



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 06/21/2020 | Report No: ESRSC01440



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Kyrgyz Republic	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	P173601	
Project Name	Enhancing the Foundation of Learning		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Education	Investment Project Financing		12/15/2020
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Education & Science		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project, building on the success of the Kyrgyz Early Education Project financed by a previous implementation grant from GPE and complementing the IDA’s recently approved Learning for the Future Project (US\$50 million), seeks to contribute to human capital development through enhancing the foundation of learning.

The proposed project development objective is to increase equitable access to quality preschool education.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	4.80

B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

The objective of the project is to increase access on an equitable basis to quality early education program, through expanding shift-based kindergartens (SbKs) in poor rural areas, enhancing the quality of the program through training of preschool teachers, institutionalizing measurement of services quality and effectiveness; and financing reforms to enhance efficiency and coverage.



The proposed Project would be organized around three components: (i) expansion of early education services for underserved children; (ii) improvement of policy & financing for system effectiveness; and (iii) implementation support.

Component One: Expansion of Early Education Services for underserved children. The aim of this component is to increase equitably access to early education services that meet quality standards for underserved children through establishing Community based Kindergartens. The project will support the creation of about 80 new CbKs enrolling approximately 5000 children ages 3–5 years. For each CbK, the project will provide furniture, equipment, and materials for play and learning; an outdoor playground; minor rehabilitation works including access for children with physical disabilities; and universal design water and sanitation facilities. The design for the water and sanitation facilities will consider vulnerability to climate change.

The project will finance a start-of-service training program for approximately 160 newly hired teachers at the CbKs. The training programs will be integrated into existing systems of teacher training and support at both the pre-service and in-service levels. The project will finance the capacity building of instructors to deliver the programs at the RIITT and six OIITs and of methodologists working at local levels, as well as at the 13 universities and 8 pedagogical colleges where pre-service teacher education is offered. The training programs will also be designed in a digital format, so that teachers can follow the program using an online or offline digital version

Component 2: Improvement of policy & financing for system effectiveness (UD\$ 295,718) The objective of this component is to improve policy and system effectiveness. To that end, it would finance technical assistance in such areas of preschool education as revision and scaling of the per-capita financing model, development of public-private partnership mechanisms for preschools, enhancing and expanding the Gov “Social contract” initiative, revision of preschool teachers’ competencies framework linked to the National Qualification Framework and the monitoring of child development at the institutions and system levels.

Component Three: Citizen Engagement and Implementation Support.

The objective of this component is to ensure all stakeholders engagement into the project implementation and monitoring and support the project implementation.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

The Enhancing the Foundation of Learning (EFL) project is a grant from Global Partnership for Education Trust Fund (GPE) that will complement the IDA's recently approved Learning for the Future project (LFF). The EFL grant will support the creation of an additional 80 new community-based kindergartens (CbKs) throughout the country enrolling approximately 5,000 children aged 3-5 years under the EFL grant project Subcomponent 1.1. It will target poor and rural communities, focusing where access to early childhood education (ECE) services is below the national rural average and there are enough children to fill two classes (according to the national regulation the number of children per class is 25, and 1 teacher per class) in the communities not covered by the LFF project. The Aiyi Okmotu (villages) will provide premises that it owns. For each CbK, similar to the LFF project, the grant project will provide furniture,



equipment, and materials for play and learning; an outdoor playground; small-scale building rehabilitation works including access for children with physical disabilities; and child- and disabled-friendly water and sanitation facilities. This project will not finance any new building construction. The design for the water and sanitation facilities will take into consideration vulnerability to climate change.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a lower-middle-income country with 6.3 million people and a GDP per capita of US\$ 1,219 (2017). The annual population growth rate is 2.1%; one-third of the population is under the age of 15 years; two-thirds of the population live in rural areas. The economy is vulnerable to external shocks owing to its reliance on one gold mine, Kumtor, which accounts for about 10% of GDP, and on worker remittances, equivalent to about 27% of GDP in 2018. Poverty and inequality falling, but vulnerability remains high.

The country is 93% mountainous and mostly lies on land situated at elevations between 1,000 and 7,400 meters. More than 40% of the country is above 3,000 meters and three-quarters of that is under permanent snow or glaciers. The country has considerable economic potential based on its rich endowments, including arable land (7%), pastures (48%), and substantial forests and minerals, and there is significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. The Kyrgyz Republic is highly vulnerable to climate change, specifically to extreme precipitation, landslides, floods, and mudflow hazards, which occur frequently across the country. Poverty and inequality falling, but vulnerability remains high. In 2016, 25.4% of the population lived below the national poverty line, with 74% of the poor living in rural areas and 60% residing in Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Batken regions in the south around Fergana valley. However, acute poverty is low at 1.4% (2016). Many villages are located far from the roads of regional significance and status. Within every settlement or community, there are vulnerable groups that cannot afford commercial kindergartens for their children.

Children with disabilities not only experience limitations deriving from interaction with non-inclusive spaces but also lack basic services such as education especially in rural areas. In addition to limited opportunities for children with developmental delays, they are often abandoned, excluded, or institutionalized due to widespread stigma. The existing education programs have little or no provision for children with special education needs (SEN), with teachers generally having very limited knowledge and skills about creating an inclusive environment and SEN pedagogy.

D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

The proposed EFL grant will be executed by the same agency as for the LFF project, i.e. the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The MoES and its Project Coordination Unit (PCU) are also responsible for project implementation and ensuring that the EFL project results are met in a timely manner. The project implementation will be supervised by the MoES using existing institutions, structures, and selective technical assistance to support the Ministry and institutions involved in project implementation. The MoES has considerable experience with donor-funded projects including those of the World Bank/IDA (e.g. the Sector Support for Education Reform Project – P113350 and Kyrgyz Global Partnership for Education P132490). The PCU has been recently established for implementation of the LFF project to carry out such key functions as coordination, fiduciary, environmental and social management, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. The same PCU will cover the proposed activities EFL grant. The PCU has several staff, including a director and fiduciary specialist. The PCU is in the process of hiring other specialists, such as M&E, environmental, social/citizen engagement specialist, and administrative staff.

Since the Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) is new, the client had no previous experience in applying Bank's ESF, except under the LFF project, which was only recently approved by Board on March 31, 2020, and is to become effective shortly (ratified by the Parliament on June 11, 2020) . Provided the geographic stretch and the



number (500 new CbKs and 1200 schools under the LFF and plus 80 new CbKs under the EFL grant) of the potential project sites, the PCU will consider hiring additional environmental and social specialists (at least one environmental specialist and one social specialist) for North and South of the country respectively, who should work closely with the technical designers for the building rehabilitation work for the CbKs. It is also recommended for the PCU to hire construction works supervisors for the CbKs.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The proposed project components are environmentally benign except that the subcomponent 1.1 that is a scale up activity of LFF project and will support minor rehabilitation works, including installation of indoor water latrines and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing community CbKs buildings, as well as improvement of access to children with disabilities (same foot print). The expected environmental impacts may be listed as: improper care, handling and storage of building renovation material and waste, generation of excessive noise and dust levels, health impacts related with inadequate disposal of asbestos containing material, and life and fire safety risks (LFS) in CbKs as those are considered as public access buildings. Renovation activities will not generate severe adverse environmental impacts or substantial risks on human population, and the predictable impacts are expected to be temporary, reversible, low in magnitude and site specific. Due to the nature of proposed works and associated environmental risks, and limited capacity of MoES in the understanding and application of Bank's ESF and relevant Standards, the project is classified as Moderate risk from environmental perspective and as defined under the Bank's ESF.

Social Risk Rating

Moderate

It is expected that the social impacts associated with the project activities will be beneficial for the Kyrgyz society. Social risk is rated as Moderate based on the information obtained during project preparation available at the concept stage, project activities will be site-specific, without the likelihood of direct impacts beyond the project footprint, low in magnitude and easily mitigated in a predictable manner. The prime focus of the project is to enhance pre-school education country-wide. This will imply support enhancement of child readiness and teacher effectiveness in pre-school education through increasing access to early childhood education, measuring quality and effectiveness and reforms to preschool financing, and increasing teacher effectiveness, providing teaching-learning resources, and improving measurement of cognitive and non-cognitive skills. The project will support the creation of new CbKs through providing furniture, equipment, and materials for play and learning; an outdoor playground; minor rehabilitation works including access for children with physical disabilities; and child- and disabled-friendly water and sanitation facilities. Activities that show the potential for temporary or permanent involuntary land acquisition, negative impact on the livelihood or economic activities, or restrict access to resources will not be financed under the project. The Aiyl Okmotu (villages) will provide premises that it owns. also, finance small-scale building renovations which will include installation of indoor water toilet and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing school buildings. Risk related to labor-management including influx is not substantial given the nature of small-scale nature of school rehabilitation works. Main social risks concern distribution of project benefits across geographic areas within the country, which is particularly sensitive given the complex inter-ethnic relationships which

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led to social upheavals in 2005 and 2010 and the eruption of violent inter-ethnic clashes in the South of the country. Additionally, a high rate of unemployment and significant dependency on remittances often affected by external economic fluctuations has impacted adversely the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups particularly on poor and women-headed households. There is also a risk that children with disabilities or developmental delays may be excluded from project benefits. Beneficiary (kindergarten) selection criteria need to be carefully elaborated to ensure inclusive access to the poorest communities, children with disabilities, equitable regional and ethnically balanced distribution of funds. The project design needs to ensure that these households are 'included' in the project and will be able to participate and derive full benefits from the project. Thus, while the risk that the project inadvertently triggers social upheavals and inter-ethnic clashes is unlikely, the risk of exclusion needs to be addressed. To ensure social inclusion of minority ethnic groups, recruitment of teachers will also consider that various children's groups can communicate with children in the language spoken in these children's families (Uzbek and Tajik). The project will ensure opening CbKs in ethnic minority groups residence area, and teachers from those CbKs will be trained.

B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

B.1. General Assessment

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:

The local government (Aiyl Okmotu) will not build new but provide existing premises for CbKs that it owns and that meet the relevant national pedagogical, safety, hygiene, and sanitation standards. It will provide suitable landscaping for the grounds and ensure there is a fence surrounding the property. It will maintain and operate the premises as a public pre-school education service for a period of at least ten years; this will include paying all recurrent, operational costs, and maintaining the premises in good condition. Finally, it will hire a qualified teacher for each new CbK created (covering two shifts). Therefore, it is expected that all CbKs will be located in built-up areas and are not in proximity to areas of biodiversity significance or cultural heritage. Potential environmental and social risks and impacts are predictable, expected to be temporary and reversible, low in magnitude, and site-specific. The expected environmental impacts include improper care, handling, and storage of building renovation material and waste, generation of excessive noise and dust levels, health impacts related to handling and inadequate disposal of asbestos-containing material, as well as Life and Fire safety risks in such public access buildings, such as CbKs. Towards addressing these issues, under the LFF project preparation the client has developed an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). The ESMF for the LFF project has been finalized and disclosed locally as well as at the Bank. The same ESMF will cover these EFL grant activities and will be updated and re-disclosed for EFL. The ESMF specifies rules and procedures for environmental and social risks screening, potential environmental and social risks and impacts and mitigation measures, and the contents for site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) to be prepared by the PMU's consultants. The site-specific environmental management and safety measures to be prepared following the project ESMF should be included in the bidding documents and contracts for works.

In addition, as an integral part of the project, the project will require that a professional design for these early childhood water and sanitation facilities in the existing premix of community CbKs should be made following relevant national guidelines on school water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and professional supervisors should be hired to supervise the installation. School teachers and children's parents should be engaged in the supervision of installation



as well. The site-specific ESMPs will be included in the contracts for works. The Bank will also require the adoption of adequate OHS practices and the World Bank EHS Guidelines.

Under the LFF project preparation, a Social Assessment (SA) was undertaken, as part of the ESMF, to (i) identify the stakeholders, their potential socio-economic barriers, issues, and concerns, (ii) assess positive and negative impacts, and (iii) recommend mitigation measure of negative impacts and enhance positive benefits. Conducted SA indicates that the Project will generate mostly positive socio-economic benefits by improving access to ECE services. At the same time, the SA reveals social risks which may undermine achieving project objectives. Social risk management issues relate to: (i) inclusion/exclusion; (ii) stakeholder engagement; and (ii) labor management. Inclusion/exclusion risks are related to the migration of the population. There are many settlements affected by external and internal migration. The main destinations of external migration are Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Korea, whereas internal migration is towards Chui oblast and to the bigger cities of Bishkek, Osh, and Jalal-Abad. As per the SA report, children of labor migrants become “invisible” for the civil registration system and remain in the care of their relatives. There is no accurate number of children left by migrated parents as there is no practice of official registration of guardianship. Lack of registration makes it difficult for migrants to access a kindergarten, school, and public health care. SA report indicates that 18% of the Kyrgyz population is internal migrants and only 24.4% of them have official registration at the place of residence. The estimated number of children affected by migration is 259,000. Towards addressing this risk the project will initiate an information campaign and ensure continuous engagement of local authorities, community representatives, and all other relevant stakeholders, thus a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed. The project will consult with stakeholders on providing alternative registration mechanism for children requiring to attend CbKs. In addition, the communities will be transparently selected, using a mechanism similar to the one prepared and used under previous WB financed Kyrgyz Early Education Project and that will be updated and detailed in the Operations Manual. The results of the project registration mechanism will be compared with the official registry and will be considered during the selection of communities for project investments. As a result, the concept of inclusion will be fully imbibed in the project’s components. Interventions are expected to result in inclusive development creating opportunities for poor and vulnerable groups and ensure that the project interventions are accessible to the intended beneficiaries. Lastly, as the project will deploy labor, both as consultants in PCU and civil works, a Labor Management Procedures is prepared which outlines the types of workers, key elements of the national labor regulations, and gaps with ESS2, as well as labor-management procedures to be adopted during the project.

Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:

The EFL grant will not use any of the Borrower's Framework.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

ESS10 is relevant to the project. Under the LFF project preparation, the client has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). The same SEP will cover the EFL grant activities. The SEP includes the following: (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning for stakeholder engagement; (iii) consultations and disclosures; (iv) grievance mechanism; and (v) continuous interface with and reporting to the stakeholders. This SEP identified all relevant stakeholders, including key ones: local communities, particularly young children, their parents and teachers, MoES, District Departments of Education (Raiono), local self-governance bodies, local parliaments (kenesh). Special focus will be given to outreach to fathers in the overall outreach to parents because of the common mindset and culture in the families that mothers are more responsible for child upbringing at early stages. The project will engage



both parents however more effort is needed to engage fathers. SEP describes the types of consultations to be conducted, frequency and methods of information dissemination, community consultations, grievance redress process and procedures, reporting mechanism. SEP is a living document and will be updated in due course of the project implementation, upon necessity. Stakeholder engagement activities will be conducted in line with the government's policy and principles on public meetings during COVID-19 pandemic, and in line with the Bank's Technical Note: Public Consultations and Stakeholder Engagement in the World Bank supported operations under constraints of conducting public meetings.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

The project Labor-Management Procedures (LMP) is prepared and adopted by the MoES to implement the LFF project. The EFL grant will apply the same procedures on labor-management as the LFF project. The document identifies main labor requirements and risks associated with the project, reviews national labor law and practices for consistency with the objectives of ESS2, and helps the MoES to determine the resources necessary to address labor issues. The LMP is a living document, which is developed by the MoES with support of the project team during the LFP preparation and will be reviewed and updated throughout the implementation of the project. Accordingly, this document details the type of workers likely to be deployed by the project and the management thereof. The prepared LMP envisages that project could encompass the following categories of workers: 1. Direct and 2. Contracted workers. Direct workers will be government civil servants (MoES staff) as well as those employed as specialists by the PCU. The former will be governed by a set of civil services codes, the latter by mutually agreed contracts. Contracted workers will be employed as deemed appropriate by contractors, sub-contractors, and other intermediaries, details of which will be known as and when activities' implementation begins. The LMP will include a Grievance Redress Mechanism for all direct workers and contracted workers.

Given the small-scale construction works, no major environmental risks are envisaged. Labor risks associated with contracted workers are at the subproject level. Labor risks including labor influx and associated Gender-Based Violence (GBV), forced labor and child labor are considered low given the small size of subproject construction works and the PCU's adherence to the national labor code and compliance with ESS2, which prohibits forced labor (article 10, Labor Code) and child labor. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) risks are expected to be low to moderate as the building rehabilitation works are small-scale. All contractors will be required to follow the site-specific ESMP and the EHS Guidelines of the World Bank, which will be included in the works contract, to ensure local workers will use basic safety gears, receive basic safety training and other preventive actions as needed. The World Bank COVID-19 Note Considerations for Construction Civil Works, as well as Labor Management Procedures COVID-19 templates should be also applied to the project.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Same as the LFF project, the standard is relevant as the project will support the installation of indoor water and sanitation facilities in about 80 existing community-based CbKs buildings. The design of these water and sanitation facilities should consider water resources, water-saving measures and how they are connected to a sewerage system,



to the extent technically and financially feasible, that avoid or minimize water usage and water pollution so that the project's water use does not have significant adverse impacts on communities, other users and the environment. These measures include but are not limited to, the use of additional technically feasible water conservation measures, the use of alternative water supplies if possible, and evaluation of alternative project locations. The risk of handling toxic materials in the existing buildings (especially asbestos) during the renovation of CbKs, should be managed following the ESMPs in line with the best international practices and the WB EHS Guidelines included in the contracts for civil works. Any toxic materials should not be used for the renovation of CbKs.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

The standard is relevant. The project will ensure the safety of children and teachers during the building renovation works by adopting adequate OHS protocols following WBG EHS Guidelines. Seclusion of construction area by putting up a fence, mitigation measures to control excessive noise and dust levels, and secure access to the area in the building will be ensured through a robust mitigation and management plan in the ESMF which has been prepared. The presence of any sensitive receptors close to renovation sites will be identified during the screening of environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures will be provided in the site-specific ESMPs. CbKs building's structural integrity, as well as Life and Fire safety risks will be assessed, and universal access is installed where technically and economically viable. In addition, an Emergency preparedness and response measures should be developed and implemented to address the operational risks of the CbKs to comply with internally accepted life and fire safety standard. Impact on the other users of the building will also be assessed during the planning stages, and the timing of the works will be carefully planned to minimize impacts on the other users if any. The scale of construction is however small so that footprint currently limited to the boundary walls is not expected to have impacts on the community beyond the sites.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

This standard is not relevant. The selected beneficiary communities must own the premises and commit to maintaining them as a pre-school institution for at least five years. Therefore, under the proposed project no land acquisition and no new building construction is expected. Activities associated with the project will also be screened to ensure there is no involuntary resettlement or negative impact on livelihood. Subprojects will be assessed through the ESMF and will be monitored during supervision.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not relevant. No project sites are expected to be located in living natural resources.

ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

The Kyrgyz Republic does not have such groups of people/communities and thus this ESS is not relevant.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage



Not relevant. The project will finance small-scale building renovations which will include installation of indoor water and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing buildings. Buildings that are registered as a culturally significant building will not be included in the project. If they are nominated, it will be addressed in line with ESS8.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

The standard is not relevant. The project does not involve FIs.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas No

III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered? No

Financing Partners

N/a

B. Proposed Measures, Actions and Timing (Borrower’s commitments)

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

1. Update and re-disclose the ESMF prepared for the LFF project to cover the EFL grant activities.
2. Update and re-disclose the SEP prepared for the LFF project to cover the EFL grant activities.
3. Update and adopt the LMP prepared for the LFF project to cover the EFL grant activities.
4. Prepare an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan.

Possible issues to be addressed in the Borrower Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP):

1. MoES conducts environmental and social screening for all project activities following the ESMF.
2. MoES reports on the environmental and social performance of all activities on a quarterly based reports.
3. MoES undertakes a mid-term and end-of-project assessment of social inclusion (those identified as vulnerable groups in the SEP).
4. MoES implements and reports on SEP.
5. MoES implements and reports on GRM.
6. MoES implements and reports on LMP.

C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS 15-Oct-2020

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IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Ministry of Finance

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education & Science

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VI. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s): Gulmira Sultanova, Dingyong Hou
Practice Manager (ENR/Social) Satoshi Ishihara Recommended on 21-Jun-2020 at 09:00:33 EDT