

CHILD RIGHTS-BASED SOCIAL AUDIT ON DIEN BIEN PROVINCE'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC Convention for the Rights of the Child

CSC Community Score Card

DOET Department of Education and Training

DOF Department of Finance
DOH Department of Health

DOLISA Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

DPI Department of Planning and Investment

DDOH District Division of Health

DDOLISA District Division of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

DDFI District Division of Finance and Planning

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

MOLISA Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

MPI Ministry of Planning and Investment

PPC Provincial People's Committee

SEDP Socio-economic Development Plan
UNICEF The United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2010s, UNICEF and Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) together with partners in a number of provinces have piloted social audit tools such as *Citizen Report Cards* (CRC) in Ho Chi Minh City and Dien Bien Province; *Community Score Cards* (CSC) and *Gender Audit* in Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Ngai Province; and Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) in Tra Vinh Province, Ho Chi Minh City and Dien Bien Province. After the pilot phase, in 2012, UNICEF and MPI have completed and introduced to the public the Toolkit for Social Audit with five tools: *Citizen Report Cards (CRC), Community Score Cards (CSC), Gender Audit, Public Expenditure Tracking Survey* (PETS) and *Child-right based Social Audit* (CRSA). In general, the social audit method has been gradually received as a management mechanism, which facilitates the development and application of methods, tools and techniques to enable the responsible agencies' review for enhancement of *social performance* of an organisation, of a plan or a policy.

Currently many provinces are embarking in reforming local governance and management. The Decision 266/QĐ-UBND on 10 May 2013 of Dien Bien Provincial People's Committee marked an important milestone of the province's planning reform as it set out the proactiveness of the province in planning, clearly regulating the process and responsibilities of each agencies in preparing, approving and M&E of the annual SEDPs in the province. Specially, this decision has mentioned the use of "social audit tools as an important source of information for the evaluation results".

In order to facilitate the transfer of the tool to local officials, and thus contribute to improvement of the province's planning capacity, from May to July 2014, UNICEF Viet Nam together with the consultants from The Center for Rural Progress has applied the Child Rights Based Social Audit Manual in Dien Bien Province. Five departments of the province participated in the tool implementation, i.e. the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), the Department of Finance (DOF), the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), the Department of Education and Training (DOET) and the Department of Health (DOH). Besides, there was also participation from officials of functional line offices of the sectors in two districts of the province; Dien Bien Dong and Muong Ang.

For fulfilling this requirement as well as capacity building for planning officials, the research team applied a participatory approach. The tools are two tables to review (1) planning processes; and (2) the plans, respectively. With these two tables, the research team together with the sectoral officials reviewed practices by answering each of 39 questions about planning process (grouped in 4 sections) and by assessing and scoring (Quantitative assessment) the degree of mainstreaming and reflecting 9 children's rights in the plans. The performance was scored on a scale from 1 to 4 with 4 as the best level. In addition the process listed evidence and/or in-depth comments (qualitative assessment). The complete tools are presented in Annex 3.

The kick-off meeting with the core planning officers of relevant provincial departments on 22-23 May 2014 received comments and suggestion to extend the assessment to 9 rights to raise the awareness of Viet Nam Law on Child Protection, Care and Education from the planned 4 rights clusters by the CRC. Data collection at provincial and district levels started from 11 to 14 June 2014. During this phase, one consultant worked separately with each planning officer of each department, undertaking an in-depth interview. Two other consultants worked in parallel in two districts with a series of group discussions: with participation from planning officers of districts divisions and officers of Finance and Planning division. In addition, the research team conducted two group discussions in each of the two districts with participation from children and their guardians for collecting information and assessing the implementation and mainstreaming of children's rights into specific programs.

Key findings:

This audit shares the findings from the Report of "Reviewing the integration of child-related issues in 2013 SEDP". The review of five-year (2011-2015) plans at province level and annual 2014 plans of the province and the two sampled districts (Dien Bien Dong and Muong Ang) show that all plans already demonstrate the attention towards the priorities for the children. All reflect fairly high the assurance for the rights to development and the rights to protection.

Besides a number of reformed elements, the prevailing process is still with limited participation of children and guardians and limited budget alignment. Data are not sufficient for disparities analysis regarding gender and ethnicity. Budget analysis only focuses on committed source, leaving out the uncommitted ones. There are limited efforts in searching for other available sources.

Economic or industrial development targets and programs cannot show the number of children benefitting or being adversely affected and environment sections fail to mention solutions for mitigate the climate change impact for children's sake. The same shortage is even recorded in national targeted programs. Many child-focus programs are designed with limited consideration of available budget so the implementation has not been smooth and effective as per the design.

Currently, monitoring is still in the traditional form of narrative reports every month, quarter and year. Only some divisions and departments have initiated the development of planning frames and M&E frames attached to their plan but the mechanism for more involvement of children is quite weak. Data for detailed analysis of gender, ethnicity, children affected by social evils, children with HIV/AIDS are inaccurate and mostly in aggregate form.

The knowledge and skills to use children's rights for analysis of children problems and situations are still very new to many officers, posing a big challenge. The ability to convert children's rights into targets or activities is very limited.

In the context that Dien Bien province has issued Decision 266 to guide the process and responsibilities of socio-economic development plans formulation and approval as well as an M&E plan, which emphasizes the use of new methods and tools such as more community consultation, utilization of social audit tools, this audit arrives at the following recommendations:

- To coordinate with other support programs in capacity building for planning officers in the province and districts so as to equip them with skills to transform children rights into specific targets, objectives and activities. More attention should go to the sectors, which are pioneering application of a child rights-based approach, e.g. education and training, to amplify the results and promoting them to become really good models. Then they will become showcases for raising awareness and further capacity of other planning officers at other levels, and even other sectors, about children's rights, about mainstreaming those into the activities of the plan, or about management and coordination of priority programs for children.
- To encourage uniform and effective implementation of community consultations, particularly with children and their guardians, to make more use of existing consultation platforms such as informal education sessions in the schools or in the community;
- To reinforce the preparation of planning logframes in the districts and agencies, which have started this process, to assist them to expand those into M&E frames and into realistic tools for M&E with participation of communities, particularly of the children. More priorities should go to assessment of the programs, which

- DPI of Dien Bien should work closely with provincial GSO to synergize with existing surveys to screen and refine the indicators, templates, data collection tools and methodology to make them more consistent and suitable for current context. In each period, the province should define a clear set of indicators for the children's rights of focus to include those in SEDP. Results from Dien Bien SITAN 2010-2011, conducted by UNICEF, MOLISA and Dien Bien PPC can be a good start for this process.
- At the same time, there should urgently be provided some support to departments to further the disaggregation of data of children disparities- ages, gender, residential locations, health situation, children with special difficulties or influence of social evils. Data collection mechanism is another area requiring support to ensure high quality data, needed to enable analysis of improvement in children's situation.
- The integration of child-related targets or objectives in the sectoral plans or SEDP should be made in a comprehensive manner to limit the practice of separate and ad-hoc regulations for child-care only when external committed budget is made available.

The coming year of 2015 is a critical point of time with the preparation of the five-year plan for 2016-2020. Dien Bien should make full use of available resources and support the implementation of the above recommendations so as to build up the complete capacity from data collection to situation analysis, to work out suitable targets, indicators and solutions for the plan.

As a technical host for children's concern, UNICEF should mobilize more resources to assist Dien Bien in that process. A number of urgent needs for assistance are:

- To refine and introduce indicators reflecting children's rights with guidelines for each line agency to quickly comprehend the relevant indicators within their mandate;
- To refurnish the Manual of Child Right-based Social Audit in particular, and other Social Audit tools. The key parts requiring improvement is the set of templates for assessment, to prepare simple report formats so even local agencies can do the audit and prepare the reports with clear identification of areas for improvement in their planning process or their plans towards more and more integration of children's rights.

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1. Introduction

Since 2010s, UNICEF and Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) together with partners in a number of provinces have piloted social audit tools of *Citizen Report Cards* (CRC) in Ho Chi Minh City and Dien Bien Province; Community Score Cards (CSC) and Gender Audit in Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Ngai Province; and *Public Expenditure Tracking Survey* (PETS) in Tra Vinh Province, Ho Chi Minh City and Dien Bien Province. After the pilot phase, in 2012, UNICEF and MPI have completed and introduced to public the Toolkit for Social Audit with five tools: *Citizen Report Cards* (CRC), *Community Score Cards* (CSC), *Gender Audit*, *Public Expenditure Tracking Survey* (PETS) and *Child-right based Social Audit* (CRSA).

In general, social audit method has been gradually received as a management mechanism, which facilitates the development and application of methods, tools and techniques to enable the responsible agencies' review for enhancement of social performance of an organisation, of a plan or a policy. The social audit tools are highly practical, in line with good governance principles and helpful for revealing the normative "good" by standards. More importantly, those tools assist the collection of essential information and implications for strengthening the effectiveness of decision-making process, resource allocation and service delivery in general. This role becomes significant in the context of on-going planning reform in both national and provincial levels for more focus at social impacts of social and economic development plans (SEDP)

In this context, social audit has proved to be an important method for assessing the extent to which social goals are prioritized in the whole management process. With the approach of using participatory methods and combining qualitative analysis with quantitative measures, the social audit approach can supplement ordinary government reports with public opinions, thus contribute to improving social performance in response to a number of challenges identified in the monitoring and evaluation of the social dimensions of SEDP.¹

The Decision 266/QĐ-UBND on 10 May 2013 of Dien Bien Provincial People's Committee marked an important milestone of the province's planning reform as it set out the proactiveness of the province in planning, clearly regulating the process and responsibilities of each agency in preparing, approving and M&E of the annual SEDPs in Dien Bien Province. Specially, this Decision has specifically mentioned the use of "social audit tools as an important source of information for the evaluation results".

Among the introduced kits for social audit, the Child-rights based Social Audit (CRSA) tool places the focus on children, exploring the integration of children's rights during the analysis of problems and design of interventions for addressing those- examples include healthcare service delivery and gender equity. This tool is designed to add value to current efforts to assess and improve social policies and programs underway by applying a "children's rights" analytical lens and involving children themselves and their guardians as key stakeholders in participatory assessments and for seeking insightful information so as to enhance the positive impacts of policies and programs on children.

The intended users of this tool are governmental officials, especially those who are working in social sectors and Planning and Investment. Though the intended application of this tool is to the general SEDPs, it is also applied to general policies as well as policies on children and at both national and provincial level. The tool focuses on reviewing and assessing programs and policies contributing directly or indirectly to the improvement of children's life (including children oriented programs and policies

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PLAN

¹ Thapa, Samman J. (2011) "The Social Audit Approach in Viet Nam: Its Value Added to SEDP PM&E and an Introduction to the Tools", Power of Point presentation in Hanoi in November

on healthcare, education, children care and protection, social protection, clean water and sanitation for rural areas, environment, etc.)

To facilitate the transfer of the tool to local officials, thus contributing to improvement of the province's planning capacity, from May to July 2014, UNICEF Viet Nam together with the consultants from The Center for Rural Progress has applied the Child Rights Based Social Audit Manual in Dien Bien Province. Five departments of the province participating the tool implementation consisting the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), the Department of Finance (DOF), the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), the Department of Education and Training (DOET) and the Department of Health (DOH). Besides, there are also the participation from officials of functional line offices of the sectors in two districts of Dien Bien Dong and Muong Ang of the province.

Dien Bien is one of the poor mountainous provinces in the north west of Viet Nam. By 2013, the total population of the province is 527,290 people belonging to 19 ethnic groups, in which Thai ethnic occupies 37.99%, H'Mong ethnic occupies 34.8%, Kinh ethnic occupies 18.42% together with Dao, Khơ-mú, Hà Nhì... ethnic groups. The province's total area is 9,592.9 km2 with the borderline of 360 km to Laos and 40.8 km to China. The province has 10 districts and city/towns with a total number of communes and township of 130.

The two districts participating the implementation of the tool are Dien Bien Dong (supported by UNICEF in the program of Child-Friendly Province) and Muong Ang (which has not participated in the program of Child-Friendly Province). In 2013 Dien Bien Dong's population was 60,442 people with 47.65% are poor households and 95.8% of them are minorities. Similar to Dien Bien Dong District, for the past many years, Muong Ang District has been one of the poorest districts of the province with the population of 43,31 people in which, 3,978 households were classified as poor, accounting for 42.22%. 90% of the population fall in 9 minorities groups.

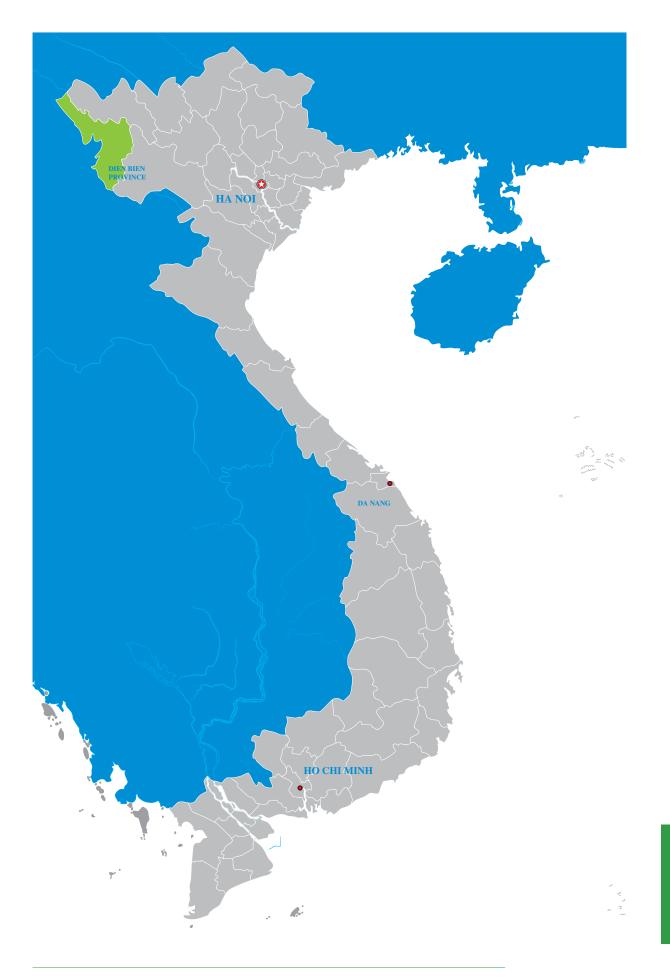
2. Methodology and Tools for data collection

Child rights-based social audit is by nature a review and assessment of the degree to which child rights principles (needs, benefits) are mainstreamed and reflected in policies, plans, programs and the level of their implementation. One goal is to identify potential gaps and recommend priorities for action. Such assessment induces areas for improvement for more child-rights integration in the plans and policies.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a general framework with four main principles institutionalized in the Convention including Non-discrimination, Primary consideration for the best interests of the child, the basic *Right to life, survival and development, and Respect for the views of the child.* For the specific review, the research team together with planning officials from selected sectors of Dien Bien detailed this further by applying the nine rights clusters provided in the Vietnamese Law on Child Protection, Care and Education (the research team did not review the 10th rights cluster, concerned with owning of property).

For fulfilling this goal and at the same time providing capacity building for planning officials, the research team applied the participatory approach. In order to ease the data collection and cross checking among agencies, levels and sectors the team applied combined- qualitative and quantitative methods for the audit. This also allows better for drawing of lessons.

The tools to realize the methods are two tables to review (1) planning processes; and (2) the plans. With these two tables, the research team together with the sectoral officials reviewed by answering each of 39 questions about planning process (grouped in 4 sections) and by classifying the degree of mainstreaming and reflecting nine children's



rights in the plans. The method includes scoring each response from 1 to 4 with 4 as the best level (quantitative measures), and then respondents provide evidence and/or in-depth comments (for qualitative assessment). The complete tools are in Annex 3.

The participatory approach was applied right from the beginning stage when the tool set was developed and introduced at the kick-off meeting with core planning officers of related provincial departments on 22-23 May 2014. The officials commented and suggested to extend the assessment to nine rights to raise the awareness about Viet Nam Law on Child Protection, Care and Education from the planned four rights clusters of the CRC.

Data collection at provincial and district levels started from 11 to 14 June 2014. During this phase, one consultant worked separately with each planning officer of each department in the form of in-depth interview. Two other consultants work in parallel in two districts with a series of group discussions: with planning officers of districts divisions, with officers of Finance and Planning division (full schedule of the audit is included in Annex 2). Each working session follow an agreed format- screening the scores in the review of the plans and plan procedures filled in advance by the officers. The discussion focus on the extreme marks of 1 and 4 so as to ensure the scoring and the justification are of most possible subjective assessment.

The audit focuses include the five-year (2011-2015) SEDP and the annual plans for 2014 of the provincial departments of DOLISA, DOET, DOH and DPI. Especially for the DOF, for its specific sectoral feature of budget estimation only without plans, the audit mainly reviewed the general budget estimation process and the budget monitoring. At district level, the audit team worked along with officials from line departments (Labour-Invalids-Social Affairs, Education and Training, Finance and Planning) of the two districts of Dien Bien Dong and Muong Ang, reviewed their sectoral plans and the districts' SEDPs.

In addition, the research team conducted 2 group discussions in each of the two districts with the participation from the children and their guardians for collecting information and assessing the implementation and mainstreaming children's rights into specific programs. In Dien Bien Dong District, the research team and the district officials studied World Vision's Area Development Program (ADP) in Luan Gioi Commune. In Muong Ang District, the review contents focused on the implementation of Decree 49 and the activities with participation by school children.

Annex 2 lists all officials who participated in the audit.

3. Main findings

This section presents the key findings from consolidated scoring and assessment together with the observations during in-depth interviews and group discussions at both provincial and district level. All of the consolidated scores are presented in eight tables in Annex 1 and the analysis below mainly extract findings in areas in need of improvement.

The assessment and the recommendations for further mainstreaming of child-rights into the plan are presented in accordance with the mandates of the different departments². Specifically, the audit of the healthcare plans and planning procedure

2 35/2008/TTLT-BGDDT-BNV Joint Circular guiding the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Department of Education and Training; Decree No. 106/2012/ND-CP on 20 December, 2012 of the Government on defining the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs; Decree No. 63/2012/ND-CP of the Government on August 31, 2012 on regulating functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Health.

looked more into the child's rights of being cared for and nurtured (right for survival and protection) as per their assigned function. The education and training plans are screened more for development and participation rights. Survival, protection, development and participation rights are the focus for auditing the plans of social affairs agencies as their mandate cover all aspects of daily livings. For planning and financial agencies (DPI, District Finance and Planning Divisions), since their key functions mainly relate to the consolidation and budget allocation for the sector plans in to SEDP, this audit does not go deeply into the plan but concentrate on their budgeting for the children's rights. In particular, the social audit in financial budgeting only examined how the priority for children's rights and child-focus targets have been implemented in the budget estimation and allocation.

3.1 Findings of the audit of five-year plan

3.1.1 Analysis and planning procedure

The Decision 266/QĐ-UBND in May 2013 of Dien Bien clearly regulates the process and responsibilities of each agency in preparing, approving and M&E of the annual SEDPs in Dien Bien Province. The Decision informs the planning procedure and set the initial basis for the use of "social audit tools as an important source of information for the evaluation of the plan" ³.

However the finding from this audit shows that though steps of the preparation for plan are taking in line with new regulation, the actual works are still needs lots of improvement away from traditional style, particularly the children-right based planning. The current process includes: a) assessment of the plan performance in the previous period; b) consultation with the offices and divisions of the sector as well as other related agencies and localities; c) identification of priorities and requirements of national targeted programs. All departments joined this audit apply the same steps, yet the development of objectives, targets and activities with consideration of child-rights has still not in the requirement and basis for plan development (as stated in page 1 of all 5 year 2011-2015 plans).

Moreover, the assessment of previous period's performance has little mentioning of National Action Plan for Child Rights. DOET could not make all check because their five-year plan of the sector has not integrated the tasks assigned by the National Action Plan. DPI did not do so as they main charge is to consolidate the plans prepared by technical departments. DOLISA and DOH reported having done so at a certain level as depicted in Table 4 (Annex 1).

Available statistics and data can only enable some disparities analysis across ages, residential registration, disabilities but not yet for gender and ethnic groups. Though evaluation of previous period have discussed here and there about children's problems, and the setting of targets or interventions for the following periods have also taken some of those into account, the situation of children across genders and ethnic groups have not been reflected in the problems, targets or solutions of the plan (page 7-9 Dien Bien 2011-2015 SEDP). Among the technical sector plans, only DOET's plan indicates figures on school girls and ethnic students. Those of DOLISA and DOH could not give any of those data.

The planning procedure has rarely consulted children and their guardians. Except DOLISA, which has had several pilot consultations with children and guardians, no departments have had any types of consultations. The scoring of preparation process

³ Paragraph 4, Article 2, Decision The Decision 266/QD-UBND on 10 May 2013 of Dien Bien Provincial People's Committee on the process and responsibilities of each agencies in preparing, approving and M&E of the annual SEDPs in Dien Bien Province.

for planning, DOLISA marked themselves at 4 out of 4 score but the audit team only assess this at level 3 out of 4. The results of scoring is computed in Table 4, Annex 1

DOLISA has conducted a number of children and guardian's consultation for plan formulation. In addition to those are several dialogues between the Department and different children's groups to present the results of children's rights execution in the previous period. Through these consultations and gathering opinions of caregivers in the communities, DOLISA has collected various suggestions for child situation improvement. Accordingly, information campaign and other activities have been better designed.

Nevertheless such consultation has been limited to a number of locations and only covers selective issues under the support from UNICEF. Hence they are still on pilot scale, not yet institutionalized to become a built-in routine.

In the last stage of refining and detailing the plan for approval of People's Council, the consultation of children and their guardian is completely absent. All departments under this audit only consult their subordinates and localities for the plans, which detailed from approved key targets.

Financial analysis during preparation step has just covered committed sources, leaving out other sources such as socialization. Although all departments confirmed there are available many socialization sources of funding for childcare program, they are only mentioned as an intervention for the plans. The committed sources mainly include central budget, national targeted programs, the retained part of local budget revenue and several committed grants (Table 4). The screening of all plans- either consolidated or inputs from subordinates- did not note any sign of analysis or orientation of concessional loans, joint-venture, ... Exceptional case like DOET gave an hint on socialization funding but stressed that it is only a very small portion in total expenditure of the province sector (page 7, Dien Bien DOET 5 year plan 2011-2015). This review remarked another gap- there is not any mechanism for children and guardian consultation for improvement of transparency and effectiveness in public spending.

2011-2015 of relevant departments in Dien Bien.

3.1.2 The content of five-year plan 2011-2015

Table 1. Assessment of mainstreaming of child rights in five-year plans

This table compute the scoring of 19 questions for nine children's rights. Accordingly, the scores in the table should range from 19 to 76 with 19 indicating a complete absence of children's rights, and 76 being the maximum possible score.

	Children's rights		Depart	tments	
CRC	Viet Nam Law	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI
Right to life, survival	right to birth registration and to acquire a nationality	19	19	19	19
	right to be cared for and brought up	54	39	19	22
	right to live with their parents	20	19	19	19
Right of	right to have their life, body, dignity and honor protected	35	19	19	19
protection	right to health care	20	19	19	39
Rights to	right to study	20	19	41	39
development	right to develop their aptitudes	20	19	19	19
	right to join in healthy recreational, entertainment, cultural, art, physical, sport and tourist activities	20	19	19	22
Right of	right to possess assets	20	19	19	19
participation	right to access information suitable to their development, express their opinions and aspirations on the matters of their concern	33	19	19	19

Assessment of Dien Bien 5 year 2011-2015 SEDP

The assessment reveals that the international commitment on children's rights has had limited reflection in the socio and cultural development component of the SEDP 2011-2015. Out of 180 targets set forth in the plan, there are 20 targets relate to 4 children's rights cluster, yet they fall mostly in the rights to healthcare and studying (Table 1 and Table 6 in the Annex). Despite the fact that situation analysis of previous period performance incorporates some consideration of national targeted programs on children as well as the national action plan on children, the targets of socio-cultural component are the only mentioning of children's right. There is not any separate component or sections to comprehend the realization of children's rights.

Digging more into the document, it is well noted that there is not any impact assessment, either positive or negative, on children in the economic development component/section. The Plan only lists the targets for each sector (industry, agriculture, fishery, forestry, and service). Yet the proposed program on agriculture and fishery development, husbandry expansion towards modernization left out the discussion of existing farming structure and practices of the households. Accordingly, there has not been any concrete solution to identify and minimize the impacts on children (a vulnerable group) of those economic shifting and of service development. The Plan set out certain directions for each sector but neglected solutions needed for latent negative impacts. Even in the plans of social sectors, the problems might be mentioned or even analysed but when it comes to objectives or solutions, very limited and concrete information is presented. Assessment of social sectors' plans could only achieve quite low marks for each children's right.

With regards to budgeting, the Plan does not show any estimation priority for children's focus. Budget estimation for socio- cultural sectors account for 22% of total budget (Table 10, page 75, Dien Bien 5 year SEDP) without any further indication of the share for childcare's objectives.

In addition to that, the scrutiny of investment portfolio for child-focus sectors fails to give clear indicators of number of children as beneficiaries. The list only indicates locations, investment budget and tentative time frames (page 40 and table 10 page 75 Dien Bien SEDP 5 year 2011-2015). There is no data regarding number of children or their guardian under the impact of those investments though some of them are bringing direct effects. Examples include Water and Sanitation constructions or Disaster Mitigation works.

The review of Dien Bien 2011-2015 SEDP shows that the components of Water and Rural Sanitation **failed to include any indicators for children as a beneficiary group.** The existing indicators only consist of: number of households with safe water; percentage of population with safe water; number of households and number of schools with standardized toilets; number of community water tanks. (page 23&41, Table 1 page 54 Dien Bien 2011-2015 SEDP, page 10- Dien Bien 2011-2015 Agriculture and Rural Development Plan). No reference to direct or indirect impact of children has been found.

In the environmental section of Dien Bien 2011-2015 SEDP, the key content is on forestation, forest protection and sanitation (page 23). The plan of DARD shows the same targets. The monitoring of natural disasters or climate change and their impact on the community, or on the children, is absent in both documents. Consequently, there are no specific measures for disaster mitigation at the community level and for children in any plans.

Assessment of the 5 year plan of social sectors

The examination of the plans from departments with child-focused mandates induces large room for improvement in mainstreaming more child' rights focus, thus better fulfilment of their designated functions.

Table 1 point out DOLISA with the score of 54/76 on rights to care (under CRC's survival), 35/76 on rights to develop and 33/76 on rights to express opinions. DOH achieves 39/76 on the rights for survival thanks to the concentration of activities in children and mother care. In fact, the mandate of DOH requires certain role for rights to protect (in further healthcare) but the assessment could only mark 19/76. DOET is supposed to fulfil the rights to study, to develop but the review of five - year plan 2011-2015 could only give the mark of 41 out of 76.

The solutions and interventions designed in the plans are not yet funded so a number of targets could not be realized. Examples are DOET with information campaign only and a target to reduce the malnourished children in kindergarten to 5% ⁴. DOH's target

⁴ No data for the exisiting situation is mentioned in the five-year plan of DOET, but in the plan for 2014 levels of underweight of 5.9% and of stunting of 6.6%

of lowering the ratio of injuries of kids under 5 had no budget associated for concrete action and in reality, the Department could only mention this in general propaganda

The interventions and actions of the plans could address little of disparities across genders, ages and ethnic groups. Specifically, overall objective 1 of DOET's plan set the aim to ensure the right to develop of kindergarten and primary children as a whole. Yet the solutions have not mentioned (re)illiteracy eradication for teenagers, minority ethnic children. For DOLISA, only few targets and solutions are sub-divided by age.

Table 1 highlights the fact that many rights are still actually very vague in all plansright to live with parents, right to health care (perhaps in this review, most department grouped and marked under the right to be cared for), right to develop aptitude and right to join in recreation, entertainment, cultural, art, physical, sport and tourist activities.

So, in order to make the plans with more reflection of children's rights, what need to be improved in every step of development, implementation and evaluation of the plans?

3.1.3 Plan implementation

This review records various examples of unfulfilled child-focus targets due to the lack of budget. It is common that upon the allocated budget from central for Dien Bien, the PPC will adjust and reallocate the budget for targets, which are not covered in national targeted programs. During this reconsideration session, the priority has been given to DOH to ensure survival and development rights (as per the discussion with officers from DOF). However it is quite common that the allocated budget is lower than needed and therefore, many activities cannot take place as planned. Some examples for reference are programs like Child Injury Prevention, respiratory infections campaign (of DOH), recreation activities and community activities for children (of DOLISA).

The coordination among departments and sector has been found mainly limited to child-focus propaganda as it can be seen in the thorough examination of all plans. Then except the activities under national targeted program which specifically require the cooperation of related departments, none of other solutions are found with such working together scheme.

3.1.4 Plan monitoring and evaluation

Dien Bien have released Document No. 19 in 2013 on the steps and processes for planning, including the guidance for preparing M&E framework, it was not there in the drafting of five-years 2011-2015 SEDP and accordingly in the annual plan so none of the departments could have done so. As it will be discussed more below, currently only DOH is piloting M&E frames, all others still only using traditional narrative reports for every quarter, semi-annual and annual report.

The templates for data collection are diversed across departments, impeding the data consolidation for consistency, accuracy and timely manner. The key reason is the usage of templates guided by their line ministries. Another issue is the lack of comprehensive surveys to enable sound databases on child situation and improvement in general, then children's rights in particular. All departments only regulate periodically checks, reviews and assessment for mid-term and end-term. Focus limits to progress, but not yet any specific mechanism for evaluation and then, use of evaluation results for plan improvement in the following circles.

As already flagged above, current data and statistics from monitoring are not

disaggregated by gender and ethnic groups. But still offices of many sectors, such as DOLISA, do not have any clear template and guidelines for how to collect those disaggregated figures from the local level. Consolidated data with gender breakdown, if any, at province level, are mostly estimates without any data foundation. One 'excuse" for not having those disaggregates is to prevent gender disparities so that enumerators are not asked to collect data, which are too specific and gender sensitive.

In terms of approach and methodology, it is apparent that none of the plans indicate any tools for evaluation. Naturally they have no reference yet to social audit and child-right based social audit, as this is still a very new concept. In addition to that, the mobilisation of children and their guardian in the M&E for on-going construction work in the localities has not been explored. This audit noticed that in these areas, with limited exposure, it would be quite challenging for consultation of a new item. Yet for on-going investment, their interest and perception are clearly more concrete and practical.

3.2 Review and Assessment of Annual Plan at provincial level

3.2.1 Assessment of annual plan (2014 plan)

Similarly to the audit of 5 year SEDP, the review of provincial plans depicts that national commitment on children's rights are only referred to in the provincial SEDP with 45 targets covering the 4 right clusters. All of these child-related targets are grouped with other targets in socio-cultural sections (page 30-31, Dien Bien 2014 SEDP).

In general, the SEDP sets out clear directions for ensuring the children's rights in all relevant sectors, covering the key rights of the children to be cared for and nurtured (to survive), to study (to develop), to be protected and have healthcare (to be protected), to enjoy and express opinions (right to participate). Nonetheless, same problems appear in the review of all the plans, as several children's rights are not yet present in the plans, not even mentioning the disaggregation for different minority groups or their households' economic conditions. The right to birth certification falls under the responsibilities of Department of Justice and DOLISA but could not be found in the sections of these agencies - page 33-34 Dien Bien 2014 SEDP. Similarly, the directions for Culture, Sport and Tourism or Post and Telecommunication sectors left out targets regarding right to develop skills, right to recreation and entertainment - page 33-34 Dien Bien 2014 SEDP.

The budget planning failed to give priority to financing child-focus targets (page 35-38 Dien Bien 2014 SEDP). As a consequence, a number of child-focus investments, e.g. the plan for renovation or new construction of several kindergartens and secondary schools in the communes, had been approved but must now be delayed due to late transfer of province budget (Table 4 Dien Bien 2014 SEDP). For this, no impact assessment has been made.

One clear reason for such assessment is the unavailability of data regarding children as a key beneficiary of the child-focus investment portfolio, and obviously for other child-related investments. Investment portfolio in the plans only lists locations, investment budget and tentative time frames. The figures on children as direct and indirect beneficiaries are completely absent from any plan (page 31, Dien Bien SEDP 2014, page 14, DOET 2014 plan).

The scoring and self-assessment of all planning officers in DPI and other departments conform that the current plan needs to have many more analysis and arguments on impacts to children (both negative and positive) - most only marked this criteria at level 1 out of 4! This is the particular highlight of the shortcomings in the review of economic development section of the SEDP. The plans only state the targets for each

sector of industry, agriculture, forestry or service but leave out the influence of those targets and their execution on household farming and income structure.

Since planning officers of DARDs did not join the audit, the team reviewed the 2014 as well as the five-year plans. Here the audit noticed the same problem of little analysis on children's benefits. In both plans for Water and Sanitation component, the targets are only for number of latrine or water tanks for households or schools but do not specify number of children with access to better water, hygiene and sanitation. The program on New Rural does not cover any children impact assessment, and there are not any figures of number of children expected to benefit from the whole program, neither in DARD's plan nor in provincial SEDP.

The review of annual plans of social departments shows that still many child rights are underpresented. DOLISA record 54/76 on the rights for being cared and nurtured, 35/76 for the rights to protection and 33/76 on the rights for participation. DOH scores just 32/76 on the right for being cared and just 19/76 on the right to have healthcare as for protection. DOET seems to have good image with ensuring the right to study but the review could only score 42/76 (See Table 2 below and Table 6 in the Annex).

Table 2. Levels of application of Child rights in the 2014-plans of relevant departments in Dien Bien.

	Children's rights		Depa	rtments	
CRC	Viet Nam Law	DOLISA	DOH	DOET	DPI
Right to life, survival	right to birth registration and to acquire a nationality	20	19	19	19
	right to be cared for and brought up	54	32	19	26
	right to live with their parents	20	19	19	19
Right of protection	right to have their life, body, dignity and honor protected	35	19	19	19
	right to health care	20	19	19	26
Rights to development	right to study	20	19	42	30
development	right to develop their aptitudes	20	19	19	19
Right of participation	right to join in healthy recreational, entertainment, cultural, art, physical, sport and tourist activities	20	19	19	19
	right to possess assets	20	19	19	19
	right to access information suitable to their development, express their opinions and aspirations on the matters of their concern	33	19	19	19

The solutions and interventions of social departments show little synergy with each other and with other related agencies. Though the self-scoring give marks 2 and 3 in most departments, it is evident that all evaluation of previous period performance always emphasize the lack of coordination among agencies and the plans for the following period only mentions vaguely about cooperation scheme. Evidence are the fact that many cross-sector child-focus targets such as reduction of malnutrition in kindergarten are stated, but the plan does not mention how each related department-DOH, DOET, DOLISA should act in order to realize that target.

3.2.2 Annual planning process

Table 4 in the Annex computes the review and assessment of four annual plans of the departments in this study with average scores of fair level. However the in-depth interviews and analysis reveals many gaps.

Firstly, during the preparation stage, similar to the five-year plan, there has neither been any consultation with local government, nor with children or their guardians. Only the line departments have been consulted. DOLISA is the exception with pilot consultation has been organized sometimes and occasionally, thanks to external support from UNICEF.

Secondly, the annual plans repeat the same problems with the presence of only data regarding age, residential registration, disabilities but lack of disaggregated data for gender or ethnicity. Over the years, the plans show a trend with more and more reference to children's problems in the previous plan period or in the setting of targets or interventions for the following periods. However the interviews with planning officers also emphasize that any requirements for detailed analysis of gender, ethnicity, and children affected by social evils or children with HIV/AIDS will remain a challenge in the coming years due to the lack of accurate data. The assurance of children's rights will require the supplement of many data collection and analysis tools.

Financial analysis for planning follow the same pattern with five-year planning, only focus on committed sources from central budget, national targeted programs and external committed grants. The targets for annual plans are based on targets of five-year plan. On one hand, this implies the need of mainstreaming of children's rights from five-year plan. On the other hand, it highlights the need to design and guide the integration of newly-emerging child-right-related problems in the annual plans.

3.2.3 Plan implementation

The review of 2014 plans, which give information on implementation of some 2013 plans, recorded several child-focus targets could not be fulfilled as per planned. The reasons include too high targets compared to implementation capacity, underfinancing than expected, or policy change. Some specific examples are ration of children 1-5 year old with 2/3 Japanese encephalitis vaccination (page 5, DOH 2014 plan), ratio of concrete classroom and ratio of school enrolment are both lower than targets (page 21, SEDP 2014). The last failure of enrolment is because of lack of attention of local government to coordinate with education sector to encourage families sending their kids to schools (page 12, DOET's Review of 2013 plan implementation and 2014 plan), page 11, DOLISA's Review of 2013 plan implementation and 2014 plan).

Other cited reason concerns with limited or insufficient budget allocation. Most programs which are not under national targeted programs only received budget much lower than requirement (Table 3, DOH 2014 plan).

Last but not least is the adequate management capacity of the local government in the preparation and implementation of all plans. It is repeatedly mentioned in all

3.2.4 Annual Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

The results from review of five-year plan on M&E mechanism remain valid for the examination of 2014 annual plans. Table 9 presents the self-scorings and assessment of the audit team which all show that there is not any M&E frames in the plans of the departments except DOH with a piloting one. The prevailing schemes are traditional monthly, quarterly and annual reports. DOET has introduced the monitoring templates for quick review and statistics of several indicators such as enrolment rate of dropped-out pupils, ratios of out-of-school kids, ratio of schoolgirls, ratio of pupils with difficulties.

The participatory M&E is for sure an absent in all plans. The performance assessment of previous period in province SEDP stressed the lack of community and mass organisation's participation in plan M&E, particularly in construction supervision (page 22, Dien Bien 2014 SEDP), yet the plan for 2014 could not bring up an correction measures for such situation.

As discussed in the review of five-year plans, all departments are working on different templates for data collection as instructed by their line ministries. Since this limits the data consolidation and processing, this is a truly threshold for facilitating the analysis, plan development and then implementation with child-rights focused. All departments are in short of comprehensive surveys to enable sound databases on child situation and improvement in general, then children's rights in particular. Then all departments only regulate periodically checks, reviews and assessment of progress, but not yet any mechanism for use of monitoring results for plan improvement. Even though, the compliance of those diversed templates is still reported to be unevenpage 11 DOLISA 2014 plan, page 22 of Dien Bien 2014 SEDP. Table 10 compute the scoring and assessment of all departments in the Annex.

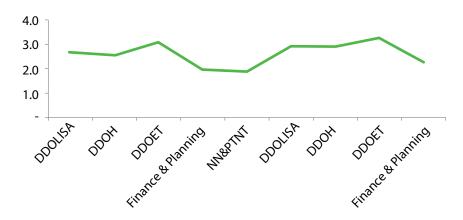
3.3 Findings from review and assessment of district annual plans

Decision 266//QĐ-UBND in 2013 regulates the steps, responsibilities of plan development, approval and monitor of the plan implementation in all districts in Dien Bien province. This audit confirms that it has been well disseminated to all districts and even the new ones, e.g. Muong Ang district, who have not been supported with the planning reform have smoothly implemented the regulation. This is a very promising signal since Decision 266 suggests many improvements in terms of emphasis on community consultation or application of social audit tools.

This CRSA in Dien Bien Dong and Muong Ang remarks a number of pathways for furthering Decision 266 to make more improvement in the planning process, particularly for more focus on children's development.

3.3.1 Review of the plans

Figure 1: Child-rights based scoring of the plans of 2014 of nine divisions in two districts⁵



Scores: Minimum = 1, maximum = 4

The review of plans of the general division, i.e. finance and planning, and indirect-child-related sub-departments, i.e. agriculture and rural development revealed little evidence of child-focus analysis and action, as a results of the lack of child disparities data. There are very few targets with relation to children's rights - the assessment of previous year performance and situation analysis sections failed to examine children's rights; the solutions sections introduced few interventions for that subject. Therefore the scores of both divisions of finance and planning are the lowest (Figure 1). This figure incorporates the score of only one participant from district agriculture and rural development sub-department so the team does not include the assessment in the in-depth analysis.

Figure 1 also shows the plans of child-related sub-departments with much higher scores. The review of their plans showed assessment of previous year performance and situation analysis sections with more exploration of disparities data and problems regarding children's rights; the solutions sections having more concrete interventions for addressing such issues. DDOET in both districts are performing best of all, partly due to the fact that their mandate is to work for children. This can go further as Dien Bien DOET has introduced the right-based approach for planning in 2013 with the tentative application time from planning for school year 2014-2015.

Besides those promising signals, the screening of district sub-departments' plans has identified a number of shortcomings for improvement:

- The concept of child-right-based analysis for problems examination and for the planning process is still new for many officers;
- Due to the lack of definition and guidance, there are still a number of rights, which have not been included into children problems inventory and analysis. Those are the rights to have a birth certificate, to live with their parents, to develop skills, to have assets, etc. Several plans have tried to address the disparities across economic condition groups, health conditions, but there are still not yet any measures for regional inequalities (rural/urban, ...)
- In parallel with the plans, there exist other documents on investment or other support for children as illustrated by below examples from Điện Biên Đông:

⁵ In one district, Agriculture and Rural Development sub-department joined the assessment with scoring, so the team try to make full use of of all obtained data

In the first 6 months of 2014, to implement the support for the districts, Dien Bien Dong District People's Committee has issued 10 documents to implement different child-related plans:

- Plan to maintain the models of assisting children with special difficulties 2014 2015 (released 1/2014)
- Plan to implement Child Protection Program in 2014 (05/3/2014).
- Plan to organize Children Forum for 2014 (05/3/2014).
- Inter-section Guidance on Child Protection and Care for Điện Biên Đông for the period 2014 - 2015 (12/3/2014).
- Guidelines on Child Protection and Care for the year 2014 (25/2/2014)
- Plan to prevent children injuries for the period 2014 2015 (29/4/2014).
- Documents to send to organizations and individuals on contribution for Children Fund (8/5/2014).
- Document to guide the activities in the Month for Children (12/5/2014).
- Plan to implement Decision 55a/2013/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on support to heart operation for the period 2014 2015 with vision to 2020 (29/4/2014)

In 2013 the district People's Committee has introduced five documents on child-related matters. Noticeable is the Decision 140/KH-UBND dated 24/7/2013 on the Plan to implement the Action Plan for Child for the year 2013 to 2020 which have clearly mainstreamed the children's rights though a clear set of targets: 4 targets on child protection, 3 targets on healthcare and nutrition, 6 targets on education and 2 targets for water and sanitation. There are no explicit targets on recreation, entertainment or participation but the plan emphasized the organization of such activities to obtain children's opinion for the formulation of child-related plans and regulations.

On one hand, these documents prove the tremendous efforts of the district in extending more attention and care for children. On the other hand, this signifies the fact that neither of the district SEDP nor sectoral plans includes these initiatives.

The following sections emphasized the key results of findings from the review of planning process in the two districts with implications for future improvements towards more child's rights integration.

3.3.2 Situation analysis and Planning

Following the pattern of the province, the planning process in the districts has few evidences of consultation with children or guardians. However some divisions such as DDOLISA in Dien Bien Dong or DDOH of Muong Ang have consulted the children and their parents in several activities for kids with HIV/AIDS, and vaccination programs. They score themselves as at 4 but since these activities are still ad-hoc and non-universal, the reassessment of the audit team only mark 3 (Table 4).

Under the support from Child Friendship Program, Dien Bien Dong district has enhanced the participation of children and their guardians in the planning process, though still not yet on large scale. Since 2011, the district has organized annual Children Forum to collect opinion for feeding into the plans of DDOLISA or DDOH and DDOET. Thanks to suggestions from the Forum, there has been a greater diversity of activities for children's benefit. Examples are the Contest on Environment Knowledge, Training on Communication skills for kids, consultation of caregivers on nutrition and care for newborn or kindergarten kids, etc.

One remark is the lack of full understanding of the concept in agencies with limited child-focus unconventional activities. One example is the DDOET of Muong Ang, which normally consult the Headmasters of all schools in the districts as the representatives of caregivers to implement the program of Decree 49/2010/NĐ-CP and Decree 74/2013/NĐ-CP on school fee exemption and reduction for pupils from poor and near-poor households. Therefore, in the communication to prepare for this audit, upon receiving the notes from DPI to arrange for a group discussion with the guardians, DDOET of Muong Ang invited the headmasters of primary schools in the perception that they are quardians of the children.

The currently available data fail to allow for planning with full consideration of children disparities since they only give some break-down in ages, residential, disability but no disaggregation in gender and ethnic groups. Accordingly, the plans in the districts cannot make analysis and proper interventions for the issues of gender imbalance or disparities. The same reason for the inadequate data is found; the inadequacy of the statistics collection from commune level and late delivery or low reliability of the data. During the discussions, participants named some problems as the lack of children care and protection at commune levels, and sometimes this was inconsistent with data of District Healthcare Center. Another example is late submission of reports to DDOH.

The participation and consultation of line agencies in the plan process needs to be strengthened. During the plan preparation, all divisions are making efforts to obtain written comments from their vertical supervisors (province departments) and horizontal colleagues- other "division". However this practice has proved to be quite superficial and ineffective. A change towards face-to-face consultation is attempted but still cannot be realized due to lack of budget. Only in certain cases with external support (from development projects, etc), the face-to-face consultation can take place. Another practice that needs change is the sending of plans from technical division to Division of Finance and Planning. This needs improvement from only tables with figures and budget to include analysis and justifications, which are now mostly sent only to line supervisors, i.e provincial departments of line ministries.

The financial analysis scores are mostly of high and very high level- 3-4 as per the self-assessment of the district officers (Table 4). The in-depth working sessions with the division of finance and planning noticed that in both districts included in the audit, there is poor budget revenue so they have to rely largely on central budget allocations. The budget analysis actually is only the calculation and reconciliation of needed budget for technical divisions for achieving their set targets in the planning year. In one self-assessment form of a DDOH, they shared that their plan does not cover any financial resource analysis.

3.3.3 Plans Implementation and Monitoring

Following the outlines of the provincial departments, all plans regulate progress reporting. Yet the data collection is confounded by a large mix of indicators and use of various templates by the line departments and ministries.

M&E mechanisms are scarcely mentioned in the plans of the district sub-departments. Table 9 summarizes that most sub-departments have not developed M&E frames for their units. Only Finance and Planning division and DDOET of Dien Bien Dong reported the on-going development of M&E frame to enable comprehensive data collection and reporting. However all district sub-departments stressed their own existing M&E systems, mostly for national targeted programs and for their upwards reporting. The additional data requirement of division of finance and planning to technical sub-departments with different format has been cited as one cause for data inconsistency.

Neither districts nor provincial departments conduct surveys to obtain data of child situation and improvement, both for reasons of budget shortage. So far information is collected in combination with existing regular surveys; namely education universalisation or ad-hoc inter-department inspection missions. This review noticed the case of Muong Ang DDOH, which has some efforts in structured data collection from commune levels.

The existing monitoring platforms are found to be quite neglective of results from consultations with children. They only assign selected division to track the collection of such opinions in a quite general manner. DDOETs in both districts stand out due to the incorporation of some pupils' consultations in their monitoring frames. In the same manner, education and training sector is the one with disaggregated data on gender disparities for enrolment statistics. Yet for some others indicators of DDOET only have aggregated data on age, residential location, and ethnicity or health situation.

3.3.4 Children's participation in the planning process and other programs.

The child rights- based assessment of planning process in both district and province level indicate limited child consultation.

DOLISA, Dien Bien Dong district and Muong Ang DDOH have conducted children forums and consultations to feed into their plans. Yet these efforts are apparently still ad-hoc and conducted through support and requirements of some support programs. Further institutionalization to turn them to routine procedures is still a gap to be filled.

In this audit, the research team conducted two group discussions with the children and two group discussions with guardians and caregivers to shed light into existing schemes for child consultation and children's rights fulfilment in the two districts.

In Muong Ang, in some sectors like education and training, the guardian role is mixed with caregiver so in fact, the consultation has mainly been in the form of discussions with the managers of the sector (as noted above in the consultation with Headmasters for implementation of Decree 49). The official and direct consultation section is a very new concept with only few special cases for special requirements such as "Care for kids with HIV" program for the DDOH. Nonetheless, there are actually many on-going activities in the schools for the children to participate in and to express their views; namely writing letters to the future, to the world friends, ... With more proper tools for design and analysis, these are the very good means - low cost and high effectiveness - to consult the children about their problems and their expectations in order to lay the ground for sectoral plans as well as in SEDP preparation.

In Dien Bien Dong, the routine for consultation with children and their guardians show some signs to become a capacity. Since 2011, with support from UNICEF, the district has organized annual Children Forum to collect opinion for feeding into the plans of DDOLISA, DDOH and DDOET. Thanks to suggestions from the Forum, there has been a greater diversity of activities for children's benefit. Those are the Contest on Environment Knowledge, Training on Communication skills for children, consultation

of caregivers on nutrition and care for newborn or kindergarten kids, etc. During the discussions with a group of children and their guardians to investigate their level of participation in the Regional Development Program of the NGO World Vision, implemented by Dien Bien Dong DPC and DDOET, it was confirmed that they do have opportunities to voice their opinions during the planning process. Still the level of such consultation is yet limited.

3.4 Cross comparison among sectors

As initially designed with the methodology of combining scoring and in-depth assessment, the marks given should facilitate the comparison among departments and divisions, and among sectors on their level of mainstreaming the children's rights in the planning process and the integration of those in the plans themselves. They can also enable the comparison on those results with the child-related mandates of each sector.

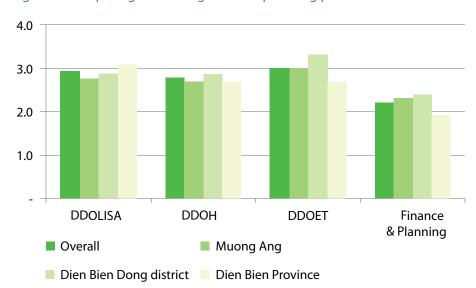


Figure 2. Comparing of child-right-based planning process of four sectors

Figure 2 illustrates that the planning process of education and training is slightly better overall in ensuring child-rights, followed by labour and social affairs, healthcare and planning sector is the last in the group. This is very much in accordance with their mandates. DDOET of Dien Bien Dong seems to apply better processes and tools, followed by DOLISA at the province. However this ranking is only indicative as it will be discussed more below that some of those marks tend to be too high - there are still considerable shortcomings..

Figure 3. Comparison of the levels of key children's rights integration in four sectors

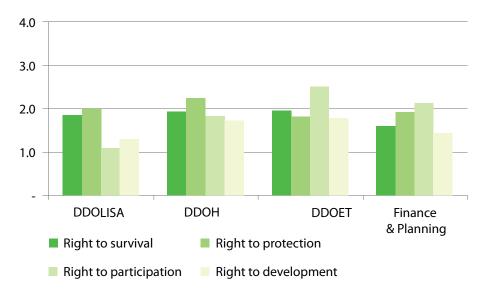


Figure 3 provide another comparison on the reflection of children's rights in the plans of four surveyed sectors at two administrative levels. The right for development (under DOET) and right for protection (appear in plans of departments of healthcare and social affairs) seem to score best, even the scores are still only average. It is noted that there is not very big differences in the cores neither between the departments, nor the cores for the different child rights. The direct review of each department plan shows the use of quite a large number of child-related indicators. There are fewer in the SEDPs of both district and province level. This is understandable as SEDP is the general plan and cannot cover every detail.

3.5 Institutional environment and local capacity for child-right based planning

Table 3. Assessment of human capacity in child-right-based planning

	DDOLISA	DDOH	DDOET	Planning	Muong Ang district	Dien Bien Dong district	Province
Difficulties in understanding of the child-sensitive objectives	2,7	2,7	3,0	2,7	2,5	3,0	2,8
Difficulties in transforming the rights of children into proper action	2,3	2,7	3,0	2,7	2,3	3,0	2,8
Planning officers have been trained on child-rights issues	2,0	2,3	3,3	2,7	2,5	2,5	2,8

The consolidated results in Table 3 reconfirm the findings from in-depth interviews and group discussions with planning officers at both levels. They all are concerned about the challenge of integrating child rights into the plans due to the lack of knowledge about the child-rights-related targets.

Those worries are less strong in DDOLISA, DOET and among officers from Dien Bien Dong district who have received trainings in the subject. Most of the other departments, particularly district officers in Muong Ang have never been trained on child rights. Therefore, all see that putting issues of children's rights into concrete action will be a challenge. At province level, officers in the departments, except DOET, self-assessed their capacity regarding this expertise as only 2 out of 4. At district level, most Dien Bien Dong officers regard themselves at the level 3 while Muong Ang regard themselves at level 2 only because most of them are young without proper training in planning. DDOH staff has even never been trained in planning.

One additional remark by the informants is that any intervention for improvement of this should take into consideration that the children's right are now, quite rapidly, becoming included in many different regulations and laws. The updating of skills and studying for learning of any new regulations related to children rights should be another subject for training, to help officers acquire full skills for understanding, interpreting and integrating those into annual and five-year plan.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

This audit reached the same findings as the Report of "Reviewing the integration of child-related issues in 2013 SEDP", which showed that all plans already demonstrate attention towards the priorities for the children - all reflect fairly high the assurance for the rights to development and the rights to protection. Annual plans have more targets as they detail the core targets in five-year plans 2011-2015. However, the right to participation is still not included very much. And if the analysis goes deeper in the rights defined by Viet Nam Law for Child Protection, there are certain rights, which have been not yet been included into any reviewed plans. They include the right to birth certification, the right to live with parents, the right to develop aptitudes, right to recreation and entertainment.

The planning process is reviewed and assessed at above average level (2,7/4) which brings up the following key findings:

- Not only the right to participation of the children is limited, during the plan
 preparation stage, the consultation process with related departments and
 divisions is still quite superficial and there is rarely consultation with children and
 guardians, except when there is external funding for this. On the other hand, in
 the schools there are quite a number of activities with the participation of pupils
 but the tools for consolidation and analysis of those activities is not available to
 provide information for plan formulation;
- There is still not yet sufficient disaggregated data for children disparities, particularly in terms of gender and ethnic groups, to allow for full situation analysis of all children's rights. The available data are only for age, residential location and health situation. Still several rights are without clear indicators for measurement. Another constraint is the lack of comprehensive surveys to provide sound data on children's situation and improvement in general and children's rights in particular;

- In many plans there remains a lack of data on number of children directly or
 indirectly affected by the interventions: economic targets or development
 programs can not show the number of children benefitting or reversely affected;
 environment sections fail to mention solutions for mitigate the climate change
 impact on children's conditions. The same shortage is noted, even in national
 targeted programs.
- Many child-focus programs are designed with limited consideration of available budget so the implementation has not been smooth and effective as per the design. On the side of financial managers, the budget allocation has not given high priority to child-focused programs. Some approved ones even fell back to group of 'pending' due to shortage of funds;
- Although several divisions and departments have initiated the development of M&E frames, the mechanism needs enhancement in the coming time, particularly for more involvement of children, which is currently quite absent. This is quite a noticeable waste of resources as this review noted that children and their guardians such as their parents, their care-givers can share lots of valuable information and recommendations for on-going program from their own view and context. The consultation for new ideas can be quite limited and incredible due to their limited exposure for situation analysis;
- The knowledge and skills to use children's rights for analysis of children problems and situations are still very new to many officers, posing a big challenge for overcoming.

4.2 Recommendations

In the context that Dien Bien province has issued Decision 266 to guide the process and responsibilities of plan formulation and approval as well as M&E plan which emphasize the use of new methods and tools such as more community consultation, utilization of social audit tools, this audit arrives at the following recommendations:

- To coordinate with other support programs in capacity building for planning officers in the province and districts so as to equip them with skills to transform children rights into specific targets, objectives, activities. More attention should go to the sectors, which are pioneering the application of child rights-based approaches, e.g. education and training, to further improve the results and develop them to become really good models. Then they will become showcases for raising awareness and further capacity of other planning officers at other sector and levels, on the issue of children's rights and mainstreaming those into the plans' activities, or about management and coordination of priority programs for the children.
- To encourage uniform and effective implementation of community consultations, particularly with children and their guardians, to make more use of existing consultation platforms such as informal education sessions in the schools or in the communities;
- To reinforce the preparation of planning logframes in the districts and agencies, which have started this process, to assist them to expand those into M&E frames and into realistic tools for M&E with participation of communities, particularly of the children. More priorities should go to assessment for the programs, which seem not directly targeting children but have indirect impact on children. These include examples of resettlement, water and sanitation and climate change adaptation, particularly for the coming ones.

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- DPI of Dien Bien should work closely with provincial GSO to synergize with existing surveys to screen and refine the indicators, templates, data collection tools and methodologies to make them more consistent with and suitable for child context. In each period, the province should define a clear set of indicators for the focus children's rights to include those in SEDP. Results from Dien Bien SITAN 2010-2011, conducted by UNICEF, MOLISA and Dien Bien PPC can be a good start for this process.
- At the same time, there should be urgently some support to departments to further disaggregate of data on children disparities age, gender, residential locations, health situation, children with special difficulties or influence of social evils. Data collection mechanism is another areas requires support to ensure high quality data, that better allow analysis of improvement in children's situation.
- The integration of child-related targets or objectives in the sectoral plans or SEDP should be done in a comprehensive manner to limit the practice of separate and ad-hoc regulations for child-care, issued only when external budget is made available.

The coming year of 2015 is a critical point of time with the preparation of the five-year plan 2016-2020. Dien Bien should make full use of available resources and support to realize the above recommendations so as to build up the complete capacity from data collection to situation analysis, in order to develop suitable solutions, targets and indicators for the plan.

As a technical host for children's concern, UNICEF should mobilize more resources to assist Dien Bien in that process. Areas needing urgent assistance are:

- To refine and introduce the indicators reflecting children's rights with guidelines for each line agency to quickly comprehend of the relevant indicators with their mandate;
- To revise the Manual of Child Right-based Social Audit in particular, and other Social Audit tools. The key parts requiring improvement is the set of templates for assessment and provision of simple report formats (including a check-list for self-audit) so even local agencies can do the audit and prepare the reports with clear identification of areas for improvement in their planning process or their plans towards more and more integration of children's rights. Editing of terminologies is also required to make it more consistent with planning terminology. The tools of this audit can be of some help for such enhancement.

5. Limitations and Lessons learnt

√ This is the first time a children's rights-based review of planning process and plans has been implemented so the related documents and tool set are mainly new. The research team proposed a participatory methodology through a process whereby the local officials do the self-scoring, which then is reviewed together with the audit team. However, this way of scoring may be quite subjective as there is still no clear definition of the scores. Therefore same score may indicate different level of achievement in different sectors and levels due to the different ways of understanding and perceiving the scores and the good performance. Even the criteria in each score still represent certain limitations in ensuring the close scoring. For example, to assess the task of monitoring the implementation compared to planned there are scores of No review (mark 1), Review of 50% of all reports (mark 2), Review of 89 % of all reports (mark 3) but it is really difficult to be able to exactly "measure" the quality of the actual review. However, this is an understandable issue and through this audit, the quantitative figures really helped to reinforce the observation from qualitative analysis - the synthetized figures still

- √ The details of four rights clusters by CRC (as initially planned) to nine rights clusters by the Viet Nam's Law on Child Protection, Care and Education enabled the specific review. But there are still lots of difficulties in understanding and measuring some of the rights' integration. Some rights are well perceived but they are very rarely explicitly described and analysed. For example, the right of living with parents has been understood in the education and training sector that it is not a right to compulsorily send the child to boarding schools. In these cases, it is very challenging to require scoring and provide with specific proof of how this is mentioned in the plan. Therefore, in the future, the application of this tool should be considered in relation actual conditions and the capacity of the officials to choose whether the cluster of four rights or nine rights is applied.
- √ The child rights-based targets in the plans relates much to the functions and mandates of sectors of Health, Education and training and Labour, invalids and social affairs and normally they are very much in lines with National Target Programs with clear financial resources. However, some targets relating to the right of participation and the right of entertainment are not specific and put in the local SEDP.

The method of self assessment by local planning officers' first and successive discussion with research team's and refining is rather effective but it requires much time for each step. The officers need more time for prudent self assessment and the research team needs more time for reviewing the self assessment sheets and checking them against the plans and then both sides need time for direct and close discussion for joint finalisation. In this pilot audit, for example, the lack of consistent understanding of child's rights has led to different marking across districts and levels. Table 6 and Table 7 show that DOH could mainly directly implement ¼ rights but both of their district divisions had higher mark- Muong Ang noted 2/4 and Dien Bien Dong recorded the accomplishment of even all 4 out of 4 rights. With the same situation, DOET reported key fulfilment of only 1 out of 4 rights, whereas the two district DOETs confirmed all 4 rights have been reflected in their plans. There need to be more time for piloting the tools and training for consistent understanding and application. Besides, tools should also be designed to ease the use and provide sufficient, yet brief information. In the long run there should be pre-defined forms for data analysis and quick reports.



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- 14. Report on the implementation of education development plan in 2013 and the sector's development plan in 2014
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ANNEX 1. CONSOLIDATED FIGURES OF RESULTS OF CHILD RIGHT-BASED AUDIT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS AND THE PLANS OF FOUR DEPARTNMENTS AND THEIR SUB-DEPARTMENTS IN TWO **DISTRICTS**

Table 4. Results of child right-based audit of the planning process for five-year plan

	Pr	ovincial I	Provincial Departments	ts	Div	isions of	Divisions of Muong Ang		Division	ons of Di	Divisions of Dien Bien Dong	ng
CONTENT	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	ВОН	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI
Review the implementation of previous year's plan with priorities in ensuring child rights	4	4	4	М	4	7	4	4	3	3	Ю	m
Compare previous year's activities with pro-child rights action plans	4	4	2	2	4	м	М	2	4	4	4	2
Consultation from related agencies and local authority at all levels	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2
Consultation from child caregivers and children groups	Э	_	1	1	Э	4≯ 3	2	2	4 > 3	4 🔰 3	4	1
The plan developed with disaggregated data clearly indentify inequity in child's situation	3	4	4	Э	7	7	Ю	æ	3	3	М	æ
Consulted ideas from the localities of all levels and related agencies are considered during the plan development process	4	4	Ю	С	4	4	4	М	ю	М	ю	m
Results from consultation of children groups and child caregivers are considered during the plan development process	4	_		2	4	М	4	ж	4	4	4	-
Financial resources are analysed during the plan development process	3	m	4	2	Э	-	4	m	4	4	М	4
Local authority at all levels, related agencies, child caregivers and children groups are consulted on the detailed plan.	Ж	7	-	7	2	7	4	7	2	7	æ	7
Total score (max: 36; min: 9)	33	27	22	20	30	53	32	26	31	31	31	21

Table 5. Child-rights indicators and targets in Dien Bien five-year SEDP (2011-2015)

	Maiı	n indicators/targets related to child rights	Related	Direct
1	Survival	rights		
	1.	Population	578,733	
	2.	Level of decrease of natural population increase	<14.25%	
	3.	Decrease of malnutition among under-5-year-old children		<20%
	4.	Proportion of under-1-year-old children with full immunization		>94%
	5.	Percentage of mortality among under-1-year-old children		23.5%0
	6.	Ratio of commune with doctors	60%	
	7.	Number of communes/wards reaching national standards on health	72.3%	
	8.	Number of doctors/10,000 people	10.8	
	9.	Number of patient beds/10,000 people	32	
	10.	Number of maternal mortality/100,000 live infants		70
	11.	Rate of goiter children (8-10 years old)		4.3%
	12.	Percentage of communes/wards reaching child-friendly standards		44.64%
	13.	Rate of rural people having clean water	95%	
П	Developi	ment rights		
	14	Number of 3 to 5-year-old children mobilized to attend schools		>88%
	15	Rate of children of 6-10 years to attending schools		>99%
	16	Rate of pupils of 11-14 years olds entering secondary schools		>90%
	17	Rate of oupils of 15-18 years old enterng high schools		>65%
	18	Rate of pupils at all levels passing their grades		>98%
	19	Rate of graduation		>90%
	20	Percentage of schools meeting national standards		>47%

Table 6. Assessment of levels of child-rights inclusion in Dien Bien five-year (2011-2015) SEDP and 2014 plans of the social sectors

Chi	ldren's rights				Depart	ments			
As per CRC	As per Vietnam Law on Child Protection	D	OLISA		DOH		DOET		DPI
		2014	2011-2015	2014	2011-2015	2014	2011-2015	2014	2011-2015
Right to life, survial	right to birth registration and to acquire a nationality	20	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
	right to be cared for and brought up	54	54	32	39	19	19	26	22
	right to live with their parents	20	20	19	19	19	19	19	19
Right to protection	right to have their life, body, dignity and honor protected	35	35	19	19	19	19	19	19
	right to health care	20	20	19	19	19	19	26	39
Right to development	right to study	20	20	19	19	42	41	30	39
	right to develop their aptitudes	20	20	19	19	19	19	19	19
Right to participation	right to join in healthy recreational, entertainment, cultural, art, physical, sport and tourist activities	20	20	19	19	19	19	19	22
	right to possess assets	20	20	19	19	19	19	19	19
	right to access information suitable to their development, express their opinions and aspirations on the matters of their concern	33	33	19	19	19	19	19	19
Minimum total	: 19, maximum total: 76								

^{1 -} Statement is not reflected at all in the document

^{2 -} Statement is reflected in a limited fashion

^{3 -} Statement is reflected adequately

^{4 -} Statement is reflected very well (or extensively) in the document

Table 7. Assessment of level of child-rights inclusion in 2014 plan of sub-departments at two districts

				Review	red sub-	departmer	its		
As per CRC	As per Vietnam Law on Child Protection	Divi	sions of I	Muong An	ıg	Divisio	ns of Die	en Bien D	ong
	Gillia i i sacciisii	DOLISA	DOH	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	DOH	DOET	DPI
Right to life, survial	right to birth registration and to acquire a nationality	36	19	30	30	41	60	60	47
	right to be cared for and brought up	42	45	43	43	49	60	60	44
	right to live with their parents	28	19	27	24	28	60	60	27
Right to protection	right to have their life, body, dignity and honor protected	47	43	25	43	47	62	63	45
	right to health care	37	52	19	42	43	62	63	45
Rights to	right to study	21	19	46	44	22	67	67	59
development	right to develop their aptitudes	20	19	46	34	22	66	67	58
Right to participation	right to join in healthy recreational, entertainment, cultural, art, physical, sport and tourist activities	37	19	23	41	37	61	63	52
	right to possess assets	19	19	19	19	13	61	60	22
	right to access information suitable to their development, express their opinions and aspirations on the matters of their concern	24	19	21	27	20	61	62	34
Total Score - Ma	matters of their concern aximum score: 76 and Mini	mum score	: 19						

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- 2 Statement is reflected in a limited fashion
- 3 Statement is reflected adequately
- 4 Statement is reflected very well (or extensively) in the document

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Table 8. Assessment of level of coordianation between province and disitricts for more right-based approachi for planning

	Prc	ovincial De	Provincial Departments	v	ρi	isions of	Divisions of Muong Ang		Divisions	Divisions of Dien Bien Dong	an Dong	
STIPPINO)	DOLISA DOH	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET DPI	DPI
The plan of your agency is intergrated in the supervisor agency (province/national) plan	4	4	3	2	3	က	4	м	К	8	4	2
The plan of your agency is intergrated in your related agency at the same level	m	4	4	2	4	4	4	m	m	m	4	4
The intergration of your agency's plan is a prerequisite for ensuring children's rights' realization	M	7	m	-	4	4	4	m	m	m	m	m

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3 - Statement is reflected adequately

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Table 9. Assessment of M&E content in the plans

		rovincial Do	Provincial Departments			Divisions of Muong Ang	Muong Ang		Divisions	Divisions of Dien Bien Dong	n Dong	
	DPI	DOLISA	РОН	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	РОН	DOET	DPI			
There is planning frame and M&E frames	2	2	2	-	2	2	2	-	2	2	4	2
There is clear mechanism for data collection and reporting for monitoring	m	m	m	7	M	2	7	m	m	m	m	m
Indicators address children's age-related development needs	m	4	М	7	m	4	4	7	М	М	М	М
There is a baseline against which to measure progress on child wellbeing	m	1	М	2	7	e e	7	2	2	7	М	7
Children's voices/participation are included in M&E frameworks (e.g. participatory social audit methods including children)	4	-	4	2	7	2	2	2	2	7	M	M
Mechanisms are in place to utilize M&E to inform policy and program design or adjustment	2	m		-	2	2	2	2	4	m	m	2

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Table 10. Assessment of data collection mechanisms in the plans

		rovincial D	Provincial Departments		Q	ivisions of I	Divisions of Muong Ang		Div	Divisions of Dien Bien Dong	en Bien Do	Вu
Contents	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI
Kế hoạch có xây dựng khung theo dõi và giám sát	2	2	7	-	2	2	7	-	2	2	4	7
Kế hoạch có xây dựng cơ chế thu thập thông tin, số liệu, báo cáo tiến độ	ĸ	æ	m	7	К	7	7	m	м	m	ĸ	m
Kế hoạch có các chỉ số và mục tiêu liên quan đến trẻ em	m	4	М	2	m	4	4	2	m	m	m	m
Kế hoạch có xây dựng các điều tra cơ bản để kiểm định tiến bộ về đời sống của trẻ em trong quá trình thực hiện kế hoạch	m	1	m	7	7	m	7	7	7	7	M	7
Kết quả tham vấn các nhóm trẻ được đưa vào khung theo dõi	4	-	4	2	2	2	7	2	2	2	ĸ	8
Có cơ chế theo dõi và đánh giá để tận dụng việc theo dõi đánh giá để điểu chỉnh các thiết kế của kế hoạch	7	m	-	-	7	7	7	7	4	m	m	7

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Table 11. Assessment of staff capacity in understanding of child rights and transforming this into objectives/activities of public planning

	a	rovincial D	Provincial Departments		Δ	ivisions of	Divisions of Muong Ang		Div	isions of Di	Divisions of Dien Bien Dong	бı
Contents	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	рон	DOET	DPI	DOLISA	РОН	DOET	DPI
Có những thách thức trong giai đoạn xây dựng kế hoạch liên quan đến nhận thức và mục tiêu nhạy cảm với trẻ	c	7	4	2	7	R	7	R	К	R	М	
Có những thách thức trong việc chuyển các khái niệm thành hành đông cụ thể liên quan đến các khía cạnh nhạy cảm với trẻ em	2	2	4	ĸ	7	R	7	7	К	С	ю	
Các cán bộ kế hoạch được đào tạo hoặc có kiến thức về các vấn đề liên quan đến quyền trẻ em	7	2	4	m	7	ĸ	m	7	7	7	m	

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ANNEX 2. LIST OF PEOPLE MET

	Full name	Unit	Position
1	Nguyễn Thị Việt Thanh	Social and Cultural Unit- DPI	Head of the Unit
2	Nguyễn Văn Toản	Social and Cultural Unit- DPI	Officer
3	Nguyễn Thị Kim Oanh	Children Protection Unit- DOLISA	Head of the Unit
4	Dương Thị Hảo	Planning Unit- DOH	Chuyên viên
5	Giang Thị Hồng Thu	Planning Unit- DOET	Chuyên viên
6	Tuyền	Administrative and Recurrent Budget- DOF	Head of the Unit
7	Phan Đức Anh	Muong Ang, Division of Finance and Planning	Officer
8	Trần Thị Hương	Muong Ang district's DDOH	Officer
9	Trần Thị Huyền	Muong Ang district's DDOLISA	Officer
10	Nguyễn Thị Hồng Thuỷ	Muong Ang district's DDOET	Officer
11	Kiều Xuân Hoàng	Muong Ang district's DDARD	Officer
12	Nguyễn Quang Ngân	Dien Bien Dong district's DDOET	Officer
13	Nguyễn Duy Đại	Dien Bien Dong district's, Healthcare Station	Vice Head of the Division
14	Bùi Xuân Thức	Dien Bien Dong district's DDOLISA	Head of the Division
15	Nguyễn Văn Huyện	Dien Bien Dong district's Division of Finance and Planning	Officer

ANNEX 3. THE TOOLS

THE TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT

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