EVALUATION

Final Project Evaluation

USETI Legacy Alliance Project in Ukraine

Final Report

September 2013

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USETI Legacy Alliance Project in Ukraine

Final Report

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Acronyms

AIR	American Institutes for Research
EC	European Commission
ELPEG	Education Law Policy Expert Group
EU	European Union
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GOU	Government of Ukraine
HE	higher education
HEI	higher education institution
IAEA	International Association of Educational Assessment
IBTCI	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MOESYS	Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sport of Ukraine
OPORA	OPORA Civic Network
SET	standardized external testing
SOW	Statement of Work
TCP	Threshold Country Program
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia ($1 = 8.09 UAH)
UCEQA	Ukraine Center for Education Quality Assessment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USETI	Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative

Executive Summary - Резюме

Альянс Програми сприяння зовнішньому тестуванню в Україні (Альянс USETI), що фінансується Агентством США з міжнародного розвитку в рамках угоди про співпрацю 121-A-00-10-00702, завершив другу фазу попереднього проекту USETI, що фінансувався за рахунок Порогового плану країни (Threshold Country Plan - TCP) американської урядової корпорації «Виклики тисячоліття» (Millennium Challenge Corporation – MCC), що виконувався з 2007 по 2009 рік. Американські ради з міжнародної освіти (Американські ради) були основним одержувачем проекту вартістю 3,4 мільйони доларів США, що розпочався в січні 2010 року та закінчився 31 січня 2013 року, та включав також субпідряд з Американським дослідним інститутом та партнерства з 16 переважно українськими організаціями та двома міжнародними донорами (для перегляду повного списку партнерів дивитися зноску на сторінці 5). У співробітництві зі своїми двома основними партнерами, Українським центром оцінювання якості освіти (УЦОЯО) та Міністерством освіти та науки, молоді та спорту (МОН), Альянс USETI взяв на себе відповідальність за продовження та консолідацію розробки та адміністрування стандартизованих тестів як обов'язковий критерій для прийому в українські вищі навчальні заклади.

Фінальну оцінку проекту Альянс USETI, присуджену компанії Міжнародні бізнес і технічних консультанти Інк. (IBTCI), було проведено двома міжнародними фахівцями, один з США, а другий з Великобританії.

Вона складалась зі змішаного методу, але в першу чергу використовувався якісний, що полягав у відповіді на шість питань всеосяжної оцінки відповідно до завдання USAID / Україна. Ці шість питань були керуючими для збору та аналізу даних і забезпечували основу для представлення результатів, висновків і рекомендацій з цього звіту і резюме. Польові роботи в США проходили між 6 травня і 16 травня 2013. В Україні роботи відбувалися між 20 травня та 1 червня 2013 року включно. Проект USETI і контекст, в якому розгорнулася його діяльність, є надзвичайно складним, з участю багатьох взаємопов'язаних особливостей та осіб, часто з ефектом впливу на різних зацікавлених сторін в системі освіти.

Питання 1: Які основні заходи проекту найбільш сприяли досягненню загальної мети проекту забезпечення вступу до вищих навчальних закладів на базі системи тестування**,** що є інституційно-спроможною та самодостатньою.

Оцінка показала, що Альянс USETI є надзвичайно успішним в досягненні своїх цілей проекту консолідації, вдосконалення та розширення якості та використання стандартизованого зовнішнього тестування (SET) для прийняття рішень при вступі до університету і, тим самим, усуваючи корупцію і невиправдані пільги, що були пов'язані з попередніми процесами прийому. Про це свідчить значне збільшення підтримки зовнішнього тестування за участю вищих навчальних адміністраторів, рядових викладачів, студентів та широкої громадськості протягом останніх кількох років. Найбільш важливими заходами Альянсу USETI в досягненні цього результату є підтримка розвитку тестів шляхом надання міжнародних фахівців, які навчали і надавали технічну допомогу персоналу з розробки тестів УЦОЯО з функції розробки повного пакету тестів, що включає розробку тестових завдань, створення банку завдань та складання тестів, адміністрування тестів, моніторинг, оцінку та звітність, а також сприяли моніторингу тестування, звітування та організаціям з підготовки тестів. Сукупність цих зусиль дала УЦОЯО достатнього спроможності для управління щорічним тестуванням з високим ступенем надійності та прозорості і призвело до поліпшення доступу до вищої освіти.

Питання 2: Які основні заходи проекту були найбільш ефективні в зміцненні суспільного попиту і зобов'язання уряду щодо стійкої системи тестування для здобуття вищої освіти?

Що стосується ролі USETI стосовно прихильності уряду, виконання проекту треба розглядати в контексті зміни керівництва міністерства освіти, яке було і досі є негативним і скептичним у ставленні до незалежного тестування. Незважаючи на менш сприятливе середовище, та час від часу

зростаюче напруження між МОН і USETI, діалог між МОН, УЦОЯО та іншими партнерами і зацікавленими сторонами широкої спільноти, який розпочав та модерував альянс USETI, сприяв відкритому і конструктивному обговоренню політики в галузі освіти та ролі тестування. Це особливо підкреслюють Група експертів з Закон про освіту (ELPEG) та Форум роботодавців. Робота USETI з забезпечення ефективної і надійної реалізації системи тестування підняла впевненість у тестуванні серед широкої громадськості та освітян, тим самим відповівши критиці на адресу системи тестування з боку керівництва. Що стосується ролі USETI по відношенню до потреб громадян, оцінка показала, що основна причина позитивного впливу USETI на громадську думку може бути пов'язана з ретельним контролем системи тестування і всього процесу вступу через свого партнера ОПОРА, поряд з ретельним аналізом охоплення тестування українськими ЗМІ, і аналіз громадської думки з цього питання. Це забезпечило можливість інформованого обговорення цього питання і можливості почути і врахувати велику кількість голосів громади в цьому важливому питанні суспільного розвитку.

Питання 3: Які основні фактори дозволили **чи стримували** досягнення поставлених цілей і як було **подолано** стримуючі фактори**,** або**,** якщо ні**,** то чому?

Незважаючи на високі ставки деяких зацікавлених сторін системи тестування, в тому числі тих, хто, можливо, втратив доходи від минулого хабарництва, респонденти дали тверду, хоча і не універсальну, підтримку незалежного тестування і бази даних Конкурс, в якій публічно розміщуються всі бали з тестів. Студенти та викладачі університетів вихваляли покращений доступ і справедливість пропонованого тестування, проте деякі студенти висловились про відсутність досвіду з тестування, а лектори зазначили, що малий досвід роботи університетів зі студентами, прийнятими на основі тестів, ускладнили викладачам можливість порівняти їх якості зі студентами, що вступали через попередні системи вступу. Хоча існує думка про те, що корупція, пов'язана з колишніми системами вступу, була взята під контроль, лишається можливість хабарництва в розрізі оцінок за університетські курси чи в школі, а також існують технології обману тестів, що створює нові виклики моніторингу для організації ОПОРА в забезпеченні прозорості та чесності вищої освіти. УЦОЯО як і раніше не вистачає деяких необхідних психометричних навичек для забезпечення порівнянні щорічних тестів і досі не повністю тестують та розглядають всі тестові завдання перед використанням - недоліки, покращити які можна завдяки (поки невдало) членству УЦОЯО в міжнародних асоціаціях. Скарги від декількох елітних університетів, що деякі кваліфіковані заявники демонструють погані результати в своїх установах зумовили необхідність розгляду багаторівневих предметних тестів або "вагових" коефіцієнтів, як можливі засоби захисту системи тестування, поряд з впровадженням вже випробуваного тесту загальної здібності для оцінки більш високого рівня навичек.

Питання 4: Наскільки ефективний даний проект був у розбудові підтримки серед роботодавців**,** тобто (а**)** залучення роботодавців у **політичних** заходах високого рівня**,** (б**) в тому числі залучення** роботодавців **в ролі** громадських захисників системи вступу та реформи освіти**,** в) виділенню ресурсів на тестування і (г) участь роботодавців шляхом створення центрів кар'єри та розвитку серії лекцій вільного доступу в університетах**?**

Інтерв'ю з представниками спільноти роботодавців, а також подальші матеріали від зацікавлених сторін сектору освіти, вказують на те, що Альянс USETI успішно досяг наступних цілей (а) участь представників роботодавців у своїх форумах і пов'язаної з нею діяльності. Крім того, сильне ядро активних організацій роботодавців зробили значний внесок в досягнення другої цілі (б) через їх участь у розробці проектів законів про вищу освіту. Був зроблений висновок, що ці заходи сприяли тому, що діалог між роботодавцем, сферою освіти, і політичними колами був збережений і зміцнився за період реалізації проекту, і переконані, що точка зору та проблеми роботодавців враховані в загальній дискусії з питання розвитку системи тестування та вступів до ВИШів. Цілі, залежні від ресурсів, (C) і (D) опинилися за рамками досягнення фази 2010-13 років USETI, оскільки первинні очікування вкладів від ряду учасників бізнес-сектора (українських та з США), не виправдалися.

Питання 5: Яку роль відігравали гендерні питання на прогрес у досягненні запланованих результатів? Які були проблеми та переваги інтеграції гендерної тематики для реалізації проекту?

Оцінка гендерних аспектів в незалежному тестуванні в проекті USETI виявилася складною через відсутність даних з розбивкою за статтю та тенденцією респондентів робити загальні заяви щодо гендерних питань. Перевага жінок (у середньому 53.2-55%) серед студентів у всіх вузах в 2010 році, попри незначні зміни в розподілі за статтю в окремих навчальних закладах, дає можливість припускати, що немає помітної маргіналізації жінок (або чоловіки) через використання тестування. Також немає значних змін у вже існуючій структурі вступу до вищих навчальних закладів, що, в будь-якому разі, відображає вплив гендерних уподобання, таких як для чоловіків - наукових дисциплін, і жінок - гуманітарних і мовних факультетів. Міжнародні експерти з тестування визнали можливості ухилу через гендерну концентрацію фахівців, що складають тести з певних предметів (наприклад, жінок у мовах, чоловіків з фізики та математики), але згадали процедури запобігання такому ухилу, що використовуються фахівцями зі складання тестів, підготовленими USETI, а також здатність незалежного тестування запобігти можливому впливу чоловічого фактору в умовах колишніх усних іспитів. У той час як чоловіки домінують в адміністрації вищої освіти, жінки-лідери громадських організацій в секторі освіти були відвертими прихильниками реформи освіти. Дані про вплив на тестування на учнів з особливими потребами були також рідкісні, а піклування про їхні потреби іноді ускладнюється за рахунок вже існуючих «привілейованих груп» (діти-сироти та діти шахтарів), які отримали пільги при прийомі. Дуже обмежені дані про питання ЛГБТ у зв'язку з тестуванням не виглядає як серйозна проблема в період правової невизначеності щодо майбутнього тестування.

Питання 6: Які не зв'язані з USAID ресурси були залучені для фінансування реалізації проекту**,** і які нові можливості існують в даний час?

Альянс USETI залучив від спільноти партнерів Альянсу загальну суму 4,679,037 доларів США. На підставі таких обставин, як додаткова залучена підтримка, не пов’язана з урядом США, отримана УЦОЯО і віра ключових зацікавлених сторін в те, що такі ініціативи USETI, як ELPEG і Форум роботодавців дали їм значимий голос у діалозі щодо ролі вищої освіти, група з оцінки вважає, що є підстави вважати, що майбутні ітерації USETI отримають вигоди від додаткових можливостей надходжень.

Основні висновки

Існує загальний консенсус серед респондентів, які представляють різні категорії зацікавлених сторін, що Альянс USETI сприяв значному впливу на продовження і зміцнення стандартизованого тестування для прийому в університети і пов'язані з поліпшенням рівного доступу до вищої освіти і зниження рівня корупції в Україні - результати, які проголошуються у всіх цілях проекту.

Проект досяг цих результатів через свій цілісний підхід до складних, взаємопов'язаних питань в основі вступу до вищої освіти, про що свідчать як характер його взаємодії з широким і різноманітним колом зацікавлених сторін, так і низка областей, охоплених діяльністю . USETI організував свою роботу в численних сферах діяльності незвичайно спритним чином у надзвичайно складних умовах. Проект повинен був реагувати на зміни в політичній ситуації в Україні, яка підготувала менш сприятливі умови для незалежного тестування. Розширена присутність USETI являє собою прекрасний приклад того, що може бути досягнуто на основі сталої ініціативи, підтриманої донорами, по боротьбі з укоріненою проблемою, яка стоїть на шляху доступної та якісної вищої освіти. Досягнення Альянсу USETI слід розглядати не тільки в боротьбі з корупцією у сфері освіти, а й такими, що допомагають відкрити й демократизувати суспільну дискусію щодо доступу до вищої освіти. У дуже великій мірі, USETI, який часто характеризується як антикорупційний проект, являє собою дуже успішну освітню діяльність, спрямовану на поліпшення якості освіти в країні, для якої таке поліпшення є необхідним не тільки для своєї майбутньої економічної життєздатності та стійкості її демократичних інститутів.

Основні рекомендації

1. (Q1,2,3) USETI слід продовжувати зосереджуватися на консолідації та збільшенні сприятливої громадської думки по відношенню до зовнішнього стандартизованого тестування, використовуючи свої перевірені поєднання експертної технічної допомоги, кампанії в засобах масової інформації, а також комплексне та відкрите обговорення питань, пов'язаних з тестуванням.
2. (Q1,3) USETI слід розглянути всі недоліки, що залишаються у УЦОЯО в розробці та оцінці тестів, за допомогою навчання та технічної допомоги на високому рівні функції психометрії та міжвідомчих відносин в УЦОЯО.
3. (Q2,3) USETI слід створити робочу групу, що складається з адміністраторів університетів, викладачів, а також відповідних представників МОН. УЦОЯО та представники НДО мають розробити взаємоприйнятні шляхи (можливо, з використанням коефіцієнтів або багаторівневих тестів) для збільшення кореляції між високим балом результатів вступного випробування і успішності першого року навчання в деяких елітних українських вузів.

Executive Summary

The Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) Legacy Alliance Project, funded by USAID Cooperative Agreement 121-A-00-10-00702, constituted a second phase of an earlier USETI Project funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Threshold Country Program (MCC TCP) that ran from 2007 through 2009. American Councils for International Education (American Councils) was the prime awardee for the $3.4 million project that started in January 2010 and ended January 31, 2013 and included both a sub-contract to the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and partnership with 16 mostly Ukrainian organizations and two international donors (see footnote on page 5 for complete list of partners). In partnership with its two most important partners, the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality (UCEQA) and its larger institutional home, the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth, and Sport (MOESYS), USETI took responsibility for continuing and consolidating the development and administration of standardized tests as a required criterion for admission into Ukrainian universities.

The final project evaluation of the USETI Legacy Alliance Project, awarded to International Business & Technical Consultants Incorporated (IBTCI), was conducted by two international specialists, one from the U.S. and the other from the U.K. It consisted of a mixed-method, but primarily qualitative, methodology to answer six overarching evaluation questions postulated by USAID/Ukraine. These six questions guided the data collection and data analysis and provided the framework for presenting the findings, conclusions and recommendations for this report and executive summary. U.S. field work took place between May 6 and May 16, 2013. In-country Ukraine fieldwork took place between May 20 and June 1, 2013, inclusive. The USETI project and the context in which its activities have unfolded are exceedingly complex, involving many interconnected features and entities and, often, overlapping effects on different stakeholders in the educational establishment.

Question 1: What major project activities most contribute to achieving the overall project goal of ensuring a system of testing-based HEI admissions that is institutionally secured and self-sustainable?

The evaluation found the USETI Legacy Alliance to be extremely successful in achieving its project goals of consolidating, improving, and extending the quality and use of standardized external testing (SET) for university admission decisions and, thereby, eliminating the corruption and unjustified preferential treatment associated with the earlier admission processes. This was evidenced by a substantial growth of support for external testing among higher education administrators, rank and file educators, students and the general public over the last several years. The most important of USETI's activities in achieving this outcome was its support to test development through the provision of international specialists, who trained and provided technical assistance to UCEQA test development personnel on a holistic package of test development functions, e.g., test item development./banking, assembly, administration, monitoring, scoring and reporting, along with assistance to test monitoring, test reporting, and test preparation organizations. The totality of this effort gave UCEQA sufficient capacity to manage the annual testing administrations with a high degree of reliability and transparency and improve access to higher education.

Question 2: What major project activities have been the most effective in strengthening public demand and government commitment for a sustainable testing system for higher education?

With regard to USETI's role in relation to government commitment, the project's performance has to be viewed in the context of a changed MOESYS leadership team that was, and still is, negative and skeptical about independent testing. Notwithstanding the less favorable environment, which occasionally increased tension between the Ministry and USETI, the dialogue with MOESYS, UCEQA and other partners and the broader stakeholder communities that was facilitated by the USETI Alliance fostered an open and constructive debate on education policy and the role of testing. These are particularly exemplified by the Education Law Policy Expert Group (ELPEG) and the Employers Forum. USETI's efforts at ensuring effective and secure implementation of the testing system raised confidence in testing among the general public and educators, thereby answering criticism leveled at the testing system by the leadership team.

Regarding USETI's role in relation to public demand, the evaluation found that a significant reason for USETI's positive impact on public opinion could be traced to careful monitoring of the testing system and of the entire admissions process via its partner OPORA, along with rigorous analysis of Ukrainian media coverage of the testing issue, and analysis of public opinion polling on the subject. This ensured informed debate on this issue and opportunities for a wide spectrum of public voices to be heard and factored into this important societal development.

Question 3: What major factors enabled or inhibited the achievement of stated objectives and how were the inhibiting factors successfully overcome, or if not, why not?

Despite the high stakes of certain stakeholders with the testing system, including those who might have lost income from past bribery, respondents gave solid, although not universal, support for standardized independent testing and to the *Konkurs* database that publically reports all SET scores. University students and lecturers praised the improved access and fairness offered by testing, although some students expressed inexperience with standardized tests, and lecturers' short experience with test-admitted students prevented easy comparison with students admitted through the previous admissions system. Although corruption associated with undergraduate admissions was perceived as controlled, possible bribery related to university course grades or graduation, as well as new test-cheating technology, has created new monitoring challenges for OPORA's role in assuring transparent and fraud-free higher education. UCEQA still lacks some necessary advanced psychometrics skills for making annual tests comparable and still does not fully pilot test and review all test items before use—deficiencies that might benefit from (so far unsuccessful) UCEQA membership in international test associations. Complaints from a few elite universities that some test-qualified applicants have poorly performed in their institutions have prompted consideration of multi-level tests or "weighting" coefficients as possible remedies, along with deployment of an already pilot-tested general ability test for assessing higher level skills.

Question 4: How effective has the project been in building stakeholder support in the employer community, i.e. (a) folding employers into high-level policy events; (b) including employers to serve as public advocates for admissions and education reform; c) devoting resources to testing, and (d) engaging employers through establishing career centers and developing visiting lecture series in universities?

Interviews with representatives of the employer community, as well as further inputs from education sector stakeholders, indicated that the USETI Legacy Alliance project has successfully attained goal (a) of engaging employer representatives in its forums and associated activities. Furthermore, a strong core of committed employer organizations has made major contributions to the second goal (b) through their involvement in the development of draft laws on higher education. The evaluation concluded that these activities have ensured that dialogue between employer, education sector, and policy communities has been maintained and strengthened over the project's implementation period and ensured that employer perspectives and concerns are factored in to the overall discussion of the development of the testing system and HE admissions. The resource-reliant goals (c) and (d) proved to be beyond the scope of achievement in the 2010-13 USETI phase, as initial expectations of contributions from a range of business sector actors (Ukrainian and US) did not materialize.

Question 5: What roles have gender issues played in influencing progress towards achieving planned results? What were gender integration challenges and benefits for project implementation?

Assessment of the gender aspects of independent testing and the USETI Project proved difficult due to the absence of disaggregated data by sex and respondents' tendency to make general statements about gender issues. The female predominance (averaging 53.2-55%) in enrollments in all HEIs in 2010, despite a few subtle changes in sex distributions in particular institutions, suggested no noticeable marginalization of females (or males) from the use of testing. Nor were there any significant changes in existing university enrollment patterns, which, in any case, reflect gender-influenced preferences such as males for science subjects and females for humanities and languages. International test experts acknowledged the possibility

of test bias from gender-driven concentrations of test item writers in certain subjects (e.g. females in languages, males in physics and math) but cited the bias-prevention procedures used by USETI-trained test specialists in test construction and the ability of independent testing to circumvent the possible male bias of the old oral examinations. While men have dominated HE administration, women leaders in education-sector NGOs have been outspoken advocates for education reform. Data on testing's influence on special needs students was also sparse, and concerns for their needs, sometimes, get complicated by the pre-existing "privileged groups" (orphans and children of miners) who have received preferential admission treatment. Very limited data about LGBT considerations in relation to testing did not resonate as a significant issue at a time of legal uncertainty about testing's future.

Question 6: What non-USAID resources have been attracted for funding project implementation, and what new opportunities do currently exist?

The USETI Legacy Alliance project has secured leverage from the Alliance partner community to the overall sum of $4,679,037 US. Based on circumstances such as other non-USG support received by UCEQA and the belief by representatives of key stakeholders that USETI initiatives such as ELPEG and the Employer Forum have given them meaningful voices in the dialogue as to the roles of higher education, the evaluation team believes that it is reasonable to believe that future iterations of USETI will benefit from added leverage opportunities.

Major Conclusions

There is a general consensus among respondents representing different categories of stakeholders that the USETI Legacy Alliance project has facilitated a significant impact on the continuation and consolidation of standardized testing for university admissions and associated improvement in equitable access to higher education and to the reduction of corruption in Ukraine—outcomes that are manifested across all the project's objectives. The project has attained these outcomes through its holistic approach to complex, interrelated issues at the core of higher education admissions, as demonstrated both in the nature of its engagement with a broad and varied stakeholder base, and the multiple focal areas covered by the project's activities. USETI orchestrated its multiple domains of activity in an unusually deft manner within an exceedingly complicated environment. The project has had to respond to changes in Ukraine's political situation that produced a less favorable environment for independent testing. The extended USETI presence provides an excellent example of what can be achieved through sustained donor-supported efforts to tackle an entrenched problem that stands in the way of accessible and high quality higher education. The achievements of the USETI Legacy Alliance project should be regarded not just in combating corruption in education but also with helping to open up and democratize the public debate on access to higher education. To a very great extent, USETI, which has often been characterized as an anti-corruption project, represents a very successful educational quality improvement activity in a country for which this kind of improvement is critical both for its future economic vitality and the sustainability of its democratic institutions.

Major Recommendations

1. (Q1,2,3) USETI should continue to focus on consolidating and increasing favorable public opinion toward standardized external testing using its proven combination of expert technical assistance, media information campaigns, and inclusive and open discussion of testing-related issues.
2. (Q1,3) USETI should address any remaining deficiencies in UCEQA's test development and measurement capacity through training and technical assistance in high-level psychometrics functions and inter-department relationships within UCEQA.
3. (Q2,3) USETI should create a working group composed of university administrators, lecturers, and relevant MOESYS. UCEQA and NGO representatives to devise a mutually agreeable way (perhaps using coefficients or multi-level tests) to mitigate the weak correlation between high-scoring admission test results and poor first-year academic performance in some elite Ukrainian universities.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation and Overview of Its Scope

The final project evaluation of the Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) Legacy Alliance Project was contracted (IQC# AID-RAN-I-00-09-00016) to International Business and Technical Consultants Incorporated (IBTCI) on April 3, 2013. As stated in the Task Order, the purpose is "to learn to what extent the USETI's programmatic approach was effective to produce the desired result, or development outcome, as well as the extent that the project was able to institutionalize a self-sustaining, testing-based, higher education institution (HEI) admission process."[1] The Evaluation Team is to assess the effectiveness of USETI's programmatic approach, as well as the extent that the project was able to institutionalize a self-sustaining, testing-based HEI admission process. The evaluation focused on three project objectives: 1) Support a sustainable strengthened Ukraine Center for Education Quality Assessment (UCEQA) capable of independently and transparently developing and implementing secure tests that meet international standards; 2) Contribute to a secure legislative basis for testing and higher education admission, and an institutionalized partnership between business, higher education, and policymakers, and 3) Transform public support for testing into a proactive contemporary public expectation, so that grass roots support will ensure the sustainability of testing. The results of the evaluation are to guide the Regional USAID Mission in future programming in combatting corruption in education.

1.2 Background for the Project

Prior to 2008, the normal procedure for applying was a university-specific "exam" that included both a written and oral exam, with judgments on admissions made by either the department's faculty, administrators or a combination. These university-administered admission decisions were confirmed by key informants, applicants to HEIs, their parents, and current university students as occasions for rampant corruption, including solicitation of bribes for admission. This was particularly the case for particularly popular faculties or subject areas and in desirable institutions. Admission to some faculties was virtually impossible unless the applicant knew someone on the inside and/or could bribe the relevant decision maker. In such cases, the size of typical bribes was reported to be up to $10,000 US—more than the cost of the education, in some cases—making the burden of bribery particularly onerous to all except the children of wealthy families.

Entry into university is the first of two steps in the admissions process, with the second step consisting of allocation of resources among newly accepted students. The decision on which applicants receive state-subsidized free "seats" and which get "paid" seats that require student payment of tuition has been, and still is, made within universities themselves. Although universities have typically used this authority to reward promising students with scholarships and raise revenue from students whose families could afford to pay full tuition costs, opportunities existed here, too, for decisions to be influenced by money or personal relationships.

Certain constituencies, particularly wealthy families and those with alumni connections to particular universities, were not troubled by this system, since the easily manipulated university exam could guarantee university admission even in the case of poor high school academic results. However, a major undesirable result was the effective denial of elite university education to students from rural areas and regional cities without their own university centers. The emergence of under-qualified graduates who had bribed their way into universities imposed still another less obvious cost on Ukrainian employers, who had to make do with poorly prepared workers.

1.3 Overview of External Support, Including the USETI and USETI Legacy Projects

The beginnings of a response to the subjectivity and outright corruption surrounding higher education admissions arose in the later 1990s, with early research into standardized tests as a tool for creating a merit-

[1] Ukraine USETI TO SOW, USAID/Ukraine, April 3, 2013, p. 4.

based approach. The first standardized test was piloted in 2002; this was used only to select recipients of 5,000 scholarships and had no connection with any university. But it demonstrated the potential efficacy of standardized external testing (SET) as a remedy for the widespread corruption in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Growing disenchantment with the university exam admission system, along with successful standardized test-based admission programs in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, and Russia, prompted consideration of external standardized testing as a preferred remedy for widespread abuses among Ukrainian educators. Funding by the International Renaissance Foundation in 2005 and a U.S. State Department grant to American Councils in 2006 provided some early and critical support to the Ukrainian government entity that was created to oversee the development of standardized independent testing, the Ukraine Center for Education Quality Assessment (UCEQA). Testing development had progressed to the point of early test formats and items by the time the first incarnation of systematic international support, the Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Threshold Country Program (MCC TCP), arrived in April 2007. USETI MCC TCP was directed to collaborate with UCEQA in advancing testing as a mechanism for merit-based university admission. This first phase of USETI, which ended in December 2009, was intended to help UCEQA construct a reliable testing instrument and test administration infrastructure that could be scaled up nationwide by project end.[2]

The second phase, the USETI Legacy Alliance, the subject of this evaluation, was funded by USAID, which awarded the American Councils for International Education (American Councils) Cooperative Agreement 121-A-00-10-00702 for $3.4 million, starting in January 2010 and ending on January 31, 2013. American Councils, which had been the sub under the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in the MCC award, along with AIR (its sub-awardee in this iteration) and partners,[3] were expected to build on the earlier progress by "building transparent external testing capacity," expanding the "coalition of support" for non-corruptible admission processes, and expand the role of the employer and business community in supporting and benefitting from test-based admissions. Because of the continuity, both the MCC USETI and USAID's USETI Legacy Alliance will be referred to as USETI; however, the evaluation covers the Legacy Alliance only. The program objectives for the Legacy Alliance were:

1. Reinforcing and building UCEQA's Test Development and Operational Capacity.
2. Securing the legislative basis for testing and HEI admissions, and institutionalizing the partnership between business and education.
3. Building public support and fostering growth of the Alliance.
4. Facilitating informed test preparation demand and a professional test-prep industry.[4]

These objectives have guided the USETI project's activities for the past three years.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Description of Methods

The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Stephen D. McLaughlin, Team Leader, and Dr. Stephen L. Webber, Education Specialist, with the assistance of Kseniya Sydorkina, Interpreter, and Oleksandr Zheleznyak, Logistics Specialist, while in Ukraine.

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[2] According to USETI staff, the USETI TCP Project was regarded as so successful that it was given three funded extensions for eight months total by USAID, bringing the end date to December, 2009.

[3] MOESYS, Ukrainian Center for Education Quality Assessment (UCEQA), International Renaissance Foundation , Fakt Publishing House, Malardalen University (Sweden/TEMPUS), National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Lviv National University named after Ivan Franko, Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University, the National Academy of Management, OPORA Civic Network, pro.mova, the Center for Educational Policy, the Union of Rectors, Ministry of Health Care's Testing Centre, National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and Borys Grinchenko University of Kyiv.

[4] This objective was not covered by the current evaluation, as per SOW requirements.

The evaluation used a "mixed-method" approach that mostly relied on qualitative data from semi-structured individual and group interviews, along with review and analysis of project and host-national institution reports, statistics and media articles (such as those shown in Annex E and listed in the bibliography, Annex G) related to the testing system. These materials gave both useful context as well as external evidence of the testing system's outcomes and their relationship to different parts of the higher education system. Different interview guides, containing open-ended questions directed toward understanding systemic issues and both intended and unintended project effects, were developed to take advantage of the different perspectives and knowledge sets of members of different stakeholder groups; based on responses to the planned questions, interviews expanded to pursue productive inquiries that emerged. Data were triangulated sequentially throughout the evaluation to indicate emerging findings. For example, interview data from test monitors and students (test takers) describing test-cheating attempts would be combined and compared with USETI quarter report statements about cheating-prevention measures to arrive iteratively at findings on potential threats to test administration integrity from test-taker cheating.

Work began in Washington with review of initial documents, interviews of U.S.-based officials and project consultants, and evaluation plan preparation between May 6 and May 16, 2013; work continued in Ukraine between May 20 and June 1, 2013. During the initial meeting with the Mission, the team was asked to add to its scope any data that could be collected on the effect of standardized testing on students with special needs and also assess any known implications of testing for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered population.

In the 10½ days available in Ukraine, the evaluation team conducted more than 40 interviews of key informants from all organizations specified by the Mission and, with assistance from USETI, met user/ participant populations such as lecturers, students, secondary school directors and parents. Except for three interviews, both team members conducted all interviews together and briefed each other on the content of the interviews they conducted separately. Early in the study, the team decided to divide responsibility equally for the six large evaluation questions through mutual agreement. Since most informants could potentially be data sources for all six evaluation questions, team members took turns asking questions of respondents to cover as many issues as possible but realized that no single informant could be asked about all six evaluation questions in the allotted interview time (which also included interpretation) and that questioning would need to center on aspects that each respondent was most knowledgeable about. The extremely tight timeline of interviews—often consisting of 4-5 interviews per day punctuated with taxi travel around Kyiv—left little time for analyzing and synthesizing data during in-country data collection. Most in-depth analysis as well as writing occurred immediately after the field phase, when the ET consulted each other about technical issues. Interview notes served as the major documentation for informant opinions, and, given the politicized environment in Ukraine surrounding testing and the requirements of the "Common Rule," team members were mindful of the importance of handling informants' opinions with confidentiality.

In terms of inherent risks for bias, the team did not deem selection bias an issue since USAID had prescribed the entities to be interviewed and, while users/participants were selected opportunistically, data from those sessions were secondary to those from the "major players." Since the people specified by USAID were deeply involved with the project, primarily contemporaneously, recall bias also was not an issue. The vast majority of key informants were interviewed individually, while users/participants were interviewed in group settings. Most interviews ran an hour, with several going longer (as long as three hours in one case). The complete evaluation and work plan (as modified) and instruments are shown in Annex B.

2.2 Limitations

The Work Plan/Evaluation Design discusses limitations that were anticipated at the outset, including the time constraints for the study, the inability to compare participants exposed to testing with those not exposed, and the lack of control over the gender balance of sampled respondents. Additional limitations were discussed in the initial USAID meeting and subsequently. The broad scope of the study combined

with the lengthy list of required stakeholder interviews (a minimum of 34) to be conducted within the ten-day field period necessarily limited the amount of time available for any one interview, and this in turn was a constraint on the amount of data obtainable in an interview given that most entailed interpretation.

In some cases there was the presence of other stakeholders, often supervisory, in rooms in which interviews with teachers and students were held. This was unavoidable in institutional settings, and this may have skewed responses; two group interviews were held without such a presence. Mission concern about potential interpreter bias was obviated when a USAID staff person sat in on an interview which entailed accurate simultaneous interpretation.

3. Evaluation Questions and Analysis of Data/Findings

As noted above, the team was to assess the effectiveness of USETI's programmatic approach, as well as the extent that the project was able to institutionalize a self-sustaining, testing-based HEI admission process, using the six evaluation questions as an analytical framework for answers. Sub-questions were developed to highlight particularly salient areas of interest. Inherently, much of the data obtained relates to more than one question and, in turn, there is inherent overlap across questions, especially given the complexity of the project. For space reasons, data are generally referenced only in response to the first question to which they relate and not repeated for other questions. For example, USETI's public awareness/education events were a major factor contributing to achievement of the project goal of an institutionally secured and sustainable test system, which is covered in question one, but analysis of these events occurs under question two, which specifically asks about project activities that strengthen project demand. Likewise, test administration monitoring is an issue that relates both to the overall effectiveness of a testing system *and* to the public acceptance of testing as a preferred university admissions criterion: hence its coverage in both questions 1 and 2 from those respective viewpoints.

While the MCC USETI Project clearly created many of the systemic characteristics that survive today, the analysis in this report *to the extent feasible*, is limited to the Legacy Alliance Project. It should be noted, however, that distinguishing between the effects of these two projects (essentially two phases of an extended endeavor) is quite difficult in many cases, because some activities were undertaken sequentially by both projects and served the same beneficiaries. Thus, some effects would certainly have been cumulative, and even informants with experience in both could not necessarily differentiate between each project's distinctive effects. Consequently, except where the two projects were known to emphasize different activities, the analysis does not draw a sharp line between the two projects.

Q1. What major project activities most contribute to achieving the overall project goal of ensuring a system of testing-based HEI admissions that is institutionally secured and self-sustainable?

1.1 Overall Project Outcomes

Consideration of USETI's effects on testing-based HEI admissions was incorporated under the first of the four project objectives: support of a sustainable Ukraine Center for Education Quality Assessment (UCEQA) capable of independently and transparently developing and implementing secure tests that meet international standards. A preponderance of data gathered from key informants and documents in this evaluation indicates that the USETI Legacy Alliance Project's assistance to the Ukraine Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sport (MOESYS) over the last three and a half years has successfully built on earlier progress and consolidated the use of standardized tests for university admission. This overarching conclusion about the USETI Legacy Alliance Project is most visibly evidenced by: (1) the universal adoption of testing results as a HEI admission criterion by the country's higher education institutions over the last five years, and (2) the transformation of Ukrainian public opinion, as documented by multiple public opinion polls over the last five-six years, from a state of broad skepticism to one of widespread acceptance of testing (65-70% favorable) as the preferred path to a merit-based admission process. This conclusion is of such importance and is sufficiently robust to merit use as a fundamental construct for examining the project's various activities.

According to numerous respondents in this study, the continued mandated nationwide use of such external testing since 2007 also has significantly reduced, although not completely eliminated, the previously pervasive corruption associated with admissions into Ukraine's higher education institutions. Reduction of excess subjectivity and, at worst, corruption in HE admission decisions represents the successful achievement of a major USETI Legacy Alliance project goal and continues USG efforts to reform higher education administration and change attitudes and practices associated with corruption.[5]

Interview data from this study strongly confirm USETI's success in advancing testing as a legitimate and appropriate mechanism for HEI admission. This composite of opinions indicates significant—although not universal—growth of support for external testing among education administrators and rank-and-file educators over the last several years. This can be seen in two disparate parts of the education establishment: university rectors and testing monitors. University rectors initially opposed external testing for admissions as an abridgement of a university's control over its own student body. Most rectors interviewed for the study, including some who were originally opposed and a few who cited negative unintended consequences for their institutions, firmly supported testing. Acceptance has also grown among educators, as evidenced by the increasing numbers of teachers and lecturers who seek work as test monitors. While employment as a test monitor may not necessarily suggest enthusiasm for testing, it does indicate educators' awareness of the sustainability of the testing system and the personal benefits of both learning about the science of testing and reaping the financial rewards of paid test-system positions.

1.2 Program Activities that Contributed to Achievement of the Project Goal

1.2.1 UCEQA Skills Acquisition and Capacity Development from International Experts

USETI Legacy Alliance's impressive achievement rests on the project's meticulous efforts to assure that UCEQA could produce consistently high test quality, fair and honest test administration, transparent operations, full public reporting of individual results, and multi-year comparison of test validity and consistency. The project's continuing provision of respected testing experts from the United States and various European countries brought the necessary knowledge and skills to attain sufficient test quality and test administration integrity for meeting international standards and convince a skeptical Ukrainian public. These experts reflected a range of crucial SET skill sets, including test item writing, item response analysis, test item banking, test scoring and ranking, validity study design, test administration, and educational measurement training, that comprised the component activities of USETI Legacy Alliance's capacity development program. Nearly every key informant with professional competence gave USETI high marks for the quality, adequacy, and timeliness of this external testing expertise. The varied nationalities of these experts also drew praise. And the fact that these international experts by no means agreed on all aspects of testing contributed a desirable diversity of opinion for Ukrainian testing colleagues.

The provision of international test experts made possible the long-term training and technical assistance that came in the form of at least annual and, sometime, multiple short-term consultations with UCEQA staff and managers. The advice and encouragement of these experts helped instigate the specific measures needed to successfully consolidate and improve the test-based approach to higher education admissions and heighten equitable access to university education, which in turn elicited public confidence in testing.

USETI's linchpin was building the capacity of the testing specialists in UCEQA and its regional centers as well as of testing-oriented faculty in several universities. The frequent training events on all testing specialties indicated USETI's determination to enhance what one respondent referred to as the "cottage industry of testing" in Ukraine. Almost all current and past UCEQA leaders and staff members gave unqualified praise for USETI's role in the country's evolution toward standardized testing, often noting the crucial role of these international specialists in enhancing their personal capacity and creating a testing-centered governmental entity where none existed before. In the words of a testing scientist who was involved from 2002, "USETI's work was huge, since the role of testing in Ukraine was undeveloped." And, as a senior UCEQA staff member put it, "Those [specialized] people were trained by USETI. Without

[5] Ukraine MCC Threshold Country Program, Component Five, Evaluation Report, May 2009.

USETI, I do not know what we would have done." Still another senior observer said, "There is no other organization or project in Ukraine that is so sharply focused on testing as USETI."

In addition to short-term expertise, USETI collaborated with an academic development program in educational measurement assisted by Malardalen University (Sweden) and funded by TEMPUS, at Kyiv Dragomanov National Pedagogical University, in which Swedish specialists and USETI specialists taught courses in various testing sub-fields to educate the earliest credentialed testing professionals. USETI's participation was credited with helping to institutionalize standardized testing and educational measurement into a degree-granting program.

Technical support for central and regional UCEQA and the agency's scientific department was directed to several different sub-areas or functions that constitute the institutional test development capacity of Ukrainian educational measurement experts. When senior USETI personnel were asked to rank activities in priority of importance, they stated that these functions are all component parts of an interrelated testing system that succeeds only when all parts operate equally effectively and are given the same attention. Any failure to have equally promoted all component functions—or, in a future project phase, to assume anything less than a fully unified approach to the testing system—would risk the introduction of weaknesses that might eventually undermine its effectiveness and its public support. USETI's role in each of these is described below.

1.2.2 Component Test Development Functions

Test Item Development and Item Banking

From early stages, USETI has had a solid focus on assistance to generation of sufficient test items. However, creation of items that reliably assess knowledge, according to one international specialist, has proven to be a multi-year process with only marginal quality improvements from year to year. Consensus from the beginning was that test items would measure the knowledge and skills being taught in accordance with the secondary school curriculum. Tests were structured in specific subjects such as math, Ukrainian language, physics, English language, for example, making the test an achievement test of past learning in these high school subjects. USETI helped recruit cadres of subject matter specialists who possessed both required knowledge and showed promise as test item writers. The relative scarcity of such skills is reflected in the fact that UCEQA's science department has only eight subject matter test item specialists, although the Center does rely on many other university lecturers and teachers who serve as intermittent test item writers.

Assuring that test items met international quality standards over time was of great importance, according to one UCEQA testing expert. To its considerable credit, USETI experts and their Ukrainian counterparts annually produced standardized tests that were progressively better than previous versions (see "Validity Testing" below) and gradually approached international standards and won public support.

USETI's focus on banking of test items helped UCEQA minimize re-using test items on succeeding years' tests, a situation which would allow savvy test-takers to game the system and threaten reliability. A large bank of test items is essential for allowing test versions that did not appreciably differ in their level of difficulty. This task was complicated by annual changes in curriculum, which made previous test questions inappropriate. In addition to the training discussed above, USETI supplied important computer software that was essential in UCEQA's systematic writing, reviewing, banking of test items.

Test Administration and Monitoring Policy and Practices

An important principle of the USETI Project both during the MCC TCP phase and continuing throughout the USETI Legacy phase was its emphasis on providing equal access to the standardized tests that soon became the key to entry to all Ukrainian universities. The old university exam system tended to discourage rural applicants and others outside the university centers from even considering an application, often because of having to travel considerable distances to attend the day-long oral exams and, perhaps, not being able to pay requisite bribes. USETI Legacy's continued support and consolidation of accessible testing—originally started by UCEQA's creation of numerous testing centers within the nine Regional Centers of

Quality Assurance—helped align the testing system with an emerging public agreement with the principle of equitable access to university education.

Equally important to public confidence was protection of test security throughout the testing cycle, including the ironclad confidentiality of final test booklets and fair and tamper-free administration of tests to applicants. UCEQA's strict maintenance of test item and test booklet security since the nationwide testing deployment is a tribute to USETI's role in setting uncompromising standards and convincing Ukrainian educators of the importance of such protection. Ukraine's record in this regard has been documented by the smooth and uneventful 2013 administration of SET (as reported by an informed international observer).

One of the primary reasons for UCEQA's success in greatly minimizing fraud or cheating in the actual administration of tests has been USETI's cultivation of OPORA, whose paid monitors have aggressively monitored the proceedings at testing centers and reported any observed breaches of expected test-taker or test-administrator behavior. This was no small contribution, since UCEQA had tried, and failed, to furnish sufficiently rigorous monitoring to assure public confidence, and OPORA was not well known for education monitoring. Having been given a role in monitoring tests and having had their monitors trained by USETI experts according to international monitoring standards, OPORA quickly became a major force in assuring test integrity, drawing favorable reviews from several informants. The NGO International Foundation on Educational Policy Research also monitored admissions into higher education institutions in 2012, although it lacked resources for nationwide coverage.

Test Scoring and Ranking

USETI had worked with UCEQA on training the educators who would score the tests and, as part of this, achieving *inter-rater reliability* of scorers, especially in the so-called "open" section of SET—the essay question accompanying the multiple choice questions. A special methodology was developed to analyze applicants' results and gauge the accuracy of each test item in measuring the intended knowledge and skills.

The dropping of the open section in 2010 introduced some minor turmoil in the scoring and ranking procedures. This discontinuation, taken for the official reason of budget constraints, placed the onus of the test's predictive power solely on fixed choice questions. It was felt by some to cause some diminution of the test's accuracy for certain subjects such as Ukrainian and foreign languages—an issue to be discussed in Section 3.

Validity testing

One of the most important modern testing features introduced by USETI experts was the annual validity testing that is done after completion of test scoring and reporting. This measurement of the correlation between applicants' test scores and first-year university academic performance (grades) was viewed by many as a test of the external testing process itself. Here, the test regime created by UCEQA with USETI's assistance fared well in the larger public debate about whether standardized tests can supply students capable of university-level academic work. The high predictive capacity of testing, shown by annual validity measurement of correlation of test scores with first-year academic grades, may have the single most important factor in convincing university rectors and other senior administrators of the value of testing, and over years validity has risen to the acceptable average correlation figure of 0.533 in 2009.[6] With the official addition in 2010 of an applicant's secondary school grade point average (GPA) to his/her SET score predictability has risen to 0.587. According to USETI managers, there has been no challenge to the results of the validity studies from any research body or educational expert. The fact that UCEQA will conduct a full validity study this year suggests USETI's influence in maintaining the quality assurance of external testing.

Reporting of Test Results

One of USETI's most important activities has been its support of the *Konkurs* reporting system for SET

[6] Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) Legacy Alliance, Final Report, January 2010-January 2013, p. 5.

results. The effect of *Konkurs* in opening a window on test results and, by extension, the entire higher education admissions process can hardly be overestimated. According to one of its principal founders with USETI's support, the *Konkurs* website, with its 100,000,000 "hits" last year, has been a subject of keen interest by test takers as well as parents, university administrators, secondary teachers, and even interested parties from outside the country. By publishing the SET results by name of each test taker, *Konkurs* provides a unique feature that is considered vital for deterring manipulation of test scores after test administration in Ukraine. Since published names and scores are associated with the universities to which test-takers applied, *Konkurs* thus offers a way for students to compare their own performance with that of their peers and assess the competitiveness of their applications. USETI managers also stated that *Konkurs* has been one of the project's most influential activities, particularly in support of transparency.

Very recent data supplied by USETI suggests that *Konkurs* continues to receive necessary government support in the form of test result data for national reporting.

Test preparation

Although assistance to develop and assure the quality of a burgeoning test preparation industry had been one of the four focus areas of the Legacy Alliance, USETI discovered that higher priority concerns awaited action and that the provision of good test preparation materials was on its way to a solution. Respondents who were asked about this subject confirmed that the Ukrainian publisher, Fakt Publishing House, was preparing and selling test prep materials of generally good quality. There was evidence that test preparation materials and services have found their way to future admissions test takers. In addition to one survey showing 75% of test takers having used them, students interviewed at both the university and high school levels confirmed a wide use of such materials. Students confirmed that these test prep materials were generally useful for preparing them for their selected tests. At this time, the existence of reputable materials has vindicated USETI's decision to let Fakt work mainly on its own in fulfilling this perceived need.

Sharing of testing knowledge with international colleagues

An important USETI-encouraged function has been an annual conference in which Ukrainian test specialists publicly present their latest research and test development practices to fellow testing colleagues. According to a Ukrainian test development expert, these conferences—one of which is to be held later this year, a clear legacy of USETI—are crucial in enhancing the kind of collegiality that encourages test professionals to improve the standards of their products and gain confidence in their thinking. This is also done through project-sponsored meetings of test developers and by visits of senior regional CEQA managers to other regional CEQAs. One of the related project goals in this regard was to assist Ukrainian colleagues, unsuccessfully so far, to join the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA).

1.3 Conclusions

The project's provision of international testing experts enabled Ukrainian test developers to acquire crucial skills in highly technical fields of standardized testing, while relying on its partner, OPORA, to assure fraud-resistant and cheating-free test administrations and the *Konkurs* system to transparently report all test results.

USETI Legacy's technical support has assisted Ukraine's testing agency, UCEQA, to continue to acquire and improve most, although not all, of the necessary component functions, for a testing system that meets international standards. Without the refinement and improved consistency of these component functions—introduced in the form of a holistic package facilitated by USETI—UCEQA would not have acquired the institutional capacity to develop and repeatedly deploy a standardized testing system that would engender broad public support and become sustainable.

Q2. What major project activities have been the most effective in strengthening public demand and government commitment for a sustainable testing system for higher education?

This complex research question relates to two key objectives of the USETI Legacy Alliance project. "Public demand" relates to Objective 3 of the USETI Legacy Alliance intervention. "Government commitment" relates to Objective 2.

2.1 Public demand

2.1.1 The USETI Alliance project approach to the notion of 'the public'

The USETI Legacy Alliance project has sought to embed the Ukrainian public as a core stakeholder in the issue of independent testing: it has engaged with the issue of public awareness and support for independent testing with an expectation that citizens will be prepared to express, and actively require, from the government and the education system, an adequate response to public demands.

The project has been able to draw on the high level of salience seen among the Ukrainian public with regard to the issues of independent testing, university admissions, and corruption in education and in society in general. The introduction of independent testing has given rise to considerable public debate, mass media and other media coverage, and, indeed, has been a controversial issue that at times has provoked (or threatened to invoke) divisions along political and ethnic lines. The public response to the issue has itself had a considerable impact, as reported by many respondents, and shown through a review of media coverage – the incumbent Minister of Education, notably, declared an intention before taking up office to remove independent testing, but found this to be impossible (or at least, not feasible as a political move) because of the anticipated negative public backlash against such a measure, given the weight of public approval for testing that had already been established by that point.[7] Further influence has been brought by student protests against planned moves to remove, or reduce the effect of, the testing system.[8] This is the context within which the project has implemented its activities relating to the public debate on testing.[9]

2.1.2 Major USETI Alliance Activities Relating to Public Demand

As stated in the final report of the USETI Alliance, the expected results of the project, measured against performance indicators, had been achieved by the end of the project.[10] The following section reviews the Alliance activities to assess the extent to which they can be seen to have been relevant and have been effectively designed and implemented, and to assess their contribution to impacts seen in this sphere, and the likely sustainability of these actions. It is important to distinguish between the evaluation of the activities themselves, and the trends seen in, e.g. public opinion over this period.

Public Monitoring, including the Konkurs Database

The activities in the sphere of **public monitoring of testing** have, according to feedback received in interviews with students, parents, school directors and members of the expert community engaged in ELPLEG, played a crucial role in building public trust in the independent testing system. Here, the key part played by Alliance partner OPORA has been very significant, and a direct linkage between the public confidence in such monitoring, and the USETI Legacy Alliance support to the work of this NGO, is possible to establish.[11] Similarly, OPORA's work in **admission campaign monitoring** has also received considerable recognition and praise from stakeholders, according to evidence gathered by the evaluation team.

The USETI Alliance support to the maintenance of the **Konkurs database**, containing details of the pathways of university applicants (discussed in Question 1, 1.2.2) has been another fundamental

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[7] For analysis of the dynamics of public opinion toward independent testing, see e.g. issue no. 9 of the journal *Gromads'ka dumka* (Public opinion) of 2012, dedicated to this subject (under the authorship of Oleksiy Sidorchuk of the USETI Alliance partner organization, Democratic Initiatives Foundation).

[8] This has involved not only university students, but also secondary school students – see, for example: 'School students come out in defense of the independent testing system,' 4 April 2013, http://znvk67.zp.ua/novini-osviti/shkolniki-stali-na-zashhitu-zno.html

[9] See, for example, O. Zaslavskyi (Expert of the Agency for Legislative Initiatives) 'Ukraine: Public's Role in the Reform of Education System: the Adoption of External Independent Evaluation', 18 March 2013, *Digest of Civil Society Leadership Network*, http://csln.info/en/news/urn:news:AF303E

[10] Final Report, January 2010 – January 2013, USETI Alliance GDA Project, Annex 2

[11] See, for example, the criticism raised by OPORA following the 2011 session: 'Work of university admission committees was not transparent,' site of International Renaissance Foundation, 19 October 2011, http://www.irf.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=34577:work_of_university_admission_committees_was_not_transparent&catid=83:news-edu-en&Itemid=68

component in the holistic approach adopted towards ensuring transparency, access to information. It is discussed here, under public demand issues, rather than under government commitment since the database operation and usage relates to issues of transparency, accountability, equity, broadening of ownership among stakeholders, of relevance both to the public and to government.

Media Monitoring

The **media monitoring** aspect of the project, led by the consulting company pro.mova, provided (by all accounts) an extremely effective means of achieving a feedback loop not just for the project but also for all stakeholders, which can access the detailed database of findings on media coverage produced by this Alliance partner.[12] Through this activity, for example, the project was able to identify journalists across Ukraine who actively cover the testing issue in their work, and provide them with training designed to enhance their knowledge and understanding of this subject. This, in turn, has resulted (according to feedback received from pro.mova staff) in an increase in quality of reporting on independent testing in the mass media. Furthermore, pro.mova has made an important contribution through its training sessions for MOESYS and UCEQA staff in media issues, and its engagement with journalists who cover education sector matters, including the question of independent testing and admissions. Through such activities the USETI project has had a considerable impact on promoting an informed and open debate on these issues.

Public Opinion Polling

Finally, the Alliance project's support for the conduct and analysis of **public opinion polling**, carried out by the Democratic Initiative Fund, has clearly had an impressive impact if measured, for instance, by the frequency with which the results of such polling are referred to in the mass and other media sources. This is a clear indicator of the impact that such polling activity has achieved – as it testifies to the level of interest raised in the mass media on the issue of testing, and to the quality of the polling evidence (given that it is cited frequently). This media coverage has brought the results of the polling to a broad public audience and thus helped to consolidate the salience of the issue among Ukrainian citizens. As the results of polling have demonstrated, there has been a steady increase in support over time among the population at large, and particularly among respondents of the age group affected by testing, toward independent testing.[13] The results of public opinion monitoring, and the analyses produced using this data, clearly provide an invaluable resource for Ukrainian stakeholders – in the education sector, among the citizenry and civil society, and the government, as a source of information for evidence-based policy discussion and development. The USETI Legacy Alliance project has sought to provide capacity-building support to stakeholders in the task of engaging with and extracting value from such data – e.g. through pro.mova's training activities with the MOESYS staff, and with journalists covering the independent testing issue.

All of the above measures have been deployed with the goal of helping to build public confidence in the independent testing system, ensuring that the debate on this issue is informed, and that the voice of public opinion can be heard and factored in to this important societal development. The USETI project has clearly, as shown by the evidence available, made a significant contribution to 'Transforming Public Support for Testing into a Proactive Contemporary Public Expectation.' It has also embedded this societal dimension into the overall project design, making it an integral part of the holistic effort in supporting independent testing – in which the public, and civil society actors, including NGOs, and the media, are treated as full stakeholders in this debate. This holds important lessons for programming of development cooperation interventions.

2.2 'Government commitment towards independent testing'

This sub-section discusses both the development of a more secure legislative basis for independent testing

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[12] This included quantitative data on, e.g. the number of journalists writing on the issue of independent testing, and the number of articles published on this theme per month in each year of the project. This data, and the content of this coverage, was analyzed in reports submitted by pro.mova to the USETI project (in total across both USETI projects a total of 50 reports has been completed).

[13] See, for instance, 'Ukraintsiam vse bil'she podobaetsya ZNO pro vstupi do vyshiv' (Ukrainians more and more support independent testing for admissions to higher education', internet news portal ZN,UA, 10 January 2013, http://dt.ua/UKRAINE/ukrayincyam-vse-bilshe-podobayetsya-zno-pri-vstupi-do-vishiv.html

and efforts to strengthen the critical issue of commitment by Government.

The focus here is on the Ministry of Education and Science (MOESYS), as the principal governmental actor involved in the oversight of the testing system, and in its role as a USETI Legacy Alliance partner organization. This evaluation covers the legislative branch through its analysis of the interaction between the USETI Legacy Alliance and key actors involved in parliamentary activity relating to independent testing as well as the broader community of actors engaged in activities relating to the development and debating of draft legislation.

The evaluation team's analysis is based on interviews with key actors involved in the afore-mentioned spheres – including current and former representatives of the MOESYS (ministerial and deputy-ministerial levels, as well as policy officials and advisors); current and former parliamentarians, including the serving chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science; respondents from the higher education, civil society sectors and expert community who have played an active part in the development and discussion of draft laws on higher education, notably through the ELPEG activities of the USETI Legacy Alliance – and on mass media coverage of the testing question.

2.2.1 Change in the political environment

Analysis of government commitment entails discussion first on the impact felt by the project as a result of the change of government in Ukraine in 2010, which affected the dynamics of the relationship between the project and the MOESYS. Prior to 2010, relations with the Ministry (under the government of the time) had apparently been based more on a shared vision between these partners regarding the question of independent testing; after the change of government, not only were efforts required to establish relations with the new incumbents of the Ministry, but also to cope with the less favorable stance adopted by ministers towards the independent testing system (including, initially, a declared desire to remove the testing system, which did not materialize; followed by a series of changes to the admissions system for higher education, which reduced the weighting afforded to the independent tests). The more skeptical stance of the MOESYS towards testing was also reflected in the lack of progress between 2010 and 2013 in the adoption of a legislative basis for independent testing, to replace the presidential decree on the basis of which the system currently operates.

Responses to interview questions regarding the impact of such changes and the overall stance of the MOESYS since 2010 surfaced two perspectives. One holds that there is still (2013) a risk that the MOESYS could seek to abandon independent testing altogether, or that its changes to the admissions system have already significantly diluted the effect of independent testing; the other perspective states, more positively, that it was now unlikely that MOESYS could abandon the testing system, as it was now sufficiently embedded, proven, accepted and supported by the public and by education sector professionals. The mass media review conducted by the evaluation team also identified the presence of these two perspectives.[14] On the basis of the interview data it is not possible to arrive at a clear conclusion as to which perspective is more pronounced – not least because respondents themselves often provided an ambivalent view as to the extent to which the independent testing system can be seen to have been institutionalized.

However, it is important to note that the independent testing system remains, as of summer 2013, the principal means of gaining admission to higher education in Ukraine, and the MOESYS continues to consolidate this system. A review of the Ukrainian version of the MOESYS website indicated an apparently strong sense of ownership (and, by extension, internalization) of the testing system by the Ministry. Furthermore, during the evaluation team's mission in May 2013, an apparently significant shift in momentum occurred with regard to the passage of draft legislation through the parliament, with the

[14] See, for example, 'Ministry of Education is warned about corruption risks due to diminishing of the role of External Independent Assessment,' International Renaissance Foundation, 20 May 2011, http://www.irf.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32691:ministry_of_education_is_warned_about_corruption_risks_due_to_diminishing_of_the_role_of_external_independent_assessment&catid=83:news-edu-en&Itemid=68

emergence of the potential for consensus now to be reached between the various factions, with independent testing to be embedded as a requirement. The chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science expressed her cautious optimism regarding the long-awaited attainment of a resolution to the legislative impasse that has lasted for many years.

2.2.2 Contribution of the USETI Legacy Alliance project to securing a legislative basis for independent testing and strengthening government commitment

The political changes in Ukraine have in fact had an impact on the USETI Legacy Alliance project. While the USETI project team has clearly made strenuous efforts in the past three years to maintain, and project, a position of neutrality, the relationship between the USETI project and the MOESYS has evidently been tense at times. This can be seen in the contents of the quarterly reports submitted by the USETI team, for instance, and was experienced by the current evaluation team in its meeting with one of the Deputy Ministers of Education—in which certain critical remarks were made towards the project and USAID as donor, with respect to the partner relations with the Ministry. While the project has sought political neutrality, this stance is clearly construed at times by the current Ministry leadership as de facto support for the 'opposition.'[15]

Per the PMP in the final project report,[16] the project has successfully met its original targets for the most part, but the 2010 change in political context has impacted on the project's ability to meet all stated goals. The expected result of establishing an Admissions Standards Committee was not achieved, as the proposal was not accepted by MOESYS; while in the area of legislative reform, partial attainment of results is recorded (although in fact, as noted above, positive momentum has been seen in mid-2013 relating to the passage of draft legislation). Overall, the project shows impressive results over the three years, given the complexities of the contexts within which it has been implemented. These achievements reflect the long-term commitment of USAID as a donor organization, as recognition of the timescale and level of effort required to produce impacts in the education sector, and in addressing such issues as corruption.

The work of the Education Law Policy Expert Group (ELPEG) forum, established under the original USETI project and continued during the Alliance phase, was identified as *the* major project activity during the Legacy Alliance phase that contributed to securing a legislative basis for independent testing and strengthening government commitment (as expressed by the majority of stakeholders interviewed who had participated in the work of this group). ELPEG is regarded by such respondents as a cornerstone of the achievements of the project, playing a crucial role in ensuring the maintenance of a platform for dialogue on policy level developments, in which a range of stakeholders, including MOESYS, can take part. This has related not only to the support and development of the independent testing system, but more broadly towards promoting the democratization of the public debate on the higher education sphere. The respondents saw, as a key outcome of this process, the benefits brought by the USETI project in terms of strengthening government commitment – through providing the Ministry access to this debate, on a more neutral and open basis than had traditionally been the case in relations in the higher-education sphere; and, alongside this, the access provided to the broader range of stakeholders to contributing to the debate, and engaging in direct dialogue with the Ministry.

Within the work of ELPEG, particular attention should be paid to the role played by the forum in the process of drafting and debating draft legislation on higher education – the adoption of which remains an urgent priority for Ukraine, given the obsolete nature of the existing law; and, in the case of independent testing, the pressing need to formalize the legal basis of this system. The issue of legislation on higher education has been – and remains, to a large extent – a contested one, at times polarized and manipulated for political purposes. However, respondents were clear in their common assessment of the positive impact of the USETI Alliance work in fostering, promoting, insisting on an open and informed debate in which professional opinion and an evidence-based approach could be emphasized over and above political

[15] As asserted by the Deputy Minister of Education and Science during the consultation with the evaluation team.
[16] Final Report, January 2010 – January 2013, USETI Alliance GDA Project, Annex 2

interests and influences.

The USETI Legacy Alliance has also been active in engaging the MOESYS over the issue of the formulation of the procedures for university admission (with recommendations produced annually by ELPEG adopted in large measure by the Ministry), and the case of the treatment of privileged categories of university applicants. Project activities that directly address the issue of government commitment are complemented by indirect influences brought to bear by other USETI Alliance activities, including work in the sphere of promoting public awareness of the testing system (which in turn has contributed to the growth in public support for testing—and, consequently, public expectations towards, and pressure on, the MOESYS over the testing system).

2.3 Conclusions

The USETI Legacy Alliance project has successfully adopted a holistic approach across the project's activity areas, which reflects an understanding of the interdependencies and synergies founds between such issues as government commitment and public support and demand in the sphere of independent testing. This approach is reflected also in the project's clear commitment towards ensuring an integrative, inclusive environment involving a broad range of stakeholders in the project activities, which has led to a widening of the scope of ownership over the process of debating and influencing the development of independent testing, and has impacted considerably on the nature of the policy debate, and within this, the nature of government commitment.

The project's activities under Objective 1 are also a crucial factor in the development of governmental and parliamentary acceptance of, and commitment to, the testing system; and in ensuring public confidence in the independent tests. The progress made in ensuring that the testing system is robust, secure, transparent, and is aiming to meet international standards has clearly played a role in allaying concerns among the public, students, educators and policy officials, and in encouraging support for this system.

From the evidence supplied by respondents, the evaluators believe that without the ELPEG platform for discussion on policy developments in the HE sector, MOESYS decision-making on independent testing could have taken place in a more isolated environment, one in which external stakeholders would not have had such opportunities to express their viewpoints, and the Ministry would not have been able to draw on such external feedback. Indeed, as a number of participants in the ELPEG community confirmed, there is a recognition that to at least some extent, the MOESYS depends on the capacity of stakeholders as the USETI project and the Alliance members to compensate for its own lack of capacity in various functional areas.

Q3. What major factors enabled or inhibited the achievement of stated objectives and how those factors were the latter successfully overcome, or if not, why not?

3.1 Support of Educators and Students for the Testing System

University administrators/lecturers, school teachers/administrators, and students have had more at stake in the testing system than most of the Ukrainian public. University administrators, in particular, potentially had the most to lose, depending on how much of their income relied on bribery. Students were affected in mixed ways, with those from wealthier families losing the ability to improperly influence admission outcomes, and with children from rural and small city areas benefitting from the opportunities created by a merit-based admission process. While not as directly affected by SET, secondary school teachers have indirectly felt the pressure of testing from their students by having to balance test prep with the existing curriculum.

While limited, data from interviews of students, lecturers, and teachers showed a generally solid, but not universal, support for standardized external testing and the quick reporting of SET results by the *Konkurs* database. SET was credited with allowing promising students from poor families or rural areas to apply to up to five universities and, possibly, to gain entry into the country's most prestigious universities rather than having those enrollments confined to local students. A few students interviewed in Kyiv and Kharkiv acknowledged that they might not have been able to gain admission without the chance offered by SET.

When probed more deeply about their experiences with testing, some students mentioned the difficulty of comprehending "tricky" questions and coping with short test-taking periods, while others deplored "unscientific" answer-guessing. There have been some relatively minor difficulties of incorrectly completed test sheets in the past. These perceptions most likely signaled students' lack of experience with the fixed-choice questions used in standardized tests rather than actual problems with test questions or resistance to standardized testing.

The sentiments of lecturers were more nuanced. Many lecturers interviewed were positive about testing as an admission tool, even while they reserved judgment on its overall effect on university academics. Nearly all said that students have more to learn today than in the immediate past and that tests are able to measure this comprehensive knowledge. A vocal minority of lecturers, including faculty members of one university's foreign language department and another university's law school, did raise serious reservations about negative effects of standardized testing, including a perceived sense of isolation from the admissions assessment process and inability to interact with university applicants. In two universities, only one lecturer had taught long enough to be able to compare the quality of students from the SET system (the first of whom just now emerging from universities) to those of the university exam era, while lecturers in a third (elite) university cited later problems with some test-qualified applicants—an issue discussed later in this section.

Three secondary school directors interviewed presented a generally favorable view and attributed testing's success to the fact that their staff knew what to expect from the beginning. For example, a guide was supplied that gave a sequence of steps for the introduction of standardized testing. In addition, some teachers got part-time work helping to prepare test items or operational tests. This careful groundwork with, and involvement of, ordinary educators probably did much to disabuse test skeptics of unwarranted fears about the upcoming changes.

3.2 Existence of Corruption and/or Cheating in Other Forms and Places

There is some disagreement on the extent to which corruption has been eliminated or rendered inconsequential. Most respondents, including higher education educators, NGO representatives, and university students and parents, agreed that bribery for admission has been eliminated as a practical threat to meritocratic procedures. Parents, who are often well positioned to detect and freely speak about corruption, confirmed a perception that subjectivity and outright bribery have largely been removed from admission decisions, as documented by two parents. This improved accessibility to university enrollment, especially for qualified rural students and other previously marginal groups, has contributed substantially to the broad perception of SET's fairness and value to society. The team was informed, though, that techniques for defeating test monitoring have become more sophisticated, although not widely employed to date. One potentially serious threat to test integrity is test-taker use of covert electronic devices, either to obtain answers or surreptitiously copy test booklets in real time. In 2012, one test-taker succeeded in uploading photos of one test and attempted to distribute it for profit during the test session. Equally disturbing is the range of newly available phone gadgetry that, purportedly, allows test takers to call confederates or consult the Internet for answers.[17] This notwithstanding, it should be noted that as one former MOESYS administrator characterized it, testing was "always primarily about equal opportunity for higher education rather than solely about opposition to corruption."

3.2.1 USETI Response to Corruption and Cheating Threats

USETI and UCEQA have recognized these new threats and worked with OPORA (and, in the past, with the MOESYS) to address risks. Both OPORA and USETI found the MOESYS's previous test-monitoring functions services inadequate. More recently through USETI's advocacy, OPORA has assumed a major role in preventing cheating in test administrations through relentless monitoring. In response to the increased risk of test-taker cheating, especially in urban centers, in 2010, the Vinnytsya RCEQA made

[17] OPORA documented web-based sellers of test cheating equipment explicitly intended to escape detection: https://www.facebook.com/olga.strelyuk/posts/4892668513880

agreements with the State Security Service to deter the use of devices (QTR report, 4th Qtr. 2010). Despite the installation of metal detectors in testing centers, test-takers in at least one testing center managed to get cellphones in. Test monitors are clearly in a race to keep pace with advances in cheating technology. On the positive side, informal observations of a couple of the most recent 2013 test sites indicate a generally well-functioning test administration operation.[18]

Although OPORA is an independent NGO, it has, according to its leaders, benefitted from USETI's ongoing financial support and strategic interventions. For example, USETI staff supported OPORA's inclusion in the Alliance, even in the face of vigorous opposition by senior MOESYS officials. OPORA's monitoring services have continued to meet the current scale of test administration against a backdrop of reduced USETI Alliance funds for monitoring activities.. Starting from 2010, OPORA conducted between 100-200 test site observations beyond the 700 to 1000 site observations "prepaid" by earlier USETI agreements. While OPORA is dedicated to continue monitoring as its core mission, USETI's declining monitoring budgets (from $160,000 in 2008, to $25,000 in 2012, to a projected $15,000-$20,000 in 2014-15) raise questions about whether even the past levels of monitoring, which have *not* covered all testing sites, can be sustained over time without either a financial infusion or changes in the way monitoring is conducted. To counteract the reduced funding of test monitoring both by USETI and the MOESYS, OPORA is now exploring the possibility of converting test monitoring into a volunteer service. Even though past attempts to involve parents/teacher representatives in such monitoring activities were deemed inadequate, OPORA believes that the Ukrainian public's newly heightened sentiment for honest and transparent educational decisions will translate into sufficient numbers of volunteer test monitors. Whatever the mechanism, public monitoring is one of the most significant elements in ensuring SET as a corruption-free component of admission reform in Ukraine.

3.3 Continued Deficits in Test Development Capacity

Standardized external testing has gained a sufficiently prominent place in the educational firmament and the public's consciousness to withstand politically motivated measures that would weaken it or dilute its effects. Several key informants from both government and NGO backgrounds, however, cautioned that, despite the entrenched status of SET as the primary higher education admission criterion, testing remains vulnerable to repeated minor assaults, and test development infrastructure faces a variety of specific deficiencies that require external assistance.

3.3.1 Inadequate Test Item Development and Banking

Lingering deficiencies, aggravated by the MOESYS leadership's attempts to undercut testing's full benefits, may eventually erode public confidence, according to many respondents. At least one key informant believed that SET had reached a point of "regression" in terms of its operational quality. As he put it, "testing technology between 2006 and now has not changed substantially, and the Center has not worked on changing that technology." In support of his opinion, he pointed to the existence of ten "ill-suited" questions on last year's history exam, which apparently were previously pilot test items. His and a few similar opinions, including the USETI test director, suggest the possibility that test item banking has not kept pace with needs and that more item writers need to be trained. A reason offered by one Ukrainian informant for "testing regression" was the transfer of UCEQA from semi-autonomy to the direct authority of the MOESYS's leadership in 2010, whose opposition to testing has been described earlier.

3.3.2 Failure to Pilot-Test All Items and Perform Psychometric Functions

Another more structural UCEQA weakness has to do with an alleged lack of coordination and trust between different departments. The seriousness with which UCEQA staff regard the need for test security is manifested, unfortunately, in a distrust of departments' capacity for secrecy. For example, according to one international testing consultant, staffers in the test content department, which assembles operational tests, habitually reserve test items developed by their own subject specialists to insert into operational tests without first being subjected to pilot-testing and other analytical procedures by the test item development

[18] Emailed observations from a foreign test observer.

department. Similarly, the Information Technology department, which receives, cleans, blends, and conducts preliminary statistical analyses on test results, does not run certain psychometric functions that are necessary to assure the equivalency of tests from year to year. Consequently, test development and test operational functions have been separated, weakening collaboration and reducing the comparability of standardized test instruments.

Test equivalency across years is important if standardized tests are to remain reliable predictors of university success each test year. There is some evidence that the lack of this kind of test equivalency analysis, which corrects for differences in test-taking populations and operational tests from year to year, has negatively affected some high school graduates who took the test in a different year than the one in which they actually intended to enroll in a university seat. More importantly, the absence of SET equivalency across years denies Ukrainian educators a systematic data-driven tool for accurately detecting improvement or regression over time. It should be added that not all UCEQA staff are convinced of the need for the most rigorous refinements of the standardized testing profession in the Ukrainian context.

3.3.3 Need for Staff Exposure to International Test Professional Associations

Part of the solution for addressing these continued deficits has been exposure of Ukrainian testing professionals to short-term training, and ultimately educational degree programs, in all testing and education measurement specialties. While USETI's technical assistance to UCEQA and support of the degree program in psychometrics and educational measurement at Kyiv Dragomanov National Pedagogical University have laid the foundation of a test development profession, the connection of these emerging testing specialists with similar colleagues from advanced testing countries remains unfulfilled due to the lack of UCEQA membership in the International Association of Educational Assessment (IAEA) and other international professional organizations. According to USETI staff, the barrier originates with UCEQA's budget, which is inadequate to send a modicum of representatives to the international sites for the organization's annual conferences. Such constraints inhibit the strengthening of SET's quality and impact.

3.3.4 USETI's Role in Addressing these Deficits

These continued weaknesses reinforce the essential, and continuing, need for an organization like USETI in helping UCEQA maintain and enhance its test-development capacity: a finding that was confirmed by numerous respondents in this study. Opinions differed on exactly what specific actions should be done by USETI to address remaining gaps. But, further progress toward the full panoply of modern testing and education measurement skills, according to one international expert, is essential for the Ukrainian SET system to reach international standards. UCEQA staff themselves expressed a strong desire for continuation of such training and technical assistance on these component functions. In other cases, informants gave few specific recommendations but felt strongly that the testing enterprise itself was at stake without USETI's continued presence as a training and technical assistance deliverer, thought leader, and mediator between stakeholder groups. As the head of one important testing-oriented NGO put it, "UCEQA will not survive without USETI."

3.4 Testing-Caused Challenges in Other Levels of Education

Although not directly related to achievement of project objectives, unintended consequences from the introduction of standardized independent testing do ultimately factor into the overall context of the testing enterprise and affect its long-term acceptance and viability in the educational establishment. In addition to the recent appearance of corruption related to some lecturers' grades and to university graduation decisions, testing has had unexpected effects on instruction both within and immediately below the university level.

3.4.1 High Ranking Test Performance and Poor University Academic Achievement

The conversion of university rectors and, ultimately, most line lecturers and department heads from opponents to supporters of standardized testing over a mere four-five year period was significant but not without reservations about the unintended consequences caused by SET. One of the most vexing of these outcomes, a failure to fully predict academic success, appears to have affected elite universities in particular. Senior administrators and faculty members at two elite Kyiv universities reported deficiencies with some of their seemingly well-qualified applicants. In one elite technical university, applicants who

were admitted on the strength of their very high SET rankings turned out to be poor performers in their first-year studies. In some cases, the students required remedial work to remain viable in degree programs. In the second elite university, which uses English as the language of instruction, academic success depends on a high communicative linguistic ability in English—a qualification previously assured by that university's discontinued internal assessment process. By disallowing the university's (more rigorous) internal system, the SET system produced a cohort of officially "qualified" applicants whose lower communicative English abilities were ill-suited for that university's more exacting standards, while excluding a portion of its applicant pool would leave the university with an undersupply of qualified applicants for their incoming freshman class. A former Minister of Education and Science confirmed that higher than expected percentages of high test-scorers were being screened out of, or dismissed from, elite universities for poor achievement.

The precise reasons for the disappointing first-year academic performance, or unsuitability, of qualified applicants are not entirely clear. It appears that UCEQA's tests, while screening out applicants likely to fail at any higher education institution, do not adequately differentiate potentially marginal applicants for institutions with the most rigorous instruction. Unpacking the causes of mismatched students for elite universities has been a subject of great interest within those universities, the higher education department of the MOESYS, as well as USETI and UCEQA. The problem is somewhat complicated by the fact that universities still have local autonomy over the state funding provided them, which allows university administrators and lecturers to decide which applicants receive so-called "free" seats and which receive only "paid" seats that require students to bear the cost. Such autonomy allows universities to reward better scoring students with free seats and relegate paid seats to students whose families have the financial capacity to pay tuition: a decision that, coincidentally, still lacks transparency. Unfortunately for elite universities, this discretionary power does not correct for the original enrollment of candidates who are, in some cases, unlikely to succeed in their studies.

Corrective measures

According to both USETI leaders and some university representatives, the problem could be partially eliminated with either of two strategies within the existing SET system. One proposes a multi-level standardized test, where more advanced levels could be used to identify especially knowledgeable high school graduates. The second strategy would involve allowing elite universities to favor certain qualifications through coefficients in ranking formulae that would weight scores in desirable subjects more heavily. For example, a science and technology university could more heavily weight scores in core subjects such as math or physics, thereby emphasizing those results in the ranking process. To address the problem of poorly performing oral communicators of foreign languages (but test-qualified applicants), one option would be to allow the universities that use a foreign language as the medium of instruction to administer their own oral exam to supplement the SET system.

3.4.2 Fixation on Tests among Secondary School Students and Teachers

Several reservations about testing had to do with the belief that it is changing how secondary teachers relate to their students and what they teach. The current regulation limiting test-takers to four subjects out of a possible 11 available subjects, inevitably, gives students a strong incentive to focus on those testable subjects during the last year or two of high school. There was agreement among students and secondary school directors that the arrival of standardized testing has increasingly forced instruction to "teach to the test" in the lead up to graduation, although a USETI staff said that the tests do reflect the material embedded in the curriculum. Students admitted that they focus only on the four subjects they are being tested on, causing some educators to lament the loss of interest in the rest of the curriculum. Students' broad use of third-party test preparation materials and seminars also diverts attention away from the traditional curriculum.[19] At least one student interviewed said that school "took time away from preparation rather than giving something" and defended prep courses as "necessary to refresh knowledge learned in previous years." In one sense, this focus on the test indicated the acceptance of testing among a core

[19] One student interviewed paid €5,000 for a test prep course, while another paid €1,200 for a university prep course.

constituency, while in another sense it raises the possibility that some remediation might eventually be needed. At least two alternatives seem possible: (1) one that secondary curriculum, especially in the senior year, might be revised to be more congruent with potential SET questions; or (2) that the introduction of a general ability test to replace the current subject tests might reduce the importance of prepping on specific subjects and increase attention to general higher-order thinking skills.

Separately, secondary school teachers might be able to give more assistance to students if they had more specific data on how their students performed on the standardized tests. Since secondary schools get only an average score of their graduates, the relevant teachers can make no correlations of individual students with their own teaching practices.

3.5 Emergence of Educational Quality as a Future Rationale for Testing

Distortions or unintended consequences of testing have prompted consideration of additional and more advanced testing as a possible remedy. As described above, complaints about new forms of corruption associated with lecturers' grades and even graduation from university have surfaced from students, parents, and NGO representatives.

3.5.1 General Ability Testing for University Admission, Graduation, and Beyond

One testing initiative that has been advanced as a corrective both for corruption elsewhere in higher education and for the weak correlation of subject tests with first-year university success is the general ability test. USETI had moved to assist those who wanted to transition SET toward a general ability test, which could be made suitable for predicting student performance in university instruction. At least one rector of a major university believed that a general ability test would correlate better with success in university studies, thereby giving universities both more precisely qualified applicants and instruments for improving his institution's own instructional quality. A small majority of lecturers was open to the extension of standardized testing elsewhere in the undergraduate and post-graduate levels and noted its current existence in departments like pharmacy, although one group of law faculty members was skeptical of expanding SET beyond admissions decisions. If properly designed to test higher order thinking skills, a general ability test could also be appropriate for assessing qualifications for graduation and, perhaps, entry into graduate programs.

Achievement versus Ability Testing

Ukraine's standardized tests were intended from the beginning as achievement tests of secondary school subjects, except for a few subjects like journalism and teaching, which are not taught at that level. Test-takers pick two of the four allowed tests according to an assumed congruence with their preferred majors and professional goals: a connection not always logically obvious. Parents of test-takers and other respondents noted a certain disconnect between the SETs and the secondary instruction in those subjects: for example, "unrealistic" tests in Ukrainian language, literature, and history that focus on obscure aspects or are too vague. Such complaints, of course, are heard in advanced testing countries, but, in Ukraine, they represent impediments to testing's optimal impact. USETI and Ukrainian experts advised early that UCEQA begin development of a general ability test that would complement but not supplant the achievement tests. As one university rector said, such a test would "show a good correlation between test scores and first year subjects" because it would target two abilities— mathematical logic and critical reading—that between them are required in essentially all subject areas.

USETI and UCEQA's specialists have successfully collaborated in developing a prototype general ability test that, according to one of its original supporters, was pilot-tested in 40 institutions around Ukraine. As currently conceived, the higher-order test items would apply to entrants into the undergraduate level, but a more advanced version could be developed for university graduation or graduate school admission.

3.5.2 Use of Testing for Quality Improvement of Education

In measuring higher-order thinking skills rather than just subject matter knowledge, a general ability test would center attention on the quality of university, or secondary, education. That represents a shift from measuring what students know to measuring how well they can apply general knowledge to novel problems.

Most senior informants who were interviewed expressed support for a general ability test, both because the tested skills are even more predictive of future academic success than achievement tests and of success in the workplace (see Question 4).

This prototype general ability test currently remains under consideration but un-acted upon by the MOESYS's leadership. If general ability testing is to move forward, USETI may need to move beyond a purely anti-corruption philosophy into one that embraces educational quality. Indeed, one Ukrainian researcher said that USETI could have done more "to bridge testing and improvement of the quality of education." Its authoritative presence in the testing profession will likely prove exceedingly important in identifying the next-generation of test item writers for these more sophisticated tests.

3.6 Conclusions

1. The overall perception among educators and students is that independent testing has enhanced accessibility to higher education for many students and reduced corruption or unfair subjectivity in admissions.
2. OPORA has been playing a critical role in building public confidence in the SET through a rigorous program of test monitoring; however, finding from USETI to support this has been shrinking. The current high integrity of SET administrations can be maintained only through vigilant test monitoring by trained monitors and the most current data on cheating technology and techniques.
3. Continued weakness of Ukrainian test experts in very specific technical areas, including psychometrics, undermines UCEQA's ability to ensure the year-to-year comparability of annual SETs and, thereby, prevents a fully reliable assessment of educational progress.
4. Despite standardized external testing's documented success in identifying qualified higher education candidates, the lack of fine-grained distinctions in the SET rankings of generally qualified applicants has limited the ability of a few elite universities to identify and select the most precisely qualified students for their demanding instruction.
5. Further development and deployment of UCEQA/USETI's prototype general ability test might alleviate the problem of poor correlation of subject tests with academic success in elite universities and offer a possible tool for addressing higher education quality in all universities...

Q4. How effective has the project been in building stakeholder support in the employer community, i.e. a) folding employers into high-level policy events; b) including employers to serve as public advocates for admissions and education reform; c) devoting resources to testing, and d) engaging employers through establishing career centers and developing visiting lecture series in universities.

This question relates to part of Objective 2 of the USETI Legacy Alliance project. To address this question the evaluation team elicited feedback from Ukrainian employers, reviewed media coverage of employer attitudes towards higher-education issues, and also received interview feedback on this issue during interviews with representatives of other stakeholder groups (education officials and experts, university lecturers, school and university students).

4.1 The context of employer perspectives on the quality of higher education in Ukraine

The situation in Ukraine is similar to that seen in many countries in the former Soviet Union region – there is a significant mismatch between the contemporary needs of employers in terms of the skills and knowledge they require of graduate employees, and the substance and quality of education provided in the higher-education system. In Ukraine, the continuing practice of the 'state order' regulating the number of students per academic discipline at university level (and, consequently, the allocation of state funding of student places in university departments) is considered by many employers to distort the profile of higher education and does not reflect the needs of the labor market.[20] There is general dissatisfaction with the state

[20] See, for example, an article by a respondent interviewed for the evaluation (Rodion Kolyshko, Director, Department of the Development of Labor Potential, Confederation of Employers of Ukraine): 'Chem deistvitel'no dlia rynka truda iavliaetsia goszakaz v Ukraine?' (What does the state order system really mean for the labor market of Ukraine?'), 1 April 2013,

of higher education among employers, with studies indicating the impact of lack of development and investment in Ukrainian HE sector on the country's economic performance, for instance.[21]

Employer representatives interviewed expressed concern, shared to some extent by higher education respondents, and frustration with regard to the relative lack of influence of the commercial sector on the nature of the curricula of universities, and with barriers perceived to stand in the way of closer collaboration between the HE and business sectors. As an employer respondent stated, building these relations (and the necessary conditions for them to succeed) has proved an arduous process over the past two decades—although there are signs now of progress in this sphere.[22] It is in this context that the USETI Legacy Alliance project has made its contribution to fostering dialogue and cooperation between these sectors.

4.2 USETI Legacy Alliance Project Activities

The research question posed for the current evaluation refers to four sets of activities (involvement of employers in high-level events; employers acting as advocates for admissions and education reform; devoting resources to testing; establishment of career centers and visiting lecture series). This reflects the broader set of goals embedded in the original proposal for the Legacy Alliance, although the project's PMP focuses on the first two activities. As project management clarified to the evaluation team, it has indeed been the case that project activities have been limited to these activities, with the resource-reliant goals (resources for testing, setting up career centers) proving to be beyond the scope of achievement by the Legacy Alliance.

4.2.1 Employer Forum

This initiative continued from the MCC USETI project, with pro.mova playing a key role in coordination of the Legacy Alliance activities as well. Five forum events were conducted, as planned, bringing together an impressive range of participants from the sphere of employment, higher education, and policymaking.[23] The evaluation team received extremely positive feedback from respondents who had participated in these events, advising that these events have served as important platforms for building trust and dialogue between stakeholder groups, thereby filling a gap (as respondents stated) in this relationship. As one employer noted, the engagement continued on a more informal, ad hoc level between the events, with the USETI team proactively approaching stakeholders in order to take the collaboration forward.

4.2.2 Employers as Public Advocates for Admissions and Education Reform

The evaluation team elicited feedback from employers regarding their motivation for engaging with the USETI project. The clear response in all cases was that employers have been drawn not so much from a direct interest in the issue of independent testing for university admissions itself but more from a general concern about the state of higher education and the quality of graduates. There was recognition, however, of the benefits of inculcating a culture of independent testing among young people, as preparation for the practice of being assessed through objective assessment later in life, in the world of work. According to respondents, the USETI project's openness and willingness to engage with employers offered an opportunity for the latter to have their concerns heard in stakeholder meetings. Crucially, the USETI project also sought to ensure that employers were involved in the process of drafting and discussing proposals for the law on higher education (as reflected, e.g., in the inclusion of articles relating to the business-HE sector relationship in the drafts, a fact that the employer representatives noted with satisfaction).

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www.confeu.org/ru/presscentre/news/pubtext.html&docid=2953

[21] See 'Sistema vysshego obrazovaniia v Ukraine: kolichestvo, ne perekhodiashchee v kachesvto' ('The higher-education system of Ukraine: quantity not transformed into quality'), 2011, Competitive Ukraine: www.competitiveukraine.org/upload/reports/chapter3_rus.pdf

[22] 'Biznes i vuzy: Led tronulsia' (The business sector and universities: The ice has started to shift'), article by Natalia Emchenko, Director of Public Relations and Communication, System Capital Management, 28 April 2013, http://blog.scm.com.ua/ru/2013/04/28/biznes-i-vuzy-led-tronulsya/

[23] See, for example, information on the December 2012 event - http://www.useti.org.ua/en/news/1246/forum-cooperation-between-higher-education-and-the-labor-market.html

While the number of employer stakeholders to have adopted an active stance as advocates may be more limited than initially hoped for, there does appear to be a solid core of committed employer organizations (as noted by employer community respondents) that are ready to continue to work with the USETI project, and which are convinced of the value that USETI Alliance activities have brought to this sphere. Given the profile of the participants in the USETI employer forum, there is optimism that the momentum achieved to date can now be built upon.

4.2.3 Devoting Resources to Testing, and Engaging Employers through Establishing Career Centers and Developing Visiting Lecture Series in Universities

The factors restricting progress in these activities include, according to respondents, both political and economic issues as well as the overall complexity of forging more constructive relations between employer/business and university sectors. On the political front, the more negative attitude towards this issue displayed by the new team at the MOESYS from 2010 (as related by the USETI project team) acted as a disincentive to employers to commit resources and time to this question. Furthermore, as discussed under Question 6 on leveraging, the potential interest in possible investments in the project expressed to the USETI project team prior to the start of the Legacy Alliance have not, in fact, had tangible impact.

4.3 Conclusions

On the evidence of feedback received from stakeholders from all three spheres who have participated in project activities aimed towards this goal, the USETI Legacy Alliance project has achieved very significant impacts in promoting the institutionalization of the partnership between business, higher education and the policy realm. As one representative of commercial sector organization put it, while momentum was difficult to attain in the initial period of collaboration from 2009 on (due, in their opinion, to a rather defensive stance of HEIs, and a less than open attitude of the MOESYS), by 2013 the situation had tangibly improved – with all parties, including MOESYS, now prepared to engage in more open dialogue. In the opinion of this respondent, the USETI Legacy Alliance role in this regard cannot be overstated, nor should the fact that a platform is now in place for constructive interaction between the stakeholders.

While the more ambitious goals of the USETI Legacy Alliance project noted in parts c) and d) of Question 4 may not have been achieved because of factors beyond the control of the project, the confidence built among stakeholders during the 2010-13 project implementation augurs well for the expansion of collaboration in the coming period – and the allocation of resources by the commercial sector to higher-education based activities may well prove feasible. This would represent a major step forward in the involvement of the business sector in the HE sphere.

Q5. What roles have gender issues played in influencing progress towards achieving planned results? What were gender integration challenges and benefits for project implementation?

To a large extent, assessment of the gender aspects of the USETI Project and, more broadly, the entire independent testing enterprise, was characterized by a paucity of gender-related documentation and an absence of articulated concern by Ukrainian respondents for any known gender imbalances or inequities. UCEQA does not collect or report sex-disaggregated data on SET results. Interviews with informants who were best suited to comment on gender matters yielded little more than oblique references to, or awareness of, sex-related performance indicators. Such responses were typical of respondents ranging from Washington D.C.-based USAID HQ officials and American Councils staff to USETI, GOU, and NGO leaders and staff with genuinely “insider” views of the testing operation and MOESYS’ internal culture. None of this is to say that gender analysis lacks importance but that it competes with more contentious matters that have absorbed the attention of Ukrainian education decision-makers.

5.1 Gender Issues Influencing Project Progress

5.1.1 Whether, or how, men and women are affected differently by independent admissions testing

One possible reason for the absence of any pronounced gender perspective among many respondents or available documentation may be that people do not perceive independent testing as having had a major influence, one way or another, in male or female access to higher education institutions. While admission to university is an independent action by each institution and beyond USETI’s authority, any gender bias in

the test instruments would likely have been manifested in actual HEI admission patterns. In fact, standardized testing has not resulted in any detectable reduction in the percentages of female students in higher education institutions. In a table supplied by the Union of Rectors in Annex E showing 2010 (the most recent such data) enrolment distribution among HE institutions, the predominance of females ranges from 53.2% to 55% of total student enrollment across institutional types. A systematic 2009 quantitative analysis of enrollment accessibility since the introduction of testing compared the admission success rate of particular categories of applicants—in this case males and females—with the admission success rate of all Ukrainian applicants. Of the 57.03% of total applicants who succeeded in getting admitted, women succeeded at a rate of 60.5% compared to men's success rate of 53.5%.

Interview data did uncover a few subtle changes in the gender distribution of some universities after the introduction of testing. According to a rector and several lecturers, the female-dominant enrollment at one private university has become less so in recent years, which may, possibly indicate increased access to urban universities among rural boys rather than any retrogression of access among girls. In contrast, administrators at a prestigious public university reported that, for the first time, a female applicant had qualified for admission into the department that educates Ukraine's secret service corps. The department apparently resisted opening the ranks of the program to female applicants by setting the service's quota of female recruits at zero.

5.1.2 Bias prevention in development of tests

Ukrainian test specialists, international experts, and USETI program staff stated that testing had, generally, avoided introducing any gender bias that might cause test results that would steer admission decisions in stereotypical directions. This was due to proactive actions by USETI-sponsored training to, according to a consultant, "assure that UCEQA implemented industry standards procedures that ensured tests are not gender biased." This was done at several stages of test development during capacity building in psychometrics and test development, including, e.g., by training item writers and reviewers to appreciate the principles of creating non-biased items and to check for possible gender bias in item content, and by implementing special statistical procedures such as the Statistical Analysis of Pilot Data and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) and applying them in test construction and analysis.

According to an international test consultant, "[USETI] can safely claim that UCEQA items and tests produced through USETI-supported item writing and item banking system are filtered for gender bias and represent gender-fair measures of student knowledge." And, as a USETI leader said, "We have actually been doing more than anyone would even be thinking about just by teaching UCEQA the industry standard in item development and test assembly." The (female) manager of testing at USETI noted that "During all test development trainings and while reviewing test items, [USETI consultants] always drew attention to avoiding gender bias and noted that it is important that test items/tests be checked for gender bias."

Even if test outcomes had caused fewer numbers of one sex to gain admission,[24] test instrument bias would not necessarily have been responsible. According to a Ukrainian test expert, girls outscore boys in most middle and higher income countries on language/verbal tests, while boys reverse the pattern in mathematics and science subjects, reflecting different personal preferences or society-level bias. Beyond the issue of test construction fairness, at least one international expert argued that SET could produce a positive effect for female applicants in subjects where stereotypical behaviors held sway. In his view, the use of standardized tests might remove heightened anxiety by students and reduce gender bias surrounding a young woman's oral examination in front of "mostly male professors in a male-dominated subject area, such as science subjects"—no doubt, a significant side effect of the earlier university-based admission system. However, the tight data collection timeframe prevented the team from gathering additional data on the salience of this intriguing cultural trait.

[24] This can occur if previously marginalized populations suddenly enjoyed greater access to higher education.

5.2 Gender Integration Challenges

It was not possible to gather a wide range of opinion about gender both because of the very limited time for all interviews and the inherently broad nature of gender integration dynamics in any institutional setting. As noted earlier in this question, some respondents who were questioned did not express explicitly definitive positions on gender-related issues, suggesting a reluctance to express anything more than general comments or, perhaps, an acceptance of widely held norms about gender roles. Nonetheless, some modest observations were made on the following questions.

5.2.1 Extent to which both sexes participated in and benefitted from project activities.

In this project, the terms "participants" and "beneficiaries" deserve some clarification, since participants in USETI project activities are generally not the same as the users, or beneficiaries, of its outputs. One could regard participants as those individuals who engaged in USETI-led trainings and/or technical assistance or attended USETI-facilitated events, while the latter would commonly refer to the many thousands of students who take UCEQA's independent standardized tests annually as an admission requirement for university admission.

Little can be said about the relative degree of participation by males and females in USETI activities, other than that project leaders took no explicit actions on any gender-focused agenda but, instead, implemented programs according to the overall objectives of developing test development capacity and garnering support for the SET enterprise among major organizational players and relevant Ukrainian analysts and opinion leaders. As USETI's testing manager said, "Throughout the duration of the project we worked with a lot of counterparts of both sexes in various roles and statuses, ranging from admin and support staff to top managerial positions. Based on anecdotal evidence throughout many years, USETI Alliance staff did not notice any particular gender-related difference on project implementation and results. All project tasks were dealt with successfully regardless of the gender of our partner representatives." Gauging from the required informant pool for this evaluation, the gender distribution of participants in USETI Legacy Alliance project activities is likely to have reflected a predominantly male composition. But most certainly, there was no evidence that females were either intentionally or casually excluded from any project activities. Although numbers are small, it appears that women hold leadership positions with USETI and UCEQA in proportions at least as great as they do in Ukrainian secondary and, particularly, post-secondary education and education administration as a whole.

With regard to the gender implications for USETI's beneficiaries, interest centers on the test development operation: an arena in which societal gender-determined roles can readily be observed. For example, an international test consultant remarked that test-item writers tend to reflect typical subject matter gender patterns, wherein female test item writers congregate in the languages and male item writers in science, math and engineering. This consultant has striven to make UCEQA aware of this source of possible self-selected gender bias in test construction, which could conceivably reinforce existing self-selected gender preferences in students' choice of tests. A Ukrainian test expert credited USETI assessment consultants with "emphasizing to UCEQA item writers/reviewers the need for thinking about possible sources of bias when writing test items, specifically gender bias and when reviewing items." As noted in 5.1.2 above, the project makes significant effort to avoid gender bias in its testing.

5.2.2 Whether the project took actions to enhance women's participation in project activities

Although USETI's independent status limits its influence of gender employment patterns in the MOESYS, USETI did give a prominent role to NGO partners that exhibited strong female presence within their leadership. Dedicated women hold important positions in USETI (i.e., the director of testing development) and several of its partners—notably, UCEQA, OPORA, pro.mova, Center for Education and Development of Society, and Democratic Initiatives Foundation, among others—and have been outspoken advocates for education reform and transparency and critical of MOESYS' actions. While this does not substitute for substantive change in host national institutions, USETI's active support of female involvement in these relationships probably constitutes the most that can be expected from a project with an extremely

challenging, and different, overall mission.

5.2.3 Whether the project integrated findings from gender analysis into its activities and how

The absence of sex-disaggregated test results by UCEQA essentially prevented USETI from crafting any gender-oriented messaging, activities, or materials. USETI Project staff attributed this to the lack of a USAID mandate to allocate project funds for data disaggregation by sex, although the USETI Project Description does state the intention to "track and disaggregate exam results by gender."[25] The staff said that they could have taken special steps to disaggregate data by sex and, thus, allow a more explicit gender perspective and expressed a willingness to assist any future research on sex-differentiated test performance.. In the absence of official authorization or directives for such expenditures, project staff did not see an imperative to fund gender-specific analyses when the consequences of doing so might have undercut other tightly funded functions. Nonetheless, there are gender-related questions, such as male-female differences in test performance on specific subject areas, where more refined data might aid UCEQA, in particular, and the MOESYS, in general, both to further reduce test bias and to address specific information needs such as access, academic success, and later employment.

5.3 Implications of Testing for Special Needs Students

Little substantive data could be collected on standardized testing and USETI's role in relation to special needs students. What information that does exist, primarily, applies to the preschool, primary, and secondary levels of education.[26] According to the principal in one major donor in this area, "Disabled children are excluded well before any higher education testing is administered." One slightly dated but still useful study of this subject characterized inclusive higher education for students as only having recently arrived in the form of reasonable accommodations for certain disabilities and was available fully at only one institution (Open International University of Human Development *UKRAINE)*.[27] The article states that a follow-up study found both instructors and students "satisfied with their experience at this integrated university." However, the role of standardized testing in the composition of its student body was not investigated.

Also, in the Ukrainian context, consideration of children with special needs is complicated by a pre-existing legal provision that grants favorable treatment (or so-called protected status) in university admissions to orphans and other disadvantaged children. This has frequently been tainted by political motives that automatically grant such protected status to the children of certain employee categories—e.g. coal miners. In the past, this has allowed both deserving and less-deserving students to be admitted into universities without competition. At least one NGO analyst and one HEI official noted that, with the introduction of standardized testing, applicants with protected status were expected, and did agree in many cases, to take the SETs. Like all other students, they would have had to score at least the minimum threshold of 124 for entry into any Ukrainian university.

5.4 The Effects of Testing in Relation to LGBT Populations

A similar lack of available data hinders any substantive inquiry of whether or how standardized testing took into account the considerations or needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) population in Ukraine. Although only a relatively few informants could be asked about this issue, interviews in this evaluation indicated little, if any, attention to LGBT perspectives by USETI staff or its partner organizations. Consequently, it is likely that the issue has not reached a threshold of societal awareness that would elicit an official response by either government or NGOs. Indeed, the opinions of one GOU representative indicate that the concept might engender opposition if pushed fully into Ukrainian public awareness. A student representative working with a Parliamentarian who is drafting a pro-testing

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[25] "Program Description, Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) Legacy Alliance," 121-A-00-10-00702-00, p. 44.

[26] See "Developing the Financing Mechanisms of Funding Inclusive Schools in Ukraine Overview Report," Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation, (no date), for some information on programming for special needs children.

[27] Raver, Sharon A., "The Emergence of Inclusion for Students with Disabilities in Ukraine," in the International Journal of Special Education, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2007, pg. 35.

proposal for the prospective Education Law dismissed any need to advance LGBT concerns at this time, calling it a "fake problem." Whether or not his opinions are representative of decision-makers in the education establishment would require a focused study.

5.5 Conclusions

1. While the sex distribution of standardized test results is unclear due to the absence of sex-disaggregated data, the testing system appears not to have adversely affected female admission into universities—an acceptable surrogate measure of testing effectiveness—as evidenced by the female majority student population in Ukrainian HEIs over the last few years.

   USETI's diligent sensitization and training of UCEQA testing specialists on avoiding gender bias have effectively removed gender bias from the organization's test development functions.
2. Although USETI's program activities did not address any explicitly gender goals, its involvement of and support to highly effective and visible women staff members of partner organizations gave females a degree of influence, although, admittedly, outside the Ministry's senior administration.
3. Because of other societal issues of greater significance, testing plays no real role in university admission for students with special needs, play a minor, almost optional role for children with protected status, and are irrelevant for LGBT students.

Q6. What non-USAID resources have been attracted for funding project implementation, and what new opportunities do currently exist?

The evaluation team received from the USETI Alliance project team a summary set of data showing the total amounts of $4,679,037 leveraged from Alliance partner organizations during the implementation period, 2010-13. The USETI project team derived these figures from the leverage reports embedded in the project's quarterly reports, submitted to USAID during the course of the project. As confirmed to the evaluation team, leverage has been calculated and verified in confirmation with USAID guidelines.

As documented in the cooperative agreement, initially the USETI project team had been optimistic that other international donors and organizations, and Ukrainian and international commercial sector companies, would also contribute resources that would complement the USETI Alliance activities. However, as related to the evaluation team by the USETI project team, progress has not been possible in these cases for a range of reasons (political, institutional, resource-related, etc. For instance, the impacts of the global economic downturn affected the ability of commercial sector companies to support such initiatives. Furthermore, the change in government in Ukraine meant that the environment was less favorable to the involvement of commercial sector organizations in this sphere, which reduced opportunities for the USETI project team to garner leverage. The achievements of the USETI Legacy Alliance project should be understood against this context of limitations on the additional resources that the project was not able to draw upon. As reported to the evaluation team by the USETI project management, there are now renewed hopes that during the next phase of the project, it will be possible to include leveraged support from new partners/contributors, drawn from the commercial sector and from other donor organizations, as well as from the existing set of partners.

With regard to the commercial sector, the positive traction being slowly but consistently developed on the basis of the USETI project's employer forum can, in the view of respondents from the employer sample, lead to more tangible results in relation to the direct involvement of companies in initiatives supporting the project's work. This will require ongoing efforts of the USETI team to ensure that the project understands and responds to the specific interests of the employer community, and exploits the common ground that exists, in principle, between the stakeholders covered in the USETI project. It should be noted that there is in fact a considerable amount of activity relating to the education sector and to initiatives in the sphere of civil society capacity-building, on the part of the donor community.

4. Summary Conclusions

The evidence gathered by the evaluation team points to a general consensus among respondents

representing different categories of stakeholders that the USETI Legacy Alliance project has facilitated a significant impact on the continuation and consolidation of standardized testing for university admissions and associated improvement in equitable access to higher education and to the reduction of corruption in Ukraine—outcomes that are manifested across all the project's objectives. The project has attained these outcomes through its holistic approach to complex, interrelated issues at the core of higher education admissions, as demonstrated both in the nature of its engagement with a broad and varied stakeholder base, and the multiple focal areas covered by the project's activities. USETI orchestrated its multiple domains of activity in an unusually deft manner within an exceedingly complicated environment. The project has had to respond to changes in Ukraine's political situation that produced a less favorable environment for independent testing, which at times led to an oppositional relationship with the MOESYS—a difficult position for a donor-funded project to find itself in. The extended USETI presence provides an excellent example of what can be achieved through sustained donor-supported efforts to tackle an entrenched problem that stands in the way of accessible and high quality higher education. The achievements of the USETI Legacy Alliance project should be regarded not just in combating corruption in education but also with helping to open up and democratize the public debate on access to higher education. To a very great extent, USETI, which has often been characterized as an anti-corruption project, represents a very successful educational quality improvement activity in a country for which this kind of improvement is critical both for its future economic vitality and the sustainability of its democratic institutions. Overall, the USETI Legacy Alliance project is an exemplar of the principles of USAID Forward in action.

The following represent some important lessons for future consideration.

1. Corruption has been arrested and greatly removed from the HEI admissions system, but the expectation of, and accommodation to, it is still deeply embedded. As one key informant said, "Most students just see testing as this weird thing you have to do for admission" and not necessarily an instrument for societal good. Until legal sanctions are enacted to punish perpetrators of corruption, supporters of merit-based assessment must be mindful of the potential for corrupt practices to find new entry points and act to minimize their corrosive effects on quality, transparency, and equity.
2. USETI has benefitted in the past by placing its testing initiatives in a broad context, where influences from diverse sources can be identified and assessed for their impact on project objectives. Some key informants think that USETI's future effectiveness will depend on adopting an even bigger picture: in effect, expanding its scope.
3. The holistic approach adopted by the USETI Legacy Alliance project has ensured that a broad set of societal stakeholders within Ukraine, including groups such as the business community which had previously felt excluded, was engaged actively in discussing and contributing to the development of independent testing for admissions and a legislative structure for higher education. The project thereby provides an excellent example of the impact that can be achieved in a development cooperation project that extends issues of *relevance* and *ownership* from a more narrowly construed understanding, where the beneficiary country government assumes a dominant role, toward a wider conception of citizenry who are able to influence project implementation and help shape change—especially in the societally important education system.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations (linked to their related evaluation questions) are listed in prioritized order from most to least important (although many are interrelated). In the next iteration of the project:

1. (Q1,2,3) USETI should continue to focus on consolidating and increasing favorable public opinion toward standardized external testing using its proven combination of expert technical assistance, media information campaigns, and inclusive and open discussion of testing-related issues.
2. (Q1,3) USETI should address any remaining deficiencies in UCEQA's test development and measurement capacity through training and technical assistance in high-level psychometrics functions and inter-department relationships within UCEQA.
3. (Q2,3) USETI should create a working group composed of university administrators, lecturers, and

relevant MOESYS, UCEQA and NGO representatives to devise a mutually agreeable way (perhaps using coefficients or multi-level tests) to mitigate the weak correlation between high-scoring admission test results and poor first-year academic performance in some elite Ukrainian universities.

4. (Q3) USETI should engage educators (government officials, administrators, lecturers and teachers at higher-education and secondary levels) in a constructive examination of the potential utility of, need for, extending standardized testing to address other (possibly new) manifestations of corrupt or non-merit-based practices elsewhere in the educational continuum.
5. (Q1,2,3,5) USETI should support research and instructional programs on independent testing and associated educational measurement issues—including the disaggregation of test results and other performance data by sex—as an essential step toward a stronger evidence base to which governmental and education sector stakeholders can refer.
6. (Q5) USETI should include in its research agenda the gender effects of any general ability tests that are deployed for admissions or future HE quality improvement efforts.
7. (Q.3) USETI should work with UCEQA to identify a way for Ukrainian test specialists to become actively engaged with and members of the International Association of Educational Assessment and the Measurement & Research Methodology division of AERA.
8. (Q1,2,3) USAID/Ukraine should consider funding a meaningful expansion of standardized external testing to help improve higher education quality, which would help foster economic development in Ukraine and protect the agency's investment in promoting transparent democratic institutions.
9. (Q.4) USETI should continue to engage actively with employers through the maintenance of the employers' forum and employer representatives in the proceedings of ELPEG and other working groups.
10. (Q1,3) UCEQA should, through collaboration with USETI testing experts, seek to strengthen remaining weaknesses in a few test development functions, such as psychometrics and item response theory, that enable test comparability from year to year.
11. (Q3) MOESYS, in concert with UCEQA, should consider deploying the already piloted general ability test for supplementation of subject tests for admissions and possible quality improvement of instruction in higher education.
12. (Q2,3) UCEQA should identify areas of testing that engender weak educator support, prepare informative responses, and disseminate this information to secondary and university faculties.
13. (Q1,2,3) USETI should offer, as needed, capacity-building support to facilitate the effective use of research-based evidence by administrators, policy makers, and researchers.
14. (Q.6) USETI should continue to seek synergies with other donor organizations (e.g. European Commission, Renaissance Foundation, British Council) working on issues related to educational assessment, equitable access to higher education, capacity-building in education sector research and use of evidence-based data in policy-making.
15. (Q1,3) UCEQA should consider taking advantage of the differentiating capacity of test items to identify and disseminate areas for possible secondary school curricular changes or improvement of school instruction.

Annexes

Annex A. Scope of Work

SECTION C – DESCRIPTION / SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK

C.1 BACKGROUND

I. Introduction

This is a Statement of Work (SOW) for a final project evaluation of the three-year $3.47 million Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) Legacy Alliance project (USETI Alliance) implemented through a Global Development Alliance (GDA). (The agreement number is 121-A-00-10-00702, implemented by the American Councils for International Education). Ms. Tamara Palyvoda is the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), and Mr. Peter Luzik is the Alternate AOR for the project. An external performance evaluation of the USETI Alliance project will be conducted tentatively from April 9, 2013 through July 31, 2013.

II. Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to learn to what extent the USETI's programmatic approach was effective to produce the desired result, or development outcome, as well as the extent that the project was able to institutionalize a self-sustaining, testing-based, higher education institution (HEI) admission process. The Regional Mission to Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova (the Mission) will use evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations to inform future programming in curbing corruption in education. The implementer and their partners[1] will have an opportunity to assess the successes and failures and to learn more about their strengths and any areas for improvement. Other project stakeholders including the Government of Ukraine (GOU) and international development partners will gain a better understanding of USAID's activities in combatting corrupt practices associated with admissions to HEIs by introducing standardized external testing in Ukraine.

III. Background

The GOU acknowledged that corruption has become a serious impediment to the country's economic, political, and social development. According to the 2005 Corruption Perception Index, Ukraine ranked 107th out of 159 countries, finding a place between Yemen and Afghanistan. Currently (2011) Ukraine is ranked 152 out of 183 countries. In 2007, USETI was established as part of the TCP. From 2006 to 2009, the GOU implemented a Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Country Program (TCP) as an effort to address this challenge, with the single Strategic Objective of reducing ccorruption in the public sector. The main goal of the USETI project implemented by the American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) was to target corrupt practices associated with admissions to HEIs by introducing standardized external testing as a mandatory criterion for university admissions. The newly created state institution, the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment (UCEQA), became the primary partner and beneficiary of technical assistance provided under the USETI project. The primary focus of the project was building UCEQA's capacity to carry out the activities related to test development, administration and implementation, and to institutionalize a testing system protected from corruption. The USETI project acted as a convener and played the role of an 'honest broker' that brought together diverse stakeholders to meet and discuss issues, and come to a consensus on next steps. The discussions about external testing served as a catalyst for launching a broader discussion on the need for and scope of higher education reform. USETI activities aimed to energize and strengthen civil society advocacy, oversight of

[1] USETI Alliance partners consist of 19 institutions, consisting of HEIs, NGOs, the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth, and Sports, and the Ukrainian Center for Education Quality Assessment.

admission testing in Ukraine, and to facilitate the creation of new channels of articulation for expressing individual and group views through innovative approaches that combined the following components: 1) establishing a first-ever Education, Law, Policy Expert Group (ELPEG) as an effective deliberation forum for all the strategic stakeholders involved in education reform; 2) creating a first-ever non-governmental organization (NGO) coalition empowered to carry out independent outside monitoring of test administration and university admissions process; and (3) implementing a sustained, broad-based public information and outreach campaign on issues related to independent external testing and its contribution to equitable and transparent university admissions.

A USAID final project evaluation conducted in May 2009 encouraged USETI and USAID/Ukraine to explore opportunities for further leveraging of resources through increased collaboration with other USG agencies and donor programs in order to secure the sustainability of testing and testing-based HEI admission.

Following this recommendation, USAID/Ukraine considered for funding, via the GDA partnership mechanism, USETI Legacy Alliance (Alliance) project designed by ACCELS and its partners. The goal of USETI Alliance is to ensure that, by project completion, Ukraine's system of testing-based HEI admissions be institutionally secured and self-sustained. The project began on January 1, 2010 and will end on December 31, 2012.

As the project began without a development hypothesis, a reconstructed development hypothesis is as follows:

In order to decrease corruption in the HEI admission system and ensure that a merit-based system is institutionalized, secure, and self-sustainable, the following must occur: a legislative framework that supports a transparent and testing-based HEI admission system must be in place; an independent institution must be given the authority to create and implement transparent, merit-based tests; the public must have faith in the admissions system; and the test-preparation industry must be able to meet consumer demand for high-quality tools for testing.

USETI Alliance aims to achieve the following four objectives:

1. Support a sustainable UCEQA capable of independently and transparently developing and implementing secure tests that meet international standards;

2. Contribute to a secure legislative basis for testing and higher education admission, and an institutionalized partnership between business, higher education, and policymakers;

3. Transform public support for testing into a proactive contemporary public expectation, so that grass roots support will ensure the sustainability of testing; and

4. Develop a basic and quality test-preparation industry driven by informed consumer demand.

The project's key innovation is to build a coalition of support for testing as a non-corruptible tool for admissions to HEIs, bringing together parents, educators and NGOs, who are convinced of the benefits of this merit-based approach. USETI Alliance currently unites the MOESYS, UCEQA, USAID, American Councils, American Institutes for Research, the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, Union of Rectors of Ukraine, four Ukrainian universities and a range of NGOs and private

companies working in the areas of testing, admissions and education quality strengthening. The Alliance currently has 19 partner entities.

The USETI Alliance Partners brings Ukrainian and international actors together at the policy, institutional operational and person to person levels. This has so far allowed to weather storms and protect both the US investment in higher education transparency and Ukrainian citizens' right of equal access to higher education.

IV. Scope of Work

The Evaluation Team will assess the effectiveness of USETI's programmatic approach, as well as the extent that the project was able to institutionalize a self-sustaining, testing-based HEI admission process. The evaluation team will concentrate on three project objectives: 1) Support a sustainable strengthened UCEQA capable of independently and transparently developing and implementing secure tests that meet international standards; 2) Contribute to a secure legislative basis for testing and higher education admission, and an institutionalized partnership between business, higher education, and policymakers, and 3) Transform public support for testing into a proactive contemporary public expectation, so that grass roots support will ensure the sustainability of testing.

The Evaluation Team will answer the following questions (not listed in priority order):

1. What major project activities most contribute to achieving the overall project goal of ensuring a system of testing-based HEI admissions that is institutionally secured and self-sustainable?

2. What major project activities have been the most effective in strengthening public demand and government commitment for a sustainable testing system for higher education?

3. What major factors enabled or inhibited the achievement of stated objectives and how those factors were the latter successfully overcome, or if not, why not?

4. How effective has the project been in building stakeholder support in the employer community, i.e. a) folding employers into high-level policy events; b) including employers to serve as public advocates for admissions and education reform; c) devoting resources to testing, and c) engaging employers through establishing career centers and developing visiting lecture series in universities.

5. What roles have gender issues played in influencing progress towards achieving planned results? What were gender integration challenges and benefits for project implementation?

6. What non-USAID resources have been attracted for funding project implementation, and what new opportunities do currently exist?

The evaluation process must be in line with relevant USAID ADS (Chapters 203 and 578) and USAID Evaluation Policy (January 2011) requirements and recommendations (http://transition.usaid.gov/evaluation/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf). The USETI Alliance Project is expected to collaborate fully with USAID and the evaluation team (ET) and provide documents and background materials to support the evaluation during the course of the evaluation.

V. Evaluation Design and Methodology

To meet the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work section, the ET is expected to submit a comprehensive evaluation design and methodology, subject to approval of the evaluation Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). The methodology will be based on a mixed method approach, comprised of the appropriate tools in response to the aforementioned research questions. These tools may include, and are not limited to, a combination of the following: a desk review of USETI Alliance's documentation (e.g. USETI's reports and PMEP data); official statistics, surveys, focus group discussions with USETI Alliance stakeholders and partners, USAID Portfolio Review documents, online questionnaires (sent to all USAID Alliance partners), key informants interviews, and surveys of those who participated in USETI's seminars.

A limitation in data collection is the availability of documents such as Draft Law on Higher Education, Conditions of Admission to HEIs, Validity Study, as well as media publications about testing and admission campaigns in Ukrainian language only.

To answer the evaluation questions, the ET is suggested to review USETI Alliance's reports, USETI MCC TCP final evaluation, surveys, scientific studies (test-validity study), and interview key informants and trained individuals with structured or semi-structured interview protocols and/or mini-surveys regarding the project results. Key informants interviews should reflect the perspective of USETI's beneficiaries (HEIs), GoU (including MOESYS, UCEQA, National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences), NGOs (including *OPORA*, Union of Rectors of Ukraine, *PROMOVA*, Center for Education Policy, Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Center of Testing Technology, Confederation of Employers of Ukraine), Ukrainian business sector representatives, other donors in Ukraine, and key development partners (including USAID, U.S. Embassy, and the Renaissance Foundation). Testimonial evidence of project success should be supported with documentary evidence where possible, including, but not limited to, USETI's documentation.

The estimated number of key informants by institutions is:
MOESYS (2 informants), UCEQA (3-5 informants), National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (1-2 informants), *OPORA* (2 informants), Union of Rectors of Ukraine (3 informants), *PROMOVA* (1-2 informants), Center for Education Policy (1 informant), Democratic Initiatives Foundation (1 informant), Center of Testing Technology (1-2 informants), Confederation of Employers of Ukraine (1 informant), Ukrainian business sector representatives (3 informants), other donors in Ukraine (2-3 informants), and key development partners (including 3 informants from USAID, 1-2 informants from the U.S. Embassy, and 1 informant from the Renaissance Foundation).

The ET shall utilize information gathered from discussions, other documents, and data provided by the Mission and/or identified by the team to synthesize findings and recommendations.

USAID will note gender considerations when reviewing the proposed methodology as well as when developing proposals evaluation criteria.

VI. Evaluation Team Qualifications and Composition

The Mission envisions a two-member team to include: (1) Evaluation Team Leader and (2) Senior-Level Education Specialist. All ET members will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Statement and Conflict of Interest Statement.

1. *The Evaluation Team Leader* must have a master's degree in education or public administration (Ph.D. is preferred). He/she should have a minimum of 10 years of experience in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of development programs, including U.S. Government projects in education and combatting corruption. The team leader should have excellent written and oral communication skills in English. Previous overseas work experience in the region and knowledge of Russian and/or Ukrainian is highly desirable. This person shall be responsible for coordinating and directing the overall evaluation effort, including preparation and submission of the draft, revised and final evaluation reports. High level of diplomatic skills and cultural sensitivity are critical for this assignment.

2. *The Senior-level Education Specialist* should have a minimum of seven years of experience in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of development programs and an advanced degree I a related field. The Education Specialist should have broad familiarity with higher education support programs, as well as expertise in development projects combatting corruption. Strong writing and word processing skills are a requirement. Previous overseas experience in the region and Russian and/or Ukrainian language capability is highly desirable.

VII. Evaluation Planning and Management

USAID will appoint the Evaluation COR to manage the evaluation. Upon arrival, the Evaluation Team will meet with representatives of the Mission to clarify any questions and agree on a final Evaluation Work Plan (EWP).

The ET will start the evaluation with a desk review of the following documents: relevant portions of the Cooperative Agreement; Work Plans (2010-2012); the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; Quarterly Reports (2010-2012); and the internal USETI Evaluation Report. Other documents may be provided as needed upon arrival of the team members from the Mission. The Mission shall provide the ET with names and contact information for key individuals to be interviewed, including its staff, USETI Alliance professional staff and USETI Alliance members, the project sub-grantees and beneficiaries, and representatives from the Ministry for Education, Science Youth and Sport.

The ET will invite the Evaluation COR and other relevant Mission personnel to participate in all meetings and site visits planned in conjunction with the evaluation. The ET will conduct weekly briefings for the Evaluation COR, the Program Coordination and Strategy Office Director, Mission Evaluation Point of Contact, and other relevant Mission personnel in order to keep them informed of the progress of the evaluation and any other issues that may arise. The ET will provide an out-brief to the Mission shortly before departure.

Required Task	**Proposed Timeframe ***
Work Planning and Evaluation Design	1 Week
Scheduling Field Meetings and Arranging Logistics	1 Week
Washington Interviews and Research	1 Week
Field Work	2 Weeks
Completing First Draft of the Report	2 Weeks

Completing Final Report and Preparing Final Presentation	1 Week
Total Work Weeks:	**8 Work Weeks**
Total Calendar Weeks:	**16 Calendar Weeks**

* See **ANNEX 2 – HOLIDAY LIST 2013**.

USAID requests that American and Ukrainian holidays be considered in scheduling evaluation meetings in the United States and Ukraine.

VIII. Other Requirements Section

All records from the evaluation (e.g., interview transcripts or summaries) must be provided to the Evaluation COR. All quantitative data collected by the evaluation team must be provided in an electronic file in an easily readable format agreed upon with the Evaluation COR. The data should be organized and fully documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or the evaluation. USAID will retain ownership of the survey and all datasets developed.

All raw data used to prepare the report will be presented to the USAID/Ukraine Evaluation Officer for warehousing and future reference.

All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, ET composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the Evaluation COR.

IX. Logistical Support

The contractor will be responsible for all logistical support to the evaluation (which also includes interpreting/translation, transportation support, office supplies and computer equipment, office space, arranging meetings and accommodating field reviews) and should not expect any substantial involvement of the Mission staff in planning or conducting the evaluation. The contractor will be notified in writing about the Evaluation COR assigned to provide the technical and administrative guidance required under the SOW.

X. Workweek

A six-day workweek is authorized for the Evaluation Team.

Annex B. Work Plan and Evaluation Design (with Data Collection Instruments)

Work Plan and Evaluation Design

Final Performance Evaluation of the USETI Legacy Alliance Project

Evaluation Purpose and Goals

The final evaluation of the USETI Project focuses on (1) project support for an independent and transparent Ukraine Center for Education Quality Assessment (UCEQA); (2) formalized legal structures on testing and admissions plus partnership across government, business, and higher education; and (3) strengthened public support for bona fide use of testing for higher education admissions. It addresses the following major questions:

1. What major project activities most contribute to achieving the overall project goal of ensuring a system of testing-based HEI admissions that is institutionally secured and self-sustainable?

2. What major project activities have been the most effective in strengthening public demand and government commitment for a sustainable testing system for higher education?

3. What major factors enabled or inhibited the achievement of stated objectives and how were the inhibiting factors successfully overcome, or if not, why not?

4. How effective has the project been in building stakeholder support in the employer community, i.e. (a) folding employers into high-level policy events; (b) including employers to serve as public advocates for admissions and education reform; c) devoting resources to testing, and (c) engaging employers through establishing career centers and developing visiting lecture series in universities.

5. What roles have gender issues played in influencing progress towards achieving planned results? What were gender integration challenges and benefits for project implementation?

6. What non-USAID resources have been attracted for funding project implementation, and what new opportunities do currently exist?

These evaluation questions go beyond measurement of the USETI project's effectiveness in introducing a functioning test-based admission system. Since the efficacy of the tests themselves has already been assessed in relation to later student academic performance, this evaluation focuses more directly on the factors that support or impede USETI's success in facilitating the wider application of a test-based admissions regime within Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs) and the extent to which standardized testing has replaced the existing non-merit, and corruption-plagued, admissions process. The answers to the six questions will inform USAID/Ukraine's future programming decision on how to further support the test-based admissions system and assist the design and implementation of similar test-based admissions systems in other former Soviet Bloc countries.

Methodology

Data collection methods. This evaluation will rely on two main methods: (1) primarily, semi-structured interviews of relevant staff members of participating and affected organizations and constituencies, and (2) review of available documents related to project activities and their effects. For

the former, the study will use semi-structured interview guides composed of open-ended questions to uncover and understand systemic issues related to the six overall research questions. This will include the intended and unintended project effects as well as the contextual dynamics of the test-based admissions system, including gender considerations and the factors influencing its perceived levels of effectiveness and acceptance. A set of one or two fixed-choice survey questions will be administered as part of interviews, if time feasible, to assess the strength of categorical views of test-based admissions across different respondent groups.

Draft interview guides tailored specifically to different organizational types and informants are shown in Annex 3. The semi-structured interview guides serve as a starting point for eliciting broad insights on the merit-based admissions approach introduced by the USETI Project. Follow-up questions will be employed to probe answers that invite deeper explanations or raise additional questions. The fixed-choice questions (shown in Annex 3) to be used in conjunction with the interview guides will be administered through a separate sheet with the questions, translated into Ukrainian, for respondents to complete individually.

Data sources. Data for the study will come from staff of the USETI project and contractor organizations (both in Ukraine and the U.S.), international and Ukrainian partner organizations, Ukrainian HEIs, government entities, nongovernmental organizations, business (employer) associations, and Mission and Headquarters USAID, along with consultants who lent assistance to the USETI endeavor. If feasible, data will be solicited from a limited number of university students, university lecturers, and secondary teachers, representing individuals who are directly affected by, or participate in, the testing system. Key informants are roughly divided into: (1) those associated with development, deployment, and oversight of student tests of higher education readiness; (2) those associated with higher education and central and regional education governmental institutions; and (3) representatives of businesses and organizations connected to, or dependent on, higher education institutions and graduates. A list of key informants who represent the various Ukrainian participating institutions and stakeholder organizations are show in Annex 1. These serve as the informant data source from which the required sample will come.

The other major data source is the regular reports and monitoring documents associated with USETI Alliance and its partners, the USETI MCC cooperative agreement, USETI Program Description for the USETI Legacy Alliance Contract, Project final evaluation report, Ukrainian government and organizational documents, and media articles on the testing system for HEI admissions and its implications that can be accessed and translated. To answer questions about gender balance, the evaluation team may need to examine any available data on the gender composition of university enrollments, especially to compare current enrollments using testing with the earlier non-test procedures.

Sample. The sample consists primarily of a set of approximately 34 key informants whose organizations were involved in the design and/or implementation of the USETI project activities or the creation of the Ukrainian testing systems and its use and advancement in Ukrainian higher education and larger society. USAID/Ukraine has specified both the organizations and the number, although not the exact names, of representatives from the organizations to be sampled as follows:

> MOESYS (2 informants), UCEQA (3-5 informants), National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (1-2 informants), *OPORA* (2 informants), Union of Rectors of Ukraine (3 informants), *PROMOVA* (1-2 informants), Center for Education Policy (1 informant), Democratic Initiatives Foundation (1 informant), Center of Testing Technology (1-2 informants), Confederation of Employers of Ukraine (1 informant), Ukrainian business sector representatives (3 informants), other donors in Ukraine (2-3 informants), and key development partners (including 3 informants from USAID, 1-2 informants from the U.S. Embassy, and 1 informant from the Renaissance Foundation).

The informant list in Annex 1 provides the pool from which the required number of informants to be sampled will be drawn. Organizationally, the sampled informants represent (a) U.S. and Ukrainian USETI project implementers and partner organizations, (b) public sector, NGO sector and private sector stakeholders, (c) and USG and other external donors.

The second part of the sample consists of improvised groups of non-expert respondents affected by the test-based admission process, such as secondary teachers, lower rank university professors and lecturers, and students who were admitted based on their admission test scores. These groups will be assembled through either a student association or asking a faculty member of a participating HEI to identify willing students or lecturers for the groups.

Because of its limited composition of expert informants, the sample is meant less to produce evidence for unconfirmed outcomes than to identify and analyze a range of plausible explanations for already known results. The improvised groups of university lecturers, secondary teachers and students provide a minimal sampling of opinions from the large populations of users of the testing system. The sample is almost exclusively drawn from greater Kyiv and Kharkiv, because of the heavy concentrations of informants from key groups such as government education officials, university rectors, administrators, lecturers, as well as a very substantial proportion of university-bound secondary school students in those two cities.

The sampling process for this evaluation is somewhat different than sampling for a purely outcomes evaluation using the program users or beneficiaries as data sources. In this evaluation, the team must depend on the organization that is the subject of the evaluation—i.e. USETI—both to identify specific respondents for the study and help schedule their interviews with the team. The improvised groups of students, lecturers and/or secondary teachers do comprise relatively random representatives of larger affected populations, but these single focus groups, of course, are neither a representative purposeful sample nor the main source of the study's data. This design is justified by the need to wisely use scarce evaluation resources to help focus likely future development assistance on the most productive types of support.

Data collection implementation. The large number of required informants for the time period may dictate at least three and, in some cases, four interviews per day. Most will be individual interviews, although respondents such as university lecturers and students will probably be interviewed in groups. Although individual interviews are desirable, the team will explore opportunities to interview more than one informant in the same session, if appropriate. The requested length of each interview will be approximately 60 minutes, with the possibility of extending longer if the respondent's and the interviewer's schedule permits. For senior government officials, such as the Minister of Education or Deputy Minister of Education, the interview time is likely to be much shorter. For group interviews with university lecturers or students, the time allowed will be 60 to 90 minutes and interview groups limited to no more than 10 to insure that all group members' opinions are captured adequately.

It is assumed that most interviews will be conducted in Ukrainian, requiring interpretation of conversations between Ukrainian and English. Because the education specialist speaks fluent Russian, it is possible that some interviews can be conducted in Russian. This would allow the team leader to conduct another interview at the same time either in Ukrainian or English with the interpreter present. Because of the time needed for interpretation, the 60 minute time-frame is the minimal amount of time to allow sufficient coverage of topics.

The sheet with the two fixed-choice questions will be administered at the beginning of each interview. The ET anticipates that this will take no more than two or three minutes, since only an institutional (e.g. MoESYS) or population (e.g. student) identifier will be asked on the sheet. Completing this at the beginning insures that the questions are not dropped if a respondent must leave the interview early.

IBTCI is familiar with the requirements of the "Common Rule" on the Protection of Human Subjects (22 CFR 225.101 and further delineation in 200mbe_122606_cd46, especially as to 225.101(b)(2);

given the nature of USETI, this is particularly relevant as is the great desirability of obtaining candid responses. Team interviewers will protect the identity of respondents' opinions by deleting explicit identifiers in quotations and assuring respondents of the privacy of the interviewer's written notes. The team is mindful of the reluctance of many citizens in former Soviet republics to fully reveal their opinions, so efforts will be made both to hold interviews in private settings and encourage respondents to be as frank as possible. Information that is collected from students or could be considered potentially sensitive will be handled carefully and will only be reported in a manner that does not identify or make attributions to specific respondents. The evaluation team will employ written notes but will, also, consider the possible use of a digital recording device for interviewing informants who might be agreeable to being recorded.

Data Analysis

The data generated by interviews and document review will be sorted with reference to the six evaluation questions. The assignment of data collection items to specific evaluation questions has been suggested in the evaluation design matrix in Annex 2. Respondent opinions will be compared and contrasted in search of patterns that might help answer each question. The evaluation questions may draw on data that answer more than one evaluation question, giving the analysis a certain degree of interconnectedness between questions. The complexity of the USETI project, comprised of inter-linked components, suggests that answers to the different research questions will emerge from assessing different influences on the same components within a larger system. For example, project effectiveness in one sense may have more to do with supply issues—that is, the ready availability of appropriate and sufficient external test instruments that are appropriate in determining qualifications for higher education studies—while, in another sense, it may have more to do with demand issues, including the extent to which higher education institutions, local and national government officials, employers, and parents and students themselves accept such admissions procedures. The analytical goal will be to tease out the respective effects of different influences to determine where achievements have been sustained and consolidated or where deficits, or unforeseen obstacles, still remain in the overall system. The quantitative results from the two fixed-choice questions administered to all respondents will be tabulated and sorted in ways to reveal support level among different groups.

This study is not confirming a hypothesis but, rather, identifying the many influences on the testing admissions system and assessing their saliency. Hence, the analytical task will rely more on the reasonableness of these variables and their likely effects than on numerical force alone in arriving at conclusions. The evaluation team will make every effort to corroborate reported findings with other independent evidence from a variety of sources. This triangulation of data should allow arrival at defensible conclusions that suggest clear policy implications for future funding and program design decisions.

ET Team Composition and Roles

The evaluation team consists of the following:

Stephen McLaughlin: Team Leader and Specialist

Steve Webber: Education Specialist

Kseniya Sydorkina: Ukrainian Interpreter/Logistics Specialist

The team leader and education specialist will interview informants both together and, in some cases, separately. As mentioned above, labor can divided on interviewing based on the education specialist's ability to conduct interviews in Russian. This will free up some time to allow more of the desired informant interviews to be completed.

The team leader, as a representative for IBTCI, will serve as the general spokesperson for the team

during the field research phase and thereafter in communicating with USAID on the report preparation. However, the team's functioning is anticipated to be maximally collegial, with the education specialist taking the lead where appropriate on matters within his expertise or purview. For example, interview questioning will reflect both the team leader's and education specialist's particular data acquisition needs from each informant. The same expectation of collegiality will apply to the team's Ukrainian interpreter, who has been asked to perform a major role in making the interview arrangements and might, possibly, be asked to attend to other matters that require independent judgment and action. The team leader will also administer project expense documentation and funds disbursement to the team members and to vendors or merchants.

The team leader and education specialist will divide responsibility for data analysis and report preparation according to the six evaluation questions. Tentatively, this division will be as follows.

Responsibility for research question numbers 1, 3, and 5: Team leader

Responsibility for research questions numbers 2, 4, and 6: Education specialist

Since the team leader and education specialist will be conducting some interviews separately, this will require some informal sharing of summaries of acquired data that might apply to the other's designated research question.

The team will be supported throughout by the following three IBTCI staff members in Vienna, Virginia:

Ed Allan, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation and project manager for the USETI evaluation

Gayla Cook, Director of Monitoring and Evaluation and co-project manager for the USETI evaluation

Irina Kuzemkina, Project Coordinator

Known Limitations

Possible limitations may exist with the time frame for the field data collections. The tight scheduling of so many key informants along with the possibility of traffic tie-ups delaying appointments could result in some individuals not being interviewed. USAID's flexible range of acceptable interview numbers will allow some adjustment in response to time limitations, but the difficulty of juggling interviews in the event of cancellations may prevent achievement of the overall number of mandated interviews.

Regarding the need for gender balance, any possibility of gender balance among key informants is going to depend on the relative distribution of men and women within the stipulated institutions, which is beyond our control. With respect to lecturers and students, however, the evaluation team will actively seek inclusion of females in the improvised focus groups.

While the evaluation would benefit from the ability to compare the general knowledge and abilities of university graduates admitted through testing with graduates admitted through the old procedures, the first graduates from the testing era have only now begun to graduate from their HEIs. This will necessarily limit any fair comparison of their on-the-job capabilities with graduates from the old admissions system. There, of course, may be some early signs of differences that appear even in these newly minted graduates.

A final advisory has to do with the nature of the study itself, which has already been mentioned. Since no methodical sampling is being done to provide quantifiable and representative data, the study's findings and conclusions will come from individuals whose opinions on the topic are exceedingly knowledgeable and, in many cases, powerful in determining the activity's ultimate outcome. These are very legitimate opinions about the USETI program and the testing system but do not serve as a substitute for an assessment of the opinions of the general user population.

Dissemination Plan

The evaluation team will observe the expected sequence of report submission, review periods, and revision dates, after the agreed-upon adjustments in the projected final delivery date to conform with the later start of the field research phase. The delivery of the draft evaluation report is envisioned to be June 17, in keeping with the task order's required submission 10 days after the debriefing with the Mission. Assuming a 10 business-day period of review and turnaround with comments from USAID Ukraine, the evaluation team will plan for delivery of the final revised report on Monday July 1.

Summary of What Has Been Learned So Far (in bullet point form)

Background of the project: (rationale for it; motivating factors according to stakeholders)

- Have heard and read detailed accounts of the pressing need for the introduction of independent testing, as a means to achieve transparent, corruption-free, reliable, equitable mechanism for university entrance
- The achievements of the USETI project, and the rationale for the legacy project to continue this work
- The work of American Councils, and USAID, in supporting independent testing in education in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine (USETI first project), now proposed in Moldova

Complexity of the project (i.e. project design):

- Complex profile of the project (potentially could have been risk – but also seems to have been factor in the success/achievements of the project?)
- Roles, and interaction among the range, of stakeholders involved in the project
- Ways in which the various components have been implemented, and how synergies between them have worked (i.e. between technical assistance element in developing and supporting the testing system; the ELPEG and other activities in the policy sphere; interaction with the general public, educators)

Outcomes and longer term impact of the project (i.e. to what extent project outcomes have met or exceeded the project goals; and whether there are areas where goals were not fully attained, and why):

- Evidence reviewed to date appears to indicate that project has effectively met the majority of the goals assigned to it, notwithstanding external factors (e.g. reluctance/opposition met from quarter of Ministry)
- Evidence relates to e.g. the extent to which the testing mechanisms and capacity-building can be seen to be embedded in the system; the level of acceptance and recognition among students, teachers, professors; the effectiveness of the policy-level dialogues and activities; the level of public support, nature of public debate
- Evidence also relates to sustainability efforts – which shows the strong apparent capacity built within the system, the resilience level of the testing regime to external pressures – although the extent to which external factors hold the potential to reverse/negatively impact on achievements also needs to be explored

Broader impacts of the project / perceptions of the role of the project:

- How are the broader meanings/impacts of the project's work perceived by stakeholders (including project teams) – e.g. its broader effects in the spheres of educational reform/change; empowerment of citizens, democratization of influences on education (as a key societal institution/process)?

- How far have these perceptions changed over time (e.g. compared with the original aims and objectives as perceived by USAID, USETI alliance, other stakeholders)?

Political and societal contexts of the project:

- How the project has been affected by, responded to, influenced the political and societal environments in which it has operated (in which the project activities, and the broader issue of external testing, has given rise to considerable debate, tensions, even controversy)
- Regional variations in contexts within Ukraine – evidence seen of the ways in which this has evolved over time
- Evidence of the international perspectives on developments in Ukraine – is there recognition of achievements?

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured Interview Guides

For University Administrators

1. Was there anything about the traditional procedures for admitting students into universities that made you think changes were needed? If yes, what needed to be changed?
2. What specific changes in the admission system, if any, have you and your faculty seen within your institution in the last few years?
3. (If test-based admission has been implemented) At the time, did you think that the test-based admissions approach introduced through the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment (UCEQA) was a good idea? Why or why not?
4. In what specific ways has the test-based system addressed or failed to address any weaknesses of the previous system?
5. To what extent were you aware that the Ukrainian Standardized External Testing Initiative (USETI) was involved in supporting UCEQA to introduce the new procedure? What difference do you think the USETI project made in your institution?
6. Was USETI sufficiently cognizant of valuable—or deeply ingrained--aspects of the existing system in introducing a test-based admissions system?
7. To what extent were the perspectives of your university staff adequately considered by USETI and UCEQA staff in their efforts to change the system?
8. To what extent has this admissions reform affected the accessibility of female secondary school graduates to institutions of higher learning, recognizing, of course, that degree programs within universities can differ in the extent to which they will reflect gender balance?
9. Would you say that the test-based admission process has become, or is beginning to be, institutionalized as an everyday procedure for your institution? Why or why not?
10. What resources, human or financial, have your university applied to the development and continued operation of the test-based admission system.

For Ukrainian central and regional government officials

(Contextualize the interview by mentioning our interest in looking at changes in the procedures for admitting students to Ukrainian universities. The shift to a test-based approach to higher education admission was obviously a very big one with differing opinions about it. With that in mind, we would like to hear your opinions on the process used in the change and the resulting changes. Let us start by asking. .)

1. Could you describe the process for selecting secondary school students for university studies in the past and both its benefits and weaknesses?
2. From what sources was there resistance to instituting a merit-oriented admissions system based on student testing?
3. Since there was some disagreement on the need for a new admissions procedure, how effective was the introduction of a test-based admissions procedure by UCEQA in assuring sceptical groups and individuals?
4. How successfully do you think universities have been in adopting all the provisions of a test-based admissions process?
5. What factors, if any, might delay or impede the full institutionalization of test-based admissions procedures into Ukraine's higher education system?
6. Does this education reform enjoy full acceptance by the Ukrainian public and by the Ukrainian Government and, if not, from what sources does opposition to test-based admissions come?
7. Has there been any impact regarding the opportunities for both female and male students to

pursue university education?
8. What resources has the GoU allocated for institutionalizing the test-based system throughout the Ukrainian higher education system?
9. To what extent is there a need for continued external funding for the test-based admission system? Where would such assistance be applied?
10. From what sources do you see this assistance coming?

For university faculty members

1. Before the introduction of student tests for admissions, how were you involved, if at all, in decisions about accepting students in your university?
2. In what ways did the testing approach change your involvement with student admissions and change the kind of students accepted into the university?
3. To what extent were you involved in developing the actual tests that were used in deciding which students would be admitted into the university, and what was the nature of that involvement?
4. How has the use of test-based admissions affected, if at all, the teaching of your subjects and the overall understanding of the content by your students?
5. To what extent has the introduction of test-based admissions been accepted by the faculty and by students?
6. To what extent has the test-based admissions changed the gender composition of your classes?
7. (If appropriate to ask) Are there ways in which faculty members who no longer have leverage over incoming students may have found other ways to influence their progress through or graduation from university? If so, how?

For USETI and other staff

1. What were some of the problems that you observed in the admissions system to Ukraine's universities at the beginning of this project?
2. What were some of the achievements of the USETI project that you think are most important for Ukraine's universities and its admission system?
3. What strategies and approaches were most effective in introducing a test-based system for admitting students?
4. What were some of the barriers you faced in trying to change the system?
5. What have been the constraints, if any, in developing and deploying the actual test instruments for measuring student qualifications?
6. From what sources has resistance to this reform arisen, and to what extent does this resistance and opposition still thwart full deployment of the reform?
7. In what ways, and to what extent, does the Ukrainian higher education system require external assistance to fully institutionalize a merit-oriented admissions system based on student testing?

For private business owners/employers

1. What is your opinion of the qualifications of university graduates for the kind of jobs at your company? (Clarify whether respondent is describing graduates from the old admissions system or the new testing system)
2. Are you aware of any relationship between the process used to select students for university entry and the quality of the graduates emerging from their studies and, if so, what is that relationship?
3. To what extent, if any, do you think Ukrainian universities that have adopted a test-based admission process have improved the quality of their instruction and, consequently, the skill levels of their graduates?
4. To what extent has the test-based admissions affected the percentages and quality of female university graduates compared to the former admissions system?

For university students

1. Were you required to take a test for admission to your university, or was there another process used to select students?
2. If you took a test, how difficult did you find the process?
3. What is your opinion about the fairness of the admission process, whether or not a test is used to select students?
4. Do you feel that the test measured the kind of abilities and knowledge that you actually needed to succeed in university studies and why or why not?
5. If you had to pay a fee to take the admissions test, to what extent was this a burden to you and your family?
6. If you were admitted with a different process than a test, please describe that process and whether or not it was effective or fair.
7. Do you feel that the test-based system has made any significant change in the quality of students who gain entry to university and why or why not?
8. How many of the women in this group feel that the testing admission system made a difference in their ability to get into university?
9. How does the use of a test to select students to the university affect your confidence in the university's academic standards or the integrity of systems for making important decisions such as student admissions?

Fixed Choice Questions

(If appropriate for a respondent, use the answer to the question in articulating the interview questions)

For All Respondents

1. To what extent did the old admission system to Ukrainian universities need to be changed with a new procedure?
   a. Needed significant change
   b. Needed slight change
   c. Needed no change
   d. Do not know or no opinion
2. To what extent do you personally support this change in the admissions system to universities?
   a. Strongly support this change in the admissions system
   b. Moderately support this change in the admissions system
   c. Slightly support this change in the admissions system
   d. Do not support this change in the admissions system at all
   e. No opinion

Annex C. List of Respondents Contacted/Interviewed

RESPONDENT TYPE*	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS PER INTERVIEW TYPE	
	Individual	Group
USETI Project Administrators/Staff (Current and one former)	6	
Education NGO Administrators (some of whom are former MoESYS officials)/Staff	11	
Govt. of Ukraine Administrators/Staff (including MoESYS officials)	4	
UCEQA Administrators/Staff	5	
University Administrators	8	
University Lecturers	2	17
Employers' Associations Administrators/Staff	3	
Secondary School Directors	3	
University Students (and staff of associations representing university students)	2	30
Graduating Secondary School Students (test-takers)	3	
Parents of students		3
Mid-level USAID/US Embassy Ukraine Staff	2	7
International Consultant with USETI	3	
International Donor Org. Staff	2	
Contractor Administrators/Staff (American Councils)	3	
USAID Washington	1	
TOTALS	**58**	**57**

* For some respondents, more than one interview session was held, although only one session is recorded in this table. Interviews conducted by telephone are classified as individual interviews.

Annex D. Statistical Table: Number of Women Students in HEI

NUMBER OF WOMEN AMONG THE STUDENTS OF UKRAINIAN HEIS AS OF THE BEGINNING OF 2010/2011 ACADEMIC YEAR, REGIONAL DIVISION

Oblast (region)	HEIs of I-II accreditation levels (colleges, vocational schools, etc.)				HEIs of III-IV accreditation levels (State and National universities)				HEIs of I-IV accreditation levels			
	Total number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %	Full-time studying		Total number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %	Full-time studying		Total number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %	Full-time studying	
			Number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %			Number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %			Number of female	Percentage of female out of all students, %
Ukraine (total)	**192284**	**53.2**	**166729**	**55.0**	**1145251**	**53.8**	**661897**	**52.9**	**1337535**	**53.7**	**828626**	**53.4**
AR Crimea	3790	48.5	3307	50.4	29013	60.8	15696	60.3	32803	59.1	19003	58.3
Viinytsya	10268	59.4	8812	60.9	17398	52.0	11066	50.7	27666	54.5	19878	54.8
Volyn	5159	65.6	4825	68.3	14907	57.9	8215	56.5	20066	59.7	13040	60.4
Dnipropetrovsk	12199	51.7	10251	52.3	73046	49.5	44685	49.7	85245	49.8	54936	50.2
Donetsk	17920	46.6	14568	48.9	72419	54.4	41808	54.5	90339	52.6	56376	52.9
Zhytomyr	8033	48.4	7102	49.0	15751	57.0	9759	58.2	23784	53.8	16861	53.9
Zakarpattya	3399	67.5	3015	70.0	14284	61.1	9145	60.7	17683	62.2	12160	62.7
Zaporizhya	6129	56.0	4908	55.6	52106	56.5	26278	53.5	58235	56.4	31186	53.9
Ivano-Frankivsk	7651	52.4	7104	53.8	22610	56.3	13597	53.1	30261	55.2	20701	53.3
Kyiv	5396	57.6	5041	60.1	16953	54.9	8827	51.1	22349	55.5	13868	54.0
Kirovograd	4577	53.0	3985	52.8	10324	52.1	6783	51.5	14901	52.4	10768	52.0

Luhansk	8481	49.0	7281	52.0	47157	53.5	25753	54.5	55638	52.8	33034	53.9
Lviv	11022	54.4	8824	55.2	70120	51.2	47054	52.1	81142	51.6	55878	52.6
Mykolayiv	4625	60.8	3861	60.5	18479	51.7	12360	51.8	23104	53.3	16221	53.7
Odessa	7642	49.7	6792	54.4	64326	50.6	39885	51.5	71968	50.5	46677	51.9
Poltava	6205	55.5	5381	57.2	29924	55.6	16861	52.1	36129	55.6	22242	53.3
Rivne	6468	60.7	6070	62.8	23281	59.4	13950	58.0	29749	59.7	20020	59.4
Sumy	3827	71.0	3454	71.6	25058	54.2	13319	52.7	28885	55.9	16773	55.7
Ternopil	4636	62.7	4366	65.8	26047	54.8	14485	53.8	30683	55.9	18851	56.1
Kharkiv	10214	44.3	8578	45.9	121032	52.0	64244	51.2	131246	51.3	72822	50.5
Kherson	4742	47.4	4121	51.2	14024	49.2	8575	50.2	18766	48.7	12696	50.5
Khmelnytskyy	4192	57.3	4074	58.7	23267	53.6	13382	50.2	27459	54.1	17456	51.9
Cherkasy	7275	64.4	6365	64.6	21328	51.9	12214	49.4	28603	54.6	18579	53.7
Chernivtsi	5985	58.4	5296	60.0	16388	60.5	10601	59.3	22373	60.0	15897	59.5
Чернігівська	4575	48.9	4197	51.9	14497	63.3	8688	61.9	19072	59.1	12885	58.3
Kyiv City	16471	50.6	14028	51.8	286543	54.9	161030	53.5	303014	54.7	175058	53.4
Sevastopol City	1403	64.0	1123	65.9	4969	32.1	3637	37.4	6372	36.1	4760	41.6

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Annex F. Conflict of Interest Statements

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Stephen D. McLaughlin
Title	
Organization	IBTCI
Evaluation Position?	X Team Leader ☐ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)*	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes X No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* 1. *Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 2. *Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* 3. *Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* 4. *Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 5. *Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 6. *Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.*	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	Stephen D. McLaughlin
Date	January 28, 2013

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

Name	Stephen Lewarne WEBBER
Title	Dr
Organization	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc
Evaluation Position?	☐ Team Leader ☒ Team member
Evaluation Award Number *(contract or other instrument)*	SOL-121-13-000003 Final Project Evaluation of the USETI Legacy Alliance project in Ukraine
USAID Project(s) Evaluated *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)*	
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	☐ Yes ☒ **No**
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:* 1. *Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 2. *Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* 3. *Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* 4. *Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 5. *Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 6. *Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation*	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature	SL Webber
Date	24 January 2013

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