



Project Information Document/ Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (PID/ISDS)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 04-Feb-2018 | Report No: PIDISDSC21811



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Burundi	Project ID P161600	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Burundi Early Grade Learning Project (P161600)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Feb 28, 2018	Estimated Board Date May 24, 2018	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance, Budget and Privatization	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve learning and student progression in early grades in Burundi

Financing (in USD Million)

Financing Source	Amount
IDA Grant	50.00
Total Project Cost	50.00

Environmental Assessment Category B-Partial Assessment	Concept Review Decision Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue
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B. Introduction and Context

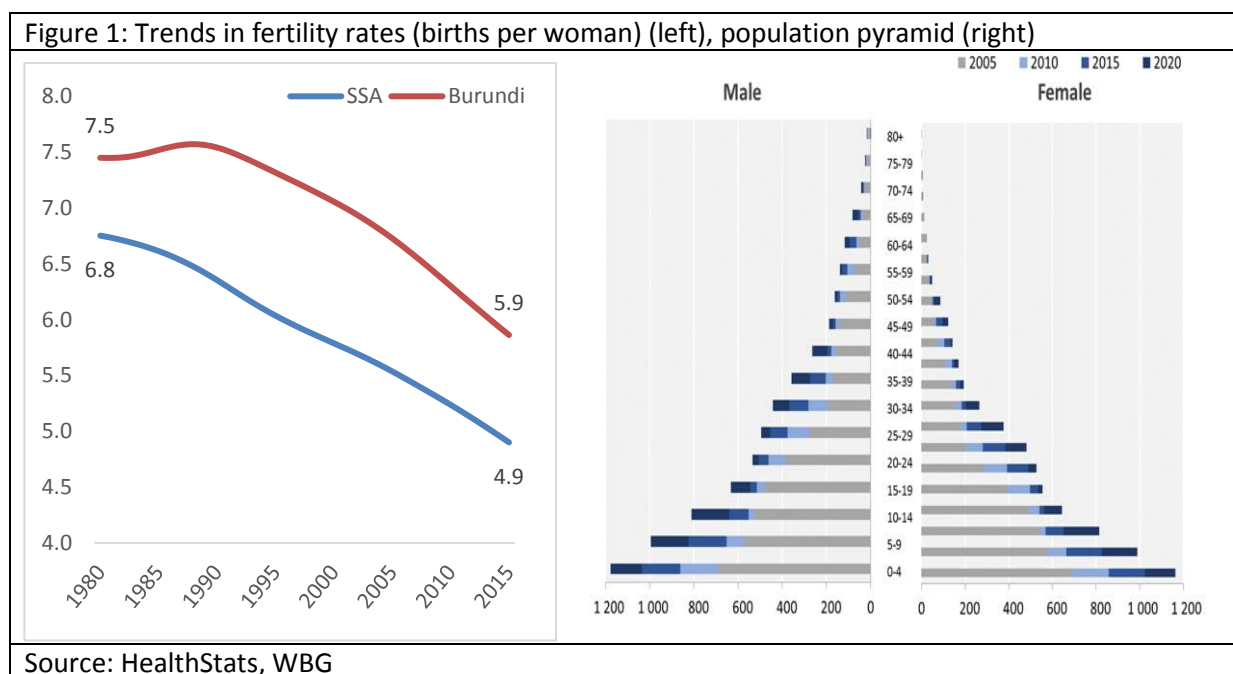
Country Context

1. Located within the Great Lakes region, the Republic of Burundi (Burundi) is a small (27,834km²), densely populated country (435 inhabitants per km², 2015) with a population of about 11 million. It borders the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, Tanzania to the east and south and Rwanda to the north, and also borders the Tanganyika lake on its



western border. The largely rural country (88% of the population lives in rural areas) is divided administratively into 18 provinces which are further sub-divided into 119 communes and more than 2000 *collines* (villages).

2. Demographic growth continues to be a significant challenge as fertility rates are still high, although on a steady downward trend. The country is characterized by a large youth population, with about 55% of the population under the age of 15. Population growth averaged about 3.3% in 2015, compared to the 2.7% average across the SSA region in the same year. In fact, despite much effort and improvement over the years, Burundi still faces a significant demographic challenge, with a high fertility rate of 5.9 births on average per woman in 2015, compared to the Sub-Saharan average of 4.9, contributing to important demographic pressures on the education system, especially at the early grades.



3. Burundi is also one of the poorest countries in the world, with about 65% of the population living below the national poverty line (WDI, 2014). The per capita income in 2015 was USD 318 (WEO, 2017). Despite strong efforts and improvement over time in key health and education indicators, Burundi remains a low human development country, ranking 184 out of 188 countries in the 2016 HDI report. The challenges are many but food insecurity remains an important concern. In particular, Burundi suffers from chronic malnutrition with a reported 70% of the population undernourished in 2014. It also suffers from the highest incidence of stunting in the world with a rate of 57.5% among children under the age of 5.

4. Inequality in Burundi, as measured by disparities in consumption spending, tends to be lower than the SSA average¹. The most recent Poverty Assessment report (Nov 2016) indicates that the Gini coefficient was about 37.3, lower than the 45.1 average among SSA countries or even Latin American countries which range from 47 to 55. As expected, the inequality tends to be higher in the urban areas, 39.3 in the capital and 40.2 in other urban areas compared to 33.4 in rural areas. The report also indicated some regional variation given that the north and center-east regions of the country tend to be more inequitable than the west and south. The report also highlights that the household head's

¹Source: Poverty Assessment, Nov 2016. Inequality is measured by real consumption per month per capita



educational attainment is one of the leading factors explaining the inequality.

5. In addition to the socio-economic challenges, Burundi is also a fragile state, subject to repeated periods of violence since its independence in 1962. It endured a particularly violent period between 1993 and 2000, which ended with the signing of the Arusha Accords in 2000. Violence flared up recently again after the 2015 elections. The ramifications from the latest period of violence have been significant for the economy, with GDP growth falling from an average of 4.8% between 2010 and 2014 to a contraction of -3.96% in 2015. The IMF also expects a slow recovery period ahead², which can be expected to negatively impact the delivery of services and the ability to raise living standards of its population.

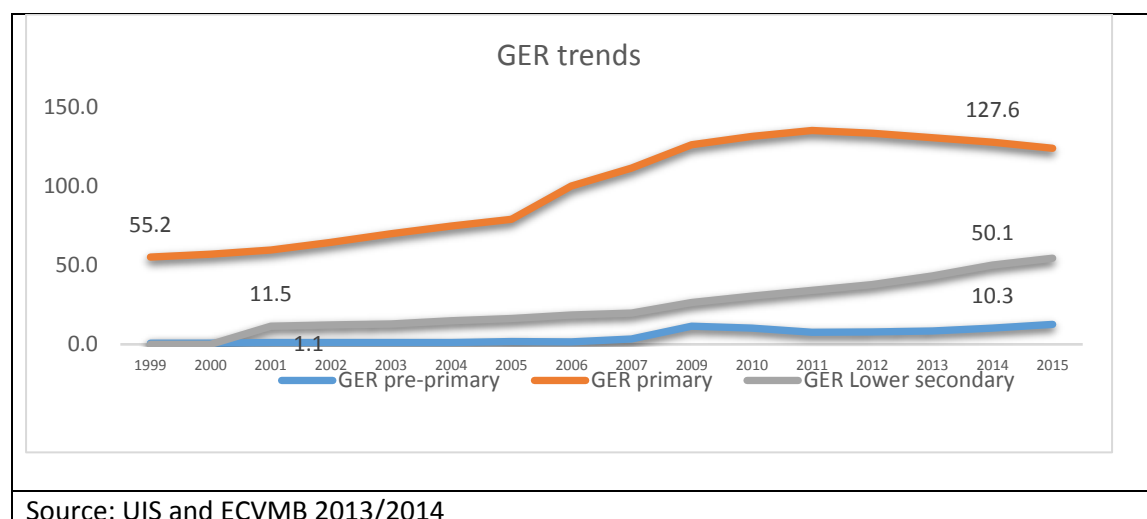
6. While overall human development indicators remain low, Burundi has shown considerable progress, especially given its low base performance. In particular, Burundi has shown great improvement in its literacy rates over time, increasing from 42.4% in 2006 to 61.6% in 2014 among the 15 year olds and above. Even more impressive are the gains among the younger cohort (10-14yr olds) where literacy rates improved from 61.2% in 2006 to 84.2% in 2014. In 2014, the literacy rates among young adults (15-24 year olds) reached 79.4%, and when excluding those who have never been to school, this increased, this increased to 95.4%. Burundi has also seen great improvement in its health outcomes. Infant mortality rates have dropped from 93 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 54 in 2015, which is lower than the SSA average of 56. The maternal mortality rates have also improved from 954 deaths per 100,000 live births to 712 over the same time period.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. In the context of high levels of poverty and demographic growth, Burundi has made impressive progress in primary education access since the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2005. In 2015, the GER in primary education had reached 123.8%. There is no significant variation in the GER at the primary level across provinces, gender, area, or wealth quintile. Even more impressively, the adjusted net intake ratio in grade 1 in 2015 was 93.4%, a strong indication of increased access for the 7 year olds. Household survey data for 2013/2014 shows that access to grade 1 was high, including from the lowest quintile. The out of school education rate was 13% in 2014, compared to 17% in neighboring DRC or 14% Rwanda. Gender parity was achieved in 2012.

Figure 2: Trends in access in Burundi

² Forecasted growth rates -1.04% in 2016, and 0.001% in 2017, WEO IMF



8. These achievements are linked to the implementation of the education policy, focusing on expansion of school access, the deployment of trained teachers and use of Kirundi as the language of instruction. New schools and classrooms have been built; on average, about 2000 classrooms have been built every year between 2012 and 2015. All primary teachers receive 2 years of training. In order to reduce class size, classrooms have been used in double shifts and in order to deal with teacher shortages, some teachers teach two shifts. Unique amongst SSA countries, Burundi has a very high proportion of women teachers and women school directors. At the national level, 55% of primary school teachers are female, reaching a high of 89% in the capital and province of Bujumbura. The Burundi PASEC data also indicates that over 80% of school directors were women³. The language of instruction during the first 4 grades of the basic education cycle is Kirundi which is also the most prevalent language in the country, used both at home and by the teachers. A much stronger foundation in the local language allows students to transfer their reading skills to the second language, French, as well to gain greater mastery over mathematics. Private schooling at the primary level in Burundi is very limited. Only about 1.2% of learners are enrolled in private schools at the primary level.

9. In 2012, the Government introduced a reform of school education, to create a basic education cycle of 9 years in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This reform underlies the Burundi Education Sector Plan 2012-2020 (PSDEF). The new education structure comprises, (i) pre-school, which is not compulsory and is offered to children between the ages of 3-5 years old; (ii) basic education, which covers grades 1-9, and starts at age 6; (iii) secondary- which offers three streams: general, pedagogical and technical and lasts between 3-4 years; (iv) secondary level TVET; and (v) higher education. The main changes of the reform in so far as it affects basic education are as follows:

- The basic education cycle is organized into 4 sub-cycles: Cycle I comprising grades 1 and 2, Cycle II comprising grades 3 and 4, Cycle III comprising grades 5 and 6, and Cycle IV comprising grades 7, 8 and 9. The new cycle sub-division is also tied to the sector's new repetition strategy which is to limit repetition to 5% in the first year of each sub-cycle and 15% in the second year of each sub-cycle.
- Elimination of the grade 6 examination, and extension of the compulsory basic education cycle to 9 years, starting in the 2013/2014 school year with grade 7. The 9-year cycle ends with a new terminal examination effectively replacing the previous grade 6 terminal examination which has been eliminated. In 2015/2016, the first batch

³ The next highest share of women school director is Cameroon with about 25%.



from the 9 year schooling cycle graduated.

- A new curriculum for the 9 year cycle, with new curricula introduced for grades 7-9. New curricula for grades 1-4, including teacher training, new textbooks and materials are to be introduced from 2017/2018.
- Lowering of the age of entry into grade 1 to 6 years
- Pre-school education for children aged 3-5 years⁴. The Plan envisages a community-based approach to providing pre-school education.

10. A preliminary assessment of the PSDEF shows that although many targets have not been met, most of the indicators are on track. Five core pillars of the new sector strategy were identified under the PSDEF, including: i) construction; ii) a reduction in double-shift schools; iii) reducing repetition; iv) improved teacher use and deployment; and v) support to schools. Over the first three years of the program 2012-2015, over 6500 classrooms were built (about 83% of their stated objective), and although the STR has not dropped over this period, the share of double shift schools has also decreased from 57% in 2010/11 to 34.6% in 2014/15. Repetition rates have also significantly improved over this period, decreasing from 33% to 24.3% in cycle I, 30% to 19.1% in cycle II and from 40 to 23.7% in cycle III. There has also been a strong reduction in the variance in teacher deployment across provinces, from 44% in 2010/11 to 25% in 2014/15. The government has also formed a school canteen unit with the objective of providing school feeding in zones affected by food insecurity. The government has also instituted a ban on a student's exclusion from school for want of a uniform or other basic items, and while this ban has not been evaluated, the out of school rate has dropped from 26% in 2010 to 13% in 2013/14⁵.

11. The education sector remains the top priority sector of the government, receiving about 30% of the total domestically-funded budget in 2016, followed by Public Security and National Defense at about 21%⁶. The 2015 crisis led international donors to withdraw a significant share of their contribution to the education sector in 2016. While most of recurrent costs, comprising mainly of salaries, continued to be mostly paid (on internal resources), the crisis led to a drop in the share of investment spending, largely funded by donors, from 111 billion BIF in 2015 to 14 billion BIF in 2016. Foreign aid, which represented about 35.8% of the Ministry of Education's (MEESRS) budget in 2015 (or 106 billion BIF), dropped to 5.3% in 2016 (or 13 billion BIF). This has impacted some of the Ministry's activities. For example, it has decided to leave the financing of school construction to other sources, such as the *National Funds for Communal Investment* (FONIC) even if these funds are used to finance various communal needs, like roads, ditches, classrooms, and so on, depending on needs). The MEESRS also appealed to the Pôle de Dakar to help produce a Country Status Report on the National Educational System (RESEN), even though the 2015/16 school year was too disturbed to produce a statistical yearbook.

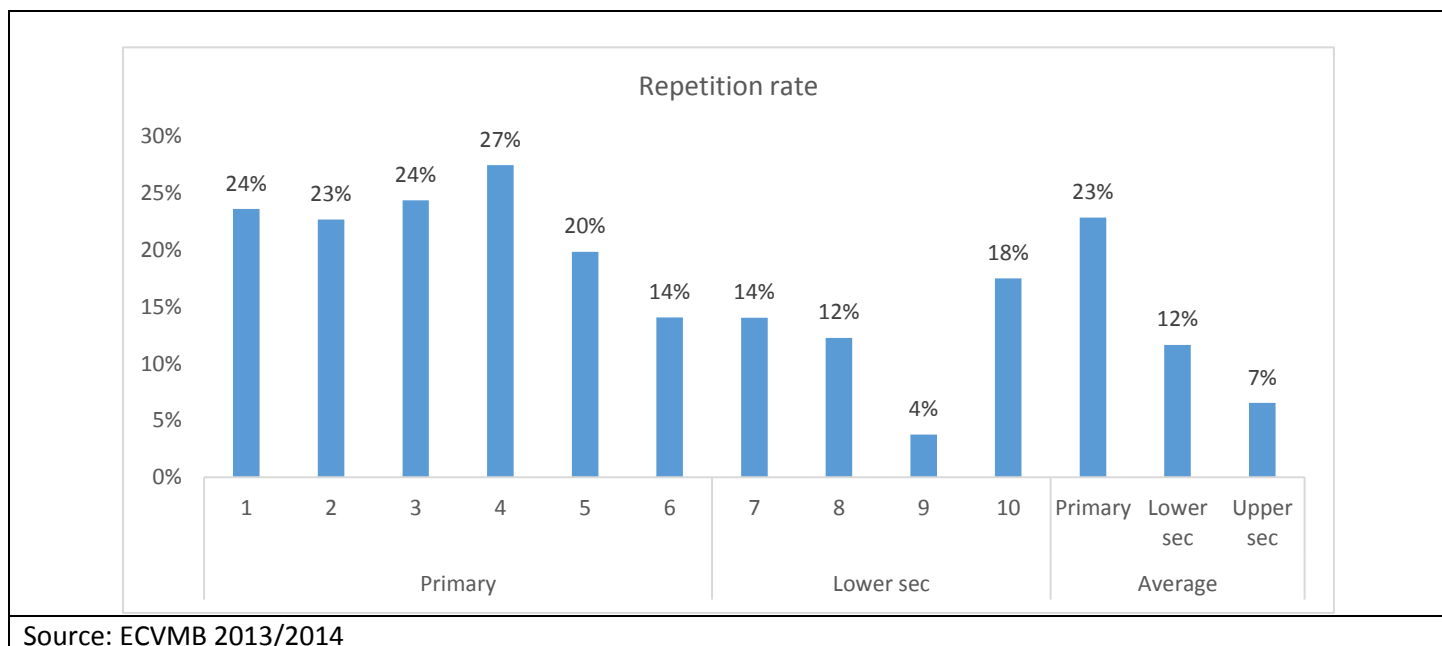
12. Building on its strengths, improving the efficiency of Burundi's education system would yield additional resources to be focused on priority needs. Despite the great successes in achieving coverage, the efforts to reduce repetition and dropout in upper primary grades could yield better results. The education system is characterized by high repetition rates at all levels of education, but especially within the first four years of the primary cycle with repetition rates of 24% and 23% respectively in grades 1 and 2 (see *Figure 3*).

Figure 3: Repetition rates by grades and levels, 2013/2014

⁴ See LOI N°1/ 19 DU 10 SEPTEMBRE 2013 PORTANT ORGANISATION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE BASE ET SECONDAIRE

⁵ Calculations based on DHS 2010 and ECVMB 2013/2014

⁶ Education Sector Budget Brief 2016, UNICEF

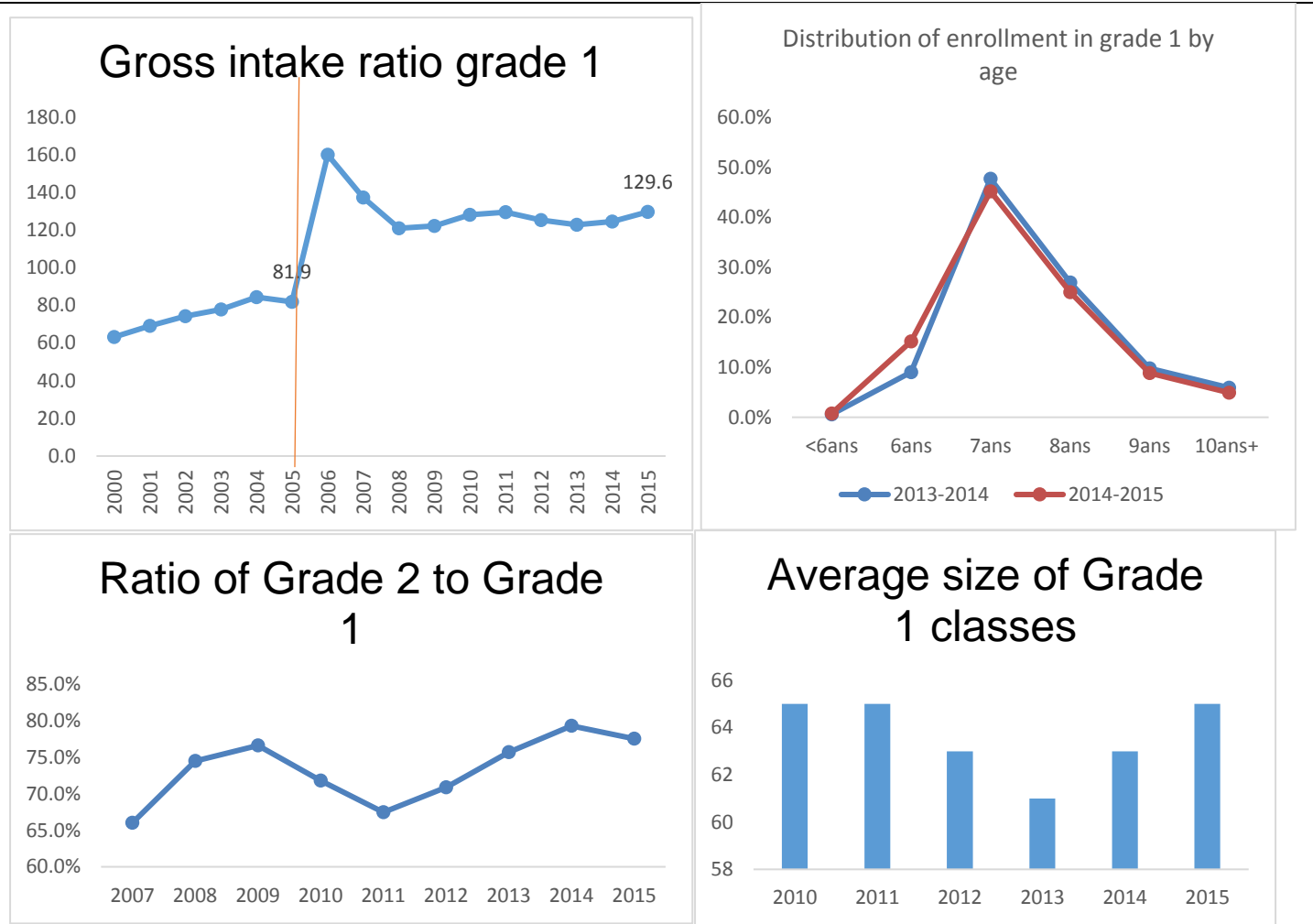


Source: ECVMB 2013/2014

13. Specifically, Burundi needs to overcome the obstacles to student progression and learning in the early grades. High repetition rates have not led, in contrast to other countries, to poor learning outcomes. Burundi’s remedial teaching for repeaters helps them succeed. However, high repetition increases overcrowding, lowering the learning opportunities for all, and increasing demand for new classrooms and teachers. One obstacle is the lack of student progression in early grades resulting in inefficiency and ultimately in lower levels of learning. The indicators of inefficiency in the early grades are (i) a high ratio of gross enrolment in grade 1 compared to the population age 7, (ii) a persistently high Gross Intake Ratio in Grade 1 (which reflects the number of “new entrants”), which has been stable at about 130 for about a decade, and (iii) a low ratio of Grade 2 to Grade 1 enrolment, which has been rising, but is currently at about 78 percent. These indicators may reflect the fact that “hidden repetition”, caused by children attending infrequently in grade 1 and then re-joining as new entrants the next year, is much higher than the already high official repetition rate. This would also contribute to the large dispersion in ages - in 2014/2015, about 40% of students were aged 8 and above, and to the large class sizes (65 students on average in grade 1), making it difficult for teachers to teach. Further understanding of the extent of this phenomenon is required to fully assess the measures needed to ensure students remain in school through the end of the school year.



Figure 4: Indicators of inefficiencies in Grade 1: GIR, distribution of age, and provision of pre-school



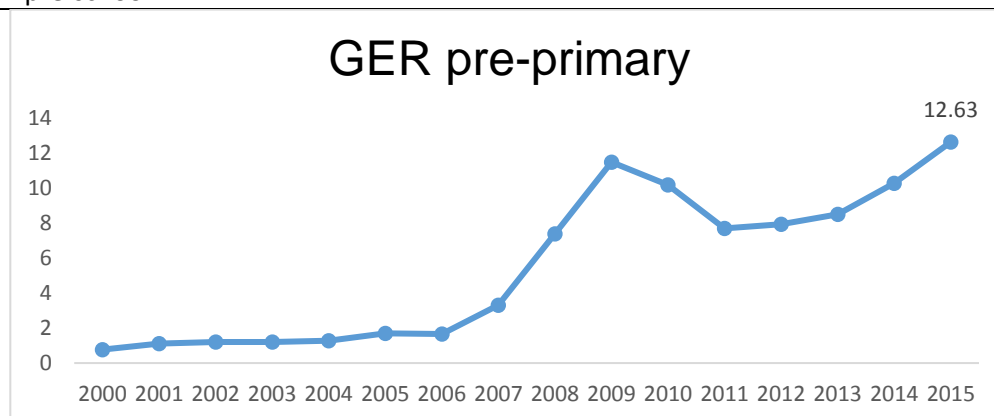
Source: UIS and admin data 2013/2014 and 2014/2015

Note: The grade 1 class size refers to non-multigrade classes

14. The low provision of pre-school services, prevalence of malnutrition and lack of parental support also pose significant challenges to the school readiness of the children entering in grade 1. As a growing number of children enter the system, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that they are ready to begin their schooling career. Provision of pre-school/ECD services have been shown to increase likelihood of on-time enrollment in grade 1, and therefore reducing the probability of dropping out in later grades. Pre-school services has been under the purview of communities and provision so far has been rather limited. Although, parents have a high degree of literacy, parental support at home, by means of encouraging homework, and reading is still limited.



Figure 5: Access in pre-school



15. The learning environment for early grades is not conducive to raising learning levels significantly. The high repetition rates in grade 1, together with the student flow through the system⁷ and lack on on-time enrollment has led to large class sizes averaging about 65 students in grade. In addition, schools in Burundi lack adequate access to learning materials such as textbooks and non-textbook reading materials, and other instructional materials. There are also few supplementary reading materials which would allow students to practice reading. Many students also do not have books or simply do not read at home⁸. Another factor impacting learning in the classroom is the teachers' training. Despite the high share of grade 2 teachers with 4 years of teacher training⁹, there are some deficiencies in teaching reading and numeracy which result in the poor performance of students on reading comprehension and reading speed.

16. Given the consistent use of Kirundi, reading and mathematics performance in early grades could be also be further improved through a more ambitious curriculum, better teaching practice and provision of an enriched reading environment. ¹⁰ Despite its relatively superior performance compared to other francophone countries, Burundi's performance still leaves room for improvement. For example, the EGRA assessment revealed that the average number of words read per minute in grade 3 was 26 (similar as in Rwanda) whereas, based on expert assessment of the complexity of the Kirundi language, this could be significantly improved, through the application of a remediation program, which ensure literacy and improve fluency in 100 days¹¹. In addition, reading comprehension remains quite low- only about 35% of grade 3 students could correctly complete the reading comprehension on the EGRA assessment. In terms of numeracy, the share of students able to count to over 80 in grade 2 in Burundi was 63%, whilst this is expected to be 100% by international standards.

17. The curriculum reform is now going to be introduced in early grades and this provides an opportunity to strengthen early grade learning and ensure all children in Burundi can progress through the 9 year cycle with stronger

⁷ It is common for students to dropout before the end of the year and re-enter the class at a later time

⁸ 60% of grade 2 students do not have books at home and 54% of grade 2 students do not read at home (PASEC 2014)

⁹ PASEC 2014

¹⁰ See background study note on quality for more details

¹¹ Application of this basic literacy method has shown very good results for example, in Cambodia, letters read by minute increased from 30 to 63 and words per minute increased from 23 to 35 and comprehension rose from 48% to 68%. See Regional Study on the Quality of Education for more details.



foundations. The reform entails the development of a new competence-based curricula for basic education. The new program for the first three cycles, which was developed with the support of the International Center for Educational Studies (CIEP), was inspired by those currently in use in Rwanda, Uganda, Mali, Singapore, France, Belgium and Canada. The main innovations of the curriculum are: a) a focus on students' learning, b) grouping disciplines by domains, c) the identification of a new profile for the kind of student to graduate from basic education (in terms of what that student can master) (d) the reorganization of learning time and the system for the formative evaluation of learning, and (e) the introduction of cross-cutting themes that have a unifying role. The new curriculum was validated in August 2015, and was implemented for cycle IV. The new curriculum for the early grades is expected to be implemented starting in 2017/2018.

18. The country has innovated with results based approaches in the health and education sectors and the Bank will draw on these experiences to inform the project design. Burundi has engaged in several results based initiatives which have yielded positive results and are indicative of the government's capacity and willingness to engage in such activities: (i) The flagship RBF initiative in the country is in the health sector where public resources, pooled with donor funding, finance activities under its Free Health Care using RBF. The combination of Free Health Care and RBF has substantially changed incentives both on the demand and the supply side, leading to large increases in the utilization of a range of health services, yielding better health outcomes¹².

(ii) From 2014 to 2016, the government also participated in a pilot RBF in the education sector primarily funded by Cordaid, a Netherlands-based development aid organization, across 81 schools in the province of Bubanza. The project sought to incentivize good performance at the school level, encourage active engagement of decentralized public education service providers and create an environment of good governance with systematic monitoring, evaluation and accountability. The better the performance, measured through both qualitative and quantitative indicators and as agreed in the contract, the higher the financing received. Upon verification of the indicators, funding was directly channeled to the schools' account and used by the school to finance any type of spending, including incentivizing teachers, or buying desks or even books. The results from the pilot are positive although there has not been a rigorous evaluation of the pilot.

(iii) The country also participated in the WBI's Leadership for Results (L4R) initiative through which the Ministry of Education launched a successful pilot initiative in the province of Bubanza to deliver textbooks on time. The Bank's own Education Sector Reconstruction Project also adopted the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) which ensured that books were distributed to the most remote parts of the country within a 100 days timeframe. As part of the preparations, a preliminary assessment of the project outcomes and lessons learnt will feed into the final program design.

Relationship to CPF

19. The FY17 Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) for Burundi is currently being finalized. The focus of the diagnostic centers around mastering demographics and fragility as to reduce poverty and boost sustainable growth. In this current post-crisis context, the SCD also highlights the need to ensure that the basic needs are met and that confidence in government and institutions is renewed. The proposed project will contribute to these objectives in several ways. The approach seeks to improve and reinforce learning in the early years which will contribute to sustaining the gains achieved by the sector over the last decade, especially in terms of ensuring access for all. In particular, school feeding can be a productive safety net that can ensure the most vulnerable are given the best chances at improved health, school performance and educational attainment. Empirical evidence¹³ shows that it can also increase school enrollment and,

¹² Within one year of implementation, births at health facilities for example increased by 25%, curative care consultations for pregnant women increased by 34.5%, family planning services increased by 26.9% and children fully vaccinated increased by 10.2%

¹³ See Ahmed (2004), Dreze and Kingdon (2001)



perhaps most importantly, attendance. The focus of the project on improving learning, will also encourage on-time enrollment of pupils, provide more physical classrooms and improve the learning environment, which will increase the likelihood of completion. Given that education has a high rate of return on investment for each year of education completed¹⁴, increased educational attainment could have a significant and positive impact on poverty alleviation. The project would also contribute to the renewal and improvement of confidence in government and institutions through the proposed RBF component. In particular, it will increase decentralization of education services and enhanced transparency and accountability within the education system.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

20. The proposed PDO is to improve learning and student progression in early grades in Burundi. For the purposes of this Project, “early grades” is defined as grades 1-4, comprising the first two cycles of primary education.

The proposed Project will focus on two areas:

- a) With respect to improving learning, more students will acquire basic competencies in reading and numeracy, taught in Kirundi, in grades 1-4, thereby enabling them to make progress through the primary education cycle with a stronger base of foundational skills. Improved reading fluency and reading comprehension in Kirundi will also help in greater mastery of French which becomes the language of instruction in grade 5. The focus on these grades is also justified by the imminent roll-out of the new curriculum in these grades.
- b) With respect to improving student progression, this means improving the age-specific entry rate into grade 1 and ensuring that more children attend regularly and progress through the early grades without repetition. A focus on this results area will help to improve the efficiency of resource use. Further, by reducing class sizes and overcrowding in the early grades (through reduction of repetition), and reducing the dispersion in ages within classes, this result will also help to create better conditions for teaching-learning and acquisition of foundational skills.

Key Results (From PCN)

21. The key results indicators will be fully defined during the consultative project design process although progress towards PDO achievement is likely to be measured through the following indicators (see proposed results chain at the end of the section on Project Description):

- a) Increased percentage of children in Grades 2 and 3 reaching adequate levels of reading fluency in Kirundi and numeracy
- b) Improved age-appropriate enrollment rate in Grades 1 and 2
- c) Reduced repetition in each grade for Grades 1-4
- d) Improved completion rate of the first two cycles (Grades 1-4)

22. During project preparation, use of a results-based financing (RBF) approach using disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) on some of the components under the Investment Project Financing (IPF) modality will be explored. This approach is under consideration because of the familiarity of the government with results-based approaches in the health sector and a pilot on RBF in the education in the province of Bubanza. The government is also keen to build on these successes by shifting focus away from inputs and towards results. In this case, some of the intermediate output and outcome

¹⁴ See Patrinos and Montenegro 2014



indicators would become the DLIs. The RBF approach would seek to incentivize both the central-decentralized entities as well as between the decentralized entities-school. The Program-for-Results instrument is not an appropriate option given the weak governance environment in the country and the sector; and the Bank's lack of experience of working in the sector in Burundi.

Project Beneficiaries

- *Students* – about 1.5 million students in grades 1-4
- *Teachers* – 39,000
- *School Directors* – 3,300
- *System managers and administrators at the Central and provincial level*

D. Concept Description

23. The proposed project concept on improving Burundi Early Grade Learning (B EGL) in Burundi was developed based by the main findings from background studies conducted in FY16/17 as well as the ongoing Regional Study on the Quality of Education in sub-Saharan Africa. The activities proposed are also aligned with the sector priorities as outlined in the *Plan sectoriel de développement de l'éducation et de la formation (2012-2020)*.

24. The Project addresses constraints at the student, teacher, school and system level.



	Key Strengths	Key Issues/ Constraints
Student- Level	High level of literacy among mothers. Tradition of school participation	Entry at different ages; malnourished with limited level of school readiness; illness; irregular attendance, particularly in first grade; participation in household chores/ activities; lack of educational support at home; lack of wide range of reading materials, distance to school.
Teacher / Classroom level	Basic 2-year training; high proportion of women teachers; availability of substitute teachers; in-service training through teacher networks; use of interactive methods	Limited knowledge amongst teachers in reading instruction and limited use of variety of pedagogical approaches; lack of formative assessment tools and remediation in classroom; continued use of repetition as a remediation tool; limited teaching-learning aids in the classroom; limited contact time. Inadequate number of textbooks and supplementary reading materials
School- Level	School management committees exist and are functional; Community based construction approaches; High proportion of women school directors; School feeding in some schools; highly equitable outcomes	Inadequate infrastructure; overcrowded classrooms in early grades. School management committees do not monitor attendance and learning
System- Level	Single language which is used as language of instruction up to grade 4. Deployment of teachers according to norms	“ Early exit” bilingual policy makes transition to French as language of instruction difficult for many students. Introduction of additional languages at primary level (Kiswahili, English) can reduce curricular time. Lack of regular, high frequency data, focused on early grades. Limited tools and incentives for Ministry and provincial level officials. Schools that are too far from some “collines”

25. Some of these issues will take some time to address. However, Burundi’s strengths mean that some issues can be tackled immediately to bring about gains in student progression and even in learning remediation.

26. The project will adopt a two-tier approach that (i) provides targeted support to students and schools to bring about immediate improvements in student progression and learning, and (ii) addresses more systemic shortcomings in infrastructure availability, teacher availability, teacher knowledge and training, providing an enriched learning environment and monitoring of learning that will sustain and deepen student progression and learning.



Component	Immediate Activities	Medium Term Activities
Component 1: Enhancing parental support and school readiness for students	Community sensitization and mobilization campaign promoting on-time enrollment, monitoring and addressing irregular attendance and drop out, and promoting reading at home	Longer term interventions to enhance school readiness include: (i) deworming, (ii) school feeding, (iii) increase in community ECD provision
Component 2: Improving teaching-learning in the classroom.	Develop in-service training modules to (i) teach letters in the first 100 days of school; (ii) identifying learning gaps among students; (ii) adopt early learning remediation for students who are lagging, especially in grades 1-2.	Longer term interventions include provision of: (i) learning and writing materials, (ii) teacher training in reading and numeracy; (iii) training for school directors on pedagogical support to teachers and strengthening of teacher learning through peer group networks and (iv) an essential package of teaching-learning materials for each classroom in grades 1-4
Component 3: Strengthening the learning environment in schools	Develop guidelines for better school-level planning, focused on improving attendance, progression and learning, reducing class sizes, enhancing teacher attendance, contact time and pedagogical practice. Also, publication of simple school report cards understood by parents	Longer term interventions include provision of adequate school infrastructure, including additional classrooms, water points and separate toilets for boys and girls
Component 4: Aligning systems to improve student progression and learning	Carry out a national information campaign on the new curriculum. Promote reading and numeracy through commune and provincial level competitions in reading and numeracy.	Develop simple data systems focusing on student progression, learning and High Frequency Surveys on key inputs, (ii) improve the deployment of teachers (iii) develop and implement a school network plan including ECD coverage, based on GPS-linked school maps and (iv) roll out of the curriculum in grades 5-6

27. The following Components are being considered:

Component 1: Enhancing parental support and school readiness for students. (Approximate amount – US \$ 10 million). This component will enable students to be more prepared and ready to participate in learning when they are in school. Immediate measures, which would be sustained throughout the project, would include the development and implementation of a community sensitization and mobilization campaign to promote enrollment of children on time; monitoring and addressing irregular attendance and drop out; and promoting reading at home, particularly given the high literacy rates, especially among the 16-30 year-olds.

The component is also expected to finance longer term interventions in student health, nutrition and ECD services that will improve the pre-requisites for improved student learning. Interventions that are planned include: (i) deworming, (ii) school feeding and (iii) increase in community ECD provision, for children aged 5 years. Given the prevalence of malnutrition and food insecurity in Burundi, and based on the success of previous interventions, provision of school feeding programs and deworming could greatly improve school readiness and access for children, especially in rural areas. The project will seek to gradually expand community organized ECD programs as per the objectives of the government sector plan. Furthermore, a plan will be developed to improve quality of ECD services including support to low-cost material, such as toys, for stimulation and learning. Coupled with the increased provision of school-feeding and deworming, these activities would help increase the readiness of 6 year-olds and thus help achieve the target for improved age-specific entry rate in grade 1.

During project preparation, appropriate targeting of these interventions by geographical area, taking into account the areas of highest need, the availability of resources and implementation capacity.



Component 2: Improving teaching-learning in the classroom. (*Approximate amount – US \$ 12 million*) This component will enable teachers to be equipped with adequate knowledge and pedagogical capacity, as well as materials for teachers and students, to improve the learning of Kirundi, mathematics and French (as a subject). The objective is to further improve on the good practices in the classroom to foster better learning, comprehension and mastery of cognitive abilities, knowledge acquisition and acquisition of practical skills. It also seeks to strengthen the transition from Kirundi to French as instructional language in grade 4.

Immediate measures would be to develop in-service training modules to enable teachers to (i) teach letters in the first 100 days of school; (ii) identifying learning gaps among students; (ii) adopt early learning remediation for students who are lagging, especially in grades 1-2. Simple teaching aids and student materials that can be used for learning remediation will be developed and supplied to teachers.

The project will also develop an integrated approach to improving learning in early grades, combining provision of materials for students, appropriate teacher training and support using these materials and support to teachers on a regular basis to improve their teaching. Specifically, the component is expected to finance (i) provision of adequate student learning materials: textbooks in Kirundi, mathematics and French, for early grades and writing materials (ii) teacher training in early grade reading and numeracy based on the new curriculum developed for grades 1-6, including appropriate use of textbooks and other materials, formative assessment, learning remediation, and reduction of student repetition; (iii) training for school directors to improve their pedagogical support to teachers and strengthening of teacher learning through peer group networks and (iv) an essential package of teaching-learning materials for each classroom in grades 1-4, including packages of graded supplementary reading materials that teachers can use to improve reading practice in students at different levels.

During preparation, the possibilities of improving the local provision of early grade reading materials and simple teaching-learning aids in Kirundi will be explored.

Component 3: Strengthening the learning environment in schools. (*Approximate amount – US \$ 20 million*) The objective of this component is to strengthen the leadership and management of the school by the director and the school management committee through training and incentives and to ensure a better learning environment for students through smaller class sizes and adequate school infrastructure.

The first sub-component will incorporate measures for strengthening the learning environment including (i) developing guidelines/checklists for better school-level planning, with a special focus on improving student attendance, progression and learning in the early grades, reducing class sizes, enhancing teacher attendance, contact time and pedagogical practice (ii) publication of simple school report cards that are understood by parents.

During preparation, the use of a DLI approach for this sub-component will be explored to incentivize school directors and teachers in schools, using the tools based on the RBF pilot in Bubanza.

The second sub-component will finance (i) the improvement of existing classroom environment through financing of small but regular maintenance grants which will be managed at the community level. A list of small maintenance activities will be developed during the project preparation; (ii) the rehabilitation of targeted classrooms (installation of windows, doors, concrete floor, blackboard and water drains). This sub-component will build on the existing community-based school



rehabilitation program. An institutional and technical review will inform a strengthening of the program, including improving the technical and quality standards. Apart from increasing school infrastructure, this community-approach is one way to strengthening involvement of the community in school management. The primary thrust of this sub-component is to improve learning environment of existing classrooms.

Component 4: Aligning systems to improve student progression and learning. (Approximate amount – US \$ 8 million). The first sub-component will focus on building capacity and strengthening incentives at the Ministerial and decentralized levels. Specifically, the sub-component will aim to (i) develop simple but efficient data systems focusing on key indicators of student progression and learning as well as High Frequency Surveys on key process / input indicators (timely availability of textbooks, teacher availability etc.) and encourage their use for planning, monitoring and adjustment of interventions through training of all staff, development of simple tools etc. (ii) improve the deployment of teachers according to student enrolment, at the provincial and commune level (iii) developing and implementing a school network plan including ECD coverage, based on GPS-linked school maps and (iv) roll out of the curriculum in grades 5-6

During preparation, the use of a DLI approach for this sub-component will be explored in order to incentivize the administration at different levels.

The second sub-component will finance project management, technical assistance, third party verification (in case of DLI-based approaches) as well as a national information campaign on the new curriculum, commune and provincial level competitions in reading and numeracy.

Area	Input/ Activity	Intermediate output	Final outcome	PDO
Student-Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ community sensitization and mobilization campaign ➤ deworming and school feeding ➤ Expand community organized ECD programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased % of students receiving school feeding and deworming tablets ➤ Increased percentage of students enrolled in ECD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater share of 6 year-olds entering grade 1 ➤ Improved attendance of students in grades 1 and 2 	Improve learning and student progression in early grades in Burundi
Teacher-Classroom level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timely provision of student textbooks in Kirundi, mathematics and French ➤ Teacher training, school-based pedagogical support, and teacher peer learning ➤ Package of essential teaching learning materials including supplementary reading materials for every class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved textbook: student ratio ➤ Improvements in teaching practice in classrooms ➤ Remediation programs in schools ➤ Students utilization of graded readers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduced repetition in Grades 1-4 ➤ Improved performance on school-based tests 	
School-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ guidelines/checklists for better planning and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhanced academic and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved school level 	



	operation of school ➤ publication of school report card ➤ improved school infrastructure, toilets for boys and girls and water points	administrative leadership by school directors ➤ Improved classroom/ student ratio in early grades	indicators in access, progression, repetition and student learning	
System-level	➤ Simple and efficient information systems ➤ Capacity building and incentives for Ministry and decentralized staff. ➤ Project management, communications, competitions	➤ Improved deployment of teachers ➤ Extended coverage of school network and ECD centers ➤ Timely availability of student and classroom inputs	➤ Reduction in inequity in availability of teachers, classrooms, schools and inputs	

28. The proposed funding allocation will be reviewed during project preparation, based on more detailed analysis of needs and coverage. The scope of the proposed components will also be reviewed during the project preparation phase. While some activities may be rolled out at the national level, for example the community sensitization and mobilization campaign, and the package of essential teaching learning materials including supplementary reading materials for every class, others may be phased-in over the life of the project, for example the scope of the roll-out for the RBF-linked activities will have to be determined based on the capacity at the central as well as decentralized level and the feasibility of scaling up.

SAFEGUARDS

A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

This is a national level project which will, in part, finance limited school rehabilitation as indicated in the sector strategy PSDEF 2012-2020. The schools to receive funds for rehabilitation have not yet been selected.

B. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

Based on the experience from the last education project which closed in FY12 (Burundi Education Sector Reconstruction Project), the government has available institutional capacity and safeguards tools to manage the safeguards policies. Nonetheless, an assessment of their current capacity and a strengthening action plan will be agreed and implemented as part of the project preparation. The previous Bank project included a construction component. By closing, 231 classrooms, 39 latrine blocks, 39 administrative blocks, 42 water points and 37 hostels had been constructed. The new schools appeared to be well built and school construction was based on careful assessment of the sites, soil, overall catchment area, and an environmental and social impact assessment. The overall safeguard rating was satisfactory with



no safeguard issue flagged during the life of the project. Given that the scope of this project is limited to rehabilitation/upgrading of the interiors of classrooms, as well as operations and maintenance, the existing capacity is considered to be capable to support safeguards implementation.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Tracy Hart, Environmental Safeguards Specialist
Paul-Jean Feno, Environmental Safeguards Specialist
Tharcisse Barakamfitiye, Social Safeguards Specialist
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D. Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	The environmental impact of this intervention is minor, limited in scope, and reversible. Construction will be limited to minor rehabilitation of existing classrooms as well as completion of interior works for unfinished classrooms. A component of project implementation includes development and dissemination of a construction manual to standardize school rehabilitation as well as operations and maintenance. There is also a feeding program for school children, to be implemented by WFP, for which WFP policies will apply. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) Checklist will be prepared, with a positive list to support each item on the limited menu of options for classroom rehabilitation.
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	This policy is not applicable, as physical works is limited to minor rehabilitation within the current footprint of the school
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	This policy is not applicable, as physical works is limited to minor rehabilitation within the current footprint of the school.
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	No pesticides or chemical treatment will be purchased or used in this project.
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	This policy is not applicable, as physical works is limited to minor rehabilitation within the current footprint of the school.
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	Yes	The indigenous Batwa people are present in varying numbers in all the administrative provinces of Burundi and are potential beneficiaries from the project. An Indigenous Peoples Framework (IPF) will be prepared for the provinces in which all project activities especially school feeding will be carried out. The Plan



		will define actions aimed at the Batwa to ensure culturally appropriate benefits from the project.
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	As rehabilitation is limited to the rehabilitation internal to the current classroom, or rooms, of a primary school, OP 4.12 is not applicable. No new school construction, nor school extensions, will be financed by this project.
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	This policy is not applicable.
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	This policy is not applicable.
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	This policy is not applicable.

E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

Feb 28, 2018

Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

The proposed project is classified as a Category B project according to Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01). The main social risks are associated with rehabilitation of existing schools that might be implemented during project cycle as well as potential exclusion of the Batwa from project activities. The indigenous Batwa people are present in varying numbers in all the administrative provinces of Burundi and are potential beneficiaries from the project. The Client will prepare an Indigenous Peoples Framework (IPF) to define specific actions to ensure that the Batwa benefit from the project in a culturally appropriate manner. The safeguards instruments - EMP and IPF -- will be disclosed in-country and on the Bank's Infoshop prior to the project Decision Meeting.

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