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# Project Information Document (PID)

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Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 02-Oct-2023 | Report No: PIDA0174



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Region	Operation ID	Operation Name
Grenada, St. Lucia	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	P179210	OECS- Skills and Innovation Project
Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Approval Date	Practice Area (Lead)
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	16-Oct-2023	30-Nov-2023	Education
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency		
Grenada, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, Grenada		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

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.

**Components**

- C1. Fostering regional collaboration for skills and innovation in the post-secondary space
- C2. Strengthening post-secondary institutions and collaborative innovation
- C3. Project Management and Technical Assistance
- C4. Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**

**Maximizing Finance for Development**

**Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?**

**Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Operation Cost</b>	<b>36.00</b>
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>36.00</b>



of which IBRD/IDA	36.00
Financing Gap	0.00

**DETAILS**

**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	36.00
IDA Credit	30.00
IDA Grant	6.00

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Low

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

**The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean.**<sup>1</sup> The OECS, established in 1981 through the Treaty of Basseterre, aims to drive and support sustainable development through regional integration, collective action, and development cooperation. Member States of this economic union are meant to adopt a common approach to trade, health, education, and the environment.<sup>2</sup> All factors of production, including people, are able to move freely throughout the Economic Union Area.<sup>3</sup> Grenada and Saint Lucia, the two countries participating in this regional Project, are part of the seven founding members of the OECS. The two countries have a combined population of 297,416, which places them among the smallest countries

<sup>1</sup> The protocol members, who include the seven founding members, are Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. They enjoy full membership. Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Martinique, and Guadeloupe are associate members.

<sup>2</sup> Mission statement available on OECS' website: <https://www.oecs.org/en/who-we-are/about-us>

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Union Area includes comprises seven (7) Protocol Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



in the world in terms of land area, population, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Eastern Caribbean countries face several key challenges, including vulnerabilities to external shocks, low growth, and high poverty rates.<sup>4</sup>

**The Eastern Caribbean region is particularly vulnerable to interconnected hazards exacerbated by climate change, such as extreme weather events and disease outbreaks.** The effects of climate change in this region will likely result in higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, and increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters. Vulnerability to natural disasters is one of the Caribbean states' main economic challenges.<sup>5</sup> In particular, hurricanes pose significant destructive potential due to high wind speeds, heavy rains, and powerful storm surges that produce flooding, which may increase the threat of vector-borne diseases. In the Caribbean region, annual losses from hurricanes alone amount to US\$835 million.<sup>6</sup>

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**Youth unemployment rates in the region are generally high and linked to other developmental issues such as youth violence.** Saint Lucia and Grenada have the highest levels of youth unemployment in the OECS region. In the years preceding the pandemic, over 40 percent of youth (15 to 24 years old) faced unemployment, with women being disproportionately affected.<sup>7</sup> These figures increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The relatively high unemployment rates of even highly educated youth point to skills mismatches. During the pandemic, youth with higher education were less likely to become unemployed, demonstrating the protective effect of education during shocks.<sup>8</sup> Still, youth with completed tertiary education in the OECS are less likely to be employed compared to their peers in LAC, potentially indicating skills mismatches.<sup>9</sup>

**The region's productivity and, in the long run, its growth are negatively impacted by skills shortages, notably in areas of transversal competencies.** There is significant evidence of skills shortages in OECS countries, with firms in Grenada identifying an inadequately educated workforce as the second-biggest obstacle to doing business,<sup>10</sup> and almost 40 percent of firms in Saint Lucia seeing the current level of workers' skills and education as a significant hindrance to competitiveness.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, about 57 percent of all workers in Saint Lucia in 2019 were underqualified for their jobs.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, employers also note that transversal skills are missing from graduates.

**Increased investment to address the low levels of research and development and innovation in OECS countries should be preceded by investment in technology adoptions and improvement in managerial practices of firms to prepare them to benefit most from collaboration with post-secondary institutions.** Only 2.7 percent of firms in Grenada and 3.2 percent of firms in Saint Lucia have a department or group of professionals dedicated to research and development. Collaboration between the private sector and National Colleges appears to be limited and inconsistent,<sup>31</sup> which hinders the firms' capacity to find the necessary skills and maximize their innovative potential. Interactions are often limited to

<sup>4</sup> Although only two of the OECS member countries will participate in the OECS Skills and Innovation Project, other member states will benefit from regional activities.

<sup>5</sup> IMF (2022), "Fiscal Rules in Disaster-Prone Countries: Implications for the ECCU."

<sup>6</sup> GFDRR (2015) Small Island States Resilience Initiative. Washington, DC: Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

<sup>7</sup> Data is for 2013-2016, cited in WB OECS Systematic Regional Diagnostics (2018), p. 65, Figure 5-8.

<sup>8</sup> In Saint Lucia, 12.5 percent of those with tertiary education lost their jobs during the pandemic, but nearly twice as many (22.7 percent) of those with less than tertiary education did, according to the World Bank's COVID-19 High-Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS).

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2018). Organization of Eastern Caribbean States System Regional Diagnostic. Report Number: 127046-LAC. June, 27, page 65.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank Enterprise Surveys, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> The 2018 Investment Climate Assessment Survey and Report for Saint Lucia. Preville & Associates Consulting Group (Saint Lucia) Limited. Submitted November 15, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> ILO Data, Labor Force Surveys.



apprenticeships, internships, joint seminars, and part-time teaching roles, and do not include direct private sector contributions to curricula, through research contracts or technology extension services, and joint research projects, joint intellectual property initiatives, and joint publications are scarce.<sup>32</sup>

**Learning levels in OECS countries are generally low, with boys being at a particular risk of not acquiring the essential foundational skills.** While the region performs well on several human development dimensions, human capital accumulation is quite constrained. The Human Capital Index (HCI) estimates that a child born in the Eastern Caribbean will be 53 to 60 percent as productive as they could be if they had enjoyed full education, health, and nutrition.<sup>13</sup> This is to a large extent due to low quality of education.<sup>14</sup> There are also significant gender gaps in both learning and schooling, with boys completing almost half a year less of education and attaining lower scores on learning assessments.<sup>15</sup> The learning crisis has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with simulations for Grenada forecasting learning losses of 1.7 learning-adjusted years of schooling (from 8.3 to 6.6).<sup>16</sup>

**Low participation in post-secondary education, especially among men, contributes to shortages of skilled workers.** Fewer than 10 percent of all adults in the Eastern Caribbean have completed tertiary education, which is low for middle-income countries.<sup>17</sup> The quality of post-secondary educational programs suffers from inadequate investment and limited capacity, at both institutional and regional levels. The OECS region lacks a comprehensive regional strategic vision to effectively tackle these challenges in post-secondary education and promote economic integration and prosperity among OECS Member States. Additionally, there are no regional standards and learning assessment frameworks for in-demand transversal skills. Similarly, regional standards for teachers' qualifications and performance assessment have been developed for basic education but not for post-secondary education. Finally, there are no mechanisms for regular collaboration for post-secondary faculty and students across the OECS region.

**Sporadic engagement with private sector stakeholders in the OECS region and beyond impedes relevance of post-secondary education programs.** Focus group discussions with the faculty of National Colleges and private sector representatives in both Saint Lucia and Grenada revealed a lack of a partnership culture between post-secondary institutions and firms in these two countries, beyond firms sometimes providing internships to post-secondary students. Private sector stakeholders expressed concerns with the preparedness of post-secondary graduates to enter the local labor market, while college faculty did not engage the private sector on innovation projects that they and their students were working on. Enhancing quality and relevance of post-secondary education requires robust information systems, which currently vary by institution and do not provide regular information on graduates' labor market outcomes.

**Given the small size of OECS economies, the limited fiscal space, and OECS' mandate, strategic actions at the regional level can improve the acquisition of transversal and advanced technical skills by the OECS workforce.** Taking a regional approach can allow OECS Member States to achieve more results with fewer resources, especially through leveraging economies of scale, such as when institutions (and countries) specialize in training for certain education fields that are of

<sup>13</sup> The figures for Grenada and Saint Lucia are 57 percent and 60 percent, respectively. World Bank. 2020. The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human Capital in the Time of COVID-19. World Bank, Washington, DC.

<sup>14</sup> The Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling indicator in the HCI shows that students in OECS countries who complete the expected 12 or 13 years of schooling only acquire the equivalent to approximately 8 years of instruction in a country with a high-performing education system.

<sup>15</sup> More girls in the OECS participate in the high stakes CSEC exam and they are more likely to attain passing grades, according to the CXC 2021 Annual report.

<sup>16</sup> Based on an intermediate scenario regarding the length of school closures and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. World Bank estimates based on Azevedo, J.P.; Akmal, M.; Cloutier, M.H.; and Wong, Y.N. (2022). "COVID-19 Learning Loss Simulations: Global Update". Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group. Unpublished Manuscript, published in World Bank (2022), Two Years After: Saving a Generation. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>17</sup> OECS, Education Strategy [2012, updated in 2020], p.22.



common interest and with high value-added potential, but also with high input costs. Besides the purely economic motive, greater convergence in policy and practice across the OECS can help improve student and institutional outcomes and empower students with a sense of regional identity, including a shared understanding of the history and heritage of the region. Finally, active sharing of knowledge and experience between OECS post-secondary institutions can generate innovative solutions and improved implementation of programs and reforms. This Project will support the OECS' vision for education by developing a shared approach to post-secondary education in the region and strengthening collaboration at the regional level and among Member States.

**Similarly, a collaborative regional approach in the OECS is critical to maximize investments in the improvement of the innovation ecosystem.** Regional integration and connectivity could enable cost sharing and risk pooling, and economies of scale can facilitate strong growth and job creation in key sectors. The freedom of movement of OECS citizens within the region, coupled with innovation programs that aim to resolve shared challenges through transnational approaches, could facilitate the increase of innovative productivity throughout the region, and help develop solutions to shared challenges, such as the threats posed by climate change. Measures to strengthen the innovation ecosystem at both the national and regional levels can build on efforts and structures supported by the OECS to achieve the objectives of regional cooperation and collaboration.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

#### Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

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.

#### Key Results

Achievement of the PDO will be monitored and measured through the following indicators:

- i. Enhance skills: Number of students graduating from enhanced programs in selected post-secondary institutions, disaggregated by sex.<sup>18</sup>
- ii. Foster regional collaboration: Common learning standards for priority skills endorsed by OECS Member States.
- iii. Foster regional collaboration: Increased participation of non-nationals from OECS in student and/or teacher exchanges in supported post-secondary institutions.
- iv. Foster collaborative innovation:<sup>19</sup> Number of innovations adopted by entrepreneurs as a result of collaboration with post-secondary education institutions.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Enhanced programs refer to programs revised or developed under the Project according to existing standards for advanced technical skills, and/or to the new standards developed under subcomponent 1.1 for transversal skills, and/or improved teaching through integration of transversal skills in pedagogical practices. Learning assessments developed under subcomponent 1.1 will allow monitoring of these skills, but these outcomes will not be used as a PDO Indicator as they will only be implemented in year 3 of the Project, and first results will be available in year 4.

<sup>19</sup> Collaborative innovation is defined as innovation resulting from collaboration between entrepreneurs or private sector firms and post-secondary institutions.

<sup>20</sup> Innovation is defined as per the Oslo Manual, 2018, OECD, Guidelines for Collecting, Reporting and Using Data on Innovation, as «a new or improved product or process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the unit's previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process). This definition uses the generic term "unit" to describe the actor responsible for innovations. It refers to any institutional unit in any sector, including households and their individual members».



## D. Project Description

### **Component 1: Fostering regional collaboration for skills and innovation in the post-secondary space (US\$4.8 million).**

Currently, there is a lack of a common vision and collaboration mechanisms for post-secondary education. OECS post-secondary institutions are not exploiting the opportunities that can arise from regional collaboration and harmonization. To start reaping these potential rewards, Component 1 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 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 and collaborative innovation (US\$27 million).**

Component 2 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 most benefits to national stakeholders.<sup>21</sup>

### **Component 3: Project Management and Technical Assistance (Estimated amount: US\$4.2 million).**

Component 3 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: Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) (US\$0 million).**

Due to the OECS' high vulnerability to natural disasters, including those exacerbated by climate change, and its vulnerability to global shocks, as exposed by the COVID-19 crisis, a CERC is included in the Project. This Component will facilitate the use of critical resources in the event of an eligible national emergency. It will have an initial zero budget allocation but would allow for rapid reallocation of project funds in the event of an eligible natural disaster or crisis that has caused or is likely to imminently cause major adverse economic and/or social impacts. To trigger the use of the CERC, the Government would provide a pre-specified trigger according to national legislation, such as a Declaration of National Emergency. This component could also be used to channel any additional funds that may become available due to the crisis. A specific Emergency Response Operations Manual will be prepared for this component, detailing financial management (FM) and procurement aspects, environmental and social aspects, and any other necessary implementation arrangements. In case of an event triggering the component, a reallocation of funds would be introduced to loan disbursement categories to fund the proposed activities under this component. The implementation agency for this CERC would be determined in accordance with a Contingent Emergency Response Manual to be prepared and adopted by the GoE. Activation of the CERC would involve: (i) a government request submitted by the Ministry of Economy and Finance to the Bank for support of an eligible event through the CERC; and (ii) the preparation of an acceptable Emergency Action Plan for the use of the CERC funds that must

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<sup>21</sup> The total financing for the Project from the IDA20 Regional Window includes the small-state provision regarding the 20 percent cap on the country allocation to operations supported by the Regional Window in a financial year (IDA20 Regional Window guidelines, para. 9(b)(i)).



be approved by the Bank.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Environmental risk is classified as low. The project will not undertake any new construction and will finance mainly consultancy and non-consultancy services, goods and operational costs. Potential source of environmental risk may be the generation and disposal of electronic waste (e-waste) such as related to the procurement of digital technologies including simulators that use Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality and hardware and software acquisition. In addition, rehabilitation of laboratories in colleges could include repairs to windows, painting and possibly electrical wiring. The potential environmental, health and safety impacts (e.g., noise, dust, occupational health and safety, hazardous and non-hazardous waste, among others) related to the works would not be significant and likely to be short-term and minor that can be managed through standard mitigation measures and good international industry practice (GIIP) as delineated in the WB Group General Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines. During operation, the standard operational procedure (SOP) of the laboratories, their waste management procedure and training of the staff and students will be reviewed. The potential environmental, health and safety risks; safe operations within the labs and disposal of lab waste; and lack of experience of the Borrower with the ESF contributes to the risk classification. The Social Risk Rating is considered Low. The Project will largely have a positive social impact on students, teachers, and managers of OECS's post-secondary education system. Investments in research, incubation, and innovation will have positive effects in employment creation and business development. The project will have minor rehabilitation of university laboratories and there will be no land acquisition. Rehabilitation activities and small repairs will be financed as part of Component 2. 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 competitive 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, and scholarships. These risks can be managed through adequate planning and other mitigation measures. Five Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) are applicable (ESS1,2,3,4 and 10). To address the potential environmental and social risks and impacts, during preparation by appraisal, the borrower shall develop and disclose for purposes of public consultations draft of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and as well as agree with the World Bank an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).





## E. Implementation

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

**Implementation of regional level activities will be carried out by a project management team within the OECS, which is an administrative structure of the OECS.** The OECS is administered by a central Secretariat headed by a Director General. Several institutions have been created within the OECS, including the OECS Authority, an Economic Affairs Council, a Council of Ministers, an OECS Assembly, and the OECS. The OECS is the administrative arm of the OECS.

**The OECS has the fiduciary capacity to implement grant funding.** In the past, the OECS successfully utilized PIUs to implement Bank-financed operations. A project management team will be established, with technical staff from the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU), Competitive Business Unit, and fiduciary staff. The team will report directly to the EDMU's director. The project team will include a core team of experts (Project manager, assistant project manager, procurement specialist, financial specialist, social and environmental specialist, and M&E specialist) and other specialized professionals in the areas of private sector development and innovation, information systems, post-secondary education, laboratory equipment, and EdTech, as needed. Staff will be hired (part or full time depending on the needs) if the budget for the Project allows. The PIU will coordinate closely with Ministries of Education of participating countries, Country Project Management Units, OECS National Colleges, other selected post-secondary institutions, and other relevant regional stakeholders (such as the CXC, the University of the West Indies, and Chambers of Commerce) to ensure coordination and smooth project implementation. The SEP defines arrangements to engage key partners in post-secondary institutions, relevant regional institutions, and industry. Roles, responsibilities, and communication channels among the Project's main stakeholders will be further defined in the Project Operations Manual.

**Component 2 activities will require country-level implementation arrangements.** These arrangements will seek to build on existing project implementation experience and capacities within the Ministries of Education and centralized fiduciary functions housed within Ministries of Finance. Arrangements by country are described below.

- i. **Saint Lucia.** A new PIU will be established within the Ministry of Education, given capacity constraints of existing PIUs and the cross-sectoral nature of the Project. The team will include (i) a Project manager; (ii) a private sector development specialist; (iii) a financial management (FM) specialist; (iv) a procurement specialist; (v) an E&S specialist; and (vi) an administrative secretary. Terms of reference for these positions will be prepared during Project preparation.
- ii. **Grenada.** A new PIU will be established within the Ministry of Education, led by a National Project Coordinator. Private Sector Development functions will be carried out by a Private Sector Development Specialist at the country PIU. Fiduciary functions will be centralized at the Ministry of Finance. E&S management will benefit from inputs from the Ministry of Environment, but will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Terms of reference for key positions will be prepared during Project preparation.

**The roles and responsibilities of the regional and national PIUs will include:** (i) developing and implementing annual activity plans, budgets, and procurement plans; (ii) coordinating implementation with different stakeholders to ensure time-bound attainment of agreed targets; (iii) tracking and reporting on the Project's fiduciary aspects, including FM, procurement, and E&S requirements, and coordinating external audits; (iv) reporting on M&E activities and updating the Project's results framework; (v) engaging with key stakeholders on Project progress and outcomes; (vi) coordinating with the World Bank on project implementation; and (vii) reporting to the Bank through Quarterly Progress Reports.



**A Regional Steering Committee (RSC) will oversee the implementation of regional activities.** The RSC will be chaired by the OECSC, and comprise representatives from the Ministries of Education, Ministry of Mobilization, Implementation and Transformation of Grenada, Ministries of Commerce, Ministries of Agriculture, Chambers of Commerce, Principals of OECS National Colleges, and leaders of other selected post-secondary institutions in Saint Lucia and Grenada, among others. Experts will also be invited to specific sessions of the RSC, as needed, to provide technical guidance.

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**APPROVAL**

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Practice Manager/Manager:		
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Country Director:	Ricardo Alfredo Habalian	03-Oct-2023
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