Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 25-Feb-2019 | Report No: PIDISDSA26156
## BASIC INFORMATION

### A. Basic Project Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Parent Project ID (if any)</th>
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<td>Georgia</td>
<td>P168481</td>
<td>Georgia I2Q - Innovation, Inclusion and Quality</td>
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<th>Practice Area (Lead)</th>
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<td>29-May-2019</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<th>Implementing Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Project Financing</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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#### Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to (i) expand access to preschool education and (ii) improve the quality of education and learning environments.

#### Components

- Improving the Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care
- Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education
- Strengthening Financing Options and Accreditation in Higher Education
- System Strengthening and Stakeholder Communication
- Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations

## PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

### SUMMARY

<table>
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<th>Total Project Cost</th>
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### DETAILS

#### World Bank Group Financing

| International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) | 100.00 |
Environmental Assessment Category
B-Partial Assessment

Decision
The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Introduction - Investing in human capital

Boosting human capital to increase productivity, innovation, and competitiveness: About 40-80 percent of economic growth in the fastest growing economies can be explained by investment in human capital both in the short term (by investing in skills upgrading and the renewal of skills) as well as in the longer term. The longer term strategic investment fundamentally changing the human capital foundation shifting a country toward a more innovative, technology driven and knowledge-based society like what was achieved by countries such as Ireland, Finland, South Korea and Singapore – all strategically focusing huge investments into their human capital. This approach is essentially based on Lucas’s macro-economic model for GDP growth (GDP = Physical Capital x Human Capital to the power of learning level). While sustained investment in physical capital is essential, given the multiplier effect on human capital (based on the overall ‘learning/knowledge within a society) for technological adaptation and innovation, most forward-looking countries have set out to invest heavily in education, skills renewal and learning to drive innovation, productivity and technological adaptation and development. This requires a new type of learning and learners and workers – a fundamental shift and change in approach to learning and education.

After decades of strategic and effective investments in infrastructure, the Government of Georgia (GoG) has strategically set out a goal to improve productivity, innovations and competition further by investing and increasing spending on human capital - also to counter the negative impact of a declining population. In return greater level of productivity, innovation and competitiveness will result in increased economic growth and rise in salaries and incomes. While some policies are critical to realize this ambition, it is not a matter of policies, but rather to change the minds, learning and thinking of new and future generations. Thus, Georgia has set out to be one of the first in the CIS region to drive through the needed changes, including on attitudes and educational approaches that will create a new foundation and generation of human capital akin to the best examples from the USA and EU. This will require a radical a sustained effort of policy changes and implementation in and outside of the education sector thus the proposed smart and ‘intelligent’ Georgia IQ project that will be the implementation tool until 2025 combined with critical policy changes articulated in the DPO 2020 and DPO 2022 currently under discussion (a section on the DPO will be added once agreed with MoF and MESCSC). Thus, the vision of the government/MoF is that the DPOs will drive policy changes (DLIs) and the sustained development and implementation of the reforms will be supported through the Georgia IQ project (IPF).

Economic growth and reforms

1 Lucas 1988; MIT Professor Robert Solow concluded that technological progress has accounted for 80 percent of the long-term rise in U.S. per capita income, with increased investment in capital explaining only the remaining 20 percent.
Deep reforms in economic management and governance have contributed to Georgia’s spectacular recovery in recent years. Georgia, a former Soviet republic located in the Caucasus region, has overcome tremendous hardship. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the following civil war, Georgia’s economy contracted by 65 percent over three years until 1993—an unprecedented collapse even among former Soviet Union states. However, between 2006 and 2016, the Georgian economy grew robustly at an average annual rate of 4.5 percent. To bolster the private sector, Georgia introduced rules and regulations that make it easier to do business, and the country’s international ratings on governance and the investment climate have soared. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement with the European Union (EU) and the proposed Free Trade Area with China are expected to also boost trade integration. Energy, tourism, and agribusiness offer strong potential to integrate the country further into the regional and global economy as well as posing challenges to the skills required from the education sector. Consequently, Georgia is a fundamentally different and better country today than it was a generation ago. Georgians can be proud of having achieved middle-income status, dramatically reduced extreme poverty to 8 percent, and implemented social policies that support the poorest people and regions. Nevertheless, the country is still far from the level of broad-based prosperity that EU accession countries enjoy, such as developing vibrant and highly skilled human capital.

While socioeconomic progress has been good, it falls short of expectations, and some gains could be reversed. Despite relatively high rates of economic growth, the pace of Georgia’s poverty reduction has been muted and relies heavily on pensions and social transfers to a large share of the population that is either unemployed or underemployed. Accordingly, one-in-five Georgians is still living in poverty and half of the population is considered vulnerable to falling into poverty. Moreover, poverty in Georgia measured using the global poverty headcount ratio at US$3.2 per day (2011 purchasing power parity) is higher than in neighboring Armenia, a country with a similar level of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Georgia also has a higher poverty rate than some lower middle-income countries, despite having a higher GDP per capita. Inequality is also still among the highest in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region and is evident along geographic and demographic dimensions. Job creation is weak and women’s economic participation and employment rates are lower than men’s, impacting the country’s income generation and growth. While earned income is the clearest path toward sustainable welfare improvements, formal job creation has been modest; a large share of employment remains in unproductive agriculture and unsophisticated services indicating the need to upgrade skills and educational levels further.

Further jeopardizing Georgia’s economy is a declining and underutilized population. Georgia’s population is shrinking fast due to low fertility and outward migration. It has declined from 5 million in 1997 to approximately 4 million today and is projected to fall to 3.4 million by 2050. Moreover, the country’s labor force is currently underutilized. Labor productivity in Georgia remains significantly lower than in the EU. Georgia’s per capita income – a proxy for labor productivity – is

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4 Ibid.
5 Based on national poverty line.
6 Poverty gap at $3.20 a day (2011 PPP) (percent of population) for ECA region are from World Bank Indicators (database), World Bank, Washington, DC (accessed August 28, 2018), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.LMIC.GP
Currently a fraction of what it is in the leading EU countries (USD 5,400 PPP). Additionally, unemployment is high (11.8 percent in 2016), especially among youth, women, and rural populations. High unemployment among those with even a tertiary education reflects the relative scarcity of jobs and a mismatch between existing skills and labor market needs, which constrains business expansion and growth. The World Bank’s 2018 Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) for Georgia highlights that innovative and growing firms suffer from skill shortages the most. Georgia’s employers regularly report their dissatisfaction with the supply of skills and unmet demand for job-relevant and socioemotional skills. Moreover, the prevalence of entrepreneurship is low as indicated by the share of employer enterprises. Enhancing productivity will require improving skills and making better use of labor resources.

Participating fully in the global economy as technology accelerates requires a continuous investment in skills and learning built on solid foundational skills acquired from early childhood. Georgian authorities are aware that the country risks being marginalized in a competitive global knowledge economy if its education system is not able to equip learners with the skills they need in the 21st century. The quality of education remains poor, which is evidenced by consistently low student learning outcomes. Georgia remains far behind countries with similar per capita income. Moreover, there are substantial in-country differences in performance, which are determined by location, socioeconomic status, and the availability of school resources. Furthermore, the existing public financing model of higher education based on a fixed grant per student provides no incentive to improve the quality of teaching and learning or research capacity. The systemic as well as institutional reforms should emphasize building a close link with the labor market’s need for a skilled and innovative labor force. Early childhood education and care interventions will also be critical for preparing Georgians for their working future, as most essential higher order cognitive and socioemotional skills, along with a strong sense of empathy, have their roots in the early years.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Since 2004, the Government of Georgia has introduced sweeping reforms to the education system in an effort to modernize the system. Currently, education is mostly publicly provided with over half a million students enrolled in the system. Education in Georgia is mandatory for all children aged 6–14. The school system is divided into primary (6 years; age level 6–12), basic (3 years; age level 12–15), and secondary (3 years; age level 15–18), or alternatively vocational studies (2 years). Students with a secondary school certificate have access to higher education. Only the students who have passed the Unified National Examinations may enroll in a state-accredited higher education institution, based on ranking of scores he/she received at the exams. It is important to note, that while the Government recognizes the importance of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and has introduced a legal framework and guidelines for a School Readiness Program (SRP) for 5-6-year-olds, neither the SRP nor ECEC is mandatory. Furthermore, preschool education (covering 2-6-year-olds) falls under the responsibility of municipalities, with minimal supervision from the central government.

Research shows that investing in the early years of life is the most effective way of building human capital and driving economic growth and equity. Access to high quality preschool education is essential for the development of higher-order

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10 In the most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), for example, Georgia ranked 60th of 72 participating countries in mathematics, 63rd in science, and 65th in reading. In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Georgia ranked 33rd and 35th in 4th grade math and science, respectively, out of 42 participating countries, and 25th and 30th in 8th grade math and science out of 38 countries.
cognitive and socioemotional skills, along with preparing for the future of work. However, Georgia’s net preschool enrollment is not nearly universal at 65 percent in 2018 and is relatively low compared to the EU enrollment rate of about 95 percent.\(^\text{11,12}\) Therefore, many children in Georgia arrive at school unprepared to benefit fully from the education system. Since learning is cumulative, the cognitive and socioemotional developmental gaps that emerge at young ages hinder further learning over the life-cycle. Future jobs will invariably demand soft skills – such as teamwork, empathy, responsibility, perseverance, and knowledge of digital tools. Investments in the early years are among the best investments to build these skills and result in high rates of returns.

**In terms of other levels of education, Georgians enjoy relatively wide access to education, but with loose links between education and employment.** Enrollment figures suggest that access to education, while can be improved in secondary and tertiary, is high. Access to primary education is nearly universal and enrollment in secondary education is comparable to peers. Even in tertiary education, Georgia has caught up in recent years: about 35 percent of the population aged 25–64 years old have completed tertiary education, which compares well even with high-income European countries. Gender parity has generally been achieved at all levels of education enrollment. At the same time, as many as 40 percent of Georgia’s unemployed have a higher education degree. According to the 2017-18 Global Competitiveness Report, “inadequately educated workforce” is the single most problematic factor for doing business in Georgia. Just like most other former socialist countries, Georgia’s population is highly literate, as measured, i.e. by the share of those completing secondary education. Thus, the main issue for employers is not a lack of candidates with diplomas and formal certificates, but a lack of professional skills. Therefore, the issue is not about access to education per se, but access to relevant education and training.

**The quality of education—particularly in STEM, which have a strong correlation with economic growth, have improved in recent years, but remain poor.** Georgian students continue to demonstrate below average levels of performance in international assessments (such as, PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS) despite modest improvements (a 38-point gain in science achievement over two PISA cycles between 2009 and 2015). In the latest PISA (2015), Georgia remains two-and-a-half years behind the average for countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in science achievement, and more than half of all children in Georgia perform below basic proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy. Additionally, 9th grade national assessment results in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects demonstrated that a significant percentage of Georgian students remain below the minimal achievement level (30 percent in Mathematics; 35 percent in Physics; 49 percent in Chemistry; 13 percent in Biology). Nevertheless, in 2013, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and in partnership with the GoG, launched an education investment in the amount of 140 million USD to boost the quality and relevance of education, particularly in STEM by improving the learning environment, strengthening school leaders’ and teachers’ professional development and national assessments, and developing classroom assessment system and operations and maintenance of schools system.\(^\text{13}\) The 5-year program, which has proven successful in developing a framework for systemic improvements of the general education, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education system, will close in July 2019 and further USAID funding is uncertain.\(^\text{14}\) Therefore, the GoG would likely need support with capacity-building to implement these systems.

\(^{11}\) Based on the meeting with representatives of the Government held in November 2018. Estimation of IMF is referring to 75 percent coverage.  
\(^{13}\) Notes from World Bank meeting with Magda Magradze, CEO and Nino Udziurari, General Education Project Director, Millennium Challenge Account-Georgia, September 13, 2018.  
\(^{14}\) Ibid.
Lack of equity in student learning outcomes also raises concerns. According to PISA 2015 results, students from the poorest 20 percent of households exhibit a significant skills gap across reading, mathematics, and science compared to the richest 20 percent. The difference for Georgia in science performance between students in the top and bottom quintiles by socioeconomic status accounts for about 85 score points and is equivalent to almost three years of schooling. The gap between rural and urban students is also more than one year of schooling (36 points). In science, girls slightly outperforming boys. PISA 2015 results also show that students who were enrolled in preschool for more than two years performed better in all subjects compared to those who were enrolled for one year or less.

Two important reasons why Georgia trails behind other countries in PISA performance relates to learning strategies and teaching practices. After controlling for socioeconomic status and parental education, an index measuring learning strategies explains a 26-point PISA reading scores gap (equivalent to more than half a year of schooling) between Georgia and new EU member states. Therefore teachers, who are responsible for teaching practices and helping children learn, have an important role in improving education quality in Georgia. However, teaching is not an attractive career choice in Georgia for highly skilled, young workers primarily due to a low pay scale. The GoG is working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to gradually increase teachers’ salaries from the current 800 GEL up to 1800 by 2023, which will be commensurate with increased work load and professional development. The plan will also introduce compensation packages to pension age teachers (approximately 30 percent of the teaching workforce) who are less likely than younger teachers to adopt modern, student-centered pedagogy. Moreover, a new Teacher Recruitment, Evaluation, Professional Development and Career Advancement Scheme (named the ‘Scheme’) was introduced in 2015/2016 academic year to foster higher quality teaching practices. Until now, adoption of the Scheme by teachers in the classroom is not obligatory and results have been mixed.

Gender Disparities

Concrete governmental actions have been taken in Georgia to prevent gender-based discrimination and provide women with equal rights under the law. In 2005, Georgia adopted the State Concept on Gender Equality as a framework policy document for equal rights and opportunities. The Gender Equality National Action Plan for 2014–2016 is the latest national gender plan to be approved. It addresses gender equality issues in economic, health, and social protection fields, and promotes women’s engagement in environmental protection and law-enforcement. It also envisages improvement of legislative and institutional frameworks on gender equality. Adoption of the Law on Gender Equality in 2010 is a significant step toward greater equality in Georgia. Most important, in May 2014, the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination came into force, moving Georgia's antidiscrimination framework closer to international standards.

Despite these efforts, gender inequality is still visible in labor market outcomes in Georgia. Although, women make up about 52 percent of the population in Georgia, about 61 percent of women ages 15-64 participate in the labor market compared to 79 percent of men. This trend is consistent regardless of educational attainment. Furthermore, the gap between men and women's participation in the labor force is highest in the 15-34 age group when many women are focused on caring for young children. Women in Georgia are more likely than men to experience long-term unemployment. In addition to agriculture, women are overrepresented in education, health-care and social work, which are viewed as better suited for women who need to balance household work with paid employment. This concentration of women in certain sectors plays a role in the gender wage gap, which was 37 percent in 2014. Supporting the equality of women and men is a smart development strategy for the country: the potential gains of closing the existing gaps are important not only for women and their families, but for the whole economy.

 ibid.
In education, gender imbalances also exist among students and school staff. Primary and secondary school enrollment is high among both girls and boys. Yet, patriarchal norms remain influential. A 2018 UNDP report on Gender Equality in Georgia, found more than one study that showed if parents could not afford to educate all their children, they preferred to send their sons to obtain tertiary education. Despite, this cultural bias, girls who do enroll in school consistently outperform boys in reading, mathematics and science, and they are more likely than boys to enroll in tertiary education. Moreover, while most teaching staff in Georgia are women, a large majority of school directors are men, revealing a glass ceiling in the sector. Thus, it is important to address this cultural bias and facilitate the school-to-work transition by encouraging women to study fields that are projected to grow, for example science, technology, engineering and math and to take on more leadership positions, including in the education sector.

Furthermore, gender and education professionals have noted a clear lack of attention given to the achievements of women in the national curriculum and textbooks, in contrast to numerous stories of famous men and their achievements. The lack of stories about women, and their “invisibility” in the curriculum and school books may contribute to female students’ low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, experts have identified a lack of illustrations or photographs of women in classrooms and recommend that women’s numerous achievements and contributions to society be better incorporated into the school resources.

Quality issues also hinder higher education’s potential to contribute innovation and relevant skills to society. A major challenge affecting quality in higher education is the low level of preparedness of many students that are admitted to higher education studies. This is a consequence of the poor performance of the general education segment. Nevertheless, the higher education system has not been able to mitigate these learning gaps and deliver the quality of teaching and learning or strengthening of research capacity that Georgia needs. Low quality faculty and curricula that are outdated and out of touch with the labor market, lack of quality assurance mechanisms, and insufficient funding (0.47 percent of GDP) are characteristic issues of the system. The Georgian higher education system must keep modernizing and improving, to be able to contribute more decisively to the development of the country, both by raising the level of human capital in the country and generating innovative research. An interesting concept that is at the core of the agenda for the modernization of Europe’s higher education systems is the “knowledge triangle,” which could be relevant to higher education reform in Georgia. This concept summarizes recent worldwide trends towards open innovation resulting in increased flows of knowledge and new types of cooperation between higher education institutions, research organizations, and businesses. The impact of the knowledge triangle on a society can be enhanced by the adoption of public policies encouraging partnerships between professional institutions, research universities, business and high-tech centers.

Shifting the “culture of learning” will require the support of parents and change of public attitudes. Educators, including the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) and NGOs point to a lack of vested parent participation in the education process. Recent efforts have been made to improve the engagement of parents in schools through the establishment of parent associations by NGOs and school-parent working groups at the school-level. Furthermore, despite teachers receiving on-going professional development, many school principals point to a resistance among teachers to adopt new student-centered pedagogy. A national strategy is not yet in place to promote greater public discourse on educational reforms both to understand the reasons for the shift in education philosophy (from rote and didactic learning to more active child-centered learning) or at least not to resist. Thus, moving the needle on education quality cannot be


17 Ibid.

18 Notes from meetings with school leaders, MES, Millennium Challenge Account, and Education for All Georgia, September 10-13, 2018.
achieved without the active support of parents and teachers and a public supportive discourse.

Finally, Georgia lacks an integrated education information management system (EMIS) and strong data analytics to inform education policies. The first general education online information system was implemented in 2011 to produce basic education data to inform the MESC and other stakeholders with timely, precise, and reliable information. In 2012, the MESCS further elaborated on this system with the creation of an EMIS, which was established to develop information and communication technology (ICT) in the education system by developing new efficient management systems and databases and providing IT support of various educational processes. Today, the EMIS captures substantial school and student-level data for general education through higher education. However, it does not include data on preschool education as this sector is under the responsibility of municipalities. Furthermore, despite the robustness of the data collection, the system is not well-integrated within the system itself (i.e. eSchool, eVET, and higher education) and other sources of education data, such as the National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC) and Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC), and across other ministries (i.e. the Ministry of Economy’s Labor Market Information System (LMIS) and Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency data on ICT and entrepreneurship. This lack of integrated data collection and reporting hinders the ability of the MESCS to make informed and timely policy decisions.

The Government of Georgia is aware of the existing education challenges and has taken steps including partnering with the World Bank to find viable solutions. In 2018, the GoG updated its Education Reform Agenda for 2018-2023. The document identifies five main strategic goals: (i) increase access to quality preschool education for all and prepare children for school; (ii) ensure access to quality general education to prepare students for future work and improve their educational competencies by national and international standards; (iii) increase student participation in VET, enhance their competitiveness by providing professional and life skills to support socioeconomic development of the country; (iv) internationalize higher education system and ensure quality education for the enhanced development and employability of individuals; and (v) modernize and internationalize the Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) system to generate new knowledge and contribute to country’s sustainable development. The proposed project aims to inform key areas of the comprehensive education reform, starting from preschool education through higher education. The proposed project does not directly support VET. However, the World Bank is supporting the United Kingdom’s Department of International Development through a 2.5 million USD grant to assist in the development of inclusive and demand-oriented cooperative training in technical professions in growth sectors. Other development partners, such as the GIZ, KFW Bank, United Nations Children’s Fund, European Union, Swiss Cooperation, and United Nations Development Program are also involved in this effort. Moreover, the IFC will seek opportunities to support companies that provide on-the-job training and to finance providers of private higher education, including global or regional institutions. IFC will explore the potential for developing viable public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education services provision.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The project development objective is build a new foundation and culture of learning for human capital development in Georgia by: (i) expanding access to preschool education; (ii) improving quality and student-centered learning in general education through the whole school approach; and (iv) changing the culture of learning at all levels. Below is a conceptual

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20 Ibid.
21 Notes from World Bank meetings with MES and EMIS, September 13, 2018.
framework illustrating key elements of the proposed project (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Proposed Project

Key Results

The proposed project outcome indicators are:

(a) Percentage of 5-6-year-old children enrolled in School Readiness Programs (preschool level), including percentage of 5-6 year-old girls
(b) Percentage of project supported schools that have achieved their whole school improvement targets
(c) Number of project supported schools in general education with increased learning outcomes
(d) Percentage of female students participating in Innovation Clubs and STEM-related gifted programs in general education
(e) Percentage of higher education grants established under Competitive Innovation Fund achieving at least 80 percent of their proposed objectives
(f) Communications and reform strategy to change culture of learning inside and outside the education system, including benefits of girls’ education, prepared by Government

Link to Development Policy Operations 2020 and 2022: Key policy triggers (DLI) will be included in the DPOs 2020 and 2022 currently being developed with the government/MoF/MESCS to drive forward the reforms and using the IPF (Georgia IQ project) as the instrument for policy development and implementation. Once key policies have been agreed a policy matrix will be included.

The proposed project is also well aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for 2019-2022 and the World Bank Group’s twin goals. Specifically, the proposed project would contribute directly to the CPF’s strategic Focus Area 2: Invest in Human Capital and is articulated by Objective 2.1: Support the education system for improved quality and relevance. Moreover, the proposed project would support the GoG’s efforts to improve the innovation and provision of
quality education throughout the system as embodied in the Government’s 2018-2023 Education Reform Agenda. In addition to national goals articulated in the CPF, the proposed project is aligned with the World Bank Group’s goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Education is a fundamental building block of human capital. A high-quality education is linked with both poverty reduction and productivity growth, both of which contribute to shared prosperity. Because improving access to quality education has a direct impact on social inclusion, poverty alleviation, and income growth, the proposed project is also aligned with: (i) the World Bank’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity; (ii) the World Bank’s recently launched corporate priority of Investing in Early Years for Growth and Productivity; (iii) the Europe and Central Asia Regional Strategy; (iv) the newly launched Human Capital Project (HCP).

The proposed project’s activities would affect beneficiaries at two distinct levels. Direct beneficiaries of the first three components of this project would include students enrolled in public and private ECEC, general, and higher education institutions who would enjoy access to an improved learning environment financed by this project. Special consideration would be given to vulnerable populations, including students and schools with low socioeconomic status located in rural areas, and gender equity. Additionally, direct beneficiaries would include school teachers, administrators, and other staff employed in the schools benefiting from an enhanced learning environment and professional development. The remaining two components, on the other hand, are designed to support the overall system and perception of education in Georgia. Monitoring of impact on gender will be included for all key sub-indicators. Through project interventions, it is expected that the system would be managed more effectively with a focus on innovation and quality. Thus, the project would benefit generations of future students and indirectly benefit parents and employers.22

D. Project Description

The proposed project is organized into the following five components: (i) Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care; (ii) Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education; (iii) Strengthening Financing Options and Accreditation in Higher Education; (iv) Boosting Behavioral Change towards Quality and Innovation in Learning and Teaching; and (v) Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations.

Component 1 – Improving Quality of and Access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (US$16.95 million equivalent)

The objective of this component is to facilitate expanded access to quality preschool education in selected schools.

Sub-Component 1.1 – Increasing equitable access to preschool education

The aim of this sub-component is to strengthen the quality of ECEC provision and equitable access for successful transition to school starting with children in the School Readiness Program, aged 5-6-years-old. As such, this sub-component would support the much-needed rehabilitation of classrooms in selected schools to accommodate preschool provision. Low ECEC coverage areas will be placed as priority, including potentially Guria, Kvemo Kartli, and Adjara. These renovations would also include provision of modern child-friendly and age-appropriate equipment, furniture, and technology in selected preschools.

Sub-Component 1.2 – Improving the quality and standardization of preschool education programs across the country

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22 This figure excludes students enrolled in VET.
The objective of this sub-component is to improve the quality of preschool education in Georgia. The proposed project would support the capacity-building of Education Resource Centers. Furthermore, this component would aid in the establishment of a certification system for ECEC teachers and development of in-service trainings on modern child-centered pedagogical approaches. This component would also assist in the design and implementation of school-based teaching and learning resources for teachers and for preschool students, including digital games and other resources. Lastly, this component would support improving and modernizing a Bachelor of Arts program for ECEC qualification in partnership with a recognized international partner university.

**Component 2 – Fostering Quality Teaching and Learning in General Education (US$53.4 million equivalent)**

The objective of this component is to provide a learning environment that is conducive to quality education in selected general education schools.

**Sub-Component 2.1 – Strengthening diagnostics to inform reform design and governance**

Under this sub-component, the proposed project will support the development and assessment of a pilot in 100 schools for improving teaching and learning using a whole-school approach. Additionally, this sub-component would support the creation of a school mapping for informing policy-making decisions on student-teacher ratios and class size to increase efficiency in education service delivery. This component would also support the assessment of school evaluation pilots and development of differentiated general education governance. Finally, a study on Teacher Renumeration Policies, including creation of perfomance-based incentive structures would help to inform the sustainability of the education reforms.

**Sub-Component 2.2 – Supporting the capacity-building of teachers and school leaders to adapt, develop, and implement school-based curriculum**

This sub-component would primarily focus on building upon the new Scheme on teacher quality introduced by the MESC in 2015/2016. The proposed project would provide guidance on the development and implementation of pre-service training modules on modern pedagogic methods, such as project-based learning, role-playing, and collaborative learning and using formative student assessments to develop interventions for improving student outcomes. Moreover, this component would support the TPDC in reviewing and improving the in-service training framework for building professional learning communities and sustainable school-based continuous professional development models involving managerial, coaching, and mentoring skills for teachers, school principals, and middle management in approximately 200 pilot schools. Additionally to boost innovation and quality, this component would support the establishment of pilots to test a blended model of education delivery using technology. Finally, this component would support the development of a strategy and curriculum for enhancing teaching for gifted students in math, technology, science, art, and sports, including the creation of “Innovation Clubs” within schools for gifted students in 100 pilot schools that is gender sensitive.

**Sub-Component 2.3 – Assisting the development of a national assessment framework**

This sub-component would provide technical assistance for developing a National Assessment Framework and methodology for both low and high stakes student assessments. Under this sub-component, the proposed project would provide the MESCS with support to develop school-based trainings for the design, conduct, and analysis of low stakes assessments and trainings for reporting, dissemination, consultations, adjustments, and actions (including manuals, training, etc.). Measures for low stakes assessments may include school readiness, national early grade assessments in math and reading (in Grade 2/3), National Assessment in 4th, 5th or 6th grades, National Assessment at 9th grade and high stakes exam at grade 10. for the development and implementation of additional summative national assessments
to capture the performance of the education system early on and throughout the learning journey. Additionally, this sub-component would support pedagogical universities to introduce courses in learning assessments, test design, and psychometrics and analytics.

Sub-Component 2.4 – Improving educational infrastructure to support high-quality learning environments

This sub-component would support the partial or full rehabilitation of selected public general education schools and develop new infrastructure designs and standards. The objective of the renovations would be to foster high-quality learning environments and enhance school safety. In addition to increasing the functionality and safety of the physical spaces, the rehabilitation would also review and improve school infrastructure designs, standards to support innovative spaces as the “third learning environment.” In other words, designing the space to facilitate learning, collaboration, and an encouraging environment among students, teachers, school administrators, and parents. Under this sub-component, ICT, equipment, furniture, as well as teaching and learning materials conducive to high quality learning would be integrated.

Component 3 – Strengthening Financing Options and Accreditation in Higher Education (US$7.5 million equivalent)

The objective of this component is to improve the quality and international competitiveness of higher education.

Sub-Component 3.1 – Developing new options for higher education performance-based financing taking into consideration the accreditation and quality assurance frameworks

Under this sub-component, the project will provide support for improving funding mechanisms for all relevant levels of education and support evidence-based policymaking to develop a financing model that will align more closely with the government’s strategic sector priorities, drive efficiencies, and incentivize the quality of teaching, learning, and research capacity. Along these lines, this component would also include the development of performance-based funding and the application of a Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) for higher education (like the Bank supported CIF in Armenia) focusing on research and technology in support of the reform and labor market linkages. This sub-component would align with the accreditation and quality assurance frameworks and provide technical assistance to strengthen these areas and incentivize performance.

Sub-Component 3.2 – Strengthening policy development and capacity-building for internationalization in higher education

This sub-component aims to support the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of higher education in Georgia. The main aspects of this sub-component would include supporting the staff trainings on strengthening internationalization, recruitment of international students, development of international branch campuses, students, staff and scholars exchange programs, internationalization of the curriculum, and research and education partnerships between institutions regionally and internationally. Moreover, this sub-component would assist higher education system compliance with European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA) accreditation requirements to align with EU and international standards on quality and increase attractiveness of Georgian higher education system in the region.

Component 4 – Boosting Behavioral Change towards Quality and Innovation in Learning and Teaching (US$7 million equivalent)

The objective of this component is to facilitate a shift in the culture of learning to one that is more pro-active, innovative,
and evidence-based.

Sub-Component 4.1 – Strengthening policy development for data-driven decision-making

The objective of this sub-component is to improve the capacity of the overall education system to collect, analyze, and disseminate data and information for monitoring and decision-making purposes. This sub-component would support mechanisms and assistance to streamline existing data collection processes and to improve system-wide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities from preschool to higher education using GIS mapping and with linkages to affiliate sectors. To this end, this component would support the development of an operational action plan and monitoring system dashboard with indicators accompanied with manuals that would identify gaps toward targets and trends. Additionally, this sub-component would support the utilization of the CLICK application to operationalize the analytics for decision-making as well as support the establishment of a feedback loop system to feed into a school improvement dashboard.

Sub-Component 4.2 – Supporting the development of communication strategy to boost positive behavior change towards quality learning

Under this sub-component, the proposed project will help the Government craft an effective communication strategy on the current education reforms and proposed project supported activities. The communication strategy would target key stakeholders, such as education professionals, teachers, principals, government officials, parents, youth, and the public at large. The purpose of this sub-component is to engage in public discourse to create awareness and spark a shift in cultural attitudes towards the value and joy of learning. Innovative tools could be used to collect parent feedback about the implementation of the proposed project. Furthermore, this sub-component would support Stakeholder Solutions Consultations, which would help to inform the communication strategy and would be the first for Georgia’s education system. Surveys (beneficiary and target groups) as well as key indicators will be used to monitor progress on this critical part of the project.

Sub-Component 4.3 – Aiding creation and facilitation of Fund for Good Ideas

This sub-component would assist the development of a Fund for Good Ideas to encourage “crowd-sourcing” of ideas to enhance quality and innovation in the education system. All stakeholders, including the public would be eligible to participate in the competition. The Fund would award the most promising ideas on a periodic basis with financing and mentoring to assist in the development and implementation of attractive concepts. Specifically, this sub-component would support: (i) dissemination activities for community leaders, parents and communities at large about the benefits to participate in enhancing the quality and innovation of education in the community and associated grant procedures; (ii) evaluation and selection of Good Ideas; (iii) provisions of grants for the implementation of the Fund for Good Ideas projects; (iv) provision of technical assistance for the implementation of the Good Ideas; and (v) monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Good Ideas. Finally, the executed ideas would also adhere to the established quality assurance and monitoring frameworks.

Component 5 – Supporting Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluations (US$1 million equivalent)

The objective of this component is to support capacity-building for effective management of proposed project.

Sub-Component 5.1 – Facilitating the establishment, staffing, and evaluation of Project operations

This sub-component would support the day-to-day management and monitoring of the proposed project through the
establishment and maintenance of a Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU would provide operational and management support for the proposed project for its full duration. This sub-component would also finance salaries for PMU staff, training activities, and operating costs. This sub-component would also provide targeted technical assistance on Bank-specific procurement processes. Under this sub-component, assistance would be provided for the development and implementation of evaluations for monitoring the progress of the Project supported activities.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The proposed project will be implemented over a six-year period by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and supported by subordinate government agencies. The Ministry would have the overall responsibility for project coordination and monitoring of the implementation progress. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be created within MESCS and will be financed by the Borrower to maintain throughout Project implementation qualified staff in sufficient numbers, as well as adequate funds, facilities, services and other resources for Project implementation (including, procurement, financial management, environmental and social aspects and monitoring and evaluation), all acceptable to the Bank. As part of the PMU structure, a Reform Group would be formed within the MESCS to take the lead on the reforms and conceptual decisions of the project implementation. Moreover, the Ministry would delegate the responsibility for managing the daily preparation and implementation of school infrastructure and equipment-related activities to the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF). In addition, the PMU may also be supported with outside specialists on an as-needed basis.

Results Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The Project Development Objective level and intermediate result indicators would be monitored using the following data collection instruments: (i) regular surveys and data collection processes; (ii) administrative data; and (iii) monitoring reports prepared by the PMU.

The PMU will carry out the day-to-day coordination of monitoring and evaluation activities. It will bring together the representatives of various subdivisions of the Ministry to monitor the project’s objectives and results and will communicate with the World Bank according to the frequency of reports described in Annex 1. Organizations subordinate to the MESCS will be responsible for the provision of timely and accurate information required for monitoring the proposed project’s objectives and results achieved under their respective sub-components, as shown in Annex 3.

The proposed project envisions beneficiary and stakeholder participation in Project monitoring activities. Stakeholder feedback would be gathered through a monitoring exercise conducted each year by the MESCS. This exercise will serve as one of the key monitoring and evaluation mechanisms used by policymakers to assess quality of education services in Georgia. The rehabilitation of selected schools proposed under Components 1 and 2 allow for annual comparisons in beneficiary satisfaction with the quality of the learning environment in “treatment” and “control” schools.

Sustainability

First, the Government’s ownership of this Project and other activities implemented under the current Country Partnership Framework; and, second, the fiscal sustainability and cost-effectiveness of Project activities. The former is derived from the Project’s support for the Government’s demonstrated commitment to comprehensive education reform under the 2018-2023 Education Reform Agenda. The latter factor—on fiscal sustainability—will derive from increased cost-effectiveness of the rehabilitated school facilities, which will reduce over time the amount of resources that must be
allocated from central and local budgets to maintain the existing facilities. Meanwhile, the systems strengthening activities reflect new Government priorities that are aimed at modernizing the country’s education sector in line with best global practices.

F. Project location and Salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

Georgia is located in the South Caucasus and is one of the Black Sea riparian nation-states. It borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russian Federation and Turkey. Georgia comprises of the following administrative units: capital city of Tbilisi, Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazeti, and nine regions - Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti. The project will be implemented countrywide, excluding the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazeti and several municipalities of Shida Kartli currently not under de facto jurisdiction of the national government of Georgia. Project implementing entities: the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) and the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) - both operate from Tbilisi. Investments into the improvement of learning environment may be channeled to school premises located anywhere in Georgia, provided that the proposed intervention meets eligibility criteria and is suitable for the project support.

G. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Darejan Kapanadze, Environmental Specialist
Sophia V. Georgieva, Social Specialist

SAFEGUARD POLICIES THAT MIGHT APPLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safeguard Policies</th>
<th>Triggered?</th>
<th>Explanation (Optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The project will provide technical assistance which has no environmental implications. It will also invest in small-scale physical works for rehabilitation and construction of school premises. OP 4.01 is triggered and the project is classified as environmental Category B. Because buildings to be rehabilitated or constructed are not selected yet, an Environmental and Social Management Framework was developed to lay out procedures for environmental and social screening, management planning, and monitoring of the proposed works. Site-specific Environmental and</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Social Management Plans will be developed based on the hierarchy of risk mitigation and implemented under technical supervision of the project implementing entity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>The project will not support any private sector activities.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not support any activities that may affect natural habitats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests OP/BP 4.36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not support any activities that may affect forests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest Management OP 4.09</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not finance procurement and/or application of pesticides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>All buildings suggested for rehabilitation will be screened for being on the list of protected cultural monuments and the project will not make interventions in buildings found on such list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No indigenous peoples in Georgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>This policy is triggered as the project may support construction of new school buildings. Such construction is expected to occur on public land plots designated for this purposes, and free of private assets or use. However, the sites of potential new construction are not yet known and cannot be screened prior to Project Appraisal. Therefore, a Resettlement Policy Framework is prepared to define the measures and institutional responsibilities in line with OP 4.12 in the event of any land, asset, or livelihood impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not support any activities related to dams and its investments will not depend on dam safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not support any activities on the international waterways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not support any activities in the disputed areas.</td>
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### KEY SAFEGUARD POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

#### A. Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

1. Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:
   
The project will provide technical assistance for the improvement of the quality, provision and relevance of education.
in Georgia, and will finance small-scale physical works for the provision of adequate learning environment in the educational institutions. This technical assistance will not have either direct or indirect environmental impacts. Physical works will be undertaken to rehabilitate the existing school premises or to construct new school buildings. All new construction is expected to occur on public land designated for this purpose and free of private use or assets. However, as the location of such construction is unknown at the time of Appraisal, the Borrower prepared a Resettlement Policy Framework that lays out mitigation measures and institutional responsibilities in line with OP 4.12. The environmental and social risks associated with the works to be financed from the project proceeds are typical for small or medium-scale construction or refurbishment of buildings, well-known upfront, and easy to mitigate. A few aspects related to refurbishment of school buildings that call for attention are as follows: Older buildings, especially outside Tbilisi, are likely to have asbestos-containing roof tiling and its replacement will require preventing workers’ health damage and environmental pollution. Structural integrity of buildings selected for refurbishment should be checked prior to approving project interventions and retrofitting be considered as required. Finally, works should be scheduled during school breaks or, if impossible, adequate arrangements should be made for safeguarding students and teachers from nuisance/accidents that may occur if works are underway in parts of the buildings where classes are being held at the same time. If temporary accommodation in alternative premises is required for schooling process (as well as any other activities within the school - food services, clubs, sports activities, etc.) while a building is being rehabilitated, the MESCS will be responsible for approving and overseeing implementation of such arrangements to be made by local municipalities.

2. Describe any potential indirect and/or long term impacts due to anticipated future activities in the project area:
No indirect or long term negative environmental or social impacts are anticipated from the project implementation. In case of significant improvement of learning environment in remote rural areas, slight decrease in out-migration of families may occur in medium to long term perspective.

3. Describe any project alternatives (if relevant) considered to help avoid or minimize adverse impacts.
Civil works under the project will be implemented predominantly on the existing school premises. In the event of new construction, all efforts will be made to implement construction of public land plots, free of private assets and any formal or informal private use. Given that the location of potential new construction is unknown the project has prepared a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) to ensure that any impacts on land, assets, or livelihoods are addressed in accordance with the World Bank's OP 4.12 policy.

4. Describe measures taken by the borrower to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of borrower capacity to plan and implement the measures described.
The Borrower has developed an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the RPF for the purposes of project implementation. These documents contain detailed instructions on the environmental and social screening of the proposed individual investments, list common types of risks that may be encountered while constructing or rehabilitating school premises, provide a menu of measures to mitigate expected negative environmental and social risks, including risks related to impacts on land, assets or livelihoods, and defines roles and responsibilities of the implementing agencies. Templates for developing simplified Environmental and Social Management Plans and producing field environmental and social monitoring reports are attached to the ESMF. Templates for preparing Resettlement Action Plan (RAPs) or Abbreviated RAP are attached to the RPF.

The MESCS and the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) under the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure will be the implementing entities for the project. MDF will manage provision of civil works, including preparation of designs and application of safeguard policies to civil works. This agency has substantial experience of operating in agreement with the Bank's safeguard policies and has a dedicated environmental and social safeguard
team. Additional specialists will be recruited for the purposes of this project. As certain functions related to quality assurance and social monitoring of school rehabilitation/construction will be provided by the MESCS, close coordination between MDF and MESCS will be essential for the successful mitigation of risks and timely delivery of outputs.

5. Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.

The MESCS, and agencies under it such as Teachers' Professional Development Center, (TPDC), National Assessment and Examination Center (NAEC), Education Management Information Center (EMIC), National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) as well as administrations, teachers, students and their parents of all beneficiary early childhood education institutions, schools and universities will be the project stakeholders. Additionally, local governments, civil society organizations and parent organizations are important stakeholders.

The ESMF and RPF developed for the project will be disclosed in Georgian and English languages through the web pages of the MESCS and the MDF. It will be discussed with stakeholders and finalized to the satisfaction of the Bank. Site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans will also be disclosed in draft, discussed with local stakeholders and agreed with the Bank. Grievance Redress Mechanisms will be established with assigned focal points by both MDF and the MESCS.

### B. Disclosure Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Assessment/Audit/Management Plan/Other</th>
<th>Date of receipt by the Bank</th>
<th>Date of submission for disclosure</th>
<th>For category A projects, date of distributing the Executive Summary of the EA to the Executive Directors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-Feb-2019</td>
<td>22-Feb-2019</td>
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"In country" Disclosure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>22-Feb-2019</th>
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Comments

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<tr>
<th>Resettlement Action Plan/Framework/Policy Process</th>
<th>Date of receipt by the Bank</th>
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Comments
C. Compliance Monitoring Indicators at the Corporate Level (to be filled in when the ISDS is finalized by the project decision meeting)

**OP/BP/GP 4.01 - Environment Assessment**

Does the project require a stand-alone EA (including EMP) report?
- Yes

If yes, then did the Regional Environment Unit or Practice Manager (PM) review and approve the EA report?
- Yes

Are the cost and the accountabilities for the EMP incorporated in the credit/loan?
- Yes

**OP/BP 4.12 - Involuntary Resettlement**

Has a resettlement plan/abbreviated plan/policy framework/process framework (as appropriate) been prepared?
- Yes

If yes, then did the Regional unit responsible for safeguards or Practice Manager review the plan?
- Yes

**The World Bank Policy on Disclosure of Information**

Have relevant safeguard policies documents been sent to the World Bank for disclosure?
- Yes

Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs?
- Yes
All Safeguard Policies

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to safeguard policies?
Yes

Have costs related to safeguard policy measures been included in the project cost?
Yes

Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the project include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies?
Yes

Have satisfactory implementation arrangements been agreed with the borrower and the same been adequately reflected in the project legal documents?
Yes

CONTACT POINT

World Bank
Soren Nellemann
Senior Economist

Borrower/Client/Recipient
Ministry of Finance

Implementing Agencies
Ministry of Education
Mikheil Batiashvili
Minister
batiashvili@mes.gov.ge
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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

APPROVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Team Leader(s):</th>
<th>Soren Nellemann</th>
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Approved By

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<tr>
<th>Safeguards Advisor:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Manager/Manager:</td>
<td>Harry Anthony Patrinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Director:</td>
<td>Ozan Sevimli</td>
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