



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 08/03/2022 | Report No: ESRSC02931



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Nepal	SOUTH ASIA	P177647	
Project Name	School Sector Transformation Program		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Education	Program-for-Results Financing	9/2/2022	12/15/2022
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Nepal	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology		

Proposed Development Objective

The proposed Program Development Objectives (PDOs) are to increase equitable access to and improve the quality of school education in Nepal.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
IPF Component	6.00
Total Project Cost	8199.00

B. Is the project 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 Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

This component will support (i) the capacity development of Local Governments (LGs) in specific areas, including teacher professional development and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); (ii) MOEST/CEHRD in strengthening quality and timeliness of reporting from LGs, fiduciary and safeguard management, undertaking assessments and evaluation studies, and commissioning the independent verification agency.

D. Environmental and Social Overview



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

The proposed activities under the IPF TA component are: program management, monitoring, and evaluation (US \$ 6 million) including provision and utilization of services, skills, knowledge, and technology in the form of short-term and long-term advisors and consultants, consulting firms, and non-consulting agencies to support and strengthen the capacity of SSTP program implementation. Specifically, this TA component will support (i) the capacity development of Local Governments (LGs) in specific areas, including teacher professional development and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); (ii) MOEST/CEHRD in strengthening quality and timeliness of reporting from LGs, fiduciary, and E&S risk management, undertaking assessments and evaluation studies, and commissioning the independent verification agency. IPF TA will not finance any civil works. The coverage of the TA would be the same as the government program.

SSTP is a national level Project and will be implemented in all 7 provinces and over 35000 schools located across 753 local governments (LGs) represented by urban and rural municipalities. Specific geographical locations of project targeted Schools at this preparatory stage are not yet known clearly. But SSTP will cover all levels of school education from ECED/pre-primary education, basic education (grades 1-8), secondary education (grades 9-12) and non-formal education all over the country.

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The MOEST/CEHRD is the lead implementing agency of SSTP at the central level. MOEST/CEHRD is well versed in implementing Nepal’s education plans, both at school and higher level, which include series of SWAp programs such as EFA (2004-09), SSRP (2009-2016) and SSDP (2017-2021), PforRs like HERP (2,015-20120) and NEHEP (2021-2026). All these programs are funded jointly by GON and other development partners, the implementation modalities and practices are well established. Moreover, MOEST/ CEHRD are familiar in program implementation following ESF framework including E&S risk management and monitoring arrangements, which includes GPE COVID-19 School Sector Response Project 2020-21. In addition to this, MOEST- executing agency for the program - is already experienced with DLI-based operations funded by the World Bank for a PforR operation which has several advantages for the country in terms of flexibility and efficiency in supporting and implementing a fairly large national program like new SSTP.

Public Disclosure

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

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating

Low

The environmental risk associated with the TA component will be low considering it will support only i) the capacity development of Local Governments (LGs) in specific areas, including teacher professional development and Information, purchase and disposal of ICT equipment. (ICT); ii) MOEST/CEHRD in strengthening quality and timeliness of reporting from LGs and environmental, social, labor and health and safety (E&S) risk management, including L&FS and EPR, undertaking assessments and evaluation studies. Capacity enhancement program will include short and long-term trainings, seminar orientation, and interschool exhibition program. The key associated E&S risks of the TA



activities would relate to generation of some low amount of electronic waste (E-Waste) from use of ICT equipment, occupational health and safety (OHS) of project workers and community health and safety (CHS) concerns to beneficiary communities due to the project being implemented in a COVID environment, risk of community being affected due to COVID and health and safety issues related to workers. These capacity building activities, while themselves having minimal or no environmental impacts, may involve providing support to LGs, schools and other beneficiaries in carrying out or overseeing activities that may have minor environmental impact such as issues of OHS and CHS, hence the risk has been assigned as low. The associated risks and impacts are due to the implementation of the project activities that are expected to be site-specific and can be mitigated with measures that are readily identifiable. The environment risk of the TA component will be assessed continuously during preparation and throughout the life of the project and adjusted as needed.

Social Risk Rating

Moderate

The social risk associated with the IPF component of the project is assessed as Moderate. The key social risks are the risk of exclusion of intended beneficiaries from the benefits and opportunities related to professional development, capacity building, ICT provided by the project, particularly to those from socially excluded, lagging provinces and individuals having limited access to information and low digital literacy. Capacity limitations of client to effectively consult and engage with stakeholders may also limit stakeholders from fully benefiting from the project interventions. Inclusive public outreach will be considered in the finalization of the project to ensure proper disclosure of project related information and extensive stakeholder engagement. The TA activities will be implemented in a COVID context, thus all measures to prevent COVID exposure of project workers carrying TA activities and stakeholders will be considered and appropriate pre-cautions taken. Mitigation measures include wider consultation, public outreach and dissemination of TA capacity development activities, transparent processes and criteria for selecting beneficiaries. Similarly, using different platforms and means for information dissemination but where there is low digital literacy alternative platforms will be identified and used. Finally, enforcement of clear procedures and guidelines for client for TA implementation, functional GRM including SEA/SH GRM mechanism and screening of all activities under TA component will be undertaken prior to commencement of work. The social risk of the TA component will be assessed continuously during preparation and throughout the life of the project and adjusted as needed. The other social risks will be assessed during Environmental and Social System Assessment (ESSA) and mitigation measures captured in the Program Action Plan (PAP).

Public Disclosure

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 Project:

The proposed project is expected to have positive and beneficial impacts on the school education sector of Nepal. The IPF component will support the capacity development of Local Governments (LGs) in specific areas, including teacher professional development and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); MOEST/CEHRD in strengthening quality and timeliness of reporting from LGs, fiduciary, and E&S risk management, undertaking assessments and evaluation studies, and commissioning the independent verification agency. An important requirement of ESS1 is to help ensure that projects are environmentally and socially sound and sustainable.



The E&S risks of the TA interventions are envisaged to have downstream impacts when they are operationalized. This involves risks during selection and coverage of beneficiaries, implementation of training and professional development, enhancing ICT, strengthening monitoring and reporting and overseeing the activities under implementation. These risks as described above will be considered in the design and implementation of the capacity support. According to the nature of proposed capacity building, activities will be screened and, where relevant, and E&S risk assessment and management will be integrated into the TORs of various activities. TORs, work plans or other documents defining the scope and outputs of proposed activities will be prepared to be consistent with the ESF.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared and disclosed before Appraisal to allow meaningful stakeholder consultation during the preparation of the project. Labor Management Plan and COVID Protocols that cover staffs/consultants and the concerned community will be prepared before commencement of activities and implemented throughout project implementation. Standard Operating Procedures for management of e-waste, hazardous materials including solid waste will be prepared within 90 days of project effectiveness.

Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:

Borrower’s Framework not being used.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

This standard is relevant. Stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information with stakeholders will be key for planning and implementation of the TA activities. The primary stakeholders include over 250,000 teachers and ECED facilitators in over 35,000 community schools and centers respectively. Institutional stakeholders consist of mainly the Education Unit (EU) under 753 local and seven provincial governments as well as Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), INGOs, NGOs, NFDIN, NEFIN and other agencies etc. CEHRD, the main implementing agency under MOEST at the center, will take lead role for stakeholder consultations at the central level using comprehensive and appropriate approaches for engaging relevant stakeholders and disclosing project related information for enhanced participation and ownership of the stakeholders in the design and implementation of the SSTP. The IPF component of SSTP will be used exclusively on capacity building on various aspects of stakeholders i.e. LGs, professional development of teachers, improving ICT, strengthening MOEST/CEHRD capacity including E&S risk management. CEHRD will prepare the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which will be proportional to the nature and scale of the project and associated risks and impacts identified. The clients will ensure that it will adopt a consistent, comprehensive, coordinated and culturally appropriate approach for the purpose of engaging stakeholders and disclosing project related information to achieve project’s objective in systemic manner. Both provincial and local governments will require close support and capacity building to effectively engage with stakeholders and project beneficiaries and to avoid exclusion. The SEP will be developed and implemented to ensure that stakeholder engagement activities are undertaken periodically and conducted in an appropriate manner. The SEP will lay out a strategy to identify and map key stakeholders, their analysis based on their interests and influence on the project and engagement strategies. CEHRD is required to ensure that consultations are undertaken in inclusive and accessible manners, in terms of both format, timing and location.

Public Disclosure



The draft SEP will be disclosed as early as possible before appraisal to allow meaningful stakeholder consultation. SEP will be updated, as necessary, during implementation and will be a condition in ESCP. MoEST/CEHRD has developed and put in place a three tier Grievance Redress Procedure (GRP, 2074) with the objective of recording, processing, and resolving the complaints / grievances efficiently and timely. The existing GRM will also be used for addressing GBV, SEA/SH related cases by establishing a clear, safe, accessible procedures along with e-mechanism for confidential reporting.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

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

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

This standard is relevant to the project and to all workers (direct and contracted) involved in the execution of TA activities. It is anticipated that the Implementing Agency, CEHRD, will hire short-term and long-term advisors and consultants, consulting firms and non-consulting agencies to support and strengthen the capacity of Local Governments (LGs) in specific areas for example: teacher professional development, ICT and of MOEST/CEHRD in strengthening both the quality, timeliness of reporting from LGs, including E&S risk management, and undertaking other assessments/studies. There is possible risk of exclusion, missed opportunities from project benefits due to inadequate dissemination of information.

It is anticipated that the project may hire direct and contracted workers for ICT and digitization works that will be implemented under the IPF component. Hence, Labor Management Procedures proportional to the project's labor and working condition risks will be developed to meet the requirements of the standard before project effectiveness, that will ensure safety and health at work including those related to COVID-19 pandemic, fair treatment of workers including vulnerable, marginalized and disabled. In addition, considering COVID, MOEST/CEHRD will adopt its existing occupational, health and safety (OHS) regulations/protocols to protect and provide safe working conditions to the Project staff, consultants and labourers. CEHRD will also adopt and strengthen its existing worker's GRM to handle any grievances from staffs and consultants.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

This standard is relevant. The key environmental risks of the TA activities are related to e-waste generation from the enhancement of ICT network, malfunctioning of electric appliances and waste management as there is lack of legal framework and guidelines to address the management issues. Therefore, an implementation plan of e-waste SOP including management of solid waste generated from the offices will be prepared by the project. However, currently there are no e-waste management facilities in the country. The informally collected e-waste is segregated by scavengers and then delivered to scrap dealers.

The Project will also procure and use energy-efficient ICT systems and office equipment.



ESS4 Community Health and Safety

This standard is relevant. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, particularly with the new variant, has elevated risks on community health and safety in terms of new cases of infections that have been spreading rapidly among the children/students and the community during the implementation of project activities, such as, organizing events, long- and short-term trainings, seminars and interschool exhibition programs, surveys, studies, and needs assessment, ICT services for remote distance learning surveys, studies, and needs assessment as it would involve travelling and interactions with students, teachers, families and local communities. The project shall incorporate measures to ensure the health and safety of beneficiary communities – including L&FS and EPR - considering the surging COVID cases during implementation of TA activities following national and WHO guidelines for ensuring the principles of infection prevention, such as social distancing, good hygiene practices, limited workforce, adjustment of workplace practices, contingency measures in event a worker contracts the infection and most importantly, awareness raising. These measures shall also be considered during stakeholder engagement and consultation. Covid 19 specific Community and Health and Safety Procedures (Code of Conduct) will be developed (if not done already) and training will be given to project workers. There is also potential risk of SEA/SH during implementation of activities hence appropriate mitigation measures will be developed and implemented under the TA component such as code of conduct, knowledge and awareness on GBV, internal provision within GRM to respond to SEA/SH related cases induced by the project.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

This standard is assessed to be not relevant.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

This standard is not relevant. The project activities will be implemented within existing premises and selection of new locations which will have impact on biodiversity, habitat loss and degradation will be altogether avoided.

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

This standard is relevant. However, no adverse impacts are anticipated on IPs due to project activities and the project will ensure their involvement in consultation, communication and information disclosure activities so they can fully participate and benefit from the project.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

This standard is not relevant. The project does not involve any activities affecting cultural heritage hence ESS8 is not relevant to this project.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

This standard is not relevant. The project does not involve any activities with financial intermediaries hence ESS9 is not relevant to this project.



B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

Under the new Federal structure, responsibility for basic (early childhood education and development [ECED] – Grade1- 8) and secondary education (Grade 9–12) has shifted to the local level, with the federal and provincial governments mainly responsible for higher education, due to which there are still lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities at different levels. The new structure also has created challenges in terms of meeting the human resource needs required for the implementation and their capacity. The current rise in omicron COVID-19 pandemic across the country poses a significant risk and will impact E&S assessments.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas No

III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered? No

Financing Partners

No other financing partner is identified at this stage.

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

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

Actions to be completed prior to Appraisal:

- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
- Screening of TA activities to inform the TORs.
- Assessment of Institutional capacity and capacity building program
- Environment and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP)

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

- Implementation of SEP and ESCP
- Labor Management Procedures (including specific Occupational Health and Safety Checklist and Procedure)
- TORs of various TA activities that imbed E&S -including potential L&FS and EPR- considerations into their design and implementation
- Implementation of the Capacity Building Program
- SOP for E-waste management will be prepared within 90 days of effectiveness

Public Disclosure



C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS

07-Sept-2022

IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Nepal

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

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