



# Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

## Concept Stage

### ( ESRS Concept Stage)

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**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Operation Data**

Operation ID	Product	Operation Acronym	Approval Fiscal Year
P180688	Investment Project Financing (IPF)	Increase Resilience of Ecuador's Schools	2024
Operation Name	Strengthening the Resilience of Ecuadorian Schools		
Country/Region Code	Beneficiary country/countries (borrower, recipient)	Region	Practice Area (Lead)
Ecuador	Ecuador	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Education
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Republic of Ecuador	Ministry of Education	18-Oct-2023	05-Oct-2023

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**Proposed Development Objective**

The objective of the Project is to improve the safety and resilience of physical learning environments and their capacity to prepare preschool students for learning in selected public schools, as well as to respond promptly and effectively in case of an Eligible Crisis or Emergency.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
<b>Total Operation Cost</b>	<b>190.00</b>

**B. Is the operation being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?**

No

**C. Summary Description of Proposed Operation [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]**



The proposed Project seeks to strengthen the safety and resilience of school infrastructure in Ecuador to address Ecuador’s high vulnerability to climate risks, as well as to make it inclusive, energy-efficient, healthy, and learning-centered. It will also support activities to boost students’ readiness for learning through the implementation of new pedagogical models in Early Childhood Education, support for the creation of library networks in marginalized areas, and strategies to prevent and mitigate students’ psychosocial risks (particularly among refugees, displaced persons, and migrants). To ensure that these interventions are adequately implemented, the Project will also support project management activities, and will foster the carrying out of impact and process evaluations, student and teacher assessments, and other studies to inform policy- and decision-making in the sector. The Project will be comprised of four components. The first component will support holistic investments in school infrastructure to increase the safety and resilience of schools to climate events and to correct climate-induced damages; the adaptation and rehabilitation of existing schools in urban and rural areas of low exposure to climate risks to meet quality local and international quality standards; the replacement of damaged infrastructure in areas of limited accessibility and high security risk with prefabricated infrastructure that meets local and international design standards for the education sector; and the technical design, construction, and/or acquisition of equipment to ensure the operationalization of the adapted and rehabilitated schools. Component 2 would support activities to boost student readiness for learning by combining investments to improve the quality of children-teacher interactions in preschool, including the adaptation of physical environments and enhancing teachers’ capacity to implement a new competency-based curriculum; the creation of community-based libraries; and the improvement of student wellbeing, particularly among refugees, displaced persons, and migrants. Component 3 would seek to strengthen the education system’s evaluation capacities and ensure the appropriate management and monitoring of the Project. Lastly, and considering Ecuador’s high vulnerability to climate-induced risks, a Contingent Emergency Response Component with zero allocation will be included to allow for rapid reallocation of project funds in the event of an eligible natural disaster or crisis that has caused or is likely to imminently cause major adverse economic and/or social impacts.

#### D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Detailed operation location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

The scope of the proposed Project is nationwide. Physical adaptation and rehabilitation of schools under Component 1 (C1) and the CERC under Component 4 (C4) could happen anywhere in the country. Similarly, Component 2 (C2) activities related to school pedagogical and administrative reform, data collection, data systematization and knowledge sharing will be national in scope. With a total area of 283,561 km<sup>2</sup>, Ecuador lies between latitudes 2°N and 5°S. Ecuador has four geographic regions: (i) The Coast, which is the western region bordering the Pacific Ocean and includes the western provinces of the Andean mountain range—seven provinces (ii) The Sierra, which consists of the provinces of the Andean and inter-Andean highlands—ten provinces, (iii) The Amazon, formed by the provinces of the Amazon jungle—six provinces, and (iv) The Insular Region that includes the Galápagos Islands, about 1,000 kilometers west of the continent in the Pacific Ocean.

The country’s high indices of geographical and biological diversity are mirrored by a high degree of socio-cultural diversity. Ecuador’s Constitution recognizes the plurinational and multicultural nature of its heterogeneous population, and according to the last population census for which results are available (in 2010), the majority of the Ecuadorian population self-identified as Mestizo (72 percent), White (6.1 percent) or Other (0.4 percent), whereas 21 percent of the population self-identified as part of a minority ethnic group: Indigenous (7 percent), Afro-descendant (7.1 percent), or Montubio (7.4 percent). Indigenous peoples (IPs) live predominantly in rural areas in the highlands and in



the Amazon (80 percent), Montubios along the coast, and three-quarters of Afro-Ecuadorians in urban areas. It is well documented that where these minority groups reside, access to quality public education is limited; this constitutes one among several dimensions of their relative vulnerability.

Ecuador is among the 10 countries with the highest natural disaster risk in the region and among the top 20 in the world according to the World Risk Index report from 2022. This is due to its exposure to geological and hydrometeorological hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, and droughts. The vast majority (96%) of the Ecuadorian urban population residing in coastal and mountainous areas suffers from increased susceptibility to phenomena like El Niño, which causes floods and landslides, and La Niña, which causes droughts. Climate extremes are affecting the population and economy, and with climate change projected to intensify such events, the incidence of natural disasters in the country is expected to rise. The earthquake of March 18, 2023, together with heavy rains, has led to extensive damage to critical public infrastructure, including schools.

As a result of an unprecedented Venezuelan exodus in recent years, an estimated 1.9 million Venezuelans passed through Ecuador between 2016 and mid-2021. Most continued their journey to countries further south, although around 430,000 chose to settle in Ecuador. The search for better conditions, integration, options for regularization, personal connections, and economic opportunities seem to be the main pull factors that influence the decision of Venezuelans to remain in Ecuador. By end-2021 the migrant population represented 2.3 percent of the country's population, causing an impact of less than one percentage point of GDP. Despite its limited fiscal impact, the massive arrival of people from Venezuela in such a short period has posed numerous difficulties for Ecuador's institutional, legal, and service delivery structures, a challenge that continues to this day. In addition to providing a humanitarian reception, the Government of Ecuador (GoE) has had to provide for migrants' and refugees' needs and livelihoods, ranging from social assistance to health, housing, and education.

#### D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

The proposed Project will be prepared and implemented by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). To properly address E&S management issues in its previous projects supported by international development agencies, the Ministry formed an environmental and social team consisting of four professionals, all of whom are based in the Ministry's National Infrastructure Directorate: one environmental specialist, one social specialist, one environmental analyst and an environmental assistant. This team has experience managing World Bank-financed projects, although under the safeguard operational policies; also, at the same time it has gained experience executing projects financed by institutions aligned with international environmental and social standards, such as the IDB and CAF. Moreover, its work has been complemented at the subnational level by eight E&S technical specialists (one per each of the country's "planning zones") who work to monitor relevant activities in decentralized fashion.

The four E&S staff who are centrally based in MINEDUC have developed two model environmental and social management plans and related tools that allow its entire team to identify impacts and risks in the design and construction of educational facilities at various scales, to propose mitigation measures, to establish and enforce requirements for contractors, and to address and resolve grievances. Also, training sessions addressing MINEDUC's model environmental and social management plans have been delivered to subnational technical specialists (also referred as E&S "delegates") and MINEDUC's contractors by the E&S national team. The focus of these trainings were on the specific ESMP applicable to the projects where E&S delegates and contractors were in charge, alongside orientations and environmental and social issues awareness sessions.



As MINEDUC has not implemented projects under the ESF, the Bank will provide focused training to its specialists to help them identify and manage E&S risks and impacts relevant to the proposed project activities in accordance with ESS requirements. In addition, in an attempt to build adequate institutional capacity, the Bank task team will work closely with the implementing agency to develop a training plan during preparation and early stages of implementation of the project on (i) E&S management approaches and tools; (ii) supervision of Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) requirements; (iii) management of potential sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA-SH) risks; and (iv) monitoring of E&S requirements and performance of the project.

## II. SCREENING OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

### A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

#### Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The environmental risk rating is considered Moderate at this stage due to the anticipated risks and impacts derived from the execution of activities under Component 1 such as minor civil works related to the adaptation and refurbishment of schools and the construction and upgrading of their electrical and sanitary installations. Overall, due to the nature of the proposed activities, the associated impacts are expected to be predictable, temporary, reversible, low in magnitude, site-specific, and with low probability of major adverse effects to human health or the environment; in addition, such potential risks and impacts can be easily mitigated in a predictable manner. Specific technical details related to infrastructure activities, including the location, type, and collective scale/magnitude will be further detailed during project preparation. Some of the key potential impacts may include: (i) nuisance related to dust generation, vibration, noise and odors; (ii) generation, management and disposal of non-hazardous and hazardous solid waste, residual construction materials waste, and hazardous materials from demolitions; (iii) generation and discharge of wastewater from civil works; (iv) disposal from water and sanitation connections; (v) health and safety risks to the project workforce and local communities in the surrounding areas of the project activities; and (vii) direct and indirect impacts from natural hazards that may occur in the selected lots and surrounding areas. Such impacts will be addressed through proper screening and assessment of the educational facilities that are eligible for intervention, in observance of factors of E&S sensitivity for the construction work to be undertaken. MINEDUC has developed and is implementing a comprehensive Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) which includes standard measures to manage E&S risks and impacts appropriate to the nature and scale of different project activities, particularly those related to the minor civil works under Component 1. MINEDUC will rely on this existing ESMP and complement it as necessary so as to align E&S issues management in the project with ESF requirements. To do this, its in-house E&S team working at the central level will identify gaps between its existing ESMP and the WB’s ESF, enhance the existing ESMP, address the gaps and align it to the applicable ESF ESSs with the guidance of the WB’s ESF team. MINEDUC’s E&S team will also develop an Exclusion List aiming to screen out any Substantial or High risk activities, such as physical and/or economic displacement, environmentally harmful land-use changes like deforestation, or significant adverse impacts on any type of natural habitats or cultural resources. MINEDUC has successfully implemented similar projects under IDB and CAF E&S requirements and WB E&S safeguards policies. As a result, its centrally based E&S staff is experienced and capable of adjusting its existing ESMP to comply with the WB’s ESF requirements. Just the same, the Bank will support MINEDUC during preparation and the early stages of implementation to ensure that the PIU achieves adequate ESF-related knowledge and E&S management performance in accordance with the requirements of the relevant ESSs. For the above-mentioned

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reasons, and making use of the precautionary principle, the task team has assessed the environmental risk as Moderate. The risk rating will be reviewed and adjusted during preparation, if necessary, as more detailed information becomes available.

**Social Risk Rating**

Moderate

The social risk classification for the project is considered Moderate at this stage. Given the predominance of adaptation and refurbishment works re: the educational facilities selected for inclusion in the project, it will require specific management instruments oriented to environmental and social impact mitigation and risk management, labor management, community health and safety, land management (but solely in terms of follow-through on the transfer of lands to MINEDUC’s control), and attention to vulnerable groups. These vulnerable groups include indigenous peoples, Afro-Ecuadorians and Montubios (collectively known as “IPAM”), disabled people, and migrants. In terms of impacts prevention, mitigation and management, the Borrower is expected to make extensive use of existing management plans, risk screening matrices, and other tools developed for other projects MINEDUC has recently implemented (see the ESS1 section below), which greatly reduces the overall level of risk. Whatever complementary measures are required, will be specified in an enhanced ESMP that complies with the relevant ESF requirements, which the Borrower will prepare, consult on, adopt and disclose prior to project appraisal. There are a number of reasons for this: (i) the project is not expected to require any acquisition of land resulting in physical and/or economic displacement, and there also will not be any restrictions in access to land or natural resources having adverse impacts on communities who are dependent on them; (ii) the proposed small-scale works will be carried out within the existing footprints of pre-established educational facilities (though some of them in more inaccessible areas may be makeshift or temporary) and certain activities—such as the construction of sanitary facilities for women or girls only, or that provide access to the disabled—will have positive, inclusion-oriented impacts; (iii) in terms of labor management, the main risks for project workers, particularly contractors and subcontractors, will be managed both through the application of the relevant national regulations and of the MINEDUC ESMP, but will also be specified in Labor Management Procedures (LMPs) prepared by the Borrower; and (iv) no significant risks are foreseen for IPAM, given that, owing to a very recent shift in responsibilities within the State apparatus, no civil works under C1 will be carried out in public schools within their territories. At the same time, IPAM are expected to be affected by, and involved in, the curricular reforms and educational quality improvement measures contemplated under C2, and appropriate ways of assessing the impacts of these measures on them will be explored during project preparation. There will also be a need to assess further and address risks related to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA-SH), mainly because of the project’s contracting needs and the rural settings where many of the selected educational facilities are located. In terms of community health and safety, considering that the project will also involve works in urban and peri-urban areas, and that Ecuador has been undergoing a period of economic and political distress, the machinery and equipment needed is at risk of theft or damage, which may require the contracting of private security personnel to guard it. This personnel must be adequately trained in the proportionate use of force and respect for the rights of surrounding community members, as per ESS4. Finally, for all project components (as technical assistance, or TA, activities are also included as part of Component 3), there is a need to adequately manage communication flows and consultation dynamics involving different sets of stakeholders, requiring the preparation and implementation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). For the above-mentioned reasons, the task team has assessed the social risk rating as Moderate.

**Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Risk Rating**

Moderate

Risks related to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and/or sexual harassment (SH) have been identified as potentially cross-cutting in this project, given that under C1, there will be civil works carried out in a variety of locations, likely

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involving different sets of contractors. During project preparation the risks will be addressed via (i) agreement on appropriate measures (worker codes of conduct, etc.) to be incorporated into the relevant documents (i.e. LMP, SEP, ESMP); (ii) confirmation of PIU willingness to socialize the issues involved among potential beneficiaries; and (iii) PIU capacity for addressing any incidents that may come up directly and appropriately. If after further analysis the Moderate risk persists, a GBV Action Plan will be prepared and annexed to the ESF ESMP.

## B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

### B.1. General Assessment

#### ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

##### **Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Operation:**

This Standard is relevant. MINEDUC's environmental and social team has developed ESMPs for similar projects, including a methodology which identifies all civil works activities relevant for the construction of educational facilities and analyzes their E&S impacts. MINEDUC uses an E&S matrix that allows the team to identify main impacts, positive and negative, and identifies when their proposed management plans will be implemented according to the project schedule and phases: i) construction and maintenance, ii) closure and iii) operation. For instance, MINEDUC's implementation of its existing ESMP for rehabilitation and refurbishing activities begins with the E&S impact matrix which in a similar existing project identified and analyzed at least 40 impacts for environmental and social components, in which 4 were positive and 36 were negative. From this assessment, there were no high negative impacts; all of them (36) turned out to be medium and low impacts (25% and 65% of the analyzed impacts respectively). This exercise also identified E&S management plans and its main activities according the different project phases: i) Impacts Prevention and Mitigation Plan, ii) Contingency and Emergency Plan, iii) Environmental Education and Training Plan, iv) Waste Management Plan, v) Community Relations Management Plan, vi) rehabilitation of affected areas, vii) Closure Plans, viii) Monitoring and Follow-Up Plan, and ix) Health and Safety Management Plan. MINEDUC's E&S team also put together a complementary document for contractors addressing the environmental and social management for construction works and checklist instruments for them to use as guidance. These documents highlight the status of the lands used (occupation and legal status) for the schools and E&S legal requirements. They also make clear that the contractor is required to have an environmental and a health & safety specialist at the worksite and to comply with MINEDUC's ESMP, including: i) the above-mentioned nine E&S management plans, ii) a code of conduct for workers, iii) the socialization of the scope of works with nearby communities, iv) implementation of a grievance mechanism, and v) a reporting scheme for the implementation of the ESMP.

While the scope and locations of many infrastructure investment activities under C1 have been defined, in several cases they have not. As the residual investments could be carried out anywhere in the different Ecuadorian regions, the project will take as a basis MINEDUC's existing ESMP, identify gaps in relation to the relevant ESSs, and enhance and complement its approach, scope and management measures. This process will entail an exploration with the Ministry's E&S specialists of which approach to evaluating social risks and impacts, in particular, is most appropriate (i.e. whether it be via a free-standing social assessment, more rigorous screening, or something else). A draft of the "ESF ESMP" developed during project preparation will be disclosed prior to appraisal and reflect all of the E&S requirements needed to be in compliance with the ESF, the World Bank Group Environment, Health and Safety Guidelines, and the applicable national regulations. Also, an Exclusion List will be developed to ensure E&S risks of





the potential project interventions are Low to Moderate, screening out activities that are both High and Substantial risk. The final version of the ESF ESMP will be developed, consulted on, adopted and disclosed within 60 days after the project's Effective Date.

The ESF ESMP will include measures to ensure the TORs for all anticipated TA activities include relevant ESF provisions according to the requirements set out in paragraphs 14 to 18 of ESS1, as relevant, appropriate to the nature of the risks and impacts. Besides TORs, work plans or other documents defining the scope and outputs of technical assistance activities will be drafted so that the advice and other support provided is consistent with ESSs 1 to 10. Additionally, technical designs for works will take into account the requirements of the ESSs, including on energy efficiency, climate adaptation and resilience, and universal access.

For Component 4 (the "CERC"), the project will prepare and adopt a manual that lays out the procedures and requirements to comply with the ESF, which will include the preparation of a CERC-specific ESMF, once it has been determined that the component will be activated. In line with the WB's CERC Guidance (October 2017), the CERC Manual and accompanying ESMF must be completed prior to any emergency disbursements, as a disbursement condition.

An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be prepared by the Bank and MINEDUC. The ESCP will include all necessary actions and measures that the Borrower will need to undertake during preparation and implementation, their timeframes, and M&E arrangements. The draft ESCP will be disclosed by MINEDUC and the Bank prior to Appraisal, while a negotiated version will be disclosed and as part of the Loan Agreement.

The project implementation phase will need to include capacity building measures not just for contractors but also for MINEDUC's E&S teams at different levels, starting with the PIU. These measures will be reflected in detail in the Project's ESCP. During project preparation the Bank will assess the capacity of the PIU to manage the E&S issues foreseen to be addressed throughout Project implementation in accordance with the ESSs.

### **ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

This Standard is relevant. Most of the project's financing is dedicated to the execution of infrastructure works, but these will be small-scale, highly localized and, in most cases, take place in relation to groups or sets of pre-identified schools. The process of carrying out and delivering these works, and of finalizing the selection of participating schools, will require straightforward yet well-structured forms of stakeholder consultation and participation, as well as an adequate level of communication with local governments, the local educational community (teachers, parents, students) benefiting from the interventions, and the general public.

Moreover, proper engagement with ever-broadening circles of the educational community in Ecuador will be a must in the case of the "softer" activities related to curricular reforms and educational quality improvements contemplated under C2. While these reforms and improvements have no doubt been informed by the latest pedagogical approaches, models, and standards, soliciting feedback on them from expert educators to ordinary parents could help to determine the extent to which they're likely to succeed. For this component, IPAM, migrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, and other vulnerable groups are among those whose feedback would be important, requiring the adoption and implementation of differentiated engagement approaches for them.





Appropriate communications and active management of expectations among beneficiary populations, which includes functional, credible, and accessible mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback and register complaints, will be essential.

To ensure an adequate stakeholder engagement process in all these cases, the Borrower will prepare, consult on, disclose, and adopt a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) prior to appraisal. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will include measures for managing communications and engagement activities regarding the scope of school-based interventions and curricular reforms. Prior to Appraisal, to provide project stakeholders with information on anticipated E&S management issues during project implementation, MINEDUC will also prepare, consult on, and disclose an ESMP that has been enhanced in accordance with the relevant ESF requirements, to include a description of E&S risks and possible impacts related to each project activity, and the corresponding E&S management measures. Labor Management Procedures (LMP) will also be drafted and disclosed. Finally, the Borrower will develop, adopt, and disclose the final ESF ESMP, LMP and SEP within sixty (60) days after the Effective Date of the Loan Agreement. The development of these documents and their approval by the Bank will also be a disbursement condition for C1 civil works. A project-level Grievance Mechanism (GM) will be established and, during implementation, managed and monitored by the social (or socio-environmental) specialist to be hired to work full-time for the project as part of its PIU. GM details will be described in the SEP, and its implementation will be an ESCP commitment.

## **B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts**

**A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Operation.**

### **ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions**

This Standard is relevant. The use of labor is required for the execution of the various project components, whether they involve schools adaptation or refurbishment activities, and must therefore be properly managed. The types of workers that are likely to be involved include Direct (for the project PIU) and Contracted. In Ecuador, labor regulations are quite solid and have extensive regulations for managing labor and health and safety issues. There are also several regulatory bodies, which, depending on the type of labor relationship, establish a set of rights and obligations of workers and employers. Depending on the component, the identification of the type of workers to be involved will be reconfirmed, the legal framework governing their contracts must be determined, an assessment of the levels of risk to which they will be exposed, and measures to prevent or mitigate their occurrence. The use of community workers is not foreseen given the type of project as adaptations and refurbishments to be developed under C1 and C2 have minor civil works where approximately 25 contracted workers (including supervision) are expected to be hired.

Construction will be carried out with local contractors and subcontractors according to local labor regulations. As part of its existing ESMP, MINEDUC has developed a Health and Safety Plan (HSP) where H&S impacts have been identified and management measures are proposed with the aim to protect the workers' health and respect their rights in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Labor and the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute. The existing HSP include, among others, identifying risk areas, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), accidents prevention and registries, internal regulation for H&S, provision of fresh water for workers, COVID-19, asbestos and GBV protocols. Each of the management measures have identified relevant Key Performance Indicators, registries or evidence for compliance and deadlines.



The Borrower will prepare Labor Management Procedures (LMP) in accordance with the requirements of national law and ESS2, which will be adopted prior to the contracting of any project workers. Among other things, the LMP will address occupational health and safety issues; provide for the prevention of SEA-SH and other forms of harassment and abuse through the adoption of codes of conduct for workers; and include a specific GM for workers that is capable of also addressing aspects related to incidents of harassment, abuse and gender-based violence. Given the nature of the interventions, no labor influx is foreseen.

### **ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management**

This Standard is relevant. Under Component 1, “Resilient and Inclusive School Infrastructure”, the project will finance civil works (adaptation and refurbishment). Project activities and civil works investments are expected to be sources of pollution, emissions (including GHGs), and users of resources as considered by ESS3. The Project will not include the acquisition or disposal of electronic waste, therefore management measures are not included for them. The types of potential pollution sources are minimal and include construction waste, runoff from construction sites and from civil works activities, use of materials, including hazardous materials for construction, such as asbestos, and petroleum-based products for vehicles, and air pollution from operation of vehicles. Hazardous materials will be responsibly managed and disposed of according to its dedicated management plan. MINEDUC’s existing ESMP defines institutional responsibilities and guide the preparation of site-specific management plans, including budget for monitoring and contractor’s capacity-building regarding pollution prevention and emergency incident response.

The Project’s pollution prevention and management response include the following six aspects, which the first three are contemplated in the existing ESMP and the rest of them will be complemented in the ESF ESMP: (i) vegetation and soil, soil removal and clearance of vegetation may occur from potential rehabilitation of abandoned areas of the school and from upgrading electrical and sanitary facilities; (ii) waste, construction waste will include mostly waste from excavated soil and debris; (iii) pollution, the Project design is not expected to imply significant potential for air pollution, disturbance by noise, or other forms of pollution and hazardous materials, but identified impacts and risks generated during the construction phase from the use of vehicles and construction activities are included in the existing ESMP; (iv) efficiency measures, project investments will promote climate-smart technologies aiming to increase resilience. The interventions contemplate the implementation of prefabricated schools that allow constructive advantages such as sustainable manufacturing, design flexibility, speed of installation, and low cost; (v) water use; activities under the Project will include the installation of new sanitation services, as such, the Borrower will adopt measures, to the extent technically and financially feasible, to avoid or minimize water usage; (vi) energy efficiency; the Project will finance civil works demonstrating savings in terms of energy and energy saving in the materials used. It is expected that the ESF ESMP includes tools for the contractors to identify if there is any preexisting environmental liability in the project area that need to be mitigated as part of the construction activities.

### **ESS4 Community Health and Safety**

This Standard is relevant. Some of the proposed activities may expose the school community to health and safety risks. Foreseen risks and impacts include potential accidents derived from increased traffic surrounding the intervened schools and the increase of dust in the school's surroundings. Engineering designs will consider disaster risk, universal access, and safety of materials to be used, among other considerations under ESS4 requirements.



The ESF ESMP will identify and lay out generic measures to minimize community risks to these and other issues to be identified and assessed during preparation, while site-specific planning will confirm relevant issues and include more detailed management measures. Among the expected specific measures to address community health and safety, the ESF ESMP will include pedestrian safety, as well as requirements for the adoption of signage and safety barriers in or near construction zones and safe storage arrangements for construction materials, and equipment, measures to avoid the spreading of COVID-19 and other potential infectious diseases, and SEA-SH risk management procedures.

The ESF ESMP will provide measures to manage risks and impacts due to noise, dust and vibration resulting from project activities during construction work. Additionally, the ESF ESMP will include specific measures to reduce the impacts of these activities, as necessary, to ensure compliance with this ESS. The use of private security forces is foreseen, as construction sites will have to hire private security services to safeguard materials and equipment. The participation of public forces is not foreseen. The ESF ESMP will contextualize relevant information regarding crime and violence in the intervention areas and assess if additional security support and safety measures are necessary to protect workers and communities. If armed security forces are expected to participate in some capacity during Project activities, the ESCP and the ESF ESMP will specify requirements to carry out security risk assessments to determine the scope of participation of private security forces, identify relevant Codes of Conduct, and establish procedures to be followed in cases of allegations of SEA/sexual harassment/human rights violations or misbehavior.

MINEDUC, together with the Bank, will ensure that the Life and Fire Safety considerations established in the Bank note “Implementations of the Bank’s Life and Fire Safety Requirements for Building Accessible to the Public” are complied with and implemented accordingly.

#### **ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement**

Based on the information currently available, this Standard is not relevant. The adaptation and rehabilitation of school structures to be supported under C1 will all be highly localized and small-scale in nature, and therefore easily mitigated and managed from both a social and environmental point of view. These interventions will take place within the footprints of existing schools, on lands already owned and managed by MINEDUC. Where "escuelas campamentos" have been damaged by climate change-related impacts and require repair or replacement by prefabricated structures, most of the lands involved are also owned by the Ministry and in those few cases where control of the lands is in the process of being transferred, the relevant specialist(s) in the PIU will conduct due diligence to confirm that the process has been satisfactorily completed before the contractors involved undertake any works. This will be described in the OM for the project. Also, all lands being transferred into the Ministry’s hands will be screened for any encumbrances (i.e. squatting or encroaching) to ensure the transfer process does not result in any physical and/or economic displacement, including that which could impact local livelihoods. In fact, any examples of such displacement will be screened out via application of the project’s Exclusion List.

These various assertions will be carefully assessed as part of the Bank’s due diligence during project preparation, at which time the relevance of this Standard will be revisited, and any needed changes made.

#### **ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources**



Based on the currently available information, this Standard is not relevant as works will be carried out in existing schools. Also, interventions in protected areas will be included in the Exclusion List.

### **ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities**

Based on the currently available information, this Standard is relevant. As it happens, none of the standing schools that will be refurbished, the new facilities that will be constructed within existing schools, or the temporary schools that will be replaced by prefabricated structures will be located within formally designated indigenous territories. In February 2023, the national agenda related to bilingual, inter-cultural education that used to be handled by MINEDUC became part of the mandate of a new government agency, the Bilingual Intercultural Education Secretariat (Secretaría de Educación Intercultural Biligüe). This includes the construction and/or renovation of schools in areas of the country where IPAM are concentrated.

And yet, Ecuador is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual country with a notable presence of indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities. A large majority of the population living in or near the areas targeted by the Project are indigenous, both in the Andes (the central Sierra region) and in the Amazon. A smaller proportion are Afro-descendants or Montubios, a mestizo ethnic group with rural roots whose members are scattered across the entire Ecuadorian coast. Given that C1 works will be carried out in schools that have the potential to be located anywhere in the country, it is distinctly possible that IPAM minority students will be scattered among the mestizo majority. The Ministry already plans to provide for the needs of such minority students, such as by providing for signage in multiple languages. Moreover, the curricular reforms and educational quality improvements that are planned as part of C2 should generate benefits for all public school students, particularly those in early childhood education (ECE). The psychosocial status assessment proposed to be carried out as part of Subcomponent 2.3, for example, will be universally applied, regardless of racial or ethnic background.

During project preparation, to inform the due diligence process, more precise socioeconomic and cultural data will be collected on IPAM beneficiaries, together with other targeted beneficiary groups (e.g. migrants), to guide the operationalization of the project's approach toward these groups in a differentiated and culturally pertinent manner. This will feed into the preparation-stage determination of which approach to evaluating the project's overall social risks and impacts is most appropriate (i.e. whether it be via a free-standing social assessment, more rigorous screening, or something else). The SEP to be drafted by appraisal will incorporate the relevant information gathered as part of the definition of culturally differentiated stakeholder engagement activities with IPAM. More than likely, the ESF ESMP will also need to provide relevant information on the characteristics of participating IPAM, so as to propose relevant measures that allow them to benefit from the project's interventions in a culturally appropriate way, while also avoiding, or outright excluding, the possibility of adverse impacts on them.

### **ESS8 Cultural Heritage**

This Standard is relevant as the anticipated adaptation and rehabilitation of schools and electrical and sanitary facilities may involve soil excavations. MINEDUC stated during the identification mission that project activities will not include the rehabilitation of buildings which could be considered of cultural or historic value. Despite this, the ESF ESMP will include provisions for site specific-level screening and assessment of any known sites or remains of cultural or historic importance which may be impacted, as well as identification of any sites of cultural/social importance for



local communities. The ESF ESMP will furthermore include Chance Finds Procedures for the construction areas, and construction contracts will include clauses requiring civil contractors to take proper protective measures in case cultural heritage sites are discovered, including to stop construction activities if archaeological or cultural sites are encountered during construction activities. No impacts on intangible cultural heritage are expected as a result of project activities.

**ESS9 Financial Intermediaries**

This Standard is not relevant as the project will not make use of any financial intermediaries.

**C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply**

**OP 7.50 Operations on International Waterways** No

**OP 7.60 Operations in Disputed Areas** No

**III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE**

**A. Is a common approach being considered?** No

**Financing Partners**

N/A

**B. Proposed Measures, Actions and Timing (Borrower’s commitments)**

**Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:**

By Appraisal: Develop and disclose: (i) a draft ESCP; (ii) a draft SEP; (iii) a draft ESF ESMP outlining the activities to be carried out by the project, describing E&S risks and possible impacts related to each activity, proposing E&S management measures in accordance with relevant ESSs, and codifying an Exclusion List to ensure that E&S risks remain Low to Moderate. Also, consultations will be carried out by the Borrower on the draft SEP and ESMP.

**Possible issues to be addressed in the Borrower Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP):**

1. Relevant E&S Instruments (final ESF ESMP, LMP, and final SEP) shall be developed, adopted, and disclosed within 60 days after the Effective Date of the Loan Agreement.
2. An Exclusion List shall be part of the final ESF ESMP to ensure Low to Moderate E&S risks.
3. Incidents and accidents notifications.
4. Operationalizing of the project’s GM and the labor-specific GM.
5. E&S capacity building measures for project direct workers staff at the central and territorial levels throughout Project implementation.

**C. Timing**

Public Disclosure



**Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS**

15-Sep-2023

**IV. CONTACT POINTS**

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**Implementing Agency(ies)**

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education

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**VI. APPROVAL**

Task Team Leader(s):                      Ciro Avitabile, Antonella Novali, Helena Rovner

Public Disclosure



Practice Manager (ENR/Social)

Sofia De Abreu Ferreira Recommended on 03-Aug-2023 at 10:22:32 EDT

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