



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(**ESRS Concept Stage**)

Date Prepared/Updated: 03/28/2024 | Report No: ESRSC04214



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P504701	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	ARM MHPSS SPF	2024
Operation Name	Mental health and psychosocial support in Armenian schools		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Armenia	Armenia	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Education
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Teach for Armenia	Teach for Armenia		31-May-2024
Estimated Concept Review Date	Total Project Cost		
15-Mar-2024	2,600,000.00		

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Proposed Development Objective

To improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of child and adolescent refugees in selected schools.

B. Is the operation 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 Activities

[Description imported from the Concept Data Sheet in the Portal providing information about the key aspects and components/sub-components of the project]

The Recipient Executed Trust Fund (RETF) will support a needs assessment, school integration, mental health and psychosocial support services. Activities to be supported under the RETF include: • carrying out rapid assessments in partnership with key stakeholders to evaluate community needs as well as individual needs of children and adolescents at schools in the regions with the largest number of newly arrived children and adolescents, • strengthening services for the integration of children and adolescents into schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs of Armenia, •



providing training and mentoring on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) to mental health experts and Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centers staff to work with schools across three waves to support newly arrived children and adolescents, their peers and their families, according to their needs, • carrying out data collection for adequate monitoring of service provision at schools, and • supporting the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) in the revision of the regulatory framework to integrate psychosocial support into the Grade 1-12 curriculum and the integration of MHPSS into (a) pre-service training with the Armenian State Pedagogical University, (b) in-service training with the National Center for Education Development and Innovation, (c) regular support provided by the Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centers. A Bank Executed Trust Fund will provide support for implementation of the RETF, through technical assistance.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

[Description of key features relevant to the operation’s environmental and social risks and opportunities (e.g., whether the project is nationwide or regional in scope, urban/rural, in an FCV context, presence of Indigenous Peoples or other minorities, involves associated facilities, high-biodiversity settings, etc.) – Max. character limit 2,000]

The Project targets selected regions in Armenia with the largest number of newly arrived children and adolescents. of school age. The Project also plans to provide training and mentoring on MHPSS to mental health experts and Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centers (RPPC) staff to work with schools across three waves to support the newly arrived children and adolescents, their peers and their families, according to their needs. RPPC locations will be delivering services to the newly arrived children and adolescents.

D.2 Overview of Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Managing Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description of Borrower’s capacity (i.e., prior performance under the Safeguard Policies or ESF, experience applying E&S policies of IFIs, Environmental and social unit/staff already in place) and willingness to manage risks and impacts and of provisions planned or required to have capabilities in place, along with the needs for enhanced support to the Borrower – Max. character limit 2,000]

The recipient and implementing agency is Teach for Armenia (TfA), an NGO established in 2013. TfA is a partner in the global Teach for All network, spanning over 60 countries. The organization has well-established capacities, including employee management, stakeholder engagement and external communications. The implementing agency has no prior experience in applying the WB Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and does not employ an Environment or Social Specialist. The implementing agency will ensure at least a social specialist is in place for adequate implementation of measures to manage any risks and ensure effective functioning of grievance redress mechanism for the Project.

The MoESCS, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) would work in partnership with the implementing agency across different sub-components. MoESCS has confirmed its endorsement and consent to TfA being the recipient and implementing agency. Both ministries have been involved in the implementation of WB-funded projects under Safeguards Policies. Specifically, through the Center of Education Projects (CEP), the MoESCS is carrying out the Education Improvement Project (P130182) and Armenia Education Improvement Project Additional Financing (P173318). The MLSA is currently implementing Second Social Protection Administration Project II (P146318). Additionally, the Ministry implemented the Armenia Support to Conflict-Affected Families Project (P176454) under the SPF grant.



National Center for Education Development and Innovation Foundation (NCEDI), The RPPC, and Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU) would collaborate with the implementing agency and their staff and students would be beneficiaries of the Project.

II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Low

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

The Project, with its proposed Component 1, will support the integration of the newly arrived children and adolescent into schools, conduct community need assessments, provide MHPSS, including training and mentoring of experts and staff. The Project will not involve any physical or infrastructure-related activities. Therefore, the Project will have no environmental footprint or impact, and environmental risk is rated as low.

A.2 Social Risk Rating

Moderate

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating, in accordance with the ES Directive and the Technical Note on Screening and Risk Classification under the ESF – Max. character limit 2,000]

The social risk is classified as moderate. Overall, the Project is expected to bring positive social benefits through strengthened services for the integration of the newly arrived children and adolescents, their peers and families, as well as host communities. The risk classification takes into account the lack of consistent background checking and vetting system for multidisciplinary staff (social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, etc.) that will be working with refugee children and adolescents. Social risks are also associated with potential shortcomings in the engagement of Project stakeholders and beneficiaries. There is also a risk of retraumatizing Project beneficiaries if rapid assessment and data collection processes are not sensitive and do not adhere to ethical standards, such as triggering painful memories, sense of vulnerability and fear through direct questions regarding past experiences or not providing proper information on the purpose of the assessment, etc. The risk of social tension or conflict is assessed as low, given the high level of solidarity with the situation of those newly arrived and the fact that the Project will also provide benefits to the host communities through strengthening services for the integration of the newly arrived children and adolescents in schools and revised regulatory framework that integrates psychosocial support into the Grade 1-12 academic curriculum. The Project will not finance civil works. The Project will not have physical footprint to cause any impact on private land, assets, or livelihoods.

A.3 Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Risk Rating

Low

[Summary of key factors contributing to risk rating. This attribute is only for the internal version of the download document and not a part of the disclosable version – Max. character limit 2,000]

The risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment from workers is rated as low. The Project will not finance civil works associated with labour influx and will involve a limited number of direct and contracted workers through individual contracts. A vetting procedure, for background character reference checks for all those coming

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into contact with vulnerable children and adolescents, will need to be in place as well as clear codes of conduct and separate grievance channel for dealing with SEA/SH complaints.

B. Relevance of Standards and Policies at Concept Stage

B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

ESS1 - Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The Project interventions do not involve any physical construction or infrastructure development. Instead, they will focus on enhancing the mental wellbeing of the newly arrived children and adolescents in selected schools. The following Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) have been identified as relevant for the Project: ESS1, ESS2, ESS4 and ESS10. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be prepared and disclosed and will have measures in place for vetting those who come into contact with vulnerable persons, establishment of ethical standards for contacting and surveying children and adolescents, worker and project grievance mechanism, measures to address work and community health risks, and stakeholder engagement requirements.

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

Interested and affected stakeholders include the governmental agencies and associated organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) active in education sector and provision of psychosocial support, academia and research organizations, beneficiary schools and school-based organizations, such as parental committees, student committees, etc.; and CSOs and development partners involved in educational and psychosocial support programs and supporting those newly arrived; and those benefitting from the services. Based on the nature and scale of the risks and potential impacts of the Project the elements of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be included as part of the ESCP, and the preparation of a standalone SEP is not required.

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is relevant and applies to all direct and contracted workers under the Project. Direct workers include employees of the TfA NGO. To conduct rapid assessment, provide trainings or support the MoESCS for the revision of the regulatory framework the TfA may involve individual consultants or firms based on service provision contracts. Other government staff to be involved in the delivery of Project benefits - staff of MoESCS, MLSA, NCEDI and RPPC are civil servants, and their labour terms and conditions will be guided by national legislation. The Project will not involve community workers. No civil works contractors will be involved in the Project either. The risks of discrimination, OHS, SEA/SH, forced and child labour are minimal. The TfA also has established internal labour management procedures that will be applied and expanded for the Project implementation. TfA will be requested to put in place a worker’s grievance mechanism to be included in the ESCP.

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ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is not relevant. Activities proposed under the Project will not pose risks associated with resource use and pollution.

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

Teachers are recruited in schools through open competitions, with the government decree enforcing criteria that prohibit individuals with a criminal history from participating. However, the hiring process for school administrative staff and professionals working directly with children and adolescents—such as social workers, psychologists, and speech therapists—is governed by internal procedures set by the schools. Notably, there's no requirement for systematic background checks, which poses potential risks, particularly concerning the safety of children and adolescents. Implementing background checks is crucial for screening and vetting staff effectively, thus minimizing the risks of harm to minors. Additionally, there's a risk of re-traumatization among Project beneficiaries if interventions, including data collection through rapid surveys, are carried out by unskilled staff without adhering to ethical procedures.

ESS5 - Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is not relevant. No land acquisition nor restriction to land use is planned under this Project.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is not relevant. Activities proposed under the Project will not pose risks to protected areas, natural habitats or involve primary production of natural resources.

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

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

This standard is not relevant as there are no Indigenous Peoples who meet the definition of this Standard in Armenia.

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

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This standard is not relevant. Activities proposed under the Project will not pose risks or impacts to tangible or intangible cultural heritage nor restrict access.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries

Not Currently Relevant

[Optional Explanation - Max. character limit 1,000]

The Project does not support any financial intermediaries.

B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways

No

OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas

No

B.3 Other Salient Features

Use of Borrower Framework

No

[Optional explanation – Max. character limit 1,000]

The Borrower’s framework will not be used for the Project. However, the Project will comply with all relevant national legal and regulatory requirements.

Use of Common Approach

No

[Optional Explanation including list of possible financing partners – Max. character limit 1,000]

There is no co-financing for the Project.

B.4 Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

[Description provided will not be disclosed but will flow as a one time flow to the Concept Stage PID – Max. character limit 5,000]

The overall Environmental and Social (E&S) risk is classified as moderate, with the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) 1, 2, 4 and 10 considered relevant.

The Project involves no physical or infrastructure-related activities, thus having no environmental footprint or impact and resulting in a low environmental risk rating.

The social risk is classified as moderate. The Project is expected to have positive social impact improving the integration services for the newly arrived children and adolescents, their peers and families, and host communities. The newly arrived children and adolescents and those from host communities will benefit from improved mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) in participating schools and through revised regulatory framework and integrated MHPSS in

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general. Project social risks are associated with potential shortcomings in the engagement with beneficiaries through possibility of retraumatizing project beneficiaries due to poorly-managed primary data collection and lack of mechanisms for background checks for the recruitment of school multidisciplinary teams (social workers, speech therapists, psychologists, etc.).

As the Project will not finance civil works nor will it acquire and or restrict access as such it will not have any impacts on lands, assets, or livelihoods.

C. Overview of Required Environmental and Social Risk Management Activities

C.1 What Borrower environmental and social analyses, instruments, plans and/or frameworks are planned or required by Appraisal?

[Description of expectations in terms of documents to be prepared to assess and manage the project’s environmental and social risks and by when (i.e., prior to Effectiveness, or during implementation), highlighted features of ESA documents, other project documents where environmental and social measures are to be included, and the related due diligence process planned to be carried out by the World Bank, including sources of information for the due diligence - Max. character limit 3,000]

No standalone Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) nor Labour Management Procedures (LMP) will be prepared. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be prepared and disclosed and will have measures in place for vetting those who come into contact with vulnerable persons, establishment of ethical standards for contacting and surveying children and adolescents, worker and project grievance mechanism, measures to address work and community health risks, and stakeholder engagement requirements. Actions aimed at implementation of those requirements will be included and guided by the Project Operational Manual (POM).

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III. CONTACT POINT

Contact Point

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IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT



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V. APPROVAL

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