



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 04/28/2020 | Report No: ESRSC01340



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
North Macedonia	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	P171973	
Project Name	Primary Education Improvement Project		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Education	Investment Project Financing	7/20/2020	10/20/2020
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Education and Science		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

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

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	25.00

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]

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

- Component 1. Improving Learning at the School Level.



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

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

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Project location(s) and salient characteristics relevant to the ES assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

The Republic of North Macedonia has recently undertaken important reforms of the preschool education and care system. To capitalize further on this important investment, more efficient investments are required in the quality of teaching and learning in primary education. The proposed project will be implemented country-wide, in both urban, peri-urban and rural locations across the country. The targeted interventions will be for schools with the potential to retain or increase the number of students. The project aims to improve learning outcomes of primary school students and the higher benefits are expected for the segments of the students with lower scores which corresponds with the income of the households. In the years between 1999-2011 as per Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study TIMSS the scores dropped for about 15%. Same drop of the scores was captured also with OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) the quality of education at all levels has been slipping, as is illustrated by worsening outcomes in international standardized measurements. Between 2000 and 2015 FYR Macedonia also drifted farther away from the predicted PISA score for its GDP per capita. According to the Systematic Country Diagnostics (2018), “Students in the top income quintile performed as if they had two more school years than students in the bottom quintile.”

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



While there are no relevant environmental issues the key social issue for the project is how the project will be most effective in the poorest areas as the students in top income quintile perform as if they had two more years than students in the bottom quintile. This gap widens further in the secondary education. The profile of the poor families are those with more children and with adults who are less educated are more likely to fall in poverty. Households with three or more children are much more likely to be poor; these families, which also average four adults of working age, live mostly in the northern regions. Similarly, the less education, especially primary through lower secondary, that adults have, the more likely they are to be poor.

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The MoES is currently implementing the Bank financed Skills Development and Innovation Support Project (SDISP). The existing PIU under the MoES, which has been established for the implementation of SDISP, most likely will be assigned with the implementation of the proposed project as well. There are two full time environmental and social experts in the PIU who have gained considerable experience with the requirements of the WB safeguard policies. The environmental and social performance of the SDISP PIU has been satisfactory throughout the project period. It is expected that the same staff will continue under the proposed project. The Bank will provide training to the PIU E&S staff on the new ESF and ESSs. The national regulatory framework envisages specific requirements for all public buildings, including schools, to be designed to address the Life and Fire Safety (LFS) aspects, and to have evacuation plans in case of emergencies. The issuance of permits to put the buildings into operation is subject to meeting these requirements. Minimum technical equipment for LFS infrastructure are determined by the type of building and the degree of fire hazard.

Public Disclosure

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 of the project is rated as Moderate. The anticipated risks are minor and can be easily avoided or minimized. Those risks are mainly associated with the implementation of activities under Component 1, envisaging minor non-structural refurbishment of the existing school facilities, including, inter alia, the upgrade of electricity, lighting, connectivity, improvement of toilet facilities, community spaces for teachers and learners, and the installation of school science laboratories, improvement of sanitary conditions, painting, wiring, refurbishment of floors, etc. The project will also finance the procurement of equipment to support effective teaching and learning as well as activities envisioned in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) to improve learning. The environmental risks associated with the implementation of these minor civil works will be mitigated by application of the WB Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines (ESHGs) and Good International Industrial Practices (GIIPs). Additionally, good environmental management practice for laboratories should be referred. The staff of the schools which will benefit from the installation of new science laboratories will receive respective training under the project.

Social Risk Rating Moderate

The social risk rating for the project is moderate. The social risks are proposed to be moderate mostly because potential exclusion/discrimination of vulnerable groups of children (such as the Roma and children with disabilities). The investments in the component 1. will be minor non-structural refurbishment of the existing school facilities. No



land acquisition or asset loss is expected, and the minor refurbishment works are expected to be carried out by local companies hired by the PIU. Minor labor risks mostly concerning OHS issues are expected. Potential risks that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups may be excluded from the project benefit will be assessed during preparation and mitigation measures, if relevant, will be developed and integrated in project designs as well as through stakeholder engagement processes

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:

This standard is relevant. The project activities under Component 1 might cause minor environmental risks associated with the implementation of minor refurbishment of the school premises, such as nuisance caused by increased noise, dust, need to properly manage insignificant amounts of construction wastes, OHS, and safety of students and teachers during the implementation of civil works. The minor refurbishment under Component 1 will not envisage any structural changes or replacements and as such will not deal with substances such as asbestos. Other environmental aspects to be considered relate to the installation of new science laboratories at selected schools and purchase of equipment to support teaching and learning processes. These environmental considerations will be addressed through the reference to, and application of WB ESHSs, GIIPs and good laboratory practices. For the minor refurbishment, the client will be requested to use ESMP checklists which indicate mitigation measures respectively. Potential risks of exclusion for some social groups from the project, in particular vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, will be assessed during preparation. The mapping of schools with children with disabilities will be done and the screening protocol (as part of the ESMP checklist) from the accessibility point of view will be developed during the preparation. Also schools with higher number of roma population students will be marked and enhanced outreach will be developed for these schools so they are co-opted in project activities. Mitigation measures, if relevant, will be developed and integrated in project designs as well as through stakeholder engagement processes. The ESMP checklist will propose measures to meet eventual gaps for the ESS2. The ESMP checklist template will be revised accordingly, to incorporate ESS2 requirements and other social aspects as appropriate. Further the project will have extra measures to engage vulnerable groups which for this project would be ethnic Roma and students that come from poor households. The data about students coming from the families under the social assistance are available and thus school could be ranked based on the incidence of students coming from the poor families and those school with higher incidence of the students coming from the vulnerable groups would have extra engagement measures.

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

The use Borrower's Framework is not considered for this project

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

The standard is relevant. The stakeholder engagement plan will be prepared and will define project affected parties (PAP) including vulnerable groups and those who would be more limited in their ability to take advantage of project benefits e.g. ethnic Roma students in schools mixed with non Roma students, students with disabilities, etc. Outreach activities for schools with students belonging to vulnerable groups will be enhanced comparing with other schools. The outreach for these schools will be defined in the SEP. Other Interested Parties (OIP) for the project would be



teachers and their unions, parents who have children in primary school as well as training providers. The stakeholder engagement will be two dimensional. One dimension will be enabling engagement of PAP and OIP on issues of national relevance and applicable to all project. The other dimension will concern school level activities. Both dimensions of engagement will mainstream engagement of vulnerable groups, and ensure that they benefit from the project. The stakeholder engagement activities will start during the early preparation of the project and will continue parallel with the implementation of the project

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

The standard is relevant. The standard will apply to 1) direct workers who will be PIU employees, consultants hired by the PIU for project implementation and the civil servants seconded to the project; and 2) the contracted workers who will be the employees of local firms that will be hired for the refurbishment of existing school buildings. Labor risks for direct workers are considered to be minor as all of them other than those civil servants seconded to the project will be hired per the Bank's procurement guidelines which will help reduce labor risks to a manageable level. Their low labor risks will be addressed through the Borrower's commitment in the ESCP to comply with the requirements of the ESS2 and the Project Operations Manual (POM) which provides clear steps to ensure compliance. Labor risks for contracted workers are also considered low, since the project would finance only small scale refurbishment of existing buildings. Since the Country Report on Human Rights Practices by the US Department of State in 2018 found some issues with regard to the enforcement of minimum wage, hours of work, and occupational safety and health standards, and of child labor in the informal economy, the refurbishment of existing buildings, the project would include provisions in the ESMP checklist to ensure compliance by the hired firms to the requirements of the ESS2 including the establishment of grievance mechanisms for contracted workers. The ESCP will: (1) include commitment of the Borrower to strictly follow the Bank's guideline on the employment of consultants; (2) require the Borrower to include in the POM measures to ensure compliance with the ESS2, satisfactory to the Bank; (3) which includes grievance mechanisms that the project workers can use if they feel their contractual rights are not respected. The Team will assess Northern Macedonian labor law during preparation to identify material gaps with the ESS2 relevant to this project and if any found they will be addressed through the ESCP and the POM

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

The standard is not relevant because the nature of the project activities does not envisage considerable consumption of resources, and will not cause any pollution. Any risks associated with minor refurbishment under Component 3 will be addressed under ESMP checklists to be applied by the client.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

The standard is relevant though the risk is very low because there will be temporary and minor nuisance which might be caused by the implementation of minor refurbishment of classrooms. This nuisance will be duly addressed under the ESMP checklists to be applied by the client.



ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The standard is not relevant as there will be no restrictions on the use or access to land or any acquisition of land.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

The standard is not relevant because the nature of the project activities does not envisage causing any adverse impacts to biodiversity and natural resources. Even in the instances that the minor refurbishment is required for schools in the rural areas, those will be within the existing facilities of the schools, not exceeding the existing school footprint.

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

The standard is not relevant because no Indigenous People are known to reside in the north Macedonia.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

The standard is not relevant because the project activities (minor refurbishment) will be implemented within the existing school facilities and are not expected to have any impact to cultural resources.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

The standard is not relevant because no Financial Intermediaries are involved in the project activities

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

There are no other possible financing partners

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

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

- Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan to be prepared disclosed and consulted prior to appraisal.
- ESMP checklist template to be updated to incorporate requirements of ESS2, prior to appraisal



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

- 1- Stakeholder Engagement Plan to be prepared before appraisal and implemented during the project implementation
- 2- ESMP checklists to be drafted prior to tendering respective civil works and applied by the implementing agency throughout the project implementation,
- 3- The POM will have section to incorporate requirements of ESS2 for the direct and contracted workers.

C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS

24-Apr-2020

IV. CONTACT POINTS

World Bank

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Ministry of Finance

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education and Science

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Bojana Naceva
Practice Manager (ENR/Social)	Satoshi Ishihara Recommended on 15-Apr-2020 at 16:25:3 EDT
Safeguards Advisor ESSA	Nina Chee (SAESSA) Cleared on 28-Apr-2020 at 15:34:56 EDT

Public Disclosure