



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

Date Prepared/Updated: 10/21/2019 | Report No: ESRSC00863



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Country | Region | Project ID | Parent Project ID (if any) |
| Maldives | SOUTH ASIA | P172631 | |
| Project Name | Maldives Learning and Measurement Advancement Project | | |
| Practice Area (Lead) | Financing Instrument | Estimated Appraisal Date | Estimated Board Date |
| Education | Investment Project Financing | | 5/31/2020 |
| Borrower(s) | Implementing Agency(ies) | | |
| Ministry of Finance | Ministry of Education | | |

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to promote learning focused curriculum implementation and strengthen the measurement of learning outcomes

| Financing (in USD Million) | Amount |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Total Project Cost | 3.70 |

B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

The project will have the following three components.

Component One: Curriculum Implementation Support. The Government of Maldives (GoM) is implementing a new comprehensive curriculum framework. The Project will support GoM to: (a) assess how the intended curriculum meets with the taught curriculum in schools; (b) assess whether key competencies are incorporated into teaching/learning and school programs; (c) identify which pedagogical approaches are used; and (d) identify the practiced assessment approach and techniques, including Assessment for Learning (AFL). Special attention is being paid to strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills. These are critical for learning achievement and the Maldives is establishing a program to ensure that these skills are developed from an early age. Solid educational foundations in the early years lays the groundwork for strong learning achievement later in the schooling cycle. The Project will



support the GoM to establish a remedial literacy and numeracy program at the relevant Key stages, starting from Foundation stage. This will include support for conducting a global review of screening tools and programs for remedial action (to identify best international practice in this area); assistance for the adaptation literacy and numeracy screening tools to the Maldivian context; as well as support for the development of a remedial program to address learning difficulties.

Component Two: Strengthening Teacher Education and Development. Strengthening the quality of pre-service teacher education is particularly important if the Maldives is to improve the quality of education. Strengthening professional teacher development, particularly school-based teacher development, is important for improving education quality. To improve teacher quality, the school-based teacher development (SBTD) program needs to be strengthened to ensure that these programs are effective in improving teacher motivation, knowledge and practice. The Project will support the GoM to develop the SBTD program. This will include a review of the current practices in SBTD, and actions for further the development of SBTD through initiatives to sensitize school principals to their proper role in SBTD, strengthen the capacity of schools to identify and implement relevant SBTD programs. Related to this, the Project will also support the GoM to further develop Teacher Resource Centers (TRC), which already play a vital role in the professional development of teachers in schools. It will be important to leverage this platform to further enhance SBTD, and particularly to train teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum.

Component Three: Improving the Measurement of Learning Outcomes. The Maldives needs to focus on improving its system for measuring learning outcomes, especially in relation to international levels of learning. The National Assessments of Learning Outcomes (NALO) needs to incorporate measurement instruments from international assessments, such as PISA or TIMMS, to enable the country to benchmark its learning outcomes against global standards. The Project will support the GoM to implement national assessments of learning outcomes which contain modules from international assessments. This would also include identifying the right assessment for the country and in-country capacity building to prepare for participation in future international assessments. In addition, the Project will support the GoM to more effectively utilize NALO for policy and planning purposes, with a special focus on implications of NALO results for curriculum design and implementation, teacher education and development, quality assurance of schools, and resource allocation.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

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

The project area includes the whole island nation of the Maldives. The Maldives consists of 1,192 coral islands grouped in a double chain of 26 atolls. The country's atolls encompass a territory spread over roughly 90,000 km², making it one of the world's most geographically dispersed countries. Over 200 of its 1,192 islands are habituated by the country's population, with an average of 5-10 islands in each atoll being inhabited islands that have infrastructure such as housing, roads and other facilities built in. A significant number of uninhabited islands in each atoll have also been converted to resorts and tourism facilities as well as house infrastructure such as industrial facilities and airports. The atolls are composed of live coral reefs and sand bars, situated atop a submerged ridge 960 km long that rises abruptly from the depths of the Indian Ocean. Maldives is noted as the country placed at the lowest elevation in the world, with maximum and average natural ground levels of only 2.4 m and 1.5 m above sea level, respectively. More than 80 per cent of the country's land is composed of coral islands which rise less than one meter above sea level. The islands consist of coral, sea grass, seaweed, mangrove and sand dune ecosystems which are of great ecological and socio-economic significance. Maldives is home to a number ecologically sensitive marine habitats in shallow and intertidal zones which have been designated as protected areas by the Ministry of Environment and



Energy (MEE) and these regions and any activities in their vicinity are stringently monitored and managed. While the exact locations of project investments are not currently known, project interventions will only be conducted in inhabited islands, which have already been zoned and developed for human habitation.

As of 2017, Maldives has 436,330 inhabitants with approximately 373,330 Maldivians and 63,000 expatriate workers. More than 30 percent of the population live in the capital city Malé, and the rest are distributed among just under 200 other inhabited islands. Basic human development indicators are high. Maldives ranks 101 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2017, the second-highest HDI rank in South Asia after Sri Lanka. The adult literacy rate is 98.6 percent, life expectancy is 77.6 years, the infant mortality rate is 7.3 per 1,000 live births, and the maternal mortality ratio is 68 out of 100,000 live births.

The Maldivian economy experienced average economic growth of 6.9 percent in 2017. The economy is dependent on a small number of sectors, with the following contribution to GDP in 2018: tourism (19.9 percent), government administration (11 percent), communication (11 percent), transport (11.6 percent), construction (8.9 percent), real estate (8 percent), wholesale and retail trade (4 percent), manufacturing (4 percent), education (4 percent), and several other relatively small sectors.

In 2012, the Maldives had about 62,000 students and 6,000 teachers in approximately 220 public schools. The Maldivian education system consists of the following stages: primary education (grades 1–7, ages 6–12), lower secondary education (grades 8–10, ages 13–15), higher secondary education (grades 11–12, ages 16–17), and higher education (ages 18 onward). The overall net primary enrollment rate was high at 94 percent. There was also gender parity, with the net primary enrollment for boys at 94 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate for girls also at 94 percent. The net lower secondary enrollment rate was 81 percent, with boys’ net enrollment at 83 percent and girls’ net enrollment at 79 percent.

The quality of education at all levels has been a major policy challenge facing the Maldives. According to the ICR of the Enhancing Education Development Project (P131331), learning outcomes in both primary and secondary education were modest and there were substantial regional disparities. National assessments of learning out

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The ESP will be executed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education which are agencies that have a long history of engagement with the World Bank and other donor financed implementation, and successful implementation of environmental and social due diligence, within the context of these programs, most recently through the Maldives Enhancing Education Development Project (EEDP). The need and E&S capacity to implement Bank’s ESSs will be assessed by Activity six as proposed in this TA and institutional strengthening plan will be suggested.

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

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Low

Environmental Risk Rating

Low

The grant operation is classified to have 'low risks' as activities are fully TA in nature such as analysis of the literacy strategy, study of the system for learning assessments and key education development initiatives and stakeholder

Public Disclosure



consultations on GPE ESPIG application; without any envisaged environmental and social risks and impacts. It will not involve any physical works nor any feasibility studies or detailed design or development of any strategy or plan leading to any investment. . Thus the associated environmental risks of the grant operation and potential downstream impacts of the studies it will finance are thus assessed to be negligible and thus classified as low in line with the ESF.

Social Risk Rating

Low

The TA activities supported under the project would not lead to any direct adverse social impacts. Project activities will be focused mainly on studies and technical assessments. In the process of carrying out studies and assessments, all relevant stakeholders including women and vulnerable groups will be ensured to address their interests and needs . The outcomes of the TA support is expected to have a long term positive impacts in the form of identifying learning and training needs and enhancing capacity for environmental and social assessments and due diligence. Further to enhance gender equity and social inclusion of the ESP, a gender-based analysis will part of all activities planned under this TA.

B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

B.1. General Assessment

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:

The project has negligible environmental and social risks and impacts as activities are purely TA in nature. That said, analytics and studies to be financed will still be screened for any environmental and social risks and, where warranted, the terms of reference of the analytics and studies will include provisions for screening and analyzing risks and impacts. Otherwise if there are no risks and impacts after screening, nothing will be done thereafter.

An ESCP will be developed by the Grantee during preparation, disclosed prior to appraisal and agreed with the Bank by negotiations. The ESCP will include a simplified Labor Management Procedures proportional to the low labor risk of the project as well as a simplified Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

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

The use of Borrower Framework is not being considered for this TA. The project will meet both requirements of the Government of Maldives and the relevant World Bank ESSs.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Consultations and disclosure of information with stakeholders will be at the core for planning and implementation of the project. The key stakeholders which include relevant Ministries, state planning departments, project beneficiaries and target audiences in Male and the atolls, target employees, researchers/respondents will be identified with the support of borrower. The borrower will map all stakeholders, prepare a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) during preparation and this SEP will be a part of the ESCP agreed with the borrower. As part of SEP, a Grievance Redress Mechanism for direct workers will be developed. In addition, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the context of

Public Disclosure



the project will be identified and mechanisms will be included for their engagement in developing and implementing the SEP. The SEP as part of the ESCP prepared during preparation will be updated proportionate to the nature and scale of project during implementation.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

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

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

This standard is relevant. The project will involve: direct workers engaged in consultancy, services firms (for developing data systems, undertaking studies, etc.) or data enumeration employed as direct workers. Accordingly, the Project will document existing labor management procedures and incorporate aspects such as: applicability of labor laws and, non-discrimination and equal opportunity, grievance mechanism to all workers, occupation health and safety aspects, among others. However, the project footprint is envisaged to be relatively small and short term. Given the low risk of this project, the Labor Management Procedures developed, will be incorporated in the ESCP.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

This standard is not relevant as the activities proposed under the project in the form of studies do not include any activities that will impact resource use and efficiency and pollution.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

This standard is not relevant since there will be physical works nor expected labor influx.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

This standard is not relevant. Project activities do not envisage any land acquisition, activities that would restrict land use, and case impacts relating to involuntary resettlement.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

This standard is not relevant as project is purely TA with no direct or indirect impacts on biodiversity and living natural resources.

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

This ESS is not relevant in the project area. There is no evidence suggesting the presence of Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities in the Maldives.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage



This standard is not relevant for the project as cultural assets, both tangible and non-tangible will not be impacted by the TA activities.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

Given the nature of the project, this standard is not relevant as there will not be an financial intermediaries involved.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

None foreseen in relation to the project activities.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways

No

The proposed project activities do not have any impacts on international waterways and therefore this policy is not triggered

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas

No

There are no disputed areas in the Maldives therefore this policy is not triggered.

III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered?

No

Financing Partners

The grant does not include any financing with partners.

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

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

Actions to be completed by Appraisal:

1. The TA activities will be screened and the results of the screening will be documented in the PAD, ESRS Appraisal Stage and the ESCP. Specific measures and instruments resulting from this screening for addressing the social and environmental risks will be proposed in the ESCP.

2.Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

3. Labor Management Procedures- will be included in the ESCP.

4. Gender analysis relating to: Gender based expenditure analysis on the Education sector.

The ESCP will be finalized with the borrower.

Public Disclosure



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

Measures for enhancing capacity of project teams on identification and management of environmental and social issues, implementation arrangements for stakeholder engagement, establishment of GRM, gender inclusion and implementation of the Labor Management Procedures.

C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS

27-Mar-2020

IV. CONTACT POINTS

World Bank

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Contact: | Harsha Aturupane | Title: | Lead Economist |
| Telephone No: | 5723+306 | Email: | daturupane@worldbank.org |

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Ministry of Finance

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

VI. APPROVAL

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Task Team Leader(s): | Harsha Aturupane |
| Practice Manager (ENR/Social) | David Seth Warren Recommended on 21-Oct-2019 at 12:20:37 EDT |

Public Disclosure