



# Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

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Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 20-Feb-2020 | Report No: PIDC204354



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Project Name
P172582		Moderate	Child Protection and Development Project
Region	Country	Date PID Prepared	Estimated Date of Approval
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	St Maarten	20-Feb-2020	
Financing Instrument	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency	
Investment Project Financing	UNICEF Netherland	UNICEF Netherland	

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

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	5.00
<b>Total Financing</b>	5.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	5.00
Single Purpose Trust Fund	5.00

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

**Sint Maarten is a high-income constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean, along with Aruba and Curacao.** It occupies the southern half of an island shared with the French overseas collectivity of Saint Martin. It is the most densely populated country in the Caribbean with a population of roughly 40,000 in an area of 34 square km and a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$25,381 (Central Bank of Curacao and Sint Maarten, based on 2018 estimates), among the highest in the region.



**Sint Maarten is particularly subject to natural disasters with the result that it periodically suffers destructive disruption of living conditions, infrastructure and economic activities.** Critical infrastructure is particularly at risk of hurricanes, and alternative services are limited. Power generation is almost completely dependent on imported heavy fuel oil and 100 percent of the public drinking water is produced by desalination. When these facilities are damaged, services are lost until repairs can be completed.

**On September 6, 2017 Irma, a Category 5 storm made landfall on Sint Maarten, causing significant destruction with winds of more than 185 mph (296 km/h) leaving a trail of devastation throughout the country.** During the landfall, the storm's eye passed directly through Sint Maarten exposing it to the highest wind velocities in the storm. Irma was shortly followed by smaller-scale Hurricane Maria on September 19, further damaging the country's infrastructure. While the loss of life was limited, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) estimates damages and losses related to Hurricane Irma and Maria at US\$1.38 billion (129.5 percent of GDP) and US\$976.5 million (91.8 percent of GDP), respectively, affecting 90 percent of all infrastructure and large parts of the natural environment.

**Although little evidence is available about the distribution of disaster impacts on vulnerable groups in Sint Maarten, international experience indicates that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are likely disproportionately affected by disasters,** including Sint Maarten's large number of female-headed households (38.7 percent of all households).

**Sint Maarten's overall unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate have significantly increased following the hurricane due to the shutting down of tourism businesses.** Employment in the tourism sector has been particularly impacted by the hurricane. Prior to the hurricane, tourism created employment for approximately one third of the employed population. Nearly six months after the hurricane, the hospitality industry was estimated to be working at just 17 percent capacity. At 23.8 percent, unemployment rate among youth still nearly three times higher than the national rate of around 6 percent (Sint Maarten Government Statistical Yearbook 2017). This context, combined with higher levels of violence affecting adolescents in the aftermath of the hurricane, makes the enabling environment for youth particularly challenging.

**To support rapid and sustainable recovery, the Government of The Netherlands has established a Single Donor Trust Fund (SDTF) managed by the World Bank for up to EUR 470 million.** The SDTF, governed by a Steering Committee, allocates financing to selected activities in support of recovery, reconstruction, and resilience under the framework of the NRRP. The Steering Committee instructed the Bank in July 14-15, 2019 to develop this project as part of an allocation to the Education sector in Sint Maarten. It is part of this much larger recovery effort to address urgent needs following Hurricanes Irma.



### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**Sint Maarten's education system has some strengths.** It is close to achieving universal primary education. The Constitution guarantees compulsory education, and 99 percent of children and adolescents are enrolled in primary and secondary education. Moreover, it comprises a small but suitable number of school infrastructure and staff to manage. There are 830 teachers for 7,900 students, which translate into low student-teacher ratio (10.8 in primary, compared to 14 and 15 in OECES and OECD countries respectively, and 9.4 in secondary, compared to 11 in OECES and 13 in OECD countries). Absenteeism rates are also low for teachers and students at the Primary level.

**However, some challenges remain in terms of equity.** St. Maarten has not participated in any international assessments of learning, so it is not possible to benchmark the learning performance of the system against comparators. In terms of national assessments, the FBE examination results for 2018 (At the conclusion of grade 6 all St. Maarten students take the Foundation-Based Education examination) indicate that students in the DPE (Department of Public Education) did worse on every subject than other schools. However, the performance of the public schools cannot be differentiated from that of the composition of their student bodies.

**Moreover, Sint Maarten's education system is highly fragmented in terms of language of instruction and governance, relative to its size.** There are three different types of schools: government owned (public schools), government subsidized, and non-subsidized schools (private schools). There are seven public primary schools and eleven subsidized primary schools, managed by four religious school boards: Stichting Protestants Christelijk Onderwijs Bovenwindse Eilanden (SPCOBE), Seventh-day Adventist (SDA), Methodist Agogic Centre Foundation, (MAC) and Stichting Katholiek Onderwijs St. Maarten (SKOS). English and Dutch-language schools co-exist. The accreditation and subsidization system are not standardized (private schools do not have to follow the curriculum and exams and do not have to be accredited).

**As in other sectors, hurricane Irma has significantly affected the education sector infrastructures.** The direct physical damages to the education, culture, youth and sport facilities were estimated at about US\$60.2 million and losses at about US\$1.7 million. Total needs were estimated at about US\$120 million. All schools were affected. Public schools were typically closed for four to six weeks. With respect to child facilities, 17 percent of daycare centers were destroyed, 37 percent require repairs to become operational, and 46 percent sustained minor damage. MECYS also reported that 64 percent of sports facilities sustained major damage, 46 percent were not operational at the time of the assessment and needed major repairs, and 23 percent are semi-operational (NRPP).

**The hurricane revealed that schools are insufficiently prepared for natural disasters.** Before Irma approached the island, all schools employed some basic form of disaster preparedness; e.g. securing lesson books, computers and other teaching and learning materials by placing them at the center of the classroom or storing them in secure 'bunker' type spaces. However, MECYS does not play an oversight role to enforce minimum requirements of preparedness as there is no comprehensive preparedness plan for the education sector on how to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the impact of potential hazards. The use of schools as



shelters is also problematic. Once occupied, schools could not resume classes until the displaced people return to their homes or are safely relocated to alternate locations. In addition, schools can sustain damage through looting or vandalism while occupied, which further delays the resumption of classes.

**The education system is also not equipped to cope with the psycho-social consequences of natural disasters on students and school staff.** Although no assessment on mental health is available, studies in other countries confirm the potential of high trauma resulting from natural disasters. The levels of fear and anxiety in Sint Maarten have increased, particularly during the hurricane season and the Police Department has reported increases in violent behavior. In addition, even though a referral mechanism is in place in schools for specialized care services, there is not enough specialized staff in Sint Maarten to cope with the demand. Lastly, school staff in charge of helping schools resume normal activity, were themselves affected and are not equipped to respond to students' needs.

**In addition, the Child Protection system was not prepared to deal with the increased number of child abuse and neglect during and after emergencies.** The adverse conditions in which families are still living lead to an increased risk of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect that the system cannot address in a timely and coordinated manner. Irma also revealed significant loopholes in the Child Protection System, cases having been reported of minor children living the island without their legal guardian. There is currently a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education, the Court of Guardianship of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health to effectively protect children during emergencies.

**To answer those emergency needs, the Government of Sint Maarten has developed an Education master plan.** It has four components: Reconstruction of schools, including special needs schools, a Care and special aid program, the strengthening of the higher education system and implementation arrangements, safeguards and fiduciary aspects.

#### Relationship to CPF

**The project will support the implementation of Sint Maarten's 2018 National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP),** which lays out priorities and a roadmap for the recovery, reconstruction, and resilience of Sint Maarten following the effects of Hurricane Irma on September 6th, 2017.

**The Project is also aligned with the GoSM 2019 Education Master Plan Project,** which aims at providing students and education staff with safe learning environments that address the needs of special care students, vulnerable students, their families, teachers and education staff who were affected by the hurricane.

**The Steering Committee of the Sint Maarten Trust Fund instructed the Bank in July 14-15, 2019** to develop this project. In agreement with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, this proposed Project will complement a grant to the Government of Sint Maarten in the form of a Resilient School Project



(P172753). This closely related Resilient School Project - currently under preparation - will be implemented by the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRBP - The National Recovery Program Bureau has been established under the Emergency Recovery Project as Project Implementation Unit).

### **C. Project Development Objective(s)**

#### Proposed Development Objective(s)

The objective of the Project is to strengthen (a) the resilience of students and staff to the emotional and physical impacts of natural disasters and (b) the child protection systems and services to improve preparation and response to natural disasters.

#### Key Results

The following results are expected and will be further developed as part of project preparation:

- Increase students and school staff's access to support and care services (number of staff and students trained to identify psychosocial needs and protection, including women);
- Support adolescents' positive behaviors (number of professionals trained on adolescents rights, methodologies developed, beneficiaries reached, including women - Indicator to be developed during preparation);
- Increase schools' preparedness and capacity to respond to natural disasters (number of students trained, number of teachers trained on school safety and resilience, disaster preparedness plans prepared, adopted and implemented by schools according to the revised methodology of the school plans; number of beneficiaries trained);
- Strengthen the child protection system (indicator to be developed during preparation).

### **D. Preliminary Description**

#### Activities/Components

The project has four components:

#### **Component 1: Nurturing learning environments and safe spaces for children and adolescents**

##### **Sub-component 1.1: Support to students and staff well-being**

This sub-component aims at increasing students and school staff's well-being in the context of post-disaster psychosocial needs. It will also focus on reducing the increased number of violent incidents happening in and around the schools to create safer environments to children and adolescents. It will finance, *inter alia* (i) the development and implementation of a psychosocial support program for school staff as well as the strengthening of protocols and practices for school care teams, (ii) the implementation of violence



prevention programs and peer-support group initiatives against violence and (iii) support to extra-curricular and community awareness activities to stimulate social cohesion.

### **Sub-component 1.2: Support to building adolescents' positive behaviors**

This sub-component will address the post-Irma growing needs of adolescents in the context of increased violence and difficult labor market transition for youth by promoting positive behaviors, participation in community organizations and information on mental and sexual health. It will finance inter alia (i) the development and dissemination of communication tools on youth needs and rights for government staff and communities, (ii) the development and implementation of a strategy to improve adolescents' well-being including access to mental health services and sexual and reproductive rights information coupled with the implementation of volunteer activities, (iii) support to the Sint Maarten Youth Council and Youth Parliament, and (iv) strategies to improve participation to community activities.

### **Component 2: Strengthening of the Sector and School capacity to prepare and respond to natural disasters**

This component seeks to strengthen coordination for disaster risk management at the system and school levels to better prepare and respond to natural hazards.

#### **Sub-component 2.1: Support to the Development and the Implementation of a Disaster Risk Management Strategy for the Education sector**

In the aftermath of hurricanes Irma, UNICEF NL has supported MECYS to establish a Safety and Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) with the objective of preparing for and coordinating the Ministry's response to natural disasters. Building on this work, this component will finance technical support to the development of the Education Sector Contingency plan and its implementation by MECYS. It will also include a communication campaign and support to the Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum in order to promote regional knowledge exchange.

#### **Sub-component 2.2: Strengthening of the school capacity to respond to natural disasters**

A roadmap toward a Comprehensive School Safety Framework was developed by MECYS with UNICEF NL's support, as well as School Safety and Emergency Guidelines (equivalent to a framework of school preparedness plans). Materials were provided by UNICEF-NL to the schools during the summer 2019 to implement those guidelines. This sub-component will finance inter alia (i) the adaptation of the School Safety and Emergency Guidelines in schools based on lessons learned from initial implementation and (ii) trainings to Safety and Emergency Teams in schools on disaster risk management.

### **Component 3: Child Protection**



This component seeks to strengthen the child protection system including policies, institutional mechanism and practices aimed at preventing and responding to children’s rights violations, defined as violence, abuse, neglect, abduction and exploitation.

**3.1 Disaster preparedness on child protection in emergencies**

Irma has revealed the need to strengthen the child protection system during emergencies, particularly regarding emergencies procedures that involve children (children had left the island after the hurricane without a legal guardian, professionals working with children had not received the appropriate training to deal with issues related to the evacuation of children). This sub-component will finance annual trainings to immigration and police officers as well as notaries on child evacuation during emergencies. It will also provide technical assistance and support the signing of an inter-island protocol on the evacuation of children.

**3.2 Support to the child protection system, structures and data**

Before hurricane Irma, MECYS Department of Youth was coordinating the development of an inter-ministerial Child Protection Policy, as a component of the Draft Integrated Youth Policy. This activity has not progressed from the initial development phase due to other departmental and ministerial priorities during the recovery activities. This sub-component will help to re-initiate the development of the draft Child Protection Policy and its implementation by MECYS. Specifically, it will put in place institutional mechanisms to collect reports of child abuse and address the cases in a timely manner by designing and piloting a new reporting system for child abuse between MECYS, VSA (Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor) and the Court of Guardianship of the Ministry of Justice. The sub-component will also support the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group on child protection, training programs for police forces, improvement of emergency and health services geared towards children’s rights, as well as communication campaigns. It will also ensure civil society involvement throughout the process.

**Component 4: Project implementation support**

This component will encompass the support for the administration, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Project.

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**Environmental and Social Standards Relevance**

**E. Relevant Standards**

ESS Standards		Relevance
ESS 1	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
ESS 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant





ESS 2	Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
ESS 3	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 4	Community Health and Safety	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 5	Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 6	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 7	Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 8	Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 9	Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

**Legal Operational Policies**

Safeguard Policies	Triggered	Explanation (Optional)
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 and Social Risk Rating of the Project is Moderate. No adverse environmental risks or impacts are associated with the project. The outputs of the technical assistance activities are not expected to result in environmental impacts. UNICEF NL has the institutional capacity to manage the environmental and social safeguards standards associated with the project and to manage social risks should they materialize.

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