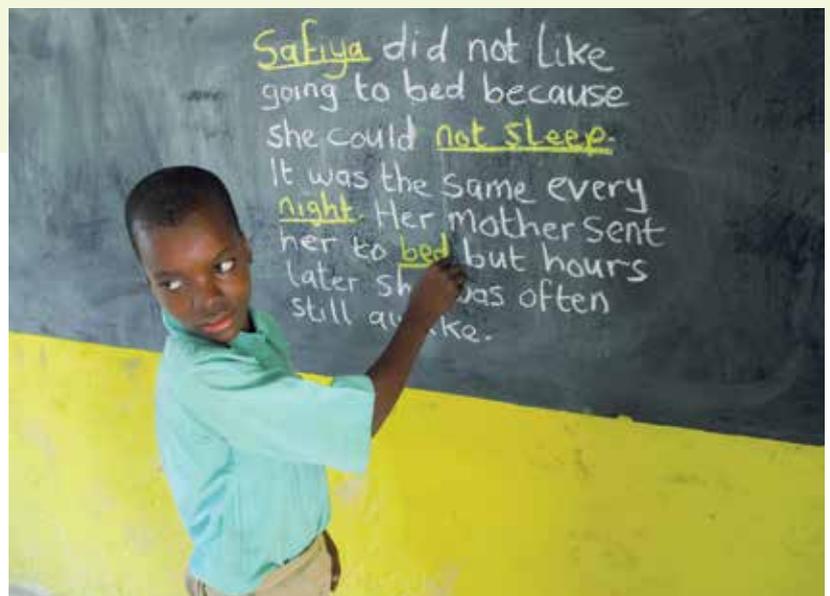
It took three or four years to penetrate, albeit imperfectly, the existing federal, state and local government systems so that the reforms emanate not from an external agency but from within the system: and changes of government and state and federal levels meant that these processes had to start all over again. Using the MTSS support process as an entry point helped in building relationships and the systematic corporate planning process helped to build capacity and interest in change.

The combination of MTSS, ASC, AESPR and a variety of M&E strategies provides solid evidence of the actions and resources needed to improve schools. The problem now lies with providing those resources. It has been a challenge to establish sustainable and inter-related elements of the planning system, built on the MTSS.

It has proved an even bigger task to help states and local governments to focus their available financial resources on the agreed priorities that these elements identify. ESSPIN has learned much about the difficulties of public finance reform – we still have much to learn about ways of resolving these endemic and deep-rooted problems.

The annual MTSS and annual school census now form the heart of a comprehensive planning framework at both state and LGEA levels. However, for this to remain demonstrably valuable, each stage of the planning cycle needs to be completed in time to support the next stage in the cycle. If there are omissions or slippages in the timescale, the value of the whole system is in doubt.

The ASC and MTSS are resource-demanding and time-consuming processes. Times change and new decision-makers are appointed or elected. They will need to be convinced of the value of the MTSS and accompanying planning tools and the evidence of the benefits needs to be widely and regularly promoted. The task for ESSPIN's successors, whether international or internal, is to help states sustain their planning systems so that each element of the planning cycle contributes to the subsequent element: only in that way will basic education budgets focus on evidence-based priorities.



Right
Children learn from school how to take the lead and demonstrate knowledge.

Annex 1: Recommended Template for MTSS Reporting

Foreword (1 page)
Acknowledgements (1 page)
Abbreviations/ Acronyms (1 page, single-spaced)
Table of Contents (1-2 pages)
List of Tables/ List of Figures (1 page each)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Not more than 3 pages
Should summarise main points of document briefly. Limit tables and keep to important and strategic issues.
1. STATE BACKGROUND: Not more than 4 pages
1.1 Description of [state]
Two or three short paragraphs only of a standard description of size, population and main economic features of the state in terms of production, employment and infrastructure
1.2 State Development Plan
Two major points – main thrusts of the Plan for the State, and main points on education in the plan
1.3 State finances and budget execution
Overview of state budget across all agencies and actual operation of budget versus plan. SPARC should have details on this if it operates in your state
1.4 State education policy
Summary of main features of state education policy, date, scope and strategic issues in the policy. If there is no state policy then discuss main issues that currently concern the education sector in the state
1.5 Organisation of the sector
Describe [with diagram] the main ministries and state agencies in the sector and their relationships. Cover all subsectors from ECE to Tertiary Education. Should include all agencies that receive state funds for education.
The organisational reviews done several years ago provided such diagrams but they may need updating.
2. EDUCATION SECTOR DIAGNOSIS: (8-10 pages)
This section should provide an overall description of the whole sector and the context for the MTSS interventions. It would be useful if Sections 2.2 to 2.5 below mirrored the sections in the MTSS and described the numbers etc. for those sections. The Annual Census will be a major source for this diagnosis
2.1 Overview of education sector developments

What are the major features of the education sector in the past five years – what have been the significant changes [improvements or failings] of the sector?

Guidance on following subsections

For each of the MTSS sections [such as those below] describe the principal features, and fill in the standard tables. This will include numbers of institutions, students, teachers etc – use tables which cover the past three and the next three years if possible. The future years should be based on MTSS targets and KPIs.

Depending on state circumstances there may be other similar tables such as adult and/or non-formal education, Islamic education etc. Adapt the tables below as necessary to describe these other subsections

2.2 Basic Education major trends

Note: Ideally the tables for Basic Education should include primary and junior secondary numbers, with senior secondary in a separate section if the state is fully implementing the disarticulation policy. If this is not possible then use one table for Primary and the next table for Secondary numbers

2.3 Secondary, technical and vocational education major trends

Ideally this section should deal with senior secondary and vocational education at that level i.e. before tertiary education, with Tables

2.4 Tertiary education major trends

This should cover state universities, colleges of education, monotechnics and polytechnics

2.5 Education management major trends

This section should describe:

any major management changes taking place in the organisations that make up the education sector, such as reorganisations, the creation or dissolution of new ministries or agencies, or the creation, amalgamation or disbanding of departments

any significant new functions being assigned or undertaken by the organisations in the sector

and summarize the status and developments in EMIS, data quality and availability for evidence-based quality planning and M&E

3. MAJOR EDUCATION CHALLENGES [4-6 pages]

This section should describe the major strategic challenges facing the sector. The AESPR will be a major source for this section as will the trends observed in the diagnosis section and the strategic directions in the state education strategic plan. The list should include three to six major challenges only and these must be addressed in the activities, targets and costs of the MTSS. The objective of this section is to link what has happened in the recent past in the sector with allocation of resources for the immediate medium term future

For each Challenge:

a) State the problem clearly [eg 'Girls are not progressing through the system – after Primary 5 they drop out significantly more than boys', 'Rural students repeat classes at a much greater rate than urban students', 'Student-teacher ratios in the West of [State] are more than in the East']

b) List strategies and broad actions that will make an impact on the problem within the medium term. Details will be included in the next section

c) Indicate where in the MTSS [section number] this is addressed and funded

3.1 Challenge 1

3.2 Challenge 2

3.3 Challenge 3

3.4 Challenge 4

4. MEDIUM TERM SECTOR PRIORITIES [8-10 pages]

This section sets out the priorities which determine which activities over and above routine actions that will be funded in the MTSS. It provides the description for the main components which are listed and funded in the MTSS table.

4.1 Long term and medium term linkages

This section should describe strategies and priorities in the Strategic Plan that are being addressed in this MTSS

For each sector described in Section 2 above

1. List the major targets to be achieved in the next three years – these must be specific and quantified. Do NOT say 'Improve the enrolment of girls in Grade 6' the target should say 'Improve the enrolment of girls in Grade 6 by x%'

2. List the broad actions (not specific activities) summarized from the MTSS table that will contribute to reaching this target

3. Briefly explain why and how the actions proposed and funded will enable the target to be reached. Each sections with Targets; Actions; Justification

4.2 Basic education subsector

4.3 Secondary, Technical and vocational education subsector

4.4 Tertiary education subsector

4.5 Education management subsector

+

4.6 Conclusion and summary

Brief conclusion [1 paragraph] and summary table

5. FINANCING THE SECTOR PRIORITIES [3 pages for 5.1 and 5.2]

5.1 Funding sources

In this subsection briefly describe where the funds come from for the education sector – state and federal government sources, fees and charges, funds from external agencies. Cover the period for the past three years and for the three year term of this MTSS – for states with SPARC involvement they should be able to assist with projected resources. Include Table: State Education Sector Budget

5.2 Budget implementation

Describe the budget and actual expenditure for state and federal education funds for the past three years for salary and operational recurrent expenditure and for capital expenditure. Comment on trends

5.3 Medium term action plan [MTSS details]

This is where the MTSS table goes. Include a summary table by major subsection and a brief description of important points

6. MONITORING & EVALUATING THE ACTIVITIES [3 pages]

6.1 M&E reporting (1/2 page to 1 page maximum)

Describe the major processes of monitoring the MTSS performance each year for the state, including how the information is shared across the sector. Describe:

1. Bottom up approach from school level to LGA to SUBEB to State
2. Working with LGEA officers collecting information at school level
3. Planning and M&E officers for state level information
4. MDAs monitoring individually
5. Quarterly reports building into AESPR

Sharing: a) Major stakeholders; b) Process of dissemination

6.2 Results framework for 2016-2018

List in a table the KPIs and targets

6.3 Results for previous year

List the KPIs, targets and actual performance for the previous year with a written summary of the main results

7. ANNEXES

7.1 Annex 1: Expanded diagnosis tables

7.2 Annex 2: Quarterly Monitoring Report form

7.3 Annex 3: SIP Quarterly Report form

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