

**Ministry of Education
Additional Financing to GEQIP-E (P170943)**

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

November 2020

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1. Introduction and Project Description

The Government of Ethiopia has requested the World Bank to prepare an Additional Financing II (AF II) to the General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (GEQIP-E) (P163050) in the amount of US\$122.5 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The GPE grant will provide additional financing to maximize the development impact of GEQIP-E and to vital interventions not covered by the parent Program. The PDO of the parent GEQIP-E, to assist the Government of Ethiopia in improving internal efficiency, equitable access, and quality in general education, will be maintained. The results framework (RF) will be modified to include new Disbursement Linked Results (DLRs) and associated changes to key performance indicators brought about by the AF II.

The proposed AF activities fall within GEQIP-E's four main results areas: (a) to improve internal efficiency, by addressing the chronic issue of repetition in the early grades; (b) to improve equitable access, by promoting access to general education, particularly for girls, children with special needs, and those in emerging regions; (c) to improve quality, by focusing on the improvement of teaching practices and learning environment; and (d) to strengthen the system for improved planning, policy formulation, and reforms targeting cross-cutting areas that support other results areas to achieve the overall development objective of the Program.

Results Area 1: Improved Internal Efficiency

This results area focuses on addressing the chronic issue of over-enrollment in grade 1 and promoting progression of children through the early grades for improved internal efficiency of the education system. To improve student progression in the early grades, concerted efforts will be made to: (i) improve school readiness of grade 1 entrants so that they were able to progress to the next grade; and (ii) get children enrolled on time and ensure regular attendance throughout the year (the latter under support of the parent Program).

To improve student progression in early years, the parent Program introduced a comprehensive QEAP for O-Class comprising two key components: Quality Enhancement (QE) and Quality Assurance (QA). The QE component aims to improve pedagogical practices in the classroom and includes teacher preparation and professional development, improvements in curriculum and teaching and learning materials for O-Class, and training for management and supervision. The QA component aims to create a quality assurance mechanism and entails the establishment of national standards, school inspection for O-Class, and quality EMIS data collection for preprimary. Under support of the parent GEQIP-E, the QEAP is implemented in 2,160 Phase 1 schools.

Achievement: (a) target for the rollout of QEAP to O-Classes of 9,000 Phase 2 schools and 7,000 Phase 3 schools is set at 70 percent, (b) scalable starting from 10 percent achievement; (c) improvement in grade 2 and grade 1 enrollment ratio in treatment schools.

Results Area 2: Improved Equitable Access

This results area focuses on promoting equitable access to general education in Ethiopia with the aim to: (i) improve gender parity in Afar, Ethiopia Somali, and Benishangul-Gumuz at grade 8 ; (ii) improve Gross Enrollment Ratio of grades 1-8 in Afar, Ethiopia Somali, and Benishangul-Gumuz to support pastoral students and students in emerging regions; and (iii) improve school participation of children with special needs.

DLI 3a: Increased student enrollment in disadvantaged areas

Design: The AF will incentivize the expansion of the school network to bring schools closer to communities, which is particularly important for girls. The AF will contribute to an increase in the number of upper primary and middle school spaces through the construction of new classrooms that meet minimum infrastructure standards. The minimum infrastructure package will be developed based on the school construction and maintenance strategy (which is to cover the number of classrooms/students; adequate WASH facilities, especially important for girls; multi-purpose science labs, electricity, and so on) and minimum construction standards, to be agreed upon with the World Bank.¹ This minimum package will be designed to ensure minimum infrastructure standards are met in existing schools (upgrades), and new schools to be constructed. The AF will support more resilient and safe schools that result from proper building locations and sound construction. It also aims to provide a conducive disability-friendly learning environment and support girls' and boys' successful completion of education.

Achievement: This DLI will be achieved when 500 classrooms will be constructed in full compliance with technical, E&S management, and fiduciary requirements, as verified by the annual procurement, FM, technical, and E&S compliance audits to benefit around 25,000 students.

DLI 4a: Enrollment of children with disabilities and special needs in IERC cluster schools

GEQIP-E supports the establishment of IERCs in mainstream schools to provide educational support for children and teachers alike. The findings of the recent diagnostic study "Situation Analysis of Inclusive Education Resource Centers (IERCs) in Ethiopia" suggest that there are many encouraging examples of support for the education of students with special educational needs in mainstream schools, and oftentimes IERCs serve as catalysts for mainstreaming inclusive education. Efforts to identify and enroll students with disabilities appear to be a priority in communities where the IERCs exist as confirmed by the interviews and focus group discussions with the beneficiaries. School leadership,² qualification and teaching load of the itinerant teacher largely explain the success of IERCs.

Design: The AF will scale up the inclusive education initiative of the parent Program. This initiative supports provision of supplementary school grants to transform additional 600 cluster center schools to reach 1,400 IERCs in the country in line with ESDP V aspirations to promote mainstreaming of children with special needs in education.³ The supplementary grants will be used to: (a) organize awareness raising and training events; (b) purchase equipment for assessing needs (embossers and audiometers) and educational resources for children with special needs (sign language dictionary, slate and stylus and tactile learning materials; and (c) ensure accessible learning environment (minor refurbishment). The AF is informed by the findings from the IERCs diagnostic study, which calls for more attention to strengthening community ownership of IERCs to support education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. The scale-up of IERCs will be based on the existing guidelines and plans, developed and approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) including, a Master Plan for Special Needs Education/Inclusive Education in Ethiopia for 2016-2025, Guidelines for Establishing Resource Centers and Guideline for Identification and Support to Students with Special Needs in Primary Schools and Good Practices in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Resource Centers in Ethiopia. Itinerant

¹ Construction of schools at the regional and local level will be guided by the national standards developed under the IPF while being adapted to substantially different regional and local needs and circumstances. The Environment and Social Guidelines developed under the parent GEQIP-E will be updated to take into account the national standards developed under the IPF, ensuring that the construction of schools complies with the PforR policy on environmental and social impacts, whose principles are similar in substance and purpose to those guiding the E&S aspects of standard IPF and are intended to achieve similar outcomes.

² The school leadership program for inclusion is likely to be supported by the DFID (as per discussions in the Equity Task Force).

³ Eligibility and selection criteria were established under parent GEQIP-E. Eligibility criteria include cluster center schools (CCS) established and fully operational at least in the last three years, and at least 35 students with special needs attending the schools in the cluster. Selection criteria include (a) number of students with special needs studying in the CCS; (b) number of students with special needs studying in other schools in the cluster; and (c) prospective enrollments measured by the number of children with special needs aged 3–6 in localities covered by the cluster. Quotas per regions are implemented based on the number of students with special needs, without leaving any region behind (capacity-building efforts).

teachers in the IERCs supported under AF from the GPE will be trained to provide inclusive education to children with special needs. The training program will rely on the new common course syllabus for teacher education “Inclusive Education in Ethiopian Primary Schools”, developed by the MoE under support of the development partners, and the Embassy of Finland in particular. The proposed GPE AF will also support the O-class preprimary program for students with special needs.

Achievement: This DLI will be achieved when additional 600 IERCs are established within the cluster center schools and 21,000 students with disabilities and special needs in grades O–12 are enrolled and benefit from the services of IERC cluster schools.

Results Area 3: Improved Quality.

To improve learning outcomes, the parent Program provides support to improve teachers’ classroom practices and time-on-task and learning environment in schools. Outcomes in this results area also benefit from efforts in improvements in O-Class quality under Results Area 1 (RA1) which is critical to the acquisition of literacy skills in early primary grades.

In the wake of COVID-19, technology needs to be at the forefront of teaching; and teachers will have to be trained and upskilled accordingly. In line with ESDP V priorities, the recently completed GEQIP II supported establishment and strengthening of the quality assurance and accountability systems at various levels of: (i) teacher and school leader skills through licensing system; (ii) the school’s teaching and learning conditions and environment through inspection system; and (iii) overall system performance through student performance assessment system. These systems are essential to evaluate and improve sector performance and student learning. Under support of the project, more than 404,160 primary and secondary school teachers and 14,257 school leaders took part in the licensing exam. Further, 24 percent of them participated in portfolio assessment, which is the second stage of licensing process. The licensing system helps MoE and regions assess content and pedagogical knowledge to support and strengthen teacher development, as a cornerstone for teacher management. A strengthened evaluation process and additional quality assurance informed improvements to teacher training in Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and universities supplying trained teachers.

DLI 5a: Improved digital competences of teachers

Design: Under support of the AF from the GPE, the teacher licensing assessment will be updated to include a digital skills module. A comprehensive teacher training program on digital skills and the use of ICT in teaching will be prepared and piloted. These digital skills training will be prepared and conducted for at least 1,000 teachers, with pre-training and post-training assessments including classroom observation on the use of ICT in teaching on sample basis. The development of the training program will be prepared by the Licensing and Relicensing Directorate (LRD) and Teachers and Education Leaders Development Directorate (TELDD) in collaboration with Curriculum Development and Implementation Directorate (CDID) with the support from the EdTech Hub and/or other international consultants.

Achievements: licensing assessment covering digital skills and digital skills teacher training pilot aimed to improve classroom practices and have an impact on student learning achievements.

DLI 5b: Improved child development and learning

Design. The AF will also support children’s learning and development in O-class program and early grade (in synergies with the parent Program). The initial data collected through Early Learning Partnership (ELP) program in seven regions (Addis Ababa, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP), Somali and Tigray) to support GEQIP-E

implementation showed that only about 52 percent of O-class students gave correct responses to the preliteracy test items, with large variations across regions and languages of instruction. Under support of the AF, the MELQO tool, designed to generate data on children's learning and development, and on early learning environments, will be integrated into existing assessments in Ethiopia following its adaptation to national standards.⁴ This is essential for identification of the weaknesses in learning and developing appropriate strategies for quality improvements and remediation practices. A standardized approach will allow comparability of data over time. Nationally representative results will be made public and disseminated within regions to allow cascading and appropriation of the results at all levels. MELQO assessment tool will be adapted for local languages of instruction in O-classes in the regions. The report on child development and learning will focus on: (i) pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, socioemotional skills, and use of child- and play-centered strategies by teachers in O-classes; (ii) determinants of learning outcomes and gaps; (iii) lessons learned and good practices; (iv) recommendations and next steps. The findings will inform the development of classroom-based assessments to help teachers improve instruction and help students learn. In addition, EGRA will be adapted to, and pretested in, at least one local language of instruction in the emerging regions of Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Afar, which are not yet covered by this assessment.

Achievement: improved child development and learning as measured by the percentage of O-class students who correctly respond to MELQO preliteracy test items.

Results Area 4: System Strengthening for Planning, Policy Formulation, and Reform

Sustained improvements in learning outcomes of Ethiopian students require the education system to make decisions based on evidence and innovate constantly to improve student performance. The parent Program focuses on strengthening the key elements of the overall education system, specifically improved data collection and analysis, and teacher preparation, to enable its students to achieve higher levels of learning. This is a cross-cutting area that supports other results areas to achieve the overall development objectives of improved internal efficiency, equitable access and quality of education in general education. Extending early grade reading assessment to regions not yet covered under GEQIP-E, is important to gain a full picture and comprehensive understanding on how well children in the early grades are acquiring literacy skills.

DLI 10: Improved/functional environmental and social management and procurement systems

Design: Environmental and Social Systems Assessment (ESSA) and Fiduciary Systems Assessment (FSA) show that the overall risk ratings for the proposed Program on the E&S issues and safety management, and procurement perspective are 'Substantial'. There are weak Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS) in implementing agencies (MoE); ethnic conflict; risks associated with sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA&SH) and/or gender-based violence (GBV) and vulnerable groups, particularly girls and special needs children; and inclusion of construction activities potentially involving land acquisition. Existing E&S and procurement management systems need to be strengthened and remain functional. Functional E&S systems means that: (i) qualified E&S risk management specialists remain on board from operational to federal level; (ii) site-specific E&S risk management tools are implemented and reported in line with endorsed guidelines for E&S risk management; and (iii) functioning grievance redress mechanism (GRM) are available at regional, woreda

⁴ The field tests of MELQO tool were conducted in 2017 and 2018 by the National Assessment Directorate at the NEAEA, under support of GEQIP-II and Early Learning Partnership initiative. The tool was also used in two regions (Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella) that piloted O-class interventions under the RBF project in 2017–2018. The results showed that there were wide variations in the quality of O-class interventions and its results across the regions where the tools were tested. The tools were also translated and adapted to the following languages: Amharic, Tigrigna, Afaan Oromo, Berta, Sidaamu Afoo and Af Somali. However, adaptation to other key local languages is important for a nationally representative data on O-class student learning and development. The results of the learning assessments will also be used to develop teacher training and coaching strategies.

and school levels, and relevant reports are made available to IDA. In terms of procurement system, “functional” means that: (i) two qualified and procurement proficient consultants and two qualified and experienced contract administration consultants are embedded in the MoE, plus one experienced and qualified procurement consultant and one experienced civil engineer in each REB, acceptable to IDA, remain on board through the implementation period of the program; and (ii) an Independent Procurement Auditor, acceptable to IDA, appointed annually, carries out the annual procurement audit of the AF and parent GEQIP-E, and submits the audit report to IDA within six months after the end of each fiscal year. Maintaining these functional systems is considered as a minimum condition to minimize potential E&S and procurement risks associated with the Program financed activities.

Achievement: established E&S and procurement management systems remain functional at central level and in the regions.

The proposed AF DLI matrix and verification protocols are provided in tables 11 and 12. The proposed AF will provide flexibility in the timing of the achievement of the stretch indicators, so that the residual targets could be transferred to the next year during project implementation. This flexibility aims to ensure the successful achievement of the cumulative targets within the agreed implementation period.

The GPE variable part funding

The variable part of the results-based financing approach under the GPE funding model aims to encourage the government to adopt transformative policies and strategies to improve learning outcomes, efficiency and equity in basic education while enabling the AF to scale up support for the ESDP. This approach fits well into the overall GEQIP-E design. The choice of indicators against which the variable part of the grant will be disbursed is based on lessons learned from the implementation of the parent Program, GEQIP-I and GEQIP-II, and the previous variable part grant—Ethiopia Education Results-Based Financing Project—financed by the GPE in 2017–2019. It builds on the successes achieved under the previous GPE grants and leverages the financing under the fixed part to reinforce the gains that have been made over the last decade to further strengthen the sector outcomes.

These lessons point to the need for specific interventions aimed at improving efficiency and equity to be scaled up to reach more schools in disadvantaged regions, which account for most of the learning poverty in Ethiopia. The evaluation of the impact of O-class program in Phase 1 schools (representing only about 5 percent of all primary schools) on efficiency and learning outcomes is in progress. However, high quality preprimary education is evidenced by country-specific, regional and international evaluations and research to be a powerful approach for improving student retention, progression and academic outcomes. The variable part grant will incentivize the expansion of QEAP for O-class to reach 50 percent of primary schools in Ethiopia. The indicators related to this scaling-up, which monitor intermediate results (number of beneficiaries/enrollment) as well as outcomes (grade 2 to grade 1 enrollment ratio and MELQO scores), are the stretch indicators that have been integrated into the overall set of DLIs of the Program . Furthermore, considering that the variable part grant supports interventions in ESDP areas that could not be covered under the parent Program (school construction and EdTech innovations), new indicators related to these interventions are added to the Results Framework of the Program. A subset of the new indicators will serve as condition for the disbursement of the variable part grant. The design of the specific interventions to expand equitable access and enhance teachers’ skills for using technology to deliver learning was informed by the parent Program and regional/international experience as well as assessment of their potential for playing a transformative role in improving equity and learning outcomes.

The following stretch indicators for the variable part grant will be supported by:

Efficiency:

- DLR 1.8: Quality Assurance program implemented in 70 percent of Phase 3 schools
- DLR 1.9: Improvement in G2/G1 enrollment ratio in treatment schools

The context for the DLRs is provided in paragraphs 20–24 above. Scale-up of the QEAP for O-class in Ethiopian schools is supporting the ESDP’s target for all children to have access to at least one year of classroom-based preprimary education. DLR 1.8 provides incentives for the government to implement the QEAP in about 20 percent of schools, which is an important advancement toward 50 percent target and an intermediate result in the Results Chain for improving efficiency and quality. DLR 1.9 rewards improvement in the grade 2 to grade 1 enrollment ratio, which is an outcome indicating improved progression from grade 1 to grade 2.

Equity:

- DLR 3a.3: 25,000 students enrolled in disadvantaged areas (with girls-to-boys ratio of at least 60 percent)
- DLR 4a.2: Enrollment of children with disabilities and special needs in new IERC cluster schools

The construction of model schools in underserved areas with a minimum infrastructure package will improve access, particularly of girls, to upper primary and middle school education. Achievement of DLR 3a.3 will trigger disbursement from the variable part grant because enrollment of students in model schools is the intended outcome of implementing a sustainable strategy for expanding equitable access.⁵ The context for DLR 4a.2, indicating that the scaling up of IERC cluster schools benefiting children with disabilities and special needs, will be critical for achieving the ESDP’s inclusive education goals. A central part of the government’s approach to implementing inclusive education is transforming cluster center schools⁶ into IERCs (within the mainstream education) so that they could respond to the diverse needs of all children, which will ensure that they are not just in the classroom but participating and learning.⁷ By supporting the government’s efforts to increase the number of adequately equipped IERCs with trained itinerant teachers, the variable part grant will contribute to the transformative mainstreaming special needs education.

Learning outcomes⁸:

- DLR 5b.3: MELQO and EGRA reports prepared, published, disseminated and used to guide the development of classroom-based assessments
- DLR 5b.4: Improved child development and learning as measured by the percentage of O-class students which correctly respond to MELQO pre-literacy test items

IPF component

A robust AF IPF component is key to provide much needed technical assistance (TA) to ensure Program performance and support implementation of new innovative solutions. Under the AF, IPF in the amount of US\$30 million will be allocated to provide TA to the Government to ensure support to strong Program management. As explained earlier, there have been weaknesses in the management of the Program in various aspects, including following up on the PAP. Previous experience in Ethiopia with the MoE points to the need for a stronger accompanying TA component that can provide capacity building at the various national, regional and local levels to accompany the ambitious set of results achievements that are expected through the DLIs.

Specifically, the AF will scale up Subcomponent 1.2 “ICT for Education” to support the EdTech innovation pilots and interventions, focusing on:

- **Use of assistive technologies and screening tools for vision and hearing impairments** to support education of children with disabilities and special educational needs with accommodated lesson plans for reading and writing instruction in mother tongue languages based on the successful pilot of Research Triangle Institute (RTI). The innovation of using pedagogical support tools on smartphones as assistive technology at the teacher level appeared to have been appropriate for the context of the participating schools in Ethiopia, as well as effective in improving inclusive reading instruction.⁹ After three months of implementation, students identified for a vision or hearing impairment in intervention classrooms demonstrated similar learning progress compared to their peers without such impairment, although the study found measurable differences in reading achievement between these groups already at baseline.
- **Support for EMIS development** including an education dashboard pilot, impact evaluation and gradual rollout. It will focus on system development, software and hardware, digitization of data collection, as well as mainstreaming quality assurance in education statistics production, including specialized technical assistance for the development of quality assurance standards and guidelines, data quality assessment tools and validation through digital technologies. GEQIP-E supported the development and nationwide adoption of a unique school ID to allow data integration across different data generating systems. Drawing on this experience and achievements, the MoE plans to introduce unique identifiers for students and teachers, with due attention to personal data protection. This will help monitor, track and organize student and teacher records more efficiently and reliably. Connecting student information with teacher preparation, instructional practices, professional development and working conditions will also help deepen understanding on how to improve student learning outcomes.
- **Use of mobile phones and tablets to support the work of cluster supervisors and key teachers** for improved teacher instructional activities in Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools. Use of mobile phones and tablets to support the work of cluster supervisors and key teachers for improved teacher instructional activities in Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools will be beneficial to implementation of GEQIP-E in two main ways: (i) to monitor the activity of Results Area 3; and (ii) to assist the key teachers and supervisors in providing feedback to teachers in real time.
- **ICT infrastructure for teaching and learning in secondary schools (grades 9-10).** This includes equipment for ICT-enabled learning by teachers.

The proposed use of an IPF modality for these investments is due to the fact that the EdTech pilots would benefit from prior reviews from the World Bank. ICT procurement have previously faced challenges under GEQIP-II, such as considerable delays in evaluation of bids, contract award, contract implementation, weak procurement oversight, and lack of effective handling of procurement complaints.

The AF will also scale up subcomponent 2.1 “Strategy for restoring education services in response to disasters” to build up resilience of the education system and capacity of the MoE, REBs, woredas, schools and communities to face future shocks. This includes development of alternative approaches and audio-visual materials to support remote learning during the crisis, combining use of digital and mass media broadcasting tools. The AF will also support TA to reintegrate the most vulnerable and marginalized groups including girls, children with disabilities and IDP children, who are more likely to permanently leave the schooling system after disruptions in schooling. This will be done through organization of parent and community mobilization activities, work of the Asmelash committee to ensure that students return to school and re-envision the school grant composition and training to support disadvantaged children. The AF will also support the schools’ communication campaign to parents to

⁹ USAID and Ethiopia READ TA (2017), “Assistive Technology Capacity Building Initiative—Endline Report: Reading for Ethiopia’s Achievement Developed Technical Assistance (READ TA)”. North Carolina: RTI International.

help achieve and sustain the PDO by promoting peace building and social cohesion in communities.

The AF will significantly scale up IPF Component 3 Management and Evaluation. This component will support capacity building in a range of areas including (i) the implementation of the new environmental and social framework (ESF), including preparation of effective information, education and communication materials and an outreach campaign to ensure environmental and social compliance; (ii) fiduciary management; (iii) digital skills and content knowledge of teachers through capacity building at Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and centers of excellence at universities; and (iv) verification, FM and procurement audits.

Furthermore, as new subcomponent 3.3 “Management of construction and expansion of schools” will be introduced. The IPF TA activities are designed to strengthen the capacity of the Government and include a feasibility assessment of school facilities in order to document existing schools’ conditions and establish national standards for the design, siting and construction of schools. The IPF TA will not finance or directly advise on the construction of individual schools, but the IPF TA will be an input into the downstream school construction planned under the PforR component of the Project. These national standards will include the financial feasibility as well as technical, environmental and social standards. The E&S standards will be consistent with applicable E&S standards (ESS) requirements such as Environment Health and Safety HS, waste management, accessibility and including of vulnerable groups. TORs on the integration of environmental and social standards into the national standards under this IPF component will be developed by the MoE. Sample TORs have been prepared as guidance to the MoE.¹⁰

2. Legal Frameworks for Stakeholder/Citizen Engagement

2.1. National Legal Frameworks

The Constitution of Ethiopia (1995) guarantees citizens’ the right for consultation in development projects that affect them. Furthermore, it also states the right to sustainable development where citizens have the right to be consulted on policies and projects that affect their environment. Government of Ethiopia has put in place structures and processes to promote participation, consultation and grievance redress at local levels. The country’s laws and regulations recognize the rights of most vulnerable in society that require special attention. The social protection policy (2014) recognizes vulnerable people to include children, older people, people with disabilities and chronically ill. Similarly, the policy for women and children recognize their right for participation and consultation. Ethiopia has also ratified international conventions related to disability, women and children’s rights.

2.2. World Bank Environment and Social Framework

The World Bank Environmental and Social Framework sets out the World Bank’s commitment to sustainable development, through a Bank Policy and a set of Environmental and Social Standards that are designed to support Borrowers’ projects, with the aim of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

The Ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESS 1- 10) set out the requirements for Borrowers relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing

¹⁰ The PforR program activities include the construction of schools at the regional and local level which will be guided by the national standards developed under the IPF while being adapted to substantially different regional and local needs and circumstances. The Environment and Social Guidelines developed under the previous PforR program will be updated to take into account the national standards developed under the IPF and ensure that the construction of schools complies with the PforR policy on environmental and social impacts, whose principles are similar in substance and purpose to those guiding the E&S aspects of standard IPF and are intended to achieve similar outcomes.

“Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure” (ESS10), is one of the environmental and social standards included in the World Bank Environment and Social Framework which recognizes “the importance of open and transparent engagement between the Borrower and project stakeholders as an essential element of good international practice”. ESS10 emphasizes that effective stakeholder engagement can significantly improve the environmental and social sustainability of projects, enhance project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful project design and implementation. As a requirement of this ESS10 this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared and implemented for **General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (GEQIP-E)** Investment Project Financing component.

Scope of application. ESS10 applies to all projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. For the purpose of this ESS, “stakeholder” refers to individuals or groups who: (a) are affected or likely to be affected by the project (project-affected parties); and (b) may have an interest in the project (other interested parties).

Requirements. The Bank standard on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure requires that the project implementing agency engages with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, commencing such engagement as early as possible in the IPF component of the program development process and in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with education sector stakeholders on project design. The nature, scope and frequency of stakeholder engagement will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposed IPF activities and its potential risks and impacts. The project will engage in meaningful consultations with all stakeholders at all level from nation, regional, woreda to school levels. It will provide these and other relevant stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation. The program implementing agency -the Ministry of Education will maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was taken into account, or the reasons why it was not. This SEP is prepared taking into account these requirements.

Stakeholders must be identified and the SEP will be disclosed for public review and comment as early as possible, before the project is appraised by the World Bank. The program will also strengthen the functionality of the existing grievance redress mechanism that allows project-affected parties and others to raise concerns and provide feedback related to the environmental and social performance of the project and to have those concerns addressed in a timely manner, in accordance with the requirements of ESS10.

3. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Stakeholder analysis identifies and determines the likely relationship between the project and the different stakeholders. A stakeholder is defined as a person or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, as well as those who may have interests in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively. This SEP is prepared based on the preliminary stakeholder identification and will be updated to ensure localized stakeholders are included during pilot site specific risk assessments.

For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, project stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups or other entities who:

- i. are impacted or likely to be impacted directly or indirectly, positively or adversely, by the Project (also known as ‘affected parties’); and
- ii. may have an interest in the Project (‘interested parties’). They include individuals or groups whose interests may be affected by the Project and who have the potential to influence the Project outcomes in any way.

Cooperation and negotiation with the stakeholders throughout the Program development often also require the identification of persons within the groups who act as legitimate representatives of their respective stakeholder group, i.e. the individuals who have been entrusted by their fellow group members with advocating the groups’ interests in the process of engagement with the Program. Community representatives may provide helpful insight into the local settings and act as main conduits for dissemination of the Project-related information and as a primary communication/liaison link between the Project and targeted communities and their established networks. Verification of stakeholder representatives (i.e. the process of confirming that they are legitimate and genuine advocates of the community they represent) remains an important task in establishing contact with the community stakeholders. Legitimacy of the community representatives can be verified by talking informally to a random sample of program operating woredas and schools’ community members and heeding their views on who can be representing their interests in the most effective way.

3.1. Methodology

In order to meet best practice approaches, including in line with COVID-19 restrictions and related parameters, the program will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

- ***Openness and life-cycle approach:*** public consultations for the project(s) will be arranged during the whole life-cycle, carried out in an open manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion or intimidation.
- ***Informed participation and feedback:*** information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format that is accessible and understandable, taking into account cultural sensitivities, literacy levels of stakeholders, and special needs of stakeholders with disabilities and stakeholders that are members of other vulnerable groups; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholders’ ongoing feedback, for analyzing and addressing comments and concerns.
- ***Inclusiveness and sensitivity:*** stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders at all times encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. The Project will provide equal access to information to all stakeholders, taking into consideration cultural sensitivities and literacy levels. Sensitivity to stakeholders’ needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, in particular women, youth, elderly, people with disabilities, and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups.

For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, stakeholders of the proposed project(s) can be divided into the following core categories:

- **Affected Parties** – persons, groups and other entities that are directly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and/or have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project, and who need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures;

- **Other Interested Parties** – individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the Project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who could affect the project and the process of its implementation in some way; and
- **Vulnerable Groups** – persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project(s) as compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status¹¹, and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project.

3.2. Affected parties

Affected Parties include local communities, community members and other parties that may be directly affected by or otherwise experience direct impacts from the Project. Specifically, the following individuals and groups fall within this category:

- Educational institutions on different levels: (MoE, REBs, WEOs, EFCCC, TVET Institutes, etc);
- Schools communities: students, teachers, school administration staff;
- Households with pupils / parents, with particular attention to female-headed households and households headed by persons with disabilities and with students with disabilities
- Parents, students and teacher association (PSTAs);
- Teachers' Associations;
- Local administration/Government officials;
- Affected communities in the project areas;
- Non-Governmental Organizations including Religious leaders and organisations, children's advocacy and disabilities advocacy groups
- Private sector providing direct educational services, supply of educational materials, and other small businesses around schools and universities;
- Development Partners;
- Local community leaders, including chiefs, headmen and headwomen, especially for communities as identified for application of ESS7;
- Labor groups, including those representing workers who would be involved in installation of project infrastructure or provision of goods/services for the project

3.3. Other Interested Parties

The projects' stakeholders also include parties other than the directly affected communities, including:

- Traditional media, including newspapers, radio, and television networks
- Participants of social media
- Politicians
- Other international CSOs and NGOs
- The public at large
- Government agencies responsible for licensing and regulating the diffusion of online, radio, television, newspaper, and other media services

3.4. Disadvantaged / Vulnerable Individuals or Groups

It is particularly important to understand whether project impacts may disproportionately fall on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts of a project and to ensure that awareness raising and stakeholder engagement with disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups(on distance education and virtual learning in

¹¹ Vulnerable status may stem from an individual's or group's race, national, ethnic or social origin, color, gender, gender orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, age, culture, literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources.

particular) be adapted to take into account such groups or individuals particular sensitivities, concerns and cultural sensitivities and to ensure a full understanding of project activities and benefits. The vulnerability may stem from person's origin, gender, age, health condition, economic deficiency and financial insecurity, disadvantaged status in the community (e.g. minorities or fringe groups), dependence on other individuals or natural resources, etc. Engagement with the vulnerable groups and individuals often requires the application of specific measures and assistance aimed at the facilitation of their participation in the project-related decision making so that their awareness of and input to the overall process are commensurate to those of the other stakeholders.

Within the Project, the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups may include and are not limited to the following:

- Disadvantaged and vulnerable students including:
 - o female students,
 - o learners with disabilities and other special needs,
 - o vulnerable children with non-special needs,
 - o students from emerging regions and pastoralist woredas,
 - o students living in remote areas with limited access to technology;
 - o students in extremely poor families with limited resources to access telecommunications technology,
 - o Students from emerging regions and pastoralist communities,
- Internally displaced persons (IDP) students;
- The poor and vulnerable parents including elderly, single mothers, children headed households, orphans.

Stakeholder Engagement Program

3.5. Summary of Previous Consultations

Several stakeholder consultations have taken place during the preparation of Environment and Social System Assessment (ESSA) based on the six core principles of environmental and social sustainability outlined in the WB policy on PforR financing. A range of representatives drawn from federal to school level of implementing agencies as well as key stakeholder institutions have been consulted to ensure proper identification of environmental and social issues and propose appropriate recommendation measures over the program period. The stakeholder meetings and consultations have been conducted as one to one interview, group discussions, and consultative meetings at all levels with high level decision makers, experts, and communities. The consultations explored the potential environmental and social impacts and risks of the AF Program, including the IPF components of the program, and the capacity of implementing agencies in mitigating the risks and negative impacts. The consultation also aimed to ensure that the priority concerns of stakeholders were taken in full account during program implementation.

Additionally, the project links to a long series of education projects and programs in the country, which influenced the design of the project. The Ministry of Education also refers to recent consultations conducted for the Additional Financing to GEQIP-E for Refugees Integration (P168411). These documents are available locally on MoE website and internationally on the World Bank external website. Within the social distancing and other parameters set by the national government, the Project Implementation Unit will make all reasonable efforts to conduct consultations with stakeholders through diversifying means of communication, including based on type and category of stakeholders. This will include online channels, such as zoom, webex, and skype, and where these are not available, to employ TV, radio, newspaper, dedicated phone lines, public announcements, or mail. The channels used to undertake the stakeholder engagement will depend upon the technological and cultural circumstances of the affected stakeholders and will provide them with clear mechanisms to give their feedback and suggestions.

Purpose and Timing of Stakeholder Engagement Activities

- The main goal of stakeholder's engagement program is to create awareness of the key deliverables of the project (activities that will be conducted as part of the technical assistance) and to keep stakeholders updated on key activities, and provide avenues for affected-people to voice their concerns and grievances.
- The main consultation planned include: The relevant parts of the ESCP will be shared for general orientation on the Government's commitments;
- During the project life cycle, it is planned to conduct engagement, during the early stages of the project and once the draft study is delivered to update and collect feedback from stakeholders on the TA activities. During the months leading up to, and once the studies are finalized, public meetings will be conducted.

3.6. Proposed Strategy for Information Disclosure

In terms of methodology, it is critical that the various project activities are inclusive and culturally sensitive, thereby ensuring that the vulnerable groups outlined above will have meaningful opportunities to participate in Project design and benefits. An inclusive information disclosure strategy will include household-outreach and focus-group discussions in addition to village consultations, ensuring usage of languages appropriate for the respective affected students and their communities, the use of verbal communication or pictures instead of text where literacy is in issue, etc. Further, the project will publish information linked to project activities through Ministry of Education (MoE) website as well as project website and the World Bank external website. The documents will also be made available to local communities, in a manner and language to be understandable to them. The project will need to adapt the methods of stakeholder engagement to COVID19 physical distancing and other national requirements with recognition that the situation is developing rapidly. The project will have to adapt to different geographic requirements as well.

3.7. Future of the Project

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and grievance mechanism. Feedback will be sought, and implementation adjusted as necessary.

5. Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Activities

5.1. Resources

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the regional educational bureaus and its relevant directories, will be responsible for and will oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and related stakeholder engagement activities.

5.2. Management Functions and Responsibilities

The project implementation arrangements are as follows:

At the federal level, the project will be implemented by the MoE and University Faculties of Education under the Ministry. The MoE will serve as the executing agency and will have overall responsibility for policy guidance and oversight for project implementation. The Steering Committee established to oversee the coordination, monitoring, and implementation of the GEQIP-E program will be pooled to integrate the coordination of the project activities. The Planning and Resource Mobilization Directorate (PRMD) of the

MoE will be the main IA with the task of preparing the annual work plan and budget and carrying out the project activities, with the support of MoE directorates and agencies, universities, and REBs. The already existing Program Coordination Office (PCO) under the PRMD will be responsible for overall implementation and coordination of project activities across MoE directorates and agencies, universities, and REBs.

At the regional level, in each of Ethiopia's nine regions and two city administrations, the project will be implemented by the REBs. The REBs have responsibility for overseeing all regional and sub-regional project implementation. At the woreda level, the project will be implemented by Woreda Education Offices (WEOs), and schools. The WEOs have responsibility for monitoring the Program's implementation in schools and report to the REBs. Some regions also have Zonal Education Offices (ZEOs) and ZOFEDs with oversight of woreda-level implementation on behalf of the regional administrations. At the school level, where most of the Program's expenditures are incurred, the school management will be responsible for managing all school-level activities and the PSTAs will have a monitoring role. Cluster resource centers in the field will provide training, management, and monitoring support to schools. The implementation of the project will also require active engagement and collaboration of students' families and most importantly participating students. Students and their families will provide continuous feedback to the respective education office on the key challenges they may encounter during implementation and possible mitigation measures to tackle the challenges.

Parents, students and teacher association (PSTAs) are at the centre of the program implementation at school level. PSTAs have a monitoring role of the project and serve as a major platform for students and families to provide their feedbacks. Most schools also have suggestion boxes and comments book in their compound to enhance the transparency and accountability of the school management and administration. Strengthen the existing PSTAs structures, enhancing the participation of parents and students in the PSTA and continuous follow ups on feedback boxes and feedback books will give more avenue for students to provide their feedback to school leadership and respective education offices.

6. Grievance Mechanism

Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRMs) can be used as a tool to stay engaged with communities and share information when other direct measures for stakeholder engagement and consultations are more limited during the outbreak of infectious diseases like COVID19 pandemic. The existence of the grievance mechanism will be communicated to all stakeholder groups via the channels used to reach these groups for stakeholder consultations, including advertising it in local radios, newspapers and/or local noticeboards. The Project will provide a summary of the implementation of the grievance mechanism to the public on a regular basis, after removing identifying information on individuals to protect their identities.

Well-functioning GRMs include multiple channels for voicing feedback or grievances, are widely accessible for different stakeholders, culturally appropriate, and entail strong complaint resolution and feedback functions. GRMs are one of the most frequently used Citizen Engagement tools in Bank projects and are mandatory for all IPFs under the new ESF. The main objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM:

- Provides affected people with avenues for making a complaint or resolving any dispute that may arise during the implementation of projects;

- Allow anonymous grievances to be raised and addressed; compliant boxes and others that allows anonymity of the complainant will be available
- Ensures that culturally appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants; and
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings.

6.1. Description of GRM

Effective grievance handling mechanisms (GRM) play an important role in the process of addressing complaints and disputes arising from issues during project implementation. It will be developed and applied to meet the needs of affected people, being cost-effective, accessible, designed to take into account culturally appropriate ways to handle community concerns, and working based on a well-defined time schedule. This project will use, in line with the flagship education program GEQIP-E, the Ethiopian public grievance mechanism, supported amongst others by the Bank's Enhancing Shared Prosperity for Equitable Services (ESPES) program. The existing Public GRMs are being supported by ESPES program to ensure their functionality and effectiveness through the provision of continuous capacity building trainings as well as monitoring of their effectiveness based on the developed GRM guideline. ESPES program. Thus, the complaints and grievances of affected people in the course of COVID19 Education Response Project implementation will be handled in a formal, transparent, cost-effective, culturally appropriate and time-bound manner. The GRM were established as an inbuilt part of the PTSA structure to deal specifically with complaints related to the school grant component and incorporated into the school grants guideline for strengthened and more effective applicability. Besides, the GRM will be monitorable at school level (PTSA and the School Management Committee), and WEO levels. Thus, it will be necessary to ensure that the PTSA structure continues to function in all schools throughout the country. However, the existing GRM will be strengthened to meet the requirements of ESS10 and fit the situation of COVID 19. The GRM will ensure that social distancing measures are in place for meetings of GRM committees, investigation of grievances, monitoring of existing grievances and public information mechanisms, and the GRM need to direct any health and COVID-19 related queries to the Ministry of Health (MOH). Meetings, trainings etc. must adhere to the national regulations on number of persons that can convene, and they need to be accompanied by adequate hygienic provisions, soap and water. The existence of the grievance mechanism will be communicated to all schools community and other relevant stakeholders through appropriate channels used to reach these groups for stakeholder consultations, including advertising via local radios, newspapers and/or local notice-boards.

Respective regional educational bureaus and woreda educational offices are responsible to ensure the functionality of PSTAs and an inbuilt GRM system. Continuous and periodic report communication regarding the GRM system performance with standard templets and establishing active referral networks with key stakeholders of the program is key to ensure the continuous functionality of the GRM system. According to the ESSA, the required budget to strengthen the functionality of the existing GRM through relevant capacity building activities will be allocated from program implementation cost of the dedicated component. In addition, the existing GRM guidelines will be updated/developed in line with the WB standards prior to disbursement of any AF to regional states and Woredas. This will be verified annually.

Besides, complaint handling mechanisms are in place at all level of governments as per the requirement of the National Proclamations (Proclamation 433/2005 and 434/2005) and institutional level operational guidelines. Project-affected persons are also entitled to present their complaints and grievances to the Ethiopia Institute of Ombudsman (EIO), which is an autonomous body that reports to the Parliament. If complainants are still not satisfied by one or more of the above levels of GRM structures, they have the right to also appeal their cases to the regular courts at their convenient.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the most recent, and that the identified methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific phases of the development. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the SEP. To this end keeping the project stakeholders informed through periodic environmental and social management reports, periodic environmental and social performance audit findings and participatory program monitoring is highly required. Quarterly summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the senior management of the project. The quarterly summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and the nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner.

Besides, the program will strengthen the preparation of effective information, education and communication materials (IEC) and an outreach campaign to ensure environmental and social compliance. Ensuring the utilization of IEC/BCC tools to disseminate information / findings and collecting feedbacks from the community are very important to strengthen the two-way information exchange and participatory monitoring.