

**Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria  
(ESSPIN)**

**Approach to supporting EMIS – Position Paper**

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## Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations .....	iii
Abstract .....	1
Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	5
Context .....	5
Assessment.....	6
The overall approach.....	7
Practical support to States and within States .....	8
Management and Organisation.....	9
Poorly maintained school lists.....	9
Low response rates.....	9
Incomplete and poor quality data .....	10
Duplication .....	10
Feedback and reporting .....	11
Hardware .....	13
Conclusion .....	13
Developing Federal coordination and support to States .....	13
Cross-cutting themes.....	14
EMIS Committees .....	14
Training.....	15
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for School Mapping.....	15
Monitoring and Evaluation.....	16
Coordination.....	16
Technical Assistance .....	16

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ASC	Annual School Census
CUBE	Capacity for Universal Basic Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FMoE	Federal Ministry of Education
GEP	Girls' Education Project
GIS	Geographic Information System
IQTE	Islamiyyah, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education
LAGEMS	Lagos State Government Education Management Systems
LEAP	Literacy Enhancement Assistance Project (USAID)
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTSS	Medium Term Sector Strategy
NCE	National Council on Education
NCoE	National Committee on EMIS
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
PPM&R	Policy, Planning, Management and Research
PRS	Planning, Research and Statistics
SBMC	School-Based Management Committee
SESP	State Education Sector Project
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
VSO	Volunteer Service Overseas

## Abstract

ESSPIN's approach to supporting the Education Management Information System (EMIS) focuses on identifying and developing effective procedures in States, and documenting and implementing them. The use of data within States for planning and management will also be promoted. Assistance will also be provided at the Federal level to assist coordination and support to all States.

## Executive Summary

1. There is currently a lack of timely, reliable data on basic education on which to base decisions at all levels in the system. ESSPIN's support to the Federal Authorities and States in improving education provision will be seriously hampered if this situation can not be improved. Timely and reliable data are fundamental to planning and management, and Education Management Information Systems (EMISs) play vital role in supporting education systems by providing information to monitor developments.
2. The current condition of the Nigerian EMIS should come as no surprise. International experience demonstrates it is very difficult to establish effective EMISs that provide users in developing countries with reliable data in a timely fashion. There are exceptional challenges in doing so in Nigeria. Suppliers of statistical services in all sectors in Nigeria face a range of daunting challenges. The existence of problems does not necessarily reflect poorly on the development work done previously with the support of external partners.
3. The situation is not the same in all States: generally ESSPIN States may be relatively advanced on EMIS. Overall, though, the main shortcomings may be summarised as follows:
  - **Organisation:** erratic timeline and limited warning; **delays** retrieving, entering and reporting data, missing next budget planning cycle; **State and Federal roles** under the decentralisation policy from 2008-09 onwards not clear; lack of **operational guidelines** to support States in new role.
  - Poorly maintained **school lists**, especially for non-government schools, leading to under-coverage which is unknown.
  - **Low response** from known schools, especially non-government schools.
  - **Incomplete** and **poor quality data** on submitted returns due to weaknesses in training, field procedures and data entry procedures.
  - **Duplication:** parallel systems exist in SMOEs, SUBEBs and other agencies.
  - No **feedback** to States, Local Government Education Authorities or schools.
  - Imperfect **questionnaires** (some complex and unnecessary items and some key items not covered, despite efforts to improve them).
  - **Technology:** the NEMIS software has not been fully revised in line with the current forms and States have reported some difficulties in using the existing version.

4. Weak demand for data and capacity to apply data to support policy-making and administration are in many ways the root of the problem in the sense that if the users really depended on the data for their operations, then solutions to many of the above problems might have been found. However, the lack of information supply can also limit the appreciation of the value of information.
5. In recent years progress has been made tackling some of the issues in some States and experience has been gained. Software has been written and hardware supplied. ESSPIN plans to capitalise and build on this progress. The approach's primary focus on States is in keeping with the overall programme, but it is also seen as the strategy most likely to lead to lasting improvements on EMIS. It is States that are responsible for conducting the Annual School Census (ASC), especially from 2009 onwards under the National NEMIS policy. The potential value of information for basic education is also greatest at State and lower levels in view of their functions and responsibilities.
6. The main aim is to provide practical support to improve the quality of the school census operations. Work with States will first identify good practice that effectively addresses the general shortcomings. Where necessary, new techniques, mechanisms and processes will be developed to tackle them - this will involve some pilot work. This new body of good practice will be set down in operational guidelines to assist States in conducting the ASC.
7. For many reasons ESSPIN seeks to provide a common approach for ESSPIN States, and ultimately all States within Nigeria. ESSPIN respects the National NEMIS Policy and seeks to work within the framework it sets, including a common national core data collection instrument, frequency and timing. The programme aims to support FMOE in carrying out the NEMIS element of its 'Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector' (March 2009). There are great advantages to States, and nationally, to having comparable data. Substantial economies of scale apply. Central and mutual support is fostered by a shared system. The programme intends to develop the existing software to meet the needs of States to enter process and output the school census data. ESSPIN will assist FMOE to move the exercise forward to November and to refine the questionnaire, subject to agreement in the National Committee on EMIS (NCE). Some flexibility will be provided to enable States to augment the data collected to meet their particular needs.
8. A strong emphasis will be placed on outputting the data in public reports and using them in policy processes. Hitherto EMIS data has seldom been released below the federal level or used in policy-making and administration. This is vital if the collection is to be worthwhile and if data quality is to improve. The development of States' Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) and the planned Annual Education Sector Reviews, both of which are being supported by ESSPIN, work in conjunction with the assistance on EMIS. The planning and review work will require improved data, and the strengthened demand for data should

support efforts to improve them. The capacity to produce and use data will be developed in a coordinated way.

9. The plans to develop capacity in the statistics units at Federal and State level also fits with ESSPIN's institutional focus on supporting reform processes in the PPM&R / PRS parts of FMOE and UBEC under Output 1 and SMOEs and SUBEBs under Output 2. An improved EMIS will also support the more rational deployment of teaching resources and other initiatives to improve learning in schools under Output 3. Developing feedback mechanisms within EMIS, notably School Report Cards, will support ESSPIN's assistance to schools and their accountability to communities under Output 4. ESSPIN's support to EMIS will be truly successful only if more children learn more effectively as a result of better data. In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation, EMIS is set to provide the data for half of ESSPIN's Key Performance Indicators and half of its quality indicators.
10. A key aim will be to replace many individual data collection exercises of dubious data quality whose outputs are unshared with a reliable, shared central data source.
11. The NEMIS software needs to be adapted to reflect the changes made to the questionnaire in November 2008 (except the data entry part which has been modified), it needs to be installed in States and training provided. ESSPIN will provide funding for this and assist PPM&R in managing the process. Complexity will be reduced by focusing the reporting only on key tables. The programme will also fund a study of the software in relation to States' requirements and then fund the development it for the 2009-10 census and later years. In particular the aim will be for easy installation, maintenance, data consistency checking and output for release.
12. ESSPIN will re-invigorate (where necessary), support and work through State and National EMIS committees. A working group of key EMIS staff from ESSPIN States and the federal level will be established to take the work forwards.
13. Training will be an important element of the approach. Officials throughout the system, from SMOEs, SUBEBs, to LGEAs and schools, need to understand their role in EMIS. In some cases, additional staffing may be necessary.
14. The approach to technology is to make good use of the available hardware and maintain it, rather than to procure more at this stage. That being said, ESSPIN will consider limited support to the procurement of replacements and additional equipment where this is essential to the achievement of the EMIS strategy and where Federal or State funds are not available.
15. The focus is on developing a basic functional school census exercise, rather than on other activities, including school mapping using Geographic Information Systems (GISs). The planned development of a full list of schools – government and non-government – and

reliable basic data on them would make a fundamental contribution to school mapping. ESSPIN does not intend to go further than this at this stage, however, because the development of capacity to maintain systems and make good use of the results is especially challenging.

16. The work will be supported by a full-time EMIS Task Leader who will provide Federal support, two resident junior international specialists covering the five States, national consultants supporting IT aspects and potentially up to four VSO volunteers.



## Introduction

17. There is currently a lack of timely, reliable data on basic education on which to base decisions at all levels in the system. ESSPIN's support to the Federal Authorities and States in improving education provision will be seriously hampered if this situation can not be improved. Timely and reliable data are fundamental to planning and management, and Education Management Information Systems (EMISs) play vital role in supporting education systems by providing information to monitor developments.
18. This paper sets out ESSPIN's approach to supporting EMIS operations that builds on the external assistance invested in recent years. It is based on an assessment of the current situation and the key underlying issues. The assessment and the proposed approach were discussed at a workshop in Abuja on 28 to 29 April, 2009 for EMIS staff in FMOE, UBEC and SMOEs and SUBEBs in ESSPIN States. Participants broadly endorsed the proposals and suggested some further additions; this approach has been refined as a result.

## Context

19. The current condition of the Nigerian EMIS should surprise no-one familiar with EMISs in developing countries. As the numerous reviews show, developing EMISs has proved very challenging in many countries. Any discussion of weaknesses in the EMIS in Nigeria should be seen in this international context. For example, one study seeks to answer the question:

*'Why, after fifteen+ years and many millions of dollars, are education leaders [in the Latin American and Caribbean Region] still complaining that they do not have the data and information they need to make informed decisions?' [Cassidy 2006]*

20. Equally, the discussion of Nigerian education statistics should be set in the wider context of statistics for other sectors in the country. The current Nigerian Statistical Master Plan bemoans:
  - (i) the weaknesses in statistical capacity and the dearth of data on social and economic indicators required for monitoring achievement of results on development policies and initiatives;
  - (ii) the unreliability of existing data; and
  - (iii) unsustainability of current statistical activities.
21. Education statistics are affected alongside other sectors but the challenge of collecting accurate data from over 70,000 schools without a team of trained enumerators to visit each school is arguably greater than that faced by other sectors.
22. The difficulty of the operating environment for statistics also affects other related statistics, in particular demographic and financial statistics that are combined with education

statistics to calculate various key indicators. Even if EMIS were to be a perfect data source, these indicators could be unreliable.

23. Given the international experience in EMISs and the state of national statistics and the underlying factors, then, it would be remarkable were the EMIS to be functioning well.

## Assessment

24. The assessment of the current situation has been made by discussing with staff at Federal level and in all five ESSPIN States and collaborating partners, and reviewing documents that describe the situation in recent years, including the National EMIS Policy and FMOE's Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector (March 2009).

No national figures have been published for school years after 2004/05. The preparation of reports at state level appears to be rare and the public release of the reports that do exist seems to be even rarer. The quality of the EMIS data varies between States and also within States. These issues are discussed in some greater depth below, but Box 1 acts to show there are serious shortcomings in parts of the system.

### *Box 1: EMIS Data quality in Kwara in 2005-06*

Kwara SUBEB conducted a detailed verification exercise into the implausible enrolment count in public primary schools provided by seven of the sixteen LGEAs in 2005-06. It concluded that the actual enrolment was under 100,000 rather than over 250,000 as reported. In the most striking case, one LGEA was assessed to have only one sixth of the total reported.

*[Source: Kwara Education Sector Analysis, p.18]*

25. There is currently a lack of timely, reliable data on basic education on which to base decisions at all levels in the system. Generally ESSPIN States may be relatively advanced on EMIS because of prior work done by SESP/CUBE and other interventions in four of the States. Overall, though, there are various shortcomings, which may be summarised as follow:

- **Organisation:** erratic timeline and limited warning; **delays** retrieving, entering and reporting data, missing next budget planning cycle; **State and Federal roles** under the decentralisation policy from 2008-09 onwards not clear; lack of **operational guidelines** to support States in new role.
- Poorly maintained **school lists**, especially for non-government schools, leading to under-coverage which is unknown.
- **Low response** from known schools, especially non-government schools.
- **Incomplete and poor quality data** on submitted returns due to weaknesses in training, field procedures and data entry procedures.

- **Duplication:** parallel systems exist in SMOEs, SUBEBs and other agencies.
- No **feedback** to States, Local Government Education Authorities or schools.
- Imperfect **questionnaires** (some complex and unnecessary items and some key items are not covered, despite efforts to improve them).
- **Technology:** the NEMIS software has not been fully revised in line with the current forms and states have reported some difficulties in using the existing version.

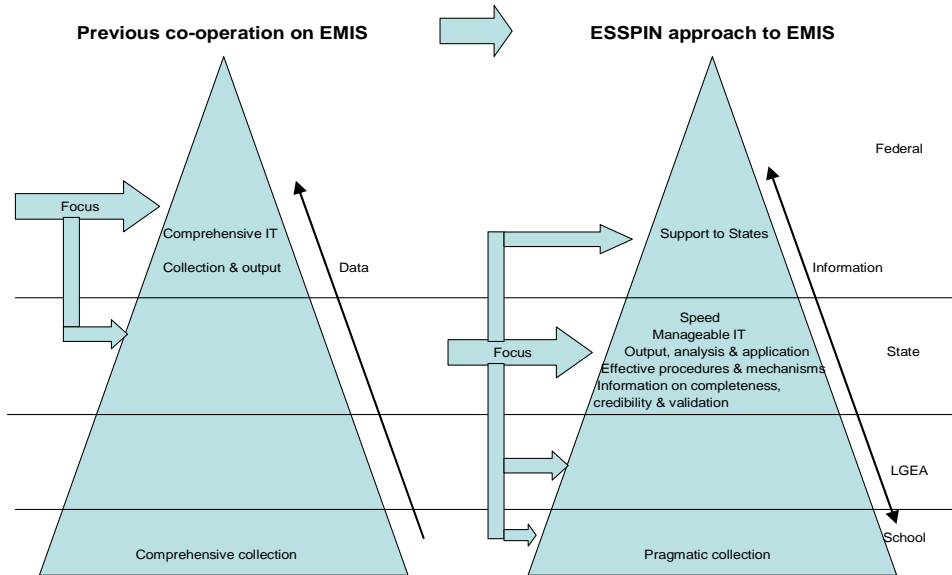
26. Weak demand for data and capacity to apply data to support policy-making and administration are in many ways the root of the problem in the sense that if the users really depended on the data for their operations, then solutions to many of the above problems might have been found. However, the lack of information supply can also limit the appreciation of the value of information, so there is a vicious circle.

### The overall approach

27. The EMIS in Nigeria took its current form in 2004 and has been formalised in a policy document that was approved by the National Council on Education in 2007. The system is based on a single software system (NEMIS) for the whole of Nigeria, which stores and manages the data of the annual school census, and a uniform institutional setup which is steered by a national EMIS committee. The system is being decentralised in 2009, with the States being held fully responsible for the implementation of the school census.
28. In recent years progress has been made in tackling some of the issues in some States – with CUBE / ESSPIN States to the fore - and experience has been gained. Software has been written and hardware supplied. ESSPIN plans to capitalise and build on this progress by focusing support at state rather than the federal level, as under CUBE.
29. The approach's primary focus on States is in keeping with the overall ESSPIN programme, but it is also seen as the strategy most likely to lead to lasting improvements on EMIS. It is States that are responsible for conducting the annual school census, especially under the National EMIS policy. The potential value of information for basic education is also greatest at state and lower levels in view of their functions and responsibilities.
30. The approach emphasises speed, pragmatism and effectiveness rather than comprehensiveness. Practical procedures and mechanisms that work in States will be identified, developed, documented and promoted. Information on the data's completeness and accuracy will be generated - through direct validation and comparison with other data sources - and made available. Establishing a two-way flow of information is fundamental.
31. While the focus of the ESSPIN approach is at State level, there will be some supporting co-operation with institutions at lower levels that supply or collect the information and – potentially at least – use it. Support at the Federal level will develop common elements of

the system and support FMOE's co-ordination of the system and support to States. The nature of support to the different levels is discussed in the following sections.

32. The approach is summarised in the following diagram.



33. The nature of the problems inherent in EMIS and the time required to address them means that the focus should be on preparing for an effective census in ESSPIN States in the 2009-10 school year, rather than on collecting fresh data for 2008-09.

34. The capacity to apply the data to policy-making and administration in States and at lower levels will be developed through other elements of ESSPIN, especially the planning and management component of institutional reform work under Output 2.

### Practical support to States and within States

35. The main aim is to provide practical support to improve the quality of the school census operations. Work with States will first be done to identify good practice that effectively addresses the general shortcomings. Where necessary, new techniques, mechanisms and processes will be developed to tackle them: this will involve some pilot work. This new body of good practice will be set down in operational guidelines to assist States in conducting the Annual School Census.

36. Most of the problems that beset the annual school census operations need to be tackled at State level. These include poorly maintained school lists, low response, incomplete and poor quality data, duplication, the lack of feedback and poor organisation. Arrangements for taking the census have not been identical in all States. There is already some good practice to draw on in States and the ESSPIN States include some of the best EMIS practice

to be shared. In some cases there may be a need to develop new techniques. Some of these techniques will be more effective – and cost efficient – than others. Some approaches may be suitable in some settings and not in others. ESSPIN will assess the various techniques and build on them. We will consider new ones, where useful, and test them. This work will be fed into guidelines ESSPIN will prepare on how best to conduct the ASC. We will then support ESSPIN states to implement the guidelines.

37. ESSPIN’s practical support to States to tackle the various problems identified is described in the following sections.

### Management and Organisation

38. The Programme will assist ESSPIN States in identifying their resource requirements under a decentralised EMIS and obtaining the allocation in a timely fashion through the improved MTSS and budgeting process. By advocating for the value of good statistics, ESSPIN will seek to help EMIS units attract the political will needed to support their work. Generic and state-specific support on planning the census process and managing the census exercise will be provided. The guidelines that ESSPIN is supporting will assist States in managing and organising their EMIS work in future.

### Poorly maintained school lists

39. For government schools, there is a mainly administrative and institutional challenge of finding the simplest way of developing and maintaining a central list, as the information is held many times within the SMOE, SUBEB, LGEA, exam authorities, etc., through various administrative and statistical operations including school mapping.
40. Non-government schools – both private and religious are harder to list. There is a need to reach out to umbrella organisations – Boards and Associations that maintain information on them, and to develop effective techniques to capture the details of schools not covered by these organisations. This statistical progress will be facilitated greatly if the good administrative practice of all schools having to inform the authorities is adopted. However, official and unofficial taxation currently discourages many non-government schools from alerting States to their existence and it may be very difficult to overcome this. The experience of LASGEMS in identifying private schools will be examined to see if any of the experience can usefully be adopted in other States. The recording of religious schools will be taken forward primarily in the Northern States. Last, the effectiveness of the EMIS school codes will be reviewed.

### Low response rates

41. Clear monitoring of response rates during operations is key. A range of techniques has been adopted for forms to be filled in: from sending forms to schools (with or without training), to having schools fill them in during training workshops, and to using Youth Corps

Volunteers to act as enumerators. Their relative success in response rates, as well as their relative costs, will be examined. Effective techniques in generating returns for private and religious schools are especially difficult and important. Simpler forms for non-government schools will be considered and discussed with private and religious school organisations. A communication campaign for school census day could raise the profile of the exercise and increase the pressure on schools to comply. Previous attempts in this area will be reviewed and this will inform whether and how to mount a campaign in one or more States.

### Incomplete and poor quality data

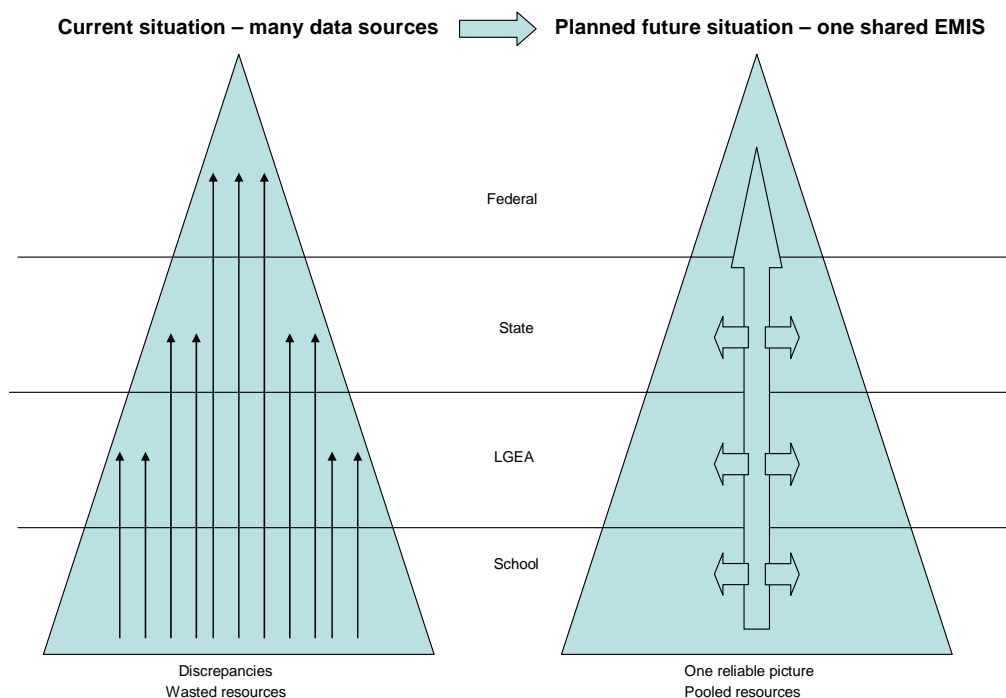
42. Data from previous school census rounds will be obtained from FMOE and States and they will be studied to assess current data quality in each state. The different data collection mechanisms may affect the completeness and quality of the data submitted, so they need to be studied. (For example, having teachers supply data in workshops may increase response rates, but reduce the quality or completeness of the return if the teachers do not have access to school records.) ESSPIN will provide technical inputs into the training given at all levels, including to those providing the data. Effective procedures to identify errors (and avoid introducing new errors and losing data) will need to be established. The programme will seek to strengthen quality control structures in the field with a team of well trained supervisors. Simple consistency checks will be introduced to make it easier for supervisors to spot mistakes and contact schools for clarifications before it is too late. The most efficient data entry procedures will be developed to ensure the best outcome in terms of minimising both the time needed to produce results and the data entry errors. States will be assisted to manage their data sets to eliminate the possibility that data get lost and to increase their accessibility.
43. States will be supported to run impartial validation exercises that give users information on data quality and that improve future data quality. ESSPIN will support a validation survey on a representative sample of schools in the partner States, which will take place 2-3 months after the next school census. The position of this survey within the overall ESSPIN M&E framework is discussed in the respective paper.
44. The use of school registers will be reviewed. A programme to strengthen their use - which could involve the re-design, printing and distribution of a limited set of standard registers – is planned, using the lessons of the review and recent experience (for example, LEAP).

### Duplication

45. Historically various organisations at the different levels of government in Nigeria have independently collected their own data from lower levels. Co-operation to date has not succeeded in changing this situation. The resulting data do not agree across sources, causing doubt and a loss of credibility. The approach is not cost-effective, though staff

throughout the system who receive funds to undertake parallel activities may be motivated to support the status quo.

46. The aim is to have a central system that collects the key information and is the main source for all levels. It is unrealistic to think EMIS will totally replace all other data collection exercises, but it is important for it to be supported by lower levels of the system. There are many barriers to overcome, perhaps the greatest being the common desire for each level to present distorted data to its perceived advantage to higher levels, even if it wants accurate data for itself.
47. A key aim will be to replace many individual data collection exercises of dubious data quality, whose outputs are unshared, with a reliable, shared central data source. The following diagram shows this conceptual change in data collection proposed (with data collected and used at all levels - see Feedback and Reporting below).



48. ESSPIN will study the extent of any parallel systems and advocate in State EMIS Committees to make better use of the central system and drop unilateral exercises. It may prove difficult to tackle duplication until an effective central exercise is established, however.

### Feedback and reporting

49. A strong emphasis will be placed on outputting the data in public reports and using them in policy processes. Hitherto EMIS data has seldom been released below the federal level or used in policy-making and administration. This is vital if the collection is to be worthwhile

and if data quality is to improve. The development of States' Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) and the planned Annual Education Sector Reviews, both of which are being supported by ESSPIN, work in conjunction with the assistance on EMIS. The planning and review work will require improved data, and the strengthened demand for data should support efforts to improve them. The capacity to produce and use data will be developed in a coordinated way.

50. An improved EMIS will also support the more rational deployment of teaching resources and other initiatives to improve learning in schools under Output 3. Developing feedback mechanisms within EMIS, notably School Report Cards, will support ESSPIN's assistance to schools and their accountability to communities under Output 4. ESSPIN's support to EMIS will be truly successful only if more children learn more effectively as a result of better data. In terms of Monitoring and Evaluation, EMIS is set to provide the data for half of ESSPIN's Key Performance Indicators and half of its quality indicators.
51. ESSPIN will support States to report the results of the census in formats that are accessible to the full range of stakeholders.
  - At the level of communities and the school, the emphasis will be on the preparation and dissemination of the school report card. The format was prepared as part of CUBE but, as data were never fed into it, the card was never distributed to schools. At a minimum, report cards demonstrate that EMIS is an active system and show the data that have been recorded, both of which can lead to better data quality. The idea is that the school report card, which shows how a school is doing by comparison to the LGEA and State average on certain key issues, can be used as a lever of pressure for communities to demand better services from underperforming schools. However, the assumption will need to be tested in practice and alternative supporting measures might be needed to enable the card to play this role. ESSPIN intends to pilot school report cards in one State (to be selected) using the data collected in November 2008 before supporting them in all states on the 2009-10 census.
  - At the LGEA level, attention will be placed on encouraging local authorities to point out inconsistencies in the school census data, especially by crosschecking with other administrative sources of data at their disposal.
  - At the SMOE and SUBEB level, ESSPIN will support the analysis of the data for the preparation of reports with different target audiences in mind (e.g. thematic reports). However, the main emphasis will be in bringing together the different pieces of analysis, not only from the school census but also from other sources, to assist the preparation of an annual State education performance report, as the evidence base to inform the anticipated State Annual Education Sector Review.



52. The proposed ESSPIN activities in the area of building capacity to use the school census (and other) data for planning and budgeting are outlined in the section on demand for information in the ESSPIN M&E framework report.

### Hardware

53. Four of the five ESSPIN States (Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Lagos) have recently received hardware under SESP or SESP II. As a result of this and other initiatives, they generally have a reasonable level of equipment for EMIS purposes. The approach is now to focus on the other areas as discussed above, to develop the capacity to make best use of the hardware and to maintain it, rather than to extend the hardware at this stage. That being said, ESSPIN may offer limited support to the procurement of replacements and additional equipment where necessary and where Federal or State funds are not available. Jigawa State is not in SESP: an assessment will be made of the hardware required to ensure a similar level to the other States and the equipment will be procured.

### Conclusion

54. All these support measures will be available on an ongoing basis. However, the initial point of engagement and the entry point for support for ESSPIN will depend entirely on the level of commitment displayed by individual States and need not be uniform across States. The objective is to have: a consolidated school list with an inbuilt institutional mechanism of updating; universal response rates; timely completion of the process to ensure that data are available for analysis before the end of the ongoing school year (June) so that they can be fed into the planning process (September-October) for the next financial year. This speeding up the exercise is the main reason for the planned moving forward of the census date from February to November, as discussed below.

### Developing Federal coordination and support to States

55. For many reasons ESSPIN seeks to provide a common approach for ESSPIN States – and ultimately all States – within Nigeria. ESSPIN respects the National NEMIS policy and seeks to work within the framework it sets, including a common national core data collection instrument, frequency and timing. The programme aims to support FMOE in carrying out the NEMIS element of its Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector (March 2009). There are great advantages to States and nationally to having comparable data. Substantial economies of scale apply. Central and mutual support is fostered by a shared system. The programme intends to develop the existing software to meet the needs of States to enter process and output the school census data. ESSPIN will assist FMOE to move the exercise forward to November and to refine the questionnaire, subject to agreement in the National Committee on EMIS (NCoE). Some flexibility will be provided to enable States to augment the data collected to meet their particular needs.

56. ESSPIN will assist FMOE PPM&R to play its role under decentralisation to guide and support States to implement the census and to coordinate and provide common elements of the EMIS. PPM&R will be assisted to organise an annual forum on lessons learned and best practice from the implementation of decentralisation starting in 2010. Advice and training will be given to assist PPM&R to develop support to States.
57. PPM&R will be supported in overseeing changes agreed to be desirable in the timing of the exercise and the questionnaires used, through the National EMIS Committee.
- It is proposed to move the census date forward from February to the preceding November (i.e. mid-way through the first term, in line with international practice) to enable reports to be produced in time to support annual planning. Another advantage is that it is easier to obtain allocated funds at the end of the financial year rather than its start, when budgets have often not been agreed
  - Further improvements to the questionnaire to drop some items having little policy value or that are difficult for schools to provide, and include some important items have been proposed for 2009-10 onwards.
58. The NEMIS software needs to be adapted to reflect the changes made to the questionnaire in November 2008 (except the data entry part which has been modified), it needs to be installed in States and training provided. ESSPIN will provide funding for this and assist PPM&R in managing the process. Complexity will be reduced by focusing the reporting only on key tables. The programme will also fund a study of the software in relation to States' requirements and then fund the development it for the 2009-10 census and later years. In particular the aim will be for easy installation, maintenance, data consistency checking and output for release.

## Cross-cutting themes

### EMIS Committees

59. ESSPIN will re-invigorate (where necessary), support and work through State and National EMIS committees.
60. State EMIS Committees have been established in some cases, but they are generally not effective even where they are active. Nevertheless, they have a potentially important role to play in ensuring a coordinated approach. ESSPIN will support State EMIS Committees to hold regular quarterly meetings with clear agendas to address issues such as:
- Integrated data management, focusing on an annual single school census and complementary use of survey data where applicable
  - Eliminating or reducing duplicated data collection

- Maximising the use of scarce resources, e.g. by pooling SMOE and SUBEB resources to create a single EMIS unit
- Establishment of a single and comprehensive school list (particularly private and religious schools) with regular updating mechanisms
- Strong leadership of the school census process with accountability mechanisms
- Validation surveys and the analysis of other data sources to assess and improve data quality.
- Promotion of appropriate technology to ensure sustainability at the State level and reduce or eliminate dependence on Federal authorities for technical support.

61. The National EMIS Committee will be supported in its role to decide on coordinated and common elements of the systems, including questionnaires, census date and software. ESSPIN will support EMIS Heads from SMOE and SUBEB in ESSPIN States meeting informally to take the work forwards.

### Training

62. In addition to the direction supplied through the mechanisms above, the developing school census needs to be facilitated by capacity development at all levels from the Federal level to schools to meet their functions on EMIS. Training will be an important element of the ESSPIN approach. Broadly, Federal staff will be trained to support States; State-level EMIS staff will be trained in all aspects of running the EMIS operations through to producing reports; LGEAs will be trained in obtaining high response rates and checking for accuracy and data suppliers will be given orientation. Further work is needed to identify the precise needs and to agree on how best to meet them: a study will be funded to do this. Allied to this, it may be that staffing at state and LGEA levels are inadequate to carry out their functions: if so ESSPIN will make appropriate recommendations to the authorities.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for School Mapping

63. As discussed above, developing a basic functional school census exercise is seen as the priority. The difficulty of doing this and the resources available leave limited scope for addressing other areas of statistical information to support education planning, including school mapping using Geographic Information Systems (GISs).

64. The planned development of a full list of schools – government and non-government – and reliable basic data on them would make a fundamental contribution to school mapping. ESSPIN does not intend to go further than this at this stage, however, because the development of capacity to maintain systems and make good use of the results is especially challenging.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

65. EMISs should play an important part in monitoring and evaluating progress in education development initiatives. ESSPIN's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework envisages the school census will supply half of the key performance indicators and half of the quality indicators. However, the role that EMIS plays in ESSPIN will depend on the assessment of the quality of the data in each state and the quality and availability of other data sources such as household surveys and school surveys where they may provide alternative measures.

## Coordination

66. It has been agreed ESSPIN will take forward work on EMIS on behalf of SESP which is also dependent on reliable and timely EMIS data for its Monitoring and Evaluation. ESSPIN invited SESP M&E coordinators to the Abuja workshop in April 2009 to initiate coordination. ESSPIN will work with the SESP M&E coordinators to update the 6-month EMIS Workplans.

67. The GEP operates in four States in northern Nigeria. In each State there is a planning and EMIS adviser equivalent to the ESSPIN State planning and management officers. ESSPIN will collaborate with the GEP team members to exchange lessons and coordinate approaches on EMIS.

## Technical Assistance

68. The work will be supported by a full-time Task Specialist, two resident junior international specialists, national consultants and, potentially, up to four VSO volunteers, as follows:

- A full-time Task Specialist (EMIS) who will give overall direction and provide support at the Federal level<sup>1</sup> [220 days on annual basis].
- Two full-time junior international State Specialists (EMIS) for an initial period of 12-15 months, (which could be extended at a later stage) who will between them share responsibility for the five States (one person covering Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna and the other person covering Kwara and Lagos). Their main task will be assist in identifying and developing good EMIS practice to be documented in operational guidelines and to help ESSPIN States plan and manage the 2009-10 school census process accordingly. [220 days each on annual basis].
- National consultants to develop the NEMIS software and train staff in NEMIS and other software and hardware [total estimated 510 days until end 2010].

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<sup>1</sup> The combination of Task Specialist and Federal support in one post has not been finalised and depends on availability.

- Up to four VSO volunteers will be recruited to support on the IT aspects supporting EMIS in Kwara, Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano, (building on a recent successful placement in Adamawa State). (It is probable their roles will also include support to the development of the education sector electronic information network being proposed under the Communications and Knowledge Management Approach) [220 days each on annual basis].

69. In addition to these dedicated resources, there will be additional part-time support from other ESSPIN members as follows:

- State Team Leaders and their Planning and Management Advisers.
- The ESSPIN Information Management Adviser to FMOE.

the Task Specialist (M&E) who will devote part of his time to the school census process, given its particular importance for the effective operation of the M&E framework.