



# Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Appraisal Stage

### **(ESRS Appraisal Stage)**

Date Prepared/Updated: 09/28/2023 | Report No: ESRSA03011



**I. BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Operation Data**

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P179210	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	OECS- Skills and Innovation Project	2024
Operation Name	OECS- Skills and Innovation Project		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Caribbean	Grenada, St. Lucia	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Education
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Grenada, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Grenada	16-Oct-2023	30-Nov-2023
Estimated Decision Review Date	Total Project Cost		
14-Sep-2023	36,000,000.00		

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**Proposed Development Objective**

The Project Development Objectives are to (i) enhance youth transversal and advanced technical skills, strengthen regional collaboration in post-secondary education, and foster collaborative innovation; and (ii) in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency, respond promptly and effectively to it.

**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**



The Project would achieve its development objective through the implementation of four components: (i) Fostering regional collaboration for skills and innovation in the post-secondary space; (ii) Strengthening post-secondary institutions and collaborative innovation ; (iii) Project Management and Technical assistance, and (iv) Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC). Component 1, Fostering regional collaboration for youth skills and innovation in the post-secondary space, will support the development of an overarching regional strategic framework for post-secondary education and of mechanisms to enhance collaboration among OECS Member States on post-secondary education, the improvement of post-secondary data at the regional level, and the development of a regional innovation ecosystem with strong participation of post-secondary institutions. The component will be implemented by the OECS Commission through an IDA grant. The benefits of the activities and outputs in this Component will accrue to all countries in the OECS region. Component 2, Strengthening post-secondary institutions to deliver priority skills and participate in collaborative innovation, will provide direct support to National Colleges and selected post-secondary institutions in participating countries to implement Regional Enhancement Plans (REPs), support collaborative innovation projects, and develop new or enhance existing programs for priority skills, with the objective of promoting improved learning environments and fostering better skills and innovation in the OECS region. Some of the regional initiatives financed under Component 1, such as the development of common learning standards, harmonized post-secondary teacher qualifications, and the use of KTIP for identifying potential innovation projects, will be piloted and implemented at the national level through Component 2. The component will be implemented by Project Implementation Units in Saint Lucia and Grenada. Most direct and indirect benefits of this Component will be regional, but some activities will accrue more benefits to national stakeholders. Component 3, Project Management and Technical Assistance, will provide technical assistance to support the implementation of Project activities and finance the establishment and functioning of three Project Implementation Units (PIUs). This component will strengthen selected aspects of the OECS' post-secondary education system's performance. Component 4 is a Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC). The CERC is designed as a mechanism for rapid response in the event of an eligible emergency, which can be activated upon request from the Government. This component does not have any initial funding allocation, but in the event of an emergency, uncommitted funds can be reallocated from other components in accordance with an Emergency Action Plan prepared by the Government and the CERC's implementation modalities.

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## D. Environmental and Social Overview

### D.1 Overview of Environmental and Social Project Settings

The project will be implemented by the OECS Commission, St. Lucia and Grenada. Direct beneficiaries are St. Lucia and Grenada, but activities implemented at the regional level will benefit other OECS countries. The OECS countries are particularly vulnerable to interconnected hazards exacerbated by climate change, such as extreme weather events and disease outbreaks. The Caribbean economy has stagnated over the past 2 years as a result of travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, investments in public services have fallen short as country budgets shrank causing investments in higher education and digital technology to decrease. This has created a gap in not only access to these types of technologies but also made students and faculty at local universities fall behind as compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world. The OECS spends 0.3% of its GDP on research and development (R&D) vs. 2 to 3% in developed economies. Colleges in the OECS invest limited resources in research and innovation, and the University of the West Indies remains the region's only significant source of academic research.

Learning levels in OECS countries are low, and skills shortages and mismatch are a major obstacle to growth. Fewer than 10 percent of all adults in the Eastern Caribbean have attained higher education, which is low for middle-income



countries. There is a considerable post-secondary education gender gap between men and women. Enrollment rates are systematically higher for women compared to men, with the gaps wider than the Latin America and Caribbean average. Female share of enrollment varies between 61% in St. Lucia and 70% in Saint Kitts and Nevis (SKN). Disability disaggregated data focused on accessibility and learning curriculum, does not exist.

The contribution of national colleges in the OECS to local development and innovation remains largely untapped and OECS National Colleges need to revamp their digital infrastructure to benefit from EdTech-enabled approaches. Most national colleges in the OECS have outdated laboratories and workshops and they need to improve their academic offer and engage more productively with local and regional actors, including employers. Thus, the proposed project aims to make strategic investments to help bridge this gap and bring higher learning institutions further along in their capacity to provide opportunities to their student body in emerging technologies. Component 1 will focus on regional activities to strengthen participation of post-secondary institutions in regional networks and innovation activities while Component 2 will focus on promoting regional academic excellence in post-secondary education in St Lucia and Grenada.

As the project focuses on improving youth skills proficiency and employability at the regional and national levels by fostering institutional strengthening and innovation in the OECS post-secondary space, infrastructure works will be limited. Under component 2, investments in minor rehabilitation works and purchase of equipment for the establishment of modern laboratories and workshops in national colleges will take place through Regional Enhancement Plans (REP) to National Colleges. The implementation of the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Platform (KTIP) to foster knowledge exchanges, networking and collaboration at the regional level as part of Component 1 will have positive outcomes.

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

The project will be implemented at the regional and national levels. Implementation of regional level activities will be carried out by a new Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within the OECS Commission’s Education Development Management Unit (EDMU). The OECS Commission has successfully implemented/is implementing several regional World Bank projects such as the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP-P159653) closed in 2021 and the OECS Regional Health Project (P168539) approved in 2020 under the World Bank Safeguards Policies, and the Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (CARDTP - P171528) approved in 2020 under the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). The implementation progress as well as E&S performance has been satisfactory for all projects.

The PIU will be established under the Commission’s Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) and will report directly to the EDMU’s director. The PIU will capitalize on the current existing capacity at the Commission’s Financial and Accounting Unit, Procurement Unit, Environmental Sustainability Unit and Human and Social Unit. It will include a core team of experts including social and environmental expertise. The OECS Commission already manages several WB projects and has two staff who have received ESF trainings. In addition, the WB is providing the OECS Commission with E&S Hands-on Implementation Support (HEIS). It is expected that the two E&S staff will be sufficient to address the E&S aspects of Component 1 which comprise technical assistance (TA) activities with little to no E&S risks. However, their capacity on E&S aspects will continue to be reviewed during project implementation and strengthening measures put in place as needed. Similar to other WB regional projects, the PIU at the OECS Commission will coordinate closely with the national ministries such as the Ministries of Education of the beneficiary countries, Country Project Management Units,



OECS National Colleges, and other relevant regional stakeholders to ensure coordination and smooth project implementation.

At the national level, PIUs will be established in Grenada and St Lucia. The OECS Commission, and governments of Grenada and St Lucia assigned Environmental and Social Focal Points during Project preparation. Given that the E&S risks are Low, the PIUs for Grenada and St. Lucia will not require dedicated Environmental and Social specialists. Instead, the PIU will be required to appoint a member of the PIU to fulfil the E&S Specialists roles, proportionate to the E&S risks. Prior to the appointment/designation of the environmental and social specialists across the PIUs being complete, the assigned E&S Focal Points shall continue to provide the necessary support on E&S risk management. The necessary capacity building measures, including staffing and training are set forth in the Project’s Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and will be reviewed and adjusted based on the Project’s E&S needs during implementation.

## II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

### A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Low

#### A.1 Environmental Risk Rating

Low

The environmental risk rating is Low. The project will not undertake any new construction and will finance mainly consultancy and non-consultancy services, goods and operational costs. The anticipated civil works will primarily consist of repair works to laboratories and workshops, and installation of modern laboratory equipment and digital hardware and software. The key potential environmental risks during the construction include pollution from the generation and disposal of electronic waste (e-waste) and other hazardous and non-hazardous waste; and noise, dust, and occupational health and safety (OHS) risks from civil works. The potential impacts would be very minor, temporary, short-term, and can be addressed with routine mitigation measures. To ensure safe operation of these labs and workshops, the Project will support the development of a regional template for the REPs which will cover environmental aspects of maintenance, sustainability, safety protocols for laboratories, disaster preparedness mechanisms among others. The environmental risk rating will be reviewed periodically throughout project implementation to ensure it continues to accurately reflect the level of risk.

#### A.2 Social Risk Rating

Low

The social risk rating for this project is expected to be LOW. The main social risks identified at this point in the project preparation are associated with: (1) managing expectations of project beneficiaries; (2) making sure there are enough resources to reach a large enough group of beneficiaries; (3) ensuring that the institutional arrangements between the OECS commission and respective country ministries have sufficient staff to carry out consultations and appropriate monitoring of environmental and social risks; (4) risk of grievances related to non-selection in trainings and skills events, or selection for the grants, not being promptly resolved, which could lead to discredit or disinterest in the initiatives; (5) risk associated with lack of transparency and timely provision of information about initiatives. The impacts of the project components are largely positive, providing a large beneficiary group (higher education students and faculty) with additional training, and other resources. These identified risks are low and manageable through adequate planning and other mitigation measures.

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

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## B.1 Relevance of Environmental and Social Standards

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

Relevant

The potential project risks consist of: (1) managing expectations of project beneficiaries; (2) ensuring institutional arrangements are clearly spelled out; (3) reaching enough beneficiaries; (4) the generation of e-waste; (5) occupational health and safety during refurbishment works; (5) lack of transparency and timely provision of information about initiatives, and scholarships; (6) pollution from hazardous and non-hazardous waste; (7) noise, dust, and OHS risks from civil works; and (8) safe operations of and waste management in the laboratories. Given that the above E&S risks are Low, the E&S risk management provisions will be documented in the Project Operations Manual (POM). The provisions will include, inter alia, an Environmental and Social Exclusion List, an Environmental and Social Screening Form, Environmental and Social Codes of Practice (ESCoP), a simplified Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) Template for activities that will require an ESMP following the results of the screening, and simplified Labor Management Procedures (LMP). The provisions will be in line with the WB Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines and relevant national requirements. The E&S provisions will be prepared during implementation and will be reviewed and cleared by the WB and thereafter included in the POM. This commitment will be captured in the ESCPs. During implementation when the detailed civil works have been identified, the PIUs will ensure that relevant E&S procedures are incorporated into bidding documents and into the contractors' standard operating procedures for civil works prior to starting works. Three draft ESCPs (one each for the OECS, St. Lucia and Grenada) and one draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) including the requirements for a project level Grievance Mechanism have been prepared as part of the appraisal package. Inputs gathered during in-country consultations during project implementation for each site will be incorporated into final version of the SEP before project activities begin. Project beneficiaries are regional post-secondary institutions' staff, faculty and students, and private sector actors. The activities under the components will take into consideration the social inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals such as single parent households, youth at risk, unemployed youth, elderly, women, the poor, people identifying as LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities. Capacity building for teachers, staff, and students will be inclusive and materials made available in languages appropriate to each country context. The Technical Assistance (TA) activities are not expected to generate environmental and social impacts. The requirements set out in paragraphs 14–18 of ESS1 will be applied to TA activities as relevant and appropriate to the nature of the risks and impacts. The terms of reference (TOR) for the activities and other documents defining the scope and outputs of TA activities will be reviewed by the World Bank so that the advice and other support provided are consistent with ESS 1–10 and duly incorporate relevant requirements of the ESSs. The proposed project has a Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) with zero allocation that can be activated to provide rapid access to Bank financing for immediate recovery needs during a crisis or emergency. A CERC Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) will be prepared as per the Bank's CERC Guidance (Oct. 2017), which will include potential activities that could be financed (positive list), a screening process for the potential activities, monitoring, capacity building measures that may be required, and institutional arrangements in case the CERC is activated. The CERC ESMF will be part of the CERC Manual which will be developed during implementation.

### ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Relevant

The main stakeholders are regional post-secondary institutions' staff, faculty, students and private sector actors. The Project's direct beneficiaries would include current and future students enrolled in participating countries' post-secondary institutions – these students will benefit from interventions to improve regional academic excellence,



networks, and innovation. The Project will also benefit teachers, counselors, and administrators of National Colleges and other post-secondary TVET institutions in participating countries, as well as training agencies, regulatory bodies, and social partners working on TVET as well as firms and employers who will benefit from technology transfer, research, and incubation support resulting from innovation activities financed by the Project. Finally, the Project will benefit post-secondary education in other OECS countries by developing mechanisms – e.g., standards and information systems’ architecture – that can be adopted or implemented by other countries. To mitigate risks related to inclusion the project has completed a draft SEP. The draft SEP outlines a) who the key stakeholders are; b) how they are to be engaged; c) how often the engagement will occur throughout the project; d) how feedback will be solicited, recorded and monitored over the project; e) who will be charged/responsible with this engagement; f) timeline for this engagement, and so on. The process of stakeholder engagement began during preparation and a draft SEP has already been completed. The draft SEP includes identification of risks and mitigations measures, identification of stakeholders and disadvantaged/vulnerable and a plan for engaging with those identified groups in both Grenada and St. Lucia. Initial consultations have already been held with a select number of stakeholders from March to June 2023. The SEP also includes a well designed GRM for the project that relies on existing systems within Saint Lucia and Grenada. The SEP also includes mitigation measures for SEA/SH reporting and management. The OECS Commission has existing mechanisms for SEA/SH and for project impact grievances used for all World Bank projects. The final SEP will be ready and disclosed during project implementation.

**ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions**

Relevant

ESS2 is relevant given the potential for hiring a small amount of laborers for different aspects of project implementation including basic repairs and rehabilitation of labs in St. Lucia and Grenada as well as the hiring of personnel for the OECS Commission PIU. It is expected there will be some government civil servants designated as focal points in each respective country working in connection with the project, whether full-time or part-time. Those workers will remain subject to the terms and conditions of their existing public-sector employment agreement or arrangement, unless there has been an effective legal transfer of their employment or engagement to the project. ESS2 will not apply to such government civil servants, except for the provisions of Protecting the Work Force (para 17-20) and OHS (para 24-30). The project does not intend to engage primary supplier workers or community workers. The WB team will review the specific HR processes and practices for the project in line with due requirements. This includes some requirements in the contracts for third party employers as well as the process for a grievance mechanism and OHS practices. In order to mitigate labor-related risks, the E&S provisions in the POM will include simplified LMP. The simplified LMP will include a worker’s level GRM, a code of conduct, contractor management procedures and OHS procedures.

**ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

Relevant

ESS3 is relevant. Some minor rehabilitation activities and purchase of equipment for the establishment of modern laboratories and workshops will take place. The rehabilitation activities may generate noise, dust, small quantities of hazardous waste including e-waste, and non-hazardous waste depending on the exact scope of works. However, these activities are expected to be minor and will occur within the footprint of existing colleges. The E&S provisions in the POM will include ESCoP, e-waste management measures, and other E&S measures to ensure that good construction practices are followed. The e-waste management guidelines will take into account the the World Bank’s EHS Guidelines and relevant national regulations. During operation, the standard operational procedures of the laboratories, their waste management procedure and training of the staff and students will be reviewed to ensure

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they are sufficient to manage operational E&S risks. Where possible, the REPs will support the development of more energy-efficient use of laboratories and equip students with skills on efficient management of waste and sustainable use of resources. Greenhouse gases (GHG) estimation will not be carried out since it will not be significant for the project.

**ESS4 - Community Health and Safety**

Relevant

ESS4 is relevant. The refurbishment works is expected to be small-scale that will not result in significant impacts and risks. Nevertheless, it may generate some levels of dust and noise, and may pose a risk to staff and students as well as workers. Thus, the E&S provisions will include OHS and community health and safety measures to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are in place, including signage and access control, dust control measures, and other measures, as appropriate. Safe working conditions within the labs including fire and life safety in the laboratories will be assessed during refurbishment as well as during lab operations. No community level workers are expected for this project.

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

Not Currently Relevant

Only minor physical works within existing buildings will take place, and there will be no land acquisition nor restrictions on use or access to land.

**ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**

Not Currently Relevant

All project activities will take place within existing footprints, and the project does not involve any greenfield or new construction activities; therefore, potential impacts and risks to biodiversity or natural habitats are not envisaged.

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

Not Currently Relevant

There are no groups/communities in St Lucia and Grenada, and the impacts of this project under the OECS Commission are not expected to reach the Indigenous Territory in Dominica.

**ESS8 - Cultural Heritage**

Not Currently Relevant

Civil works will be undertaken in existing modern public buildings hence impacts to tangible and intangible cultural heritage are not anticipated. Any activity that may affect historical buildings in St Lucia and Grenada will be excluded from financing.

**ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries**

Not Currently Relevant

Project will not support FIs.

**B.2 Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

**OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways**

No

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**OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas**

No

**B.3 Other Salient Features**

**Use of Borrower Framework**

No

None

**Use of Common Approach**

No

None

**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 implementation?**

Draft environmental and social risk management provisions have been prepared and they will be finalized during implementation and documented in the Project Operations Manual (POM). The provisions will include, inter alia, an Environmental and Social Exclusion List, an Environmental and Social Screening Form, Environmental and Social Codes of Practice (ESCoP), a simplified Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) Template for activities that will require an ESMP following the results of the screening, and simplified Labor Management Procedures (LMP). The provisions will be in line with the WB Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines and relevant national requirements.

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**III. CONTACT POINT**

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**IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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**V. APPROVAL**

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