



Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary

Concept Stage

(ESRS Concept Stage)

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BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)
Kyrgyz Republic	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	P170542	
Project Name	Learning for the Future		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Education	Investment Project Financing	11/14/2019	3/31/2020
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)		
Kyrgyz Republic	Ministry of Education and Science		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To enhance child readiness and teacher effectiveness in pre-school through secondary education for building foundational skills

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Total Project Cost	55.00

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

No

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

A. Country Context

The Kyrgyz Republic is a land-locked mountainous nation of 6 million people, with an income per capita of US\$ 1,179 (2016), and considerable economic potential based on its rich endowments. The annual population growth rate is 2.1 percent; one third of the population is under the age of 15 years; two thirds of the population live in rural areas. The country is distinguished within the region by its liberal political regime, a lower level of capture of the state by narrow vested interests, and a lighter state footprint in the economy. The country has rich, largely unexploited, natural endowments in the form of minerals, as well as large potential to expand agriculture, hydroelectricity and tourism. It



sits at the crossroads of the Chinese, South Asian and Russian markets, with unfettered access to the Eurasian Economic Union (of which it is a member).

The economy grew at an average annual rate of 4.5 percent over the 2000-2016 period, largely driven by gold extraction and worker remittances from abroad. Growth in recent years resulted in only modest improvements in welfare among the bottom 40 percent coupled with falling incomes for the upper 60 percent. Nearly a quarter of the population live below the international poverty line of US\$ 3.2 per capita per day, with a still larger proportion of households clustered just above the poverty line and therefore vulnerable even to small shocks. Economic growth and poverty reduction are below the country's potential, due to a business environment un conducive to private investment and job creation, weak public institutions and services, and constrained human capital that lacks essential skills required for a more productive and dynamic economy.

Given relatively high poverty and vulnerability, medium-term macro-sustainability risks and the weakening relationship between poverty reduction and growth, sustained progress on the twin goals will depend on the Kyrgyz Republic's ability to shift to a new, more dynamic growth model under which human capital improvements across all strata can make a significant contribution to inclusive growth and productivity.

The Human Capital Index ranked Kyrgyz Republic 58th out of 157 countries, meaning a Kyrgyz child born today will be 58 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and was fully healthy. Given a large bulge in its school and youth population aged under 30 years, the country has a challenge as well as a huge opportunity to boost its human capital.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

Basic Facts and Data

Kyrgyz's education system has five levels. Pre-school education covers children aged zero to six years. Primary and lower secondary education, both of which are compulsory, cover grades 1 to 4 (usually ages 7-10 years) and 5 to 9 (11-15 years), respectively. Upper secondary school lasting two years is non-compulsory and can be completed in general education schools, vocational schools, or specialized technical schools. Post-secondary schooling is available through vocational schools and specialized technical schools, and universities. Education is overwhelmingly provided by the public sector, which enrolled approximately 98% of all preprimary (0-6 years) and general secondary (Grades 1-11) students in 2016.

The pre-school sector is covered by various options including: nurseries (for ages 6 months to 3 years); State Kindergartens (ages 3 to 7 years) that provide a range of care and developmental support services on a full-shift basis (many from the Soviet period); Shift-based Kindergartens (SbK) that usually provide half-day early childhood education; and the 480 hours school-readiness (Nariste) program for children aged 6 years who otherwise would not attend any ECD program, and which is delivered in a dedicated classroom of a primary school.

The net enrollment rate (NER) in ECD institutions (other than Nariste) for children aged 3-6 years roughly doubled from 13 percent in 2007 to 25 percent in 2016, with no disparities between girls and boys; the enrollment rate for children below the age of 3 years is roughly 4 percent. Enrollment rates in urban areas are roughly twice those of rural areas; Bishkek and Osh have substantially higher enrollment rates than other oblasts; and the wealthiest quintile of households have a 50 percent enrollment rate compared to 12 percent for the poorest quintile. Urban group sizes



in 2016 averaged 42 children, compared to 29 in rural areas. In 2017-18, 79 percent of Grade 1 students had attended some form of pre-primary education institution, up from 56 percent in 2015-16. The Nariste program notwithstanding (which covers only children aged 6 years), the main constraint on ECE coverage is the lack of supply.

The situation is quite different at the primary and secondary levels. Enrolment rates for Grades 1-9 are near universal (above 99% for Grades 1-4 and 98% for Grades 5-9), with no disparity between girls and boys. Enrollment drops off at upper secondary; net attendance rates for Grades 10-11 were estimated to be 79 and 86 percent respectively for boys and girls in 2014.

General secondary enrolment rates fall somewhat short of 100% due in part due to the lack of inclusive education opportunities. This constraint begins at the pre-primary level, which has 14 special kindergartens for children with special education needs (SEN); of which two-thirds are in Bishkek city. These kindergartens are inaccessible to most children, and the mainstream pre-primary education programs have no provision for integrating children with SEN. The situation is similar at the primary level. There are specialized institutions which are geographically inaccessible for most children, while the mainstream schools have little or no experience or programs for including children with SEN. A recent Bank-supervised GPE-funded Project successfully piloted an integrated approach to children with SEN, in which children were assessed early by a multi-disciplinary team and referred as needed to specialized services; received intensive education at school; and were gradually integrated into mainstream classrooms when possible. The project also supported the strengthening of local networks of parents, teachers and other stakeholders to create a more enabling environment for these children. The pilot was assessed favorably, and the model was included in the National Concept on Inclusive Education, which is currently under consideration by the Government.

Key challenges

There is a learning crisis causing low functional literacy among 15-year-old. The education system is improving its performance with incremental gains in student learning results since 2010 but significant gaps remain in learning achievements and the skills students acquire. This adversely impacts Kyrgyz children and youth, preventing them from realizing their full potential and thereby weakening the foundations of human capital. Evidence can be found from large-scale international and national assessments including: The Early Development Instrument (EDI), the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA), the test for the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and the Survey of Adult Skills of the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC).

For example:

- The EDI 2015/16 found that children enrolled in SbKs demonstrated improved EDI scores over the program's timeframe, with the greatest gains in the Language and Cognitive Development domain. However, one quarter of children were still vulnerable on one or more domains even at the end of the program.
- The EGRA 2017 found that only 44 and 47 percent of sampled students in Grades 2 and 4 attained grade-level oral reading fluency (ORF). These represented gains of 10/13 percentage points over the EGRA 2014 results.
- The NSBA 2017 found that many Grade 4 students performed below basic level in Reading and Comprehension (60 percent) and Mathematics (53 percent). This was an improvement of 4.5 and 11.7 percentage points, respectively, compared to 2014. As one indication of disparate performance, the percentage of students scoring below basic level



in 2014 ranged widely from 43 percent in Bishkek to 60 percent in regional centers and small towns to 70 percent in rural schools. The percentage of grade 8 students below basic level also improved (i.e. dropped from 67 percent in Reading and 71 percent Comprehension/Mathematics in 2009 to 52/65 percent in 2017).

- Kyrgyzstan's results in PISA 2009 indicated that students aged 15 years lag approximately 4.5 grade levels behind the OECD average; and that there are large geographic variations in performance, with southern and Talas oblasts scoring poorly.
- The EGRA, NSBA and PISA all found that, on average, girls performed better than boys in all subjects.
- A 2018 PIACC survey found that Kyrgyz adults scored approximately 20 points lower than the OECD average in terms of functional literacy and numeracy (247 and 243, versus 268 and 263, respectively); it also found the highest variability in performance across respondents it had recorded in any country to date.

In 2018, the Human Capital Index used some of this data to calculate the reported learning gap of 4.2 years in the Kyrgyz Republic; indicating that 12.6 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school completed by age 18 years is equivalent to only 8.4 years when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning. Altogether, these results point to the school system's lack of effectiveness and efficiency and the need to better prepare young people to carry out the tasks that enable them to participate effectively and proactively in economic and social life, and more generally to build the kind of human capital that is increasingly required by Kyrgyzstan's aspirations for a high-productivity economy.

The key factors contributing to Kyrgyzstan's education performance and deficiency in learning outcomes can be analyzed using a framework that unpacks the breakdown.

Children not prepared for learning

Data indicate that the relatively low ECE coverage contributes to the education sector's poor performance. The PISA 2009 results showed that students who received more than one year of pre-primary education performed better than those who had not. Further, the EGRA 2011 found that Russian-speaking students with pre-primary experience performed better compared to those without (though there was no difference for Kyrgyz-speaking students). At the same time, the quality needs to be enhanced with standards for child development and effective teaching practice that interact, engage and stimulate children's physical and emotional growth and readiness for learning. For instance, a representative sample of standardized classroom observations of the Nariste program in 2016 found that 65 percent had no book area assigned for reading; and more than 80 percent of classrooms had fewer than 15 books and limited writing materials. Students spent roughly 60 percent of their classroom time in a whole-group setting, indicating that didactic rather than explorative or play-based lessons are the norm.

Teacher quality, competency and practice impact learning

Sixty-five percent of pre-primary and 95 percent of primary-secondary teachers have university degrees. However, this does not necessarily imply that secondary teachers have a tertiary education in all the subjects they teach. Further, given the quality of their initial teacher education, teachers often do not have the competency and pedagogy to adapt to student learning of varied levels and abilities, blending digital technology and social emotional skills.



While most pre-school teachers are regular primary and or secondary teachers who have been retrained with short courses, this has not been sufficient to ensure effective pre-school teaching, which requires specific pedagogy and competency to engage and interact with children to stimulate their curiosity and learning.

Although the primary and secondary levels made progress in recent years through in-service teacher training to introduce stronger practices, there is still significant room for improvement. In general, teaching practices are oriented toward the whole group; rely heavily upon chalk-and-talk and simple question and answers techniques. In the higher grades, they make inadequate use of formative assessments, and focus on teaching facts, simple operations and getting students to recite back what they have heard or read rather than fostering higher-order learning and life-useful skills. CLASS scores (based on observations of a representative sample of Grade 4 classrooms) in 2017 were 5.7 for emotional support, 5.2 for classroom organization and 2.8 for instructional support.

Continuous professional development (CPD) is not working effectively. The system for CPD is rigid, difficult to access and expensive. Norms stipulate that teachers should receive 72 hours of in-service training every five years. The trainings are of limited variety (depending on the teacher's formal qualifications and what they teach) and are generally delivered at one go over a period of days at either the Republican or Oblast Teacher Training Institute (TTI). While each year approximately 16,000 teachers should attend one of these in-service trainings, only 10,000 are actually trained (roughly 60% of target). Even these numbers overstate the system's capacity, in that there are substantial arrears of per-diem and transport allowances payable to teachers, i.e. the teachers attended the trainings at their own expense. The limited offerings make it difficult to meet teachers' individual professional development needs, which in any case are not systematically assessed against competencies. Further, they do not address the use of IT; climate change; inclusive education; and fostering socio-emotional skills. The Bank-supported Sector Support for Education Reform project introduced a standardized classroom practices observation instrument (CLASS), which can be used to identify professional development needs; but much work remains to institutionalize and scale up its use. The Republican TTI has recently begun to experiment with the design and delivery of online/offline courses, but it requires significant capacity building. These digital initiatives are part of a broader reform that the Republican TTI is developing to make the CPD system more flexible, responsive, accessible and affordable.

The MoES (Ministry of Education and Science) has developed a draft teacher competency framework to align with the competency-based curriculum. It also developed CPD programs (and assessments of teacher practices) against clearly articulated teacher professional standards. The framework includes: fostering students' socio-emotional skills; including children with special education needs; and digital literacy.

Lack of essential inputs constrain learning

Teaching-learning practices are constrained in part by the predominant role played by the textbook, and the lack of other teaching-learning materials including IT equipment, science laboratories and books. The MoES focused its energies in recent years on aligning textbooks with the new curriculum and developing a textbook rental scheme to resolve issues of availability and sustainability. These efforts are paying off, as nearly all textbooks have been revised to be aligned with the curricular competencies (except for social studies). The NSBA surveys of school management indicate that the average textbook availability increased from 74 percent in 2014 to 80 percent in 2017. The government's Strategy 2040 and draft Education Sector Plan (ESP 2021- 26) recognize the pressing need to strengthen digital literacy and teaching-learning practices through the widespread use of digital technologies and content. It supported limited initiatives to introduce digital technologies and content into schools, through inter alia the Bank-



financed SSER project (benefiting 60 schools) and the ‘Smart School’ program (100 schools). But the work to adapt, develop and distribute digital content that can be accessed at schools has barely begun. In 2016, there was on average only one computer for every 25 students; while only 35 percent of schools had internet access. These technologies are imperative for preparing students to become adaptive learners.

Curriculum and assessment need to be aligned and enhanced

The MoES and Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE) made substantial progress over the past decade in reforming the curriculum, which is now broadly competency-based. The main challenge is to ensure that teachers understand the competency-based approach and teach accordingly. The curriculum includes such cross-cutting competencies as self-organization and problem-solving, as well as social and communication skills; but has gaps pertaining to socio-emotional skills.

The national assessment system in Kyrgyz Republic covers classroom assessments for improving teaching and learning; examinations for making high-stakes decisions about individual students; and large-scale assessments for determining system learning levels and related factors. The institutional capacity has been strengthened under the technical assistance financed by the Russian Education Aid for Development (READ). Classroom-based assessment is emerging as a key instrument for improving learning in classroom. Many teachers have been trained but need to be supported in practice. Summative assessments need to be strengthened, particularly at Grades 4, 9 and 11, to be better aligned with the competency-based curriculum. Grade 4 tests are designed and administered by teachers and schools, while Grade 9/11 tests are designed by the NTC and administered locally by schools and local education authorities. However, in both cases the items tend to be traditional in character, in that they test memorization of facts or simple operations and use multiple-choice and short answer formats. They do not assess competencies involving higher-order skills of understanding, analysis, argumentation, application of knowledge and skills to problem situations, and so forth. While the NTC has been making strides in recent years to re-orient summative exercises to broaden the competencies tested and the formats used, there is still much to be done; while at school level, teachers are accustomed to traditional methods of evaluation and have limited capacity in designing competency-based assessments. The lack of alignment between the summative exams and the competencies of the curriculum (including those needed for a more highly productive economy) works against the teaching of skills, as teachers tend to teach those capacities that are assessed at the end of a cycle. The NTC has limited technical capacity for item development, test construction and results analysis. Further, there is no in-country experience in assessing socio-emotional skills.

Teaching-learning practices are constrained in part by the traditional five-point system teachers use to report on students’ progress. This rigid system is highly reductive and overly summative in character. It does not encourage teachers to think broadly about how well their students are learning. For instance, it does not emphasize how well students master and use the range of higher-order competencies that the revised curriculum targets and that are critical for building the foundations for skills valued later as human capital. It also does not include useful reflections or diagnoses as to what the student (with teacher and parental support) can do to better to master these competencies. Moving towards a more comprehensive, diagnostic system will require building teachers’ capacities to assess their students and report on progress by established criteria.

Teaching-learning practices are also constrained by end-of-cycle summative tests at Grades 4, 9 and 11 as well as by the pre-university ORT. These instruments test factual knowledge and relatively simple competencies using multiple-



choice and short-answer formats. Given the importance generally accorded to these tests, particularly the increasingly high stakes at Grades 9, 11 and the university application stage, they discourage teachers from developing higher-order competencies in their students.

The MoES has regularly supported large-scale assessments including the EDI (2015/16); EGRA (2017); and NSBA (2017), which evaluate learning in three subjects at Grades 4 and 8 and provides valuable system-diagnostic information. At an international level, the MoES participated in PISA (2009) and announced its intention to participate again in 2024.

Efficiency of financing and management must improve to maximize performance and results

Government expenditures on education as a share of GDP grew from 6.3% in 2014 to 7.7% in 2016; during the same period, government expenditures on education of total expenditures remained consistent (from 18.5 to 18.9 percent). These levels are in line with spending from comparator countries including OECD members. However, if the spending is broken down by student, the per student expenditure falls short due to a large cohort of preschool and school children relative to the general population. While the increases went almost entirely to pre-school and general secondary education, this was driven mainly by the recovery of wage bill expenditures to the 2012 pre-fiscal consolidation levels; and a tripling (between 2011-16) of capital expenditures (measured as a percentage of GDP). The percentage of public education expenditures allocated to the preprimary level increased from 8.8% in 2011 to 13% in 2016. This was mainly due to a three-fold increase in wages and a two-fold increase in goods and services expenditures. The Bank's 2017 Public Expenditures Review (PER) found that the share of pre-school investments remains low (7.6%) despite the increases in capital expenditures for education. Further, the PER estimated that the government would need to increase its 2016 level of pre-primary expenditures by a factor of five to reach a net enrollment rate of 70% for children aged 3-6 years by 2021. The PER also suggested that areas where expenditures might be optimized for more efficient and equitable service provision include school meals and wages. Thirty-eight percent of non-wage recurrent expenditures in 2016 were allocated to the provision of meals.

The MoES provides performance incentives for quality teaching but faces operational challenges. Each school has a committee to evaluate teachers but does not have clear standardized methods of evaluation. The MoES established a working group to reform the incentives system. The recent work to elaborate teacher professional standards will, once finalized and distributed, provide schools with an evaluative basis. The Bank-supported SSER project introduced the use of valid and reliable classroom observations (using CLASS), which could be used to help determine incentives allocations; but it has yet to be institutionalized and scaled up.

Data and management information systems are essential for planning and decision-making at school level to support learning. The MoES has made progress in recent years in strengthening its education management information system (EMIS). However, the system still struggles to generate timely, reliable, accessible and comprehensive information. There are several underlying challenges, such as overlapping data collection exercises; and the development, piloting and partial scaling up of various software packages, none of which are satisfactory in terms of architecture, informational range, licensing fees and security. However, the main constraint to date has been the lack of a dedicated EMIS functional unit at the MoES working from a technically sound Master Plan. In this regard, and partially in response to governmental IT programs, the MoES has recently established an Office responsible for digital management initiatives that is technically capable and has prioritized the elaboration and operationalization of an EMIS Master Plan. The Office has provisionally cleared the use of an adapted version of the UNESCO-supported open



EMIS software, which is currently being piloted; after which, the MoES will finalize a Master Plan for its institutionalization and scale-up. As part of the Master Plan, the Office foresees establishing an EMIS function within the NTC. The plans for institutionalization are constrained by the NTC's limited technical capacities and resources.

Government strategy and program

In 2018, the President of the Republic approved the 'National Development Strategy for 2018-2040 (Strategy 2040)'. Its focus is to create opportunities for human capital development including through education and the creation of highly-productive quality jobs, particularly in strategic sectors. It is fully aligned with the SDGs. The first phase of the Strategy 2040, the 'Development Program of the KR 2018-22 (Program 22)' acknowledges that the education system is not yet effective in developing the higher order skills that are needed; and identifies several education sector priorities, including: (i) improving the quality of education; (ii) making the education system more effective in teaching skills required by the modern economy; (iii) supplying schools with a broader range of modern teaching-learning materials and innovative technology and (iv) strengthening the professional capacities of teachers. The MoES's preliminary draft of the National Education Plan 2021-2026 (NEP 2026) addresses Program 22's objectives focusing on: (i) expanding access to ECE and improving its quality; (ii) strengthening teacher professional capacities to effectively teach skills, including transversal competencies (such as digital literacy) and providing flexible, accessible and affordable continuous professional development ; (iii) improving the availability and use of digital teaching-learning materials at schools; and (iv) strengthening assessment systems to: ensure children are formatively assessed, summative assessments are aligned with curricular competencies, and sample-based learning outcome evaluations are carried out to identify and remedy system weaknesses.

The project seeks to contribute to achieving these objectives by expanding ECE and enhancing the quality of education i.e., by promoting socio-emotional skills to establish the foundation for adaptive learning to acquire the necessary skills for becoming a successful modern worker. In addition, it seeks to improving teaching practices more broadly in general education with the use of digital materials. Toward this end, the project also works to enhance the measurement of cognitive and non-cognitive skills and all three types of assessments outlined in the NEP 2026.

C. Relationship to CPF

The Project is aligned with the CPF Focus Area 3 (Enhance economic opportunities and resilience), Objective 7 (Develop human capital). One of the objective's key outcomes is improved education outcomes related to results on the national school-leaving exam and adult competencies and workplace skills. To achieve this the CPF includes: strengthening the formal education system to increase market-relevant skills; enhancing learning outcomes in basic education, including digital literacy in the curriculum, improving assessment; expanding early childhood education to facilitate women's participation in the labor market, develop children's school readiness and wellbeing; and bridge gender-based educational gaps. The project will contribute to enhancing human capital development by results in two main areas: (a) increased child readiness for learning through increased access to early childhood education through the establishment of Shift-based Kindergartens, enhanced quality, measurement of child growth and development, and reformed public financing of ECE and; (b) enhanced learning outcomes by strengthening teacher effectiveness, integrating transversal teacher competencies related inter alia to digital literacy and socio-emotional skills, and providing schools with digital content and technologies and modernized assessment tools.

Corporate Priorities



Gender. Gender parity is achieved in terms of access to pre-school and general education. However, disparity exists in student learning outcomes in that boys lag in reading by a year and half. The project will address that gap through two initiatives including: (1). enhancing teacher pedagogy for reading at varying levels and abilities and (2) introducing a remedial program targeted to boys who are left behind with a home -based reading program.

Climate change. The project will incorporate climate change into the new competency and skills framework for teachers' professional development and training to build their capacity to integrate the subject into teaching. Additionally, the learning materials for teaching and learning to be developed and accessed on and off line will incorporate the climate change content.

Inclusive education. The project is supporting more equitable access to preschool and improved learning through secondary education including children with special education needs. The project will support building teacher's pedagogical capacity on how to integrate children with special education needs into a regular school environment.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Project location(s) and salient characteristics relevant to the ES assessment [geographic, environmental, social]
The project is designed to support enhancement of child readiness and teacher effectiveness in pre-school and secondary education through increasing access to early childhood education, measuring quality and effectiveness and reforms to preschool financing, and increasing teacher effectiveness, providing teaching-learning resources and improving measurement of cognitive and non-cognitive skills at a country wide scale. In about 300 community shift-based kindergartens (SbKs) in poor rural areas enrolling up to 45,000 children aged 3-5 years, the project will finance installation of indoor water toilet and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing school buildings under the Component 1.1, which will involve small-scale building renovations. However, no new building construction is expected. The project will also finance IT equipment (including computers, tablets, memory cards for smartphones, projectors, IT-adapted furniture and internet connectivity equipment) for teaching and learning under Component 2.2 in an estimated 1,000 schools (approximately 45% of all schools), targeting those that are in the poorest and most vulnerable communities. The Kyrgyz Republic is a landlocked country, located in eastern Central Asia in the heart of the Tien Shan mountains and bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, China to the east, Tajikistan to the south, and Uzbekistan the west. It covers 199,951 square kilometers. The second-smallest of the five Central Asian states, it occupied 0.9 percent of the Soviet Union. The country is 93% mountainous and mostly lies on land situated at elevations between 1,000 and 7,400 meters. More than 40% of the country is above 3,000 meters and three quarters of that is under permanent snow or glaciers.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a lower-middle-income country with 6.3 million people and a GDP per capita of US\$ 1,219 (2017). The annual population growth rate is 2.1%; one third of the population is under the age of 15 years; two thirds of the population live in rural areas. The economy is vulnerable to external shocks owing to its reliance on one gold mine, Kumtor, which accounts for about 10% of GDP, and on worker remittances, equivalent to about 27% of GDP in 2018. Poverty and inequality falling, but vulnerability remains high. In 2016, 25.4% of the population lived below the



national poverty line, with 74% of the poor living in rural areas and 60% residing in Jalal-Abad, Osh, and Batken regions in the south around Fergana valley. Most of the poor live in households headed by men with incomplete general secondary education qualifications. The country has considerable economic potential based on its rich endowments, including arable land (7%), pastures (48%), and substantial forests and minerals, and there is significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. The country is a mosaic of ethnic groups (Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek), with cultures and languages of different ethnic groups living side by side or in mono-ethnic enclaves, which led to social upheavals in 2005 and 2010 and the eruption of violent inter-ethnic clashes in the South of the country. While calm was restored within a relatively short period of time, tensions remain. Children with disabilities not only experience limitations deriving from interaction with non-inclusive spaces but also lack basic services such education especially in rural areas. In addition to limited opportunities for children with developmental delays, they are often abandoned, excluded or institutionalized due to widespread stigma. The existing education programs have little or no provision for children with special education needs (SEN), with teachers generally having very limited knowledge and skills about creating an inclusive environment and SEN pedagogy.

D. 2. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity

The implementing agency will be the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), which has considerable experience with donor-funded projects including those of the World Bank/IDA (e.g. the Sector Support for Education Reform Project – P113350 and Kyrgyz Global Partnership for Education P132490) . It is foreseen that a project coordination function with a core set of competencies pertaining to coordination and oversight, fiduciary matters, and M&E and reporting. During Project preparation, the Bank team will work with the MoES to clarify how the project coordination function will be executed, and how best to embed project technical and fiduciary functions including environmental and social management within the Ministry, to ensure smooth implementation and Ministry’s ownership while building national capacities. As the Bank’s ESF is new, the client is therefore assumed to have limited capacity to apply Bank’s ESF (although the PIUs for the previous education projects participated in the Borrower’s ESF training) and to prepare the environmental and social risk management measures and instrument like ESMPs. Borrower's capacity to manage the risks will be specifically assessed during the project preparation to determine capacity gaps and developed through project specific training on ESF and on other environmental and social management aspects including those related to small-scale construction (renovation) works. Specific capacity building measures such as training needs will be identified and listed in the ESCP.

Public Disclosure

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

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate

Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The Environmental risk is rated Moderate. The proposed project components are environmentally benign except that the subcomponent 1.1 will support installation of indoor water latrines and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing community SbKs buildings (same foot print), which will involve existing building renovations. Renovation activities will not generate adverse environmental impacts or substantial risks on human population, and the predictable impacts are expected to be temporary, reversible, low in magnitude and site specific. Due to the nature of proposed works and associated environmental risks, and limited capacity of MoES in the understanding and application of Bank's ESF and relevant Standards, the project is classified as Moderate risk from environmental perspective and as defined under the Bank's ESF.



Social Risk Rating

Moderate

Social risk is rated as Moderate based on the information available at the concept stage, project activities will be site-specific, without the likelihood of impacts beyond the project footprint, low in magnitude and easily mitigated in a predictable manner. It is expected that social impacts associated with the project activities will be beneficial for the Kyrgyz society. The prime focus of the project is to enhance pre-school and secondary education country-wide. This will imply support enhancement of child readiness and teacher effectiveness in pre-school and secondary education through increasing access to early childhood education, measuring quality and effectiveness and reforms to preschool financing, and increasing teacher effectiveness, providing teaching-learning resources and improving measurement of cognitive and non-cognitive skills. The project will also finance small-scale building renovations which will include installation of indoor water toilet and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing school buildings. Presently, no land acquisition and no new building construction is expected under the proposed project. Subprojects that show the potential for temporary or permanent involuntary land acquisition, negative impact on the livelihood or economic activities, or restrict access to resources will not be financed under the project. Risk related to labor management including influx is not substantial given the nature of small-scale nature of school rehabilitation works.

The distribution of project benefits across geographic areas within the country is particularly sensitive given the complex inter-ethnic relationships which led to social upheavals in 2005 and 2010 and the eruption of violent inter-ethnic clashes in the South of the country. Additionally, high rate of unemployment and significant dependency on remittances often affected by external economic fluctuations has impacted adversely the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups particularly on poor and women-headed households. There is also a risk that children with disabilities or developmental delays may be excluded from project benefits. Beneficiary (school and kindergarten) selection criteria need to be carefully elaborated to ensure inclusive access to the poorest communities, children with disabilities. The project design needs to ensure that these households are 'included' in the project and will be able to participate and derive full benefits from the project. Thus, while the social upheavals and inter-ethnic clashes are likely to be external to the project, the risk of exclusion needs to be addressed. Towards this, a Social Assessment is required to identify the various poor and vulnerable sections, ascertain their expectations and concerns, and that the same are fed into designing of the project including adjustments into the institutional arrangements.

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 will not support construction of new school buildings. The existing community-based SbKs are located in build-up areas and are not in proximity to areas of biodiversity significance or cultural heritage. Potential environmental and social risks and impacts are predictable, expected to be temporary and reversible, low in magnitude, and site specific. The expected environmental impacts may be listed as: improper care, handling and storage of building renovation material and waste, generation of excessive noise and dust levels, and health impacts related with inadequate disposal of asbestos containing material. The Bank will also require adoption of adequate OHS practices. Towards addressing these issues, the client will prepare, before appraisal, an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) as the locations of project activities will be confirmed during project implementation, and disclose it locally as well as at the Bank. And as an integral part of the project, the project will



require that a professional design for these early childhood water toilet and sanitation facilities in the existing premix of community SbKs should be made following relevant national guidelines on school water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and professional supervisors should be hired to supervise installation. School teachers and children parents should be engaged for supervision of installation as well. The site-specific environmental management and safety measures to be prepared following the project ESMF should be included in the contracts for installation. In addition, if at the appraisal stage, it is determined that a large number of (e.g. several hundred or more) IT equipment for teaching and learning will be procured under the project, as an integral project activity, the project will also support preparation of an environmentally sound installation and disposal plan for all electronic equipment to be financed by the project to ensure that these equipment will not cause environmental and health risks in future when they are retired.

Social risk management issues relate to: (i) inclusion/exclusion; (ii) labor management; and (iii) stakeholder engagement. Toward addressing these issues: one, a comprehensive social assessment (SA) will be undertaken as part of the ESMF to accomplish the following: (a) stakeholder identification/mapping; (b) stakeholder analysis of expectations, concerns, and issues; (c) assessments of positive and negative impacts; and (d) a social management plan to mitigate the negative impacts and enhance positive benefits. Also, SA findings are intended to inform the project design to create equitable opportunities for poor and vulnerable groups and ensure that the project interventions are accessible to the intended beneficiaries. As the project will deploy labor, both as consultants in PIU and civil works, an LMP will be prepared which will outline the types of workers, key elements of the national labor regulations and gaps with ESS2, as well as labor management procedures to be adopted during the project. Lastly, given the diverse and heterogeneous as well as poor and vulnerable stakeholder canvas, the project needs to be engaged with the stakeholders on a continuous basis, thus a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will need to be developed.

Documentation and information available and reviewed as part of E&S screening are as follows:

1. Project Appraisal Document and ESMF/ESMP. Sector Support for Education Reform Project in Kyrgyz Republic.
2. Project Appraisal Document and ESMF/ESMP. Kyrgyz Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-3.
3. Early Childhood Development. <https://www.akdn.org/where-we-work/central-asia/kyrgyz-republic/early-childhood-development-kyrgyz-republic>
4. Law of the Kyrgyz Republic (#198. 2009) about preschool education.
5. Preprimary & Primary Education. Kyrgyzstan.
6. <https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/796/Kyrgyzstan-preprimary-primary-education.html>
7. Preschool Education in Kyrgyzstan. <https://enews.fergananews.com/articles/2965>
8. Unicef in Kyrgyzstan. <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/>
9. Community kindergartens address preschool education gap in Kyrgyzstan. https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/kyrgyzstan_92958.html
10. Wikipedia Kyrgyzstan. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyzstan>

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

The country’s Environmental and Social Framework is not being proposed to be applied in whole or in part for this project.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure



Stakeholder Engagement (SE) includes the following: (i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning for stakeholder engagement; (iii) consultations and disclosures; (iv) grievance mechanism; and (v) continuous interface with and reporting to the stakeholders. At this stage, the main stakeholders, specially, the likely affected/beneficiaries are expected to include young children, parents and teachers. Further stakeholder identification and analysis will be undertaken as a part of the proposed SA. All these will help in preparing a SEP which will lay bare the methods and timings to reach out to different stakeholders. SE will also help in drawing on the experience and expertise of thought leaders and influencers from government, civil society, and the private sector. Overall, SE will help in developing a common shared understanding among all sections as well as sustained constructive relationships enabling avoiding risks. It will be ensured that all consultations are inclusive and accessible (both in format and location) and through channels that are suitable in the local context. The client will maintain, and disclose, a documented record of all stakeholder engagement activities. SEP will include mechanisms for setting out a Grievance Mechanism which would help the beneficiaries/ affected individuals to express their concerns and grievances and provide the borrower to address them effectively.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

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

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions

The project would include direct workers (employees of MoES) as well as contracted workers (employees of civil works contractors). The MoES will develop written Labor Management procedure (LMP) for the project, prior to Appraisal, describing the types of workers, key elements of the national labor policy and regulations and gaps with ESS2, as well as labor management tools to be adopted during the project. Bidders for civil work contracts would be required to express commitment to develop Contractor's LMP when selected and prior to start of civil works. All civil works contracts will include industry standard Codes of Conduct that include measures to prevent Gender Based Violence/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (GBN/SEA). Grievance redress mechanisms for all project workers will be established, or – where one exists – will be assessed and strengthened to comply with the objectives of ESS2. The Project and Contractor's LMP will also include Occupational Health and Safety measures. These would have a special focus on handling potentially dangerous or toxic materials, such as asbestos, lead containing paints, etc.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

The standard is relevant as the project will support installation of water toilets and sanitation facilities in about 300 existing community-based SbKs buildings. The design of these toilet and sanitation facilities should consider water resources, water saving measures and how they are connected to a sewerage system, and how waste generated from these newly installed facilities are managed, to the extent technically and financially feasible, that avoid or minimize water usage and water pollution so that the project's water use does not have significant adverse impacts on communities, other users and the environment. These measures include, but are not limited to, the use of additional technically feasible water conservation measures, the use of alternative waster supplies, water consumption offsets to maintain total demand for water resources within the available supply, and evaluation of alternative project locations.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety



The standard is relevant. The project will ensure safety of children and teachers during the building renovation works by adopting adequate OHS protocols following WBG EHS Guidelines. Seclusion of construction area by putting up fence, mitigation measures to control excessive noise and dust levels, and secure access to the area in the building for children and teachers and public use will be ensured through a robust mitigation and management plan in the proposed ESMF. Presence of any sensitive receptors close to renovation sites will be identified during screening of environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures will be provided in the site-specific ESMP. Building's structural integrity and access of disabled population to the buildings will also be assessed. The scale of construction is however small so that foot print currently limited to the boundary walls is not expected to spill over across communities beyond the boundary walls.

ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The selected beneficiary communities must own the premises and commit to maintaining them as a pre-school institution for at least five years. Therefore, under the proposed project no land acquisition and no new building construction is expected. Subprojects will be assessed through the ESMF and will be monitored during supervision.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and determined to be not currently relevant given the Project's current context . Relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.

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

The Kyrgyz Republic does not have such groups of people/communities and thus this ESS is not relevant.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

Potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this ESS have been screened and determined to be not currently relevant given the Project's current context and timing and none of the buildings to be renovated are registered as a culturally significant building. Relevance of this ESS will be further assessed during Project preparation as part of the ESA process.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

The standard is not relevant. The project does not involve FIs.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways No

OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas No

Public Disclosure



III. WORLD BANK ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DUE DILIGENCE

A. Is a common approach being considered?

No

Financing Partners

The Project will be financed through a US\$30 million credit/grant with the International Development Association (IDA) and a US\$5 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), using an Investment Project Financing (IPF) instrument with Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs). The Bank's ESF will be applied for the grant resource as well.

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

Actions to be completed prior to Bank Board Approval:

1. Develop, disclose and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP).
2. Prepare Labor Management Procedure for project workers.
3. Prior to project appraisal, prepare an ESMF to identify, mitigate and monitor the environmental and social impacts for the proposed renovation works. The ESMF will also include a Social Assessment and will be disclosed locally as well as at the Bank. The site-specific environmental management and safety measures to be prepared following the project ESMF should be included in the contracts for installation.
4. Assess the borrowers' specific capacity-building measures such as training needs for environmental risk management and prepare a corresponding capacity development plan.
5. Hire or assign within the MoES an Environmental Specialist, responsible for coordinating all environmental safeguards activities.
6. Hire or assign within the MoES a Social Specialist to prepare, implement and monitor activities related to community engagement, labor management, grievance redress, gender and social inclusion (as per ESMF, LMP, SEP).
7. Prepare an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan.

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

1. Implement the agreed capacity building plans.
2. Civil work contractors prepare and implement environmental and social management plans with satisfactory quality to the World Bank. The plans will include, among others, Contractor's Labor Management Plan (including OHS issues and workers' GRM), Stakeholder (Community) Engagement Plan, Environmental, Health and Safety Plan.
3. MoES conducts environmental and social screening for all project activities via the ESMP/ESMP Checklist covering the above aspects.
4. MoES reports on the environmental and social performance of all activities on a [quarterly/biannual] reports;
5. MoES implements and reports on SEP.
6. MoES implements and reports on GRM.
7. Preparation and implementation of LMP.

C. Timing

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage ESRS

31-Oct-2019



IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Kyrgyz Republic

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education and Science

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s): Dingyong Hou, Gulmira Sultanova
Practice Manager (ENR/Social) Kevin A Tomlinson Recommended on 27-Sep-2019 at 09:03:59 EDT
Safeguards Advisor ESSA Nina Chee (SAESSA) Cleared on 03-Dec-2019 at 11:28:29 EST