

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS DATA SHEET CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: ISDSC3933

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I. BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country:	Sierra Leone	Project ID:	P133070
Project Name:	REVITALIZING EDUCATION IN SIERRA LEONE (P133070)		
Task Team Leader:	Kaliopé Azzi-Huck		
Estimated Appraisal Date:	13-Aug-2013	Estimated Board Date:	19-May-2014
Managing Unit:	AFTEW	Lending Instrument:	Specific Investment Loan
Sector(s):	Pre-primary education (10%), Primary education (40%), Secondary education (20%), General education sector (30%)		
Theme(s):	Education for all (60%), Education for the knowledge economy (40%)		
Financing (In USD Million)			
Total Project Cost:	23.40	Total Bank Financing:	0.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
Financing Source			Amount
Borrower			0.00
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative			17.90
Revitalizing Education Delivery in Sierra Leone (REDiSL)			5.50
Total			23.40
Environmental Category:	B - Partial Assessment		
Is this a Repeater project?	No		

B. Project Objectives

The Education Sector Plan (ESP) has identified three strategic objectives under which the Ministry will move forward with interventions: (i) access, equity and completion; (ii) quality and learning outcomes; and (iii) systems strengthening.

The Project Development Objective is to (i) improve school readiness and learning in targeted areas, and (ii) monitor for better education outcomes. To do this, the Project will finance elements of the

Education Sector Plan that deliver intermediate results while simultaneously addressing critical issues in the system to build the foundation for better management and efficiency within the sector.

C. Project Description

The REDiSL is a US\$23.4 million grant processed under the Investment Project Financing (IPF) instrument available to the GoSL from the GPE Fund as well as the Sierra Leone Multi-Donor TF. It builds on the progress achieved through the previous EFA-FTI operation, and finances the activities in the ESP (2013-2018).

Component 1 – Improving the learning environment and opportunities in targeted areas (US\$11.9 million)

1.1 Performance-based School Grants (US\$4 million): The objective of the performance-based school grants component is to improve the learning environment and opportunities in primary and junior secondary schools in targeted districts. Financial incentives (grants) will be provided to schools in most marginalized districts based on the criteria outlined in the table below related to poverty and education outcomes. Schools must meet agreed outputs or outcomes to receive funding. This is a new approach for the education sector in Sierra Leone (see Table 4), but it has been tested with some success in the health sector.

The project will provide grants to schools in three phases, and the amount disbursed to schools will be based on the number of results that schools achieve. The specific objectives of the system are to: (1) provide additional resources at school level to cover the cost of delivering services and removing the need for ‘informal’ charges in primary school; (2) increase educational equity, since Local Councils (LCs) with the lowest educational outcomes and highest poverty levels are targeted; (3) improve the learning environment and opportunities in selected schools – by strategic selection of the indicators and targets; and (4) strengthen capacities of LCs, district education staff, and heads of schools in the administration of the grants.

The performance-based grants incentivizes schools to focus on providing a basic opportunity to learn by rewarding schools that are open a high percentage of the time, schools with high student and teacher attendance etc. The school receives a pre-determined amount of money for each indicator met. The Table below provides a list of indicators proposed by MEST and their targets. A baseline assessment will be collected in schools in targeted districts before project start to ensure a baseline figure for each of the indicators. This may lead to refining some of the targets.

The funds will be disbursed using the same procedures MEST currently uses to send school-fee subsidies (capitation grants) to schools. In Phase 1, all approved government-assisted schools in selected districts (Kambia, Pujehun, Tonkolili and Kenema district) who meet pre-determined basic record keeping requirements will receive initial grants of up to US\$1000. In phase 2, schools may receive up to US\$2000 depending on number of agreed targets they meet from the menu posted above and must have sufficient bookkeeping to show they have received the phase 1 funds. For phase 2, they will get an amount for each indicator met. Depending on the number of schools that receive funding in phase 2, a third phase of performance-based competition will be feasible, focusing this time on schools that improve the most throughout the project. It is noted that schools that miss targets in phase 2 can apply to receive up to \$2000 in the third year of the project, when others are competing for phase 3. This will incentivize those close to meeting targets.

Using the performance-based financing mechanism, the REDiSL will support the delivery of education services while obtaining reliable data at schools, and building a results-focused culture in

the education sector. The systems and processes for administering grants to schools already exists in Sierra Leone through the school fee-subsidies - an input-based grant that is provided to primary schools whereby schools receive about US\$1.2 per each student enrolled. However, this amount is not enough to provide quality improvements and it usually reaches the school very late.

1.2 Piloting approaches to increase school readiness (US\$1 million): Improving access to ECCE is in accordance with the aspirations of the Government as identified in the White Paper on the Gbamanja Commission of Enquiry Report 2010, the draft National Education Policy (2010) (which calls for 2-3 years of preprimary school for all children), the ESP and the latest Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). A tradition of ECCE exists in Sierra Leone and good models of service provision are in operation (though targeted to higher income populations); this sub-component will build on these existing practices and pilot a cost-effective approach to ECCE and develop quality assurance standards.

The project would support the establishment of approximately 50 pre-primary classrooms; 30 of these will be attached to Government supported primary schools and the rest hosted in Community Learning Centers, which are established in select communities and managed by the Department of Non-Formal Education within MEST. These are conservative estimates of classrooms to be established due to budget constraints; should the construction/rehabilitation turn out to be less costly than currently estimated and/or additional external funding become available these numbers can be raised. The classrooms will primarily serve children age 5, many of whom are currently enrolling in Grade 1 and adding to the already challenging learning environment at that level

In addition to the classrooms, the Project will support teacher and caregiver training for those who will be teaching in the pre-primary classrooms. This will include initial 3 weeks of training and then ongoing training throughout the school year. Approximately 110 teachers will be directly trained through the project, but materials will also be made available to teacher training institutions throughout the country for use by teachers and caregivers considering working in ECCE. This will add another 150-200 teachers indirectly trained through the materials provided by the Project.

To ensure the quality of service delivery, the project will also support the capacity building of the MEST to establish Minimum Quality Standards for ECCE. These Minimum Quality Standards would be applied to the classrooms established under the pilot, along with a sustainable system for monitoring and supporting compliance. They would include simple infrastructure and safety and sanitation standards, level of education and qualifications for teachers and caregivers, student-teacher ratio and guidance on curriculum and classroom management. To achieve this and ensure sustainability of efforts and commitment to ECCE, a pre-primary focal person will be identified to help MEST develop pre-primary education services and address quality standards. This position will be created in MEST, funded by the Ministry and will help address ECD issues separate from primary level responsibilities (which is the current arrangement).

It is understood that the GPE funding will serve as a catalyst for the expansion of ECCE services in Sierra Leone. Given the competing demands on the sector, it is not feasible to expect the GoSL to scale up the pilot effort immediately upon project closing. However, there are several other potential sources of funding that may become available, including private foundations, local and international organizations who have expressed interest in follow-on funding once results are delivered through this project. External funding has also been requested to conduct and impact evaluation of the ECD activities implemented under this project. It is therefore critical that the piloted efforts show results and scale-up potential.

1.3 Strengthening reading outcomes at early grades (US\$6.9 million): To support the ESP's aim of improving the pedagogical methodologies used by teachers to improve learning outcomes, the operation will support a comprehensive national reading program intended to improve literacy in early grades and create a culture of reading as a foundation for learning. Specific interventions would include:

Reading books for primary classes (1-3) and relevant learning materials (teachers' guides and teaching support packets for trained teachers). The GPE would finance the production, and distribution of approximately 1.8 million reading books for grades 1-3 for all primary schools throughout the country. This would be an approximate ratio of 2 reading books per student though they are developed to be used and re-used so students would be exposed to more titles throughout the school year. These books would complement the current syllabus and would be selected using criteria based on literacy-levels, literary value, and social-cultural relevance. Teachers and students are expected to use the books as tools to complement literacy skill and fluency based instructional goals, using strategies such as word family work, vocabulary learning, comprehension teaching, reading aloud, storytelling, literary games, and individual silent reading. Books will be delivered to the local councils. Incorporating expected costs into their annual business plans and projections, Local councils will be expected to pre-finance the delivery of books to schools. Upon submission of signed delivery to schools, the project will transfer funds to the local councils using the funds-flow mechanisms currently in place. Books selected for publishing will be cleared by the MEST prior. By project effectiveness dates, at least four titles will be available for immediate publishing pending minor modification (adding two poems at the beginning and an additional "informational" section at the end, e.g. hygiene instructions in the book on bathing). This will increase the number of encounters children have with each book; raising the genres and vocabularies children engage. Three more titles will be developed for lower level readers (grades 1 and 2).

Grade-level reading campaign. The project will support the roll out of a reading campaign using multiple channels. At the community level, there would be Talking Drum Studio stories and similar events. At the national level, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) will be approached to carry bi-monthly interviews and presentations about the importance of literacy and the ways in which parents and schools work for children's success together. At the school level, the SMC would be asked to create regular slots for learning about literacy using proposed topics such as "importance of learning to read", "why do we want our children to be able to read?", and "how do children learn to read". Schools can also hold short storytelling events with print outcomes, or make alphabet books with help from teachers.

Training for teachers of early primary grades. The project will fund the development of a training to help teachers understand effective teaching for quality outcomes. This training will include tools like teacher lesson guides, pedagogical materials, as well as scope and sequence lists. These are part of the teacher training initiative to support better quality of education and improved learning outcomes. As demonstrated by initial results of a pilot training currently under implementation, enhanced lesson planning and strategy guides show positive increases in teacher's skills and student's knowledge. The training will be carried to 10 percent of the primary schools teaching workforce (about 3,800 teachers over the three years and 600 pre-service teachers in training). To ensure sustainability of the practice, the project will also work with the MEST and teacher training institutions to integrate the training on the use of supplementary reading books into the pre-service and distance learning for initial teacher training on college campuses where early primary school teachers are certified. To achieve this, the cohort of trainers will include representation from all the Teacher Training College Departments of

Language Arts to insure their abilities to participate in the development of new practices with new pre-service teachers in the second phase.

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Component 2 – Strengthen education service delivery (US\$8.9 million)

2.1 Improvements in teacher management (US\$3 million): The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) Act was enacted in 2011, with the following four broad roles for the Teaching Service Commission with respect to Teacher Management (i) registration and licensing of teachers (ii) teacher performance and development (iii) teacher management operations – recruitment, replacements, transfers, promotions etc. and (iv) teacher / employer relations. In this context, the project will provide funds to make the TSC functional and would be used to cover operational costs of the Commission both at central and decentralized levels. The main output for this intervention would be an effective and efficient management of the teaching labor force underpinned by a database which would inform management decision making with respect to the promotion of professional development and performance of teachers and reporting protocols from districts.

2.2 Building the foundation for better measurement of learning outcomes (US\$1.1 million): Building on previous outputs, the project would establish and operationalize a semi-autonomous assessment unit within the Directorate of Policy and Planning of the MEST to coordinate the design and execution of assessments at lower and upper primary and JSS. The project would fund a Class 4 assessment in Mathematics and English. Sample selection, data collection, data processing and editing, weighting and variance estimation would be sub-contracted to Statistics Sierra Leone or another entity that has experience in the work to be carried out and does not require much, if any, capacity building to incorporate the learning assessment into their work programs. Though the length of the project does not allow for repeated assessments, the ultimate goal will be realized once Sierra Leone is able to carry out national learning assessments regularly to understand patterns in students' learning and modify the curriculum as needed to gain improvements. The Assessment Unit would involve those responsible for pre-service and in-service teacher training, curriculum development experts and the Inspectorate in the analysis and dissemination of assessment findings to all levels of the system.

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2.3 Robust and consistent school data collection (US\$.4 million): The Ministry has successfully carried out an annual school census over the past three years. However, the process is quite cumbersome and exhausts significant time and resources. The REDiSL will build on the system already in existence to support the Ministry in mainstreaming a briefer version of the school census in off years so not all data is collected annually but ensuring that those indicators relevant for monitoring purposes of the project are included. This component will also provide financing for the enhancement of the financial management (FM), procurement, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) functions and decentralization of data collection and cleanup of data to the district levels where real-time validation is more feasible. During the Project cycle, the “traditional” longer school census will be carried out once (in 2016) and supported by REDiSL. It will provide the update to the 2013 data the Ministry will use as a baseline for this project.

2.4 Establishing a system for driving and monitoring the implementation of the Education Sector Strategy (\$4.4 million): A key lesson from the implementation of the last ESP is that setting up systems and processes for delivering and monitoring key outcomes will be critical to improving performance. This component will finance the setting up of a Change Unit (CU) to support the Minister and Ministry to bring about desired improvements in education and to be more proactive and effective in service delivery with a focus on the goals and targets spelt out in the ESP and to monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of the latter. The Change Unit (CU) will be a

temporary entity with an estimated maximum lifetime of 3 years by which time the Ministry would be able to do without the support the unit is to provide. In this regard, the CU will ensure that all departments within MEST are focused on delivery of key targets and milestones as outlined in the Education Sector Plan. It will also coordinate and provide on-going capacity development for MEST officials at both the central and district level, based on the capacity development strategy (CDS). Once executed, this setup should catalyze significant transformation in the education sector and enable the Government to achieve the targets set out in its ESP.

REDiSL will co-finance a Donor and Project Coordination Unit (DPCU), which would serve as a vehicle for donors to align their support to the MEST, using a best practice approach that has been tested in the health sector. The DPCU will also provide administrative and operational support to projects funded or implemented by local partners.

Component 3 – Project Management and Supervision (US\$0.9 million)

Project Management and Supervision: The project would provide necessary and appraised support to the MEST for the upgrade of the supervision mechanism, financial audits, qualitative audits, and impact evaluations for interventions supported by GPE and MDTF funds. During implementation, interim reporting will be required from district inspectorates in districts targeted under specific components and will be established and supported under this component.

This component will also provide the necessary funding for the operations of the project implementation unit to be housed within the MEST, specifically the DPCU. In addition to funding the administrative costs associated with implementation of the components above, it will also support fiduciary management, procurement, and auditing (Details are noted in Annex 3). It will fund the day-to-day costs of operation and systems needed including accounting systems, FM audits, capacity building workshops, and field visits. As such, the Project is expected to finance the following positions: DPCU Coordinator, GPE Project Manager, Finance Officer, M&E Officer, procurement specialist (consultant), and project assistants.

Overall, there is an unallocated amount of US\$1.7 (equivalent to 13.8%) to be used as a contingency for all components, but in particular for the schools grants component, where the remaining funding will determine the amount to be received by schools as well as the number of schools eligible in phase 3. In addition, potential additional training for SMCs is currently under discussion.

D. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

Some aspects of the project are national and be spread throughout the entire country. Specific sites will however be identified prior to implementation. There are no salient physical characteristics relevant to safeguards. The safeguards issues for the project are minor.

E. Borrowers Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

The Project will be under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The Ministry has implemented World Bank financed projects before but it is not clear the level of capacity they have on World Bank safeguards issues. Consequently, they will need some support to ensure that they are on course with regards to safeguards compliance and due diligence. On the other hand, the Country's Environmental protection Agency (EPA) has very strong experience and knowledge about the Bank's safeguards policies and requirements and has been collaborating with the Bank on capacity programs for safeguards. The EPA can therefore support the Ministry and participating entities to ensure effective implementation of safeguards in the project's area of influence.

F. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Beatrix Allah-Mensah (AFCW1)

II. SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/ BP 4.01	Yes	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/ BP 4.11	No	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	No	This policy is not triggered. This is because the project activities implementation will not lead to land acquisition that will affect people's livelihoods, assets or limit access to assets. They will also not lead to any displacement or relocation temporary or permanently that will cause social hardship to people. Even though there will be provision to provide toilet facilities for girls, these facilities will be on the same school compound and will require very small amount of land space with no impacts.
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	

III. SAFEGUARD PREPARATION PLAN

A. Tentative target date for preparing the PAD Stage ISDS: 03-Sep-2013

B. Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed.

The specific studies and their timing¹ should be specified in the PAD-stage ISDS:

tbd

IV. APPROVALS

Task Team Leader:	Name: Kaliope Azzi-Huck
<i>Approved By:</i>	

¹ Reminder: The Bank's Disclosure Policy requires that safeguard-related documents be disclosed before appraisal (i) at the InfoShop and (ii) in country, at publicly accessible locations and in a form and language that are accessible to potentially affected persons.

Regional Safeguards Coordinator:	Name: Johanna van Tilburg (RSA)	Date: 07-May-2014
Sector Manager:	Name: Peter Nicolas Materu (SM)	Date: 07-May-2014