Report Number: ICRR0022255

1. Project Data

Project ID P129828	**Project Name** ET GEQIP II
Country Ethiopia	**Practice Area(Lead)** Education

L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-53150,TF-16684,TF-18053,TF-A4619,TF-A4701,TF-A6267	**Closing Date (Original)** 07-Jul-2018	**Total Project Cost (USD)** 517,669,363.36
Bank Approval Date 12-Nov-2013	**Closing Date (Actual)** 31-Dec-2019	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	**Grants (USD)**
Original Commitment	130,000,000.00	399,756,425.51
Revised Commitment	529,725,775.38	392,014,574.12
Actual	517,218,270.59	392,014,574.12

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Project ID P161060	**Project Name** GEQIP2 GPE2 grant (P161060)

L/C/TF Number(s)	**Closing Date (Original)**	**Total Project Cost (USD)** 0

Bank Approval Date 11-Jul-2017	Closing Date (Actual)	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	**Grants (USD)**
Original Commitment	0.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	0.00	0.00
Actual	0.00	0.00

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The objectives stated in the grant agreement were "improving learning conditions in primary and secondary schools and strengthening of institutions at different levels of educational administration."

A June 2017 restructuring revised some outcome targets upward. A split rating is not required.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?
Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
Yes

Date of Board Approval
11-Jul-2017

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
No

d. Components

The project originally included six components. In the first restructuring on July 11, 2017, the objectives were not changed, but activities were moved or new ones introduced in components 1 through 5 and some targets increased. Consequently, the project presents two periods of implementation as follows.

Period 1: November 12, 2013 to July 10, 2017

Component 1: Curriculum, textbooks, assessment, examinations, and inspection (US$114.4 million).
This component built on the quality interventions of its predecessor project, General Education Quality Improvement Project (GEQIP) I: (i) improvement in the quality and relevance of the general education curriculum; (ii) increase in the supply of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials; (iii)

strengthened national assessment and examinations system, aligned with the national curriculum; and (iv) support for the newly developed schools inspectorate to ensure the implementation of the curriculum, use of educational materials, continuous assessment, and all other contributions to quality improvement within the classroom. It had three sub-components:

- *Sub-component 1.1:* Curriculum implementation improvements.
- *Sub-component 1.2:* Learning and teaching materials to Grades 0-12.
- *Sub-componen*t *1.3:* Support for institutional development to improve student assessments and strengthen schools inspectorate.

Component 2: Teacher and education leaders' development program (US$70 million). This component had two subcomponents:

- *Sub-component 2.1*: Enhance the training of pre-service teachers in teacher education institutions (TEIs) through (i) improved selection of entrants to teacher training; (ii) provision of teaching and learning materials in the TEIs; (iii) enhanced practicum for teacher candidates; (iv) in-service pedagogical training for teacher educators; (v) enhanced English language support in the TEIs; and (vi) provision of a training program for alternative basic education center (ABE) facilitators.
- *Sub-component 2.2:* Improve the quality of in-service teacher training through: (i) enhancing the provision of continuous professional development at schools; (ii) providing English language training for teachers of English and developing a cadre of school-based English mentors to support all teachers using English as a medium of instruction; (iii) developing a teacher career structure, as well as a licensing and re-licensing system that recognizes professional development and behavior; and (iv) upgrading primary teachers from a certificate qualification to a diploma qualification.

Component 3: School improvement plans (SIPs) (US$255 million). This component sought to support the strengthening of school planning, and to partly fund the SIPs through school grants. It comprised a combination of activities started and successfully implemented under GEQIP I and new activities initiated under this project. The two subcomponent activities included:

- *Sub-component 3.1:* Specific activities for school improvement, including: (i) providing training on linking SIPs with improved student learning; (ii) developing a simplified SIP framework for rural, isolated schools, smaller schools, and ABEs; (iii) creating information campaigns for parents and communities to strengthen community support to improved learning through the SIPs; and (iv) encouraging activities focused specifically on reading.
- *Sub-component 3.2:* School Grants (SG) interventions. The interventions covered: (i) revision of SG guidelines to encourage use of funds for appropriate learning and teaching materials; (ii) additional per capita incentives for the most disadvantaged regions and disadvantaged students; (iii) introduction of performance-based incentives for encouraging improved learning outcomes through SGs in the second year of project implementation; (iv) strengthening the social accountability mechanisms through parents, students and teachers associations (PSTAs) with intensive community involvement in planning and monitoring SGs; and (v) strengthening the grievance redress and complaint management mechanisms at various levels of educational management to ensure efficient and equitable management of the grants.

Component 4: Systems management and capacity building program, including Education Management Information System (EMIS) (US$21.7 million). This component was designed to: (i)

improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education planning, policy-making, management, evaluation, and resource allocation and utilization through human capacity development and by strengthening linkages at the federal, regional, and woreda levels; (ii) strengthen participatory and evidence-based school planning, management, and monitoring; and (iii) strengthen the EMIS by improving collection, accuracy of input data, and use of system data for evidence-based planning, policy making, management, and evaluation (with special attention to the four emerging regions).

Component 5: Improving the quality of learning and teaching through the use of ICT (US$34.67 million). This component focused on the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) by: (i) developing a national policy and institutions for ICT in general education; (ii) developing a national ICT infrastructure improvement plan for general education through strengthening the specification, procurement, distribution, and management of ICT in secondary education and developing capacity for producing digital learning content; (iii) developing an integrated monitoring, evaluation, and learning system for ICT; (iv) providing teacher professional development in the use of ICT; and (v) piloting the use of e-Braille display readers in select schools.

Component 6: Program coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and communication (US$24.5 million). This component aimed at: (i) providing technical advisory support to strengthen the institutional capacity of education institutions at the federal level and to improve coordination between federal, regional, and woreda levels; (ii) monitoring various activities supported through project interventions and evaluating the impact of these interventions; and (iii) using communications to increase awareness and ownership of the project's components and ensure effective participation of all stakeholders.

Period 2: July 11, 2017 to December 31, 2019

Component 1: ***Curriculum implementation and teaching learning materials (US$91 million; actual $103.7 million).*** **T**he revised component kept original activities as subcomponent 1 and added an activity that became subcomponent 2 as follows:

- ***Sub-component 1.1:*** Curriculum, textbooks, assessment, examinations, and inspections. Enhance the quality of the primary and secondary curriculum by strengthening the institutional capacity of regional educational bureaus through: (i) assessment of the impact of the National Curriculum Framework 2010 (NCF 2010); (ii) translation, printing, and distribution of curriculum materials to the regions; (iii) focused curriculum studies and study visits; and (iv) realignment of the general education curriculum with the technical and vocational education and training and higher education curricula.
- ***Sub-component 1.2:*** Teaching and learning materials. Finance the reprinting of grade 1-12 textbooks; grade 1-8 mother tongue textbooks and teachers' guides in arts, visual arts, music, and physical education; and books in Braille for visually impaired students through the provision of e-Braille readers, originally under Component 5.

Component 2: Teacher and education leaders' development program (US$76.3 million; actual US$105.3 million). This component was revised to include a professional development program for education leaders.

- **Sub-component 2.1:** Leadership development program, aimed at improving the qualification of school managers by providing a one-year leadership program for school principals and supervisors.
- **Subcomponent 2.2.** Teacher development program, aimed at improving pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teacher training. Pre-service teacher development encompassed: (i) improving the selection of teacher training entrants and strengthening teacher education programs, including the pre-service student teaching experience (practicum); (ii) strengthening English Language Improvement Centers; (iii) providing professional development for teacher educators; and (iv) establishing one Ethiopian university faculty of education and its cluster of Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) as a national Center of Excellence in Teacher Education. In-service teacher training covered: (i) primary and secondary teacher upgrading (summer upgrading programs provided by CTEs for primary teachers and universities for secondary teachers); (ii) improving the delivery of the English Language Quality Improvement Program; and (iii) updating short-term training integrating mathematics and science programs with school level continuous professional development.

Component 3: School improvement program (US$273 million; actual US$257.9 million). Specific activities under subcomponent 3.2. were added:

- **Subcomponent 3.1:** "School improvement program" remained the same, but support for school report cards was discontinued.
- **Subcomponent 3.2**: "School grants" were revised to include SGs to specifically support education of pre-primary students and children with disabilities (additional funds of US$18 million were reallocated to Component 3 to cover these additional grants).

Component 4: Systems management and capacity building program, including EMIS (US$21.7 million; actual US$21.5 million). This component was divided into two subcomponents:

- **Sub-component 4.1:** Strengthening management systems. Under this subcomponent, the activities of Component 4 mentioned above were kept, adding licensing and relicensing of teachers and school leaders (formerly Subcomponent 2.3).
- **Sub-component 4.2:** Quality assurance system, National Learning Assessment, teacher licensing, and school inspection. The added activities encompassed. (i) student learning assessments; (ii) teacher assessment through licensing and re-licensing; and (iii) school assessments through school inspections.
- **Sub-component 4.3:** Capacity building to school principals and woreda, regional, and federal-level education managers (short-term training) through: (i) school leaders updating; (ii) woreda, regional, and federal capacity building; and (iii) special support for emerging regions.

Component 5: Improving the quality of learning and teaching through the use of ICT (US$34.67 million; actual US$21.2 million). This component was revised to build ICT infrastructure and skills within the education sector through: (i) policy development and capacity building for the Centre for Educational ICT (CEICT); (ii) provision of e-cloud infrastructure; and (iii) e-learning system development, under the following three subcomponents:

- **Sub-component 5.1:** National ICT in education policy development and capacity building for the CEICT. This covered: (i) the development of autonomous ICT in the education agency; (ii) a capacity building program for CEICT; and (iii) a change management program.

- *Sub-component 5.2:* Provision of e-cloud infrastructure, which aimed to provide an e-cloud infrastructure (re-tendered) to provide ICT-enabled quality learning at 300 secondary schools and ten teacher training institutions.
- *Sub-component 5.3:* E-learning system development (learning management system, LMS). This aimed to develop LMS systems to enable curated content and software to be used by teachers and students for teaching and learning.

Component 6: *Program planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and communications (US$16.5 million; actual US$21.5 million).* The above-mentioned activities remained the same, as the component was not revised.

e. **Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**

Project cost and financing. Total project costs were estimated at approval at US$550 million, but financing of only US$472.3 million was mobilized from IDA and development partners: US$130 million in IDA funds, and the remainder in grants from multi-donor trust funds. To cover the balance, at the 2017 Mid-Term Review (MTR) the Global Partnership for Education contributed additional financing of US$69.5 million. The total actual funding was US$529.7 million, of which the IDA loan was US$125.6 million.

Borrower contribution: The project had no contributions from the Recipient.

Dates:

The project was approved on November 12, 2014 and became effective on February 18, 2014. It had five restructurings, with its original closing date of July 7, 2018 extended to an actual closing date of December 31, 2019. The last three restructurings requested closing date extensions, mainly to complete the procurement and delivery of textbooks and installation of ICT infrastructure.

The restructurings (ICR, pp. 3 and 13) were as follows:

- July 11, 2017: A level 2 restructuring authorized additional financing of US69.5 million from the Global Partnership for Education to cover the financing gap found at the MTR of US$85 million (due to a drop in United States Agency for International Development commitment and exchange rate fluctuations) and to adjust project components and its results framework. Targets were upscaled for four out of six PDO-level indicators.
- January 19, 2018: A second level 2 restructuring formalized the allocation of Multi-Donor Trust Fund financing as part of the project's pooled funding.
- June 22, 2018: A third level 2 restructuring authorized an extension of the closing date.
- December 28, 2018: A fourth level 2 restructuring formalized changes in some intermediate indicator targets, extended the closing date, and revised the implementation schedule.
- June 27, 2019: This fifth level 2 restructuring also authorized revisions in the results framework and in the implementation schedule, as well as the extension of the closing date to December 31, 2019.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

GEQIP II was the second phase of an Adaptable Program Loan (GEQIP I, 2009-2013) to improve teaching and student learning conditions (Grades 1-12). Built on GEQIP I's experience, at appraisal the project was relevant to address education sector needs identified in the government's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP; 2010-2015) and the Bank strategy for Ethiopia, and continued to be relevant during implementation. Between 2003 and 2012, Ethiopia was making significant progress towards the government's quest of becoming a middle-income country – growing at least at 11.2 percent per year, increasing public spending on education by 70 percent in real terms, and increasing K-12 grade school enrollment from 10 to 19 million students. GEQIP I had achieved considerable but uneven progress, which meant that at GEQIP II's approval, Ethiopia's education still lagged behind in terms of access (enrollment was still low), equity (regional and gender disparities remained), and quality of the learning environment (deficit of qualified teachers, weak leadership, and financing gaps). Considered the flagship investment program in Education, GEQIP II was relevant to support the GTP's priority to enhance education conditions and improve delivery of education services for all. It was also relevant to the Education Sector Development Plans for 2010/11-2014/15 (ESDP IV) and 2015/16-2019/20 ESDP V, both seeking to spread quality education nationwide and to ensure equitable access for children and, more specifically, greater girls' permanence in school. In the latter dimension, at closure the GEQIP II's scope proved to be a mismatch in its ambition to reduce the overall dropout rate, affected by Ethiopia's unrest.

GEQIP II's objectives were equally relevant to the World Bank Group priorities reflected in the FY13-FY16 Country Partnership Strategy for Ethiopia (CPS1, pp. 15-16). The strategy deemed that, "since 2011, Ethiopia was on track in achieving gender parity in primary education (MDG Goal 3) and its primary Gender Parity Index had increased from 0.87 in 2006/07 to 0.94 in 2010/11" (CPS, p. 42). It also pointed to women-focused project activities or individual projects as the means to mainstreaming gender equality. Congruously, GEQIP II elevated gender equality issues to cross-cutting activities but, given that the Bank did not mandate it, gender-disaggregated outcome indicators were not included in the results matrix. The project was expected to prompt equity of education through textbook distribution to schools, including books in seven mother tongues for children of ethnic minorities and Braille books for the sight-impaired (ICR, p. 72). The Bank was also to provide support to fostering gender equity and learning outcomes through other specific projects, such as the Program for Results Enhancing Shared Prosperity through Equitable Services Project (approved on September 15, 2015).

The next Bank strategy, FY17-FY22 Country Partnership Framework (CPF), shifted focus towards improved learning outcomes and gender parity for at least grades 4 and 8. The reorientation of priorities did not change the relevance of the GEQIP II objectives to the extent that the Bank's programmatic education sector analytical work, "Ethiopia Education Sector Studies" (P152796), had stated that there is a general positive link between teacher qualification and student learning outcomes (ICR, p. 17). In this respect, the project was aligned with the FY18-FY22 CPF goals inasmuch as it enhanced/set in place instrumental education conditions at schools that supported Focus Area 2, "Building Resilience and Inclusiveness," and Objective 2.4, "improved basic education learning outcomes." However, the adoption of the new emphasis on student learning outcomes, coupled with the relatively short duration of the project, slightly constrained the relevance of the project, as by design, it was not set to measure its contribution to student learning outcomes or gender equity.

The PDO was also relevant to the Bank's Global Partnership for Education (2017-2021, GPE), which sought quality education for all by 2030, and supported education sector plans and raising teacher qualifications through training. Project activities were relevant taking into account efforts to improve school

planning, foster teachers' licensing and diploma programs, and strengthen educational institutions' administration. After 2017, during the crisis and conflict period, the project proved to play a relevant role in promoting interpersonal cooperation and understanding, and reinforcing social cohesion in the country (ICR, p. 14).

Rating
High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1
Objective
Improve learning conditions in primary schools

Rationale
The project's theory of change referred to lessons and experience of the GEQIP I to justify the link between GEQIP II's textbook provision component and students' cognitive ability. Despite a lack of hard causality and the debate on contribution of teacher capacity building to enhance students' learning outcomes, the GEQIP II continued to support the link and thus training for teachers as done in GEQIP I. It presupposed that, by increasing the availability of qualified teachers and utilization of teaching and learning materials, the GEQIP II would reasonably expect to contribute to improved teaching and learning conditions in Ethiopia, as noted above. Teacher selection for training was done regionally by the Regional Education Bureaus.

With the provision of textbooks under GEQIP II, the theory of change focused on addressing textbook shortages driven from enrollment growth and book replacement. The project also aimed at providing core textbooks at relatively lower unit costs compared to the project's initial estimates as well as to those of other Sub-Saharan African countries. In addition, the theory of change assumed that the preparation and implementation of SIPs under the support of SGs would strengthen the schools' planning capacity and thereby generate improvements in teaching and learning conditions (ICR, p. 15).

The mid-term review found that the project had achieved impressive progress, which led to raising targets of several of the outcome indicators and incorporating some new ones in the first restructuring on July 11, 2017. As indicated in Section 2a, a split rating is not performed here, and in accordance with harmonized IEG/OPCS guidelines, this review assesses outcomes and outputs according to the revised, increased outcome targets. However, some original targets are noted here, particularly those for teachers trained, where the indicator changed from percentage to numbers. For this indicator, the ICR is unclear about whether important information on coverage was lost with the shift away from percentages. In cases of lack of disaggregated data between primary and secondary schools, this review follows the ICR's approach of bringing together Objective 1 (improve learning conditions in primary schools) and Objective 2 (improve learning conditions in secondary schools) (ICR, p. 15).

The GEQIP II project achieved the following **outputs** by December 31, 2019.

1.1: Curriculum, textbooks, assessment, examinations, and inspection

- 125,886 textbooks and supplementary materials distributed to pre-primary - grade 12 (cumulative), surpassing the revised target of 120,000 (original target was 130,000).
- 156 million primary level textbooks and teachers' guides procured and reprinted. This was on the basis of enrollment growth and an allowance to replace books damaged or lost.
- The indicator related to distribution of mother-tongue textbooks was considered essentially achieved. Additional textbooks were distributed over the last six months of implementation, bringing the actual ratio of primary students to newly procured mother-tongue textbooks closer to the target of 1:1 than than was reported in the 2018 textbook survey. (ICR p. 16, 34).

1.2: Teacher and education leaders development program

- Leadership Program*:* 1,456 participants obtained post-graduate diplomas in school leadership (annual), surpassing the revised target of 800.
- Upgrading of teacher qualifications: 30,949 primary teachers upgraded their credentials from certificate to diploma (annual), surpassing the revised target of 22,000.
- Data includes both primary and secondary teachers for the following: 13,833 diploma graduates from Colleges of Teacher Education (annual), surpassing the revised target of 10,000 graduates with diploma. 18,347 teachers upgraded their qualification from diploma to post-graduate diploma, exceeding the revised target of 13,000 graduates. 71,052 teachers received English language teaching improvement project training (cumulative), exceeding the revised target of 10,000. 26,761 G7-8 teachers received math and science updating training (cumulative), surpassing the revised target of 20,000. As part of teacher training, the project supported in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for teachers, general and subject-specific, which was instrumental for improving teaching and learning in schools.

- The 2014-15 school inspection collected information on teachers' application of knowledge and skills. Inspectors observed classroom availability of well-planned teaching lessons, subject knowledge, teaching methods, and assessment. The project employed 134,749 new teachers over the course of implementation. The theory of change did not include this outcome indicator.

1.3: Primary schools improvement

School improvement planning: The project surpassed its target of having schools allocating at least 50 percent of their grants for the SIP teaching and learning domains, or 50 percent of PSTA members who agree or strongly agree that there was improvement. Over time, the use of the grants decreased, with issues related to lack of receipt of grant funds and "variations in priorities across schools" compared with program guidelines (ICR, p. 18).The 2019/20 EMIS data indicates 4,383 schools operating in tents or under trees, but the extent of variation is not known..

According to SG Evaluation results, from the survey conducted by a competitively selected firm that covered the 2016/2017 period following the 2016 revised SG guidelines:

- 92.5 percent of schools planned the SG budget jointly with the SIP committee and wider school community members and stakeholders.
- 90.4 percent of schools had SIP committees preparing annual reports on results of the implementation of SIPs.
- 81.1 percent of schools had an SIP plan aligned with SG allocations.
- 78.8 percent of schools had their SIP committee's report discussed publicly at the school with the school community and other stakeholders.
- 38.5 percent of schools posted their SG allocations at a public notice board.
- About 11.7% of primary schools flagged the school environment to be their priority for SG utilization. Other important areas included spending in community mobilization, or support of access for marginalized groups (i.e., girls, children with disabilities, internally displaced children).
- 94.3 percent of PSTA members agreed or strongly agreed on SIP practices that increased participation of the school community in the decision-making process about school matters.

School Grants as assessed by PSTA members who agreed or strongly agreed on SG contribution to school improvements:

- 96.2 percent assessed that the SG program helped with key necessities in their school such as chalk and paper.
- 92.4 percent assessed that the SG program empowered schools to make informed financial decisions based on actual needs in schools.
- 92.3 percent assessed that SG resources were allocated transparently with participation of internal and external stakeholders.
- 88.4 percent assessed that the SG program helped enrich a library in their school.
- 80.8 percent assessed that the SG program helped build separate latrines for boys and girls in the school.

Upgrading of schools:

- 21,363 schools were reinspected (academic year 2017-2018), showing that 57.5 percent and 8.5 percent of Level 1 and 2 schools, respectively, were upgraded to the next level as per the inspection performance ladder, against targets of 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively.
- The percent of upgraded Level 1 schools surpassed the original target of 25 percent.

GEQIP II contributed to rolling out the school inspection system. Experience was gained in the process of turning around low-performing schools and upgrading schools, providing a basis for future upgrade of the majority of primary and secondary schools in the country to meet national standards.

Outcomes

According to procurement data, the actual ratio of primary pupils-textbooks delivered rose to close to 1:1 by the end of the project period. According to evidence from a 2018 textbook survey, textbook availability and the utilization ratio of primary pupils to newly procured mother tongue textbooks was 1:0.74, an improvement from the 2013 baseline of 1:0.65, but not achieving the target of 1:1. The 2018 survey found that the rates of children, at both primary and secondary levels, bringing the books to school were much lower than targeted. Evidence from the 2019 GEQIP exit evaluation showed that about just over half of students brought their textbooks to school, namely 51.77 percent for math, 60.95 percent for science, and 56.65 percent for social science. The 2017 targets of 90 percent for math and 70 percent for science and social science were not achieved (ICR, p. 15).

Between 2012/13 and 2018/19, the proportion of teachers with appropriate qualifications (diploma or degree) in Grades 1-4 increased from 43.8 to 88.8 percent. Data from the Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2018/19) supported the magnitude of this achievement, considering the significant increase of the primary teaching force by 36.6 percent, from 367,989 teachers in 2013/14 to 502,738 in 2017/18 (ICR, p. 18).

The teaching effectiveness indices used as metrics covered average scores of school inspection standards on teachers' knowledge, lesson planning, teaching practices, and assessment practices. The targets were 45.4 percent (Level 1) and 59.3 percent (Level 2). Al closing, the indices were 46.4 percent for Level 1 schools and 59.5 percent for Level 2 schools, based on the 2016/17 and 2017/18 reinspection report. It should be noted that these data are offered in percentages in the ICR, even though percentage measurements were dropped from the results framework (ICR, pp. 17-18). Evidence on outcomes on learning conditions from teacher training includes: (i) the application in the classroom of teachers' new knowledge and skills, as measured by inspection surveys, and (ii) compatibilities in measuring the average scores in the teacher effectiveness indices used and instruments used. The ICR (p. 68) mentioned that inspection standard 8 refers to "Teachers use modern teaching methods to increase student participation." GEQIP II lacks specific data on teachers' training applied in the classroom and on where these trained/qualified teachers were deployed. However, the sample-based inspections cover the whole teaching force, showing significant improvements nation-wide. Thus, it can be speculated that GEQIP II-trained teachers might have potentially had a contribution, of unknown dimension, to the objective of improving learning conditions. Although undermeasured, it is likely that the project achieved the revised target of having about half of the teachers adopt active teaching methods.

Evidence from the 2018 SIP and SG evaluation showed that 74 percent of schools were using their school grants allocation for guiding SIP teaching and learning. This achievement surpassed the original target of 50 percent, but not the revised target of 100 percent (ICR, p. 70).

To reduce first-grade dropout rates, the project undertook community and parents' sensitization activities, as well as school *Asmelash* committees (comprised of parents, teachers, and community members) to work with out-of-school children and their parents. Sensitization activities focused on ensuring that those who dropped out of school re-entered and continued their education. These activities were largely successful in reducing Grade 1 dropout until the mid-term review; from a baseline level of 25 percent, the Grade 1 dropout rate at the national level fell to 18.1 percent in 2016/2017. However, at closure, the targeted reduction in the grade 1 dropout rate was not achieved, as violence prompted school closures, population displacement, and child absences. The rate had reverted to the baseline of 25 percent by 2018/2019 (ICR, p. 21).

The overall number of direct project beneficiaries was 24,976,545 (i.e., exceeding by 5.6 percent the revised target of 23,650,000), and of these, 47 percent were female, slightly below the targeted 48.7 percent.

The number and percentage of qualified teachers improved impressively; data shows improved teaching effectiveness in new knowledge application, and textbook provision and use arguably improved to targeted levels. Although below-target utilization is reported, surveys suggest that outcomes are likely to be higher and that GEQIP is potentially meeting the utilization targets. Achievement of this objective is rated Substantial.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2
Objective
Improve learning conditions in secondary schools

Rationale
The same considerations that the project's theory of change presupposed for primary schools applied for improving conditions in the secondary schools, namely through increased numbers of textbooks, guides, and other teaching materials, and upgrades in teachers' qualifications. With respect to the 2017 revised targets, the GEQIP II project achieved the following **outputs and intermediate results** by December 31, 2019.

2.1: Curriculum, textbooks, assessment, examinations, and inspection

- As stated above under objective 1, achievements for secondary education are included in the 125,886 textbooks and supplementary materials distributed to O class - Grade 12 (cumulative), surpassing the revised target.
- 21 million textbooks and teachers' guides for the secondary level were procured and reprinted under the project (ICR, p. 15). No baseline or target were provided.
- SG payments made to all government secondary schools were used for additional teaching and learning materials, charts, graphs, maps, laboratory equipment, and minor upgrades of school facilities, and to support continuous professional development of teachers.

2.2: Teacher development program

Upgrade of secondary teachers' qualifications

- 3,338 graduates obtained post-graduate diploma in teaching (secondary, annual) from universities, surpassing the revised target of 1,500 teacher trainees.
- As detailed below under Objective 3, an undetermined number of secondary teachers took the written licensing exam. There is no specific data on how many secondary teachers obtained licenses.

2.3: Secondary school improvement

The SG evaluation and PSTA assessments did not provide evidence specific to secondary schools. As noted under Objective 1, because the data lump together all grades (K to 12), it can only be speculated that the project might have achieved an unknown number of secondary schools allocating at least 50 percent of their

grants for their SIPs to teaching and learning, and PSTA members that agree or strongly agree with seeing improvement in different areas pertaining to secondary schools.

Outcomes

The ICR does not provide evidence specifically on secondary student-textbook ratios; however, as noted above, textbook utilization rate of primary and secondary students are likely to be above the reported data.

A total of 33,659 secondary teacher trainees were graduated from diploma and post-graduate diploma teaching programs. Between 2012/2013 and 2018/19, the share of appropriately qualified teachers (diploma or degree) for grades 5-8 remained at the baseline ratio (about 91 percent). The share of teachers teaching grades 9-12 who met their level's standard qualification increased from 91.5 percent to 94.5 percent under the project. Overall, a 63.9 percent increase in the number of secondary school teachers was achieved between 2013/14 and 2018/19, rising from 70,987 to 116,345 teachers. However, as noted above, there is inconclusive evidence on the application of improved training and qualifications in the classroom.

Although the project institutionalized the practice of having SIPs guiding the use of SGs (ICR, p. 18), no specific outcomes for secondary schools were reported by the SG evaluation or PSTA self-assessment study. However, the results of the SG evaluation and PSTA assessments are representative for both primary and secondary schools.

Despite inconclusiveness of some evidence, achievement of this objective is rated Substantial.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3
Objective
Strengthen institutions at different levels of educational administration

Rationale
With respect to the 2017 revised targets, the GEQIP II project achieved the following **outputs and intermediate results** by December 31, 2019.

Quality assurance and accountability systems

3.1 National Learning/Education Assessment (NLA)

- Calibrated test items and administration of grades 4, 8, 10, 12 NLA tests were developed.
- 5,160 NLA test items and 15,220 test items for grade 10 national examination were developed.

- The National Education Assessment and Examination Agency delivered training to regional assessment and examination experts on conceptual overview of assessment, test development, test analysis, and data capturing; and training to grade 8 test developers and exam-administration focal persons on how to write, review, and edit examination items based on the national curriculum framework.
- A tool for Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) was completed and piloted in six local languages.
- 800 (grade 4 & 8) and 3,360 (grade 10 & 12) items with acceptable psychometric characteristics were developed and banked, surpassing the original target of 800 (grade 4 & 8) and 1000 (grade 10 & 12) NLA items banked.

3.2 Teacher and school leader licensing program

- More than 404,160 teachers (307,764 primary and 96,396 secondary teachers) took the written licensing exam, doubling the revised target of 200,000 teachers.
    - Of all teachers and school leaders who took the exam, 35 percent were female.
- 14,257 school leaders (11,776 primary and 2,481 secondary) took the written licensing exam.
- 24 percent of licensed teachers and school leaders participated in portfolio assessment, which is the second stage of the licensing process.
- Overall, 31,000 teachers received licensing certificates, while the remaining were under assessment as of project closing.
- 5,129 (11 percent female) woreda education officials and experts drawn from 1,018 woredas received ten-day short-term trainings on educational planning; monitoring and evaluation; data collection, analysis, and utilization; educational leadership; educational supervision; women's participation in education; community participation; and resource mobilization.

3.3 School inspection and upgrading of schools

- 95 schools were inspected, meeting the target of 95.
- 21,365 schools were re-inspected, of which 6,159 were Level 1 moving to Level 2 (57.5 percent) and 15,206 (8.5 percent) Level 2 moving to Level 3 in 2016/17 and 2017/18, surpassing the revised target of 16,033 schools. These schools were upgraded to the next level as per the inspection performance ladder, against targets of 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively. The percent of Level 1 schools that were upgraded exceeded the original target of 25 percent.
- Procurement and delivery of E-cloud infrastructure took place as planned, enabling 300 schools and universities to have a new computer laboratory installed and operational for access to private cloud infrastructure in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology national data center.
- Since the inspections and re-inspections at the time of closure of GEQIP-II covered different schools, and because unique school IDs were not introduced until 2019, no meaningful comparison was possible of the data gathered at the time of the first inspection with the reinspection results, even without taking into consideration the large number of new schools and teachers in the system.

Systems Management and Capacity Building Program

3.4: Program planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and communications

- A consolidated semi-annual report (March) and an annual report (September) of GEQIP II were submitted, meeting the target.
- Final individual school performance reports were produced from the proposed specialized evaluations: 4 [2 SG evaluations (2016 and 2018); textbook survey (2018); and comprehensive beneficiaries exit evaluation (2019)] undertaken; target achieved.
- The Planning and Resource Mobilization Directorate did not produce consolidated annual GEQIP work plans by mid-May each year. The target was not achieved.
- The target for dissemination of an Education Statistics Annual Abstract by early October following each school year was achieved.

Outcomes

Evidence for partial strengthening of the administration capacity of the Ministry of Education and other educational institutions is provided through the reinforced national learning/education assessment system, the established teacher licensing and inspection systems, the regular preparation and dissemination of education statistics, and the school inspection and school upgradings. It is within expectation that the strengthened evaluation process – along with the additional quality assurance described under Objective 1 -- led to informed improvements in teacher training in CTEs and universities, producing better trained teachers. It is also realistic to expect that the professional school leadership and management program bolstered the capacity of school principals and supervisors in these domains.

However, there were shortcomings in teacher training, financial flows, and financial audits at the woreda level. With respect to improving teaching and learning, the ICR (p. 17) noted that World Bank's programmatic education sector analytical work, "Ethiopia Education Sector Studies" (P152796) "showed that teacher qualification generally has a positive association with learning outcomes" and that the CPD program was instrumental for improving teaching and learning in schools. It was reported that only modest progress was achieved in building ICT infrastructure and skills in the education sector (ICR, pp. 53-54). The project was adversely impacted by violence and social unrest. Based on the mixed results, achievement of Objective 3 is rated substantial but with shortcomings in management, planning, and budget capacity of the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY
Rationale
Overall efficacy is rated Substantial. The project overachieved numerous outputs toward improving learning conditions in primary schools and secondary schools. By closure, half of the expected textbook utilization rate, and a smaller reduction in the targeted dropout rate than envisioned, were achieved. In May 2019, the ICR (p. 17) notes that: "Grade 4 National Learning Assessments in four subjects (mathematics, mother-

tongue reading, environmental sciences and English) and Grade 8 NLA in five subjects (mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry and English) were conducted. However, the results of the assessment are yet to be released to report on recent developments."

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

At appraisal, the project was justified on the premise that enhancing the cognitive ability of individuals would prompt increases in future productivity and therefore higher earnings (PAD, p. 21). In the PAD, the ex-ante economic analyses deemed Components 1, 2 and 3 (i.e., provision of textbooks, improving teaching and learning conditions, and capacity building of education administrators) as a benefit to education. Studies of similar interventions to the project financed by other international agencies and partners in other countries (Chile, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Tanzania, and South Africa) indicated that, in a worst-case scenario, an average impact of 0.074 standard deviations in cognitive ability of grade 4 children would be required for the project to break even (PAD, p. 126). A review of international experience indicated that the project's planned activities could be expected to produce the required learning benefits to justify the project economically, but that there was a wide range of results -- including some poor performers -- among the comparator countries and interventions.

The GEQIP II internal rate of return was calculated only at completion by the ICR. Thus, it is not possible to compare cost-benefit assessments of the project with the appraisal stage. The ICR calculated the internal rate of return at 13.5 percent, based on a modeled effect size of 0.22 standard deviations using data from the 2015 National Learning Assessment. The ICR also conducted a sensitivity analysis on the sampling distribution. Under this probability distribution, an internal rate of return of less than 10.7 percent was found to be unlikely, having a probability of less than 5 percent (ICR, p. 22). Comparatively, optimal levels of a metric of the opportunity cost of capital invested by education enhancement projects reported by the 2001 Bank Policy Research Work tended to gravitate between 24 to 27 percent, including Ethiopia and other fragile or conflict-afflicted countries in the region (Ethiopia Education Sector Development Program (Report No. 1 7739-ET) in Economic Analysis of World Bank Education Projects and Project Outcomes, Policy Research Working Paper 2564, 2001).

Cost efficiency of procurement. Overall, procurement faced multiple shortcomings, mainly due to a lack of proficient procurement staff in the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureaus, and other sub-national implementing agencies. These shortcomings were coupled with a lack of coordination and supervision; lack of systems and practices of accountability, planning skills, and use of plans to monitor, make decisions, and supervise procurement; ineffective handling of procurement complaints; and an absence of expertise and experience in managing ICT procurement (ICR, p. 29). However, with respect specifically to *procurement of textbook reprinting and distribution,* GEQIP II showed efficiency through the use of international competitive bidding, a copyright agreement that allowed the government to reprint at no extra cost, and large print runs. Its initial estimates on unit costs from textbook reprinting were based on the unit costs provided by GEQIP I. The ICR reported that GEQIP II costs in 2015/16 were US$0.47 for primary textbooks and US$0.74 for secondary textbooks, which were lower than those under GEQIP I. Textbook costs were also lower compared to other Sub-

Saharan Africa countries, enabling significant savings of US$25 million (ICR, pp. 22-23), while at the same time ensuring better quality and durability of materials.

Cost efficiency in teachers' and leaders' capacity building activities. The project considered lessons from the experience of GEQIP I and from international literature to justify the assumption of benefits from upgrading teachers' and education leaders' knowledge and capabilities. Despite inconclusive evidence on the link between training and education enhancement, following the arguments of GEQIP I, the PAD deemed training activities to be cost-effective. The ICR did not comment about these activities, and therefore cost-efficiency of the capacity building activities for teachers and education leaders cannot be determined.

Cost efficiency of School Grants. School improvement plans for teaching and learning guided the use of school grants. It is reasonable to assume that the multi-stakeholder school planning process (involving schools' principals, SIP committees, the wider school community, and other stakeholders) contributed to bringing more cost-efficiency and transparency to identifying optimal investments than when school decision-makers were solely responsible for investments and budget allocations. Conversely, it is within expectation that the Ministry of Education's delays in transferring SGs at regional levels or woreda levels (according to the Beneficiary Survey) might have had a detrimental effect on implementation efficiency (ICR, p. 18). The ICR did not comment about the SGs' cost-benefit ratio. Conversely, the ICR noted that delays in grant disbursements produced three extensions in the closing date and cancellations of some funds. In some schools and Alternative Basic Education Centers in remote areas, the inefficiencies were significant because of budget shortages and/or a lack of trained personnel to use funds or report fund utilization as required (ICR, p. 8).

Implementation efficiency. The project disbursed nearly all of its planned financing (98.4 percent of its proceeds), with three six-month closing date extensions due to delays in completing the procurement and delivery of textbooks, as well as installation of ICT infrastructure. Factors that positively affected efficiency in implementation were: smooth donor coordination during preparation and implementation (ICR, p. 25); staff continuity in the Coordination Office (p. 26); and synergy with other Bank-financed projects (ICR, p. 26). The increased conflict and violence afflicting Ethiopia after the 2017 AF were problematic from an efficiency perspective (ICR, pp. 13-14). These factors outside the control of the Bank made it impossible to sustain the project's initial expedited performance of the early years that had enabled targets to be surpassed.

Based on inefficiencies in implementation, including in some procurement activities and in the implementation of School Grants, project efficiency is rated Modest.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)

Appraisal	0	0 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓ 13.50	0 ☑ Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated High as indicated by the project's alignment with government plans/priorities and Bank strategy at closing. Efficacy is rated Substantial based on plausible achievement of improved teaching and learning conditions in primary and secondary schools. The following outputs materialized: (i) increased availability of teaching and learning materials, (ii) improvements in teachers´ skills and qualifications, (iii) application of teachers' learning, and (iv) increased grants to schools to support learning conditions. However, outcomes related to improved learning conditions, measured by a partial increase in textbook utilization and a reduction in school dropouts, were not achieved, and institutional strengthening outcomes were mixed. Efficiency is rated Modest due to lack of evidence on the cost-efficiency of various activities, as well as moderate shortcomings in the project's procurement and implementation. The ratings are indicative of moderate shortcomings in the project's preparation and implementation, leading to an overall outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory.

a. **Outcome Rating**
Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The financial sustainability of the development outcome is likely to be maintained through strong government commitment to improving learning outcomes and sectoral management through better systems; continued donor funding, at least through 2022; and the existing donor coordination processes in place (ICR, p. 30). Several activities were institutionalized, and donor funding supports the sustainability of these activities' recurrent costs. However, the persistence of ethnic conflict and violence across the country, as well as the possibly extended school closures triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, are likely to compromise school attendance in Ethiopia. A major risk is that these school closures may lead to permanent dropout of children, particularly from vulnerable households, mainly those in rural areas and especially of girls. Lost months of schooling and nutrition deficiencies will also adversely affect human capital development and earning potential of children in poor families. Going forward, the current GEQIP-E AF program preparation (additional financing to the successor project, GEQIP-E, US$300 million, 2018-2025) is considering incorporating a resilience program for the education system to face the pandemic and unrest shocks, aiming to reintegrate internally displaced children into the school system and maintaining focus on equitable and efficient access to quality education (ICR, p. 31).

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project design was based on lessons learned from the GEQIP I, strong economic and financial analytical work, international studies, and World Bank best practices (PAD, pp 15-17 and 22). While the team recognized that evidence of attribution related to strengthening teacher's capacity on quality of education was up for debate, it was reasonable to base the GEQIP II on continuation of the intervention in this domain, as it had been deemed beneficial. The project's activities and indicators were aligned with the objectives, and indicators were adequate to assess key outputs that were deemed pre-requisite to foster enhanced learning outcomes from 0 to 12 Grades. The set of indicators focused on numbers of teachers trained/qualified, but missed metrics to assess whether and to what extent and teachers used/applied their new learning/qualifications. Although this outcome may take time, the theory of change lacked indicators that would enable determination of a positive effect on learning outcomes. As explained above in Section 3, the project design set targets in line with the GOE's General Education Quality Improvement Program, and in agreement with Ethiopia's Education Sector Development Plan IV (ESDP IV). The comprehensive evaluation of GEQIP II at mid-term was a relevant foundation for the 2017 escalated targets and reformulation of the indicators/targets. The mid-term review's findings underpinned modifications of the project scope.

The appraisal team's consultations with stakeholders from the central and regional governments were fitting to ensure understanding of the government's financial constraints and to build ownership for the project. Institutional arrangements continued to be pragmatic and enhanced, whereby the project's financial management (FM) arrangements were anchored to the country's public FM system at the Ministry of Education. In addition, the project adopted a harmonization approach, which enabled an effective multi-partner operation in all regions and woredas. The appraisal team assessed the Ministry of Education's implementation capacity as a substantial risk, given the procurement delays observed in GEQIP I. The mitigation package – capacity building prior to the project and a dedicated project coordination office within the MoE -- proved to be ineffective, as the ministry's inability to monitor grants and some procurement remained unresolved.

The risks of potential emergence of violence and unrest, as well as the consequences from the recent COVID-19 pandemic, were not overt at that time of appraisal. The project's implementation and outcomes were impacted by these external factors, mainly causing dropouts or absences of children, and delays in generation of statistics by the EMIS, which ultimately underestimated learning outcomes.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The quality of supervision was adequate to track timely progress towards milestones and goals. Except for the first bi-annual ISR development objective rating (DO-rating) of June 2014 that was satisfactory, all other DO- and implementation progress ratings were moderately satisfactory (ICR, p. 3), a basis to rate supervision moderately satisfactory. Although World Bank teams of managers were proactive in providing

timely fiduciary advice and observations to the government and development partners to keep the project on track, delays still happened.

The Bank showed responsiveness in supporting the five restructurings with extension of deadlines and AF, and skillful management of the project with the aim of achieving the PDOs, despite the Ministry of Education's minimal involvement in monitoring school grants and delayed delivering of its Annual Work Plans and budgets. The project team dealt effectively with the challenges posed by conflict and violence, rising ethnic tensions, border disputes, and ongoing internal displacements in the country. At closure, the project delivered outputs, such as an increase of the primary teaching force, but did not meet all of its targets, particularly for textbook utilization (ICR, p. 17) and school grant utilization (ICR, pp. 15-16), and there was an absence of data on the number of teachers deployed and who applied/adopted their new knowledge, skills, and active teaching methods in the classroom.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design
The project's results framework clearly specified the intended outcomes and their linkages to indicators, outputs, and intermediate outcomes. The M&E design made it possible to monitor progress towards completion of planned activities and their linkages to achievement of the objectives (ICR, p. 26). The project developed M&E systems with indicators and outputs that were plausibly and logically tied to achievement of objectives for overall education. However, separate outcome indicators for primary education and secondary education were not captured, and so the project was unable to assess the extent to which education at each level improved. The project introduced or enhanced textbook procurement and delivery, M&E systems, and a teacher quality assurance system that included a teacher licensing and inspection system. In addition, the project's design included a SG management system, an M&E and Learning System for ICT, school audits, a student performance system, and enhancements to the EMIS. Institutionally, the M&E function was undertaken by the Ministry of Education and the Regional Education Bureaus (REBs). REBs monitored activities using data collected at the regional, woreda, and school levels, while the central ministry was in charge of reviewing, compiling, and feeding such data into the EMIS (ICR, p. 27).

The project's M&E design lacked gender-disaggregated outcome indicators. The lack of female/male breakdown inhibited assessments of gender equality improvements, from the student perspective. The indicator on the Grade 1 dropout rate was more suited to measure internal efficiency of the education sector than to measure the institutional strengthening objective it was supposed to measure (ICR, p. 27).

b. M&E Implementation

Overall, the results framework enabled the Ministry of Education to monitor implementation, the REBs to collect data at regional, woreda, and school levels to feed the EMIS, and the World Bank team to review implementation progress. M&E activities included: (i) systematic/routine monitoring, (ii) a mid-term review, (iii) biannual implementation support reviews, (iv) a series of evaluations on the teacher development program, SG utilization, schools' and PTAs' self-assessments, and an end-of-project comprehensive evaluation, and (v) the ICR (ICR, p. 27). As indicated in Section 2d, the project supported the design, development and completion of the EMIS, which also supported tracking procurement.

The mid-term review, as well as the SG and end-of-project evaluations, enabled close follow-up of textbook delivery and utilization by students, teacher training, SG delivery. The newly developed school inspection system was also part of the design to increase school accountability, enabled by the individual school performance reports (ICR, p. 69). The EMIS allowed project and Ministry of Education managers to collect more accurate input data for evidence-based planning, policy-making, and evaluations.

The mid-term review disclosed moderate weaknesses of M&E design. Underestimation of scope prompted the upscaling of target levels, although without revisiting potential risks, such as ethnic conflicts and violence. Textbook utilization at schools was added as an indicator, and the target for upgrading low-performing schools was reduced. For Objective 3, the indicator for production of report cards in woredas in each region was dropped in the first restructuring. Because EMIS data collection lagged by one school year, and inspection data was collected in batches, the project had insufficient time to further revise the PDO-level indicators and/or targets before its closure.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E findings from the project's various systems were effectively used to monitor implementation and inform decision-making. M&E findings were assembled by the Ministry of Education and shared with the project administrator and the Bank team. The national school inspection system informed the ministry's strategy for upgrading primary and secondary schools. The project-supported quality assurance systems were at the basis of the Ministry of Education's Education Roadmap until 2030 and other policy documents (ICR, p. 28).

The 2017 mid-term review´s finding of targets having been surpassed was used by the government and the Bank to modify the results framework and serve as a basis for the first restructuring. Results from subsequent monitoring mechanisms were also the basis for justifying four additional restructurings to accommodate implementation delays in textbook procurement, in ICT infrastructure, and in EMIS data collection.

M&E Quality Rating
Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Environmental and social compliance. The Project was classified as Environmental Assessment category C and did not trigger safeguards. Gaps in social policies implementation assessment were addressed with the Ministry of Education, and most REBs allocated budget for cascaded trainings. Implementation action plans for social aspects were prepared. The project demonstrated coordination among its different directorates. Performance was impacted by delays in the institutionalization of the existing grievance redress mechanism (including the establishment of up-take location and documentation at regional and woreda levels), and weakness in following up and supporting regions due to lack of environmental and social safeguards experts.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial compliance was rated moderately satisfactory in ISRs throughout project implementation. Fiduciary staff within the Ministry of Education ensured timely submission of good quality quarterly Interim Financial reports. In addition, external auditors were in place and completed school grant audits mostly on time with unqualified (clean) opinions. Overall, the project accomplished the financial covenants of the Financing Agreements (ICR, p. 28). The project adequately executed US$517.2 million disbursement (of the revised US$529.72 million planned). Due to a dispute between the Ministry of Education and a supplier on a tax issue, the closing of contract procurement and delivery of E-cloud infrastructure (under Objective 3) was still pending at the time of the ICR preparation. This has delayed the disbursement of the remaining 20 percent payment to the supplier (ICR, p. 43). The final independent financial audit report took place on July 17, 2019.

The project experienced a problematic initial funds flow, which was solved by introducing additional reporting on cash balances and basing processing of advances on these. The project used Integrated Budget and Expenditure at federal and regional levels and kept intact internal control procedures throughout implementation. Financial management challenges and weaknesses identified related to the following: (i) Annual Work Plan preparation delayed until the first quarter; (ii) budget allocations consequently delayed; (iii) substantial delays in school grant audits and covering two percent instead of the planned ten percent of schools; (iv) Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation inaction or delays in addressing findings from grant audits of regional schools and subsequently delayed communication to the World Bank; (vi) limited engagement of the internal audit in reviewing school grants; and (vi) ineffective and inefficient meeting for the project of the Financial Management Taskforce led by the government.

Procurement, except for the initial assessment rated satisfactory (6/2014), was marked by moderately satisfactory ratings throughout the project due to delays. The project showed inability to hire qualified procurement and contract administration staff at the central and regional levels due to existing salary caps. The project was to comply with the Bank's requirements under OP/BP10.00 by having a dedicated project coordination office within the Ministry of Education in charge of procurement, financial management, and M&E functions. This requirement, the early and regular familiarization of the implementing agencies with the Bank's procurement guidelines, and the Bank team's regular procurement supervision and support for contract management were insufficient to overcome the procurement risk identified at appraisal (ICR, p. 29).

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None reported.

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR (pp. 32-33) offered several lessons, including the following adapted by IEG:

- **Textbook competitive pricing and a few up-front procurement actions can generate savings and increase efficiency.** The combined use of international competitive bidding that bundled textbook development, printing, and distribution; the use of quality and price as tenders' evaluation criteria; a copyright agreement allowing the government to reprint at no additional cost; and large print runs generated US$25 million in savings.
- **In conflict-afflicted contexts such as Ethiopia's, the use of rapid surveys and digital data collection can support timeliness of regular data collection.** Data collection from remote and poorly connected areas, as well as manual data collection, were challenging factors for the project's completion and timely generation of statistics that fed the EMIS.
- **In conflict or violence contexts, strong attention to realism in defining indicators and setting targets is important especially in projects with decentralized implementation.** In its final year, this project lacked time to accommodate for implementation delays, hindering target achievement. When considering extensions and restructurings, activities including building social cohesion, provision of psychological support to conflict-affected children and their families, empowerment of girls, and prevention of gender-based violence and early marriage are also important dimensions to consider in restructurings.
- **Careful attention to having systems to track textbook distribution and ensure that textbooks and teaching material reach schools is essential.** Similarly, in this project, encouraging the government to maintain financing for continuous textbook provision independent from development partners was beneficial.

This review adds an additional key lesson, related to books procured:

- **Buying teaching and learning materials does not produce impact if students leave textbooks at home and do not use them.** When defining characteristics of books to be procured and distributed, factors such as weight and bulkiness of the books, as well as bags for carrying them, are important considerations, the more so if a set of students must travel long walking distances to and from school. The 2019 project exit evaluation showed low textbook utilization in all grades in classrooms due to inconvenient dimensions of carrying the books.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR provided complete information on the original and revised project scope and implementation. It was internally consistent and followed guidelines. The narrative on the theory of change focused on results, and analyses were well explained. The project would have benefited from capturing the individual performance of primary education separate from that of secondary education. The ICR's analysis lacked a discussion of cost-efficiency of procurement, grants, and capacity building activities. The procurement storyline would have benefited from more clarity. The assessments of Bank supervision focused on the more effective aspects but lacked a discussion of the shortcomings at the basis of the moderately satisfactory Implementation Performance Ratings across the project's lifetime. The lessons section provided relevant and coherent insights for enhancing education service delivery, and on general knowledge (i.e., evident impact of new processes extends beyond the life of the project). The ICR presented ratings tables under each objective without supporting data in the tables, making it difficult to understand what was underpinning those ratings. Several elements of efficacy were more elegantly presented in the lessons than they were in the actual efficacy discussion. Overall, however, the ICR provided a well-written implementation narrative, enabling assessment of the project's outcomes.

  a. **Quality of ICR Rating**
  Substantial