

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	NICARAGUA/CID - Isthmus & DR
▪ TC Name:	Enabling environment for the diversification of school lunches
▪ TC Number:	NI-T1330
▪ Team Leader/Members:	NASLUND-HADLEY, EMMA INGRID (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; LE POMMELLE, MARION (CSD/RND) Alternate Team Leader; SELVA DELGADO, ALMA REYNA (CID/CNI); OLIVARES GRETA (SCL/EDU); LOPEZ GELB LOREN VIVIANA (SCL/EDU); SUAREZ SANDOVAL, ANDRES FABIAN (VPC/FMP); LANDAZURI-LEVEY, MARIA C. (LEG/SGO); BLASCO, IVANA (SCL/EDU); CANETE ROMERO, SHIRLEY MARGARITA (CID/CNI)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	16 May 2024
▪ Beneficiary:	MINED
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$400,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$0.00
▪ Disbursement period:	24 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality ; Productivity and innovation ; Indigenous People; Gender equality; Diversity

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The objective of this TC is to improve the supply chain and distribution model of the Nicaragua Comprehensive School Nutrition Program (PINE) through a pilot program to diversify school lunches.
- 2.2 The proposed TC is justified by a combination of socio-economic, environmental, and nutritional reasons. First, the Nicaragua Comprehensive School Nutrition Program (PINE) predominantly relies on large agricultural companies for the provision of food. This reliance on larger entities limits the diversity, local sourcing, and community engagement of the program. Small food producers have difficult access to markets, and school cafeterias represent a local market currently untapped by local producers. By connecting small local farmers to the school-feeding market, the TC creates opportunities for income generation. Increased market access can lead to higher revenues, contributing to economic stability at the individual and community levels. This shift represents an opportunity to create a more inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven school feeding program that aligns with broader goals of economic development and food security. Second, the World Food Program (WFP) has detected inefficiencies in the PINE food transportation and distribution chain with an additional cost of approximately 20%. Food is transported from rural areas to central warehouses around Managua and then back to schools across the country. Research suggests that it is more cost efficient

and environmentally sustainable to deliver food directly to schools by purchasing from local producers (FAO, 2014; IDB-WFP, 2023). By encouraging local production and consumption, the project may help reduce the carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation of food items. Third, school feeding programs is among the most important policies to improve the nutritional status of children. In Nicaragua, PINE is universal for all public and subsidized schools (98.5%), from preschool through secondary education, mobilizing 28,000-30,000 parents who, prepare lunches daily for 1.2 million students in 12,000 schools. For many children, the lunch represents the only food of the day (WFP, 2018). In spite of PINE, the prevalence of anemia in students aged 6 to 14 years is high. The IDB with the Ministries of Health and Education have carried out representative surveys with students from two of Nicaragua's most vulnerable geographical areas, finding that the prevalence of anemia among children of primary school age in the Dry Corridor region (20.1%) reaching the levels of countries with low socioeconomic status, such as Africa and Asia. Children aged 6 to 14 years in the Caribbean Coast region doubles the levels of Anemia observed in these countries (43.9%) (Näslund-Hadley, Zanoni and Alonzo, 2024). The same study concludes that the health and nutrition of students could be improved by diversifying school lunches to include more protein, fruit, and vegetables. Introducing locally sourced, nutritious foods into school feeding programs enhances the diversity and nutritional quality of students' diets. This can have long-term benefits on children's health, cognitive development, and overall well-being.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Diversification of School Lunches Pilot.** This component will finance a pilot program to diversify school feeding through fresh produce (e.g. proteins, vitamins, and fibers) from local producers, which covers nutritional requirements, establishing supply chains that connect farmers with PINE. The diversification of school lunches will be conducted through the introduction of non-perishable fresh produce and animal protein to complement dry produce already supplied by PINE.
- 3.2 **Component II: Capacity Building to Access School Lunch Market.** The aim of this component is to support the insertion of local food producers into the school feeding logistics chain which will strengthen small producers/farmers' ability to increase their production in an environmentally sustainable manner. This will also strengthen the capacity of the local and national government to develop and implement sustainable agricultural plans that emphasize the promotion of public goods, such as school feeding.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Diversification of School Lunches Pilot	US\$200,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$200,000.00
Capacity Building to Access School Lunch Market	US\$200,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$200,000.00
Total	US\$400,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$400,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Education Division (SCL/EDU) in collaboration with the country office (CID/CNI) will execute this TC. The Team Leader from SCL/EDU in collaboration with the project team from CID/CNI will

carry out the supervision and monitoring of project implementation through biweekly meetings with MINED, the WFP, and INTA.

- 5.2 The Government has informally requested that the IDB execute the TC due to its long trajectory in education evaluations and history with the program (a formal request is forthcoming). This is consistent with Appendix 10 in the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperations (as modified Annex 2 of OP-619-4), which identifies the need of a strong institutional, operational, and technical capacity for the execution of the contemplated activities in technical cooperations.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 There is a risk that local producers closest to the schools will not have the capacity to provide the supplies required for the fresh food pilot (medium risk). To mitigate this situation, alliances will be established with Agricultural Cooperatives that have experience and are established in the Project areas. Likewise, with several actors, there are always risks of inter-institutional coordination in the territory. To mitigate this risk, regular coordination meetings will be held, as is done with technical cooperation projects with the MINED and WFP.

VII. Environmental and Social Aspects

- 7.1 This TC does not have applicable requirements of the Bank's Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF).