

## TC ABSTRACT

### I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL/CID - Isthmus & DR
▪ TC Name:	Supporting School Re-Enrollment and Learning Outcomes Recovery for Vulnerable Youth in Mesoamerica while Addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic
▪ TC Number:	RG-T3742
▪ Team Leader/Members:	ZOIDO LOBATON, PABLO (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; FERNANDEZ COTO, RAQUEL AUXILIADORA (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; CHAVEZ ALZAMORA, JOSE CARLOS (SCL/EDU); BLASCO, IVANA (SCL/EDU); SCANNONE CHAVEZ, RODOLFO ANDRES (SCL/EDU)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	02 Jul 2020
▪ Beneficiary:	Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Colombia
▪ Executing Agency:	Secretaría Ejecutiva del Consejo de Ministros de Salud de Centroamérica
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$1,000,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$200,000.00 (In Kind)
▪ Disbursement period:	32 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL - Social Sector
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	Yes
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality ; Productivity and innovation

### II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The objective of this Technical Cooperation (TC) proposal is to support Mesoamerican countries in the process of addressing the crisis resulting from COVID-19. In particular, it will support country efforts to re-open schools providing a safe environment for learning and reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the re-enrollment of children and youth into school and providing support to vulnerable youth to limit learning losses during the crisis.
- 2.2 On March 11, the Director-General (DG) of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern, as a pandemic, due to its expansion across the world. The virus has rapidly spread from China to 185 countries and regions. In response, Mesoamerican governments enforced widespread school closures across their countries, affecting more than 64 million students (UNESCO, 2020). In the medium term, the discontinuity of educational services will have a negative impact on dropout and student learning, particularly for those lacking economic resources, parental support or access to effective distance-based learning programs (Cooc, McIntyre & Gomez, 2016). Based on the effects on education of previous economic crises, it is expected that close to one million youth (10-18 years old) will not come back to school in Mesoamerica, a number that represents at least a 20%

increase in student absenteeism . Preliminary analysis shows the crisis will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable: 4 out of 5 young people not coming back are poor or vulnerable middle class (BID, 2020) . Even for those who will return, preliminary estimates suggest students may lose 30% to 50% of learning in reading and mathematics compared to a typical school year (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020 ). In Mesoamerica, the crisis unfolds in a particularly unfavorable context. The educational exclusion rates prior to COVID-19 are high and concentrated in the most vulnerable and lowest-income population. While the vast majority start secondary education, more than two thirds of the region's poorest youth do not finish (Ramirez and Viteri, 2020). Among those who complete their studies, 1 in 20 achieve the fundamental basic competences and the transversal skills they need (Ramirez and Viteri 2020). The COVID-19 crisis will only exacerbate the situation. The situation of the most vulnerable youth is challenging the education systems, as they are currently struggling on building a path forward for schools to gradually reopen, defining what are the minimum sanitary conditions they should offer, how to reach students from remote areas, how to incentivize assistance and support students who need to catch up with their peers.

### III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Sanitary conditions for schools** . This component has the objective of providing the minimum sanitary conditions hardest to reach schools require for reopening. This component will finance the acquisition of personal protection equipment (face masks), hygiene kits (antibacterial gel), and health monitoring kits (infrared thermometers) to benefit around 12,000 students.
- 3.2 **Component II: Strategies for school reopening** . This component has the objective of providing criteria for reopening schools and implementing guidelines and protocols to maintain safe environments, as well as analyzing which schools match the criteria, with a focus on the hardest to reach youth. Criteria to be considered includes gradual or phased reopening, availability of hand washing points, existence of protocols to monitor the health condition of students, teachers and administrative staff, among others.
- 3.3 **Component III: Innovative monetary and non-monetary incentives.** This component has the objective of setting up a scheme to prove incentives to vulnerable youth to encourage re-enrollment, regular school attendance, and adequate progress. Examples of incentives include subsidies, monetary allowances, free data for mobile services, free internet service or other rewards conditioned to meeting agreed upon metrics.
- 3.4 **Component IV: Catch up strategies.** This component has the objective of providing teachers and school staff with strategies for reaching out to students at risk of deep learning losses due to the pandemic. This component will finance the development of a cost-effective strategy to support low performing vulnerable students. Cost-effective strategies could be developed considering successful open source platforms implemented in the region.

### IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Sanitary conditions for schools	US\$300,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$300,000.00
Strategies for school reopening	US\$190,000.00	US\$90,000.00	US\$280,000.00
Innovative monetary and	US\$270,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$270,000.00

non-monetary incentives			
Catch up strategies	US\$240,000.00	US\$110,000.00	US\$350,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US\$1,000,000.00</b>	<b>US\$200,000.00</b>	<b>US\$1,200,000.00</b>

## **V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure**

- 5.1 The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and Executive Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and Dominican Republic (SE-COMISCA) will jointly act as the Executing Agency for the TC: COMISCA will be accountable for Component 1 and the IDB for Components 2, 3, 4, 5 and project administration.
- 5.2 COMISCA is the agency who leads the regional response of Central America and Dominican Republic to COVID-19 following the mandates of the Council of Ministers of Health of the region. COMISCA has experience and has managed similar regional purchases on an annual basis up as the Joint Negotiation of Prices. The Ministers of Health have delegated this mandate to the SE-COMISCA. The unit in charge of Component 1 will report directly to the Executive Secretary which will facilitate rapid decision making and project implementation. The IDB is a multilateral organization with extensive expertise in Mesoamerica through its country offices, allowing agile coordination between countries and actors on the ground. Additionally, it enjoys regional recognition as a technical cooperation executing agency in education. Finally, the IDB has experience in the coordination of international donors, the monitoring of funds and has quick disbursement and spending mechanisms.

## **VI. Project Risks and Issues**

- 6.1 Given the time-sensitive nature of this COVID-19 public health emergency, it is critical that the executing agency carries out the project activities within the timeline established as conditions allow considering the still uncertainties around the pandemic and its development. IDB and COMISCA will monitor execution closely and jointly for early warnings. This requires solid project planning and execution; COMISCA has the experience, competences, and presence in all benefited countries. Due to the higher global demand of COVID-19 supplies and broken chain of production and distribution, there is a risk of important delays in availability; consequently, delaying the TC implementation. Mitigation actions include permanent monitoring of suppliers and their stocks as well as close coordination with other procurement entities.

## **VII. Environmental and Social Classification**

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "undefined".