



# Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 03-Mar-2020 | Report No: PIDC28207



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country North Macedonia	Project ID P171973	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Primary Education Improvement Project (P171973)
Region EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date Jul 20, 2020	Estimated Board Date Oct 20, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education and Science	

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

The proposed PDO is to improve conditions for acquiring key skills in primary education.

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

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	25.00
<b>Total Financing</b>	25.00
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	25.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**World Bank Group Financing**

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	25.00
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Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Low

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue



## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

- 1. North Macedonia is a landlocked country at the heart of the Balkans.** According to the last census of 2002, the population is about two million people of which 25 percent live in the capital Skopje. An aging population and a long tradition of emigration pose challenges to productivity. The projected population growth is nearly zero. Considering the small size of the workforce and low birth rates, the loss of even a small number of workers affects the overall pool of skills in the economy.
- 2. The resolution of the decades-long dispute with Greece over the country's name<sup>1</sup> marks a turning point in North Macedonia's history as an independent nation.** The change of the name enabled the country's signing the NATO accession protocol. In April 2018, the European Commission (EC) recommended the opening of negotiations with North Macedonia, but on October 17, 2019, the Council of the EU failed to reach the decision and will revert to the issue before the EU-Western Balkans summit in Zagreb in May 2020<sup>2</sup>. Following the Council's decision, the Prime Minister announced early elections for April 12, 2020.
- 3. North Macedonia has a good track record of sound macroeconomic management and business environment reforms.** The country maintained a relatively moderate public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt level, however macroeconomic risks are significant due to: (i) a possible decline in growth related to deterioration in the external - prospects and geopolitical tensions in the region and (ii) possible delays in the implementation of consolidation measures, and accumulation of new contingent liabilities. With the EU as the country's main trading partner, slower EU growth than expected could dampen the recovery of North Macedonia's economy. Support provided by all international partners helps ensure that the authorities remain committed to their ambitious reform program and to actively move forward.
- 4. Growth and fiscal measures helped increase employment and reduce poverty after 2009.** However, unemployment is still high at 19 percent by June 2019, and labor-force participation is low, especially for those younger than 25 and older than 55, and for women. In addition, poverty remains high in rural areas, and the reduction in poverty since 2009 has not been sufficient to close rural-urban gaps in living conditions. While the urban poverty headcount is 17 percent, the rural poverty headcount remains at nearly 30 percent.

### Sectoral and Institutional Context

- 5. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index,<sup>3</sup> a child born in North Macedonia today will be 53 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health<sup>4</sup>.** North Macedonia's Human Capital Index is lower than the average for the region and its income group. Poor educational outcomes largely explain this loss of lifetime productivity. Children in North Macedonia can expect to complete 11.2 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, the result

<sup>1</sup> The country became a member of the United Nations in 1993, but because of a dispute with Greece over the use of the name Macedonia, it was admitted under the provisional description of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

<sup>2</sup> Council of European Union, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2019/10/17-18/>

<sup>3</sup> The Human Capital Index quantifies the contribution of health and education to the productivity of the next generation of workers. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital>

<sup>4</sup> Complete education is defined by the HCI as 14 years of high-quality school by age 18. Full health is defined by the HCI as no stunting and 100 percent adult survival.



is equivalent to 6.8 years of education, equivalent to a learning gap of 4.4 years. In North Macedonia, gaps in human capital start early and expand over time. It seems that the education system fails to provide students with the skills they need to successfully complete each stage and move confidently to the next. These challenges persist all the way up the education ladder, from preschool education to graduate university degrees, including non-formal education. With the workforce shrinking and labor productivity low, the country's future growth will increasingly rely on the formation of human capital.

6. **Access to education has improved since independence.** Participation in schooling has expanded steadily and more children and young people participate in education and remain in school for longer. As reported in the Public Finance Review (PFR, World Bank, 2018), the proportion of out-of-school children in primary education is low (at about 1.4 percent) and completion rates for primary school are high. The country has largely achieved gender equality in education, however, gender disparities persist for certain population subgroups. Some ethnic groups still lag behind in terms of educational attainment and access to education and, among these groups, gender gaps are wider. In 2017, the completion rate in primary education was 96 and 91 percent for female and male non-Roma students respectively, while it was 63 and 77 percent for Roma female and male students respectively.

7. **However, progress on the most important measure of education system quality – student learning outcomes – remains limited.** As mentioned above, system deficiencies are visible in the early years of primary education. The Early Grade Reading/Mathematics Assessments (EGRA and EGMA)<sup>5</sup> give an indication of literacy and numeracy proficiency in the early primary years. Even though there are improvements in results between grade 2 and grade 3, the results in grade 2 and grade 3 for oral reading fluency and comprehension – the sub-tasks most highly correlated with literacy – are still significantly below international benchmarks.

8. The USAID report finds that below average results in oral reading fluency and comprehension, particularly at the end of third grade, highlight multiple reasons why children may not acquire the necessary reading skills at school, such as: i) insufficient resources at school and home; ii) insufficient learning time (e.g., during and/or after school); iii) teachers/principals have little incentive to improve learning; iv) rigid and overly ambitious curricula which do not match the learning levels of the students; v) teachers do not individualize instruction, and vi) low-performing students do not get extra help. Similarly, in mathematics, simpler tasks such as number discrimination and geometric pattern extension are completed by most students (more than 90 percent) whereas the most difficult task for both grades is subtraction (completed by 54 percent in Grade 2 and 57 percent in Grade 3) followed by word problems (66 percent for Grade 2 and 3). The main factors correlated with student success in mathematics are: i) the higher education of parents; ii) studying in central or urban schools and monograde classrooms; iii) attendance at a pre-school institution; and iv) having books at home<sup>6</sup>.

9. **North Macedonia participated in PISA in 2000, 2015, and 2018.** While the country had greater improvement in results than any developing country in 2018, the results only returned the country to a level of about 10-15 points above the 2000 results, after a very weak set of results in 2015 (Figure 1). Though increasing<sup>7</sup>, these results are modest and remain well below the mean scores for the ECA region, the EU, and the OECD group of countries (Figure 2). While the percentage of students performing below basic proficiency in all three PISA subjects has dropped from the 2015 value,

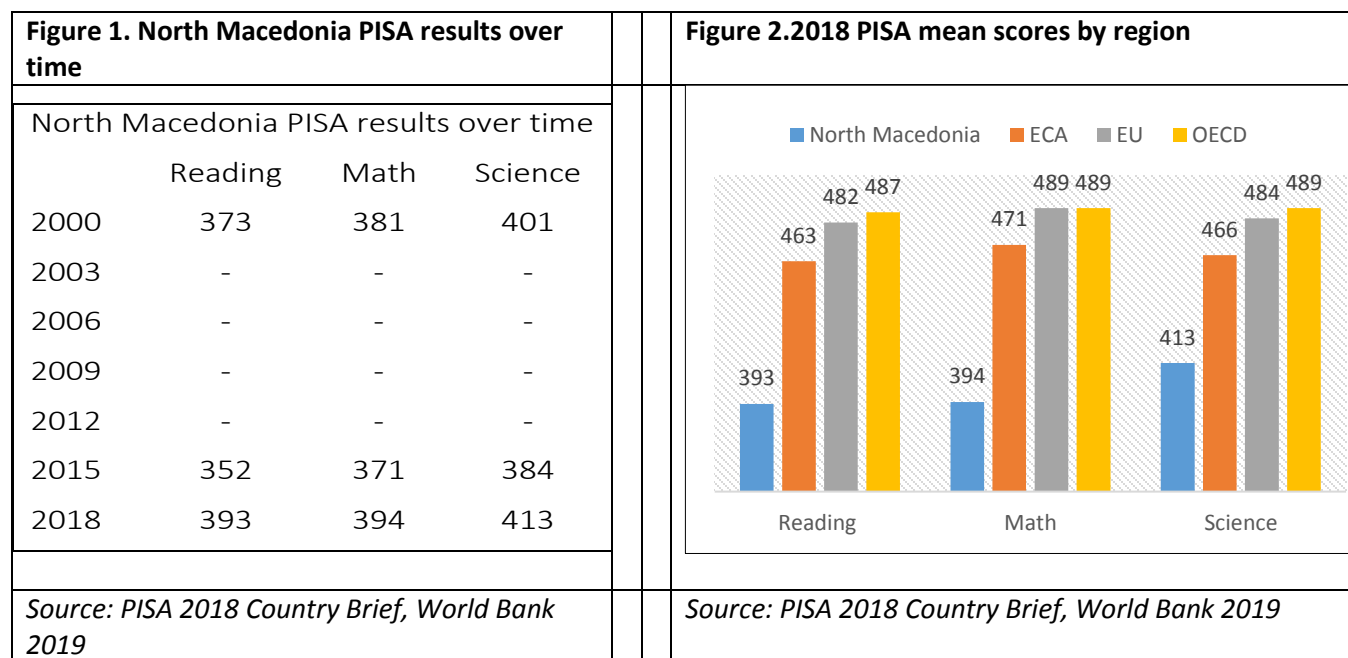
<sup>5</sup> USAID, 2017. *Nationwide Study of Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessment in the Republic of Macedonia*

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, 2018, MKD Roma Brief

<sup>7</sup> While scores are increasing, this should not be interpreted as 'improving'. Only the scores for reading are comparable over time. This is explained in the PISA report (vol 1). "For reading, trend comparisons are possible starting from 2000. Mathematics was the major domain for the first time in 2003, and science in 2006. This means that it is not possible to measure the change in mathematics performance between PISA 2000 and PISA 2018, nor the change in science performance between PISA 2000, PISA 2003 and PISA 2018."



approximately half of all students still find themselves in that bracket.<sup>8</sup> There are also wide performance gaps between the top and bottom income groups, with students from the latter lagging by 90 PISA points (roughly equivalent to two years of schooling), and between language groups<sup>9</sup> (by a 40-point difference). Female students are also doing consistently better than boys – by a 46-point spread on average.



10. **North Macedonia has a highly decentralized primary education system with central government and municipalities sharing responsibilities for it.** The central government is responsible for capital investments while other spending associated with maintenance cost and management of human resources are mainly handled by municipalities. The largest share of funding available to municipalities comes from centrally provided resources. Although municipalities finance less than 5 percent of the cost of primary education, they handle almost 90 percent of the spending at this level<sup>10</sup>. The composition of municipal spending is skewed towards maintenance costs and salaries. This is to the detriment of capital expenses which are only 5 percent of the total education spending in the country – far below what is needed to keep school infrastructure in good condition<sup>11</sup>.

11. **The allocation of grants to municipalities for primary education comes in earmarked<sup>12</sup> and block grants based on a per-student funding formula.** The criteria for allocation of block grants for primary education by municipalities are: lump sum, number of students in the municipality, number of pupils in subject teaching, number of students with special needs, and population density<sup>13</sup>. While block grants are allocated via a per-student formula, the main impact on the allocation is due to upper and lower buffers (that is by historical allocation in previous budget years) in a procedure which ensures that the grant covers all salary costs. There is evidence however that the formula for funding allocation is in fact

<sup>8</sup> 55 percent, 61 percent, and 49 percent of students find themselves in the below basic proficiency in reading, math and science, respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Macedonian language of instruction and Albanian language of instruction.

<sup>10</sup> The World Bank (2018). *Republic of North Macedonia Public Finance Review: Sowing the Seeds of a Sustainable Future*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Only one municipality

<sup>13</sup> The values of lump sum and of the per student standard are not included in the Government decree and are not made public.



affected by staffing levels, rather than by enrolment<sup>14</sup>. This creates considerable inefficiencies in spending. The number of schools, class sizes and teachers has not decreased to compensate for falling enrolment in recent years.

12. **Infrastructure investment falls short of the need.** As a result, primary schools lack the facilities, equipment and resources they need (buildings, libraries, laboratories, internet access, computers, etc.) to improve the quality of the learning environment. So far, the country has been unable to create equal or tolerable differences in material and technical conditions between schools and to provide students with equal or approximately equal conditions for acquiring educational needs and achieving educational goals. Many schools still operate in a very difficult context without the essential standards for the operation being met (e.g. heating, sanitation, security, kitchen, school desks, etc.) and without the necessary resources to cover even the basic running costs. This prevents them from investing in improvements in the instructional environment and ultimately, advancing the quality of education being offered.

13. **North Macedonia lacks a strategic framework for monitoring student learning outcomes and quality enhancement.** A key strength of the assessment framework in North Macedonia is the national recognition of the value of assessment for student learning. Assessment features in national policy documents – such as the comprehensive education strategy, and laws on primary and secondary education. However, together the laws and policies do not provide a coherent framework to ensure that assessment consistently supports learning. The Law on Primary Education explicitly requires the development of a Concept to guide the development and conduct of the National Assessment Program (NAP) in primary grades. The Law requires this Concept to be approved by the end of July 2020.

14. **In addition, North Macedonia has invested significantly in developing a modern framework for school evaluation, based on research about what matters for school quality.** Since 2008, primary schools have been required to undertake self-evaluations every two years. However, both external and self-evaluations focus primarily on compliance with regulations and administrative processes, and evaluations do not provide feedback on how to improve learning and teaching practices. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Science and its agencies provide little support and training to schools for improving the quality and relevance of these self-evaluations and school improvement plans respectively.

15. **In-service teacher professional development (INSET), in particular, requires significant reform.** Teacher salaries in primary education compare favorably with average salaries nationally, with the exception of the capital where salaries are slightly below the mean. However, the salary progression of teachers is relatively slow and flat compared to OECD and other European countries. It takes an average of 40 years for a teacher to reach the top of the salary scale – the longest time of all European countries<sup>15</sup>. Salary increase is awarded based on years of service rather than through an appraisal process that recognizes and rewards good teaching. In addition, teacher appraisal used to be carried out by several ministerial entities but without an underlying harmonized framework. This left the different appraisals incomparable and inconsistent and did not, reportedly, clearly identify the actual skills gaps and/or needs of teachers. Further, with limited funding for INSET, a consensus emerged that the relevance and quality of the professional development programs in place were questionable. Recognizing that the model for i) evaluating teacher professional development needs and ii) addressing those needs through in-service professional development was no longer effective, the Ministry began to pursue reforms to modernize it. In the last five years, several significant initiatives have supported these reforms, all of which have important ramifications for the reform of INSET. The analytical work on teachers (MCEC 2013,<sup>16</sup> OECD 2019), the teacher core professional competencies and standards (USAID), and the new Laws are all positive developments.

<sup>14</sup> The World Bank (2019). *North Macedonia: Sustainability of Delivery, Financing for Municipal Infrastructure & Services*.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2016). *Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe – 2015/16*. Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>16</sup> *Policy and Practice Analysis of Teacher Professional and Career Development in the Republic of Macedonia* (2013). Macedonia Civic Education



16. Currently, school-level actors – teachers, the multi-professional support team (MPST), and school leaders – have either unclear mandates or misaligned incentives that are not in the interest of improving student learning.
- Teachers.** While North Macedonia has begun to develop more robust systems for teacher selection, assessment, professional development and promotion, efforts have not been sustained and comprehensive reform of the career path and teacher professional development has still not been implemented. As a result, teachers lack the means to develop professionally to become and remain effective educators.
  - MPST.** All North Macedonia primary schools benefit from a multi-professional support team that includes 1) a ‘pedagogue’ (pedagogical expert); 2) a psychologist; and, 3) a ‘defectologist’ (roughly, a special-needs adviser). However, according to the OECD report, these teams seem to have a very narrow definition of learning support, one that focuses on ‘problem’ students rather than supporting teachers “to understand the learning needs of each student and help them design lesson plans that create a more inclusive and effective learning environment” (OECD 2019).
  - School leaders.** The school leadership function is relatively underdeveloped in Macedonia. Principals receive little training or guidance to lead the school and little support from school boards. In recent years the MoES has taken some steps to address these concerns. In 2016, a new training and licensing process was introduced to ensure that new principals receive minimum preparation in core aspects of school leadership. However, the principal role remains primarily administrative, and principals’ capacity to steer teaching and learning and set goals for improvement remains relatively limited.

**Although North Macedonia has begun to put into place elements of a more up-to-date education system, there are nevertheless several reform areas that require urgent attention.** The Government has a Comprehensive Strategy for Education for 2018-25,<sup>17</sup> launched in 2018, which includes a number of actions relevant to improving education quality and assessment, inter alia includes: (i) strengthening the competence of teaching staff at all educational levels; (ii) strengthening management and leadership capacity at central and local government levels, and within schools; and (iii) developing a national assessment program. In addition, two laws – on Primary Education and on Teachers – have been ratified recently. Reforms are nevertheless required at the system- and school- levels. The recent OECD evaluation<sup>18</sup> of the education system in North Macedonia and the PFR indicate several shortcomings that have constrained education outcomes. These include initiatives for improving national assessment and putting into action recently-developed professional competencies, as well as empowering schools to become the nexus of institutional change.

#### Relationship to CPF

17. The project is aligned with the World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework 2019 – 2023 in North Macedonia which aims to support the country’s ability to achieve faster, inclusive, and sustainable growth and provide its citizens with greater opportunities for a better life. The CPF is organized around three focus areas that will help North Macedonia improve the environment for a dynamic private sector to enhance export-led growth, strengthen human capital for inclusive development, and build sustainability. Specifically, the project will contribute to Focus Area II – Inclusive Growth: Expand Skills and Opportunities for the Most Vulnerable, and CPF Objective 2 –Improve the Quality and Relevance of Education. The CPF Objective 2 anticipates supporting new investments in basic education, by i) increasing instruction quality in primary schools, ii) piloting new methodologies to monitor student achievement, providing adequate

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Center, Skopje.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje (2018). *Comprehensive Education Strategy for 2018-25*.

<sup>18</sup> OECD (2019), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: North Macedonia* of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/079fe34c-en>.



learning support to vulnerable and ethnic minority students, and addressing shortcomings in the curriculum; and, iii) improving teacher performance and career development – all of which are addressed in the proposed Project.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The proposed PDO is to improve conditions for acquiring key skills in primary education.

#### Key Results

1. Proportion of classrooms with improved learning environment at the primary level resulting from project interventions
2. Proportion of teachers certified in new modules in math, reading and science (disaggregated by language of instruction)
3. Proportion of classrooms with improved quality of teaching practices as measured by TEACH (in-class teacher observation tool)
4. Proportion of (implemented) School Improvement Plans that use performance data and monitoring tools for improving student learning

### D. Concept Description

18. The proposed project will be organized around three main elements that need to be aligned in order to complement each other. The first focuses on school-level interventions. Two are system-level reforms, developing a comprehensive national assessment program and putting into practice professional competencies, so the school teams are empowered with data on learning and up-to-date training. Together, these will provide adequate information, tools, training, and support to create an effective learning environment and increase student achievement. A final component would strengthen Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Management. The Project would thus include the following components:

- Component 1. Improving Learning at the School Level.
- Component 2. Reform of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Progress in Learning.
- Component 3. Enhancing Competencies of Teachers, Multi-Professional Support Teams, and School Leaders.
- Component 4. Project management and M&E.

#### Component 1: Improving Learning at the School Level

19. **Teaching and learning constitute the core work of the school, and school staff should strive to provide the best possible learning experience to their students.** The project would finance activities aimed at improving the capacity of schools to conduct self-evaluation and develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP will be a central instrument to determining ways to improve the physical learning environment in schools and, most importantly, it will identify areas in which the school team (principal, teachers, support team, community) will work together to improve learning. The project





would finance minor refurbishments of existing facilities<sup>19</sup>. Among others, the project would finance civil works needed for the installation of school science laboratories, improvement of sanitary conditions, painting, wiring, refurbishment of floors, etc. In addition, the project will finance the procurement of equipment to support effective teaching and learning as well as activities envisioned in the SIP to improve learning.

20. **This component will focus on factors that improve learning at the school level** through: i) the development and use of school improvement plans *focusing on improving student learning*, and ii) the upgrading of the physical learning environment.

- A. **Subcomponent 1.1: School Improvement Plans (SIP) and grants.** Promoting SIPs as a central instrument to improve student learning outcomes implies a new vision for the role of the school personnel. They would be incentivized to act as a team (school leaders, teachers, multi-professional support teams, along with the school community) in order to play a significant role in improving student learning outcomes, with the primary means being the school improvement cycle. School teams that promote innovative SIPs that ensure an effective learning environment for all students will be entitled to receive grants to implement their ideas. The schools that will include effective strategies in the SIPs for ensuring school attendance and better learning results of Roma students, especially Roma girls will be prioritized. The best performing schools would be selected as resource schools to mentor other interested schools in improving their learning environment.
- B. **Subcomponent 1.2: Improving the Learning Environment.** Spaces that are designed with young students in mind promote learning (WB 2019).<sup>20</sup> In line with this, this sub-component will finance upgrading to improve the learning environment in primary education through:
  - i. **Upgrading of the physical learning environment.** While no major works are planned, select schools may benefit from:
    - a. *Upgrades in basic infrastructure:* where needed, minor rehabilitation will be provided to upgrade electricity, lighting, connectivity, ensure sufficiency of toilet facilities, community spaces for teachers and learners.
    - b. *Enhancements to learning environments* that are multifunctional, internet-connected, and conducive to learning. The project will finance the procurement of multifunctional science laboratories and libraries, age-appropriate furniture, equipment and laboratories that allow for transformations and the rearrangement of spaces to support different types of teaching and learning.
  - ii. **Updating of learning resources.** Classrooms will also be provided with teaching and learning materials: resources such as age- and level- appropriate books, learning manipulatives (objects, toys, and games), posters, etc. will be provided in all North Macedonian official languages.

## Component 2. Reform of the Monitoring and Evaluation of National Progress in Learning

21. **The Ministry of Education and Science recognizes the importance of assessment-related data in evaluating the quality of education and in formulating policies.** The MOES is committed to evidence-based policymaking but recognizes that objectively verifiable evidence as to the current situation is limited. The MOES requires the proposed NAP to provide

<sup>19</sup> There is a new operation in North Macedonia (recently approved by the Board) that will help municipalities to enhance the energy efficiency of public buildings such as schools or hospitals. It was agreed with the government that this project will finance non-structural refurbishments while energy efficiency projects will finance “out-door infrastructure, insulation, heating systems, and so on.”

<sup>20</sup> Tigran Shmis et al. (World Bank, 2020)



an accurate snapshot of standards achieved by learners in the primary phase of education and to establish a reliable baseline against which future progress may be monitored.

22. **Developing a NAP for primary grades will require developing age-appropriate semi-formal sample-based assessments for, initially, grade 3.** It should focus on the key enabling skills of basic mathematics (numeracy) and language (i.e. mother tongue/language of instruction). Before developing NAP instruments, comprehensive assessment frameworks will be needed for these domains. In addition, target levels should be closely linked to the relevant curricula and associated standards. Once this is embedded in the system, it may be possible to move towards the testing of all learners in Grades 3 and 6 (and possibly 9) for the purposes of tracking the progress of individual students. This should be a long-term goal.

23. The component would, therefore, support the Government 's assessment reform agenda through:

- A. **Subcomponent 2.1. Development of a National Assessment Program.** This sub-component aims at providing technical assistance to the MOES and the National Examination Center (NEC) to develop the NAP concept as stipulated in the Law for Primary Education as well as to strengthen the capacity of the NEC in terms of human, technical and financial resources. Developing a NAP will require hiring expert staff, acquiring the necessary hardware and software, and ensuring a flow of steady financial resources. The project would support the development and administration of at least two cycles of early reading and mathematics national assessment. In addition, the project would support strengthening the capacity of the NEC for data analysis, reporting and use of the results, including preparation of customized reports for different stakeholders. Depending on the capacity and readiness of the educational institutions, the project would support expanding the use of the national assessment to other grades, which would include science in addition to reading comprehension and mathematics.
- B. **Subcomponent 2.2. Exploitation of NAP results at the Ministerial and School Level.** Once developed, the NAP results must be used to inform policy reform at the ministerial level and through action at the school level. This would entail providing technical assistance and training in the following ways:
  - i. **For Ministerial Stakeholders.** Concerned ministerial stakeholders would be provided with training to learn how to interpret and analyze NAP data in the interest of using it for policy reform. The project would also provide support to the design and implementation of a set of training courses for existing inspectors with a focus on explaining the purpose of school evaluation and developing key evaluation competencies, such as how to conduct a classroom observation and report back to schools. In addition, the inspectors will be trained to write school evaluation reports that are clear, specific and actionable. Such reports would be of immense importance to the schools in developing their plans.
  - ii. **At the School Level.** Training would be provided to the school principals on how to interpret and act on NAP results at the school level while training for teachers will be focused to help them on how to interpret and act on NAP results at the classroom level.

### **Component 3. Enhancing Competencies of Teachers, Multi-Professional Support Teams, and School Leadership.**

24. **If student learning outcomes in North Macedonia are weak, as international assessments demonstrate, frontline actors - teachers, multi-professional support teams and school leaders - need to be in a strong position to respond to this learning crisis,** with support coming from effective In-service Teacher Professional Development (often called INSET). Empirical research suggests that high-performing education systems, while different in many respects, have similar approaches to INSET. In Singapore, Finland, Canada, Shanghai, for instance, in-service professional development is recognized to be central to the job of a teacher and so is an ongoing daily concern; it is not a set of one-off trainings from time to time. Rather, teachers become part of 'learning teams' (sets of teachers working together) in their schools and, in



turn, the school is arranged as a ‘learning organization’.<sup>21</sup> North Macedonia has some of the necessary elements in place. It is rolling out Teacher Standards, has the ‘Teacher Actives’<sup>22</sup> model in schools and has begun to show interest in developing online professional development modules.

25. **The proposed Project is in a strong position to support the Ministry in modernizing its INSET system** by focusing on the following sub-components:

- A. **Subcomponent 3.1. Implementing Teacher, Multi-Professional Support Teams, and School Leader standards.** North Macedonia has developed these standards but now needs to implement them judiciously. Career paths for these professions also need to be developed to incentivize the professionals working in these fields.
- B. **Subcomponent 3.2. Modernizing In-service Professional Development, making it more effective by:** a) revising INSET content; b) adjusting delivery – how INSET is delivered; c) improving support to teachers, pedagogical support staff and school leaders through learning resources (including e-resources<sup>23</sup>), learning groups like *Teacher Actives*, and resource persons; d) design compulsory and elective courses and allocate appropriate funds to make them available for teachers and school leadership; and, e) providing incentives and strengthening accountability for INSET.<sup>24</sup> The project would support teacher training informed by the national priorities for learning. These include: (i) identified gaps in students’ learning such as those identified through EGRA and EGMA; (ii) gaps identified in SIPs; and (iii) training to sensitize teachers to the culture, needs, and vulnerabilities of minorities such as Roma children and different learning styles between female and male students, etc.
- C. **Subcomponent 3.3. Strengthening institutional capacity of concerned ministerial units.** The modernizing of INSET requires revising the mandate of concerned agencies, such as the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and strengthening its capacity in terms of human, technical, and financial resources.

#### Component 4. Project Management and M&E

26. This component will support the day-to-day management of project implementation and the M&E of its objectives and outcomes. This component will finance the activities that would ensure effective administration and implementation of the project.

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<sup>21</sup> In the business sense of the term. See Senge (2006).

<sup>22</sup> Teachers in North Macedonia have an informal culture of in-school collaboration. They exchange teaching material and discuss students’ learning and work with each other’s as part of in-school teacher subject groups called “teachers actives”.

<sup>23</sup> As in #Inno4Edu platform, the main goal of which is to build a national web-based platform that will assist the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning through co-creation and innovation, involving teachers, parents and children. The development of the platform is financed by UNICEF but will be managed by the BDE.

<sup>24</sup> This PD model is developed in ‘A new model of PD for North Macedonia’



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

### Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The environmental risk of the project is rated as Low. The anticipated risks are minor and can be easily avoided or minimized. Those risks are mainly associated with the implementation of activities under Component 1, envisaging minor non-structural refurbishment of the existing school facilities, including, inter alia, the upgrade of electricity, lighting, connectivity, improvement of toilet facilities, community spaces for teachers and learners, and the installation of school science laboratories, improvement of sanitary conditions, painting, wiring, refurbishment of floors, etc. The project will also finance the procurement of equipment to support effective teaching and learning as well as activities envisioned in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) to improve learning. The environmental risks associated with the implementation of these minor civil works will be mitigated by application of the WB Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines (ESHGs) and Good International Industrial Practices (GIIPs). Additionally, good environmental management practice for laboratories should be referred. The staff of the schools which will benefit from the installation of new science laboratories will receive respective training under the project. The social risk rating for the project is low. The social risks are minimal and negligible. The investments in the component 1. 1 will be of very small scale such as: Upgrades in basic infrastructure: where needed, minor rehabilitation will be provided to upgrade electricity, lighting, connectivity, ensure sufficiency of toilet facilities, community spaces for teachers and learners. The project will also finance multi-functional science laboratories and libraries, age-appropriate furniture, equipment and laboratories that allow for transformations and the rearrangement of spaces to support different types of teaching and learning. Classrooms will also be provided with teaching and learning materials: resources such as age- and level- appropriate books, learning manipulatives (objects, toys, and games), posters, etc. These works would be done by local companies hired by the PIU. Thus ESS 2 will be applicable though with very low risk. Also, standard ESS1 and ESS10 will be relevant as through ESS1 assessment of vulnerable groups will feed into ESS10 which will help into inclusion and engagement of these groups into project activities. No vulnerable groups will be adversely affected by the project neither any other group. The question rather is how the project can make sure that vulnerable groups will benefit more than others.

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