



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(**ESRS Concept Stage**)

Date Prepared/Updated: 12/11/2023 | Report No: ESRSC04005



I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Operation Data

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Operation ID | Product | Operation Acronym | Approval Fiscal Year |
| P181118 | Investment Project Financing (IPF) | ISTLES | 2025 |
| Operation Name | Improving the Sustainability and Transparency of the Lebanese Education Sector | | |
| Country/Region Code | Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient) | Region | Practice Area (Lead) |
| Lebanon | Lebanon | MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | Education |
| Borrower(s) | Implementing Agency(ies) | Estimated Appraisal Date | Estimated Board Date |
| Republic of Lebanon | Ministry of Education and Higher Education | 30-Apr-2024 | 28-Aug-2024 |
| Estimated Concept Review Date | Total Project Cost | | |
| 24-Jul-2023 | 150,000,000.00 | | |

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Proposed Development Objective

Increase the sustainability and transparency of the Lebanese education sector while strengthening the quality of education.

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 objective of the proposed project is to increase sustainability and transparency of the Lebanese education sector while strengthening the quality of education to ensure that all children have consistent access to quality education. The proposed project consists of two components. The first component of the project, focused on increasing sector sustainability and transparency, will aim to improve public school teacher utilization and deployment, improve data systems, and improve financial management within the sector, and strengthen effective governance of the Lebanese



University. The second component of the project, focused on improving the quality of education inputs, will aim to support the revision and roll out of the national curriculum (last updated in 1996), provide opportunities for additional instructional time for learning recovery, and maintain learning assessments.

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 will be implemented at the national level. The project will expand access to and quality of education service delivery and expand economic opportunities and increase human capital development. The project will support MEHE to achieve its 5-Year Plan and MEHE's Learning Recovery Strategy which includes three pillars: Pillar 1 is focused on equitable access to and participation in education; Pillar 2 is focused on improved quality of education and higher learning outcomes for all students and strengthening citizenship; and Pillar 3 is focused on system-strengthening and governance. MEHE's Learning Recovery Strategy focuses on providing girls and boys from preschool to secondary with skills (foundational literacy and numeracy), social-emotional learning, and psychosocial support in addition to academic support aligned with expected mastery of the curriculum, with interventions at the level of the learner, educator/teacher/counselor, and administration.

Lebanon is divided into four distinct physiographic regions: the coastal plain in the west, the Lebanon mountain range in the middle, the Beqaa valley in the east, and the Anti-Lebanon mountains in the far east near the borders with Syria. Large socio-economic disparities exist in the country, with the North and Bekaa governorates having the poorest populations and lowest socioeconomic indicators. According to the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) of Lebanon (World Bank, May 2022), across the eight governorates, Akkar and Bekaa are the poorest, with approximately a third of Lebanon's MPI-poor residing in Mount Lebanon where about 41% of the population of Lebanon reside. The economic crisis has increased the poverty rate, which reached 82% in 2021, up from 45% in 2019, 30% in 2018, and 27.4% in 2011–2012. Vulnerable Lebanese households face challenges accessing food, healthcare, education, and other basic services. Moreover, Lebanese public schools have been facing significant disruptions since 2019 due to

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 MEHE will be the implementing agency for the overall project which has previous yet limited knowledge of the Bank's environmental and social requirements through the previous RACE2 PforR project. However, this will be MEHE's first project under the ESF and thus the MEHE will need to recruit an E&S specialist who has knowledge and experience on the World Bank's ESF and ESSs requirements and who will need to be recruited prior to the commencement of project activities as per the provisions of the ESCP. The Bank team will also provide support and capacity building as needed throughout the project life cycle. In addition, the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) (which is an independent public institution directly linked to the Minister of Education and Higher Education) in close collaboration with designated departments at MEHE will implement and oversee the delivery of component 2 of the project. CERD has no previous experience with the Bank's ESF hence will need to ensure full coordination with the



MEHE PIU E&S specialist and will ensure implementation of the E&S instruments. The MEHE will prepare a SEP, ESCP, and LMP which will be cleared and disclosed prior to the appraisal stage. The E&S instruments will need to be adopted by CERD who will be implementing component 2 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

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]

There are no significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the project. The project does not include any physical work. The project could have positive impacts through increased sector sustainability and transparency, and improve the efficiency of teacher utilization by strengthening the mechanisms of both teacher demand identification and deployment across public schools in Lebanon, incentivize the development and execution of a process to consolidate underutilized schools to strengthen the education system’s efficiency, strengthen planning and budgeting processes, support MEHE in developing an EMIS that allows for comprehensive, timely, and reliable education sector data collection, validation, analysis, dissemination, and utilization, to increase institutional autonomy at the Lebanese University, and increase the quality of education inputs. The project activities may result in some community and occupational health and safety risks, in particular, exposure to communicable diseases such as covid-19 at training events or in an office environment. The other expected environmental impacts associated with the installation and use of electronics are waste at the end of experiments and the end life of equipment, their management, and disposal, in addition to non-hazardous waste, especially papers from workshops, training, and meetings throughout the project. Consequently, the environmental risk rating is estimated to be moderate.

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 project is associated predominantly with positive social impacts as it aims to strengthen the quality of education in Lebanon while increasing sustainability and transparency. In this regard and based on the project indicators and project components, it will increase the student-teacher ratio, improve the capacity of teachers based on a new curriculum that will be rolled out, ensure continuous education is delivered to students for at least a period of 3 years and with minimal interruptions, improve key education data reliability which will become accessible to policymakers and other stakeholders for planning and improving the education sector through the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The project activities will also support MEHE in providing additional learning opportunities targeted at the lowest-performing students and schools. Adverse social risks and impacts are associated predominantly with the risk of exclusion of lowest-performing students and schools especially in the more marginalized and poorer areas of Lebanon, the risk of poor and ineffective communication and engagement with key identified stakeholders throughout project life cycle, and the risk of a weak functioning grievance mechanism which has not been adequately and widely disseminated to reach all stakeholders (lower risk due to existing and functioning GM at MEHE further strengthened under the RACE project and which is accessible to all schools nationwide).

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[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]

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 is expected not to result in irreversible E&S impacts. The project does not involve infrastructure or civil work. The project could have positive impacts by supporting increased sector sustainability and transparency through improved teacher utilization, improve data systems, improve financial management, strengthening effective university governance, and improving the quality of education inputs through support of curriculum revision and roll-out, expanding access to remedial education. It is expected that the above interventions will have limited E&S risks and minor adverse impacts as mentioned in the ESRC section above. The anticipated occupational and community health risks associated with the IT hardware, software, and the engagement with the various stakeholders to build the capacity and technical assistance that might result in spreading communicable diseases such as COVID-19, especially these times were Lebanon faces the Cholera epidemic. Other community health and

ESS10 - Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure Relevant

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

As per ESS10, the project stakeholders are divided into 3 categories including the affected persons such as the teachers and school principles who will be benefiting from the project activities and namely the trainings and capacity building activities under component 2, the Lebanese University where a University Council will be established with the legal authority for decision-making under component 1, MEHE, CERD and Regional Education Offices (REOs) who will be furnished with necessary IT equipment such as software and hardware including servers, computers, routers under component 1, MEHE who will be provided with technical assistance to strengthen their planning and budgeting processes, and Department of Orientation and Guidance (DOPS) which will be involved in the trainings under component 2 of the project. Other interested parties include teachers unions, parents committee which are officially selected nationwide and which represent students in all school grades, CSOs, educators, p

ESS2 - Labor and Working Conditions Relevant

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

The project will include government civil servants at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and CERD will be members of the project implementation teams under both components 1 and 2 of the project. ESS2 will not apply to such government civil servants, except for the provisions of paragraphs 17 to 20 (Protecting the Work Force) and paragraphs 24 to 30 (Occupational Health and Safety). The project will include direct workers who will be comprised of the consultants of the project management unit at MEHE. The project will also include contracted

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workers who will install the IT hardware and software at the MEHE, CERD and REO. Moreover, the project will include primary supply workers who will provide goods and materials required for the IT hardware and software. As per the PCN, the project is envisaged to finance activities such as conducting a school census, a communication campaign with key stakeholders explaining inter alia the rationale behind new teacher policies, st

ESS3 - Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

Relevant

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

This standard is relevant as the project electronic devices, materials, and basic supplies for both components 1& 2. These materials and supplies will generate some e-waste, paper, and other waste of domestic nature in addition to consumed communicable diseases PPEs such as Covid-19 and Cholera. The anticipated environmental impacts associated with the project activities are likely to be limited. However, the implementing agencies need to address the e-waste and consumed PPEs, and other domestic waste especially paper waste in an appropriate manner, relative to their management and disposal. The IA will also promote resource efficiency tools during capacity building and training. The potential issues related to the project components such as water consumption, energy efficiency will be mitigated through a proportionate mitigation measures that will be designed in the relative sections of ESCP reduce energy consumed by electronic devices and subsequently eliminate the EHS impacts, while

ESS4 - Community Health and Safety

Relevant

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

The relevance of ESS4 is mainly from risks of exposure to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases for project workers and beneficiaries during the training programs, workshops, meetings with stakeholders, etc. To mitigate these risks, the project will follow the precautions and measures in accordance with the MoPH and the World Health Organization WHO recommendations. The project will provide adequate facilities and PPEs to the project workers and beneficiaries as appropriate. These measures will be described in the LMP that will be prepared and disclosed prior to project appraisal. A SEA/SH Action Plan will be prepared for the project to address risks in a way that is commensurate to the Substantial-risk level and will include inter alia the need to have a code of conduct for all staff involved in the project, training/awareness-raising of SEA/SH for all project workers, and a GM channel for SEA/SH grievances. No new infrastructure is being constructed under the project, however, ac

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

Not Currently Relevant

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

This ESS is not relevant. The project will not support activities that require land acquisition or land use restrictions.

ESS6 - Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Not Currently Relevant

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

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This ESS is not relevant at this stage as the project will not support rehabilitation, construction activities, civil works, or procurement of major equipment and accordingly will not result in any risks or impacts to biodiversity or living natural resources.

ESS7 - Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities Not Currently Relevant

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

There are no Indigenous peoples as defined under this standard in the project area, and therefore this ESS is not considered relevant to the project.

ESS8 - Cultural Heritage Not Currently Relevant

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

This ESS is not relevant at this stage as the project will not support activities that might affect cultural heritage.

ESS9 - Financial Intermediaries Not Currently Relevant

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

Not relevant at this stage.

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]

“Use of Borrower Framework” is NOT considered under this project.

Use of Common Approach No

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

“Use of Borrower Framework” is NOT considered under this project.

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

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[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 project has limited environmental impacts. There are no significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the project. Adverse social risks and impacts are associated predominantly with the risk of exclusion of lowest-performing students and schools especially in the more marginalized and poorer areas of Lebanon, and the risk of poor and ineffective communication and engagement with key identified stakeholders throughout project life cycle. Other adverse social risks include potential SEA/SH since schools in the project community do not have protocols to refer teachers/ students affected by GBV to services and there are no institutional Codes of Conduct (CoCs) or rules of engagement (or any form of protocol) for teachers and administrative staff.

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]

The MEHE PIU will prepare the following instruments which will be cleared and disclosed prior to appraisal:

- A waste management plan (WMP) including measures to address e-waste and solid waste management procedures;
- A stand-alone Labor Management Procedures (LMP)
- A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) as a stand-alone document to cover all stakeholders’ aspects in line with ESS10
- An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be prepared and agreed on with the Bank

All the instruments noted above will need to be implemented by the borrower to address any impacts and risks which might result from project activities and to suggest the proportionate mitigation measures through integrated environmental and social management and monitoring plans, in addition to establish a project implementation unit (PIU) with an environmental and social specialist. The ESCP will also include provisions for the preparation of a SEA/SH Action Plan before commencement of project activities and periodic progress reporting on the E&S aspects.

III. CONTACT POINT

Contact Point

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IV. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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V. APPROVAL

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
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| ADM Social Specialist: | Noushig Chahe Kaloustian |