

Document of
The World Bank

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Report No: PAD1486

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

ON A

PROPOSED CREDIT

IN THE AMOUNT OF EURO 27.6 MILLION
(US\$30.00 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

FOR AN

EDUCATION SECTOR SUPPORT PROJECT

April 6, 2016

Education Global Practice
Africa Region

This document has a restricted distribution and may be used by recipients only in the performance of their official duties. Its contents may not otherwise be disclosed without World Bank authorization.

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS
(Exchange Rate Effective February 29, 2016)

FISCAL YEAR
January 1 – December 31

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFD	<i>Agence Francaise de développement</i> (French Development Agency)
APE	<i>Association de parents d'élèves</i> (Parents Association)
APEE	<i>Association de parents d'élèves et d'enseignants</i> (Parent-Teacher Association)
ARMP	<i>Autorité de Régulation des Marchés Publics</i> (Regulatory Authority for Public Procurement)
CAB	Central African Backbone
CGDC	<i>Comité de Gestion du Développement Communautaire</i> (Management Committee for Community Development)
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
DDEPSA	<i>Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, et de l'Alphabétisation</i> (Regional Directorates of MEPSA-JEC)
DEP	<i>Direction des Etudes et de la Planification</i> (Studies and Planning Directorate)
DGCOMP	<i>Direction-Général du contrôle des marchés publics</i> (Directorate-General for the Control of Public Procurement)
DGEB	<i>Direction Générale de l'Enseignement de Base</i> (Directorate-General of Basic Education)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOM	<i>Enquête Consommation Ménages</i> (household consumption survey)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ENI	<i>Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs</i> (Teacher Training Institute)
ENS	<i>Ecole Normale Supérieure</i> (Teacher Training College)
FM	Financial Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education (<i>Partenariat mondial pour l'Education</i>)
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
ICB	International Competitive Bidding
IFR	Interim Financial Report
IGEPSA	<i>Inspection générale du MEPSA-JEC</i> (Inspectorate-General of MEPSA-JEC)
INRAP	<i>Institut national de la Recherche et d'Action pédagogique</i> (National Institute for Pedagogical Research and Action)
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
LEG	Local Education Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEPSA-JEC	<i>Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, et de l'Alphabétisation, de la Jeunesse et de l'Education Civique</i> (Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Literacy Education, Youth and Civic Education)

MES	<i>Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur</i> (Ministry of Higher Education)
METPFQE	<i>Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique, Professionnel, de la Formation Qualifiante et de l'Emploi</i> (Ministry of Technical and Professional Education, Qualifying Training and Employment)
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
NCB	National Competitive Bidding
NDP	National Development Plan
NPV	Net Present Value
PASEC	<i>Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN</i> (Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems)
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PDCE	<i>Projet de développement des compétences pour l'employabilité</i> (Skills Development for Employability Project)
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PNEAS	<i>Programme national pour l'évaluation des acquis scolaires</i> (National Program for Learning Assessments)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRAASED	<i>Projet d'Appui et d'Amélioration du Système Educatif</i> (Education Sector Support Project)
PRAEBASE	<i>Projet d'Appui à l'Enseignement de Base</i> (Support to Basic Education Project)
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
QCBS	Quality- and Cost-Based Selection
SBD	Standard Bidding Document
SDI	Service Delivery Indicator
SRP	Standard Request for Proposal
SSS	Single Source Selection
TA	Technical Assistance
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

Regional Vice President:	Makhtar Diop
Country Director:	Ahmadou Moustapha Ndiaye
Senior Global Practice Director:	Claudia Maria Costin
Practice Manager:	Sajitha Bashir
Task Team Leader:	Meskerem Mulatu

REPUBLIC OF CONGO
Education Sector Support Project

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT	1
A. Country Context.....	1
B. Sectoral and Institutional Context.....	2
C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes	9
II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	9
A. PDO.....	9
Project Beneficiaries	9
PDO Level Results Indicators.....	10
III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	11
A. Project Components	11
B. Project Financing	18
C. Lessons Learned and Reflected in the Project Design.....	19
IV. IMPLEMENTATION	20
A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements	20
B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation	22
C. Sustainability.....	22
V. KEY RISKS.....	23
A. Overall Risk Rating and Explanation of Key Risks.....	23
VI. APPRAISAL SUMMARY	24
A. Economic and Financial Analysis.....	24
B. Technical.....	25
C. Financial Management.....	26
D. Procurement	26
E. Social (including Safeguards).....	27
F. Environment (including Safeguards)	28
G. World Bank Grievance Redress.....	28

Annex 1: Results Framework	29
Annex 2: Project Description.....	36
Annex 3: Implementation Arrangements	52
Annex 4: Implementation Support Plan.....	66
Annex 5: Economic and Financial Analysis	69
Annex 6: Public Spending on Education and Analysis from Household Surveys	74

PAD DATA SHEET
Congo, Republic of
Education Sector Support Project (P152910)
PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT

AFRICA

GED07

Report No.: PAD1486

Basic Information			
Project ID P152910	EA Category B - Partial Assessment	Team Leader(s) Meskerem Mulatu	
Lending Instrument	Fragile and/or Capacity Constraints []		
	Financial Intermediaries []		
	Series of Projects []		
Project Implementation Start Date 28-Apr-2016	Project Implementation End Date 31-Jan-2023		
Expected Effectiveness Date 25-Aug-2016	Expected Closing Date 31-Jul-2023		
Joint IFC No			
Practice Manager/Manager Sajitha Bashir	Senior Global Practice Director Claudia Maria Costin	Country Director Ahmadou Moustapha Ndiaye	Regional Vice President Makhtar Diop
Borrower: Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Literacy Education, Youth and Civil Education (MEPSA-JEC)			
Responsible Agency: MEPSA-JEC Project Preparation team			
Contact: Telephone No.:	Philippe Claver Massez- Okemba 242069514686	Title: Email:	Head praebase@yahoo.fr
Project Financing Data(in US\$, millions)			
[] Loan	[] IDA Grant	[] Guarantee	
[X] Credit	[] Grant	[] Other	

Total Project Cost:	70.00	Total Bank Financing:	30.00						
Financing Gap:	0.00								
Financing Source		Amount							
BORROWER/RECIPIENT		40.00							
International Development Association (IDA)		30.00							
Total		70.00							
Expected Disbursements (in US\$, millions)									
Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Annual	0.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	6.00	4.00	0.00
Cumulative	0.00	2.00	5.00	9.00	14.00	20.00	26.00	30.00	30.00
Institutional Data									
Practice Area (Lead)									
Education									
Contributing Practice Areas									
Cross Cutting Topics									
[] Climate Change									
[] Fragile, Conflict & Violence									
[X] Gender									
[] Jobs									
[] Public Private Partnership									
Sectors / Climate Change									
Sector (Maximum 5 and total % must equal 100)									
Major Sector	Sector				%	Adaptation Co-benefits %	Mitigation Co-benefits %		
Education	Primary education				50				
Education	Secondary education				45				
Education	Tertiary education				5				
Total					100				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I certify that there is no Adaptation and Mitigation Climate Change Co-benefits information applicable to this project.									
Themes									

Theme (Maximum 5 and total % must equal 100)		
Major theme	Theme	%
Human development	Education for all	100
Total		100
Proposed Development Objective(s)		
To improve education outcomes of primary and lower secondary school children and to increase the effectiveness of select management systems.		
Components		
Component Name	Cost (US\$, millions)	
Providing Quality Education for All	35.00	
Improving Scope, Quality and Management of Human Resources	18.00	
Improving System Performance	10.00	
Unallocated	7.00	
Systematic Operations Risk-Rating Tool (SORT)		
Risk Category	Rating	
1. Political and Governance	Substantial	
2. Macroeconomic	Substantial	
3. Sector Strategies and Policies	Substantial	
4. Technical Design of Project or Program	Substantial	
5. Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	Substantial	
6. Fiduciary	Substantial	
7. Environment and Social	Moderate	
8. Stakeholders	Moderate	
9. Other		
OVERALL	Substantial	
Compliance		
Policy		
Does the project depart from the CAS in content or in other significant respects?	Yes []	No [X]
Does the project require any waivers of Bank policies?	Yes []	No [X]
Have these been approved by Bank management?	Yes []	No []
Is approval for any policy waiver sought from the Board?	Yes []	No [X]
Does the project meet the Regional criteria for readiness for implementation?	Yes [X]	No []
Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No

Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01		X	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04			X
Forests OP/BP 4.36			X
Pest Management OP 4.09			X
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		X	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		X	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		X	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37			X
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50			X
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60			X
Legal Covenants			
Name	Recurrent	Due Date	Frequency
Project Unit Staff - Schedule 2.I.A.2		25-Sept-2016	
Description of Covenant			
The Recipient shall cause the MEPSA-JEC to establish, by no later than one month after the Effective date, and maintain thereafter, a project coordination unit (PCU) to be charged with day-to-day management of this project in close collaboration with the key government entities; such UGP to be staffed with a high-quality, technically sound team, and shall include inter alia, a Project Coordinator, a Financial Manager, a Procurement Specialist, a Construction Manager, a Component Head for each of the three components of the Project, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, a Communications Specialist, a Social Safeguards Specialist, and assistant specialists, as needed.			
Name	Recurrent	Due Date	Frequency
Steering Committee - Schedule 2.I.A.3		25-Sept-2016	
Description of Covenant			
The recipient shall establish, not later than one (1) month after the effective date, and thereafter maintain, throughout the Project implementation period with composition, mandate, and resources satisfactory to the Association, a Steering Committee, to be chaired by the Recipient's Minister in charge of Planning or a designate and comprised of representatives of key ministries, agencies, the private sector and civil society.			
Name	Recurrent	Due Date	Frequency
External Auditor - Schedule 2.I.A.4		25-Dec-2016	
Description of Covenant			
The recipient shall employ, not later than four (4) months after the effective date, the external auditor pursuant to terms of reference satisfactory to the Association.			
Name	Recurrent	Due Date	Frequency
Social Safeguards Specialist - Schedule 2.I.A.5		25-Feb-2017	
Description of Covenant			

The Recipient shall cause the PCU to employ, not later than six months after the Effective Date, and thereafter maintain at all times during Project implementation, a Social Safeguards Specialist whose qualifications, experience and terms of reference shall be acceptable to the Association.

Conditions				
Source Of Fund	Name	Type		
IDA	Implementation Manual - Article IV.4.01	Effectiveness		
Description of Condition				
The recipient shall adopt a Project Implementation Manual, in form and substance satisfactory to the Association.				
Team Composition				
Bank Staff				
Name	Role	Title	Specialization	Unit
Meskerem Mulatu	Team Leader (ADM Responsible)	Lead Education Specialist	Education	GED07
Clement Tukeba Lessa Kimpuni	Procurement Specialist (ADM Responsible)	Senior Procurement Specialist	Procurement	GGO07
Saidou Diop	Financial Management Specialist	Senior Financial Management Specialist	Financial Management	GGO25
Abdoulaye Gadiere	Safeguards Specialist	Senior Environmental Specialist	Environmental Safeguards	GEN07
Kishor Uprety	Legal Specialist	Senior Counsel	Senior Counsel	LEGAM
Faly Diallo	Finance Specialist	Finance Officer	Finance	WFALN
Alison Marie Mills	Team Member	E T Consultant	Education	GED07
Josyane E. Carmen Costa	Team Member	Program Assistant	Administration	AFMCG
Lalaina Noelinirina Rasoloharison	Team Member	Program Assistant	Administration	GED07
Leopold Remi Sarr	Team Member	Senior Economist	Education	GED06
Quentin Wodon	Team Member	Lead Economist	Economist	GEDGE
Lucienne M. M'Baipor	Safeguards Specialist	Senior Social Development Specialist	Social Safeguards	GSU01
Samira Halabi	Team Member	Education Specialist	Education	GED05
Waly Wane	Team Member	Senior Economist	Education	GED07
Extended Team				
Name	Title	Office Phone	Location	

Johan Verhaghe	Consultant - education	Education	
Mahamat Goadi Louani	Education Specialist (consultant)	Education	
Marie-Yvette Sacadura	Senior Education Specialist (consultant)	Education	Brazzaville
Souleymane Zerbo	Consultant Architect	Architecture	Washington, DC

Locations

Country	First Administrative Division	Location	Planned	Actual	Comments
Congo, Republic of	Sangha	Sangha	X		
Congo, Republic of	Pool	Pool	X		
Congo, Republic of	Plateaux	Plateaux	X		
Congo, Republic of	Niari	Region du Niari	X		
Congo, Republic of	Likouala	Likouala	X		
Congo, Republic of	Lekoumou	Lekoumou	X		
Congo, Republic of	Kouilou	Region du Kouilou	X		
Congo, Republic of	Cuvette	Cuvette	X		
Congo, Republic of	Bouenza	Region de la Bouenza	X		
Congo, Republic of	Brazzaville	Commune de Brazzaville	X		
Congo, Republic of	Cuvette-Ouest	Cuvette-Ouest	X		
Congo, Republic of	Pointe-Noire	Pointe-Noire	X		

Consultants (Will be disclosed in the Monthly Operational Summary)

Consultants Required? Consultants will be required

I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A. Country Context

1. **The Republic of Congo (Congo) is a lower-middle-income oil-dependent country in Central Africa with per capita gross national income of US\$2,720 (2014).** Congo's recent growth trend was lower than the projected rate of growth in the 2012–2016 National Development Plan (NDP). From 2011 to 2014, Congo's annual growth rate averaged 4.3 percent, which is lower than the 8.5 percent target set by the NDP to achieve the country's ambitions to become an upper-middle-income country by 2025. This was largely a result of the poor performance of the oil sector. Uncertainty with regard to public revenues is high, due in large part to the fall in the price of oil. During the last four years, oil production declined by an average annual rate of 6.2 percent essentially due to interruptions of oil production in some offshore wells. Because the oil sector accounted for more than 60 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), 75 percent of Government revenues and 90 percent of total exports from 2010 to 2014, additional years of weak performance, are expected to negatively affect human development indicators.

2. **Congo has a relatively small population of 4.1 million, about 65 percent of whom live in the urban corridor between Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.** The country is highly urbanized with a high proportion of the population living in the three main urban centers. The country has significant endowments of natural resources, with extensive forests, arable land, and minerals, as well as a deep-sea port in Pointe-Noire, all of which offer considerable opportunities for growth and development beyond the oil and gas sectors.

3. **The high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality are significant threats to the country's economic development aspirations as captured in its NDP.** These challenges are outlined in the latest Poverty Reduction, Growth, and Employment Strategy Paper for the period 2012–2016, the main objective of which is to stimulate inclusive economic growth and to diversify the economy away from its dependence on oil. Other objectives of the Poverty Reduction, Growth, and Employment Strategy Paper include improving governance, developing basic infrastructure, promoting social inclusion and equity, and reducing poverty from 46.5 percent in 2011 to 35 percent by 2015.

4. **In the last decade, spending on human resources did not increase at the same rate as overall government spending;** this was true even when oil prices and prudent spending had enabled Congo to accumulate large budget surpluses in the last decade. Recent developments leading to lower oil production and significantly lower oil revenues caused the budget to run a fiscal deficit in 2014.

5. **After a lengthy period of conflict throughout the 1990s, the country has enjoyed a relatively stable sociopolitical situation, yet persistent challenges remain.** The country continues to suffer from weak public institutions and limited implementation capacity in the public sector, thereby not fully capitalizing on the opportunities offered by its significant oil revenues and reserves. Congo did not meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to universal primary completion, though it achieved gender parity in primary education and is close to parity

in secondary education.¹ Moreover, with an estimated population growth rate of 3.2 percent per year,² the demographic transition is not yet in sight even with Congo's middle-income status and relatively high rate of urbanization. The cohorts of youth entering the labor market are large and are expected to increase in the coming years, with limited prospects for gainful employment.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. **Congo has had a long history of supporting education.** Early on, it had a relatively well-developed education system, with fairly high educational attainment of the population now in their 40s, as confirmed by the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) (the median number of years of education is 8.2 for 25–29 year-olds compared with 8.5 years for 45–49 year-olds). More recent cohorts have not had the same opportunities: the quality of education is low, the equity challenges are significant, and the system dysfunctions are tangible. For example, only 43 percent of students starting grade 6 achieved the minimum acceptable score in French in the 2014 Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (*Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN*, PASEC) assessment, and only 34 percent reached that minimum level in mathematics. This means that most students leaving primary school do not have sufficient foundational literacy and numeracy skills. When compared to other Francophone countries participating in this international assessment, Congo does not fare better than average despite its middle-income status.

7. **The update of the Education Sector Strategy is now complete.** In an effort to address the gaps found in the earlier Education Sector Policy, the Government conducted a substantial revision of its Education Sector Strategy, which was completed in 2015 and covers the post-MDG period from 2015 to 2025 and consists of the following three major themes:³ (a) providing quality education for all; (b) responding to the need for quality human resources in an emerging economy; and (c) creating a well-performing education system. The strategy provides an important starting point, on the basis of which further system wide improvements can be launched, however data upon which it is based are somewhat unreliable.

8. **While Congo compares favorably with other low-income countries for total spending on education as a share of GDP, it spends considerably less when looking at public spending per student.** When measuring total spending as a share of GDP, Congo compares favorably to other middle-income countries in Eastern Europe or Asia (Armenia, Indonesia, Moldova, and Sri Lanka, among others). However, as shown in the graphs in the economic analysis, Congo spends

¹ Preliminary data indicate that gender parity may also have been reached (Multi-indicator Cluster Survey 5 [MICS5], 2014–2015).

² The latest population census was completed in 2007; however, data are difficult to access. The data from household surveys, the most recent of which was undertaken in 2011, are used to calculate population growth estimates.

³ Strategy themes in more detail include (a) providing quality education for all, with a focus on a basic education cycle of 10 years and on moving toward universal access to pre-schooling, especially in rural areas; enhancing access to informal education and literacy services for youth and adults, including second chance education; (b) responding to the need for quality human resources in an emerging economy, with a focus on creating quality schools, establishing a newly reformed technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system, and improving the relevance of higher education; and (c) creating a well-performing education system, with a focus on improved institutional management, enhanced human resource management, and better management of financial resources and statistics, planning and strategy, and crises and emergencies.

less per student than comparable countries. In fact, significantly poorer Sub-Saharan African countries are able to perform better, including Niger and The Gambia, among others.

9. **Congo was formally admitted into the Global Partnership for Education (*Partenariat mondial pour l'Education, GPE*) in September 2015.** This important partnership has endorsed the Congo's Education Sector Strategy (2015–2025), and Congo will now join the 61 countries within the GPE who hold a shared commitment to ensuring access to quality education for all children. The process of fulfilling the prerequisites for membership in the GPE has been instrumental in catalyzing discussions around complex issues regarding equity, in particular. Therefore, while Congo did not benefit from the GPE's financial support, its inclusion in this partnership allows its voice to be included in global discussions on important education issues.

Snapshot of the Sector⁴

10. **Primary intake is high**, growing from 90 percent in 2005 to 104 percent in 2011. As noted, while gender parity has been achieved in primary education, disparities can still be seen in some regions, including Plateaux, Kouilou, and Niari. Completion rates increased from 74 to 80 percent over that same period; however, this relatively high rate hides increasing repetitions, which have gone from 18 percent in 2010 to 23 percent by 2012.

11. **Lower secondary enrollments** have been growing consistently, increasing from 59 to 72 percent from 2005 to 2013, more than 49 percent of whom are girls (parity index of 0.96). Preliminary data from a more recent survey show that gender parity was achieved in secondary in 2015 (MICS 5). The dropout rate is still high at 17.6 percent, and the number of secondary school places is not sufficient to accommodate the increasing enrollment and completion rates in primary.

12. **Physical infrastructure resources are deficient at the primary level.** While 86 percent of schools have an administrative office block, less than five percent have libraries, less than six percent have functioning waters points, and only 37 percent of classrooms have a chair for the teacher. Figures on latrines are not yet available, but few have been rehabilitated in recent years since rehabilitation programs focused on the need for additional classrooms without increasing the numbers of latrines, or rehabilitating the existing ones, despite the potential impact on school attendance of girls.

13. **Access to learning materials is limited**, with few students having all of the core textbooks or learning materials. In primary, each reading textbook is used by five students and each mathematics textbook by ten students.

14. **Urban schools tend to be overcrowded, sometimes with over 90 students per classroom**, but also tend to have more teacher coverage and staffing by Government paid teachers who have received at least basic preservice teacher training. Conversely, rural schools are fewer in number and less crowded but often suffer from unreliable staffing of teachers, requiring parents to pay volunteer teachers who may or may not have received training.

⁴ This section acknowledges the challenge of finding accurate data, particularly with regard to the population figures. The team used the best available data at the time of project appraisal.

15. **High shares of private provision of primary education suggest inadequate success in ensuring effective access and/or poor quality.** Almost 29 percent of primary school-age children were enrolled in private schools in 2011 and another three percent in subsidized non-public religious schools (also called *écoles conventionnées, Type 1*). Preliminary data from a recent ministry survey (June 2015) paints a more dramatic picture, with more than 39 percent in private, nonsubsidized primary schools and only four percent of primary school students in subsidized *écoles conventionnées*.

Key Sector Issues

Quality remains the most significant challenge by all accounts, although rigorous measures of education quality remain ad hoc in nature.

16. **Learning outcomes are not tracked at regular intervals.** The only evaluation of student learning in recent years was done in 2012–13, assessing learning outcomes at the beginning of grade 6 of primary education (*CM2*), covering all regions of Congo and all types of schools (including public, subsidized religious, and private). A total of 2,000 students were evaluated in French and mathematics. In French, the average score was 33 percent across the country, with regional average scores ranging from 21 to 61 percent. In mathematics, the national average was 26 percent, with regional scores ranging from 18 to 49 percent. Boys outperformed girls in both French (35 versus 31 percent) and mathematics (27 versus 24 percent), and in both cases the difference was statistically significant. Interestingly, there was little difference between the performance of rural and urban students (the differences were not statistically significant).⁵ Private schools received the highest scores (44 percent) with public and *écoles conventionnées* receiving scores of 34 and 25 percent, respectively. The 2014 PASEC data provide more up-to-date information, and the analyses offer important benchmarking of Congo’s learning outcomes against regional Francophone comparators.

17. **Repetition and dropouts are persistent problems in Congo;** however, those who repeat do not appear to gain any benefit from their additional and costly years in school. This is similar to results seen in other countries in SSA. In the above mentioned assessment, for example, students who had repeated did less well than those who reached grade 6 without repeating, and this difference was statistically significant. Repetition rates can be as high as 24 percent in grade 4 and 19.7 in grade 10 in lower secondary. Dropout rates are also of great concern, going as high as 16 percent in grade 6 in primary and 12 percent in grade 10.

18. **There is widespread use of double shifting,**⁶ which is not surprising given the large majority of the population living in urban areas. This reduces the total number of instructional hours from which students can benefit. In addition, a disproportionately high number of exams and evaluations reduce instructional time; a quick count showed that instead of a total of 29 school weeks per year, students ended up having classes for 23.5 weeks—or less than six months. These exams include the high-stakes end-of-cycle exams, where entire schools and teaching staff are

⁵ Given the significant differences in the learning environments between rural and urban areas, this is a particularly noteworthy finding that would be explored further in action research supported under the project.

⁶ Double shifting is operation of a school in two shifts with one group attending school earlier in the day and a second group attending later in the day. The general purpose of double shifting is to increase the number of students attending school without the need to build another building.

assigned to cover the tests, leaving the other children with no option but to stay home. There are also quarterly exams (*devoirs départementaux*), which involve the teaching corps, inspectors, and students in week-long processes every quarter. There is little indication that the results from these disruptive quarterly exams lead to any systematic analyses and remediation or are used to target additional support to teachers or students.

19. **The last update of curricula took place 15 years ago.** The Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Literacy Education, Youth and Civic Education (*Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, et de l'Alphabétisation, de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Civique*, MEPSA-JEC) is in the process of discussing modifications to the curricula, including updated pedagogic approaches to reading, among others. There is concern among the officials in the ministry that the curricula are no longer appropriate and that the focus on rote memorization has resulted in major gaps in problem-solving capacities in both literacy (French) and numeracy (mathematics), as noted above. The lack of an adequate number of trained teachers and laboratories has affected the ability to teach the sciences, and the curricula are not adapted to the realities of the society or of the school environment, including the use of locally available and appropriate materials to teach core topics. In general, there are considerable challenges in the alignment between instructional time and expected learning outcomes, leading to discussions on refocusing the primary curricula on literacy and numeracy and strengthening the teaching of science and mathematics across the entire primary and secondary cycles.

Human resource management, and teacher management in particular, is inadequate.

20. **The education sector is one of the largest, if not the largest, employers in the Government.** However, data on personnel are inconsistent and outdated: various data sources list between 2,500 and 2,900 volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* in primary and between 4,700 and 6,900 civil service teachers in primary. Further, it is difficult to obtain accurate personnel numbers for the entire sector.⁷ Overlapping responsibilities among several central directorates and an ill-equipped human resources team have contributed to the ad hoc management of teacher recruitment, deployment, professional development, promotion, training, or exit/retirement from the system.

21. **Efficiency in the use of scarce resources is essential given the current budget situation.** Personnel costs within the education system consume more than 80 percent of the budget and have the potential to deliver or hamper the attainment of education sector objectives. Moreover, the human resources in education represent one of the largest, if not the largest, contributors to the overall personnel numbers in the public sector. Therefore, any major issue in the way personnel are managed in education has an important impact on the Government wage bill, the efficiency of Government recurrent spending, and the delivery of quality education.

22. **In recent years, the education sector does not appear to have benefited from any evidence-based planning for determining its staffing numbers.** On the demand side, poor data on actual student numbers, unreliable demographic information on incoming cohorts of school-age children, and the lack of reliable sources of information on out-of-school children make it

⁷ The latest data from June 2015 provide an important starting point, and those data are used for results monitoring with the understanding that revision of those data may be necessary as data get verified.

difficult for the MEPSA-JEC to clearly project how many teachers it will need in the coming years to reach universal primary enrollment. On the supply side, there is a lack of rigorous application of deployment decisions (or sanctions against missing teachers); controls on movement of staff from one region to the next or from active teaching to administrative status; systems to remove personnel from the MEPSA-JEC budget once they leave the sector; and decision-making power within the MEPSA-JEC for recruiting or paying teachers. All of these make it difficult to establish a rational human resource plan for the sector. Perhaps most importantly, the MEPSA-JEC has little say over most personnel decisions, given that quotas for recruitment of teachers are set by the Ministries of Finance and Civil Service without input from the MEPSA-JEC.

Equity and effective access require considerable attention.

23. **While Congo has relatively high enrollment rates, these hide considerable disparities.** For example, in those areas where civil service teachers have been unable or unwilling to live and teach, the state has not been able to address the problems (be they justified or not) so that there are trained teachers to fill all vacant positions. Therefore, even in public schools, parents are required to pay volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* out of their own means. On average, it appears parents are asked to pay about CFAF 200 per child per month. This means that families in remote, rural areas, often with very limited means, are required to finance a large share of their children's education, while families that are better off and/or living in urban areas can benefit from Government-paid teachers, who are often better trained and supervised.

24. **While the Education Sector Strategy makes a strong case for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, there is little systematic tracking of the challenges they face or of the progress made in addressing them.** For example, while boys outperform girls across the entire compulsory cycle, this does not appear to have led to any concerted efforts to support the learning of girls, especially adolescents. The data on indigenous peoples are not readily available; nor do there appear to be successful public system efforts to provide them with better-adapted and more acceptable learning environments. The same can be said for children with disabilities.

Systems development is the key to sustainability beyond project completion.

25. **Discussions with key decision makers in the education sector bring up a series of organizational challenges.** First, the teacher training institutions that provide all of the teachers for general education belong to the Ministry of Technical and Professional Education, Qualifying Training and Employment (*Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique, Professionnel, de la Formation Qualifiante et de l'Emploi*, METPFQE), which trains all primary teachers within the teacher training institutes (*Ecoles Normales d'Instituteurs*, ENIs), and to the Ministry of Higher Education (*Ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur*, MES), which trains all lower and upper secondary teachers. Second, within the MEPSA-JEC, a number of key functions are managed by units with limited resources or are not anchored within any existing units or directorates. For example, there is no single office charged with sector-wide human resource management, finance and budget, or communications. Units responsible for education data management, in-service teacher training, strategic planning, or school construction have neither the hierarchical weight nor the right expertise (in number or quality) to adequately fulfill their roles. Third, key outputs that will normally be part of the day-to-day tasks of the MEPSA-JEC, such as data collection and analysis, teacher career and professional development, collaboration between different

Government entities, or school feeding programs, all appear to depend on external assistance or projects by development partners. Therefore, there are serious challenges with regard to the development of adequate systems and the sustainability of reforms or policy advances in the absence of external partnerships.

26. **There are additional system-level challenges that need to be addressed.** Recruitment to the ENIs for both primary and secondary teachers has not been subject to any evaluation or assessment. There appear to be serious concerns regarding the selection of candidates to enter those institutions. In principle, candidates are required to pass an entry examination, but the quality and transparency of that recruitment process needs to be reviewed. There is an exit examination for those completing the primary ENIs (*les finalistes*); however, again, there are concerns about the quality and transparency of the exam. The actual coursework for training institutions, as well as the trainers who teach there, have not been reviewed in recent years to ensure alignment with curricular goals and quality standards for any teacher entering the system. There has not been a formal agreement between the ministries that house these institutions and the MEPSA-JEC, as the key employer of their graduates, on the quantity or quality of candidates who are certified by those institutions.

27. **The organization and management of the sector, and the alignment of its key functions, are in urgent need of overhaul.** A number of functions within the MEPSA-JEC are either missing or inadequately resourced, including strategic planning, data systems, finance and budgeting, human resource management, construction, evaluation, communication and collaboration (with stakeholders and between ministries), and evidence-based decision making and accountability (further described in Annex 3).

28. **There is considerable anecdotal evidence of rent seeking in many aspects of the functions of the education sector,** including in tests, especially the entrance exams or *concours* for entering both pedagogic and academic higher education institutions; recruitment; promotions; and deployment. The lack of systems for tracking data in a transparent manner (for example, dysfunctions in the sector with regard to ghost teachers, overstaffing schools with administrative personnel, assignment of teachers to other ministries while paid under MEPSA-JEC budgets, and false declarations of student numbers) has contributed to this situation. While computerized systems are only a first step in addressing some of these issues, open access to data and information and tracking of any arbitrary changes in policy can help set the stage for far-reaching governance reforms in the sector.

Donor Programs and Coordination

29. **The largest contributor to education within the Congo is the Government, which accounts for 98 percent of non-household funding to the sector.** Donor support accounts for the other two percent, comprising approximately CFAF 5–6 billion per year. In addition to the World Bank, active donors include the French Development Agency (*Agence française de développement*, AFD); United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); and the World Food Programme (WFP). External partner coordination takes place through a local education group (LEG) led by UNICEF for the regular review of the complementarity and synergy of programs, as well as for data sharing, where possible. The LEG collaborated closely on the development of the Education Sector Strategy

which outlined key objectives through 2025 and informed the project design. Given the severe lack of data within the sector, as noted earlier, the project will discuss possibilities for collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) as the MEPSA-JEC team works to update and systematize Government data systems under the project. In addition, the school feeding programs supported by the WFP and by the international nongovernmental agency International Partnership for Human Development (with significant financial participation from the state) are important for supporting children from poor families, especially those in indigenous communities. Perhaps most importantly, the project was prepared with the full participation at key points of all key local education group members, led by UNICEF.

30. **Complementarity with other Bank operations is being explored.** The project will build synergies with other Bank-supported projects in Congo, including the Statistics Capacity Building project (P133731),⁸ and the LISUNGI Safety Nets project (P145263).⁹ Collaboration with the Statistics Capacity Building project will help address the data limitations within the sector, while collaboration with the Safety Nets Project will allow for better targeting approaches for reaching vulnerable beneficiaries. The team also drew inspiration from the Congo Health Sector Project (PDSS II, P143849) by adapting their third-party verification processes to the education context. The project will collaborate with the ongoing AFCC2/RI-Central African Backbone SOP5 (CAB, P132821) project to ensure that the education ministry is given priority in the cabling and connection to the internet planned for Government administrations under the project;¹⁰ moreover, the CAB project will support implementation activities during the time the project conducts the necessary recruitment of project staff in-country. The ongoing Skills Development for Employability project (*Projet de développement des compétences pour l'employabilité*, PDCE) (P128628) aimed at promoting skills development among vulnerable urban youth provides the opportunity to learn from current work with the METPFQE, which continues to play a role in teacher training for general education.¹¹ Finally, a technical assistance (TA) task on higher education continues to provide additional information on the links between pre-university and tertiary education and the labor market; the project will further enhance that knowledge base.

31. **The project design also takes into account lessons learned from the previous IDA-financed Support to Basic Education Project (*Projet d'Appui à l'Enseignement de Base*, PRAEBASE),** which had the aims of better efficiency, quality, and equity in education. Although gains were made in each of these areas, given the post conflict context in which the project was implemented, lasting systems could not yet fully emerge. In the current project, therefore, systemic changes are still necessary to ensure sustainability of improvements to quality and equity within the sector by establishing systems that will be maintained beyond the life of the project. As a result, special attention will be paid to crosscutting system improvement measures such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), improved scope and quality of human resources, and capacity building across all levels of the system.

⁸ This project aims at strengthening the National Statistics System and promoting the demand for statistical information.

⁹ This project has the objective of establishing the building blocks of a social safety net program within the country

¹⁰ The CAB Project team will most likely provide fiduciary support for the implementation of the project advance for this project while the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) or the Project Management Unit (*Unité de gestion de projet*, UGP) staff with the right skills and qualifications are recruited.

¹¹ However, the PDCE project does not include activities that touch on teacher training for general education.

C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes

32. **Support to the education sector strategy.** The project supports Congo’s education agenda by focusing on system-wide improvements to create the conditions for better access and quality in schools and is closely aligned with the Education Sector Strategy, which covers the period of 2015–2025. Each of the key themes—(a) providing quality education for all; (b) responding to the need for human resources with a focus on creating quality schools; and (c) creating a well-performing education system (including better institutional and system-wide management of resources, and strategic planning)—have heavily informed project design.

33. **Relationship with the Bank Congo Country Partnership Strategy (CPS).** Education operations are included in the work program agreed with the Government for FY13–FY16, as described in the Country Partnership Strategy for the Republic of Congo dated September 24, 2012 (Report 71713-CG). The main objective of the CPS is to help Congo use its large oil revenues to diversify its economy away from oil dependency and improve its social outcomes. The CPS also highlights the importance of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public investments and strengthening Government capacity. The proposed project will contribute to both Pillars 1 and 2 of the CPS, Competitiveness and Employment and Vulnerability and Resilience, by providing opportunities for all children to benefit from a quality education. It also aims to improve service delivery in education.

34. **The project is aligned with the twin goals of the Bank, to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.** Education is a driver of development and a tool for reducing poverty as it contributes to economic growth and development by providing children with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills required to lead successful, healthy, and productive lives. Along these same lines, the project is closely aligned with the *World Bank Education Strategy 2020: Learning for All* that aims at providing this very opportunity to all children, not just the most privileged, or the smartest. This is also aligned with the Africa regional strategy of contributing towards sustaining growth and making growth more inclusive, as in addition to system-wide changes and improvements in education quality, the project aims to address gender disparities, geographic variations in access and completion, and the needs of vulnerable populations through adaptation of schools and targeting mechanisms.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. PDO

35. The project development objective (PDO) is **to improve education outcomes of primary and lower secondary school children and to increase the effectiveness of select management systems.**

Project Beneficiaries

36. The project aims to provide benefits to the following:¹²

¹² Data in this section are from preliminary results from the MEPSA-JEC survey from June 2015.

- (a) Approximately 480,000 public primary school students and 30,000 students from subsidized religious schools
- (b) Approximately 110,000 public lower secondary students
- (c) Approximately 6,000 civil service teachers in public primary schools
- (d) Approximately 2,000 volunteer teachers (*bénévoles*)
- (e) About 6,000 families in remote areas, who are disproportionately poor

PDO Level Results Indicators

37. The following indicators will track progress toward the attainment of the PDO:
- (a) Primary completion rate (percentage); percent female
 - (b) Transition rate to lower secondary (percentage); percent female
 - (c) Transition rate to upper secondary (percentage); percent female
 - (d) Primary repetition rate (percentage)
 - (e) System for learning assessment at the primary level (yes/no); Utility of the learning assessment system (supplemental)
38. **A first set of data from UNICEF-financed MEPSA-JEC survey was made available by the ministry.** Demographic data from United Nations data sources confirm there will be continued growth in the school-age population in the coming years; consequently, here are some points to consider:
- (a) At current population growth rates and assuming the share of children in public schools remains the same, just to keep the same gross enrollment rate until the end of the project period, **the Government will have to enroll an additional 101,000 children in public schools by 2023.** This impact is already being felt, with 13,800 new entrants to enroll in 2016.
 - (b) Just to accommodate this new population, the sector will need **an additional 1,700 classrooms by 2023** to keep class sizes at 60 students (not taking into account other important needs already seen in the system).
 - (c) The government will have to recruit **an additional 2,000 teachers by 2023** to keep student-teacher ratios at 50:1.

39. **The time to take action to meet this important demographic challenge is now.** The current budget-constrained environment limits the actions that the Government can take to address both the need for additional classrooms and additional teachers. Even as the system awaits the resolution of budget issues, it is imperative that existing resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible; that all teachers who are paid are actually teaching in class; that all

schools are open for the required number of school days; and that all textbooks and other learning materials are in the hands of the children, to mention a few key actions. To that end, this project aims to support improvements in the quality of education and in the implementation of more robust systems to sustain the important gains seen so far. This, in turn, will support improvements in both effectiveness and efficiency.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Components

40. The proposed project will help create a well-performing general education system able to support improvements in education quality, foster efficient use of human resources, and create a more effective sector management system. Details of each component and subcomponent can be found in Annex 2.

Component 1: Providing Quality Education for All (US\$35 million, of which IDA US\$14 million)

41. **This component seeks to improve the quality of education with a strong focus on providing both teachers and students with an appropriate teaching and learning environment.** The overarching objective is to deliver a full teaching/learning ‘package’ that deals with current needs, including revision of the core curriculum for all primary and lower secondary grades, provision of learning materials for students (textbooks and other learning materials), and relevant teaching materials for teachers. It is expected that these activities will improve the quality of education by supporting the provision of more relevant academic teaching or learning content, increased availability of textbooks in major subjects for all primary and lower secondary students, didactic materials for all primary schools, and scripted lessons for all primary teachers, especially those with weak content knowledge and/or pedagogic practice. This component builds on similar initiatives conducted under PRAEBASE (2004–2009 and the additional financing 2009–2012) but will shift toward more essential teaching strategies in terms of content, teaching practice, use of instructional time, and enhancing learning even in challenging contexts. As such, the curriculum review will integrate elements of reform to improve the overall quality of education but also to develop more efficient teaching/learning processes.

Subcomponent 1.1: Curriculum revision and implementation (US\$5 million, of which IDA US\$5 million)

42. **The project will support a series of activities leading to a revision of all primary and lower secondary school curricula, with a focus on French, mathematics, and science.** This will entail rapid evaluation of current curricula as they are implemented at present with a rigorous assessment of the instructional time spent on each objective/competency¹³ both in absolute terms and as a share of the total expected and observed hours of instruction. The targeted revision will complement activities supported under PRAEBASE. In addition, the project will build on the results of the *Assises sur les réformes curriculaires* (Conference on Curricular Reforms,

¹³ At present, Congolese schools are straddling two approaches: one that is based on objectives and another that is based on competencies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that competency-based approaches, which are newer, have not taken hold; however, there is little empirical evidence based on actual observation.

Brazzaville, 2010) in light of the shift toward a ten-year basic education cycle that incorporates science in the primary curriculum.

43. **The project will progressively print and distribute all curriculum materials, and provide training to all actors engaged in curriculum delivery.** Both national and international TA will be provided to support in the assessment, drafting/writing, printing, and distribution of curriculum materials, as well as in the use of systematic classroom observation tools and protocols for ensuring appropriate implementation of the curricula.

44. **In addition, the project will strengthen the entity responsible for education quality improvements, the National Pedagogical Research and Action Institute (*Institut national de la Recherche et d'Action pédagogique*, INRAP),** which is charged with curriculum development and procurement of learning materials, including textbooks. At present, INRAP is not adequately staffed or resourced to fulfill this task. The project will provide support to INRAP to enable it to fully play its role as an institute for pedagogic improvement, and will consider the possibility of transforming it into a center of excellence for the entire education system, in collaboration with both the technical and higher education partner ministries. The goal is to develop INRAP into an institution that offers high-quality services with regard to curricula and learning materials.

Subcomponent 1.2: Provision of learning materials (US\$9 million, of which no IDA funding)

45. **To enhance the learning environment for children and enable them to take their books home from school every day, the project will support two rounds of textbook procurement.** The first round will reprint existing textbooks as soon as possible to ensure a 1:1 coverage in French and mathematics for all primary school students,¹⁴ and a 1:1 coverage in French, mathematics, and science for all public lower secondary students. Not only will this enable children currently without textbooks to receive them within the first year of the project, but the Government's commitment to providing textbooks to all Congolese children who are in licensed¹⁵ schools will reduce and perhaps even eliminate the parallel market in illegal textbook sales, which often leads to the theft of entire stocks of textbooks from large, urban schools. The second round of textbook procurement will be launched as soon as the new curricula are available, when the project finances the publishing, printing, and distribution of the textbooks and instructional materials (including workbooks) for the new curricula, likely to start in the fourth year of project implementation.

46. In lower secondary, the project aims to serve 110,000 public school students. These estimates will serve as the basis for the programming of reprints. Although the project aims to deliver textbooks to schools as soon as possible, the target set by the MEPSA-JEC is to reach 1:1 coverage in French and mathematics textbooks in public primary schools by 2018 and to reach 1:1 coverage in French, mathematics, and sciences, which will include physical sciences (chemistry and physics) and natural sciences (*Science de la Vie et de la Terre* or SVT) textbooks in public lower secondary schools, also by 2018. This builds on PRAEBASE achievements that could be completed and/or complemented. In all cases, the issues of copyright of the manuscripts will be

¹⁴ With priority given to students in public and *écoles conventionnées* with government-paid teachers.

¹⁵ Students who are in illegal or not-yet-licensed private schools would not receive textbooks.

resolved at the time of the negotiation of the contracts to offer the Government the maximum amount of flexibility and cost-effectiveness.

47. **In addition, the project aims to deliver to all public and subsidized primary schools didactic materials and classroom learning supports (maps, charts, and so on) as well as reading corner books. Science kits will be provided to primary and lower secondary schools.** In addition, this activity is to be coupled with a policy debate on the minimum package of didactic materials needed for primary schools, how to make their acquisition sustainable, and their use as a central part of the curriculum and lesson planning process.

48. **The project aims to provide a standardized set of teaching materials in the form of scripted lessons (*fiches pédagogiques*) in French and mathematics to all teachers in public primary schools.** This will help address current weak capacities of primary teachers in both content knowledge and in teaching practice (see chart in Annex 2 for additional details regarding sequencing).

49. **While there is considerable anecdotal evidence that many teachers are not able to fulfill their pedagogic responsibilities fully, there is little or no reliable data with regard to the extent of this problem.** To address this knowledge gap, the project intends to launch the Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) survey (<http://www.sdindicators.org/>), which includes a set of education (and health) indicators that examine the effort and ability of staff and the availability of key inputs and resources that contribute to a functioning school.

50. **To encourage the development of a culture of action research and evidence-based decision making, the project will create a Competitive Fund for Action Research in Education (C-FARE),** with separate windows for individuals and groups, and with a multisectoral jury of evaluators who will award grants annually. The goal of this fund is to support action research in the three thematic areas of the Education Sector Strategy: (a) providing quality education for all; (b) ensuring quality human resources in an emerging economy; and (c) creating a well-performing education system.

Subcomponent 1.3: Improved Assessment (US\$5 million, of which IDA US\$5 million)

51. **The project will help foster a culture of conducting and using data from transparent and high-quality evaluations, including evaluations of the system as a whole, and assessments of learning outcomes.** This includes the launching of a national assessment of French and mathematics (at elementary and lower secondary levels), which will be conducted at least twice during the project implementation period. The project aims to use this as the basis for the creation of a permanent evaluation team to head an independent, expert commission for evaluating education system performance.

52. **Under this subcomponent, the project will support activities that address weaknesses in national examinations and tests and measure learning outcomes.** More specifically, it will (a) critically analyze the current series of evaluations, assessments, tests, and examinations at all levels, with a focus on their quality, and their rigorous and transparent administration; and (b) design and implement a learning assessment tool to track learning outcomes in French and mathematics, at a minimum.

Subcomponent 1.4: Expand use of remediation in schools and classrooms (US\$4 million, of which IDA US\$4 million)

53. **Under this subcomponent, the project will support activities that provide support to teachers and students to support remediation activities.** This will help address any learning gaps that have emerged from evaluations at the school and regional level without awaiting the organization of in-service training activities. This subcomponent is designed to build on learning assessments under this project and explore various ways for supporting improved learning for students. The key objective is to support remediation activities for teachers and students, including building on the results from learning assessments to design and implement remedial strategies in reading and mathematics, and exploring various ways for ensuring improved learning for students.

54. **Systematic research will be undertaken to provide evidence to enable the Government to undertake much-needed systemic reforms and to promote adoption of more efficient teaching practices.** Substantial (but anecdotal) evidence shows the presence of multifaceted causes of inefficient teaching; some of these are structural and need to be addressed to effectively support other activities that seek to improve quality education (such as the provision of textbooks and didactic materials). Systematic research will focus on (a) increasing efficient use of instructional time; (b) the improvement of teaching practice; and (c) the use of data for effective teaching.

55. **Building on existing findings, this component will support the Ministry in developing a comprehensive policy framework for inclusive education.** Universal basic education requires proactively identifying and removing barriers that impede access to educational opportunities for all children, without exception. This will look into the adaptation of schools to fit the needs of vulnerable populations, including those of girls, students with disabilities, and children from indigenous populations, among others.¹⁶

56. **Developing local accountability mechanisms.** Various Government resources currently flow from central to local levels (teachers, textbooks, and per capita grants) and are not systematically monitored and assessed. This component will support the Ministry to establish mechanisms that increase accountability on the use of resources. This includes a coherent framework at central, regional, and school levels to ensure efficient and consistent use of all resources in line with identified priorities as well as a pilot for crowdsourcing community-level information to ensure availability of human and financial resources at schools (further detailed in Annex 2).

Subcomponent 1.5: Improvements to School Environments (US\$12 million, with no IDA funding)

57. **The project recognizes that an important contributor to learning quality is the physical environment within which students learn.** Consequently, the project will support the construction of classrooms and rehabilitation of infrastructure with a vision of a ‘whole’ school rather than of discrete classrooms. These new and rehabilitated structures will respect the standards

¹⁶ At present, there are no reliable data with regard to the total population of school-age children from indigenous populations in the Congo. Therefore, the project will target the enrollment of increasing numbers of children from these groups rather than aiming for a particular percentage.

of accessibility for people with disabilities. The focus will be on expanding primary school places to ensure universal primary enrollment. In areas where the availability of land is the most acute, the project aims to finalize and use building plans that include two-story options (R+1) to maximize the use of the available space.¹⁷

58. **To ensure that the selected school sites are responding to real demand, the project will finance a school mapping exercise**, which will not only provide geographic locations of both schools and villages/towns/cities but also serve as a basis for the creation of a national policy for the rational, systematic creation of new school places regardless of the level at which they are done or the entity that creates them. To support the maintenance of school buildings, furniture and equipment, the project will develop a small maintenance manual to be shared across all key stakeholders around the school.

59. **Each of the newly constructed or rehabilitated classrooms will have new furniture and equipment.** Every school where the project intervenes will also benefit from rehabilitated latrines as needed, and possibly water points.

Component 2: Improving Scope, Quality, and Management of Human Resources (US\$18 million, of which IDA US\$3 million)

60. **In the area of human resources in education, the project aims to support improved, reliable, and transparent personnel management systems**, with a focus on teachers but also on school directors, pedagogic advisers, inspectors, regional directors, and central directors; the project will also help find the appropriate balance between administrative and pedagogic personnel.

Subcomponent 2.1: Personnel recruitment, deployment, remuneration, advancement and exit (US\$1 million, of which no IDA)

61. **The project will support the creation of a digital personnel database to help uniquely identify personnel** based on their actual positions and track their careers, professional development, deployment, advancement, and eventually retirement. This database, to be part of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) supported under Component 3, will help collect the data necessary for a more evidence-driven management of personnel. As a first step, the database will start to register and use biometric data to identify all of the volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* in the system—but not necessarily integrate them into the civil service. For civil service teachers, who already have unique identity numbers, the database will begin to build their digital profiles and will enable MEPSA-JEC senior management at central or regional levels to track the personnel working in their centers. Once the biometric data for volunteer teachers is included, the database will keep biometric data for civil service teachers as well. Eventually, the idea is to have a single database (*Fiche unique*) that will be used to track teachers' careers at the Ministry of Civil Service and to pay their salaries at the Ministry of Finance. Given the number of challenges in getting there, the project will attempt to build the necessary commitment across the three ministries

¹⁷ The selection of school sites will be based on a series of criteria that favor those areas with poor and vulnerable populations, where there is high demand and relatively lower levels of enrollment and completion.

but acknowledges the important role that political will and direction from the highest levels will play in the success of this approach.

62. **To ensure the quality of the recruitment and training processes at the ENIs and the Ecoles Normales Supérieures (ENS), the project will formulate clear and objective standards for recruitment into the training institutions**, including revised examinations at entry, an assessment of the courses with a focus on finding the right balance between content and pedagogy, and between theory and practice, and a transparent and rigorous examination at exit. To ensure the alignment of the ENI and ENS courses with advances in the system, the project will offer multiple opportunities for the training institutions to interact with and benefit from contributions from the MEPSA-JEC, including INRAP.

63. **The project will support the MEPSA-JEC efforts to track teacher mobility** to identify the regions or districts with the highest staff turnover and/or largest share of volunteer teachers and will study the role that teacher pay and incentives plays in stabilizing that force. The study will look at the existing incentives and sanctions and make recommendations regarding the use of both financial and non-financial benefits to attract and keep the best teachers (for example, lodging, access to more attractive posts, shortening of years of commitment, and so on).

Subcomponent 2.2: Training and Professional Development (US\$17 million, of which IDA US\$2 million)

64. **In response to the issues raised above, the project will support training for all key education personnel, with a priority focus on teachers and other school-level actors.** As a first step, the project will build on previously conducted training needs assessments (PRAEBASE) but go beyond that scope in terms of implementing long-term systemic reform. This will include the following:

- (a) Preservice training for new primary and lower secondary teachers;
- (b) Enhanced in-service training for all primary and lower secondary teachers;
- (c) Targeted training of volunteer teachers (*bénévoles*), based on their academic profile and number of years of experience;
- (d) For reasons of coherence and continuity, the training program will pay particular attention to the training of school directors and inspectors;
- (e) Training of school directors, pedagogic advisers, and academic directors (for lower secondary) as pedagogic leaders with the responsibility for leading and supporting learning improvements in schools;
- (f) Training of inspectors as facilitators of system-wide improvements; and
- (g) Training for regional and central education directors with a focus on their multifaceted roles and the support they can provide both to central directorates and to inspectors and schools

65. **In addition, the project will provide training for community actors and other key stakeholders, including parent- and community-associations, media partners, unions, education associations, and so on.** The project will explore opportunities for involving communities in on-site verifications of resource use, be it human resources, financial allocations, or textbooks and other material distribution.

Component 3: Improving System Performance (US\$10 million, of which IDA US\$10 million)

Sub-component 3.1: Improved monitoring and evaluation (US\$1.5 million, of which IDA US\$1.5 million)

66. **The project will support the creation and sustained functioning of a reliable and credible EMIS** that goes beyond the setup of computerized systems to include the collection, analyses, and use of data for informed decision making. The database will provide, at minimum, data that are disaggregated by gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location (including urban/rural) and by vulnerability (indigenous, with special needs, living in remote areas, and so on). Lessons learned from the PRAEBASE project show how current data collection is laborious, costly, and not sustainable (that is, central Studies and Planning Directorate [*Direction des Etudes et de la Planification*, DEP] staff traveling to all schools every year to collect data). The chart and description in annex 2 provide additional details on current data collection procedures.

Sub-component 3.2: Institutional strengthening and capacity building (US\$2.5 million, of which IDA US\$2.5 million)

67. **As mentioned earlier, the project will support a functional analysis of the key institutions in the sector,** with particular attention paid to the functions of strategic planning, financial and budget management, human resource management, construction, communications, and training and professional development. On the basis of its findings, the project will support the strengthening of the capacities of these functions at central and regional levels. A particular focus will be placed on the creation of an evaluation culture, as noted in Component 1 above, and evidence-based decision making in an environment where transparency and accountability are enhanced.

68. **As noted in the previous component, the project will examine the status and capacities of structures charged with teacher training in other education ministries,** that is, the METPFQE and the MES, and the entity charged with curriculum reform and implementation (INRAP). The project will place a high priority on facilitating coordination between relevant ministries (MEPSA-JEC, MES, METPFQE, Ministry of Finance/Ministry of Planning and so on).

Subcomponent 3.3: Project Management (US\$5 million, of which IDA US\$5 million)

69. **As was done under the previous IDA-financed PRAEBASE, this project will establish the PCU to help implement the planned activities.** Past and ongoing Bank-financed projects have highlighted the challenges related to implementing projects via existing government structures. While this can be effective in those situations where there is solid capacity within those institutions, this is not yet the case in the Congo. The PCU will be housed within or close to the MEPSA-JEC and will be charged with day-to-day management of this project in close collaboration with the key government entities.

Subcomponent 3.4: Additional strategic studies (US\$1 million, of which IDA US\$1 million)

70. **The project will finance additional studies and TA as needed to ensure alignment of general education reforms with both higher/tertiary education and the labor market.** These studies will also include sector-wide analyses of issues related to governance, quality and quality assurance, and alignment in addition to the three themes of equity, quality, and relevance.

Phasing of Project Implementation

71. This Education Sector Support Project (*Projet d'Appui Et d'Amélioration du Système Educatif*, PRAASED) has been prepared at a time when the uncertainty with regards to public revenues is high, due in large part to the fall in oil prices and revenues but also due to large budget outlays in 2015 and 2016, including the preparation of the Africa Games and the presidential elections. Within that context, to advance project preparation and still build in some flexibility, the project team proposes specific phasing of project implementation.

72. More recently, there has been a change in the Government portfolio that includes the general education sector, which now includes Youth and Civic Education and has a new minister. This additional responsibility under the scope of the Ministry may offer opportunities for expanded engagement in the education sector.

73. To support Government efforts to commit to counterpart contributions that take into account fiscal realities and to enable the new minister and his team to identify any new priorities that may emerge as a result of the MEPSA-JEC's expanded responsibilities, the Bank team proposed an initial project of US\$70 million (US\$40 million from the Government and US\$30 million from IDA). IDA financing has been strategically allocated to finance essential system building and quality enhancing inputs, leaving the major infrastructure and textbook expenditures for Government counterpart funding.

74. **The project will include construction activities for four regions where high unmet demand (urban) and lower enrollment rates (rural) are well-known challenges.** Implementation of textbook purchases will be done in phases, with priority first given to distribution to children in public schools, then those in *écoles conventionnées* before considering private school students.

B. Project Financing

75. **The largest financier in this project is the Congolese Government,** which is contributing US\$40 million; second is IDA, which will be contributing US\$30 million. The IDA contribution would consist of Investment Project Financing of EUR 26.7 million (US\$30 million equivalent) for the republic of Congo, to be made available upon effectiveness and disbursed on the basis of a withdrawal applications¹⁸.

¹⁸ The credits will be financed under Single Currency IDA hard term credit, with a 25-year maturity including a five year grace period as per the lending eligibility criteria applicable to the republic of Congo. The single currency

Project Cost and Financing

76. The costing of the project inputs has been complicated by the fact that unit costs for inputs varied enormously depending on the sources. As a result, the current draft only includes indicative costs; these should be taken as only preliminary estimates. Strategic decisions were taken in terms of how to allocate IDA funding and counterpart funding to ensure the greatest opportunity for sustainability and project results. Curriculum, remediation, recruitment, M&E, institutional strengthening, and strategic studies are largely IDA financed, while Government resources will be used for construction activities (100 percent counterpart funding financed) and the purchase of textbooks.

Table 1. Indicative Project Costs by Component and Financier

Indicative project costs by component and financier		Total	Government	IDA	% IDA
		US\$, million	US\$, million	US\$, million	
Component 1: Providing Quality Education for All					
1	Subcomponent 1.1: Curriculum revision and implementation	5		5	100.0
1	Subcomponent 1.2: Provision of learning materials	9	9		0.0
1	Subcomponent 1.3: Improved Assessment	5		5	100.0
1	Subcomponent 1.4: Expand Use of Remediation in Schools and Classrooms	4		4	100.0
1	Subcomponent 1.5: Improvements to school environments	12	12		0.0
Component 2: Improving Scope, Quality and Management of Human Resources					
2	Subcomponent 2.1: Personnel recruitment, deployment, remuneration, advancement, and exit	1		1	0.0
2	Subcomponent 2.2: Training and Professional Development	17	15	2	11.8
Component 3: Improving System Performance					
3	Subcomponent 3.1: Improved monitoring and evaluation	1.5		1.5	100.0
3	Subcomponent 3.2: Institutional strengthening and capacity building	2.5		2.5	100.0
3	Subcomponent 3.3: Project Management	5		5	100.0
3	Subcomponent 3.4: Additional strategic studies	1		1	100.0
Price and physical contingencies (10%)		7	4	3	42.9
Total project costs		70	40	30	42.9

C. Lessons Learned and Reflected in the Project Design

77. As noted above, ongoing projects in other sectors in Congo have experienced the challenges of implementing projects through existing government structures. As a result, the project will be implemented by a PCU, working closely with all the relevant government entities, as one of the stated goals of this project is to support and reinforce systems within the MEPSA-JEC. Another, related lesson was gleaned from the difficulties encountered with offering additional

amounts (EUR26,700,000) will be converted to the final SDR amount (SDR21,800,000) for commitment authority and country allocation management purposes on the day of project approval.

financial incentives to Government officials in the conduct of project activities through Government structures. This not only contributed to distracting officials with scarce management skills from the work of Government ministries, but it also created tensions with regard to the roles and responsibilities of each Government actor in the successful implementation activities. Therefore, the PRAASED will benefit from the decision to have a Government line item to reward officials and not to include such payments in project costs, including under counterpart funds.

78. **The project aims to learn from previous efforts to reach and adequately serve indigenous populations**—anecdotal indications are that up to ten percent of all school-age children belong to these communities. Some efforts already have seen some successes, including the Observe, Think, Act (*Observer, Reflechir, Agir*) schools which have placed preschool and early primary grades into communities; the project will include design elements from those experiences.

79. **In addition to the above, the project design was guided by lessons learned in the IDA-financed PRAEBASE (P084317)**, which preceded this operation and closed in 2013 after one additional financing, as well as other operations within Congo and those in other post conflict settings such as Cote d’Ivoire. Key lessons learned include the following:

- (a) **Capacity development and institutional strengthening takes time.** The context of post conflict, competing demands and system-wide governance challenges make improvements in institutional capacity slow to materialize. To create system-wide changes, continued emphasis needs to be placed on capacity development throughout each aspect of the project design, including as is the case for this project, building in improvements to data collection, M&E, addressing competing roles and responsibilities between ministries, and regularly holding stakeholder consultations.
- (b) **Persistent investments in equity pay off.** As demonstrated in the PRAEBASE, as well as in the Emergency Support to Basic Education Project in Cote d’Ivoire, activities that targeted disadvantaged groups are often challenging to get off the ground (for example, the challenge of building of latrines for girls’ safety in Congo) but are absolutely fundamental to improving equity and creating education gains. As a result, interventions aimed at equity gains within the project, for example the proposed adaptation of schools to benefit disadvantaged, or marginalized students (girls, students with disabilities, and indigenous people) need to be prioritized.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

80. **The success of this project will depend on the close collaboration between the Government entities and the project activities, coordinated by the PCU.** The MEPSA-JEC will be responsible for the overall management of the project and will provide guidance to the PCU. Annex 3 further details the implementation arrangements.

81. **Community and stakeholder involvement.** The role of the communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of and reporting on each of these activities cannot be underestimated. The community organizations (including *Comité de Gestion du Développement Communautaire*, [Management Committee for Community Development, CGDC], and

Association des parents d'élèves [Parents Association, APE], among others,) will be asked to lend their full support and provide timely and relevant feedback with regard to the implementation of key steps. This will be especially important for the M&E of a certain number of school-level activities and indicators. For each school that is included in the construction and/or rehabilitation activities, the Regional Directorates of MEPSA-JEC (*Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire et de l'alphabétisation*, DDEPSA) will make contact with the beneficiary community to ask them to ascertain that the contracted works and the supervision are both undertaken as planned. Each community will designate two persons who will be charged with this, based on a small training/briefing that is provided by the supervising firm. Until the government establishes a sustainable maintenance program, the community will have to do this on the basis of a maintenance guide for works and furniture that will be written and distributed to each school and to each community partner (CGDC, *Associations de parents d'élèves et d'enseignants* [APEE], and so on).

82. **Involvement of the Ministry of Infrastructure.** The project aims to work with technical staff who are under the Ministry of Infrastructure and who are assigned to each of the regions.

83. **The following implementation arrangements will be established.** No more than three months after project effectiveness, each relevant MEPSA-JEC director will work with the PCU component head and the PCU M&E specialist to convene the appropriate Government officials and finalize the work plan for each component. These will be key contributions to the overall project work plan to be developed by the project coordinator under the guidance of the Steering Committee, see below, which will be discussed with MEPSA-JEC senior officials and communicated to the Bank. Thereafter, once a quarter, the PCU will report on progress to the MEPSA-JEC as well as key development partners within the LEG and will share the work plan for the following three months. The component head for Component 1 (Quality) will include the work plan for all civil works, which will be prepared by the construction head.

84. **At the quarterly meeting, regional education officials (DDEPSA) will also share their regional reports.** Not only will this enable all central and regional officials to share their reports, but this will also offer opportunities for sharing good practice experiences across disparate regions in a systematic manner. Any action research that is planned under the project will be presented as soon as it is approved, and results will be shared at annual reviews.

85. **A system-wide Steering Committee will be set up to provide guidance to the project on an annual basis.** This Steering Committee will comprise, at minimum, ministers, or their delegated, representatives from the MEPSA-JEC, METPFQE, MES, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Infrastructure, and the office of the president. It could also include representatives of civil society and private sector. At the annual meeting, the MEPSA-JEC with support from the PCU will provide results for the year and will set out its intended results and necessary resources for the following year. The annual meeting will be done before the end of May of each year to ensure that the decisions taken by the Steering Committee are reflected in the budget submission for the following year. The first meeting of the Steering Committee is, therefore, expected to take place in April 2017.

86. **The role of the Steering Committee is to provide guidance and advice for strategic direction of the project and approve annual budget and action plan.** In those cases where

specific action is needed to address issues that go beyond the scope of any single ministry, the president of the Steering Committee can bring together the relevant parties to find solutions to problems that are interministerial in nature, which may be presented to the Steering Committee, if necessary.

87. **Annual reviews will be held in November/December of each year**, bringing together all key stakeholders in the system. At those reviews, the MEPSA-JEC officials will provide updates on all results for the education sector (pre-university), including information regarding the start of the school year (enrollments, recruitments, trainings, and so on). Each functional/central directorate will present its results, and each regional directorate will do the same. Data for that review as well as any additional studies will come from the work of the DEP, which will head this annual review effort, including field visits. This is not limited to project activities but also includes all activities carried out in the MEPSA-JEC, including those financed by the budget. The arrangements will be formalized in the project implementation manual.

B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation

88. **The accuracy and completeness of the current set of system data, received in the first week of September 2015, is not yet confirmed.** However, the latest data are a marked improvement over the situation that the project team confronted at the start of the preparation process. Consequently, the project will use the period between appraisal and year 1 after effectiveness to update the baseline values in the Results Framework. The first opportunities for improving the data situation will come from collaborations with UNICEF, which has not only conducted a thorough system census in May 2015, but has also concluded its MICS instrument, for which data are available.

89. **A collaborative effort between the Bank and the UIS has resulted in the creation of a preliminary statistics action plan.** Using that action plan, the DEP will establish a system for data collection and use that will resolve the problem of tracking system progress even beyond the years of the project. The project will finance the steps necessary to support that effort.

90. **During project preparation, multiple participatory consultations were held with key stakeholders and will continue to be held throughout project preparation and implementation.** Government representatives, teachers' unions, associations of private schools, associations of parents, community development organizations, technical experts, and donors were all present and actively participated in discussions regarding the education system challenges, and potential reforms. The strong level of engagement demonstrated by key stakeholders will continue to be crucial to project success.

C. Sustainability

91. **Sustainability is a major challenge in the education sector.** At the end of the last IDA-financed education project, many of the core activities that were meant to continue under the government's budget and within the Government structures were not sustained: for example, was the statistical report, which has not been issued since 2011/12. The reasons appear to be primarily financial, although there is also a clear capacity constraint that made it difficult for understaffed units within Government to take up the necessary tasks.

92. **In the absence of a Government-wide civil service reform, it is not possible for a single project to address the personnel challenges**, be they the need for additional budget allocations to the sector or for improvements in Government salaries to attract the best and brightest to the sector. That said, the Bank will use its dialogue with the Government to attract greater attention to these issues. Where the project can make a contribution is in the creation of capacity within the system beyond those linked to finances. It will offer a sound functional analysis of sectoral structures, including the core MEPSA-JEC units, and help streamline the functions to avoid overlapping responsibilities and fill major gaps [see Component 3]. It will provide training to bridge the divide between theory and practice, including offering on-the-job training and evaluation opportunities at all levels [see Component 2]. It will establish a communication strategy to enable key stakeholders, especially those at school level, to become regularly updated with regard to progress in the sector. This, in turn, will help create a culture of accountability towards stakeholders within MEPSA-JEC.

V. KEY RISKS

A. Overall Risk Rating and Explanation of Key Risks

Risk Category	Rating
1. Political and Governance	Substantial
2. Macroeconomic	Substantial
3. Sector Strategies and Policies	Substantial
4. Technical Design of Project or Program	Substantial
5. Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	Substantial
6. Fiduciary	Substantial
7. Environment and Social	Moderate
8. Stakeholders	Moderate
9. Other	
OVERALL	Substantial

93. **The overall risk rating is Substantial.** The rating is based on political and macroeconomic risks, as well as weak institutional capacity related to public administration, combined with weak governance.

94. **Political and Governance risk.** The intense political agenda with presidential elections completed in early 2016 poses a risk, as the Government's commitment for reforms and engagement in certain sectors may affect already weak governance within the country. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the ad hoc nature of inter-ministerial cooperation and a lack of clarity in often overlapping roles and responsibilities between education sector ministries, as well as the Ministry of Finance and Civil Service, are worrisome and pose a risk to effective implementation of the project.

95. **Macroeconomic risk.** Slower growth in advanced and emerging economies and slowdown in growth in China have reduced oil revenues in Congo. This gave rise to a reduction in

Government spending and negatively affect growth perspectives, as well as the Government's capacity to provide counterpart funding to Bank projects.

96. **Fiduciary risk.** While the Government commitment to the project is strong, a countrywide systemic issue of internal bureaucracy and fiduciary requirements has historically resulted in irregular and/or inadequate counterpart funding and may lead to project implementation delays. As a mitigation measure, recruitment of consultants for TA, especially for fiduciary management, will be undertaken as detailed in Annex 3.

97. **Sector strategies and policies.** Recent elections could lead to changes in senior management, which could lead to some reversals in the reform agenda. Furthermore, the education strategy, while a commendable first step in education sector improvement has substantial data challenges and it is unclear whether incentives are in place to adequately address these challenges. To mitigate this risk, the project has built in considerable resources for continued capacity building of government officials. In addition, the collaboration with UNICEF in systematic collection of data has been built into this project.

98. **Technical design of the project.** The key risk to the technical design of the project is the lack of reliable data, particularly with regard to the school-age population and the potential for under-estimating the population of children requiring places in school. Given the potential impact that lack of reliable data can have on many of the ratios that track progress, the team feels it worthwhile to flag this risk. The next census is planned for 2017 or 2018, with data unlikely to be available in time to influence targets before mid-term.

99. **Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability.** The risk rating for institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability is Substantial due primarily to the country's weak implementation capacity and persistent challenges in the systematic use of country systems. Finally, though availability and quality of data will improve over the life of the project, the current dearth of reliable information on the education sector makes assessment of the sector, as well as tracking of progress toward project objectives challenging as stated above.

VI. APPRAISAL SUMMARY

A. Economic and Financial Analysis

Methodology

100. Applying the Bank's standard approach to assessing the economic value of a project, a cost benefit methodology is used to estimate the internal rate of return (IRR) and the net present value (NPV). The economic analysis attempts to calculate the net benefits generated by each project component on an incremental basis. These net benefits are equal to the difference between the incremental benefits and the project costs (direct and indirect), where the incremental benefits are defined as the positive effects induced by the project, such as (a) the graduation/completion rates in primary and lower secondary education; (b) the improved quality of student learning; and (c) the increased earnings and employment of project beneficiaries. These net benefits are therefore identified by comparing two scenarios, the 'with-intervention' scenario versus the hypothetical 'without-intervention' scenario. To carry out the cost-benefit analysis, administrative data from the MEPSA-JEC on student enrollment, student-teacher ratios, infrastructure, textbooks, *bénévole*

teachers, and so on was employed as well as the household consumption survey (*Enquête Consommation Ménages*, ECOM) to extract wage information by level of education.

Costs and Benefits

101. The total direct cost of the project is estimated to be US\$70 million with the Government providing US\$40 million (57 percent), and IDA providing US\$30 million (43 percent). In addition, the indirect costs are represented by the opportunity cost of attending primary and secondary school for those enrolled in school as a result of the PRAASED.

102. The estimated annual benefits are discounted at the rate of eight percent, which corresponds to the rate at which funds can be borrowed in the market. Therefore, any IRR higher than the cost of borrowing will be an attractive investment. A lifecycle of 40 years is also assumed for graduating students entering the labor market. The analysis (further detailed in Annex 6) suggests that undertaking this project is likely to yield huge benefits given that the NPVs for the medium case scenario (and most likely case scenario in which the Government contributes US\$40 million in counterpart funding in addition to the IDA US\$30 million) is strictly positive and greater than the original investment with corresponding IRR in the amount of 34.9 percent, making it a very attractive investment.

103. In addition, over the course of the project, close to US\$2.5 million will be saved by poor families who continue to support the school system, mainly in rural areas, by paying the salaries of *bénévole* teachers directly out of their meager pockets. This will not only bring more children from poor families to school but will enhance the quality of education provided as it will open up opportunities for *bénévole* teachers to earn a stable income and grow professionally. However, more significantly, contributing parents will largely benefit as about 6000 poor households could save, each year for the next eight years, up to US\$50 for other uses within the household.

B. Technical

104. The core of this project includes activities that have been proven to yield positive results in addressing the intended challenges in both Congo and elsewhere. Learning outcomes can be improved by enhanced availability of learning materials, improved physical environments, but especially improved teaching practice with improved content knowledge and pedagogical support to all teachers. The project aims to address existing dysfunctions by moving key education sector functions away from ad hoc and irregular actions toward more accountable systems with objective, data-driven, and widely communicated results. To establish these systems, the project will use the first year of implementation to establish the rigorous data collection efforts and the appropriate reporting mechanisms.

105. **Construction and rehabilitation (that is, all civil works) will be managed as follows.** Within the PCU, there will be a construction head and an assistant engineer who will work with the DDEPSA to share criteria for selection. The DDEPSA will take the responsibility of selecting the areas in the two regions where new classrooms will be constructed. Construction firms will be hired to conduct the technical feasibility studies to (a) ensure the site selection is consistent with criteria and (b) ascertain that the choice fulfills the technical criteria that are necessary for construction to be concluded, including the presence of a title for the land and the respect of all

safeguards (environmental, social). On the basis of these evaluations, the PCU team will put together the final construction plan. This plan, including the works planned for the first year, is to be made public. Firms will be hired to conduct the supervision of the sites under construction.

106. **Rehabilitations will be done along the same lines**, but will be done on structures whose rehabilitation require less than 50 percent of the cost of a new construction. This ensures that the cost of substantial rehabilitations will be judged against the efficiency and utility of doing replacements instead.

C. Financial Management

107. As part of project preparation phase of the PRAASED, a financial management (FM) assessment was carried out in August 2015 in accordance with the Financial Management Manual for World Bank-Financed Investment Operations that became effective on March 1, 2010. Given the lack of fiduciary capacity within the MEPSA-JEC and pending the setting up of the PRAASED PCU, the preparation team agreed to use the existing coordination unit of the CAB project. Although the project implementation unit was not yet established at the time of the assessment, the MEPSA-JEC has started preparatory activities (preparing terms of reference for the recruitment processes of key project staff, technical specifications of project activities, preparation of implementation manuals and manuals of administrative, accounting and financial procedures, and so on) with the support of a Project Preparation Advance managed by the existing coordination unit of the CAB project.

108. Therefore, to meet the Bank's minimum requirements under OP/BP 10.00, the FM system will need to be supported by the following measures: (a) strengthening the PRAASED's PCU with the recruitment of an FM expert and providing him/her with fiduciary training and ensuring adequate staffing of the FM unit; (b) recruitment of an internal auditor to strengthen the internal control system; (c) purchase and installation of a computerized accounting system in the PCU; and (d) establishment of a manual of procedures for better implementation of administrative and fiduciary procedures of the project.

D. Procurement

109. **Applicable guidelines.** Procurement for the proposed project will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank's 'Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works, and Non-consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers', dated January 2011, revised July 2014; 'Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers', dated January 2011 revised July 2014; the "Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants", dated October 15, 2006 and revised January 2011, and the provisions stipulated in the Financial Agreement. The various items under different expenditure categories are described in Annex 3. For each contract to be financed by the Credit, the different procurement methods or consultant selection methods, the need for prequalification, estimated costs, prior review requirements, and time frame has been agreed between the recipient and the Association in the Procurement Plan. The Procurement Plan will be updated at least annually or as required to reflect the actual project implementation needs and improvements in institutional capacity. In addition a procurement specialist will be recruited.

110. **Procurement documents.** Procurement will be carried out using the Association's Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs) or Standard Request for Proposals (SRPs), respectively, for all International Competitive Bidding (ICB) for supplies, works, and services other than consulting services. For National Competitive Bidding (NCB), while waiting for the Association to assess the implementation of the new procurement system, and based on experience gained from the Government's use of these documents outside the context of this project, the recipient will use the Bank's SBD for supplies, works, and services other than consulting services, and the Bank's SRPs for recruitment of consultants. The complete procurement details are provided in Annex 3.

E. Social (including Safeguards)

111. **Gender, Indigenous People, Persons with Disabilities, Poverty, and Equity.** System improvements supported under the PRAASED include provisions for the adaptation of schools to fit special needs, including those of girls, students with disabilities, and indigenous populations. This can include physical accommodations (accessibility, latrines for girls, and so on); removal of negative representations of specific populations from teaching and learning materials; offering training to all personnel on the importance of addressing bias and encouraging positive images of diverse populations; and in some cases, even adjustment of the school calendar to better fit local realities.

112. The project aims to support interventions that improve lifetime opportunities for all Congolese children. The largest population for whom this will be essential are children from poor families, who are likely to be disproportionately unable to access pre-schooling; live in remote, rural communities or high-density working class urban areas; and face both indirect and direct costs for education that compromise their ability to succeed (about 47 percent of Congolese are poor, and poor families are likely to have more children). The project will also address the needs of girls which is critical. Data show that girls perform lower in both mathematics and French than boys¹⁹ and pregnancy rates impact girls' ability to complete their schooling.²⁰ Another group that may represent up to 12–15 percent of the school-age population are children with disabilities. Finally, at least two percent²¹ of the population of school-age children will be from indigenous populations who, in addition to facing school environments that may be ill adapted to their particular needs, may also be disproportionately affected by geographic disparities. By targeting its activities directly to these populations, the project will help ensure that the benefits from the project accrue to those for whom the benefits are important. This does not mean that the project is focused on these vulnerable populations to the exclusion of all others. The challenges within the system are far-reaching and pervasive, and the project aims to enhance lifetime opportunities for all children in Congo by enhancing quality and efficiency across all schools.

113. **Social safeguards triggered.** The project triggers OP/BP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement as potential land acquisition for construction and rehabilitation of schools may, on an exceptional basis, result in potential loss of land and structures. A Resettlement Policy Framework has been prepared, consulted upon, approved, and disclosed in-country and the InfoShop on February 29, 2016. Resettlement Action Plans will be prepared if/when needed. In addition, the project triggers

¹⁹ As mentioned earlier PASEC 2014 data show that boys outperformed girls in both French (35 versus 31 percent) and mathematics (27 versus 24 percent), and in both cases the difference was statistically significant.

²⁰ A recent survey estimates that about 33 percent of 15–19-year-old girls are either pregnant or have had a child.

²¹ This number is not confirmed; the actual population of indigenous peoples could be significantly more or less.

OP/BP 4.10 - Indigenous Peoples given that indigenous people are presumed to constitute between 6 to 10 percent of the population in the country. To mitigate adverse impacts an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework has been prepared and disclosed in-country and in the InfoShop on February 29, 2016. In addition, an Indigenous People's Plan will also be prepared, consulted upon, reviewed, and disclosed during project implementation once sites and activities have been finalized.

114. Environmental and social safeguard risks are rated as Moderate given that there is low capacity within the Government, particularly related to expertise in indigenous peoples. An indigenous people's expert will be hired under the project to help mitigate this risk and necessary safeguards instruments prepared to adequately address the needs of the population.

F. Environment (including Safeguards)

115. **Environmental safeguards triggered.** The project triggers two environmental safeguards: OP/BP 4.01 - Environmental Assessment and OP/BP 4.11 - Physical Cultural Resources due to potential adverse environmental impacts related to construction and rehabilitation of schools financed under Component 1. The environmental impacts for civil works and construction are expected to include dust, noise, and waste management and are expected to be small-scale and site specific. The construction will include excavations which may lead to vestiges discoveries. While the exact location of construction is not yet known, to address these environmental safeguards an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been created, including a specific chapter providing guidance in case physical cultural resources are discovered. This has been disclosed in-country and in the InfoShop on February 29, 2016.

116. **Consultations and communications.** The identification, design, and preparation of the project has been participatory at several levels: district level, national administration level, and the donors' level. Public consultations have been carried out in conjunction with the preparation of the ESMF and social safeguards instruments (Resettlement Policy Framework and Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework). In addition, continuous consultations with local and national administration will be a part of the project implementation and monitoring strategy.

117. **Government institutional capacity for safeguards policies.** Given the low quality of institutions within the country, it is possible that capacity for implementing and monitoring safeguards measures may be low. Such capacity will be assessed during preparation of the appropriate safeguards frameworks and TA recruited as needed to mitigate risk and successfully carry out appropriate safeguards measures.

G. World Bank Grievance Redress

118. Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a Bank-supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaints to the Bank's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of Bank non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the Bank's attention and Bank management has been given an opportunity to

respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the Bank's corporate GRS, visit <http://www.worldbank.org/GRS>. For information on how to submit complaints to the Bank Inspection Panel, visit www.inspectionpanel.org.

Annex 1: Results Framework and Monitoring

Country: Congo, Republic

Project Name: Education Sector Support Project (P152910)

Results Framework

Project Development Objectives

PDO Statement

To improve education outcomes of primary and lower secondary school children and to increase the effectiveness of select management systems.

These results are at | Project Level

Project Development Objective Indicators

Indicator Name	Baseline 2015	Cumulative Target Values							
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	End Target
1. Primary completion rate - total (Percentage)	73.00	73.00	73.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
Primary completion rate - female (Percentage - Subtype: Breakdown)	73.00	73.00	73.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
2. Transition rate to lower secondary (Percentage)	67.00	67.00	67.00	70.00	70.00	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.00
Transition rate to lower secondary, female (Percentage - Subtype: Breakdown)	67.00	67.00	67.00	70.00	70.00	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.00
3. Transition rate to upper secondary (Percentage)	67.00	67.00	67.00	70.00	70.00	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.00
Transition rate to upper secondary, female (Percentage - Subtype: Breakdown)	67.00	67.00	67.00	70.00	70.00	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.00
4. Primary repetition rate (Percentage)	21.00	21.00	21.00	19.00	19.00	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00

5. System for learning assessment at the primary level (Yes/No) - (Core)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utility of the learning assessment system (Number - Subtype: Supplemental) - (Core)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00

Intermediate Results Indicators

Indicator Name	Baseline	Cumulative Target Values							
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	End Target
Component 1. Providing Quality Education for All									
Direct Project Beneficiaries (Number) - (Core)	0	300	600	512,000	621,000	622,000	623,000	628,000	630,000
Direct Project Beneficiaries of which female (Percentage – Core – Subtype: Breakdown)	0	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
French and mathematics curricula revised for all primary grades (Yes/No)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Creation of national learning assessment instrument (Yes/No)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implementation of the first national assessment by Year 4 of the project (Yes/No - Subtype: Breakdown)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions. (Number) - (Core)	0.00	0.00	0.00	125.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Percentage of public primary schools with 1:1 student-to-textbook coverage in French and mathematics (Percentage)	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	45.00	60.00	75.00	90.00	90.00

Component 2. Improving Scope, Quality, and Management of Human Resources									
Percentage of <i>bénévoles</i> registered with biometric data (Percentage)	0.00	0.00	45.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00
Number of additional qualified primary teachers resulting from project interventions (Number) - (Core)	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	600.00	1,000.00	1,500.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Component 3. Improving System Performance									
Publication of annual statistics, starting in Year 2 (Yes/No)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual consultation with indigenous groups (in collaboration with associations for indigenous peoples)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Indicator Description

Project Development Objective Indicators				
Indicator Name	Description (indicator definition and so on)	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Primary completion rate – total	The number of non-repeating students who complete grade 6 divided by the total number of children aged 12	Annual	Annual reports by MEPSA	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Primary completion rate - female	Primary completion rate for girls	Annual	Government annual statistics starting with 2015 data	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Transition rate to lower secondary	Increase in the percentage of children from primary who will transition to grade 7 (<i>7eme</i>)	Annual	Annual MEPSA-JEC reports and surveys	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Transition rate to lower secondary, (female)	Increase in the percentage of girls passing from primary to lower secondary, that is, to grade 7 (<i>7eme</i>)	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports and surveys	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Transition rate to upper secondary	Increase in the percentage of children from primary who will transition to grade 10 (<i>10eme</i>)	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports and surveys	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Transition rate to upper secondary (female)	Increase in the percentage of girls passing from primary to upper secondary, that is, to grade 10 (<i>10eme</i>)	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports and surveys	DEP, MEPSA-JEC
Primary repetition rate	Number of repeaters in year N divided by number of students in year N-1, *100	Annual	Annual report of MEPSA after the first value drawn from the simulation model (this value presents several problems but it is what is available at appraisal)	DEP, MEPSA
System for learning assessment at the primary level	This indicator measures whether the basic elements of a learning assessment system exists at the primary level, and the degree to which that assessment is able to provide useful information for education policy and practice.	Once in the project life	MEPSA-JEC	MEPSA-JEC

Utility of the learning assessment system	Use of data for decision making or reports generated by region	Annual	MEPSA-JEC	MEPSA-JEC
---	--	--------	-----------	-----------

Intermediate Results Indicators

Indicator Name	Description (indicator definition and so on)	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Component 1: Providing Quality Education for All				
Creation of a national learning assessment instrument	The design of a national learning assessment instrument in primary	Annual	MEPSA annual report	DEP, MEPSA
Implementation of the first national assessment by year 4 of the project	The rollout of a sample- or census-based national learning assessment instrument	Once in the project life	Annual MEPSA report	DEP, MEPSA
French and mathematics curricula revised for all primary grades (yes/no)	Confirmation of completion of curriculum revisions in French and mathematics for all primary grades	Annual reports progressively reporting on curriculum revisions	MEPSA-JEC reports	MEPSA-JEC
Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions	The number of classrooms rehabilitated or built at the primary level as a result of project interventions	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports	MEPSA-JEC
Percentage of public primary schools with 1:1 student-to-textbook coverage in French and mathematics	Percentage of primary schools where students have a textbook each for French and mathematics	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports	MEPSA-JEC
Component 2: Improving Scope, Quality, and Management of Human Resources				
Number of additional qualified primary teachers resulting from project interventions	This indicator measures the number of additional qualified primary teachers through the project	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports	MEPSA-JEC
Percentage of <i>bénévoles</i> registered with biometric data	Percentage of <i>bénévoles</i> (volunteer) teachers who have been registered using biometric data	Annual	MEPSA-JEC reports	MEPSA-JEC, DDEPSA

Component 3: Improving System Performance				
Publication of annual statistics, starting in year 2	Publication of national education statistics each year, starting in year 2	Annual starting in year 2	MEPSA	DEP, MEPSA
Annual consultation with indigenous groups (in collaboration with association for indigenous peoples)	Consultations carried out on project implementation with indigenous groups	Annual	MEPSA	MEPSA-JEC

Annex 2: Detailed Project Description

Republic of Congo: Education Sector Support Project

1. The proposed project will help create a well-performing general education system that can support improvements in education quality, foster efficient use of human resources, and create a more effective sector management system.
2. The PDO is to improve education outcomes of primary and lower secondary school children and to increase the effectiveness of select management systems.

Project Beneficiaries

3. The project aims to provide benefits to the following:²²
 - (a) Approximately 480,000 public primary school students and 30,000 students from subsidized religious schools will benefit from improved quality of education, with better-trained teachers, better materials, more timely and accurate evaluations of their learning, updated curricula, and improved physical environments.
 - (b) Those same 480,000 public primary school students and 30,000 subsidized religious school students will receive sufficient textbooks to offer 1:1 coverage in the subjects of French and mathematics for all six grades.
 - (c) Approximately 110,000 public lower secondary students will have 1:1 textbook coverage in the subjects of French, mathematics and science.
 - (d) Approximately 6,000 civil service teachers in public primary schools will receive in-service and preservice training (the latter for new teachers after 2016) targeted to address the challenges as identified by the evaluations to be carried out in the coming years.
 - (e) Approximately 2,000 volunteer teachers (*bénévoles*) will be registered in the information management system, and those who fulfill minimal criteria will receive intensive teacher training.
 - (f) Families in the more remote, rural areas, who are paying monthly fees to sustain the 2,000+ volunteer teachers, will no longer have to make those contributions; the Government will take on the burden of paying the teachers instead. If this is successful, about 6,000 families in remote areas, who are disproportionately poor, will benefit from this important reform.
4. In addition to the above, the project aims to provide benefits to the following:

²² Data in this section are from preliminary results from the MEPSA-JEC survey from June 2015.

- (a) 110,000 lower secondary students through improved curricula, better trained teachers, better materials, and higher-quality evaluations and examinations
- (b) 2,400 civil-service teachers in public lower secondary schools, who will receive improved in-service and preservice training, especially the 850 public lower secondary school teachers of mathematics and science.

5. Finally, in its effort to enhance the pipeline of possible mathematics and science teachers, the project aims to improve the teaching of mathematics and science in upper secondary schools (*lycées*), including the provision of laboratory facilities, textbooks, and other learning materials to students in the mathematics/scientific disciplines (series C, D) and support to the ENI at that level to improve their capacity for teaching scientific and mathematics courses.

Component 1: Providing Quality Education for All (US\$35 million, of which IDA US\$14 million)

6. **This component seeks to improve the quality of education with a strong focus on providing both teachers and students with an appropriate teaching and learning environment.** The overarching intention is to deliver a full teaching/learning ‘package’ that deals with current needs. This includes the revision of the core curriculum for all primary and lower secondary grades, provision of learning materials for students (textbooks and didactic materials) and relevant teaching materials for teachers (scripted lessons).²³ It is expected that these activities will improve the quality of education by supporting the provision of more relevant academic teaching or learning content, increased availability of textbooks in major subjects for all primary and lower secondary students, didactic materials for all primary schools, and scripted lessons for all primary teachers, especially those with weak content knowledge and/or pedagogic practice. This component builds on similar initiatives conducted under PRAEBASE (2004–2009) and its additional financing (2009–2012) but will shift toward more essential teaching strategies with regard to content, teaching practice, use of instructional time, and enhancing learning even in challenging contexts. As such, curriculum review will integrate elements of reform to improve the overall quality of education but equally to develop more efficient teaching/learning processes.

Subcomponent 1.1: Curriculum revision and implementation (US\$5 million, of which IDA US\$5 million)

7. **The project will support a series of activities that will lead to a revision of all primary and lower secondary school curricula, with a focus on French, mathematics, and science.** This will entail rapid evaluation of current curricula as they are implemented at present with a rigorous assessment of the instructional time spent on each objective/competency²⁴ both in absolute terms and as a share of the total expected and observed hours of instruction. For instance,

²³ The term ‘scripted lesson’ is used to describe lessons written in such detail that the teacher knows exactly what to say and do, and when to deliver each lesson (similar to a theater script). While this may appear to be too directive for experienced teachers, new and inexperienced or untrained teachers would have a ‘script’ that will improve their teaching practice and offer their students some type of standardized instruction.

²⁴ At present, Congolese schools are straddling two approaches: one that is based on objectives and another that is based on competencies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that competency-based approaches, which are newer, have not taken hold; however, there is little empirical evidence based on actual observation.

part of this assessment will focus on evaluating the teaching of French to identify opportunities for simplifying the number of sub-disciplines. Such an approach is in line with the broader context of core content review and a reconsideration of essential learning achievements. This kind of targeted revision will complement but not repeat activities supported under PRAEBASE. In addition, the project will build on the results of the *Assises sur les réformes curriculaires* (Conference on Curricular Reforms, Brazzaville 2010) in light of the shift toward a 10-year basic education cycle that incorporates the initiation to science in the primary curriculum. Scientific enquiry (and experimental approaches) as the cornerstones of the teaching of science will be introduced in all grades based on the following model: a learner (a) engages in scientifically-oriented questions; (b) gives priority to evidence in responding to questions; (c) formulates explanations from evidence; (d) connects explanations to scientific knowledge; and (e) communicates and justifies explanations.²⁵ Curriculum review will follow standardized processes and a pre-established sequence. For French and mathematics, sequencing will be as follows: CP1-2 (2017), CE1-2 (2018), and CM1-2 (2019); for science, the end-target is year 2018 for all grades. Quality control or pilot testing is expected to happen the year after each rollout (for instance 2018 for CP1-2) followed by content validation during the same year.

8. Major activities will include the following:

- (a) The constitution of appropriate commissions to review primary curricula in French and mathematics and introduce a focus on scientific enquiry as early as CP1 (grade 1). These will include experts from INRAP, the ENI, and ENS under the overall guidance of sustained high-level expertise (TA) that includes a clear mandate for building local capacities.
- (b) To create a link between the curriculum that is taught and the work done by school directors, pedagogic advisors, and inspectors to ensure continuity and support at all levels; the project will also include the academic heads (*directeurs d'études*) of lower secondary schools.

9. **The review of curricula will also aim to address needs of specific classroom conditions,** which are present to various degrees throughout the system and for which teachers have not received guidance or training: large classes (some with more than 100 students), multigrade classrooms,²⁶ and classrooms catering to large numbers of children from indigenous populations, among others. In addition, all curricula will be reviewed to ensure inclusive education is available to children with disabilities. Curriculum revisions will be financed, with a focus on the following activities:

- Establish learning goals/standards if they do not exist such as what students should know and what they should be able to do.
- Specify how those goals will be assessed.

²⁵ See National Science Education Standards on Scientific Inquiry.

²⁶ Recent data indicate that, nationally, almost 22 percent of all pedagogic groups (classes) are multigrade, ranging from 5.7 percent in Brazzaville to 63 percent in Kouilou.

- What external assessments exist (for example, PASEC), what are the key content areas that are assessed, and how are they assessed (item analyses).
- Survey of research-based curriculum to find how the learning goals and content areas are best taught. The national curriculum can be constructed taking advantage of the strengths of those research-based curricula that have been shown to improve student learning.
- Identify an evidence-based observation protocol that measures effective pedagogy with an impact on student achievement (Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]) from the University of Virginia is an excellent example. It has been tested in a number of countries, including Ecuador, Malaysia, Chile, and Finland and was recently positively evaluated by the Measures of Effective Teaching Study (2014) by the Gates Foundation.
- Develop formative and summative assessments as part of the curriculum to help teachers adjust their instruction and provide training for formative assessment.
- Identify content specialists at the school level based on their content knowledge and openness to the observation protocol; they will support the development of team-based learning goals for teachers of the same grade and/or same content area (mathematics, French, and so on) and will be trained for this.
- Pre-assessment of student learning levels for each grade and subject: quick, conducted at the beginning of the school year, not used to assess individual students but to see where kids are on a continuum.

10. **The project will progressively print and distribute all curriculum materials and provide training to all the actors engaged in curriculum delivery.** Both national and international TA will be provided to support in the assessment, drafting/writing, printing, and distribution of curriculum materials, as well as in the use of systematic classroom observation tools and protocols for ensuring appropriate implementation of the curricula. Concretely, the project will provide curriculum materials for French, mathematics, and science to (a) all primary school teachers (estimated at a total of 70,000 copies, mainly for school directors and teachers); (b) all inspectors and pedagogic advisors (estimated at 6,000 copies); and (c) ENI (a forecast stock of 10,000 copies for preservice training of prospective primary teachers).

11. **In addition, the project will strengthen the entity responsible for education quality improvements (INRAP),** which is charged with curriculum development and procurement of learning materials, including textbooks. At present, INRAP is not adequately staffed or resourced to fulfill this task; the project will explore the possibilities for providing support to INRAP to enable it to fully play its role as an institute for pedagogic improvement and will consider the possibility of transforming it into a center of excellence for the entire education system, in collaboration with both the technical and higher education partner ministries. The goal will be to develop INRAP into an institution that offers high-quality services with regard to curricula and learning materials.

Subcomponent 1.2: Provision of learning materials (US\$9 million of which no IDA funding)

12. **To enhance the learning environment for children and enable them to take their books home from school every day, the project will support two waves of textbook procurement:** the first to reprint existing school books as soon as possible to ensure a 1:1 coverage in French and mathematics for all primary school students,²⁷ and a 1:1 coverage in French, mathematics, and science for all public lower secondary students. Not only would this enable children without textbooks to receive them within the first year of the project, but this will also reduce the government’s commitment to providing textbooks to all Congolese children who are in licensed²⁸ schools and perhaps even eliminate the parallel market in illegal textbook sales, which often leads to the theft of entire stocks of textbooks from large, urban schools. During this period, the revision of the existing curricula will be ongoing, as described above. The second wave of textbook procurement will be launched as soon as the new curricula are available, when the project will finance the publishing, printing, and distribution of the textbooks and instructional materials (including workbooks) for the new curricula, likely to be starting in the fourth year of project implementation.

13. **By 2018, each public primary student will receive at least one textbook for French and one for mathematics; each public secondary student will receive a textbook each for French, mathematics, and science.** Accurate student numbers will be available only once the ongoing statistical survey, supported by UNICEF, is completed; for planning purposes, the project will use the following numbers:

Table 2.1. Beneficiaries of Free Textbooks by Order of Priority

Type of School	Description	Approximate Number of Students
Public	Government schools	480,000
<i>Ecoles Conventionnées Type 1</i>	Religious schools with teachers paid by the government	30,000
<i>Ecoles Conventionnées Type 2 and Privé Laïc</i>	Religious schools without government support; private nonreligious schools (that is, without religious affiliation)	350,000

14. In lower secondary, the project will aim to serve 110,000 public school students. These estimates will serve as the basis for the programming of the reprints. Although the project aims to deliver textbooks to schools as soon as possible, the target set by the MEPSA-JEC is to reach 1:1 coverage in French and mathematics textbooks in public primary schools by 2018 and to reach 1:1 coverage in French, mathematics, and science (*Science de la Vie et de la Terre* or SVT) textbooks in public lower secondary schools, also by 2018. This builds on PRAEBASE achievements that could be completed and/or complemented. Concretely, the first wave (mainly reprints) will include (a) existing textbooks for mathematics (CP and CE) designed under PRAEBASE; (b) existing textbooks for French (all grades); and (c) completion and printing of CM1-2 textbooks for mathematics (started under PRAEBASE). Textbooks will be directly distributed to schools, as was piloted and successfully done under PRAEBASE. All textbook and material supplier contracts will include delivery to each school. The package destined for each school will be individually labeled

²⁷ With priority given to students in public and *écoles conventionnées* with government-paid teachers.

²⁸ Students who are in illegal or not-yet-licensed private schools would not receive textbooks.

and directly delivered to the school, with reception and verification of each delivery onsite at the school.

15. **In addition, the project aims to deliver to all public and subsidized primary schools didactic materials and classroom learning supports (maps, charts, and so on) as well as reading corner books and science kits.** The choice of didactic materials (relevance, link with the curriculum and textbooks, quality, shelf life and so on) will be carefully prepared and planned. In addition, this activity will be coupled with a policy debate on the minimum package of didactic materials needed for primary schools and how to make their acquisition sustainable. Didactic materials will be distributed following the distribution chain of the textbooks and using school-level verification, employing, to the extent possible, community organization and new/mobile technology to ascertain successful arrival at schools.

16. **The project aims to provide a standardized set of teaching materials in the form of scripted lessons (*fiches pédagogiques*) in French and mathematics to all teachers in primary schools.** This will help address current weak capacities of primary teachers in both content knowledge and in teaching practice. Therefore, this subcomponent envisages (a) a targeted and intensive in-service training program; and (b) a revamp plan for the ENI/ENS to ensure the delivery of qualified and performing teachers. However, given the large stock of teachers in the system, the project will provide all active teachers (that is, those actually teaching, including *bénévoles*) with standardized, scripted lessons. This will not only fill the gaps in their content knowledge but also ensure the materials used across the country fulfill a minimum level of pedagogic quality and content. Scripted lessons will be based on the newly developed curricula with a focus on core teaching topics. Design process steps will be aligned with those of the curriculum review, (for instance, 2017 for CP1-2). Expertise will come from INRAP, ENI, and ENS with national and international TA, as needed. Distribution to teachers in schools (including pedagogic advisers and ENI) will follow the proposed distribution mechanisms.

Table 2.2. Planned Sequencing of Curriculum Reform and Textbook Production and Distribution

Activity	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1. Review of curriculum *					
<i>Design</i>	CP1-2	CE1-2	CM1-2	-	-
<i>Pilot-testing and validation</i>	-	CP1-2	CE1-2	CM1-2	-
2. Scripted Lessons	CP1-2	CE1-2	CM1-2	-	-
3. Didactic materials					
<i>Procurement</i>	All grades	-	-	-	-
<i>Distribution</i>	-	All grades	-	-	-
4. Service Delivery Indicator (SDI)	Survey	Analysis Report	-	-	-
5. Textbooks					
A. 1 st wave (reprint) (**)					
<i>Procurement-printing</i>	Existing textbooks	-	-	-	-
<i>Completion and printing</i>	Math CM1-2	-	-	-	-
<i>Distribution</i>	-	All grades	-	-	-
B. 2 nd wave (new curriculum)					
<i>Procurement and production</i>	-	CP1-2	CE1-2	CM1-2	-
<i>Distribution</i>	-	-	CP1-2	CE1-2	CM1-2

For all public and private schools; () Curriculum for French, mathematics and scientific enquiry (all grades at primary level); (**) French and mathematics for all grades.*

17. **Distribution of textbooks and didactic materials across the country will build on previous experience from PRAEBASE.** As noted, all bid packages for the procurement of textbooks will include delivery, with individual labeling and packaging of materials destined to each individual school. Once the education data have been stabilized, bidding documents can be developed that include school names and student numbers, and the suppliers will be required to deliver packages to each school. Opening of those packages will be done in a public forum, involving parents and other stakeholders, and the delivery to each child of their textbooks will be verified through third parties.

18. **While there is considerable anecdotal evidence that many teachers are not able to fulfill their pedagogic responsibilities fully, there is little or no reliable data with regard to the extent of this problem.** To address this knowledge gap, the project intends to launch the SDI survey (<http://www.sdindicators.org/>), which includes a set of education (and health) indicators that examine the effort and ability of staff and the availability of key inputs and resources that contribute to a functioning school. In education, the SDI will track the minimum knowledge of teachers, including tests of French, mathematics, and pedagogy. It will also track teacher absence from school and from the classroom and time spent teaching. The indicators also cover availability of textbooks, learning materials/equipment, and infrastructure. In line with the objectives of this project, the SDI helps build capacity for conducting such analyses within the country and provides support and guidance with regard to the communication of the results to reach a varied set of stakeholders. It is expected that the survey will start as early as possible after project effectiveness and findings be available in 2017. Results will enable better-targeted courses for the in-service training programs and the revised ENI curriculum (using evidence-based knowledge on the teachers' major needs/challenges for a more pertinent preservice training). In addition, findings may also help inspectors and pedagogic advisors to support more efficiently teachers in schools. For students, the identification of their areas of difficulty will be used to offer better-targeted remedial activities, both in class and in possible additional courses.

19. **To encourage the development of a culture of action research and evidence-based decision making, the project will create a Competitive Fund for Action Research in Education,** with separate windows for individuals and groups, and with a multisectoral jury of evaluators who will award grants annually. The goal of this fund will be to support action research in the three thematic areas of the Education Strategy: (a) providing quality education for all; (b) ensuring quality human resources in an emerging economy; and (c) creating a well-performing education system. A tripartite committee composed of INRAP, the ENS and the UNESCO Chair will manage the fund and prepare a conceptual/operational framework. Essentially, the framework will include elements related to education policy and goals (independent quality research), standards (including quality control by external peer evaluators), and financing (with an exit strategy plan). The goal will be to support individual grants of no more than one year or group grants of no more than two years, the results from which will be published and disseminated.

Subcomponent 1.3: Improved Assessment (US\$5 million of which IDA US\$5 million)

20. **The project will help foster a culture of conducting and using data from transparent and high-quality evaluations, including evaluations of the system as a whole, and assessments of learning outcomes.** This will include the launching of a national assessment of French and mathematics (at elementary and lower secondary levels), which will be conducted at least twice

during the project implementation period. A team of education specialists, who have worked on evaluation activities either under the previous IDA-financed project (PRAEBASE) or as part of the PASEC team, have now become members of an evaluation team (*Programme national pour l'évaluation des acquis scolaires*, PNEAS) under ministerial memo.²⁹ The project aims to use this as the basis for the creation of a permanent evaluation team that will head an independent, expert commission for evaluating education system performance. This commission will have two levels: a policy-making level, comprising key officials from the education system—the cabinet of ministers, the director of studies and planning, the director of exams, etc. A second level will comprise individuals selected as a function of their specialized knowledge. These individuals will provide support to and facilitate the work of external experts in the review of existing exams, evaluations, and tests at all levels. Eventually, the project aims to create an independent entity that will have its own charter and will be able to carry out this essential role with direct support from the Government budget. The project, therefore, will help transform the nascent evaluation functions into something that approximates this permanent entity.

21. More specifically, it will:

- (a) critically analyze the current series of evaluations, assessments, tests, and examinations at all levels, with a focus on their quality, and their rigorous and transparent administration;
- (b) design and implement a learning assessment tool to track learning outcomes in French and mathematics, at a minimum. The funding for this activity will be transferred to the government budget before the end of the project; and
- (c) support the creation of the permanent evaluation institution, after a broad dialogue among the education ministries with regard to its final institutional home.

22. The project will finance activities to build capacity in evaluation of learning outcomes and in pedagogic leadership, for pedagogic advisors, inspectors, directors of studies, and principals. The project will also support work that will be done by local communities of practice (*réseaux locaux de l'éducation*), which could become important partners in school-based professional development activities.

Subcomponent 1.4: Expand use of remediation in schools and classrooms (US\$4 million of which IDA US\$4 million)

23. **Under this subcomponent, the project will support activities that provide support to teachers and to students for remediation activities.** This will help address any learning gaps that have emerged from evaluations at the school and regional level without awaiting the organization of in-service training activities. This subcomponent will build on learning assessments under this project and explore various ways for supporting improved learning for students. The key objective will be to identify students with difficulties; train teachers on how to help remediate the most often observed difficulties; finance tools and materials that would help remediation in the classroom and at the school level; offer more intensive learning opportunities

²⁹ Note *Ministérielle de service N°0784/MEPSA/CAB du 08 août 2014*. N.B. This group is informally referred to as the *Dispositif* although that name does not officially appear in the legal texts.

to students with more substantial learning gaps; and provide training and materials for students whose learning difficulties are linked to disabilities.

24. **Impact evaluations will be financed under the project** to empirically ascertain the impact of interventions aimed at improving teacher content knowledge and teacher practice as it affects student learning. The use of observation protocols (CLASS, or others) is an option that the team will explore to evaluate teachers' classroom practice and help create a link between teaching practice and student achievement to identify the best interventions for effective teaching and learning. Teachers will be evaluated on a series of agreed-upon indicators. In the case of the CLASS,³⁰ teacher-student interactions will be assessed along three main domains: instructional support, classroom organization, and emotional support. To the extent that such protocols can be adapted to the Congolese context, the project will support the piloting of an observation protocol to help support improvements in teaching practice and measure any impact this may have on student learning.

25. **Developing more efficient teaching practices.** Substantial (but anecdotal) evidence shows the presence of multifaceted causes of inefficient teaching; some of these are structural and need to be addressed to effectively support other activities that seek to improve quality education (such as the provision of textbooks and didactic materials). Under this component, more systematic research will provide evidence-based findings to enable the Government to undertake much-needed systemic reform, focusing on

- **the use of instructional time**, currently constrained by the heavy use of double shifting and further reduced due to multiple school- and inspection-level evaluations that are not used to remediate or enhance learning;
- **the improvement of teaching practice**, including the use of classroom observation as mentioned above and school-based support to teachers to enhance their effectiveness in class and the transformation of those observations (perhaps even video clips) into learning opportunities during in-service and preservice teacher training courses; and
- **the use of data for effective teaching**, including real-time remediation based on observations in class and tracking of progress on a few key learning outcomes, such as reading accuracy and comprehension.

26. **Developing an inclusive education policy.** Universal basic education requires proactively identifying and removing barriers that impede access to educational opportunities for all children, without exception. Building on existing findings, this component will support the ministry in developing a comprehensive policy framework for inclusive education. This will look into the adaptation of schools to fit the needs of vulnerable populations, including those of girls, students with disabilities, and children from indigenous populations, among others. This can include physical accommodations, removal of negative representations from learning materials, and in some cases, adjustment of the school calendar (for indigenous children). For both poor children

³⁰ Details about CLASS can be found at www.teachstone.org; an evaluation of CLASS can be found at www.METproject.org, a project financed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop and test teacher effectiveness measures.

and girls, every effort will be made to ensure that their needs are prioritized in the project activities; the same will be true for children with disabilities, though they may also need special accommodations to help them fully benefit from learning opportunities (architectural design adjustments, machines and tools for their use, training for teachers to ensure their ability to fully mainstream the majority of these children, among others). With regard to children from indigenous populations, specific activities targeting their needs will be included in the project, including specific accommodations to enhance their learning opportunities, and specific training modules for teachers who will be working in communities with a large number of indigenous children. Those modules will be integrated into the in-service and preservice training programs but will be targeted in the first instance to those areas where the issues are the most acute. At present, there are no reliable data with regard to the total population of school-age children from indigenous populations in the Congo. Therefore, the project will target the enrollment of increasing numbers of children from these groups rather than aiming for a particular percentage. In addition, in collaboration with the WFP, the project will select a number of these schools so that they will benefit from a school feeding program.

27. **Developing local accountability mechanisms.** Different types of Government resources currently flow from central to local levels (in-kind or cash support) and are not systematically monitored and assessed. This component will support the MEPSA-JEC to establish mechanisms that increase accountability on the use of resources, which will include a coherent framework at central, regional, and school levels to ensure efficient and consistent use of all resources in line with identified priorities. Monitoring the use of resources should be a routine activity under the supervision of the Inspectorate-General but also through third-party, independent reporting (for example, civil service organizations or operational community-level organizations).

28. **On-site verification of key education inputs.** The project will support the use of mobile technologies (for example text messages) and other mechanisms being used in other projects within Congo for on-site third-party verifications to track delivery of key inputs, such as textbooks, and to track availability and attendance of teachers, school heads, pedagogic advisors, and inspectors. Similar mechanisms will be used to track arrival at the school of per capita funding grants from the Government (*Fonds de gratuité*), and the transparent use of those resources. This will support a more transparent management of scarce assets as well as enhance the culture of accountability.

Subcomponent 1.5: Improvements to School Environments (US\$12 million, of which no IDA)

29. **The project recognizes that an important contributor to learning quality is the physical environment within which students learn.** Consequently, the project will support the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms with a vision of a ‘whole’ school rather than of discrete classrooms, one that includes classrooms, administrative offices, latrines (separated between boys and girls), water points, and to the extent possible, wall fences (or hedges in rural contexts). These new and rehabilitated structures will respect the standards of accessibility for people with disabilities.

30. **The selection of school sites will be based on a series of criteria that will favor those areas with poor and vulnerable populations, where there is a high demand and relatively lower levels of enrollment and completion.** The focus will be on expanding primary school

places to ensure universal primary enrollment, although the project will also provide additional places in lower secondary schools. In addition to the construction of new classrooms, latrines, and so on, depending on the budgets available, the project aims to create 250 primary and/or lower secondary schools in those areas where the need is the most acute. In areas where the availability of land is the most acute, the project aims to finalize and use building plans that include two-story options (R+1) to maximize the use of the available space.

31. **Each of the newly constructed or rehabilitated classrooms will have new furniture and equipment.** Every school where the project intervenes will also benefit from rehabilitated latrines as needed, and possibly water points.

32. **To ensure that the selected school sites are responding to real demand, the project will finance a school mapping exercise,** which will not only provide geographic locations of both schools and villages/towns/cities but will also support the creation of a national policy for the rational, systematic creation of new school places regardless of the level at which they are done, or the entity that creates them. To support the maintenance of school buildings, furniture, and equipment, the project will develop a small maintenance manual that will be shared across all key stakeholders around the school. The budget for any systematic maintenance of school facilities will have to be included into the budgets of either the MEPSA-JEC (DDEPSA) or the local Government authorities. To date, any resources for maintenance appear to be made available infrequently, if at all.

Component 2: Improving Scope, Quality and Management of Human Resources (US\$18 million, of which IDA US\$3 million)

33. **In the area of human resources in education, the project aims to support improved, reliable and transparent personnel management systems,** with a focus on teachers but also on school directors, pedagogic advisors, inspectors, regional directors, and central directors. The project will also help find the appropriate balance between administrative and pedagogic personnel.

Subcomponent 2.1: Personnel recruitment, deployment, remuneration, advancement, and exit (US\$1 million of which IDA US\$1 million)

34. **The project will support the creation of a digital personnel database that will help uniquely identify personnel** based on their actual positions and track their careers, professional development, deployment, advancement, and eventually retirement. This database, which will be a part of the EMIS supported under Component 3, will help collect the data necessary for a more evidence-driven management of personnel. As a first step, the database will start to register, and use biometric data to identify all of the volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* in the system—but not necessarily integrate them into the civil service. For civil service teachers, who already have unique identity numbers, the database will begin to build their digital profiles, and will enable MEPSA-JEC senior management at central or regional levels to track the personnel working in their centers. Once the biometric data for volunteer teachers is included, the database will store biometric data for civil service teachers, as well. Eventually, the idea is to have a single database (*Fiche unique*) that will be used both to track teachers' careers at the Ministry of Civil Service and to pay their salaries at the Ministry of Finance. Given the number of challenges in getting there, the project

will attempt to build the necessary commitment across the three ministries but acknowledges the important role that politics and direction from the highest levels will play in the success of this approach.

35. **To ensure the quality of the recruitment and training processes at the ENIs and the ENS, the project will formulate clear and objective standards for recruitment into the training institutions**, including revised examinations at entry, an assessment of the courses with a focus on finding the right balance between content and pedagogy, and between theory and practice, and a transparent and rigorous examination at exit. To ensure the alignment of the ENI and ENS courses with advances in the system, the project will offer multiple opportunities for the training institutions to interact with, and benefit from contributions from the MEPSA-JEC, including from INRAP.

36. **The project will support the MEPSA-JEC efforts to track teacher mobility** to identify the regions or districts with the highest staff turnover and/or largest share of volunteer teachers and will study the role that teacher pay and incentives plays in stabilizing that force. The study will look at the existing incentives and sanctions and will offer recommendations regarding the use of both financial and nonfinancial benefits (for example, lodging, access to more attractive posts, and shortening of years of commitment).

Subcomponent 2.2: Training and Professional Development (US\$17 million, of which IDA US\$2 million)

37. **In response to the issues raised above, the project will support training for all key education personnel, with a priority focus on teachers and other school-level actors.** As a first step, the project will build on previously conducted training needs assessments (PRAEBASE) but go beyond that scope with regard to implementing long-term systemic reform. This will result in better defined and more specific targeted training needs of teachers, school directors, pedagogic advisors, academic directors (in lower secondary) and inspectors (using SDI results) and a more active and relevant involvement of the In-service Training Directorate (*Direction de la Formation*) to build sustainability. With those evaluations in hand, a series of activities will be financed, including the following:

- (a) Preservice training for new primary and lower secondary teachers, with improved approaches to the process of recruitment of candidates and the quality of the training to be provided. As noted, this will include a complete revamp of ENI curricula (uniformity across the three ENIs of Brazzaville, Dolisie, and Owando and conformity with primary curricula) with a strong focus on practicums in pre-identified practice schools. The latter will be a mix of urban and rural schools so that future teachers are aware of realities on the ground and learn how to best address day-to-day challenges. The revamp of the ENIs will also assess and address the internal efficiency of these institutes (targeted training for teacher trainers, review of organograms, provision of relevant equipment and learning materials, including textbooks, etc). A similar exercise will be conducted at the ENS, where lower secondary teachers are trained.
- (b) Enhanced in-service training for all primary and lower secondary teachers, using the results of the training needs assessment to identify key areas for intensive training and

exploring opportunities for involving a diverse set of training providers, including existing institutions, networks of senior and retired teachers, private training providers including those from overseas. In the absence of a national in-service training policy and to address the most pressing needs, the project will finance a large-scale and accelerated in-service training program across the country. Teachers will participate in a highly intensive course (likely during the month of August) using the three ENIs as training centers. Based on the number of teachers to be trained, three rounds may be necessary to reach all of them (project years 2017–2019). The underlying principle of the training program is to provide teachers with practical teaching guidelines combined with core content review; it is expected that a well-designed and relevant training program could reduce existing weaknesses that result from an inefficient preservice training.

- (c) Targeted training of volunteer teachers (*bénévoles*), based on their academic profile and number of years of experience. Given the remarkable contributions that most if not all *bénévoles* have made to the education of Congolese children by working in schools where civil service teachers were unavailable, the project will look for ways to use their teaching experience as a foundation for building a training program that addresses their weaknesses.
- (d) For reasons of coherence and continuity, the training program will pay particular attention to the training of school directors and inspectors. At the school level, they play the role of pedagogic leaders and are essential advisors for teachers. It is also important that they possess both the necessary skills and the pedagogic authority to play that role.
- (e) Training of school directors, pedagogic advisors, and academic directors (for lower secondary) as pedagogic leaders with the responsibility for leading and supporting learning improvements in schools.
- (f) Training of inspectors as facilitators of system-wide improvements (they have a limited role to play in daily instruction given their limited numbers) but the key role they can play in supporting and reinforcing system-wide improvements and participating in crucial curriculum implementation and reform efforts.
- (g) Training for regional and central education directors with a focus on their multifaceted roles and the support they can provide both to central directorates and to inspectors and schools.

38. **In addition, the project will provide training for community actors and other key stakeholders, including parent- and community-associations, media partners, unions, education associations, and so on.** The project will explore any opportunities for involving communities in on-site verifications of resource use, be it human resources, financial allocations or textbooks, and other material distribution.

39. **The project will support opportunities for collaboration between Government entities that are closely involved in the delivery of education services,** including an annual conference

for sharing results and ideas, interministerial workshops to identify and handle common problems. In addition, the project will support joint task forces between the MEPSA-JEC, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Civil Service, to help address particular issues such as teacher training quality, unique databases for personnel management, recruitment, and deployment, among others. The goal will be to have a sustainable coordination framework between these key partners.

Component 3: Improving System Performance (US\$10 million, of which IDA US\$10 million)

Subcomponent 3.1: Improved monitoring and evaluation (US\$1.5 million, of which IDA US\$1.5 million)

40. **The project will support the creation and sustained functioning of a reliable and credible EMIS** that goes beyond the setting up of computerized systems to include the collection, analyses, and use of data for informed decision making. The database will provide, at minimum, data that are disaggregated by gender, by socioeconomic status, by geographic location (including urban/rural), and by vulnerability (indigenous, with special needs, living in remote areas, and so on). Lessons learned from the previous IDA-financed PRAEBASE project show how current data collection is laborious, costly, and not sustainable (that is, central DEP staff traveling to all schools every year to collect data). The project will introduce a more cost-efficient process that transfers responsibility for data collection/consolidation to local structures (school districts [*Circonscriptions scolaires*] and departmental directorates [*Directions Départementales*]), involving the Inspectorate-General and building on existing routine data collection mechanisms (for example, back-to-school reports). This process will include (a) the design of a standardized back-to-school report (*Questionnaire statistique*) for all schools (adopted by all ministries involved); (b) an assessment of current technical capacity of lower levels (with regard to human resources, equipment, and so on); (c) a clear definition of roles and responsibilities at all levels of the process; (d) the production of user-friendly statistical yearbooks, including the provision of systematic feedback on the results to departments and schools. The above-revisited scheme will allow the ministry to calculate the real cost of a routine (recurrent) EMIS. This cost, classified as compulsory expenditure, will then need to be integrated into the national budget as a key line item.

Subcomponent 3.2: Institutional strengthening and capacity building (US\$2.5 million, of which IDA US\$2.5 million)

41. **As mentioned earlier, the project will support a functional analysis of the key institutions in the sector**, with particular attention paid to the functions of strategic planning, financial and budget management, human resource management, construction, communications, and training and professional development. On the basis of its findings, the project will support the strengthening of the capacities of these functions at central and regional levels. Special focus will be placed on the creation of an evaluation culture, as noted in Component 1 above and evidence-based decision making in an environment where transparency and accountability are enhanced.

42. **As noted in the previous component, the project will examine the status and capacities of structures charged with teacher training in other education ministries** (that is, METPFQE, which is charged with the institutions for initial training in primary, and the MES, which is charged

with the initial training for secondary) and the entity charged with curriculum reform and implementation (INRAP). The project will place a high priority on facilitating coordination between relevant ministries (MEPSA-JEC, MES, METPFQE, Ministry of Finance/ Ministry of Planning, and so on).

Subcomponent 3.3: Project Management (US\$5 million, of which IDA US\$5 million)

43. **As was done under the previous IDA-financed PRAEBASE, this project will establish the PCU to help implement the planned activities.** Past and ongoing Bank-financed projects have highlighted the challenges related to implementing projects via existing government structures. While this can be effective in those situations where there is solid capacity within those institutions, this is not yet the case in the Congo. The PCU will be housed within or close to the MEPSA-JEC and will be charged with day-to-day management of this project in close collaboration with the key Government entities.

44. **Additional work (beyond their normal tasks) done under this project by Government officials will be recognized and financially rewarded through a separate budget line under the MEPSA-JEC budget, starting in 2016.** This is in line with the latest agreement between the Bank and the Ministry of Planning. This will not be included in the counterpart funds for this project but will be included as a separate line item in the regular MEPSA-JEC budget, as will be the case for all other sectoral ministries that are implementing IDA-financed projects. The Bank project team will provide regular reports to the minister of the MEPSA-JEC to highlight the contributions of key staff and their teams to ensure that their contributions are taken into account on time; however, the decision to recognize the teams is the sole responsibility of the minister.

45. **The project will use a set of standard costs to cover any payments to be made in the conduct of its duties.** This will include a set rate for per diem paid for in-country and overseas travel, among others. These standard costs (*coûts paramétriques*) will be discussed with the government and included in the project implementation manual. To the extent possible, the project will align these norms with those of other national and international organizations active in the sector.

46. **The PCU will be staffed with a high-quality, technically expert, and results-oriented team.** It will include a project coordinator, a financial manager, an internal auditor, a procurement specialist, a construction manager, and a component head for each of the three components. It will also include an M&E specialist and a communications specialist. In addition, the PCU will include assistant specialists,³¹ as needed, and a core team of administrative staff. Each of these positions will be recruited competitively, following the Association's procurement procedures. An independent firm will be charged with handling those recruitment processes.

47. **As part of this component, the project will support expenditures related to transportation, communication, and administration,** although a higher focus will be on the actual results related to these expenditures. In addition, third-party verification mechanisms will be established, using both community partners and private sector entities, to ensure that these

³¹ This could include an assistant engineer, an assistant procurement specialist, etc.

significant investments of the Congolese people are actually reaching their intended beneficiaries and results.

Subcomponent 3.4: Additional strategic studies (US\$1 million, of which IDA US\$1 million)

48. **The project will finance additional studies and TA as needed to ensure alignment of general education reforms with both higher/tertiary education and the labor market.** These studies will also support sector-wide analyses of issues related to governance, quality, and quality assurance, alignment in addition to the three themes of equity, quality, and relevance.

Phasing of Project Implementation

49. This project has been prepared at a time when the uncertainty with regard to public revenues is high, due in large part to the fall in the price of oil, but also due to large budget outlays expected in the coming year, including the preparation of the Africa Games and the presidential elections. Within that context, to advance the project preparation and still build in some flexibility, the project team proposes the following phasing of project implementation.

50. To support Government efforts to commit to counterpart contributions that take into account fiscal realities and to enable the new minister and his team to identify any new priorities that may emerge as a result of the MEPSA-JEC's expanded responsibilities, the Bank team proposes an initial project of US\$70 million (US\$40 million from the government, US\$30 million from IDA) as a starting point. An additional financing could potentially be explored at a later date to expand any of the activities started under this project and/or add any additional priority areas.

Annex 3: Implementation Arrangements
Republic of Congo: Education Sector Support Project

1. The success of this project will depend on the close collaboration between the Government entities and the project activities, coordinated by the PCU. The MEPSA-JEC will be responsible for the overall management of the project and will provide guidance to the PCU. For the components and subcomponents, the following lines of collaboration are essential:

Table 3.1. Role of Government Entities for Project Implementation by Component

Component/Subcomponent	Responsible Government Entity	Comments
Component 1: Providing Quality Education for All		
Subcomponent 1.1: Curriculum revision and implementation	<u>INRAP</u> , DDEPSA, DG Basic Education (DGEB), DG Secondary (DGES)	
Subcomponent 1.2: Provision of learning materials	<u>INRAP</u> , DGEB, DDEPSA, IGEPSA	
Subcomponent 1.3: Improved Assessment	<u>PNEAS</u> , DEC, IGEPSA, DGEB, DGES, ENS, DDEPSA, DEP	The role for the PNEAS remains to be fully elaborated in the legal texts, including those ‘ <i>textes d’application</i> ’ mandated by procedure. This relatively new function will require substantial collaboration across the entire system, at the central and regional levels.
Subcomponent 1.4: Expand use of remediation in schools and classrooms	<u>DDEPSA</u> , DGEB, PNEAS	
Subcomponent 1.5: Improvements to school environment	<u>DEP</u> , DDEPSA	The Ministry of Infrastructure’s regional staff will be involved in ensuring the presence of qualified staff in the regions.
Component 2: Improving Scope, Quality and Management of Human Resources		
Subcomponent 2.1: Personnel recruitment, deployment, remuneration, advancement and exit	<u>DGAS</u> , DEP, DDEPSA	Commitments are also necessary from the Ministries of Finance and of Civil Service, the modalities of which will need careful planning.
Subcomponent 2.1 (continued): Activities related to the ENIs, ENS	<u>DGEB/DGES</u> , DDEPSA, ENS (MES), ENIs (METFPQE)	A Memoranda of Understanding will need to be developed between the MEPSA-JEC and the two other education ministries (technical and higher) to coordinate the exchanges: there will be financial support from the MEPSA-JEC to finance quality improvements from the others, which are responsible for ENIs and ENS.
Subcomponent 2.2: Training and Professional Development	<u>DFC/IGEPSA</u> , DGEB, DGS, DDEPSA	While the DFC should be responsible, they do not have the human resources necessary to manage such a major task. While that capacity is being built, the IGEPSA will play the role.
Component 3: Improving System Performance		

Subcomponent 3.1: Improved monitoring and evaluation	<u>DEP</u> , DGEB, DGES, DDEPSA, IGEPSA, DGAS	Collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics will be crucial; commitments are also necessary from the Ministries of Finance and Civil Service.
Subcomponent 3.2: Institutional strengthening and capacity building	<u>IGEPSA and DGAS</u>	Some high-level engagement will also be needed from the cabinet of ministers to successfully complete this work.
Subcomponent 3.3: Project Management	<u>Cabinet of ministers</u> ; Steering Committee (Inter-ministerial Committee)	A Steering Committee will work closely with the PCU to ensure smooth implementation of project activities.
Subcomponent 3.4: Additional strategic studies	<u>Cabinet of ministers</u> ; MES	Collaboration will be necessary with the minister of Higher Education.

Note: The government entity that is underlined will be the primary collaborator and will convene the necessary coordination meetings with all other entities regarding project activities, with project financial support for those activities.

DEC = *Direction des Examens et Concours* (Examinations and Tests Directorate); DGEB = *Direction Générale de l'Enseignement de Base* (Directorate-General of Basic Education); IGEPSA = *Inspection générale du MEPSA-JEC* (Inspectorate-General of MEPSA-JEC).

2. **Community and stakeholder involvement.** The role of the communities and other stakeholders in the implementation of and reporting on each of these activities cannot be underestimated. The community organizations (CGDC, APE, among others) will be requested to lend their full support and provide timely and relevant feedback with regard to the implementation of key steps. This will be especially important for the M&E of a certain number of school-level activities and indicators. For each school that is included in the construction and/or rehabilitation activities, the DDEPSA will establish contact with the beneficiary community to request them to ascertain that the contracted works and the supervision are both undertaken as planned. Each community will designate two persons who will be charged with this, based on a small training or briefing that is provided by the supervising firm. Until the Government establishes a sustainable maintenance program, the community will have to do this on the basis of a maintenance guide for works and furniture that will be written and distributed to each school and to each community partner (CGDC, APEE, and so on).

3. **Construction and rehabilitation (that is, all civil works) will be managed as follows.** Within the PCU, there will be a construction head and an assistant engineer who will work with the DDEPSA to share criteria for selection of civil works sites. The DDEPSA will take the responsibility of selecting the areas in the two regions where new classrooms will be constructed. Construction firms will be hired to conduct the technical feasibility studies to (a) ensure the site selection is consistent with criteria and (b) ascertain that the choice fulfills the technical criteria that are necessary for construction to be concluded, including the presence of a title for the land and the respect of all safeguards (environmental, social). On the basis of these evaluations, the PCU team will put together the final construction plan. This plan, including the works planned for the first year, is to be made public. Firms will be hired to conduct the supervision of the sites under construction.

4. **Rehabilitations will be done along the same lines, but on structures that require less than 50 percent of the cost of a new construction.** This ensures that the cost of substantial rehabilitations will be judged against the efficiency and utility of doing replacements instead.

5. **Involvement of the Ministry of Infrastructure.** The project aims to work with technical staff who are under the Ministry of Infrastructure and who are assigned to each of the regions.

6. **The following implementation arrangements will be established.** No more than three months after project effectiveness, each relevant MEPSA-JEC director (as set out in Table 3.1) will work with the PCU component head and the PCU M&E specialist to convene the appropriate Government officials and finalize the work plan for each component. These will be key contributions into the overall project work plan to be developed by the project coordinator under the guidance of the Steering Committee, which will be discussed with the MEPSA-JEC senior officials and communicated to the Bank. Thereafter, once a quarter, the PCU will report on progress to the MEPSA-JEC as well as key development partners within the LEG and will share the work plan for the following three months. The component head for Component 1 (Quality) will include the work plan for all civil works, which will be prepared by the construction head.

7. **At the quarterly meeting, regional education officials (DDEPSA) will also share their regional reports.** Not only will this enable all central and regional officials to share their reports, but this will also offer opportunities for sharing good practice experiences across disparate regions in a systematic manner. Any action research that is planned under the project will be presented as soon as it is approved, and results will be shared at annual reviews.

8. **A system-wide Steering Committee will be set up to provide guidance to the project on an annual basis.** This Steering Committee will comprise, at minimum, ministers or their delegated representatives from the MEPSA-JEC, METPFQE, MES, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Infrastructure, and the office of the president. It could also include representatives of civil society and private sector. At an annual meeting, the MEPSA-JEC, with support from the PCU, will provide results for the year and will set out its intended results and necessary resources for the following year. The annual meeting will be conducted before the end of May each year to ensure that the decisions taken by the Steering Committee are reflected in the budget submission for the following year. The first meeting of the Steering Committee is, therefore, expected to take place in April 2017. The Steering Committee will be responsible for approval of the annual budget and action plans.

9. **Annual reviews will be held in November/December, bringing together all key stakeholders in the system.** At those reviews, the MEPSA-JEC officials will provide updates on all results for the education sector (pre-university), including information regarding the start of the school year (enrollments, recruitments, trainings, and so on). Each functional/central directorate will present its results, and each regional directorate will do the same. Data for that review as well as any additional studies will come from the work of the DEP, which will head this annual review effort, including field visits. This is not limited to project activities but also includes all activities carried out in the MEPSA-JEC, including those financed by the budget.

10. The project institutional and implementation arrangements will be formalized in project implementation manual which will be finalized before effectiveness.

Financial Management, Disbursements, and Procurement

Financial Management

Introduction

11. As part of the project preparation phase of the PRAASED, an FM assessment was carried out in accordance with the Financial Management Manual for World Bank-Financed Investment Operations that became effective on March 1, 2010. Given the lack of fiduciary capacity within the MEPSA-JEC and pending the setting up of the PRAASED PCU, the preparation team agreed to use the existing Coordination Unit of the CAB project. Although the project implementation unit was not yet established at the time of the assessment, the MEPSA-JEC has started preparatory activities (preparing terms of reference for the recruitment processes of key project staff; technical specifications of project activities; preparation of implementation manuals and manuals of administrative, accounting, and financial procedures; and so on) with the support of a Project Preparation Advance managed by the existing Coordination Unit of the CAB project.

12. Therefore, and to meet the Bank's minimum requirements under OP/BP 10.00, the FM system will need to be supported by the following measures: (a) strengthen the PRAASED's PCU with the recruitment of an FM expert and providing him/her with fiduciary training and ensure adequate staffing of the FM unit; (b) recruitment of an internal auditor to strengthen the internal control system; (c) purchase and installation of a computerized accounting system in the coordination unit; and (d) establishment of a manual of procedures for better implementation of administrative and fiduciary procedures of the project.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures

13. The proposed FM arrangements were designed to ensure that funds are used for the purposes intended, information is produced on a timely basis for project management and government oversight, and the project is in compliance with Association fiduciary requirements.

14. The main risks and mitigating measures of this project are listed in the Systematic Operations Risk-Rating Tool table in section V.A on Risk.

15. In view of the general country FM issues and the issues specific to the PRAASED's PCU and the mitigation measures provided, the overall FM risk rating for this project is Substantial.

16. **Strengths.** The FM arrangements will be built on the experience gained from implementing other IDA-funded operations in Congo and strengthened by establishing experienced staff familiar with donor-financed project implementation.

Table 3.2. FM Action Plan

No.	Activity/Action	Target Completion	Responsibility
1.	Recruit an experienced FM expert	By effectiveness	PCU
2.	Recruit an internal auditor	By effectiveness	PCU
3.	Purchase and install a project accounting software	2 months after effectiveness	PCU
4.	Recruit a procurement specialist	By effectiveness	PCU
5.	Adoption of an administrative, accounting, and financial procedures manual	By effectiveness	PCU

Governance and Anticorruption Considerations

17. The country’s political situation has weakened the governance and corruption environment. In the context of the project, the effective implementation of the fiduciary mitigation measures should contribute to strengthen the control environment. Also, the appropriate representation and oversight of the minister of Primary, Secondary, and Literacy Education, as well as the transparency in both operation implementation and dissemination to stakeholders and the public should constitute a strong starting point to tackle governance and corruption issues during project implementation. The existing Internal Audit Unit will also contribute to improving and strengthening the internal control environment.

Overall Fiduciary Implementation Arrangements Staffing

18. The FM arrangements for the project will be handled by the PCU under the MEPSA-JEC and will be responsible for implementing and monitoring day-to-day project activities, including budgeting, disbursement, FM, reporting, supervision, management of the designated account, and auditing.

19. **Project’s accounting and financial software.** The current accounting standards in use in Congo for ongoing Association-financed project will be applicable. SYSCOHADA is the assigned accounting system in the West and Central African Francophone countries. The PCU will purchase a software that will be tailored to the scale and nature of the program and can record and report program operations (by origin of funds, component, and activities) on time. This software should be multicurrency, multilocation, multidonor and should include the following modules: general accounting, cost accounting, budgeting, assets management, contract management, preparation of withdrawal applications and tracking of disbursements by donors, reports generating, including quarterly interim financial reports (IFRs), and semiannual financial statements.

20. **Project Financial and Accounting Manual.** The PCU will establish a Financial and Accounting Procedures Manual that includes a description of the FM system and financial policies and procedures. It will contain: (a) the accounting system to be used (chart of accounts, budget coding, and accounting standards); (b) the main transactions cycles; (c) internal control procedures; eligibility criteria and selection procedures for Sub-grants; and (d) a summary of the various operational procedures related to budget management (planning, execution, and monitoring) and assets management, procurement of works, goods and services, and disbursements.

21. **Reporting.** At least two sets of financial reports will be prepared by the PCU. The quarterly IFRs, as required by the Association and the Annual Financial Statements will include the project’s

consolidated financial statements. The quarterly IFRs agreed upon during negotiations will be prepared and submitted to the Association 45 days after closing of each quarter. The IFRs will be based on formats developed in the Association’s Guidelines on Financial Monitoring Reports, with some adjustments. The IFRs will include a table of Source and Use of Funds also a table of Use of Funds by activities or by components.

22. **Internal control and internal auditing.** To maintain a good standard of internal control system in the project given the country high risk rating, an internal auditor will be recruited to strengthen the internal control the PRAASED. Furthermore, the project’s administrative and FM procedures provides a clear description of the approval and authorization processes with regard to the rule of segregation of duties. The Association will pay attention to the adequacy of internal control during supervision missions.

23. **External auditing.** The audit report should reflect all the activities of the FM program and be submitted to IDA within six months after the end of each fiscal year. The selection of an external auditor of project financial statements should be presented to IDA for no-objection. Appropriate terms of reference for the external auditor will be provided to the project team.

24. **Financial audits will be conducted yearly.** Audits will be conducted by independent auditors acceptable to the Association in accordance with international auditing standards. The auditor will also provide a management letter on the internal control procedures outlining recommendations for improving the control system, accounting, and financial procedures.

25. The audit reports that will be required to be submitted by the PCU and the due dates for submission are provided in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3. Due Date for Audit Report Submission

Audit Report	Due Date
Institutional financial statements, that is, annual audited financial statements (including Statements of Sources and Uses of Funds with appropriate notes and disclosures), and the management letter	Submitted within six months after the end of each fiscal year

26. **Flow of funds arrangement.** The PRAASED will have one designated account located in an acceptable commercial bank that will be managed by a joint signature of both the FM specialist and the project coordinator.

Disbursement Arrangements: Use of Statement of Expenditures

Disbursements by Category

27. Table 3.4 sets out the expenditure categories to be financed by the Credit.

Table 3.4. Disbursements by Category

Category	Amount of the Credit Allocated (expressed in Euro)	Percentage of Expenditures to be Financed (inclusive of Taxes)
(1) Goods, works, non-consulting services, Operating Costs and consultants' services under Parts A.1, A.3, A.4, B.1, and C of the Project	20,300,000	100%
(2) Goods, works, non-consulting services, consultants' services, and Training under Part B.2 of the Project	900,000	12%
(3) Grants under Part A.2 (e) of the Project	900,000	100%
(4) Refund of the Preparation Advance	2,800,000	Amount payable pursuant to Section 2.07 of the General Conditions
(5) Unallocated	2,700,000	
TOTAL AMOUNT	27,600,000	

28. As indicated in the table above a project preparation advance in the amount of Euro 2,800,000 was granted by the Association to the Recipient. As indicated in the Financing Agreement no withdrawal shall be made for payments made prior to the date of the Financing Agreement, except that withdrawals up to an aggregate amount not to exceed Euro 2,800,000 may be made for payments made prior to the Financing Agreement date but on or after February 1, 2016, for Eligible Expenditures.

Disbursement Methods

29. By effectiveness, the project will use the transaction-based disbursement procedures, that is, replenishment, direct payment, reimbursement, and special commitments. When project implementation begins, the quarterly IFRs produced by the PCU will be reviewed. If the reports are found to be well prepared and produced on time and the recipient requests conversion to report-based disbursements, a review will be undertaken to determine if the project is eligible for report-based disbursement.

Minimum Value of Applications

30. The minimum value of applications for reimbursement, direct payment, and special commitment is 20 percent of outstanding advance made to the designated account.

Reporting on Credit Proceeds

31. The supporting documentation for reporting eligible expenditures paid from the designated account should be a summary report of the statement of expenditures and records evidencing eligible expenditures for payments against contracts valued at US\$1,000,000 or more for works, US\$500,000 or more for goods, US\$200,000 or more for consulting firms and US\$50,000 or more for individual consultants and a list of payments against contracts that are subject to the Association's prior review. The supporting documentation for requests for direct payment should be records evidencing eligible expenditures (copies of receipt, supplier's invoices, and so on). All supporting documentation for the statement of expense will be retained by the CAB PCU and will be made available for review by periodic Bank review missions and internal and external auditors.

Designated Account

32. A designated account will be opened in a commercial bank acceptable to IDA.
33. The ceiling amount for the designated account will be set at FCFA 660,000 million.

Monthly Replenishment Applications

34. The designated account will be replenished through the submission of withdrawal applications on a monthly basis by the PCU account unit and will include reconciled bank statements and other documents as may be required until the recipient may choose to convert to report-based disbursement.

35. **Implementation support and supervision plan.** Based on the outcome of the FM risk assessment, the following implementation support plan is proposed:

Table 3.5 Implementation Support Plan

FM Activity	Frequency
Desk Reviews	
IFR review	Quarterly
Audit report review of the program	Annually
Review of other relevant information such as interim internal control systems reports.	Continuous, as they become available
On-site Visits	
Review of overall operation of the FM system	Annual (implementation support mission)
Monitoring of actions taken on issues highlighted in audit reports, auditors' management letters, internal audit, and other reports	As needed
Transaction reviews (if needed)	As needed
Capacity-building Support	
FM training sessions	Before the project starts and thereafter as needed

36. The objective of the implementation support plan in Table 3.5 is to ensure the project maintains a satisfactory FM system throughout the project's life.

Procurement

37. **Applicable guidelines.** Procurement for the proposed project will be carried out in accordance with the Bank's 'Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers', dated January 2011 and revised July 2014; 'Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers', dated January 2011 and revised July 2014; and the provisions stipulated in the Financial Agreement. For each contract to be financed by the Credit, the different procurement methods or consultant selection methods, the need for prequalification, estimated costs, prior review requirements, and time frame has been agreed between the recipient and the Association in the Procurement Plan. The Procurement Plan will be updated at least annually or as required to reflect the actual project implementation needs and improvements in institutional capacity.

38. **Procurement documents.** Procurement will be carried out using the Association's SBDs or SRPs, respectively for all ICB for supplies, works, and services other than consulting services. For NCB, while waiting for the Bank to assess the implementation of the new procurement system, and based on experience gained from the government's use of these documents outside the context of this project, the recipient will use the Association's SBD for supplies, works, and services other than consulting services and the Association's SRPs for recruitment of consultants.

39. **National procurement system and ongoing reforms.** The main recommendations of the 2006 Country Procurement ISSUE Paper were to (a) prepare and approve a public procurement code, (b) carry out a survey of the existing capacity on procurement, (c) prepare a needs assessment of the institutional and human capacity requirements for public procurement in the country, (d) prepare an action plan for the procurement reform, and (e) implement the new procurement code in accordance with the agreed action plan. All these recommendations have been undertaken.

40. Indeed, the government has finalized major actions to implement the new procurement code which is already enforced since September 2009. The most important steps achieved to date include the following: (a) the draft of the national procurement code is finalized and approved by the national authorities; (b) the staff of the DGCMP (*Direction-générale du contrôle des marchés publics*, Directorate-General for the Control of Public Procurement) responsible for prior reviewing and the ARMP (*Autorité de Régulation des Marchés Publics*, Regulatory Authority for Public Procurement) are already in place; (c) the national SBDs have been reviewed and approved by the procurement reform committee; and (d) the national strategy on procurement capability building of main actors is being implemented. A recent independent audit for the exercises 2011–2012 concluded that rules are not respected by the contract authorities. The procurement audit report for 2013 budget is expected to be finalized for verifying the extent to which the procurement rules are followed by the procuring entities. In addition, and as part of the ongoing country dialogue on public procurement, the discussion on further using country institutions for IDA operations is ongoing.

Application of the Procurement Code

41. **Advertising procedure.** General Procurement Notice, Specific Procurement Notices, Requests for Expression of Interest, and results of the evaluation and contracts award should be published in accordance with advertising provisions in the Bank's Procurement Guidelines and Consultant Guidelines.

Procurement Methods

42. **Procurement civil works.** Civil works procured under this project will mainly include construction/rehabilitation of schools. Depending on the size of the contracts, procurement will be done either under the ICB using IDA procurement rules that include the related SBDs or under NCB using National SBDs agreed with or satisfactory to the Association. Small-value works may be procured under shopping procedures. Direct contracting may be used where necessary if agreed in the Procurement Plan in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 3.7 to 3.8 of the Association's Procurement Guidelines. The prequalification processes for all contracts for works to be procured using ICB are subject to prior review by the Association.

43. **Procurement of goods and non-consulting services.** Goods procured under this project will include equipment, office furniture, and vehicles. Non-consulting services procured under this project will include office maintenance and guard contracts. Procurement will be done under the ICB or NCB using the Association's SBD for ICB and National SBDs satisfactory to the Association. Small-value goods may be procured under shopping procedures.

44. **Direct contracting** may be used where necessary if agreed in the Procurement Plan in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 3.7 to 3.8 of the Association's Procurement Guidelines.

45. Procurement of goods such as vehicles, motorcycles can use the agency of the United Nations Office for Project Services in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3.10 of the Bank's Procurement Guidelines.

46. **Selection of consultants.** Consultant services will include various advisory services, studies including engineering and design studies, construction supervision, training and TA in FM, and procurement. The selection method will be the Quality- and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method whenever possible. Contracts for specialized assignments estimated to cost less than US\$300,000 equivalent may be contracted through CQS. The following additional methods may be used where appropriate: Quality-Based Selection, Selection under a Fixed Budget, and Least-Cost Selection.

47. Least-Cost Selection may be used for selecting consultants for assignments of a standard or routine nature, such as audit services, where well-established practices and standards exist.

48. Single-Source Selection (SSS) may be employed with prior approval of the Association and will be in accordance with paragraphs 3.8 to 3.11 of the Association's Consultant Guidelines. All services of Individual Consultants will be procured under contracts in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 5.1 to 5.6 of the guidelines. Short lists of consultants for services

estimated to cost less than the equivalent of US\$100,000 per contract may be composed entirely of national consultants in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2.7 of the Bank's Consultant Guidelines. However, if foreign firms express interest, they will not be excluded from consideration.

Training, Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences

49. Training activities will comprise workshops and training in the country and abroad, based on individual needs as well as group requirements; on-the-job training; and hiring consultants for developing training materials and conducting training. All training and workshop activities will be carried out on the basis of approved annual programs that will identify the general framework of training activities for the year, including (a) the training envisaged; (b) the criteria for selection of personnel to be trained (and personnel if known); (c) the selection methods of institutions or individual conducting such training; (d) the institutions conducting the training, if already selected, (e) the duration of the proposed training; and (f) the cost estimate of the training. Attendance at relevant project workshops and seminars will be treated as training and will need advance 'no objection' from the Association.

Operating Costs

50. The operating costs will include reasonable expenditures for office supplies, vehicle operation and maintenance, communication and insurance costs, banking charges, rental expenses, office equipment maintenance, utilities, document duplication/printing, consumables, travel cost and per diem for project staff for travel linked to the implementation of the project, and salaries of contractual staff for the project but excluding salaries of officials of the recipient's civil service.

Implementation Arrangements

51. The PCU that will be created within the MEPSA-JEC will have the overall responsibility of implementing this project. It will oversee the project's fiduciary aspects (FM and procurement). Regarding procurement, the MEPSA-JEC will have all responsibility. In addition, to strengthen procurement capacity within the MEPSA-JEC, the team will benefit from training on IDA procedures. In addition, a procurement specialist will be recruited through a competitive process. The selection process should be finalized before effectiveness.

Assessment of Risks and Mitigation Measures

52. The risk factors identified for procurement performance include the following:
- (a) A weak governance environment including, in accountability arrangement, and an overall lack of transparency in conducting procurement processes, which create significant risks of corruption, collusion, and fraud.
 - (b) The MEPSA-JEC system, as it operates in practice, creates opportunities for informal interference in the procurement process by senior officials—creating opportunities for waste, mismanagement, nepotism, corruption, collusion, and fraud.

- (c) Government officials—likely to be involved in project procurement through tender committees and the national control system responsible for ensuring that the rules are respected including a complaints review mechanism—may not be familiar with procurement procedures.
- (d) The control and regulatory systems are not fully operational and independent.

53. The overall project risk for procurement is Substantial.

54. **Risk mitigation measures.** The following measures have been identified:

- (a) Implementation arrangements will be geared toward achieving a high level of transparency in terms of disclosing all information of the procurement processes.
- (b) All consulting contracts costing above US\$300,000 and ICB contracts for goods will be published in the United Nations Development Business online and on the Association’s external website, in accordance with IDA guidelines.
- (c) A project launch workshop will be conducted for the MEPSA-JEC staff and relevant staff of all other entities involved in project implementation.
- (d) For all procurement, the Project Implementation Manual that includes procurement methods is to be used in the project, as well as the standard and sample documents to be used for each method.

Table 3.6. Schedule of Risk Mitigation Action Plan to be Carried Out

Sl. No.	Action	Responsibility	Due Date	Remarks
1	Procurement Plan for the first 18 months prepared and agreed with the Association	MEPSA-JEC team	Draft available at negotiations	Was finalized during negotiations
2	Update of the MEPSA-JEC team project record management system	MEPSA-JEC team	Expected within six months after project effectiveness (not a covenant)	To better keep procurement documents and reports
3	Training of all staff on IDA procurement procedures in specialized institutions	MEPSA-JEC team	Not later than three months after project effectiveness (not a covenant)	To improve project staff skills in IDA procurement
4	A maximum period of 30 days after bids opening is allowed for contract award signature, to avoid delays and reduce the scope for corruption.	MEPSA-JEC team	Ongoing (not a covenant)	To be maintained during the whole life of the project

55. **Implementation readiness.** A detailed Procurement Plan for the first 18 months of the project was prepared and finalized during negotiations. The following actions will be carried out during the approval and effectiveness of this project:

- (a) The General Procurement Notice will be prepared and advertised locally and in the United Nations Development Business online and the Association’s external website after Board approval.
- (b) The selection of consultants for studies for all major components and the most important procurement activities for the critical contracts of the first year will be initiated and is expected to be completed by project effectiveness.

Fraud, Coercion, and Corruption

56. All procuring entities, as well as bidders, suppliers, and contractors, shall observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of contracts financed under the project in accordance with paragraphs 1.16 and 1.17 of the Procurement Guidelines and paragraphs 1.23 and 1.24 of the Consultant Guidelines. The anticorruption plan to be prepared for the project and discussed above will also focus on procurement-related matters.

Frequency of Procurement Supervision/Implementation Support

57. In addition to the prior reviews which were carried out by the Association offices, the capacity assessment of the implementing agency has recommended (a) supervision mission every six months to visit the field; and (b) at least one annual post-procurement review. Missions in the first 18 months shall include a procurement specialist or a specialized consultant.

Procurement Planning

58. The recipient developed a draft Procurement Plan for project implementation, which provides the basis for the procurement methods. This plan was finalized and approved by the Association during negotiations. It will be available in the project’s database and on the Association’s external website. The Procurement Plan will be updated annually or as required to reflect the project implementation needs and improvements in institutional capacity.

59. Procurement methods and Association review requirements are provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Procurement Methods and Association Review

Expenditure Category	Contract Value Threshold (US\$)	Procurement Method	Contracts Subject to Prior Review
Works	≥ 10,000,000	ICB	All
	≥ 100,000 > 200,000	NCB	All above US\$5,000,000
	< 200,000	Shopping	Post-review
	n.a.	SSS	All

Expenditure Category	Contract Value Threshold (US\$)	Procurement Method	Contracts Subject to Prior Review
Goods and Services (other than Consultant's Services)	≥ 1,000,000	ICB,	All
	≥ 100,000 > 1,000,000	NCB,	All above US\$500,000
	< 100,000	Shopping, UNOPS	Post review
	n.a.	SSS	All
Consultant's Services Firms	n.a	QCBS	Above US\$200,000
	> 200,000	QCBS, QBS, FBS, LCS, CQS and SSS	All
Individuals	≥ 100,000	IC	All
	–	SSS	All
	–	ToR	All

Note: QBS = Quality-Based Selection; CQS = Selection based on Consultants' Qualification; IC = Individual Consultant; FBS = Selection under a Fixed Budget; LCS = Least-Cost Selection; SSS = Single-Source Selection; ToR = Terms of Reference; UNOPS = United Nations Office for Project Services.

60. The approved Procurement Plan will determine procurement methods and the contracts to be submitted to the Association for review and no objection.

Annex 4: Implementation Support Plan

Republic of Congo: Education Sector Support Project

Strategy and Approach for Implementation Support

1. **The implementation support strategy is based on the project objective, risks, and implementation arrangements.** This strategy is based on (a) close implementation supported by the task team; (b) semiannual and annual reviews; and (c) technical support missions.
2. **Close implementation support.** The task team, including the task team leader, the safeguards specialists, the procurement specialists, and FM specialists will play an active role during implementation to support the full implementation and implication of beneficiaries in subproject selection, implementation, and M&E as well as in capacity-building activities. The team will conduct a videoconference every month in the initial stages with project counterparts to support, and provide advice on implementation for 12 months.
3. **Semiannual and annual reviews.** Twice annually, in June and November each year, the task team will join a review meeting to assess the progress made so far, identify the difficulties in the implementation of the project, and agree on the measures to overcome them.
4. **Technical support missions** will be carried out in specific areas where international expertise is needed, most notably in the areas of evaluation and assessment, classroom observations, school-level pedagogic support, and data management and evidence-based decision making, among others.

Implementation Support Plan

5. The Implementation Support Plan is built around semiannual and annual reviews, which happen twice a year, in June and November, jointly with key national stakeholders and development partners. The first is to review interim progress and the second is to approve the annual work plan. The team will attend an annual joint review mission to evaluate progress made in the first year of project implementation, considering the lessons learned and agreed on corrective measures.
6. Key elements of the Implementation Support Plan are described below:
 - **Monitoring with respect to safeguards instruments by including safeguards specialists in semiannual missions.** These specialists will also assure knowledge transfer and development of adequate training program for additional PCU staff to be recruited to monitor safeguards aspects with special attention paid to the social safeguards aspects related to indigenous peoples as well as the environmental safeguards. The Steering Committee will be given support in monitoring project implementation, particularly with respect to the safeguards instruments. Any issues and problematic areas will be discussed and options will be agreed to address them.
 - **The biannual implementation supervision missions will also have the objective of conducting strategic policy dialogue** on the major sector issues which the project

supports; reviewing project bottlenecks and making recommendations for improvement; and monitoring progress toward achievement of project indicators. All findings will be documented in aide memoires and policy papers, as needed.

- **Support to develop and regularly monitor a communication strategy** and implement responsive feedback mechanisms (spot checks, dedicated safeguards, and compliance support) for quality assurance and M&E.
- **FM implementation support plan.** The FM implementation support will be consistent with a collaborative and risk-based approach involving the entire task teams' specialists. FM supervision will take the form of on-the-ground supervision missions. A first implementation support mission will be undertaken three months following project effectiveness. Thereafter, the FM missions will be scheduled using the FM unit risk-based model, at intervals determined by the initial FM risk rating assigned at entry, and subsequently, as determined by Implementation Status and Results Reports. FM support missions will be responsible for (a) monitoring overall FM arrangements; (b) reviewing the IFRs; (c) reviewing audit reports and management letters from external auditors and following up on accountability issues by engaging, as and when appropriate, the task team leader, the client, and/or the auditors; (d) ensuring that the audit is of sufficient quality, covers all relevant aspects of the project, and provides sufficient assurance with regard to the appropriate use of funds by recipients; and (e) providing intensive assistance to the PCU and other relevant entities to build or maintain the appropriate FM capacity.

7. **Procurement.** A procurement specialist will be in charge of providing support and coaching to project implementation agencies at all levels.

8. **Technical support** will be required to support the team to assess the implementation progress, and prepare and carry out activities. The following skills mix and resources needs are estimated:

Table 4.1. Main Focus for Support to Implementation

Time	Focus	Skills Needed	Resource Estimate Staff Week
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMIS and school mapping exercise • Procurement • External audits • Curriculum revision • Social and environmental safeguards • Teacher training modules development • M&E • Preparation for civil works, including cost analyses and standard plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT specialist • Procurement specialist • Curriculum specialist • Environmental and social safeguards specialists • Teacher training specialist • M&E specialist 	45 SW
Year 2–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external audits • School construction supervision • EMIS and school mapping • Student learning assessment • Curriculum revision • Development of teaching/learning materials • Textbook procurement and distribution • Teacher training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditors • Architect • Engineers • IT specialists • Learning assessment specialist • Curriculum specialist • Teacher training specialist • Textbook development specialist • Procurement specialist • M&E specialist • Communications specialist • Environmental and social safeguards specialists 	135 SW

Table 4.2. Skills Mix Required

Skills Needed	Number of Staff Weeks (for the Duration of the Project)	Comments
Team leader	10 weeks annually	–
Education specialist	6 weeks annually	–
Procurement specialist	4 annually	Based in country
FM specialist	4 annually	–
Environment specialist	1 annually	Twice-yearly missions
Social specialist	3 annually	Twice-yearly missions, based in Kinshasa
M&E specialist	2 annually	One trip annually
Architect	3 annually	Consultant
Teacher training specialist	6-8 annually	Consultant
Classroom observation and teacher practical support expertise	TBD	Consultant(s)
Curriculum development specialist	10+	Consultant
Other expertise as needed	TBD	
Total	250+	

Annex 5. Economic and Financial Analysis

Republic of Congo: Education Sector Support Project

Methodology

1. The Association's standard approach to assessing the economic value of a project, a cost-benefit methodology, is used to estimate the IRR and the NPV. The economic analysis attempts to calculate the net benefits generated by each project component on an incremental basis. These net benefits are equal to the difference between the incremental benefits and the project costs (direct and indirect), where the incremental benefits are defined as the positive effects induced by the project, such as (a) the graduation/completion rates in primary and lower secondary education; (b) the improved quality of student learning; and (c) the increased earnings and employment of project beneficiaries. These net benefits are therefore identified by comparing two scenarios, the 'with-intervention' scenario versus the hypothetical 'without-intervention' scenario. To carry out the cost-benefit analysis, administrative data from the MEPSA-JEC on student enrollment, student-teacher ratios, infrastructure, textbooks, *bénévole* teachers, and so on was employed as well as the ECOM survey to extract wage information by level of education.

Costs and Benefits

2. The proposed project aims to benefit about 510,000 primary school students³² and 110,000 lower secondary school students by equipping them with better-trained teachers, improved curricula and learning materials, and improved learning environments that support their continued school attendance and ameliorate student learning. In addition, about 6,900 primary school teachers and 4,600 lower secondary teachers—who are all civil servants—will receive preservice and/or in-service training while about 2,500 *bénévole* teachers will receive intensive training on a competitive basis using a newly developed information management system that is effective at tracking them all. Rural populations, who, until now, were bearing the burden of paying the salaries of *bénévole* teachers out of their pockets, will be released from this financial responsibility, making them indirect beneficiaries of the proposed project. The MEPSA-JEC staff will also benefit from the project through training and capacity building.

3. The total direct cost of the project is estimated to be US\$70 million with the government providing US\$40 million (57 percent) and IDA providing US\$30 million (43 percent). In addition, the indirect costs are represented by the opportunity cost of attending primary and secondary school for those enrolled in school as a result of the project.

4. Three scenarios have been developed based on the uncertainties around the Government's current financial situation. Under the low-case scenario, only IDA funding is available (US\$30 million) and the corresponding IRR and NVP are computed (cf. Table 5.1). Under the high-case scenario (US\$90 million), the Government is expected to contribute up to US\$60 million due to possible future stabilization of oil prices. Under the medium-case scenario, IDA would provide US\$30 million and Government would make a counterpart contribution of US\$40 million, yielding the highest IRR.

³²About 480,000 public and 30,000 subsidized confessional school students.

5. Under these various scenarios, assumptions are made regarding the number of beneficiaries and the graduation rates of primary school students as well as for lower secondary students. In the absence of grade-wise enrollment data, about one-tenth of primary school students are assumed to complete primary school each year and out of those primary completers, between 55 and 77 percent of primary graduates are assumed to find a job under the different scenarios.³³ Similarly, graduation and employment rates are computed for secondary school students.

6. Using household survey data (ECOM 2011), it is also assumed that primary school completers who graduate through this project and happen to engage in the labor market earn a premium wage with respect to children in their school-age group who did not benefit from the project because they either dropped out of school or were never enrolled.³⁴ Similarly, a premium is earned by lower secondary students who benefited from the proposed project as compared to their school-age group of children who only completed primary school. This wage difference reflects the differential productivity that was induced by the project intervention. In other words, those who completed secondary and are working will earn, on average, a higher salary than those who only completed primary school.

7. The estimated annual benefits are discounted at the rate of 8 percent, which corresponds to the rate at which funds can be borrowed in the market. Therefore, any IRR higher than the cost of borrowing will correspond to an attractive investment. It is also assumed that there is a lifecycle of 40 years for graduating students entering the labor market. Table 5.1 presents the IRR under the three scenarios and suggests that undertaking this project is likely to yield huge benefits given that the NPVs for the medium- and high-case scenarios are strictly positive and greater than the original investment, with corresponding IRRs exceeding 20 percent. The computed IRRs range from 12.1 to 29.3 percent, making the PRAASED an attractive investment project. The highest returns on investment is achieved if the government provides a counterpart funding of US\$40 million. When public funding of the project increases to US\$60 million, there are diminishing marginal returns and the IRR falls from 34.9 to 23.3 percent, though largely above the prevailing interest rate, making it still a very attractive investment.

Table 5.1. Net Present Value and Rate of Returns: Sensitivity Analysis

	High-case Scenario (US\$90 million)	Medium-case Scenario (US\$70 million)	Low-case Scenario (US\$30 million)
IRR (%)	23.3	34.9	13.1
NPV (US\$, millions)	257.1	218.6	67.5

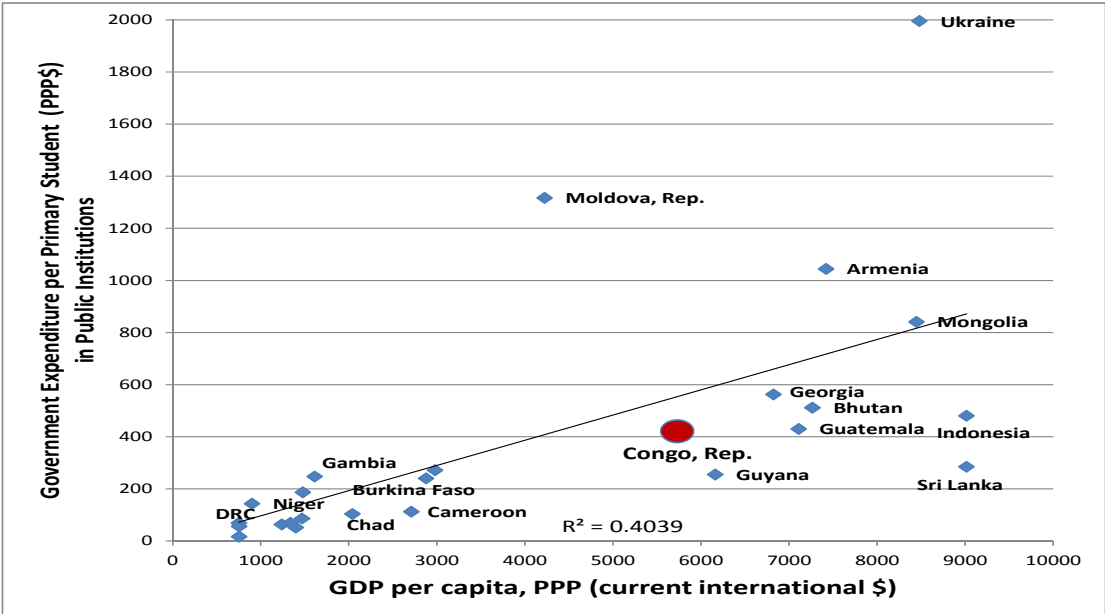
8. The rationale for public sector financing of primary and secondary education is therefore well established. In fact, investments under the proposed project will support system improvements that increase access to quality education for less well-off populations currently either out of school or in schools with low quality of learning. According to the public expenditure review 2014, spending in social sectors remains very low (16 percent of government spending go

³³These rates are based on the assumption of moderate and sustained economic growth driven not only by the oil sector but also by the non-oil sectors which have shown some positive growth in recent years. In addition, ECOM 2011 showed that among primary completers, employment rate is close to 52 percent, both wage and non-wage employment combined.

³⁴This control group is assumed to be idle and not working, as they do not possess basic numeracy and literacy skills that will make them competitive in the labor market.

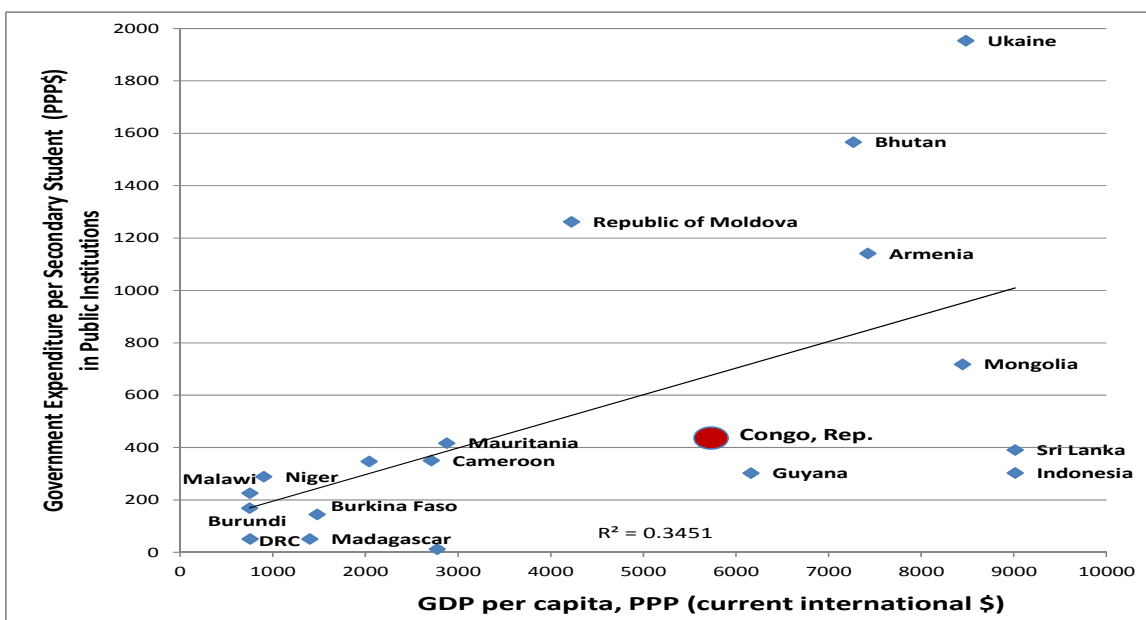
to the education sector) and significant regional and socioeconomic disparities are still prevalent in Congo. For instance, over 10 percent of primary school-age children are currently not in school while some regions (Cuvette Ouest, Lekoumou, and Likouala) have student/teacher ratios exceeding 80 (cf. *Strategie sectorielle 2015–2025*). Similar situations exist in secondary and higher education where the poor and students in some regions exhibit the lowest education outcomes. These provide a rationale for focusing the proposed project’s investment on reaching out to these disadvantaged groups across all levels of education. A recent public expenditure review suggests that Congo spends less per student in public schools than other countries with similar per capita income (Wodon 2015). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 display, on the vertical axis, public spending per student in public school as a function, on the horizontal axis, of GDP per capita. In both figures, Congo is located below the line of best fit, respectively, for primary and secondary education, confirming therefore that Congo spends less per student than other countries of similar levels of economic development. This strongly justifies the need to invest more public resources in primary and secondary school, targeting them principally to children of disadvantaged and poor households as well as regions with lower enrollment rates.

Figure 4.1. Primary, Per Student in Public Schools (PPP\$)



Source: Heejin Kim and Wodon (2015). Data from World Development Indicators and UIS.
 Note: Year of reference for the Congo in 2010; UIS data for comparison countries in 2012.

Figure 4.2. Secondary, Per Student in Public Schools (PPP\$)



Source: Heejin Kim and Wodon (2015). Data from World Development Indicators and UIS.

Note: Year of reference for Congo in 2010; UIS data for comparison countries in 2012.

9. The nationally representative household survey carried out in 2011 shows that the cost of attending school (both direct and indirect) and the lack of textbooks and school supplies constitute serious constraints for poor families to send their children to school, in both primary and secondary. This is why the proposed project intends to provide textbooks and school supplies to all students with special attention to the poor and disadvantaged students and priority to regions with the highest needs.

10. In addition, over the course of the project, close to US\$2.5 million will be saved by poor families who continue to support the school system, mainly in rural areas, by paying the salaries of *bénévole* teachers directly out of their meager pockets. This will not only bring more children from poor families to school but will enhance the quality of education provided as it will open up opportunities for *bénévole* teachers to earn a stable income and grow professionally. However, more significantly, contributing parents will largely benefit as about 6,250 poor households could save, each year for the next eight years, up to 50 dollars for other uses within the household.

11. **Recent evidence on effective education interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa.** A number of meta-analyses have been carried out recently, exploring the relative effectiveness of various interventions such as improvement in school supplies (desks, tables, chairs, etc.), teacher presence or subject knowledge, incentives, smaller class sizes, instructional materials, pedagogical interventions to match teaching to student's learning, and teacher training. Katharine Conn (2014) finds, for instance, that change in instructional techniques has a larger effect size than 11 other types of intervention while Patrick McEwan (2013) shows that computer or instructional technology has the highest impact on learning (0.15) followed by teacher training (0.12), small class sizes (0.12), contract or volunteer teachers (0.10), student or teacher incentives (0.09), and instructional materials (0.08). Roughly speaking, for a US\$100 investment in teacher training, US\$12 go toward improving student learning whereas out of US\$100 investment in

contract/volunteer teachers or in instructional materials, US\$10 and US\$8, respectively, translate into improved student learning. On the other hand, monetary grants to schools are shown to be less effective at improving student learning (Evans and Popova 2015). As far as school construction is concerned, there is very little evidence of its impact on student learning although some studies have shown that improvements in the availability and quality of school infrastructure led to increased primary school enrollment and better English and mathematics scores (Theunyk).

Justification

12. Congo is still facing large regional, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities, which prevent many children from accessing quality primary and secondary education even when they are enrolled in schools. In addition, a recent public expenditure review (Wodon 2015) suggests that government spending per student in public primary schools is lower in Congo than in some countries of similar GDP per capita. These two observations provide a strong rationale for focusing the proposed project's investment on reaching out to these disadvantaged groups while attempting to improve the quality of education offered. Disparities in access to education vary greatly by area of residence, region, wealth status and gender. The Government is aware of this situation and is committed to undertaking the necessary interventions to correct such market failures. In particular, given the positive returns to education, public investment on education can reduce inequality and create opportunities for the disadvantaged groups as well as provide access to households that are too poor to afford their day-to-day needs.

13. The proposed project aims to benefit primary and lower secondary school students by equipping them with better-trained teachers, improved curricula and learning materials, and improved learning environments that support their continued school attendance and ameliorate student learning. With an IDA funding of US\$30 million, it is estimated that the project would yield an IRR of 13.1 percent at a discount rate of eight percent, suggesting that it is an investment worth making over the course of the next six years. With the additional Government funding of US\$40 million to complement the IDA financing and support complementary activities, the IRR rises to 34.9 percent, making it a very attractive investment project.

World Bank Value Added

14. Given the multiple challenges posed by the pressing need to provide equitable and quality schooling to many children in Congo, the Bank has identified, under the proposed project, priority interventions such as revision of curricula, use of remediation in schools, and support for system-wide improvements. Global knowledge, experience, and expertise will therefore be deployed by the Bank to help serve disadvantaged groups, improve the quality of the teaching force, and help develop a system that can be sustained beyond the life of the project.

Annex 6: Public Spending on Education and Analyses from Household Surveys

Republic of Congo: Education Sector Support Project

1. The quality of the allocation of public spending for education often matters more than the level of spending for improving education attainment and achievement. At the same time, the level of spending matters, too. Is public spending for education in Congo comparable to the levels of spending observed in other countries with similar levels of development? Public spending appears relatively high when using metrics such as the share of the GDP allocated to the sector, but it is much lower when using more appropriate measures such as the level of spending per student in public school. To illustrate the issue, this annex uses data from the UIS to provide a rapid diagnostic of public spending for education in the country.

2. As shown in Figure 6.1 and Table 6.1, public spending on education Congo, as a share of the GDP, is higher than in other countries at a similar level of development (this has been summarized in the economic analyses earlier in this document). The top panels in figure 6.1 display the share of GDP allocated to public spending for primary and secondary education (vertical axis) as a function of the level of economic development in GDP per capita of countries (horizontal axis). Congo is well above the line of best fit for both primary and secondary education. Other countries with similar levels of development, as measured through GDP per capita in purchasing power parity terms, spend less. On the basis of public spending per student in public schools, however, Congo tends to spend less than other countries with similar levels of economic development. The bottom panels in Figure 6.1 display public spending per student in public school as a function of economic development. Congo is below the line of best fit for both primary and secondary education.

Table 6.1. Public Education Spending as a Share of the GDP: Selected 10 Countries

Country	GDP per capita, PPP (2012)	Government Expenditure on Education as a Share of the GDP (%)		Government Expenditure per Student in Public Schools (US\$ PPP)	
		Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Congo, Rep.	5,732.6	1.93	3.32	420.4	435.5
Armenia	7,421.8	0.76	1.61	1,044.2	1,141.6
Bhutan	7,266.9	1.47	2.64	512.1	1,566.2
Georgia	6,823.0	0.68	0.64	562.7	
Guatemala	7,110.9	1.64	0.37	429.7	
Guyana	6,162.6	0.98	1.06	255.1	302.6
Indonesia	9,014.3	1.49	0.93	480.8	303.4
Moldova	4,225.2	1.53	2.92	1,317.0	1,261.9
Mongolia	8,446.3	1.79	1.66	840.9	717.9
Sri Lanka	9,014.8	0.41	0.87	284.6	391.1
Ukraine	8,482.3	0.96	1.76	1,995.0	1,953.6

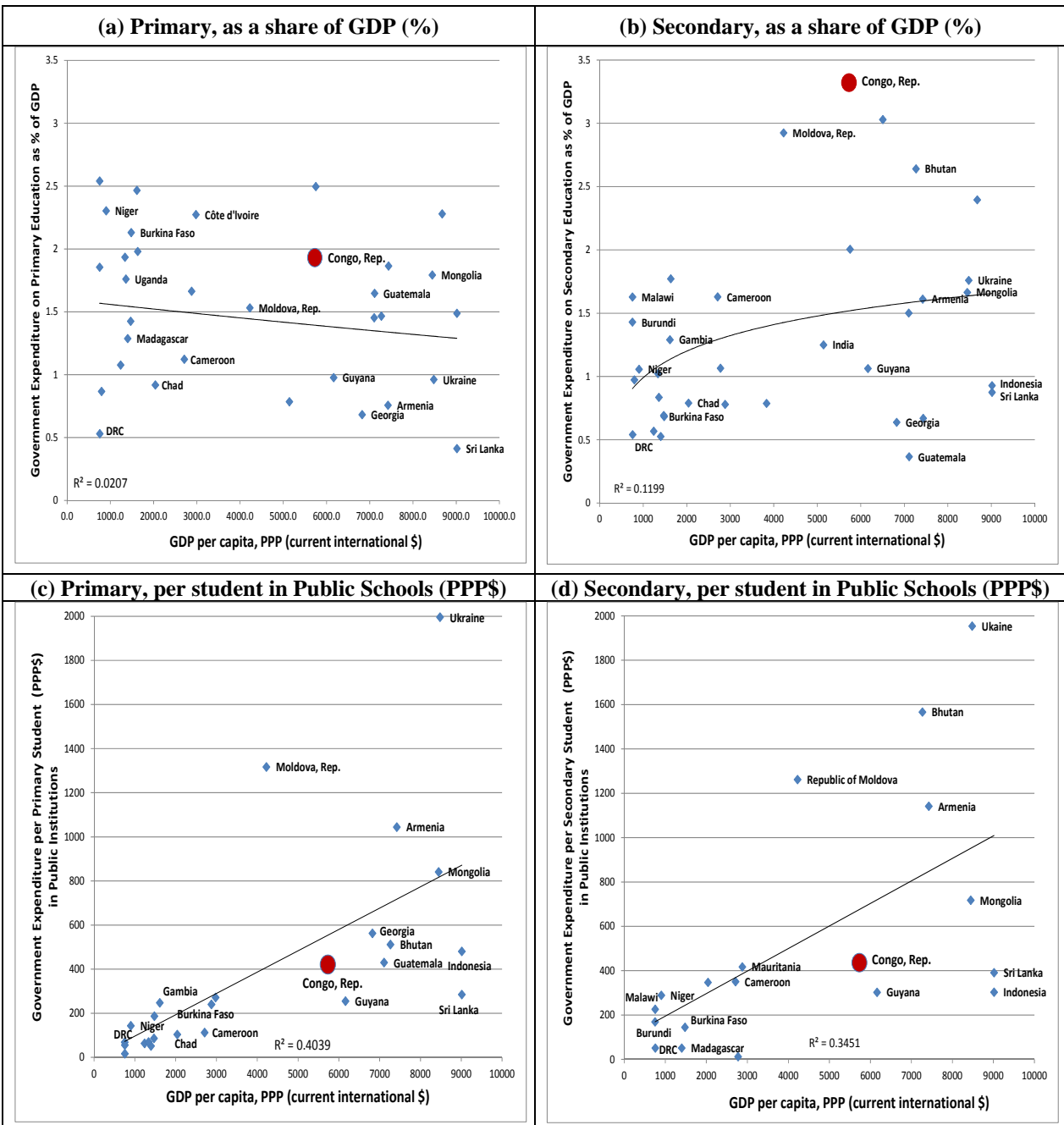
Source: Heejin Kim and Wodon 2015. World Bank-World Development Indicators; UIS.

Note: Year of reference for Congo in 2010; UIS data for comparison countries in 2012; GDP per capita PPP\$ in current international dollars.

3. A number of factors contribute to these differences in assessment of the adequacy of public spending depending on the metric used. A key factor is that Congo tends to have a higher number of primary school-age children as a share of the population than other countries with similar GDP.

This is shown in the top panels of Figure 6.2. In addition, at primary, the gross enrollment rate is a bit above expectations. As a result, even though the share of students in public schools at the primary level is smaller than in many countries, public spending per student remains lower. At the secondary level, the demographic factor also contributes, with more children to be served than in comparator countries, even though enrollment is low. Overall, the data suggest that public spending per student remains below expectations in the country, which in turn suggest that targeted investments in public schools could be beneficial if allocated to the students most in need. The rapid diagnostics below discuss some of the areas that warrant investments according to data from the 2011 nationally representative ECOM household survey.

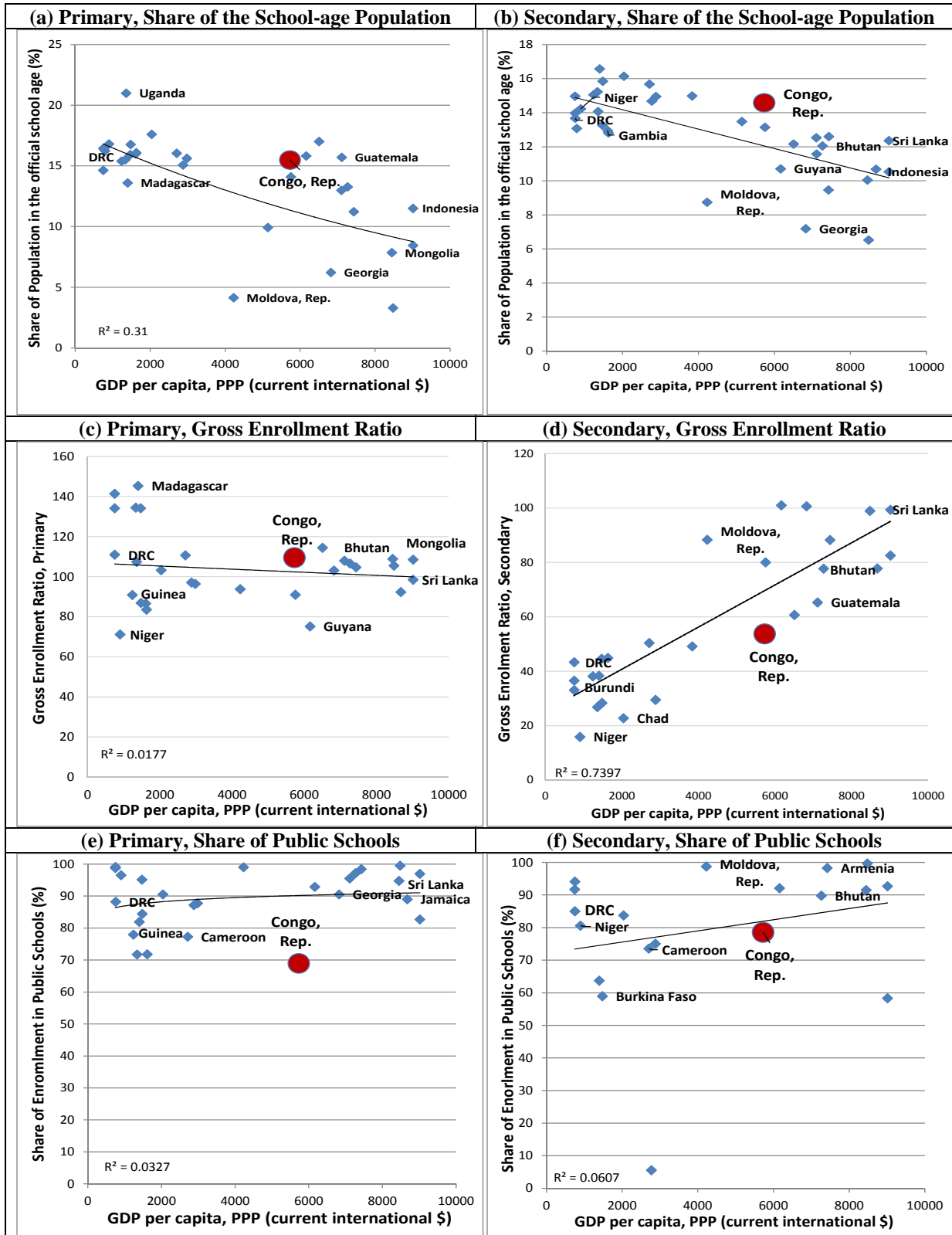
Figure 6.1. Public Education Spending as a Share of GDP and per Student



Source: Heejin Kim and Wodon 2015. Data from World Development Indicators and UIS.

Note: Year of reference for Congo in 2010; UIS data for comparison countries in 2012.

Figure 6.2. Public Education Spending as a Share of GDP and per Student



Source: Heejin Kim and Wodon 2015. Data from World Development Indicators and UIS.

Note: Year of reference for Congo in 2010; UIS data for comparison countries in 2012. For market share in secondary education, estimates from household surveys are used in the analysis.

Brief Analysis of the Education Sector Using Household Surveys

4. This section provides a rapid diagnostic of the education sector in Congo using the 2011 nationally representative household surveys. The annex considers four different questions: (a) enrollment rates and reasons for not being enrolled in school; (b) the type of schools attended by students; (c) the satisfaction or lack thereof with the schools; and (d) private spending for schools.

Enrollment Rates and Reasons for Not Being Enrolled

5. Table 6.2 provides data on net and gross enrollment rates at the primary and secondary level in 2011. Enrollment rates are higher for the nonpoor than for the poor, especially at the secondary level, and the same is observed when considering welfare quintile. Indigenous children are much less likely to go to school than Bantou children, with virtually none enrolled in secondary schools. Children with a disability are at a clear disadvantage. There are finally large differences in enrollment rates, especially at the secondary level, by location or geographic area.

Table 6.2. Net and Gross Enrollment Rates in Primary Schools, 2011 (%)

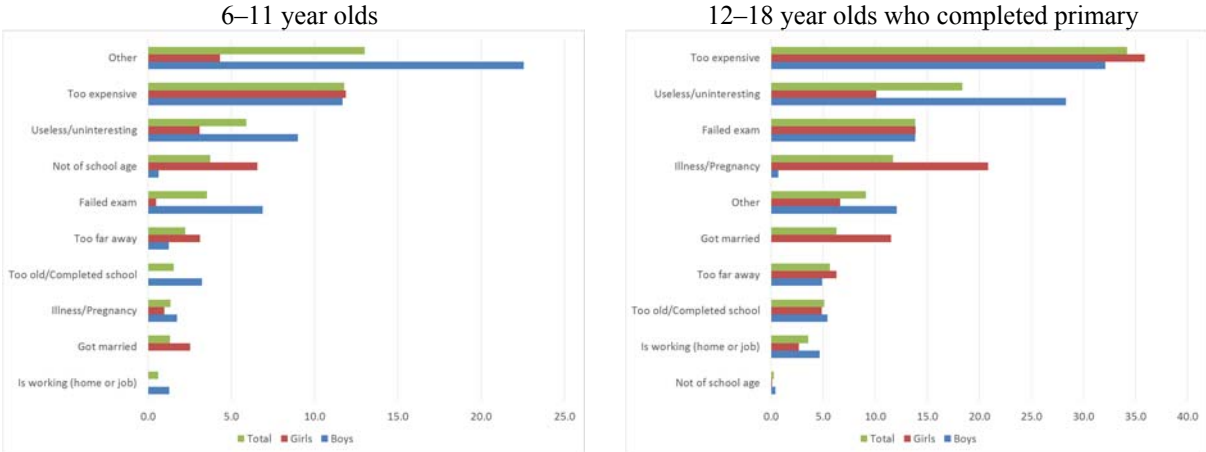
	Primary						Secondary					
	Net Enrollment Rate			Gross Enrollment Rate			Net Enrollment Rate			Gross Enrollment Rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female						
Poverty												
Nonpoor	90.2	91.3	89.1	128.1	128.2	128.0	70.3	70.1	70.4	101.8	100.4	103.2
Poor	87.2	86.8	87.6	124.9	127.8	122.0	43.9	45.1	42.6	62.7	65.2	59.9
Ethnicity												
Indigenous	46.3	48.0	44.3	62.8	66.9	57.9	2.6	4.4	—	4.4	4.4	4.4
Bantou	89.1	89.5	88.7	127.1	128.5	125.7	58.6	58.5	58.7	84.5	84.2	84.8
Disability												
Yes	74.2	74.8	73.0	126.5	111.1	162.4	31.9	12.1	50.2	45.2	30.5	58.9
No	88.9	89.4	88.5	126.6	128.2	125.0	58.7	58.9	58.6	84.7	84.5	84.9
Region												
Brazzaville	90.5	93.1	87.8	129.5	131.0	128.0	75.1	75.5	74.7	107.6	108.5	106.9
Pointe Noire	90.2	90.0	90.4	126.1	127.4	125.0	64.7	64.4	65.1	92.2	91.9	92.5
Other municipalities	90.9	91.0	90.8	127.8	130.8	124.6	56.3	57.8	54.7	87.8	89.1	86.5
Semiurban	86.2	83.8	88.6	123.6	126.6	120.7	47.6	46.6	48.7	75.0	68.7	82.7
Rural	86.6	85.8	87.5	124.4	125.4	123.3	34.1	36.7	31.1	48.5	51.8	44.5
Quintiles												
Q1	85.8	85.0	86.7	124.1	127.6	120.2	36.2	37.9	34.1	52.9	54.0	51.5
Q2	88.5	88.6	88.5	126.7	128.0	125.4	50.7	52.2	49.2	71.7	76.6	66.8
Q3	92.1	91.1	93.2	122.3	121.7	123.1	62.6	60.5	64.5	90.7	90.9	90.6
Q4	87.5	92.1	83.1	123.5	128.7	118.6	73.7	74.2	73.2	105.7	101.1	110.8
Q5	91.1	90.7	91.4	140.9	138.3	143.1	75.1	76.2	74.2	109.4	109.9	109.0
Division												
Kouilou	87.1	88.2	85.8	126.4	126.6	126.2	27.8	28.2	27.4	34.5	34.2	34.9
Niari	86.3	86.8	85.8	122.6	125.2	119.8	39.1	40.9	36.9	65.2	65.7	64.5
Lékoumou	85.0	86.5	83.6	127.0	135.7	118.7	36.6	40.1	32.3	50.7	56.9	43.2
Bouenza	88.4	87.2	89.6	122.4	123.6	121.0	41.0	43.0	38.4	58.3	58.7	57.9
Pool	86.5	85.0	87.9	127.3	130.7	123.7	37.2	39.3	34.2	49.2	50.9	46.7
Plateaux	89.9	89.4	90.3	125.7	125.0	126.5	36.6	40.5	32.5	51.9	63.0	40.6
Cuvette	90.1	89.0	91.5	124.8	124.7	125.0	47.2	46.4	48.2	72.6	69.3	76.2
Cuvette-Ouest	87.2	84.8	90.0	126.0	126.9	125.0	44.6	44.8	44.4	68.5	68.8	68.1

	Primary						Secondary					
	Net Enrollment Rate			Gross Enrollment Rate			Net Enrollment Rate			Gross Enrollment Rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female						
Sangha	80.4	79.1	82.4	126.8	126.4	127.3	35.3	39.7	30.0	54.2	58.0	49.6
Likouala	85.0	82.4	87.6	124.4	124.0	124.9	39.4	41.1	37.8	60.5	63.4	57.7
Brazzaville	90.5	93.1	87.8	129.5	131.0	128.0	75.1	75.5	74.7	107.6	108.5	106.9
Pointe-Noire	90.2	90.0	90.4	126.1	127.4	125.0	64.7	64.4	65.1	92.2	91.9	92.5
Total	88.8	89.2	88.4	126.6	128.0	125.2	58.4	58.3	58.5	84.2	83.8	84.6

Source: Tsimpo and Wodon 2015.

6. In the survey, questions are asked about the reasons for not going to school. As shown in Figure 6.2, cost is the main reason for not going to school for both children of primary school age and children of secondary school age who have completed the primary cycle and are thus eligible for secondary school (at the primary level, ‘other’ reasons that are not specified in the data play a role for boys). Lack of interest in schooling comes next, which may denote a lack of opportunity associated with schooling, at least in some areas. This is especially the case for boys, but for girls at the secondary level, the issue of an illness or more likely a pregnancy is a more important factor for dropping out, especially when marriage is also factored in as another reason to drop out. Other factors including work (opportunity cost of schooling) and distances to schools also play a role.

Figure 6.3. Reasons for Not Being Enrolled

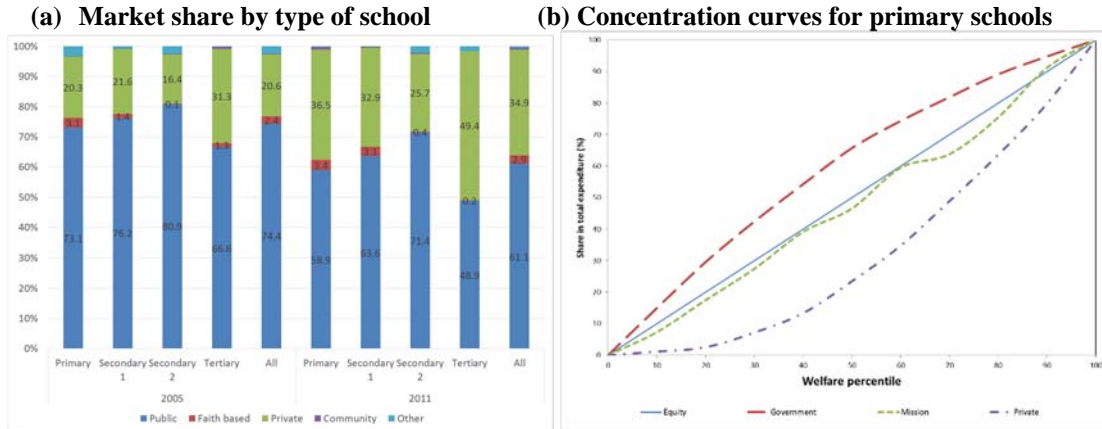


Source: Tsimpo and Wodon 2015.

Types of Schools Attended by Students

7. Figure 6.3 provides data on the types of schools attended, while Figure 6.4 gives information on who attends which school in terms of welfare level through concentration curves by type of school (for primary schools). The share of students in private schools seems to have increased between the last two surveys for 2005 and 2011. As expected, children in public schools tend to be poorer than those in private schools, with students in faith-based schools falling somewhere in between in terms of welfare levels. In other words, targeting public schools helps in reaching the poor.

Figure 6.4. Type of School Attended and Concentration Curves

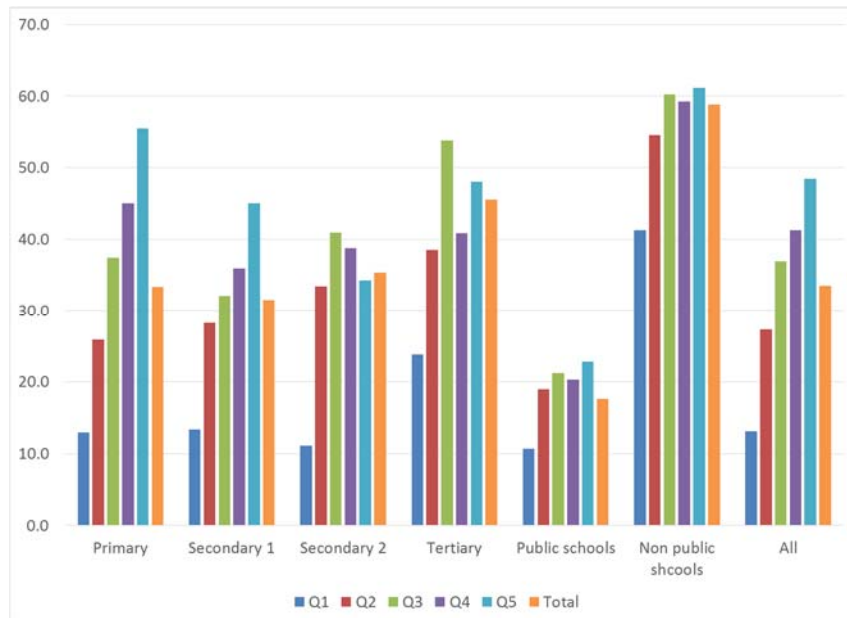


Source: Tsimpo and Wodon 2015.

Satisfaction with Schools

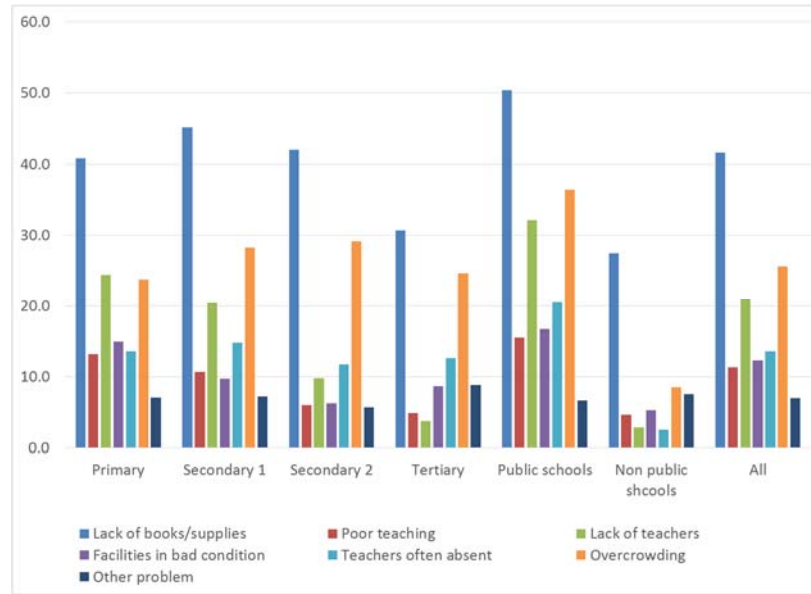
8. Satisfaction with schools, as measured by the share of parents who do not have any complaints with schools, is low, as shown in Figure 6.6, especially in public schools. Importantly, parents of children from lower socioeconomic background as measured from the quintile of well-being of the household are much less likely to be satisfied than parents from higher quintiles. In terms of the reasons for lack of satisfaction, the lack of books and supplies predominates in children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Figure 6.6), while overcrowding is cited more often by parents of children from higher quintiles.

Figure 6.5. Who Attends which Schools, by Quintile



Source: Tsimpo and Wodon 2015.

Figure 6.6. Reasons for Lack of Satisfaction with Schools, by Quintile

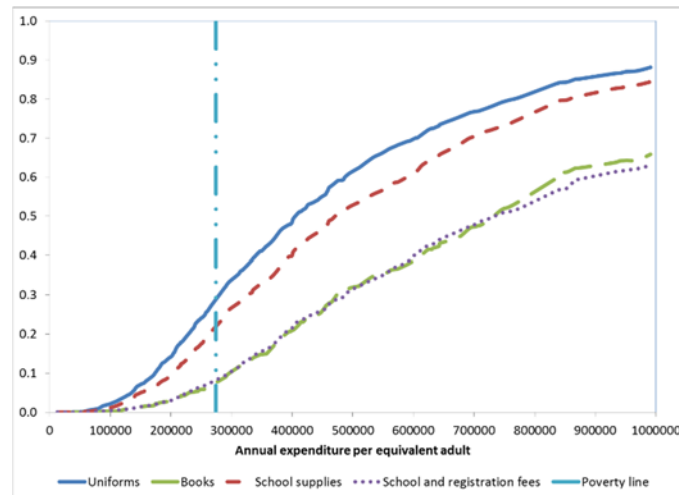


Source: Tsimpo and Wodon 2015.

Private Spending for Education

9. The average private spending per child in school ranges from a low of CFAF 7,775 per year in the bottom quintile to a high of CFAF 117,473 per child in the top quintile. The national average is CFAF 47,111. As a share of total consumption, households allocate 2.5 percent of their resources to education in the bottom quintile versus 3.7 percent in the top quintile. The national average is 2.8 percent. As mentioned earlier, for the very poor, who are much more likely not to enroll in school, cost is the main constraint. Strategies for lowering costs could include transfers to poor households conditional on enrollment of the children, but another alternative—adopted in some countries—is to ensure that private costs of schooling are reduced. As shown in Figure 6.7, among different types of private expenditures, subsidizing school uniforms will be the most pro-poor.

Figure 6.7. Dominance Curves for Education Expenditures, 2011



Source: Tsimo and Wodon 2015.

10. **Access to early childhood education is still very low, with less than 16 percent of the population having access despite the relatively high urban population.** This rate may be marginally higher now, as a recent survey shows 23 percent of grade 1 students having benefitted from some pre-schooling.³⁵ However, this is substantially lower than the gross enrollment rate average for lower-middle-income countries, which is closer to 48 percent (EdStats 2011), with only about 21 percent of the provision in private institutions, as compared to Congo’s more than 66 percent of preschool provision occurring outside the public system.

11. **Access to primary is relatively good; access to secondary presents challenges.** The numbers that support these observations have to be confirmed against the findings from the latest census, which call into question rates that have been in use in recent years. Gender parity has been achieved in primary, though disparities can still be seen in some regions, including Plateaux, Kouilou, and Niari. Primary intake is high, growing from 90 percent in 2005 to 104 percent in 2011; though these are figures from the earlier census, they are likely to change with the new data. Completion rates increased from 74 to 80 percent over the same period; however, this relatively high rate hides increasing repetitions, which have gone from 18 percent in 2010 to 23 percent by 2012. Student: teacher ratios remain very high with a national average of 60 but with some regions registering ratios closer to 80, and even 86. Infrastructure in primary is deficient; while 86 percent of schools have an administrative office block, less than 5 percent have libraries, less than 6 percent have functioning water points, and only 37 percent of classrooms have a chair for the teacher. Figures on latrines are not yet available but few have been rehabilitated in recent years since rehabilitation programs focused on the need for additional classrooms without increasing the numbers of latrines or rehabilitating the existing ones, despite the potential impact on school attendance of girls. Not all students have textbooks or learning materials; in primary, each reading textbook is used by five students and each mathematics textbook by about ten students. The private sector is particularly active in primary, with almost 29 percent of primary school-age children enrolled in private schools in 2011, and another 3 percent in subsidized nonpublic religious schools (also called *écoles conventionnées, Type 1*). Preliminary data from a recent ministry survey (June

³⁵ Preliminary data from MICS5 (July 2015).

2015) paints a more dramatic picture, with only 4 percent of primary school students in subsidized *écoles conventionnées*, and **more than 39 percent in private, nonsubsidized primary schools**. Such high shares of private provision in primary education in a country, where almost half of the population is poor, is an indication of inadequate success in ensuring effective access and/or poor quality or relevance.

12. **Enrollments in lower secondary schools have been growing consistently**, going from 59 to 72 percent from 2005 to 2013, more than 49 percent of whom are girls (parity index of 0.96). A more recent survey (data still preliminary) shows that gender parity has been achieved in secondary in 2015 (MICS5). Dropouts are still high at 17.6 percent, and the number of secondary school places is not sufficient to accommodate the increasing enrollment and completion rates in primary. Double shifts are often used in both primary and secondary schools, considerably reducing the instructional time but enabling larger groups of students to attend school.

13. **Senior secondary schools are relatively few in number and exist in the major towns and cities**. Transition from lower to senior secondary schools have shown improvement over the years, rising from 40 to 52 percent from 2008 to 2013. As a result, the GER in senior secondary has gone from 24 to 32 percent over 2005–2013.

14. **While Congo compares favorably with other low-income countries for total spending on education as a share of the GDP, it spends considerably less when looking at public spending per student**. When measuring total spending as a share of the GDP, Congo compares favorably to other middle-income countries in Eastern Europe or Asia (Armenia, Indonesia, Moldova, and Sri Lanka, among others). However, as shown in the graphs in the economic analysis, Congo spends less per student than comparable countries. In fact, significantly poorer Sub-Saharan African countries are able to perform better, including Niger and the Gambia, among others, which show up slightly above the line of best fit in the graphs.

Quality remains the most significant challenge by all accounts, although rigorous measures of education quality remain ad hoc in nature

15. **Learning outcomes are not tracked in any rigorous way and curricula need updating**. An evaluation of student learning at the beginning of grade 6 of primary education (*CM2*) was conducted in 2012–2013, covering all regions of Congo and all types of schools including public, subsidized religious (*écoles conventionnées*), and private. A total of 2,000 students were evaluated in French and mathematics. In French, the average score was 33 percent across the country, with a range of regional average scores from 21 to 61 percent. Nationally, scores on competencies related to understanding the concepts within the curriculum averaged about 37 percent; those on actual application were at 30 percent, and on problem solving were at 24 percent. In mathematics, the national average was 26 percent, with regional scores ranging from 18 to 49 percent. Scores for understanding were at 37 percent, for application were at 42 percent and for problem solving were at 16 percent. Boys outperformed girls in both French (35 versus 31 percent) and mathematics (27 versus 24 percent), and in both cases the difference was statistically significant. Interestingly, there was little difference between the performance of rural and urban students (the differences

were not statistically significant).³⁶ Private schools received the highest scores (44 percent) with public and *écoles conventionnées* receiving scores of 34 and 25 percent, respectively.

16. **Repetition and dropouts are persistent problems in Congo;** however, those who repeat do not appear to gain any benefit from their additional and costly years in school. This is similar to results seen in other countries in SSA. In the abovementioned assessment, for example, students who had repeated did less well than those who reached grade 6 without repeating, and this difference was statistically significant. Repetition rates can be as high as 24 percent in grade 4 and 19.7 in grade 10 in lower secondary. Dropout rates are also of great concern, going as high as 16 percent in grade 6 in primary, and 12 percent in grade 10.

17. **There is widespread use of double shifting, which is not surprising given the large majority of the population living in urban areas.** This, in turn, further reduces the total number of instructional hours from which students can benefit. In addition, a disproportionately high number of exams and evaluations further reduce this time; a quick count showed that instead of a total of 29 school weeks per year, students ended up having classes for 23.5 weeks—or less than six months. These exams include the high-stakes end-of-cycle exams, where entire schools and teaching staff are assigned to cover the tests, leaving the other children with no option but to stay home. There are also quarterly exams (*devoirs départementaux*), which involve the teaching corps, inspectors, and students in week-long processes. There is little indication that the results from these quarterly exams lead to any systematic analyses and remediation or are used as a way to target added support to teachers or students. However, the disruptions that they introduce into the school year cannot be denied.

18. **The last update of curricula took place 15 years ago.** The ministry is in the process of discussing modifications in the curricula, including updated pedagogic approaches to reading, among others. There is concern among the officials in ministry that the curricula are no longer appropriate, and that the focus on rote memorization has resulted in major gaps in problem-solving capacities in both literacy (French) and numeracy (mathematics), as noted above. The lack of adequate numbers of trained teachers and of laboratories has affected the ability to teach the sciences, and the curricula are not adapted to the realities of the society, or of the school environment, including the use of locally available and appropriate materials to teach core topics. In general, there are considerable challenges in the alignment between instructional time and expected learning outcomes, leading to discussions on refocusing the primary curricula on literacy and numeracy, and strengthening the teaching of science and mathematics across the entire primary and secondary cycles.

Human resource management, and teacher management in particular, is inadequate by any measure.

19. **The education sector is one of the largest, if not the largest, employers in the government.** However, data on personnel are inconsistent and outdated: various data sources list between 2,500 and 2,900 volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* in primary and between 4,700 and 6,900

³⁶ Given the significant differences in the learning environments between rural and urban areas, this is a particularly noteworthy finding that would be explored further in action research supported under the project.

civil service teachers in primary. Further, the same difficulties regarding accurate personnel numbers exist across the entire sector.³⁷ Overlapping responsibilities among several central directorates and an ill-equipped human resources team have contributed to the ad hoc management of teacher recruitment, deployment, professional development, promotion, training, or exit/retirement from the system. The lack of a functional in-service training body has led to the integration of this function into those of the pedagogical center (INRAP) charged with developing curriculum and selecting and distributing textbooks. The assignment of preservice training institutions or ENI to the TVET Ministry has meant little or no input from the ministry into any of the decisions regarding courses taught or trainers recruited for the ENIs or the definitions of profiles of graduates from these programs. The same is true for the preservice training institution for secondary teachers (the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*), which is under the MES.

20. Efficiency in the use of scarce resources should be given renewed attention given the current budget situation. Personnel costs within the education system consume more than 80 percent of the budget and has the potential to deliver or hamper the attainment of its objectives. Moreover, the human resources in education represent one of the largest, if not the largest, contributors to the overall personnel numbers in the public sector. Therefore, any major dysfunction in the way personnel are managed in education has an important impact on both the government wage bill and the efficiency of government recurrent spending.

21. In recent years, the education sector does not appear to have benefited from any evidence-based planning for determining its staffing numbers. On the demand side, poor data on actual student numbers, unreliable demographic information on incoming cohorts of school-age children, and the lack of reliable sources of information on out-of-school children make it impossible for the MEPSA-JEC to clearly project how many teachers it will need in the coming years to reach universal primary enrollment. On the supply side, there is a lack of any rigorous application of deployment decisions (or sanctions against missing teachers), lack of any controls on movement of staff from one region to the next or from active teaching to administrative status, lack of systems to remove personnel from the MEPSA-JEC budget once they leave the sector, and lack of any decision-making power within the MEPSA-JEC for recruiting or paying teachers. All of these make it impossible to prepare a rational human resource plan for the sector. Without significant attention to teacher demand and teacher supply, any personnel decisions made by the MEPSA-JEC remain ad hoc in nature.

22. Perhaps most importantly, the MEPSA-JEC has little say over personnel decisions. Quotas for annual recruitment of teachers are set by the Ministries of Finance and Civil Service without any input from the MEPSA-JEC, and payment of salaries is done directly by the Ministry of Finance against the MEPSA-JEC budget without any input from the education sector. There are ongoing discussions of putting in place Regional Civil Service policies (*La Fonction Publique Territoriale*), where recruitments will be done directly in the 12 regions. If, as expected, this policy is implemented in 2016, some of the challenges mentioned above may be addressed; however, to date, there is little information on the timing or details of this new approach.

³⁷ The latest data from June 2015 provide an important starting point, and those data are used for results monitoring with the understanding that revision of those data may be necessary as data get verified.

Equity and effective access require considerable attention

23. **While Congo has relatively high enrollment rates, these hide considerable disparities.** For example, wherever civil service teachers have not been willing to teach, the state makes no arrangements for ensuring school-age children have access to good quality instruction. Therefore, even in public schools, parents are required to pay volunteer teachers or *bénévoles* out of their own means. Parents are often asked to pay CFAF 200 per child per month. This means that families in remote, rural areas, often with very limited means, are required to finance a large share of their children's education, while families that are better off and/or living in urban areas can benefit from government-paid teachers, who are often better trained and supervised.

24. **While the Education Sector Strategy makes a strong case for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, there is little systematic tracking of their challenges or of the progress made in addressing them.** For example, while boys outperform girls across the entire compulsory cycle, this does not appear to have led to any concerted efforts to support the learning of girls, especially adolescents. The data on indigenous peoples is not readily available; nor does there appear to be successful public system efforts to provide them with better-adapted and more acceptable learning environments. The same can be said for children with disabilities.

Systems development is the key to sustainability beyond project completion

25. **Discussions with key decision makers in the education sector bring up a series of organizational challenges.** First, the ENIs that provide all of the teachers for general education belong to the TVET Ministry, which trains all primary teachers within the ENIs, and to the MES, which trains all lower and upper secondary teachers. Second, within the MEPSA-JEC, a number of key functions are managed by units with limited resources or are not anchored within any existing units or directorates. For example, there is no single office charged with sector-wide human resource management, finance and budget, or communications. Units charged with education data management, in-service teacher training, strategic planning, or school construction have neither the hierarchical weight nor the right expertise (in number or quality) to adequately fulfill their roles. Third, key outputs that will normally be part of the day-to-day tasks of the MEPSA-JEC, such as data collection and analysis, or teacher career and professional development, or collaboration between different government entities, or school feeding programs, all appear to depend on external assistance or projects by development partners. Therefore, there are serious challenges with regard to the development of adequate systems and the sustainability of reforms or policy advances in the absence of external partnerships.

26. **There are additional system-level challenges that need to be addressed.** Recruitment to the ENI for both primary and secondary teachers has not been subject to any evaluation or assessment. There appear to be serious concerns regarding the selection of candidates to enter those institutions. In principle, they are required to pass an entry examination but in reality the quality and transparency of that recruitment process needs to be reviewed. There is an exit examination for those completing the primary ENIs (*les finalistes*); however, again, there are concerns about the quality and transparency of the exam. The actual coursework for training institutions as well as the trainers have not been reviewed in recent years to ensure alignment with curricular goals and quality standards for any teacher entering the system. There has not been a formal agreement between the ministries that house these institutions on the one hand, and the

MEPSA-JEC, on the other, which is the ultimate employer of their graduates, on the quantity or quality of candidates who are certified by those institutions.

27. **The organization and management of the sector, and the alignment of its key functions, are in urgent need of overhaul.** A number of functions within the ministry are either missing or inadequately resourced. These include the following.

- (a) *Strategic planning.* The DEP does not have sufficient numbers of planners, economists, econometricians, or statisticians, hampering its ability to conduct any strategic planning or to track progress on its intended target areas.
- (b) *Data systems.* Administrative data collection is currently done on an ad hoc basis by the pedagogic departments; although the DEP is charged with issuing official statistics, it has not been able to do so since 2011, when data collection was financed by the last IDA-funded project. There is minimal staffing for database management and school mapping; moreover, the existing EMIS is on an outdated computer system with little or no security or backup.
- (c) *Finance and budgeting.* There is considerable disconnect in the FM and oversight within the sector. While most education systems elsewhere will have a Directorate-General for FM, in Congo there is only a ministerial appointee who advises on financial matters and accountants in the different Directorates-General charged with payments. There does not appear to be clear oversight and authority either for budget preparation or for FM and control at the ministry or sector level.
- (d) *Human resource management.* There is a small office charged with human resources but it has little capacity to effectively manage personnel at any level of the system. Career tracking, payments, promotions, sanctions, deployments, or training and professional development opportunities are addressed on an ad hoc basis or are handled by other ministries (including the Ministry of Civil Service, and the Ministry of Finance).
- (e) *Construction.* Despite considerable efforts to increase the number of school places in the past years, there is only a small unit charged with the activities around school construction, which is at the level of a subunit within the DEP. In addition, there are a number of structures within government that build schools and classrooms, and there does not appear to be any coordination or use of a general school map for optimal placement and expansion of schools to meet demand. Rather than establishing a coordinated approach between the MEPSA-JEC and Ministry of Infrastructure, the existing systems require each contract to include three percent, which is supposed to cover the costs of the supervising technicians at the regional level as they join the missions with the contractor. This approach, which seriously compromises the integrity of the supervision process, has severely limited the ability of regional supervising technicians to provide systematic, objective supervision of the sites.
- (f) *Evaluation.* While the system has a rigid system of end-of-year and end-of-cycle exams and even quarterly tests (*devoirs départementaux*) that take up a large numbers

of instructional hours, very little is done with this information to truly evaluate the learning that is happening in the system and to establish mechanisms to remediate the learning gaps identified.

- (g) *Communication.* There does not appear to be any systematic way for the MEPSA-JEC to communicate its objectives or targets to its major stakeholders aside from the use of ad hoc meetings and speeches. A communications section does not exist, and messages on important reforms that are envisaged under the draft Education Strategy are not widely available. In addition, the limited information available to stakeholders at all levels of the education system make it difficult for them to seek explanations on the use of resources or the attainment of specific results.
- (h) *Evidence-based decision making and accountability.* There is no coordination mechanism to ensure that the activities carried out by the ministry can indeed attain the targets set for the sector. Data are not used for systematic decision making and there is little evidence of accountability across the entire sector.

28. **Interministerial collaboration is, as with other functions, ad hoc in nature.** This is particularly worrisome, as there are other ministries whose decisions directly affect the functioning of the education sector. The Ministry of Finance pays government salaries without any systematic input from the Ministry of Education to ensure that paid civil servants are actually working within the education sector (in fact, there is considerable anecdotal evidence that significant numbers of teachers who have since moved to other sectors or even outside the public service continue to be paid as education employees). The Ministry of Civil Service sets a recruitment quota each year of both pedagogic and administrative staff for the Ministry of Education without either setting those quotas based on actual needs in the sector or conferring with the education team to set priorities. In addition, the lack of a coordination mechanism between these three ministries leads to long delays in the payment of new teachers, especially those deployed in the regions, and in the payment of pensions for retirees, which can take up to two years.

29. **There is considerable anecdotal evidence of rent seeking in many aspects of the functions of the education sector,** including in tests, especially the entrance exams or *concours* for entering both pedagogic and academic higher education institutions; recruitment; promotions; and deployment, among others. The lack of systems for tracking data in a transparent manner (for example, dysfunctions in the sector with regard to ghost teachers, overstaffing schools with administrative staff, assignment of teachers to other ministries while paid under MEPSA-JEC budgets, and false declaration of student numbers) has contributed to this situation. While computerized systems are only a first step in addressing some of these issues, open access to data and information and tracking of any arbitrary changes in policy can help set the stage for far-reaching governance reforms in the sector.

Prioritizing Among Challenges

30. There are many opportunities for Bank operations to contribute to the reforms in the education sector. While the data on the sector are both outdated and incomplete, there are enough indications from administrative reports and from ongoing and past operations of those areas where challenges are acute and where Bank operations can have an important impact. These challenges

include low learning outcomes and outdated pedagogic curricula; large variations in effective access based on geographic location, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics linked to vulnerable groups; inadequate support to teachers and to schools to ensure quality instruction; uneven coverage in textbooks and learning materials; and large gaps in management and decision making that should be aligned around key priorities set at the central and regional levels. Addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations, including those of children with special needs and those of indigenous populations, are a key contribution that this operation can make.

31. The Bank, because of its global experiences and its past work in Congo, is able to support the government in addressing these challenges through the proposed operation. The government has requested the Bank's support and has expressed its willingness to provide substantial financial resources for this operation. Given the continued fall in the price of oil, the project cost has been adjusted downward to accommodate this new reality. In that context, the focus will be to ring-fence core activities by ensuring financing of substantial IDA even if counterpart funds are not forthcoming, thus keeping the quality and human resources aspects in the forefront.

32. The previous IDA-financed PRAEBASE project (2005–13) was designed to support Congo in achieving universal quality primary education through more efficiency, quality, and equity in the provision of basic education. As the main externally financed intervention in the education sector at the time, the PRAEBASE project contributed to positive results, including (a) an increase in primary gross enrollment rates from 107 to 116 percent, bringing more out-of-school children into school; (b) an increase in primary completion rates from 50 to 79 percent; and (c) an improved girl-boy ratio in primary education (from 0.91 to 0.96). Gains in efficiency show a pupil-teacher ratio decrease from 92 to 57; this also indicates a more effective distribution of teachers across the sector. The project also greatly contributed to the availability of textbooks in schools and school construction/rehabilitation. However, lessons learned also indicate how difficult it is to maintain capacity development and institutional strengthening efforts and how these take time and political will to materialize—especially in a post conflict context characterized by significant need, competing demands, and limited resources. This knowledge, therefore, will factor greatly into all aspects of any new project design, which aims to focus more on systemic change and institutional sustainability.

Donor Programs and Coordination

33. **The largest contributor to education within Congo is the government, which accounts for 98 percent of funding to the sector.** Donor support accounts for the other 2 percent, comprising approximately CFAF 5–6 billion per year. In addition to the Bank, active donors include AFD, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the WFP; external partner coordination takes place through a LEG led by UNICEF for the regular review of complementarity and synergy of programs as well as data sharing, where possible. The LEG collaborated closely on the development of the Education Sector Strategy, finalized in June 2015, which outlined key objectives through 2025 and informed the project design. Given the severe lack of data within the sector the UIS will be a key partner as the MEPSA-JEC team works to update and systematize government data systems over the first year of the project. In addition, the school feeding programs supported by the WFP and by the international nongovernmental agency International Partnership for Human Development (with significant financial participation from the state) are important for supporting children from poor families, especially those in indigenous communities.

34. **Complementarity with other Bank operations is being explored.** The project will build synergies with other Bank-supported projects in Congo, including the CG-Statistics Capacity Building project (P133731) aimed at strengthening the National Statistics System and promoting the demand for statistical information; the CG Rep. LISUNGI Safety Nets project (P145263), which has the objective of establishing the building blocks of a social safety net program within the country. Collaboration with the Statistics Capacity Building Project will help address the data limitations within the sector, while collaboration with the Safety Nets Projects will allow for better targeting approaches for reaching beneficiaries. The team also aims to draw inspiration from the CG Rep. Health Sector project (PDSS II, P143849) to learn from their third-party verification processes to adapt them to the education contexts. The project could potentially collaborate with the ongoing CAB, (P132821) project to ensure that the education ministry is given priority in the cabling and connection to Internet planned for government administrations under the project. The project team at CAB will most likely provide fiduciary support for the implementation of the project advance for this project while the PCU staff with the right skills and qualifications are recruited. The CG Rep. PDCE project (P128628) aimed at skills development for urban youth is ongoing and provides the opportunity to learn from current work with the TVET Ministry, which continues to play a role in teacher training for general education.³⁸ Finally, a TA task on higher education continues to provide additional information on the links between pre-university and tertiary education and the labor market; the project will further enhance that knowledge base.

35. **The project design also takes into account lessons learned from the previous IDA-financed PRAEBASE Project,** which had the aims of better efficiency, quality, and equity in education. Although gains were made in each of these areas, given the post conflict context in which the project was implemented, lasting systems could not yet fully emerge. In the current project, therefore, systemic changes are still necessary to ensure sustainability of improvements to quality and equity within the sector by establishing systems that will be maintained beyond the life of the project. As a result, special attention will be paid to crosscutting system improvement measures such as M&E, improved scope and quality of human resources, and capacity building across all levels of the system.

³⁸ However, the PDCE Project does not include activities that touch on teacher training for general education.