



# Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 13-Aug-2023 | Report No: PIDC33387

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Project Beneficiary(ies) Uzbekistan	Operation ID P177805	Operation Name Transforming Public Education for Economic Growth Project	
Region EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date 11-Nov-2023	Estimated Approval Date 09-Jan-2024	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing (IPF)	Borrower(s) Republic of Uzbekistan	Implementing Agency Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan	

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

The objectives of the proposed Project are to (i) improve student-centered teaching practices in primary education (Grades 1 - 4) and (ii) strengthen the education data governance system for decision making.

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)****Maximizing Finance for Development**

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?

Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Operation Cost</b>	<b>80.00</b>
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>80.00</b>
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Financing Gap</b>	<b>0.00</b>

**DETAILS****World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	50.00
IDA Credit	50.00



**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Other Sources	30.00
Islamic Development Bank	30.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Concept Review Decision

The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

1. **The Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) is committed to advancing the country’s transition to an inclusive market economy and to halving the poverty rate by 2026, with the vision of Uzbekistan to become an upper-middle-income country by 2030.** Despite the polycrisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on the economy, which have eroded household incomes, structural reforms enacted since 2017 and effective economic management have supported a strong macroeconomic environment. The economy grew by 7.4 percent in 2021, rebounding from 1.9 percent growth in 2020<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, in 2021, the poverty rate stood at 16.5 percent of the population (equivalent to around 5.7 million people)<sup>2</sup>, and food prices increased 43 percent between January 2020 and September 2022<sup>3</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Uzbekistan’s economy and the Government now faces the double challenge of supporting the recovery while continuing the structural transformation into a modern, market-oriented economy.<sup>4</sup>

2. **With an estimated at least 9 million new entrants in the labor market over the next 15 years, Uzbekistan’s steady-growing population places an urgent pressure to build stronger human capital investments.**<sup>5</sup> The country’s population has increased from 32.7 million in 2018, to 35.6 million in 2022. With a 1.59 percent annual growth rate in 2021<sup>6</sup>, the population is expected to increase to 49.5 million people by 2070<sup>7</sup>. The working age population has increased by over 50 percent since 2000. Approximately 60 percent of the population are children and young people below 30 years of age<sup>8</sup>. Thus, Uzbekistan will have a significantly larger share of youth in the coming decades compared

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. 2022. ‘Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Period FY2022-FY2026.’

<sup>2</sup> State Statistics Committee. Data Series. “Share of the low-income population in the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. 2022. ‘Advancing Uzbekistan’s Economic and Social Transformation Development Policy Operation: Program Document.’

<sup>4</sup> State Statistics Committee. Data Series. “Share of the low-income population in the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. 2022. ‘Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Period FY2022-FY2026.’

<sup>6</sup> State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan. <https://stat.uz/en/official-statistics/demography>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2022. ‘World Population Prospects 2022’.

<https://population.un.org/wpp/>

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF. 2020. ‘Youth of Uzbekistan: Challenges and Prospects’.



to any other period of the country. This provides the country with a window of opportunity for boosting economic prosperity, competitiveness, and reducing poverty and inequality. However, this window of demographic opportunity cannot stay open for long. By 2050, the share of older people is projected to start increasing. Thus, urgent actions are needed today to reap the benefits of this demographic dividend by building strong human capital. Despite progress over the last decade, Uzbekistan's Human Capital Index is still 0.6 on a scale between 0 and 1, underscoring multiple challenges in the country's human capital outcomes.

**3. Uzbekistan is among the most water- and gas-dependent countries in the world and remains highly sensitive to climate change.** The country is particularly exposed to risks of natural disasters, especially droughts, floods, and landslides, and these are projected to increase in the future as a result of climate change<sup>9</sup>. Uzbekistan experienced drought every five years in the 1980s and 90s, increasing to four episodes between 2000 and 2012. Flash flooding and mudflows pose an increasing threat to southern and eastern parts of Uzbekistan, with 3,300 such events having occurred in the country between 1900 and 2013. As of 2010, the population annually affected by flooding in Uzbekistan is estimated at 61,000 people and expected annual impact on gross domestic product (GDP) estimated at US\$181 million<sup>10</sup>. Despite these exposures, the country is also one of the world's most unsustainable and inefficient users of water and energy. Vulnerable groups, such as the poor, are disproportionately affected by natural hazards and climate variability. As the world's fifth most intensive greenhouse gas emitter, Uzbekistan needs to develop a long-term approach to the establishment of a carbon-neutral economy<sup>11</sup>.

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**4. Amidst a demographic bulge in the youth population and a growing student population, the GoU is striving to increase the quantity, and enhance the quality of teachers throughout the education system.** Between 2018 and 2021, the student population in general secondary education, that is Grades 1 to 11, increased from 5.8 million to 6.2 million. This is a notable growth of over 7 percent within three years. During the same period, the number of general education teachers also rose from 442,404 to 502,687, an increase of 14 percent, with females making up 68 percent of this figure.<sup>12</sup> In Uzbekistan, the average school size is about 600 students, and approximately 15 percent of schools are considered large (that is exceeding 1,000 students). The current educational system is however struggling to accommodate growing students within standard school hours. Consequently, more than 70 percent of general secondary schools operate on a double shift system. Of these, 37 percent of the first shift and 12 percent of the second shift already exceed a student-classroom ratio of 20:1. An approximate ratio of 15:1 is deemed appropriate.<sup>13</sup> To alleviate this issue, the government and Development Partners (such as the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank) plan to construct additional general secondary schools to reduce multi-shift schools. Simultaneously, the government intends to increase the quantity of high-quality teachers with improved content knowledge and pedagogical skills that are aligned with new competency-based standards.

**5. In December 2022, a major public administration reform was announced by the President, setting ambitious goals to reform the education sector.** This reform aimed at expanding the education system with quality, and the GoU has embarked on substantial system efficiency measures. Efficiency measures included reducing the number of government ministries and agencies, and consequently staff. The financial savings are essential to help address the

<sup>9</sup> World Bank. 2022. 'Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Period FY2022-FY2026.'

<sup>10</sup> World Bank and Asian Development Bank. 2021. "Climate Risk Country Profile: Uzbekistan."

<sup>11</sup> World Bank. 2022. 'Country Partnership Framework for the Republic of Uzbekistan for the Period FY2022-FY2026.'

<sup>12</sup> Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. <https://stat.uz/ru/>

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF. 2021. "Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis: 2021"



country's social issues. During this reform, the Ministry of Preschool Education and Ministry of Public Education were merged into a new Ministry of Preschool and School Education (MoPSE). Year 2023 has also been declared by the President the year of "Care for the Human Being and Quality Education". The ambitious goals to reform the education sector are guided by the country's 2019-2023 Education Sector Plan. There are thus ambitious reforms and initiatives set to improve the quality of education with support at the highest levels of government.

**6. To accelerate the implementation of the reforms in the sector, and ultimately improving student learning outcomes, in April 2023, several development partners (DPs) signed a new Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-funded Partnership Compact.** The Partnership Compact lays the system foundation in the sector. The Partnership Compact is a roadmap to transformation where the government exercises strong leadership and DPs support its commitment to the transformation. Beyond nurturing coordination and collaborations among DPs, the Compact identified five outputs. It also sets strategic priorities within these five outputs, defined targets for key indicators, and assigns the priorities to respective DPs to support these country priorities. The Compact identifies five outputs and three crosscutting themes. The five outputs are (i) infrastructure and equipment, (ii) curriculum and teaching and learning materials, (iii) teacher development, (iv) student and teacher assessments, and (v) system management including data management. The three crosscutting themes are: (i) gender, (ii) integrity, and (iii) human rights and equity.

**7. It has been agreed by the MoPSE and DPs that the World Bank takes the lead in output (iii), "teacher development", given the significance of the theme to achieve better learning outcomes, and the World Bank's extensive experiences in this area globally.** The Partnership Compact lays out areas of comparative advantages of respective DPs. DPs, including the World Bank, and the MoPSE are currently discussing where and how to collaborate with each other more precisely on the respective outputs and themes.

**8. Low student learning outcomes are the major bottleneck of the education system.** With the remarkable improvement in the rates of enrolment over the last few decades, access to primary and secondary education is no longer a major challenge. Net enrollment rate reached 95 percent in 2021. Data, however, shows that a child born today in Uzbekistan would be only 62 percent as productive as they could be if they enjoyed complete education and full health. While a child in Uzbekistan can expect to complete 12 years of school by their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, factoring in what children actually learn in the classroom, the expected years of schooling (or learning-adjusted years of schooling) is only 9.1 years. These results place Uzbekistan lower than the average for Europe and Central Asia (ECA) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (10.0 and 10.9 respectively) in the Human Capital Index 2020.<sup>14</sup> The country's average Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) score is 437, which is lower than the ECA region average (450), and lower than the global average (503) in 2021. The assessment also shows that 30.2 percent of students in grade 4 in Uzbekistan are below the minimum proficiency level (a PIRLS score below 400), which is much higher than the ECA median of 28.2 percent and the global median of 9.5 percent.<sup>15</sup> PIRLS data also show boys are falling substantially behind girls in their early reading, with girls leading boys by 24 points, equivalent to close to a year of schooling, and one of the largest gender gaps of participating countries.

**9. A recent World Bank report suggests significant contributors to poor learning performance are: (i) low teacher quality, (ii) lack of an effective data platform to identify strengths and weaknesses of student learning and teaching**

<sup>14</sup> World Bank. 2020. "The Human Capital Index"

<sup>15</sup> Besides PIRLS, a sample of Grade 5 students on a mathematics assessment based on TIMSS assessment scored 474 where 400 presents the minimum proficiency out of a maximum of 625 in 2019. In a similar assessment for science, they were able to answer 7 questions on average out of 36 questions.



**practices, and (iii) inadequate learning environments at school.**<sup>16</sup> The report assesses student learning outcomes in 2019 and 2021 (during the COVID-19 pandemic). While more data and research are needed to fully comprehend the reasons for poor learning outcomes in Uzbekistan, the findings in the country report are consistent with a guidance note for learning recovery and acceleration, developed by the World Bank in 2022, RAPID.<sup>17</sup> The RAPID framework places strong emphases on, among others, (i) prioritize teaching the fundamentals, (ii) assess learning levels regularly, and (iii) develop psychological health and wellbeing, including access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities at school and learning (environments) with technology.

**10. First, in Uzbekistan teachers remain of low quality and this is a major driver of lower learning outcomes.** Teacher quality is at the center of the GoU's sector priorities. The importance of pre-service training is stressed by the MoPSE. Recent research findings suggest that lower performing teacher candidates continue to be low performers in the teaching profession.<sup>18</sup> In-service training (with an average 4 year duration) itself cannot make up for weaknesses in pre-service training. Low quality of teacher candidates is observed already at the start of the pre-service training period. Pedagogical universities are not selective in admissions. Often the students enroll in universities as a last resort to simply obtain a higher education degree. Pre-service training institutions consistently rank at the bottom in the national university rankings.

**11. The curriculum of preservice institutions is outdated and does not foster a student-centered approach nor the development of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills**<sup>19</sup>. The pre-service training currently follows a "4+2 model": that is, it offers academic course work for four days, and practicum for two days per week. The practicum is a mandatory course work in the final year of the higher education pedagogical program. Limited number of practicum training is partly due to constrained financial resources as students need to cover transportation costs. Furthermore, the recently developed national qualification system, and the new teacher professional standards, aim to enhance pedagogical skills through pre-service training. The national teacher professional standards - developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2020 - are currently not yet operationalized.

**12. The teaching profession also fails to attract, retain, and motivate the best higher education applicants and talent.** In 2021, the government introduced a national online platform for recruitment of new teachers and principals. However, the platform is used only to announce new teacher job vacancies. Teacher recruitment is decentralized mainly to school principals. Today, this recruitment process lacks transparency and is not aligned with existing nationwide teacher competency standards. In addition, the education system is producing a surplus of trainee teachers beyond what the current needs are in the system. In 2021, 26,115 students graduated with bachelor degrees in pedagogical specialties, whereas the government aims to hire only approximately 7,000 teachers per year. A more selective approach to admitting students in the teacher training colleges could improve the efficiency of the system and enhance the quality of training provided. In particular, trainee teachers who transition into full-time teaching roles often lack sufficient competency in teaching skills. The MoPSE has recently announced the certification of teachers

<sup>16</sup> World Bank. 2023. "Learning during the Pandemic: Evidence from Uzbekistan"

<sup>17</sup> World Bank. 2022. "Guide for Learning Recovery and Acceleration". The acronym of the RAPID framework comes from its main recommendations: (i) Reach every child and keep them in school, (ii) Assess learning levels regularly, (iii) Prioritize teaching the fundamentals, (iv) Increase the efficiency of instruction including through catch-up learning, and (v) Develop psychological and wellbeing.

<sup>18</sup> Neilson, C., Gallegos, S., Calle, F., & Karnani, M. 2022. "Screening and Recruiting Talent at Teacher Colleges Using Pre-College Academic Achievement." HCEO Working Paper Series. Working paper 2022-004.

<sup>19</sup> 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills are those adaptable in changing economic, and social and technological contexts. They could include (i) foundational skills like literary, numeracy, and basic scientific knowledge, (ii) digital literary, (iii) higher-order skills, (iv) socio-emotional skills, and (v) skills for lifelong learning.



based on a one-year training period after the completion of graduation from teacher training institutes, and it is reconfirmed once every five years. A competency-based model is a student-centered approach that ensures mastery of specific knowledge and skills, moving away from rote memorization, as students progress through their education. However, it is not clear if the certification system retains the best possible talents in the education system as it is not yet aligned with teacher competency standards. Since 2017, the government has passed several regulations to improve the status of teachers with the goal of attracting more talent into the teaching profession (including salary increases and a media campaign to promote the teaching profession). Moving forward, the government aims to improve the selection criteria for entry into the teaching profession. This is done both by raising standards to enter pre-service teacher training and improving the process of formal teacher certification. The ultimate goal is to make the teaching profession more competitive.

**13. The World Bank holds a comparative advantage in supporting pre-service training as it has global experience in research and implementation of pre-service teacher training programs.** To date, DPs in the sector have provided limited support to pre-service education. However, the World Bank has increased its involvement in enhancing pre-service training with countries globally (e.g., the Dominican Republic, Kazakhstan, and Morocco). The Education Global Practice of the World Bank has also recently prepared four comprehensive guidelines for improving pre-service training, covering selection, coursework and practicum, training completion, and recruitment and deployment. Moreover, the World Bank has supported Uzbekistan's higher education sector, where pre-service training occurs (via the Modernizing Higher Education Project, which was closed in February 2023). Given the World Bank's extensive technical knowledge and operational experience in pre-service training, it is well-equipped to assist the MoPSE in reforming the pre-service training system.

**14. In-service training needs an urgent overhaul to implement competency-based training programs at scale.** In addition to weak teacher candidates in poorly designed pre-service training, the content knowledge and pedagogical practices of the currently active 510,000 teachers nationwide are often obsolete. A 2022 assessment by the State Inspection for Supervision of Quality in Education revealed that one in four of the active teachers could not meet the minimum national in-service training standards. Teachers, on average, were also familiar with only 65 percent of the knowledge content they were expected to teach. Hence, in-service training as a whole urgently requires major changes to adapt competency-based models for which there remains significant potential for expanding the scope and enhancing the contents of in-service training programs. In 2020, UNICEF developed a National Curriculum Framework for the general secondary education system that aims to shift the learning and teaching process from a fact-based and rote learning model towards a competency-based model. However, its implementation has been limited and not yet deployed nationwide.

**15. While some donors already support in-service training, the work is uncoordinated, and investments are not yet sufficient to conduct in-service training aligned with the new competency-based model nationwide.** Currently, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UNICEF, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, all assist the MoPSE in conducting in-service training across almost all grades of primary and secondary education. However, the primary education sector in particular needs significant improvement, both in its geographical reach and contents to be aligned with the new competency-based model. This is especially relevant given that the ADB and JICA focus their substantial investments mainly on secondary education.<sup>20</sup> During the development of the Partnership Compact, the World Bank, as the leading donor supporting teacher development, was approached by the USAID and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to not only fill the financial gap, but also to share its extensive experiences with in-service training relevant to Uzbekistan. Indeed, the World Bank's TEACH

<sup>20</sup> ADB is expected to invest US\$1 billion for secondary education in coming five years.



classroom observation tool has been utilized by some donors in the country, albeit on a pilot basis. The World Bank could also bring expertise in supporting school principals in implementing different forms of continuous teacher professional development, including one-to-one coaching, group training sessions and workshops. Additional collaborations with other donors under the Partnership Compact could enable the MoPSE to extend the reach of in-service training on a larger scale with quality.

**16. Second, the education system lacks a robust data platform that can accurately identify strengths and weaknesses of student learning and teaching practices.** This weak data platform inhibits data-driven decision-making across the whole education system. Student learning data is essential for communities (e.g., parents), teachers, principals, and regional and central government officers to improve the overall education system. Research across the world shows that sharing the information on benefits, costs, and quality of education can increase student learning at relatively low cost.<sup>21</sup> While Uzbekistan does not conduct a regular student assessment at the national level, the country has begun participating in international learning assessments, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), PIRLS, and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2022 for the first time. The country also already collects data on both pre- and in-service teacher training as well as other data for its Education Management Information System (EMIS), which contains data about school administration and school characteristics. However, despite the ample education data available, the education system still lacks an *interoperable* system for regular and systematic quality assessments identifying strengths and weaknesses of student learning as well as teaching practices. Education-related data is collected and maintained often by different education agencies or departments in the MoPSE. As a result, data tends to be archived with often different formats and/or unique IDs for students, teachers, and schools, impeding any form of comprehensive data integration. The MoPSE is in the process of expanding the Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERPS), a data platform that collects among others annual administrative and registration data on teachers and students nationwide. By utilizing ERPS, the MoPSE has been working towards a unified education-data platform to improve interoperability among all existing education data. The platform is set to consolidate all existing education data, allowing for more robust analysis and identification of areas to enhance student learning and teaching quality.

**17. Third, there is a significant shortage of quality learning environments.** Schools in Uzbekistan are often overcrowded. Approximately 74 percent of schools in Uzbekistan operate in double shifts. The national average of Student-Classroom Ratio (SCR) is 20:1, which is not bad thanks to the shift system. However, 37 percent of schools in the first shift classroom and 12 percent of schools in the second shift classroom exceed the national average of 20:1. In Tashkent City particularly, 66 percent of the first shift and 29 percent of the second shift substantially exceed the national average of the SCR. Only 47 percent of schools have access to drinking water. 22 percent of schools still do not have access to even one fully functional toilet. The average Student-Toilet ratio is 341:1 in the first shift and 174:1 in the second shift.<sup>22</sup> A recently published report by the Bank also discusses a serious shortage of digital equipment (including limited access to electricity and internet) that helps to improve 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.<sup>23</sup> The ADB (approximately US\$1 billion) and IsDB (approximately US\$140 million) are planning to support the MoPSE to substantially invest in learning environments in the coming years. In addition, the majority of the Vision 2030 Fund (approximately US\$130 million) is expected to be utilized to increase the number of pre-schools and schools.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP). 2023 “Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning”. The Panel is convened by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF. 2021. “Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis 2021”

<sup>23</sup> World Bank. 2021. ‘Education Excellence Towards Human Capital and Economic Growth in Uzbekistan’

<sup>24</sup> The fund is an UN inter-agency pooled fund that aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Uzbekistan by 2030. It is capitalized through a contribution representing a return of assets that have been definitively forfeited in criminal proceedings in Switzerland.



## Relationship to CPF

18. **The proposed project activities would be aligned with a Higher-Level Outcome (HLO) of the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period FY2022-FY2026<sup>25</sup>, 'Improve Human Capital', through Objective 2.1, 'Improve access to quality education'.** Proposed project interventions are focused on improving the quality of the teaching force, which, international evidence shows, has the biggest impact on learning outcomes, and measuring learning outcomes to improve evidence-based decision-making of the MoPSE. Under HLO 3, 'Improved Livelihoods and Resilience through Greener Growth', it will support Objective 3.1, 'Decarbonization and the greener development of industry and the economy' and Objective 3.2, 'More efficient use of natural resources', by supporting training institutions to make improvements in their energy efficiency, and training teachers and school leaders on the importance of reducing their impact on the environment, and how they can do it in their own schools and lives. This messaging would then be expected to cascade down to students and communities. The project is therefore very well suited to advance the HLOs of the CPF for Uzbekistan.

19. **The proposed project is consistent with climate strategies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as laid out in the Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 2021, which seeks to "... reduce by 2030 specific greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per unit of GDP by 35 percent from the level of 2010."** The Updated NDC does not imply an absolute reduction of GHG emissions but shall "... take actions aimed at promoting innovation and capacity building at all levels." Through interventions targeting teacher education that cover aspects of increasing awareness of the impacts of climate change, which will have follow on impacts into their teaching practices in classrooms, the proposed project is aligned with the Updated NDC. These interventions will in turn play a key role in building climate resilience and supporting climate transitions across different systems and sectors in the country.

## C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The objectives of the proposed Project are to (i) improve student-centered teaching practices in primary education (Grades 1 - 4) and (ii) strengthen the education data governance system for decision making.

### Key Results (From PCN)

The Project's achievement of the PDO will be measured via the following indicators:

- Number of students graduating from pre-service teacher training institutes and certified by a more competence-oriented teacher certification model
- Share of improved quality of teaching practices in classrooms in selected schools measured by TEACH tool<sup>26</sup>
- Share of schools that distribute school report cards to communities with student learning progress data

## D. Concept Description

<sup>25</sup> Discussed by the World Bank Board on May 24, 2022 (Report no. 170931).

<sup>26</sup> The indicator is expected to be monitored and evaluated by TEACH, a free classroom observation tool developed by the World Bank.



20. **The project proposes to support the government in three critical education reform and investment areas:** (i) improving quality of pre-service training of teachers, including better alignment with pedagogical practices aligned with the competency-based model and more streamlined selection of students in the teacher training institutes; (ii) improving quality of in-service training that supports continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders (principals and head teachers); and (iii) developing an interoperable education data system while making the data accessible to all levels of decision makers and communities. This is expected to lead to expanded utilization of existing and new data sets, and to enhanced evidence-based decision making to improve students learning outcomes. Through these interventions, the project is expected to achieve the proposed PDO.

**Component 1: Improving quality of Pre-service Teacher training (US\$13 million - IDA)**

21. **Component 1 would support the GoU in attracting and training high performing individuals into the teaching profession nationwide.** The project would: (a) refine and operationalize teacher competency standards across all pedagogical institutes, aligning the pre-service teacher training curriculum with the new teacher competency standards, and supporting development and printing of teacher training materials; (b) refine and strengthen the assessments for entry in pedagogical universities; and (c) finance the roll out of the implementation of the assessments. The primary focus of pre-service training support will be the early grades of primary education. This focus aligns with Component 2, and both components support the MoPSE in incorporating competency-based standards into both pre-service and in-service training.

**Component 2: In-Service Training in Early Grades of Primary Education (US\$22 million from IDA, and approximately US\$30 million from Co-Financing with IsDB)**

22. **Component 2 aims to enhance teaching practices in the classroom and quality of learning materials used by students and teachers, refurbish teacher training institutions, and improve quality of in-service training programs.** This component will focus on improving the classroom learning experience, and hence improve learning of early grades students in primary schools. This component consists of four sub-components. First, the component would provide updated teaching materials for early grades of primary education, including teacher guides and workbooks for teachers and students. Second, it would upgrade and rehabilitate teacher training institutions with provision of digital equipment. Third, the component will adapt the TEACH and COACH tools to the local context, fostering regular observation and relevant mentoring to enhance teaching. It also supports teacher peer learning groups at school levels. Utilization of the classroom observation tools, coupled with such peer learning groups will help identify strengths and weaknesses in teacher performance and support mentoring from seasoned teachers. Fourth, the component will also assist the MoPSE in the certification of new teachers based on training assessment outcomes. Component 2 benefits from the partnerships which have been made possible by the positive outcomes of the Partnership Compact and have been welcomed by the government.

**Component 3: Interoperable Education Data System and Evidence-Based Decision Making (US\$12 million - IDA)**

23. **Component 3 would develop the interoperability of a more comprehensive education data platform.** This would ultimately support evidence-based decision making in the whole education system. By integrating administrative, assessment, and household data, the platform will enable rigorous analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses in the education system, ultimately improving student learning outcomes. This component would also finance the country's participation in international and national learning assessments.

**Component 4: Project Management and Monitoring and Evaluation (US\$3 million)**



24. **Component 4 would build government capacity in project management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).** As the MoPSE undergoes reforms, capacity development is crucial. This includes enhancing skills in procurement, financial management, environmental and social risk management, and M&E. The component aims to facilitate the hiring of international and local experts to support project implementation and provide training opportunities and study visits for MoPSE officials, managers, and education professionals. These visits will enable them to learn from countries with extensive experience in introducing educational innovations, particularly in teaching reforms and integrated data systems.

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

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

25. **The environmental and social risk is considered Moderate (M) at this stage.** The moderate environmental and social risk classification is based on the fact the risks and impacts are predictable and expected to be temporary and/or reversible, and site-specific, without likelihood of impacts beyond the actual footprint of the project.

26. Activities of the project particularly under sub-component 2.3 will have positive environmental impacts by implementing energy efficiency measures such as installing solar panels, thermal insulation in roof cavities, and energy-efficient lighting, and procuring energy-efficient heating/cooling systems, appliances to reduce carbon footprint and operational costs and installing renewable energy generation using solar panels. At the same time, civil works, albeit in small amounts, may have localized and temporary impacts on air and noise pollution, occupational health and safety (OHS) and disposal of construction wastes. Risks may also arise if maintenance of the newly installed facilities is not undertaken during the operation phase. Sub-component 2.3 promotes the provision or improvement of ICT equipment in Tashkent State Pedagogical University and the 14 regional teacher training institutes, which could involve addressing waste utilization and management challenges related to old ICT equipment with particular focus on e-waste. The specifics of civil works will be determined during the appraisal stage. In the event that the Component activities mentioned earlier are reduced during the appraisal stage, the level of environmental risk will be reassessed and adjusted accordingly.

27. The Project activities are not likely to cause physical or economic displacement, as the minor civil works will be carried out on the existing land plots of Tashkent State Pedagogical University and the 14 regional teacher training institutes. The labor influx risks are manageable through appropriate instruments, as the civil works are not likely to involve a large workforce. But there could be potential safety risks to communities / neighbors such as noise, dust, and aesthetics / reflection during installation and operation of solar panels. Additionally, there will be comprehensive citizen engagement and a robust GRM in place throughout the project cycle to ensure that all intended stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in and receive the benefits of the project. The MoPSE will prioritize hiring one Social/GRM Officer dedicated to this Project prior to the appraisal.



28. The relevant ESF standards to address social risks are ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, and ESS10. The following instruments will be prepared and disclosed prior to project appraisal: (i) ESMF; (ii) Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), (iii) Labor Management Procedures (LMP); and (iv) ESCP. The ESCP will address issues such as stakeholder engagement, environmental and social impact assessments, labor management procedures, and capacity-building plans. The plan will also include periodic reporting on E&S, incident notification, grievance management, and the implementation of the ESMF, LMP, and GBV Action Plan. Furthermore, the ESCP should specify the involvement of E&S personnel, including details such as the number of personnel required and whether they will be assigned or recruited for the project.

29. The ESMF will include TOR for environmental and social screening to be conducted for modernization of teachers training centers. The screening report will form the basis to develop environmental and social (E&S) instruments, including the site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). Additionally, the Project will apply criteria for school selection to enhance learning environments to make the selection process transparent and inclusive. The Project is assigned a moderate risk rating for SEA/SH at this based upon the country context of norms and legal protections for women in working environments and project-specific indicators, which will be re-assessed during appraisal stage and the ESCP will include appropriate actions with time-bound commitments. Additionally, the ESMF will include requirement to review the Implementing Agencies' (IAs) capacity to prevent and respond to SEA/SH as part of ESF preparation. During ESMF preparation (as well as during the Project cycle), consultations will be held with stakeholders (political, cultural or religious leaders, health teams, local councils, social workers, women's organizations and groups working with children) to get their feedback on SEA/SH and appropriate mitigation measures will be put in place to address any such risks including GRM to handle such complaints.

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**APPROVAL**

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