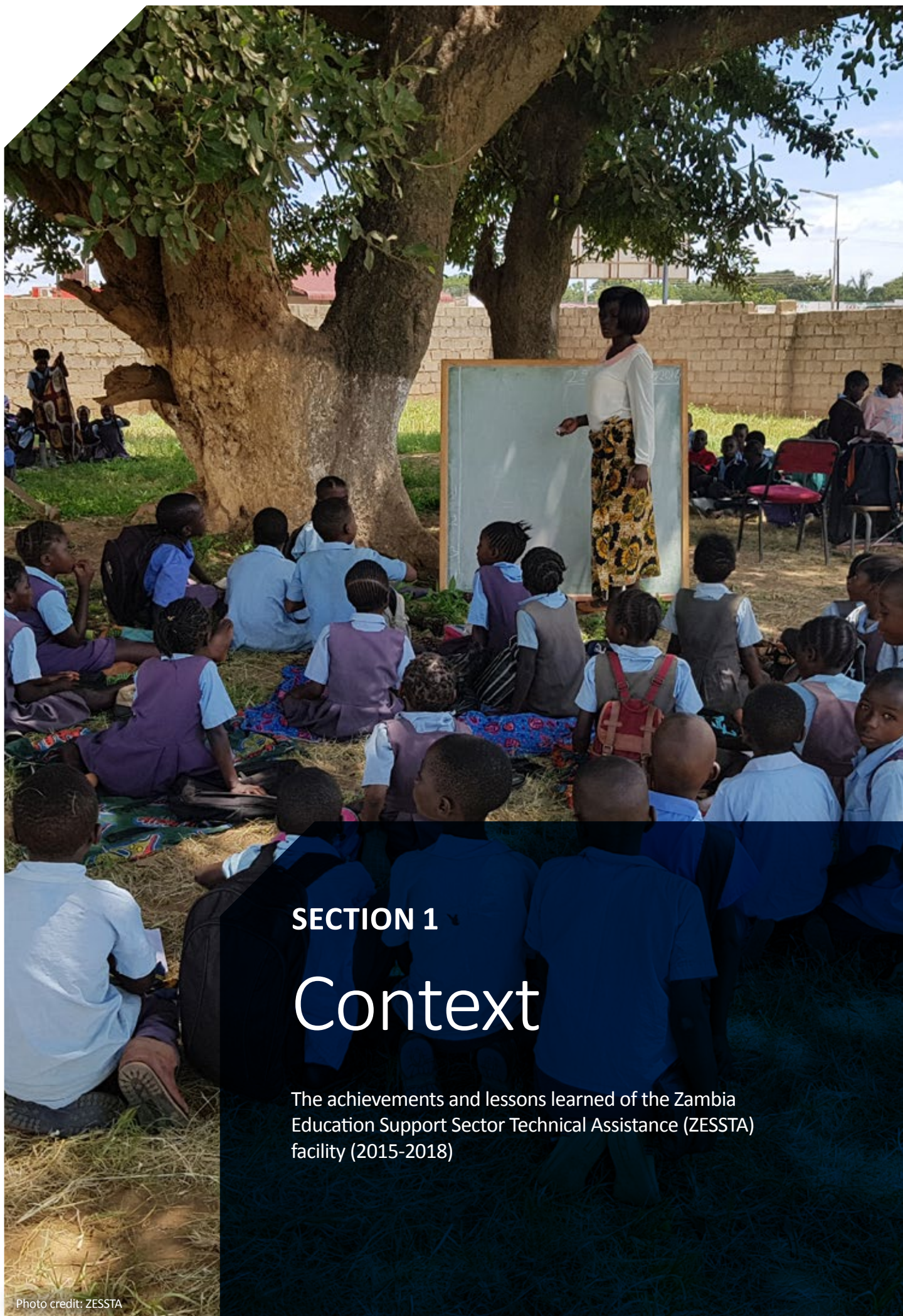




Lessons from a Technical Assistance facility

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SECTION 1

Context

The achievements and lessons learned of the Zambia Education Support Sector Technical Assistance (ZESSTA) facility (2015-2018)

This document has been produced by the Zambia Education Sector Support Technical Assistance (ZESSTA) facility to document the many important achievements and lessons that have been learned. It is the product of a reflective process spanning three years (2015-2018) of implementation and draws on views given throughout the implementation period by members of the national and international technical assistance (TA) team, Ministry of General Education (MoGE)¹ colleagues, and members of the ZESSTA Management Unit. It aims to provide insights to any donors, national governments and implementers setting up – or considering the option of setting up – a similar facility. It also intends to help the British Council, which has been delivering ZESSTA for the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), to learn from this experience.

ZESSTA is the name adopted for the Technical Assistance Component of the Education Sector Budget Support (SBS) Programme, which DFID identified as a complement to the provision of Sector Budget Support (SBS). DFID's aim/rationale was as follows:

To improve the return on investment by DFID and GPE, cash transfers will be complemented with targeted TA to both mitigate risk and strengthen the capacity and approach of the Ministry of Education's sector reform agenda. This TA will help to improve planning and management capacity.¹

Technical assistance accompanies the service delivery grants to strengthen financial, human resource, data and results management systems. Significant capacity building for MESVTEE² staff at the centre and periphery is not a new approach in Zambia. However, what makes this TA "smarter than the business as usual" is that it will be demand driven and focused on ensuring adequate capacity is built. It will be based on the Ministry's requirements. It will be linked to the annual planning processes to have it align to the Ministry's need and be based on a TA action plan.³

The British Council has managed the delivery of the facility, benefiting from resources provided by Ecorys/PMTC and the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) of the University of Wolverhampton.

At its close on 31st January 2018, the ZESSTA facility had provided 6,000 days of technical assistance to Zambia's MoGE and the wider education sector, across 10 workstreams which support the full breadth of elements needed for quality service delivery. The facility's evolution is tracked in the timeline developed for the ZESSTA Legacy Pack.

Section two of this document highlights the many achievements of ZESSTA. **Section three** identifies the lessons learned with regard to the challenges faced during ZESSTA's implementation, how they may have been mitigated during the design, inception or implementation phases, and the factors that are required to support sustainability beyond the life of the facility. **Section four** identifies the six most important determinants of a successful TA facility.

A more detailed description of many of ZESSTA's achievements can be found in Annex 1.

ZESSTA Workstreams

WS 1

Public financial management

WS 2

Sector-wide human resource management

WS 3

Institutional leadership and management

WS4

Information/knowledge management and communications

WS 5

Education management information systems

WS 6

Monitoring and Evaluation

WS 7

Evidence-based planning

WS 8

Teacher education

WS 9

Implementation of the revised curriculum

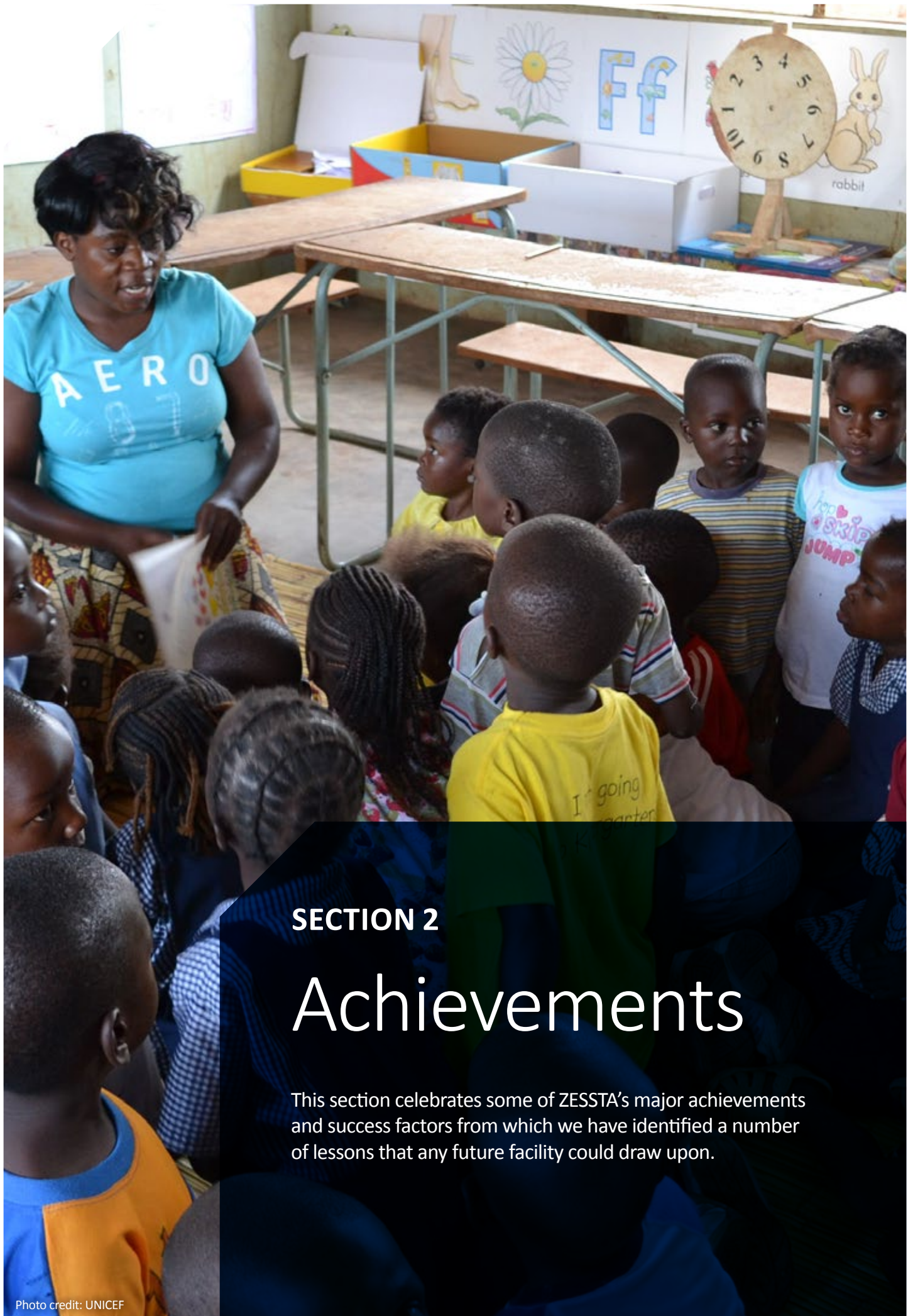
WS 10

Assessment systems

1. DFID and GPE funded Zambia Education Sector Budget Support Programme – Business Case, DFID Zambia, February 2013, p. 2

2. In September 2015 the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) split into the MoGE and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) following a major restructuring of ministerial portfolios.

3. As above, p. 17



SECTION 2

Achievements

This section celebrates some of ZESSTA's major achievements and success factors from which we have identified a number of lessons that any future facility could draw upon.

A good technical facility complements and magnifies work done by other Cooperating Partners.

ZESSTA has been recognised, appreciated, and relied upon by a wide range of Cooperating Partners (CPs) in Zambia. It has had plaudits and appreciation from multilateral and bilateral institutions, and non-government organisations (NGOs). These successes have not come without a concerted effort by the management unit to ensure broad understanding and support for the facility. ZESSTA has also supported well-received contributions to key joint initiatives in the sector, notably its support to MoGE for the preparation for and running of the Joint Annual Review (JAR) (an annual meeting to assess the performance of the education sector) and on specific technical activities such as its collaboration with the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB) and Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) on the innovative Catch-up literacy and numeracy programme. ZESSTA has also worked with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), both of which support MoGE with in-service training of teachers and teacher educators, to ensure a consistent approach to assessment of learning aligned with the principles established in the National Learning Assessment Framework (NLAF).

"One of the functions of the Teaching Council of Zambia is to develop, promote and uphold national professional standards for education professionals. It has been really important to work with our colleagues in the Ministry, in the Teaching Service Commission, with private education providers and with the teacher unions to develop a first draft of the standards which we can use as the basis of a broad national consultation exercise. ZESSTA support for this project has been invaluable."

Dr. E. Mubanga, Registrar, Teaching Council of Zambia



A technical facility can be a catalyst for discussion and change within a sector.

In many cases, ZESSTA's way of working brought MoGE directorates and units together to plan, discuss and implement technical activities. In doing so, it reinforced the relationships between Ministry officials and refreshed the idea that directorates and units do not operate in silos, but depend on each other for support and capacity. This was not only limited to MoGE. The facility played a large role in strengthening relationships with and between other ministries, agencies, and departments. A strong example of this is the work under the public financial management workstream, which reinforced relationships between MoGE, the Ministry of Finance and the Zambian Public Procurement Agency. Another example is the work ZESSTA supported on teacher standards, which facilitated meetings between the Teaching Council of Zambia, the Teaching Service Commission, the Examinations Council of Zambia, the Teachers' Unions and UNESCO amongst others. In these and all of its activities, ZESSTA has always added technical rigour to the initiation, development, and implementation of activities – ensuring that strong justification always existed and helping MoGE to ensure that any resulting activity was the best solution to a given challenge.

In a successful technical facility, advisers and their ministry partners build strong, mutually respectful relationships and work closely together.

ZESSTA's approach of 'doing with and not for' has fostered ownership and integration across its many workstreams. Working together has resulted in the two-way transfer of knowledge and skills between the MoGE officers and ZESSTA TA. An excellent example of this emerged from our support to the development of institutional leadership and management toolkits, where side-by-side work resulted in a strong cadre of materials writers from MoGE while the national and international TA increased their understanding of how key management systems are implemented in schools and how education officers address the challenges they find. This learning was then used to strengthen the relevance of the materials. A second lesson to learn is that relationships require patience and respect from both sides, and that not every relationship can be expected to go smoothly. In that case, ensuring a support system is in place to resolve differences is key, and ZESSTA successfully used both informal mechanisms and its steering committee to good effect in this regard.

ZESSTA and MoGE worked side-by-side to develop the Zambia Education Management Toolkits (ZEMT) for institutional leaders.

ZEMT 1	ZEMT 2	ZEMT 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School improvement planning • Supporting positive learner behaviour • School health management • Financial management guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School performance management • Managing curriculum change • Communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing professional development • Resource management • Stakeholder engagement



A technical facility can also build national capacity outside of government institutions.

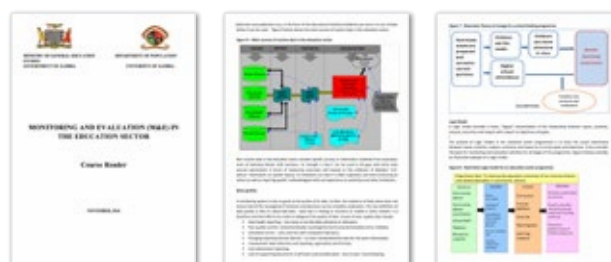


Image: The M&E Course Reader developed by UNZA for MoGE

Economists describe a 'positive spill-over effect' where an activity creates value outside of its target institutions – and ZESSTA is a good example of this. It has built sectoral capacity for development outside of government institutions in a number of ways; working with the University of Zambia's (UNZA) Department of Population Studies to develop a suite of practice-oriented Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) courses, and working alongside Ku-Atenga Media to strengthen MoGE's communications are just two examples.

"The best practice approach to course development that ZESSTA required us to use has not only strengthened the capacity of MoGE staff, it has also enabled us to be a more effective and responsive provider of M&E training for the education sector."

Dr Lemba, University of Zambia, Department of Population Studies

Adaptive and responsive programming is a key feature of a successful TA facility.

One of ZESSTA's outstanding achievements has been the way in which it has continually, and quickly, adapted to the changing needs of MoGE. A balanced planning system has allowed for annual planning as well as demand-driven activities. Regular steering committee meetings have allowed the MoGE senior management team to review progress and direct effort as needed. Flexibility within the facility structure also allowed the team to respond to unexpected sectoral changes, and our targeted support to MoGE in the second half of 2017 to respond to challenges around the receipt of Sector Budget Support is an example of this. At all times, decisions about where to focus resources were based upon evidence, and justified to the steering committee using a standardised set of criteria. Where success was not met, lessons were learned, and that feedback used to inform future activities.

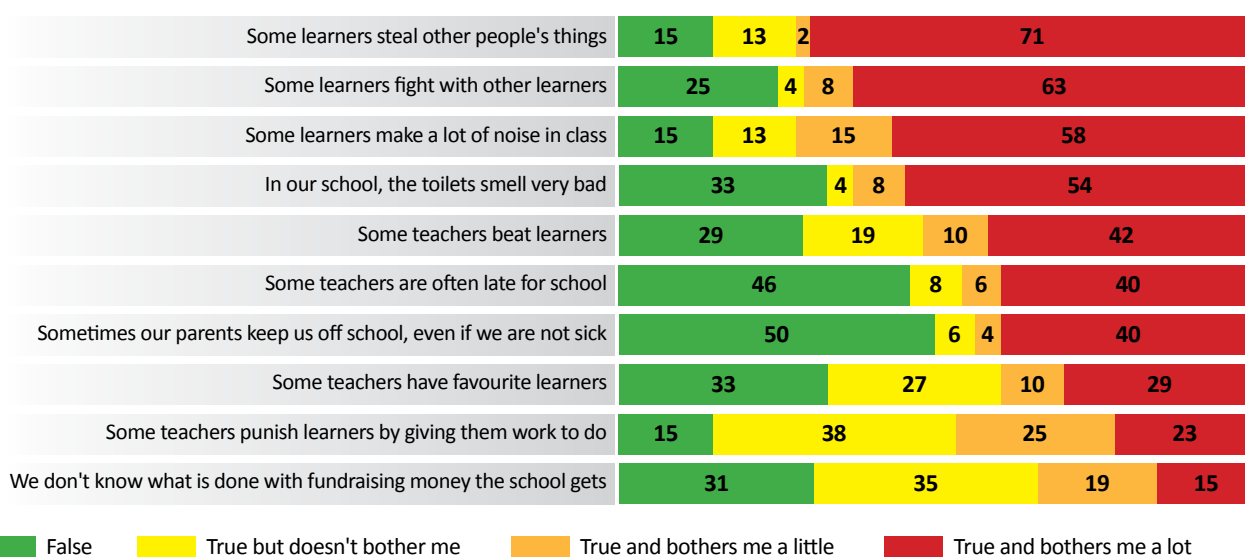
Modelling effective planning processes supports the strengthening of evidence-based planning and effective implementation of plans.

When directorates approached ZESSTA for TA support for their initiatives, the initial collaborative activities included an analysis of the current situation in order to support evidence-based planning. This included a situation analysis prior to the development of the Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Guide (TCIG); a baseline survey prior to the development of leadership and management tools for school leaders followed by monitoring of implementation of the tools; a training needs analysis prior to the design and implementation of any training such as in procurement and M&E. In addition, the annual TA work-planning process was entirely inclusive and transparent, as was the ongoing evaluation of progress against the workplan.

A technical facility is well suited to test, incubate, and replicate innovative development practice.

ZESSTA was innovative! Across a number of activities, the ZESSTA team introduced and supported new and original ideas, gaining knowledge of what did and did not work in a Zambian context. An example of this was the baseline study carried out in schools to identify the challenges that most concerned learners, teachers and parents in order to develop toolkits that institutional leaders could use to address these challenges. As part of the study, each group of learners, parents, and teachers were asked to use an innovative card game to identify areas which they were most concerned about; this provided information to the schools, zones and districts on the problems they needed to address. Another example was the use of a 'parallel learning' approach rather than a cascade model to increase the pool of trainers to introduce the new curriculum. Also, ZESSTA's support to the MoGE Curriculum Development Centre to localise cutting-edge literacy materials resulted in those materials being trialled, and finalised. Finally, ZESSTA's support to Output Based Budgeting (OBB) resulted in the production of a manual by MoGE planning officers to support future staff in OBB; this was then shared with the Ministry of Finance – so bottom-up rather than top-down. Further examples can be found in Annex 1.

An innovative baseline study identified the challenges that most concerned learners.



There is a direct correlation between the success of a TA facility and the strength and coherence of the team that provides the technical assistance.

ZESSTA built a strong, coherent team of technical advisers who respected each other and worked well together, and this was a common element of many of ZESSTA's successes. The team had a balance of complementary skills, personalities, experiences, and nationalities – Zambian, regional, and international. Importantly, this pool of individuals remains as a resource available to MoGE should it wish to obtain further support in future.

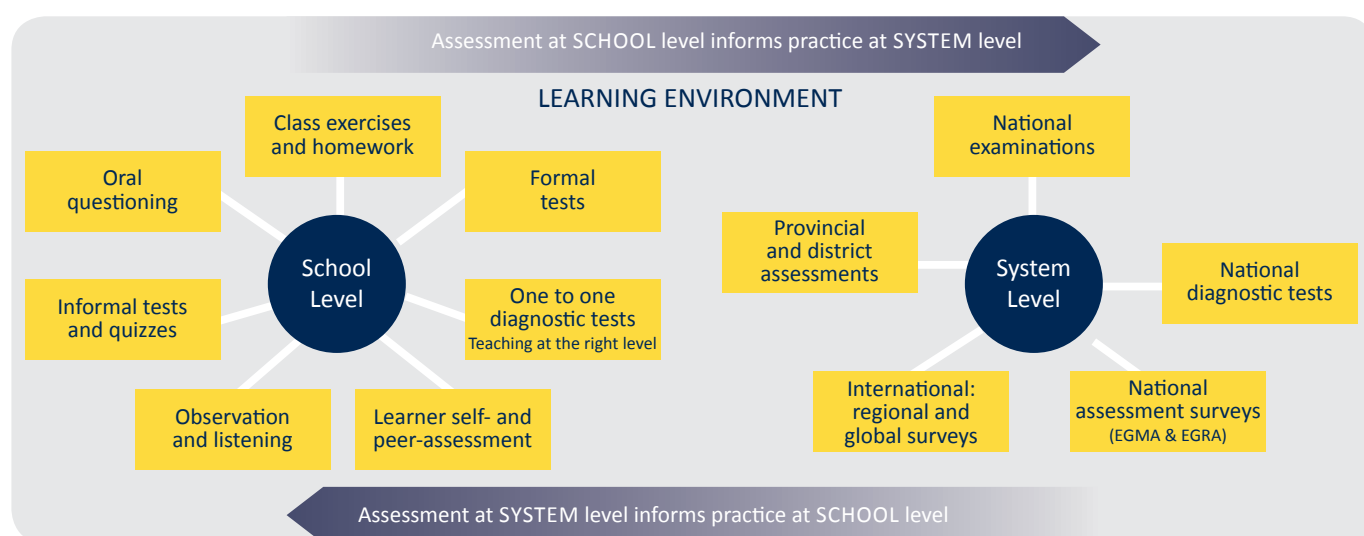
Ensuring high quality 'knowledge products' is a key safeguard of the legacy of any technical facility.

One of ZESSTA's key successes has been its comprehensive quality assurance protocol, which has resulted in a large volume of consistently high quality tools, reports, and documents. These will remain after the closure of the facility, and will ensure a legacy long after the end of ZESSTA. The system involved three levels of quality assurance, including validation by stakeholder - always leading up to the team leader - and this not only produced highly polished, user-friendly documents which were both robust and attractive, but resulted in strong, defensible knowledge products that MoGE could be proud of, and which will stand the test of time. There are too many examples to list, but amongst those which the facility is most proud: the toolkits to support improved institutional leadership and management, the Teacher's Curriculum Implementation Guide, the National Learning Assessment Framework, the draft National Standards for educators, and ZESSTA's six high quality results papers distilling hard-earned lessons about implementation in a timely way, throughout the life of the facility.



Image: Results paper cover

Diagram from the National Learning Assessment Framework



As a support mechanism, a technical facility can provide excellent economy and efficiency for donors.

ZESSTA provided DFID with outstanding economy and efficiency when considering value for money. This included the reduction of operational costs through the setting up and management of a guesthouse; supplier agreements with hotels, venues, and service providers; bulk supply purchasing; and close attention to unit cost details. Through its use of a small management unit, it delivered over 6000 days of consultant time, balancing national, regional and international, and short and long term inputs to maximise the value of DFID and the GPE's investment.

A technical facility can facilitate outstanding technical work that provides value for money, adds value to ongoing ministry activities, and results in sustainable and innovative development practice.

This reflection on the achievements of the ZESSTA facility would be incomplete without examples of what we feel demonstrate industry best practice in how they: related to key strategic imperatives (as set out in the SBS, Performance Assessment Framework (PAF), National Investment Framework (NIF), Joint Annual Review (JAR) etc.), complemented existing support, were achieved in a timely way, were affordable and cost effective, were sustainable/innovative, provided evidence for improved planning/budgeting, and provided technical assistance rather than administrative support. Examples of some of the work that make up the ZESSTA legacy can be seen in Annex 1.

"The contribution that ZESSTA is making is truly excellent. Tangible results have already been seen in the first 11 months that you have provided technical assistance to the Education Sector."
Owen Mgemezulu, former Director of Planning and Information



SECTION 3

Lessons learned regarding design, implementation and sustainability

This section looks at the lessons learned from the challenges faced during the implementation of ZESSTA.

This section looks at the lessons learned with regard to the challenges faced during the implementation of ZESSTA. We have identified how some of these challenges could have been mitigated during the design or inception period while other ‘lessons learned’ provide guidance on addressing challenges during the implementation phase. During both design and implementation, careful consideration needs to be given to ensuring that there is sustainability of implementation beyond the life of the facility.

3.1 Design

TA facilities need to be granted sufficient time for critical design activities, notably developing a unified vision.

ZESSTA's short inception was a major design weakness. Delays to the tendering process resulted in ZESSTA not being synchronised with SBS and having a shorter duration than was initially envisaged. An eagerness to commence TA activities led to an inception period of just one month. This was insufficient and meant that numerous classical inception phase activities, including the establishment of systems, were either rushed, only completed later after implementation had already commenced or did not happen at all. This contributed to many of the implementation challenges highlighted elsewhere in this report. For example, although a hurried stock-take of MoGE's TA needs at headquarters was undertaken, there was no time for either a diagnostic assessment of realities and needs at the school or sub-national levels. Nor was time available for other TA induction activities such as cultural awareness training or the building of durable relations with key Ministry partners.

More fundamentally, however, a truncated inception period meant that the critical action of shaping a unified vision – between MoGE's senior management and rank-and-file staff, DFID and the British Council – of what ZESSTA was meant to be, was only partially successful. This also affected agreements on critical procedural issues (such as per diems, which we deal with in more detail in subsequent sections). This had a continued negative impact on stakeholder relations that lasted throughout the facility's lifetime.

“There was no orientation time, and this inhibited achievement: there was not much time for sensitisation, and we were up and running before we knew what needed to be done. To effectively address issues, it takes a long time; as you go deeper into them, so you realise that there is more work to do than originally thought. This was compounded by the Ministry taking a while to understand ZESSTA and fully use the facility. We really needed more time.”

Bridget Moya, Director, DODE

Careful consideration needs to be given to the optimal duration of TA facilities in light of the level of ambition and absorptive capacity of beneficiary institutions.

ZESSTA's implementation period of just 35 months was insufficient given the newness of this sort of approach within both Zambia and DFID, ZESSTA's delivery capacity as well as the scale of needs, complexity of challenges, reform appetite and level of absorptive capacity within MoGE itself. Ultimately, ZESSTA did successfully deliver its three annual work plans to the overall satisfaction of both DFID and MoGE, but this inevitably came at a significant personal cost to some within the ZESSTA team and sometimes - but by no means always - led to an erosion of the key delivery principle of ‘doing with, not for’.

Clarity on the broad technical and geographic scope of a TA facility needs to be engendered within the design phase, whilst in parallel building in sufficient adaptability to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Careful thought – particularly on the topic of payment modalities – needs to be given to the contract between a funding organisation and TA facility Service Provider.

ZESSTA was able to respond nimbly to address evolving Ministry needs, both through its basic design as a flexible TA facility as well as the specific inclusion of a demand-driven support ‘window’ triggered through specific requests to the ZESSTA Steering Committee. At the same time, however, confusion emerged among stakeholders over key issues of scope (e.g. support to sub-national levels and the higher education sector).

A number of important lessons can be learned from the contract between DFID and the British Council. The adoption of payment milestones during ZESSTA’s inception period has undoubtedly contributed to enhancing institutional knowledge within DFID on how this budgeting modality can be designed in an efficient and transparent manner. Subsequent experiences during implementation have, however, shown some of the limitations associated with payment milestones. In particular, whilst nominally strengthening results accountability, they have tended to lead to a narrower focus on the delivery of easily evidenced outputs (written documents, workshops etc.), upon which payment milestones are typically based, rather than the more difficult to obtain systemic and institutional changes within MoGE at a higher (outcome) level. Payment milestones have also in some cases undermined the principle of ‘doing with, not for’ as the need to manage overall facility-level cash-flow has sometimes prevailed over working at a slower pace but in a more collaborative manner with Ministry officials. The collection and transmission of evidence of achievement of payment milestones each quarter also proved to be time-consuming.



The level of ambition for any TA facility needs to be matched by adequate resourcing.

The budget allocated for ZESSTA was insufficient given its scale and level of ambition. Although ultimately a commercial decision for prospective Service Providers, ZESSTA was rather unusual in the fact that the complex, broader SBS context meant that there were a significant number of uncertainties at the tendering stage which were not ultimately resolved during the inception phase. Furthermore, an unintended consequence of the three consecutive tender processes was downward pressure on the ultimate resourcing of the facility, with particular consequences in terms of the staffing of ZESSTA’s management unit and the resource envelope for travel and subsistence (including the coverage of MoGE’s travel and subsistence costs – see subsequent pages). The demand-driven nature of ZESSTA – a key design feature – also resulted in a facility which inevitably became highly ambitious in relation to available resources.

A critical design phase activity is reaching an agreement acceptable to all parties (government, funding organisation and service provider) on the policy towards per diems (allowances) and other financial responsibilities.

ZESSTA's contract with DFID meant that it was unable to pay cash per diems (allowances) for Ministry staff participating in ZESSTA activities; per diems were required to be paid by MoGE using government funds. This misunderstanding damaged relations with MoGE and became particularly problematic following the suspension of SBS in mid-2017 as MoGE was no longer able to provide such payments itself. This resulted in the delay or cancellation of certain activities but, more importantly, soured the overall relationship between ZESSTA and key MoGE colleagues. The whole issue became characterised by distrust and misunderstanding on both sides: MoGE opined that in not providing cash allowances the basic conditions of service of its staff were being ignored. Furthermore, the MoGE policy of organising workshops in Kabwe or on the outskirts of Lusaka was not in line with DFID value-for-money (VfM) policies nor easy to reconcile with the British Council's procurement system (vendor registration). Moreover, irrespective of the divergent views between MoGE and ZESSTA on the issue, the fact remains that the ZESSTA budget was such that the British Council could not have afforded to pay allowances in line with Government of Zambia conditions of service even if it had wanted to. This points to the need for agreement on the issue to be reached between the funder and government at an early stage of project design, before the procurement of the TA facility Service Providers. Such an agreement should ideally go beyond the narrow issue of allowances and seek consensus on both the funder and government's broader requirements in terms of VfM and conditions of service respectively. A further misunderstanding was the view that ZESSTA should have its own funding envelope to support implementation of activities, rather than requiring MoGE to utilise the SBS. This led to a number of requests for support that could not be met.

"The package of trainings that were profiled for the Ministry took care of challenges; but such a facility must move with a resource envelope – providing just technical assistance has affected the overall implementation process. In Zambia we need resources."
Sunday Mwape, Director Standards & Curriculum

The staffing model of Core and National Advisers with additional short-term expertise is effective, with additional lessons to be learned on how it might be further optimised to meet the demands of specific contexts.

A key advantage of ZESSTA was its strong, permanent presence within MoGE's Headquarters and its diverse team of national and international advisers able to provide support across all MoGE directorates and units. Some advisers were physically 'embedded' in the offices of their TA partners and this proved to be very effective for some tasks. The 'fly-in, fly-out' model of Core Advisers combined with National Advisers ensured MoGE access to a diverse team often working across directorates; however this sometimes limited the ability to respond promptly to emerging Ministry needs, particularly where national advisers were only available part-time. This raises the issue of whether it would be more efficient to have a small number of Core Advisers (international or national) engaged for a greater number of days embedded within key directorates, who could respond to emerging needs and call down additional skills and expertise from a larger pool of international and national advisers as needed.

"ZESSTA has been a very good facility and we have been able to learn and achieve a lot; it has given us access to people with lots of knowledge we didn't have."
Muyangwa Kamutumwa, Director TESS

Although ultimately dependent on the specific institutional context, the ideal location for TA facilities is fully integrated within Ministry structures.

While ZESSTA was located within MoGE's headquarters, Ministry ownership might have been strengthened had ZESSTA been located more specifically within the Directorate of Planning and Information (DPI). Such an arrangement would have been fully consistent with DPI's role in co-ordinating key horizontal activities within the Ministry such as budgeting, strategic planning, M&E and MoGE-CP relations and could even have seen ZESSTA's activities fully subsumed within the Ministry's Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB). Although not without its own administrative challenges (notably around DFID and British Council fiduciary safeguards), fully integrating the TA facility within Ministry structures would potentially have led to greater ownership of ZESSTA at both leadership and operational levels.

TA facilities require stable and supportive institutional leadership from both funding provider and partner ministry to thrive.

The ZESSTA experience was one of varying levels of engagement on both accounts. The presence during the first half of ZESSTA of a full-time, resident DFID Education Adviser was highly beneficial with high-level policy dialogue (i.e. at Ministerial or PS level) complementing ZESSTA's 'grass-roots' activities within the Ministry to mutual benefit. With hindsight, the departure of the Education Adviser around ZESSTA's midpoint was unfortunate insofar as high-level policy dialogue became more limited – as was the scope for DFID to support the resolution of sensitive facility governance issues such as in relation to per diems. Equally, for the first year of the facility, ZESSTA's key 'champion' was the Director of Planning and Information who played an active role in carving out (and communicating) ZESSTA's place within the Ministry. Following his departure from the Ministry, it took time for others at a senior management level to understand and back ZESSTA with resulting implications in terms of continuity, ownership and, ultimately, general understanding of ZESSTA's mandate.

3.2 Implementation



Photo credit: WOB Zambia Teacher Education

Governance of the facility should be situated within the Ministry's decision-making structures to strengthen uptake and effectiveness.

Throughout the life of the facility, the Steering Committee sat outside the Ministry's formal decision-making structure. This may have impacted the MoGE's capacity for uptake of the high volume of work. The external evaluators identified that, 'Even as a demand-driven facility ZESSTA requires a significant input in time and discussion by MoGE senior management, which has created an additional burden because ZESSTA operates with a separate decision-making structure, thus taking up additional time from senior management'.

Wide understanding of the TA facility's role and operational procedures in order to manage Ministry expectations is needed throughout the life of the facility.

A number of challenges arose as a consequence of a lack of understanding within MoGE of the role of ZESSTA and its operational procedures in providing TA. Such misunderstanding resulted in requests for support that required purchasing of equipment; expectations that TA carry out activities 'for' rather than 'with' MoGE staff; requests for payments of per diems, incidental expenses and transport refunds, etc. Some misunderstandings could be explained by the change of leadership and staffing within MoGE across the lifetime of ZESSTA, inconsistent attendance at Steering Committee meetings and lack of information sharing by senior managers to their officers.

"There should have been more respect for the conditions of service – a 'human face' – not like in, for example, the M & E workshops as well as PSU officers being offered bus money to travel to the planned Chipata training on procurement."

L. L. Jere, Procurement and Supply Unit

"However, the issue of funds was hard as was the holding of meetings within Lusaka; you don't achieve as much as when you hold them in Kabwe or somewhere else, which ensures dedicated attention."

Muyangwa Kamutumwa, Director TESS



National and international TA should be embedded in relevant TA partner offices while considering the aggregate 'load' of multiple TA workstreams working within individual Directorates or Departments.

At the inception of ZESSTA it was promoted that national and international TA should be embedded in the relevant directorate. However, this was difficult for MoGE as office space for their officers was limited so an office for ZESSTA TA was made available. However, some TA subsequently embedded themselves within their TA partner's office and this was found to be very effective in building relationships and supporting 'doing with' MoGE. More attention should also have been given to managing the aggregate workload imposed by multiple workstreams working within a single directorate. At times, ZESSTA's overall engagement within the Directorate of Planning and Information was challenging, with various Core and National Advisers (e.g. across Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Public Financial Management (PFM) and Evidence-based Planning), all placing demands on the time of the same cohort of (already very busy) officials.

"Staff from outside should share with an officer dealing with the same issue; there has not been sufficient transfer of knowledge."

Joseph Nthele, DPI

Advisers need to have an intricate understanding of the country context and specifically the education sector.

MoGE identified the importance of all TA having a good understanding of the local environment and the need for TA to engage in field visits relevant to their work to enhance that understanding. However, the DFID business case stated that the advisers were not expected to travel. To address this, the terms of reference (TORs) for national and international TA required experience in Zambia or the region in order to be appointed. The facility also shared the ZESSTA quarterly reports and held TA meetings to facilitate sharing of progress and challenges. However, greater understanding of the context in which ZESSTA operated could have been enhanced through enabling greater access to reports, materials and other documents developed by TA, MoGE and CPs through an online repository to which all TA had access. Some field visits outside of Lusaka would also be helpful for TA where their work leads to national implementation in order to gain full understanding of the various challenges.

An online repository for documents enables the wide sharing of information with advisers and ministry staff.

The knowledge management and communications strategy developed during the inception period outlined the establishment of a central repository for all documents produced by the TA facility. The aim was to provide an online platform (i.e. one-stop shop) for all advisers and MoGE staff to access the publications and products produced by the facility. This was to ensure advisers, particularly international advisers without a continuous presence in Zambia, would deepen their understanding of the Zambian context and the work of the various ZESSTA workstreams. The team explored various online sharing platforms but they did not meet the rigorous security standards required by the British Council, and for security reasons the British Council's own platform was not accessible to non-staff. The team also explored the platforms available within the Ministry and discovered that there was no functioning Ministry website or intranet. In the end, British Council online storage was used to securely store all documents related to ZESSTA activities, but this was only accessible to members of the management unit. In Year 3, ZESSTA responded to a demand-driven activity from MoGE to strengthen the website. Having identified the problem with the MoGE website at the start of the facility, working with MoGE to address it in Year 1 could have ensured that all documents were accessible to ZESSTA TA and MoGE staff as well as (if appropriate) the general public. However, all facility documents and knowledge products have been stored and will easily be transferred once the MoGE website is operational.

"Dissemination could have been stronger – ZESSTA has helped produce a lot of really useful papers and reports."

Tara O'Connell, UNICEF

Consistently strengthen the understanding of the value of 'doing with and not for'.

Due to the volume of activities taking place within the various directorates, MoGE officers were not always available to 'do with' their ZESSTA partners and activities were delayed. The consequence of this was delays in the delivery of the reports, products and training required as evidence for payment milestones as well as the need to change or cancel activities based on the prevailing context. ZESSTA worked with both DFID and MoGE, through the Steering Committee, to balance the two requirements to ensure that the collaborative 'way of working' remained in place as far as possible while payment milestones were adjusted to ensure that ZESSTA costs were met. For DFID this could be an excellent internal lesson learning opportunity on how this modality can work in similar TA facilities and to develop strategies to mitigate against the potential for TA to 'do' the work rather than 'do with' in order to achieve payment milestones, or select milestones that are easier to achieve.

3.3 Establishing a legacy

The capacity to manage TA must be built into the TORs for the facility if you want such a capacity to be developed and to endure.

MoGE officers have been exposed to significant levels of TA and have used ZESSTA to support the development of strategy, policy, tools and materials. Their technical skills have often been enhanced. However, the capacity of the Ministry to manage TA to maximum advantage has not specifically been developed. If this is a desired output from a TA project, it should be built into the design of the TA facility and its workstreams.

Ministry staff must own the documents, the reports, the tools and the materials that have been developed in collaboration if these products are to endure beyond the life of the TA facility.

There are risks that ZESSTA reports and papers will not be read, let alone acted upon; that tools, including training programmes and guidance documents, will not be used despite the collaborative efforts to develop them; and that some activities which ended prematurely due, in part, to the late start-up of the facility, will not have sufficient momentum to continue without external support. The ZESSTA approach of 'doing with and not for' has been a key principle in engaging with Ministry staff and there have been significant efforts to identify Ministry champions for specific workstreams and, where possible, 'TA Partners' from relevant Ministry directorates. This has been important to try to maintain shared commitment to implementation beyond the lifetime of ZESSTA. It has also been important to badge activities or documents which have been developed with ZESSTA support as Ministry activities and documents, to strengthen Ministry ownership. Strong engagement with officers at district and provincial levels has also been effective in ensuring that new initiatives are implemented and sustained.

"We are very happy with the results achieved through working collaboratively with the ZESSTA facility. We have achieved many of our key milestones."
James Chilufya, Chief Curriculum Specialist

There must be leadership commitment to build on the work that the TA has supported if it is to be sustainable.

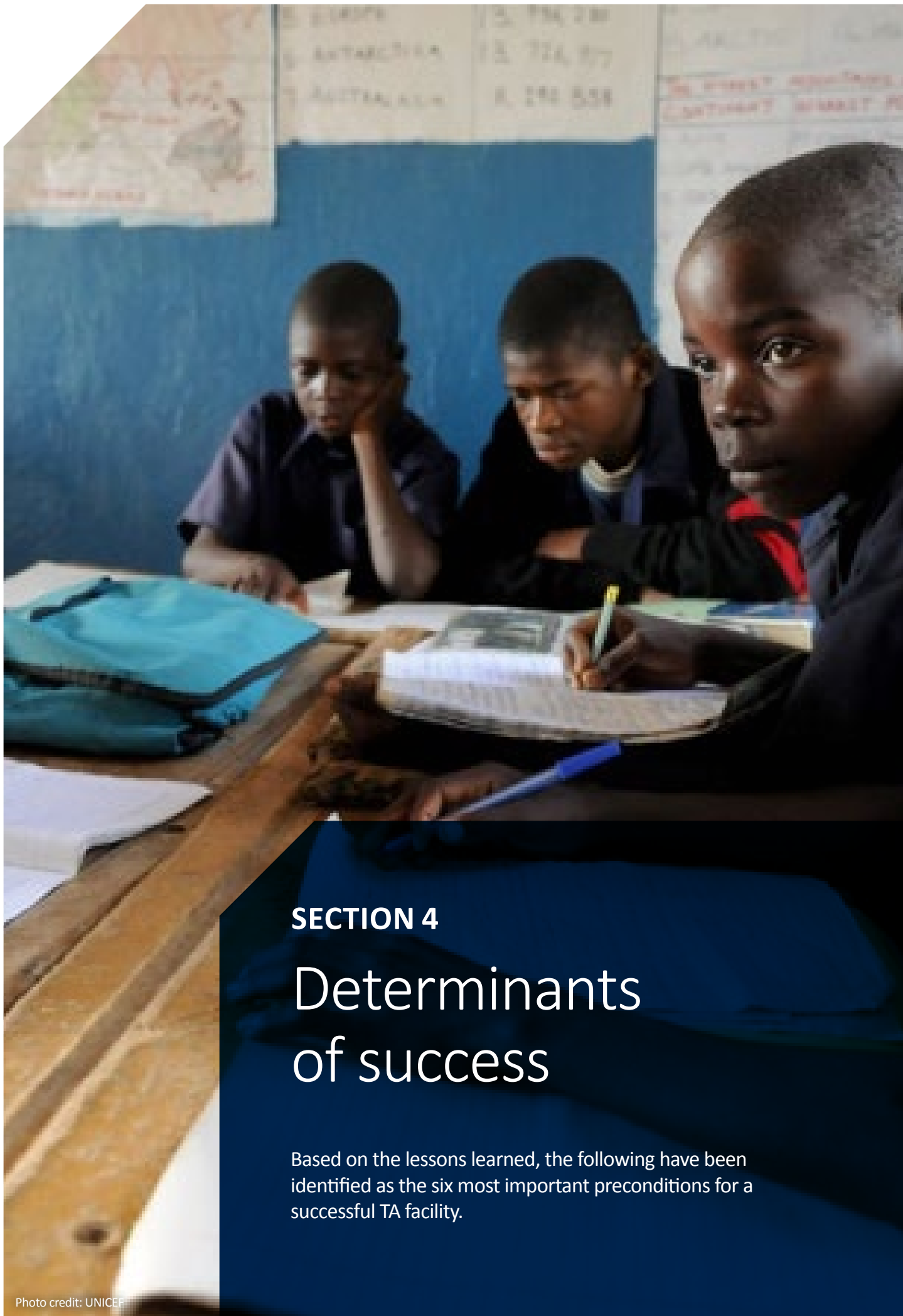
It has not always been possible for ZESSTA and the Ministry to engender a genuine appetite for reform and a shared vision; this is addressed elsewhere in this report. But where there was greater involvement and genuine commitment from MoGE senior managers, workstreams gained momentum which is more likely to continue beyond the life of the ZESSTA facility.

The outputs developed with support from the TA facility must be enshrined in policy, be widely available and be of the highest possible quality if they are to endure.

ZESSTA sought where possible to embed ZESSTA supported work in formal policies and procedures, including Cabinet Circulars, and to ensure that implementation plans were clear and agreed. It was also important that ZESSTA's products were of the highest quality to ensure a positive reception and that the successes and progress of the activities supported by TA should be widely disseminated and available, with an accessible repository being a priority. To ensure sustainability of initiatives begun during ZESSTA, a legacy plan was developed for each of its workstreams, and ZESSTA TA worked with MoGE partners to identify where other agencies (specifically UNESCO, USAID, CAMFED and UNICEF) would provide support for the implementation of ongoing initiatives beyond ZESSTA.

An ex-post evaluation is important to judge the extent to which TA facilities have had a positive impact.

Given concerns that the momentum behind initiatives might be lost when the TA facility is closed down, it is suggested that there be a formal review after two or three years to determine which initiatives have endured, what materials are still accessible and being used, and whether there is any evidence that Ministry staff closely associated with TA have benefitted from this experience.



SECTION 4

Determinants of success

Based on the lessons learned, the following have been identified as the six most important preconditions for a successful TA facility.



Developing the second toolkit for institutional leaders
Credit: ZESSTA

1 Strong and committed leadership within the ministry which will host the TA facility.

2 Rigorous design phase for TA facility led by the donor in consultation with the ministry; with formal agreements on key financial responsibilities and integration of the TA facility in the ministry's structure.

3 An appetite within the ministry for reform and learning.

4 Availability of resources (earmarking) to fund activities that are supported by TA.

5 Access to a large pool of skilled national and international TA, with the relevant technical skills/expertise; regional (ideally country-specific) knowledge; and the predisposition to work in a collaborative fashion.

6 Good working relationships between facility managers, TA and MoGE partners.

A photograph of three young people, two women and one man, wearing school uniforms (white shirts and dark ties). They are looking down at a document or book. The woman in the foreground has braided hair. The background is slightly blurred, showing an indoor setting with a corrugated metal ceiling.

ANNEX 1

The ZESSTA legacy

The facility supported outstanding technical work that provided value for money, added value to ongoing ministry activities and resulted in sustainable and innovative development practice.

The table below identifies some of achievements that ZESSTA has supported.

Workstream	Innovation, effectiveness, impact, sustainability
WS 1: Public financial management (PFM)	<p>Support Output Based Budgeting. Support was provided to the MoGE Department of Planning and Information (DPI) during the formulation of the 2018 Output Based Budget. Two challenges were encountered during this activity: the planning team were new in their positions and this was their first OBB preparation; the Ministry of Finance was leading the OBB reform but had no OBB manual/guideline or budgeting templates to put the 2018 OBB together.</p> <p>We worked with the DPI team to develop the budgeting templates linking the directorates to the programmes and sub-programmes. We also prepared a baseline budget before the Ministry of Finance could issue the ceilings for 2018. This assisted the MoGE because all they had to do was adjust the baseline in line with the final ceilings issued by the Ministry of Finance.</p> <p>A guide to OBB has been developed and the budgeting templates have been set up for the 2019 OBB preparation; this will enable the same process to be followed by the DPI budget team to formulate the 2019 OBB. It will also officers new to the process should there be changes in staffing.</p> <p>Strengthen utilization of IFMIS in MoGE and the provincial education offices, and set up a system of super users. The MoGE Accounts Department was supported to develop a super user mechanism as there was no mechanism in place. With the Accounts Department ZESSTA carried out a training needs assessment to identify the tasks and competences required of super users and individuals to be trained for this role. The Ministry of Finance training programme was used to train the selected individuals as super users. The super user mechanism is now in place; the Accounts Department will maintain it with the support of regular training conducted by the Ministry of Finance.</p>
WS 2: Sector-wide human resource management (HRM)	<p>Reduce ‘payroll mismatch’. ZESSTA worked with the Ministry over a significant period to understand the causes and consequences of ‘payroll mismatch’, i.e. where central records are not aligned to the actual deployment of teachers and many teachers are working at a school that is different from their paypoint. As a consequence of this, some schools are overstaffed while others are significantly understaffed – particularly those in more rural areas, with many teachers being paid allowances that are inappropriate for the job they actually do. ZESSTA supported the Ministry in developing a roadmap to address payroll mismatch. The PS issued the plan to all provinces and districts with instructions to comply with the requirements and deadlines. The Chief Accountant agreed that the payroll clean-up roadmap should be incorporated into the Financial Management Action Plan (FMAP) and progress should regularly be reported to the Financial Technical Committee (FTC). The first objective of the plan was to address inappropriate allowances and there are preliminary reports of many cases where inappropriate allowances have been stopped and recoveries effected. This will produce major savings for the Zambian public sector.</p> <p>Support development of national standards for educators. ZESSTA also contributed to the development of a draft set of national professional standards for teachers, teacher educators and education leaders, initially bringing interested parties together and then organising a stakeholder workshop led by an expert on UK and international teacher standards. A Steering Group was established to oversee the development and implementation of the standards, which involved Ministry officers, the Teaching Council, the Teaching Service Commission, the private sector and the trade unions. Working groups refined the wording of the standards, especially in the context of an emerging common standards framework for countries across Southern Africa which has been supported by UNESCO. All Steering Group members have presented outline plans for how the standards might be implemented in their areas of responsibility, which is a major achievement given traditional difficulties of getting different directorates, agencies and stakeholder institutions to work together. The standards will have a significant impact on teacher performance and thus on pupil learning.</p>

WS 3:

Institutional
leadership and
management

Support professional development of education leaders. MoGE provided training for a small number of headteachers through Chalimbana University; this was found to be unsustainable due to the high cost per individual and recognition of the need to strengthen leadership capacity in all schools. Meetings were held to identify a more cost effective approach to improving the leadership and management skills of school leaders and the concept of toolkits emerged. The toolkits were designed to provide step-by-step guidance to enable school leaders to implement more effective management systems and ways of working, and respond to challenges. A baseline study was also carried out in pilot schools to identify the key concerns of learners and teachers in order that these could be addressed through the toolkits.

"The community and school are now working together and parents have since begun contributing to hygiene by donating soap for use after using the toilets and they bought handwashing buckets for the learners' toilets." Senior teacher

Teams of officers from MoGE HQ, district and provincial offices were supported to develop the three toolkits. The monitoring of the first toolkit found that headteachers found the materials easy to follow and that the majority of schools had begun implementation. Lusaka province has recently decided to roll-out the toolkits to all their schools. UNICEF is also considering how they can support MoGE to carry out the national roll out of the toolkits.

"I am positive that the portfolios we have developed will bring sanity in the teaching profession. I wish to thank the ZESSTA for supporting the Ministry to develop the portfolio as a way of monitoring the performance of our headteachers. This is a good move and I am sure that you shall see more well managed schools." Workshop participant

Support mechanisms for performance management of school leaders. A further innovation has been the development of a guide, written by stakeholders from across the education sector, on how to manage assessment of headteacher performance through using evidence based portfolios. In order to ensure sustainability, discussions are ongoing between Teacher Education and Specialised Services and (a) the Teaching Council of Zambia on how performance assessment using portfolios could also be used as part of the licensing of headteachers; and (b) with the Teaching Service Commission to discuss how the portfolios could also be used as part of the promotion process.

WS 4:

Information/
knowledge
management
and
communications

Support in operationalising the MoGE communications strategy. At the start of ZESSTA, there was no clear 'owner' within the Ministry for communications. A sector-wide communications strategy had been developed with CP support, but it had not been operationalised. Due to a triage of ZESSTA support (operationalising the communications strategy, supporting the Directorate of Early Childhood Education (ECE) to develop a communications strategy, and strengthening the MoGE website - www.moge.gov.zm), the communications momentum is now building within the Ministry. There is now clear ownership. The work is being led and coordinated by the Public Relations Unit (PRU) via a communications working group with representation from each Directorate (sustainable footprint). The ZESSTA-supported activities have led to a positive trickle effect: shift in approach from primarily tracking the Minister's speaking engagements to piloting strategic media interventions; re-activating the MoGE Facebook page (an innovative solution despite minimal budget); and publishing the inaugural edition of the MoGE Magazine: In-Focus. The work has been supported by a local communications firm, Ku-Atenga, which has built sustainable relationships that will last beyond the life of the facility. The activities have been acknowledged by other CPs. UNICEF has already initiated discussions with the PRU to discuss possible areas of support post-ZESSTA.

**WS 5: Education
management
information
systems (EMIS)**

Support to strengthen EMIS. MoGE requested support to upgrade their systems to take advantage of the improvements in technology that have enabled more efficient ways for the capture and sharing of information to support evidence based decision making. ZESSTA has provided support to range of activities including migrating MoGE databases from Microsoft Access to SQL and enabling remote access on the intranet from any workstation. An enthusiastic team of MoGE officers has also been established and trained to provide technical and stakeholder engagement for the day to day management and update of the database. ZESSTA also supported the updating of the MoGE website which now features dynamic functionalities and interactive capabilities, as well as being easy to update depending on the emerging needs of the Ministry. A consultation exercise resulted in harmonised data capture instruments and established timeframes for collection of information. The website now enables remote access to the MoGE database and will feature web enabled remote data capture of information. The ultimate goal of MoGE is to have a robust integrated national information system; ZESSTA has supported the documentation of the systems flow and specifications of the requirements for such a system. A further achievement has been the development of a master plan for ICT in three areas: ICT as part of the pedagogical delivery machinery; ICT as a critical management tool in support of evidence decision making and ICT as an input component in the curriculum content.

WS 6:

Monitoring and Evaluation

Support to strengthen M&E across MoGE. The M&E capacity building programme developed in partnership with UNZA was very effective. By its conclusion some 171 Ministry officials drawn from headquarters, provincial and district levels successfully completed a Basic M&E Course, with a further 31 officials going on to complete an Advanced Course. Innovative features included a heavy involvement of MoGE in the design of both courses to ensure that they were heavily tailored to the needs of the Ministry; joint-branding with UNZA (which increased the courses' 'prestige' and resulting popularity; and the 'blended learning' approach (combining pre-course exercises, workshops and post-course assignments) adopted within the advance course. In terms of sustainability, UNZA's capability to design and carry out high-quality M&E courses in the education sector has been strengthened as have relations with key MoGE colleagues.

WS 7:

Evidence-based planning (EBP)

Support to strengthen evidence based planning at school, district, provincial and HQ level. Early work on evidence-based planning focused on reviewing the experience of previous sector plans and providing a foundation of issues and principles for the most significant evidence-based planning challenge – development of the next sector plan. Once the lead partner for supporting the ministries in developing the sector plan (UNICEF) was appointed, support for strengthening evidence-based planning focused on three key areas: (i) development of tools to support evidence-based planning at the school, district and provincial levels, working in close partnership with UNICEF; (ii) developing a planning framework for teacher policy and management; and, (iii) developing a framework for system planning and reporting that linked each level of the system from schools to the national ministry. Each of these initiatives was put on hold in favour of collaboration with the ministries in completion of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2017-2021. These three initiatives are well documented and could be brought to sustainable finalisation with the support of other partners.

"ZESSTA has been very helpful particularly on ESSP/ESA and support to budget preparation, and within a short tight timeframe." William Nyundu, DPI

WS 8:

Teacher education

Support to the Directorate of Open and Distance Education (DODE), including training of Zambia College of Distance Education Lecturers. Strong leadership from the Director of DODE resulted in ZESSTA supporting 60 College of Education lecturers and distance learning tutors to upgrade their methodological skills. Using an online learning platform which mirrored the way they deliver services to out of school secondary school learners, participants drafted and refined learning modules using the latest methodological frameworks from open and distance learning. The training was held at the state of the art ZICTA facility in Ndola.

WS 9:

Implementation of the revised curriculum

Support to the development of the Catch-up materials. The Catch-up programme is an innovative literacy programme aimed at supporting learners whose reading levels have fallen behind to catch up with their age group by receiving targeted support at the level of letter, word, sentence, and paragraph, in groups with similar reading abilities, in the learners' mother tongues. ZESSTA supported the Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialised Services (TESS) with the localisation of a set of international materials by working collaboratively with Poverty Action Lab, VVOB, and Pratham. For relatively little ZESSTA input, our materials will end up touching over 2000 schools and the learners in them, in a programme that, due to its success, has attracted the interest and investment of USAID and UNICEF.

WS 10:

Learning assessment systems

Development of the National Learning Assessment Framework (NLAF). The NLAF is the 'sister' document to the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF), setting out the principles underlying the whole spectrum of assessment from the classroom through to national examinations and international surveys. As a prominent national document, the NLAF required a comprehensive development process with contributions from a wide range of stakeholders and a number of stages of drafting, commenting, redrafting and quality assurance.

Once it was approved, a key strategy to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability was teacher training. A pre-service module was developed and piloted in universities and education colleges. This was then fine-tuned before being distributed to all teacher-training institutions by TESS. An in-service programme was also developed and trainers from each province were trained. These teams went on to organise training of all the teachers around the country during 2018.

ZESSTA

**Zambia Education Sector Support
Technical Assistance Facility**

*Managed by the British Council in partnership with: Ecorys
and the Centre for International Development and Training*

About ZESSTA

The Zambia Education Sector Support Technical Assistance (ZESSTA) Facility supports the Government of Zambia to strengthen the education sector and improve learning outcomes for children. We focus on capacity strengthening as sustainable support to improved service delivery in the education sector. Our work is demand-driven and linked to ministerial annual planning processes, focused on education sector priorities and responsive to current and emerging needs. The ZESSTA Facility is funded by (i) UK aid from the UK government and (ii) the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and delivered by the British Council.