

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ADDITIONAL FINANCING

OPERATIONAL MANUAL

AUGUST 2022

DRAFT

ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Additional Financing
APL	Adaptable Program Loan
ANQA	National Center of Quality Assurance
CEP	Center for Education Projects
CIF	Competitive Innovation Fund
EIP	Education Improvement Project
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EQRP	Education Quality and Relevance Project
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FMM	Financial Management Manual
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MoESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NACET	National Center of Education Technologies
NCF	National Curriculum Framework

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NCEDI	National Center for Education Development and Innovation
OM	Operational Manual
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PPSD	Project Procurement Strategy for Development
SC	Project Steering Committee
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEMIS	Tertiary Education Management Information System
QA	Quality Assurance
RoA	Republic of Armenia
WB	World Bank

EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Preparation and Content of the OM with Additional Financing (AF)

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PART I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preparation

This Operational Manual (OM) was developed for the implementation of Education Improvement Project (EIP) and was revised for the implementation of EIP with AF respectively. AF would finance the expansion of successful activities under the EIP and would be restructured to: (i) scale-up the provision of laboratory equipment to general education schools, which were originally carried out for high schools; (ii) adjust activities in the existing sub-components and the Results Framework to ensure its alignment with the priorities set by the Government of Armenia (GoA) for the next five years; and (iii) address existing gender gaps and support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

EIP with AF is the continuation of EIP which completion date is October 31, 2022. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) and Project Implementation Unit (PIU) would like to express their deep appreciation to the World Bank's team and the group of consultants who assisted in all the activities associated with the provision of AF for EIP.

Purpose of the Operational Manual

The aim of this OM is to provide detailed guidance on applying the established rules and procedures to the administration and management of EIP AF.

The Manual provides information about EIP AF's components and subcomponents and will serve as an operational guide for planning, coordination, and monitoring of EIP implementation with AF.

The objectives of this OM are the following:

- i. define project's goal and objectives by each component/sub-component;
- ii. provide description of activities and arrangements for their implementation by project components and sub-components;
- iii. spell out Financial Management, Disbursement, and Procurement procedures;
- iv. provide guidance on the application of safeguard policies;
- v. establish Project Monitoring and Evaluation procedures; and
- vi. specify project management responsibilities at all levels of administration.

The OM with AF includes a set of documents, which provide detailed description of components/subcomponents implementation such as:

- i. Financial Management Manual;
- ii. Procurement Procedures;
- iii. Environmental and Social Management Framework;
- iv. Operational Manual on Pre-school Education Micro-Project Grants; and
- v. Operational Manual on Implementation of Competitive Innovation Fund for Armenian Higher Education.

The OM will enhance consistent implementation of planned EIP activities with AF and will promote transparency of all operational actions.

The OM is intended for use by the “Center for Education Projects” (CEP), PIU, MoESCS and its units, public institutions, NGOs, donor organizations and private foundations supporting the education sector, as well as all EIP beneficiaries and implementing partners. The OM will be published on the CEP website to be available for a wider public.

Chapter 1.1 Background of the Project

The EIP was approved on March 13, 2014 and became effective on November 20, 2014. The EIP has been supported by World Bank and encompassed all levels of education, from preschool to higher education with the view of creating an education system that met international standards, establishing equal conditions for all social groups of the population and promoting academic and research work. The EIP aimed to improve education by ensuring the social readiness of children entering primary education, improving physical conditions and the availability of educational resources in high schools as well as supporting higher education institutions in enhancing the quality and relevance of education.

The Project has been restructured three times since appraisal. The first restructuring was approved on September 7, 2018, to extend the closing date of the EIP by 24 months from September 31, 2019 to September 31, 2021. The need to extend the closing date was due to

delays in civil works activities and budget constraints stemming from a tightened macro-economic and fiscal situation in Armenia. Additionally, several other activities were halted and subject to review as a result of the change of government following the Velvet Revolution (April-May 2018). The second restructuring was approved September 23, 2021 to address delays in two important project activities that were caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The high school rehabilitation activities were delayed due to security issues caused by the conflict as well as quarantines caused by the pandemic. The CIF grants activities experienced delays due to global travel restrictions and procurement processes, leading to implementation delays. The actual closing date of the project was stated April 30, 2022. The third restructuring was approved in April 2022, to extend the closing date for a period of six months, from April 30, 2022, to October 31, 22. This extension was required to prepare and process the AF to EIP, requested by the Government of Armenia on December 3, 2021 and relates to IBRD financing only.

In the frames of EIP 136 preschools have been established across Armenia (127 preschools in different regions and 9 in Yerevan) with the enrollment of 13580 four- to six-year-old children. About 258 teachers currently involved in newly established preschools have been provided with respective trainings (subcomponent 1.1). 13 high schools have been rehabilitated (10 in different regions of Armenia and 3 in Yerevan); 107 high schools have already been equipped with necessary laboratory equipment and furniture for natural science subjects (335 laboratories in total) (subcomponent 1.2). Furthermore, 585 schools have been provided with computer equipment, 4,475 teachers and administrative staff have been trained on the ICT usage. Development of e-learning materials, chemistry and biology subjects have been completed. The new office of the National Center for Educational Technologies (NACET) has been renovated, furnished and equipped with necessary computer equipment and was strengthened as a Data processing center (subcomponent 1.3). Subject standards and curricula of 6 subject disciplines of the General Education were revised and about 7,000 teachers were informed about the changes in the subject standards and curricula during the seminars (subcomponent 1.4). 18 grants projects were awarded to 15 universities to strengthen the capacity of implemented innovative programs and as a result, innovative research centers were established in the universities, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and up-to-date educational content (Component 2).

Chapter 1.2 Rationale of the Project with AF, Project Goal, and Structure

1.2.1 Rationale of the Project with AF

The country’s vision for further strengthening its education system—as outlined in key strategic documents—strives to provide opportunities for all Armenians to develop to their full potential during their school years and enter the labor market ready to work.

The Armenia Development Strategy 2014-2025 prioritizes a knowledge-based economy and the strengthening of the country’s competitive advantages in science and technology as a condition for development. It highlights the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of education at all levels of the educational system and ensure affordable and accessible education for all. The more recent Government Program (Program of the Government of the Republic of Armenia: 2021-2026) continues to demonstrate a commitment to the development of education and science by emphasizing the importance of strengthening the education/science labor market at all education levels. The education activities focus on: (i) the rollout of new general education standards in all classes by 2026, (ii) the provision of new textbooks and educational materials, (iii) the upgrading of school infrastructure, particularly for science laboratories, and supplying them with furniture and equipment, (iv) the establishment of preschools, and (v) the alignment of tertiary education programs with the needs of the labor market. The MoESCS’ Draft State Development Program for Education of the Republic of Armenia by 2030 highlights the need to: (i) ensure that all children are ready to learn; (ii) build an education system that can provide good quality education for all; (iii) improve productivity by endowing tomorrow’s labor force with the appropriate set of skills; and (iv) expand new ways of organizing education through methods such as distance learning. To achieve its vision, Armenia has embarked on an ambitious curriculum reform, transitioning towards a competency-based education system, which requires inquiry-based, student-centered, outcome-oriented teaching, learning, and assessment.

1.2.2 Project Goal and Structure

Based on the success and results achieved under EIP, as well as taking into account the necessity of implementing activities that are in line with the priorities of the RA Government

Program 2021-2026, Armenia has requested World Bank's support for the provision of AF under "Education Improvement" Project (EIP), since ensuring high-quality learning environment for the children and students is considered priority for the RA Government.

The Project Development Objectives for AF are to improve school readiness of children entering primary education, improve physical conditions and the availability of education resources in general education, and support improved quality and relevance in higher education institutions in Armenia.

The completion date of EIP with AF is set December 31, 2025.

The Project is aligned with and contributes to the World Bank's most recent Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the Republic of Armenia for 2019-2023's focus area 2: Human Capital Development and Equity. Specifically, the Project is aligned with the objective of "enhanced access to good-quality educational services for skills development and employability", which emphasizes the importance of increasing the share of children enrolled in early childhood education, improving the quality of diagnostic tools implemented across different areas of the education system, and creating a new cluster of HEIs and research centers. The Project supports this objective through activities aimed at:

- (a) Upgrading the skills of future labor market entrants through strengthening the quality of education provided from early childhood to adolescence
- (b) Clustering HEIs, research centers, industry, and government to create a more effective mechanism for accelerating knowledge creation and innovation and which enable students to acquire skills that are relevant to employability
- (c) Strengthening evidence-based decision making through the establishment of a data infrastructure system that provides information on students, teachers, and schools across all levels of the education system.
- (d) Removing barriers to labor market participation, especially for women, through enhanced enrollment in early childhood development programs and increased access to preschool education for vulnerable students in rural areas.

AF would help address long-lasting inequities prevalent among gender groups in fields of study related to jobs of the future and would also help tackle the impact of natural disasters, including those related to climate change, and the risk it poses to school safety and educational trajectories.

The AF will continue to support the Government reforms in education sector. In particular, AF will: (i) continue providing grants to pre-school institutions involving more vulnerable communities in the pre-school projects, (ii) support improvement of the high school network and its successful operation; (iii) improve data collection and the monitoring of the education system performance assist in improving general education through providing schools with education resources and laboratory equipment, and (iv) support higher education reforms by continuing the CIF.

AF would be added to a project as a support for enhancing the quality of general education schools and providing continuity to the CIF for HEI. Particularly the first Component would continue to support, through the scaling-up of activities, the promotion of school readiness and equal opportunities at the start of general education. This would be achieved through the establishment of preschools and the implementation of training for teachers and school principals. The training would include climate topics such as disaster risk management, learning continuity in the event of disasters caused by climate change, and energy efficient school operations and maintenance. The scaling-up of activities would also support the enrichment of secondary schools through the rehabilitation of upper secondary schools and through the provision of laboratory equipment and related teacher training with a shift in focus from upper secondary schools to general education schools. The rehabilitation of upper secondary schools would consider climate risks to support adaptation. The laboratory equipment would meet high energy efficiency standards to reduce energy consumption and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Part of teacher training would focus on practices that could help attract female students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and subsequently, to enroll in STEM streams. The first Component would also add an activity to support the improvement of data collection and monitoring of the education system performance, which would focus on improving the use of data by the education community for managing, teaching, and learning. The second Component of the project would continue to support the implementation of the CIF for HEI through an additional round of funding. The third Component would continue to focus on project management, monitoring, and evaluation. Activities for improving the quality of education through curriculum revisions in non-STEM subjects were completed under the EIP and those concerning STEM subjects had been completed under the EU4Innovation Project (P167562)..

Based on the above-stated, EIP with AF is composed of the following three Components:

The first component “Enhancing the Quality of General Education” (*IBRD financing: €19.7 mln., Counterpart financing: €4.9 mln.*) covers four sub-components:

1.1 Promoting School Readiness and Equal Opportunities at the Start of General Education (*IBRD financing: €0.9mln., Counterpart financing €0.2 mln.*).

1.2 Enrichment of the Upper Secondary Schools (*IBRD financing: €9.9mln., Counterpart financing: €2.5 mln.*).

1.3 Improving Data Collection and the Monitoring of the Education System’s Performance (*IBRD financing: €0.9mln., Counterpart financing €0.2 mln.*)

1.5 Equipping General Education Schools (*IBRD financing: €8.0mln., Counterpart financing: €2.0mln.*).

The second component “Mainstreaming of the CIF for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) into Full Implementation” (*IBRD financing: €1.4mln., Counterpart financing: €0.4mln.*).

The third component “Supporting Project Management and Monitoring” (*IBRD financing: €1.5mln., Counterpart financing: €0.3mln.*).

The amounts allocated to the above-mentioned component/subcomponents have been determined based on the Project Paper indicators and may be changed during the Project implementation, keeping the total amount of the Project, which is €28.2mln. (*IBRD financing: €22.6mln., Counterpart financing: €5.6mln.*).

Chapter 1.3. Social Aspects

Target Beneficiaries

EIP AF is planned as a participatory Project and will strive to directly or indirectly involve major stakeholders and groups of society. The project’s main beneficiaries include:

Component 1. Enhancing the Quality of General Education

- Pre-school children- about 3000 children aged 4-6 will benefit from pre-school grant projects. Among them will be children from vulnerable groups, such as the poorest communities, remote (frontier) and mountainous regions, etc.

- Students – About 30.000 students from the selected general schools will study in the new learning environment, equipped with the up-to-date STEM laboratory and information and communication technologies (ICT) equipment. A number of high school students will study in the renovated and refurbished schools. It is envisioned to rehabilitate and refurbish 4 high schools that have already received modern ICT equipment, science laboratory equipment, and laboratory furniture in the frames of EIP.
- Teachers – the majority of the project activities involve teachers, which makes them one of the key beneficiaries and major target groups.
- School principals - adoption of a school maintenance manual and training in the use of that manual (which would include operation and maintenance of clean technologies) improve the competency of school principals in this area. Professional stakeholders – curriculum and syllabi developers, education material developers, teachers’ trainers.
- Parents – while the project activities will not target the parents as primary beneficiaries, they represent the largest group of the society ultimately affected by the project.

Component 2. “Mainstreaming of the CIF for Higher Education Institutions into Full Implementation”

- University staff – Professors as well as administrative staff from the Higher Educational Institutions in Armenia will benefit from the project through participation in CIF projects.
- University students – all students from the Higher Educational Institutions will benefit from the CIF projects becoming more relevant to the needs and requirements of the society.
- Professional stakeholders and employers are another large group of beneficiaries who will enhance their professional capacities due to the project.

The project is expected to have an impact in terms of institutional capacity building. Different educational and non-educational institutions will be involved in the project implementation, particularly:

- Pre-school institutions – About 80 pre-school institutions will be involved in the project, receiving grants directed to renovation, refurbishment of pre-school institutions, provision of new equipment, as well as teaching and learning materials.
- Schools – 200 general education schools will receive new laboratory equipment, 4 upper secondary schools will be renovated and refurbished, thus creating up-to-date and sustainable infrastructure in schools, training will be delivered to 1160 schoolteachers, etc. All these activities will facilitate capacity building and institutional development of schools.
- Higher Educational Institutions – 5 both public and private institutions will receive funding to implement innovative projects.
- State management bodies – Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport marz/regional educational departments will participate in seminars, conferences, workshops organized under the project.
- State institutions involved in project implementation (ATC, NaCET, NCEDI will develop their capacities) through the provided trainings in the use of EMIS and ICT tools, which will enable them to carry out their functions in an improved way.
- Private sector –In the innovation centers established in the frames of the project, private enterprises from different sectors, within the framework of cooperation/joint business projects with the HEIs, will both gain additional profit, which will letter direct to improve the qualification and experience of staff and significantly strengthen their capabilities.

Social Inclusiveness

Activities planned and implemented under the EIP were focused on improving access to education for all groups of beneficiaries, including children from vulnerable groups, children with special needs, etc. EIP with AF would further promote inclusion in education. The project would include inputs from stakeholders of children with disabilities during the revision of the design of the rehabilitation, refurbishment, furnishing of upper secondary schools, for providing laboratory equipment and furnishing and would promote among stakeholders the benefits of preschool education to children with disabilities in preschools. Project would seek that infrastructure works ensure accessibility for ease of use by students with motor disabilities, including ramps and railings outdoors and in restrooms and adapting the heights of drinking fountains, among others and would ensure teachers and principals

promote the education of students with disabilities. The Project would also seek training on learning continuity through hybrid or remote modalities to also cater to students with disabilities in preschools.

Gender Equality

The provided AF would help address long-lasting inequities prevalent among gender groups in fields of study related to jobs of the future. Female students are increasingly underrepresented in STEM as they progress through education levels and enter the labor market. The gender streaming dynamic in the choice of subjects by women and subsequently women's underrepresentation in STEM fields of study and jobs remains a challenge in Armenia. Factors that contribute in part to these gender disparities in education and the workforce include: the low level of attention given to gender sensitization in school teachers' professional development, the teaching practices and methodologies in STEM subjects, and lack of efforts and mechanisms to attract more female students to enroll in STEM fields of study and seek jobs in HEIs. This creates an imbalance that enhances gender segregation by sector and profession, contributing to the gender wage gap. To address the low female participation in STEM-related subjects and diminish gender inequality in the job market, it is imperative for the GoA to tackle potential biases in teachers, school principals, and university faculty. The AF supports the GoA's commitment to integrating the principles of gender equality in education, reflected in a number of national policies including the Gender Policy Concept Paper adopted in 2010.

The Project would support the inclusion of activities aimed at narrowing the gap in women's underrepresentation in STEM in two ways. First, the Project would support the inclusion of gender-sensitive approaches and methodologies in teacher training programs to support teachers to help attract female students to STEM streams in upper secondary schools. Second, the Project would support the inclusion of mechanisms to incentivize HEIs to attract more female students into STEM fields of study and jobs in HEIs and have more female teaching staff working in STEM-related programs in Higher State Education Institutions.

Climate Co-Benefits.

The AF would incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures that support climate change mitigation and adaptation action and further increase climate co-benefits in existing and

revised activities. The education sector can improve its efforts to address climate change. In order to improve the sector's resilience and adaptation to climate change in Armenia, especially for the most vulnerable populations, it is crucial to: (i) raise awareness of principals, teachers, and students about the expected impacts of climate change; (ii) build capacity among education stakeholders so that adequate disaster management plans can be prepared; (iii) increase digital services and interconnectivity, and; (iv) strengthen schools' ability to continue to provide services in the event of climate-induced shocks and natural disasters, (v) complement government investment in school infrastructure with the implementation of maintenance and management standards and strategies across the education system that increase energy efficiency and infrastructural resilience to these shocks

The rehabilitation of schools would incorporate climate-resilient design measures (e.g. structural strengthening, weather resistant materials, etc.) and install energy efficient appliances and equipment (e.g. solar panels). The rehabilitation works supported by the project would consider climate risks and vulnerabilities and, where needed, strengthening works would be carried out. This would help ensure the resilience of school infrastructure to climate change-related vulnerabilities. The AF would also include the following activities to better address and respond to climate change: (i) to the extent technically and economically feasible, clean technologies such as solar-powered renewable energy technology and technologies to enhance water efficiency related to construction and rehabilitation of relevant structures (e.g. rooftop rain capture, etc.) would be incorporated in the design of preschools and upper secondary schools, (ii) school principals, teachers and other staff would be trained on operation and maintenance of clean technologies as part of school infrastructures overall, (iii) school principals, teachers and other school staff would be educated/informed on climate change and how these technologies work to support the response to climate change, (iv) disaster risk management training would be provided to school principals, teachers, and other staff, including management of climate-related risks, and (v) communications activities with education community stakeholders related to civil works under the AF would include information and engagement about the environment and climate change preparation and mitigation. A Climate and Disaster Screening has been conducted for this operation with two hazards being identified to be relevant to the project location both in present and in the future -- (i) geophysical hazards and (ii) extreme precipitation and flooding – yet exposure rating is deemed low.

PART 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Chapter 2.1. Component 1. Enhancing the Quality of General Education.

2.1.1. Subcomponent 1.1. Promoting School Readiness and Equal Opportunities at the Start of General Education.

Subcomponent Description

EIP which was launched in 2015 and supported the establishment of sustainable community-based preschool education units under a competitive grant financing scheme. During the project implementation, 136 preschools were established and currently operate in all regions in Armenia –93 percent of the preschools were located in regions (mostly in villages). The majority of these preschools—128 of them—are school-based, and eight operate in kindergartens. The preschools established under the project in 2015-2020 in their first year alone welcomed a total of 3,500 children exceeding the end target of 3,450. Additionally, from 2015 to 2020, around 13,580 children were enrolled in preschool education comprising 5-6 percent of the children entering first grade of primary education every year. Preschool students covered under the project also improved their Early Development Index (EDI) scores, but still demand remains high for the preschool micro-projects and further expansion of preschool access. About 258 teachers currently involved in newly established preschool had been provided with respective trainings in the frames of EIP.

The development of pre-school education currently remains one of the priorities of education in Armenia. The priority directions of the reforms in the field of pre-school education are the improvement of the legislative field, the management system, the improvement of the technical-educational bases, the increase of the accessibility of the services and increase in enrolment, development of the professional capacities of the staff. To this end, there is a need to expand pre-school services in communities where there are no pre-school facilities or the existing ones cannot accommodate all the children of the community that are in need of preschool education through the establishment of alternative, low-cost educational services or through the extension of existing ones.

There are currently a number of problems in the field of pre-school education, which are a serious obstacle in terms of improving the quality of pre-school education services and

increasing the enrolment of children in pre-school institutions. In particular, the following problems should be singled out:

- Insufficient network of pre-schools and unequal access to services, especially for children in rural areas;
- Insufficient funding of the system, limited resources of community budgets, which does not allow to increase the inclusion of children;
- Poor building conditions of preschool institutions;
- Problems of professional development of pedagogical staff, which require regular professional training and certification.

The Government places a special attention to the issue of readiness of 4- to 6-year-old children to primary school, thus ensuring equal start opportunities for all children, their easy adaptation to school environment and smooth academic progress in later years, as well as establishing good basis for future development of their personal and social skills. Improvement of the quality and accessibility of the preschool education services and increase of enrollment was planned to be achieved through both the enhancement of preschool institutions' capacities and introduction of alternative low-cost pre-school education services.

According to the provisions of paragraph 3 (Education) of Section 4 (Human Capital Development) of the RA Government Program 2021-2026 (RA Government Decree 1363-A dated 18.08.2021), - implementation of the following activities are foreseen:

“Build, capitally renovate or renovate at least 500 kindergartens and preschool institutions by the year 2026, making sure they are fully equipped with necessary items and equipment”.

Activities in the frames of EIP with AF in line with the priorities of RA Government Program 2021-2026 would scale-up the co-financing of community-driven micro-projects for the establishment of 80 preschools in disadvantaged areas of RoA. Activity revisions would include mechanisms to ensure communities in need of full financing are covered; communications activities with communities would include information about the environment and climate change preparation and mitigation (related to civil works), additional principal training on school maintenance (including operation and maintenance of clean technologies), disaster-risk management, learning continuity through hybrid or remote modalities; and technical assistance to ensure building works consider energy savings

solutions. In the frames of the collaboration with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) up to 20% co-financing will be provided for the renovation of preschools through provision of energy-efficiency measures.

Activities with AF also envision establishment of playgrounds in the area adjacent to preschools, thus contributing to better physical education of preschool children.

The goals of this sub-component are as follows:

1. Preparing children for primary school, through ensuring equal start opportunities.
2. Increasing the share of children enrolled in early childhood education

The main objectives of this sub-component are as follows:

- Support the opening of new low-cost preschool services for children, which will be accessible for the poorest communities and will facilitate increasing student enrollment in preschool institutions.
- Stimulate the initiatives of communities aimed at provision of accessible and sustainable preschool education services.
- Train the preschool teachers, principals and administrative staff directly involved in the delivery of preschool education. Training will be delivered by the institution selected competitively.

The main activities of this sub-component are as follows:

- Undertake a study which would identify communities with disadvantaged populations and potential organizations able to provide preschool educational services, as well as conduct needs assessment for communities identified with disadvantaged populations to determine which communities would be unable to provide co-financing and thus would require full financing;
- Conduct dissemination activities for community leaders, parents, and communities at large about preschool opportunities for children, including children with disabilities, and their benefits to startup these services in the community and associated grant procedures for micro-projects. Communications activities with education community stakeholders related to civil works would include information and engagement about the environment and climate change preparation and mitigation;

- Organize evaluation and selection of micro-projects;
- Provide grants for the implementation of the micro-projects;
- Training of teachers and principals assigned to the new preschools. In addition to early childhood training, training modules and adoption of manuals are included on (a) school maintenance (including operation and maintenance of clean technologies), (b) learning continuity through hybrid or remote modalities (including for students with disabilities), in the case of disruptions to in-person learning due to epidemiological, geo-political, or climate-related shocks, and (c) disaster risk management and prevention (including activities such as earthquake drills or climate-related emergency response training for teachers throughout the school year);
- Provide technical assistance for the implementation of the micro-projects ensuring that facilities are accessible and inclusive, ensuring the safe physical conditions of the buildings, the refurbishment of classrooms, and the purchase of equipment that privileges energy efficient devices and appliance;
- Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the micro-projects.

Detailed description of the grant scheme procedures is given in a separate Operational Manual “Grants to Institutions for Implementation of Preschool Education Micro-Projects”. (Appendix 5) The Operational Manual for the grant scheme was developed during the phase two of the Education Quality and Relevance Project (EQRP) within the Adaptable Program Loan (APL 2). APLII, was revised and approved for EIP and is revised for EIP with AF implementation respectively.

Subcomponent implementation risks and ways to mitigate them

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>
Insufficient participation of communities in implementation of the micro-projects	Conduct inter-institutional discussions and meetings with community officials; carrying out consecutive promotion work with communities and provision of technical assistance to them. Organize discussions and

	presentations to share positive examples of the previously implemented micro-projects, also to identify the challenges.
Delays in contributions from communities and parents to assist in implementation of micro-projects	Implement measures (i.e. set timely payment of community contributions according to the pre-established schedule as precondition for provision of micro-project funding) to ensure compliance of communities with the co-financing commitments under the program. Carry out awareness raising and promotion campaigns among parents and marz officials.
Temporary closure of the preschools due to outbreaks of COVID-19 pandemic	The conducted trainings of the preschool teachers through the newly developed manuals would ensure learning continuity through hybrid or remote modalities (including for students with disabilities) during emergency situations.
Lack of properly trained preschool teachers in the selected communities.	Develop incentives in order to encourage enrolment of qualified preschool teachers in the communities facing problems (e.g. salary increments, improved working conditions, training courses, etc.)
A sharp decline in the number of preschool aged children, especially in border communities due to recent war, emigration and a number of other factors	Implement preschool establishment micro-projects even in border communities that are not included in the list of communities receiving social assistance from the Government, communities with small number of preschool aged children, since the preschool establishment would greatly contribute to preventing emigration and will reduce the likelihood of emptying the village.

Expected Outputs

<i>Output</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>
Establishment of accessible and sustainable preschool education services in the selected 80 communities.	2025

160 trained teachers involved in preschool micro-projects	2025
Increase in enrollment of 4-6 aged children in preschool education by 3000 supported by the project	2025

2.1.2. Subcomponent 1. 2. Enrichment of Upper Secondary Schools

Subcomponent Description

The effective performance of upper secondary schools is highly dependent on the availability of modern infrastructure, as well as facilities equipped with up-to-date laboratories, computers, internet, electronic teaching/learning materials, as well as qualified pedagogical cadres. This subcomponent under the EIP was focused on rehabilitation of targeted upper secondary schools, the provision of adequate teaching and learning equipment, and the provision of other complementary resources to all upper secondary schools in the country. Many of these schools were built during the Soviet Union period and present infrastructure deficiencies, including lack of appropriate heating systems, potential seismic safety issues and humidity problems. All rehabilitation works had been carried out on state property and within the existing building footprint. No rehabilitation activities requiring resettlement or land acquisition/use had been permitted under the Project. The selection of schools was based on the criteria developed by the MoESCS. The criteria included technical conditions of the school buildings – including structure and foundation, roof, floor, walls, and heating and electrical systems – accounts for most of the weight in an index of infrastructure needs. School selection criteria included school construction year, number of students, number of villages served, etc. whereas the preference was given to older and larger schools and those that served a higher number of villages.

A total of 13 schools out of the initially planned 17 have been rehabilitated in the frames of subcomponent. Taking into account the amount of funds required for the rehabilitation, it was possible to organize and carry out the rehabilitation of 13 upper secondary schools, while rehabilitation and refurbishment of 4 upper secondary schools will be conducted within AF. 107 high schools have been equipped with laboratory equipment and furniture for STEM subjects; provision of e-learning materials for STEM subjects has been completed.

According to the provisions of paragraph 3 (Education) of Section 4 (Human Capital Development) of the RA Government Program 2021-2026 (RA Government Decree 1363-A dated 18.08.2021), implementation of the following activities is foreseen:

“Build, capially renovate or rehabilitate at least 300 schools by 2026, making sure that they are completely equipped with necessary items and equipment”.

Under the provided AF, this subcomponent split into two sub-components. Activities under subcomponent 1.2 would be restricted to school rehabilitation and refurbishment of four upper secondary schools in line with the priorities of RA Government Program 2021-2026. The rehabilitation of schools would consider climate risks to support adaptation. Activity revisions would include adding operation and maintenance of clean technologies to principal training on school maintenance, and inclusion of energy savings solutions to rehabilitation designs. In the frames of collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the technical designs for upper secondary school rehabilitation will be revised and energy efficient equipment will be provided with UNDP co-financing. The share of the investment will be not more than 20% of the total value of the energy efficient measures included in the developed design documents.

Activities related to the provision of adequate ICT and energy efficient science laboratory equipment and other complementary resources but targeted to general education schools would be included in subcomponent (1.5).

The goals of this sub-component are as follows:

1. Rehabilitating and refurbishing of 4 upper secondary schools.

The main objectives of this sub-component are as follows:

1. Improving physical conditions in upper secondary schools. Furnishing and equipping classrooms, canteens, and sports facilities

The main activities of this sub-component are as follows:

- Feasibility study for each of the schools, including experts’ assessments of their seismic conditions and climate risks,

- Revising of the design of the rehabilitation, which prioritize energy-efficient, waste-reducing, water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities design and construction methods, accessibility and inclusiveness (gender and disability) as well as risk-informed climate-resilient rehabilitation;
- Rehabilitation and refurbishment of facilities;
- Ensuring appropriate author-technical control over the rehabilitation work;
- Providing furniture and equipment for classrooms, canteens, and sports facilities;
- Developing training modules and adopting manuals on school maintenance (including operation and maintenance of clean technologies), contributing to the long-term climate-resilience, climate mitigation, and sustainability of investments in infrastructure;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the subcomponent activities. (Monitoring and evaluation activities are being conducted by the sub-component staff under the supervision of the Head of the sub-component, as well as by the Safeguard specialist in the process of the rehabilitation activities)

Sub-component implementation risks and ways to mitigate them

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>
Delays in coordinated actions by the different bodies involved in rehabilitation works and permits for the envisioned rehabilitation and renovation work in the schools.	Organizing frequent meetings with relevant representatives of various stakeholders involved in the school rehabilitation process to ensure coordinated activities. Receive assistance from MoESCS for obtaining the relevant permits from the local self-government bodies for carrying out the construction works on time.
Restrictions in project related activities due to outbreaks of COVID-19 pandemic	In case of emergencies the timetables will be revised, the deadlines will be extended if necessary, hence, to try to avoid serious delays in rehabilitation activities.
Pollution of school territory and nearby area with construction waste	On-site storage of construction materials and waste in designated locations and organized transportation of waste to final disposal sites pre-agreed with local self-government bodies.
Blocking of nearby roads/access ways and/or disruptions to local residents or	Disseminate information on rehabilitation works and likely impacts on local residents well in advance of the start of construction. Provide

businesses during rehabilitation works.	information on ways to submit grievances, including sign boards at each work site indicating contact information of contractors, CEP PIU and the design and maintenance companies. Provide alternate access means (e.g. footbridges) residential or business areas are blocked by construction equipment or by other construction-related reasons.
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Expected Outputs

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>
Rehabilitated, furnished and equipped 4 upper secondary schools in accordance with RA's construction and safety standards and energy efficient regulations	By 2025

2.1.3. Subcomponent 1. 3. Improving data collection and the monitoring of the education system performance

Subcomponent Description

Activities supported by EIP provided the foundation -- strengthening of NACET (National Center of Education Technology), development of an ICT strategy, and data infrastructure such as data collection and integration, and system interoperability -- needed for monitoring of the system. A total of 585 schools have been provided with computer equipment, 4475 teachers and administrative staff have been trained in ICT usage, and the office of the National Center of Educational Technologies has been renovated and equipped to adequately function as a data processing center in the frames of EIP.

With AF this sub-component would continue to aim at improving the MoESCS's capacity to monitor the performance of Armenian schools in collaboration with the NACET.

This sub-component would go a step further and finance activities that focus on improved functionality for managing, teaching, and learning (e.g., data visualization, interpretation, and usability of the information collected through the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) system developed under the parent project) and promote data-driven

evidence-based policy making. New activities within AF would include identifying and piloting data visualization tools and features to be added to the EMIS to strengthen its usability and improve key education outcomes. Revisions would be made to all activities related to software improvement and training of MoESCS employees, and teaching and non-teaching staff of education institutions to ensure a focus on improving the use of data of for managing, teaching, and learning.

The reason for adding activities supporting improved functionality for managing, teaching, and learning is two-fold. First, improving data visualization and interpretation can better inform stakeholder engagement. The EIP supported the NACET in establishing the EMIS system by capturing student, teacher, and school level data from preschool through tertiary education and producing statistical reports using the extensive dataset. Yet, these reports are not disseminated in a user-friendly manner to the wider education community (ministry employees, schools, and parents), and as such, its use is limited to those with the technical expertise to interpret the data. Second, improving informed stakeholder engagement can better support evidence-based decision-making and policy implementation through increased buy-in for interventions aimed at improving education outcomes. The EIP delivered capacity building training on the use of the EMIS (mainly reporting and light monitoring) to school managers, and teachers. There is still a need to provide capacity building to MoESCS employees, school managers, and teachers to strengthen their own analysis of education performance (at the sectorial, school, or classroom levels), as well as the identification, piloting, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions.

The goals of this subcomponent are as follows:

- To have a more efficient Education Management System as a result of EMIS updating and upgrading (addition of new tools, expansion of reporting opportunities)
- To have a wider range of beneficiaries who effectively use the opportunities of EMIS as a result of the training.

The main objectives of this subcomponent are as follows:

- Increasing the role of EMIS as an education management system for general education institutions.

- Conducting training for MoESCS employees, teaching and non-teaching staff of educational institutions to introduce the improved EMIS and develop knowledge and skills of its effective use during the working process.
- Improving the skills of targeted groups (teachers, administrative staff of educational institutions) in the use of EMIS and ICT tools in learning

Main activities of this subcomponent are as follows:

- Carry out an identification study to determine possible features that should be added to the current EMIS to strengthen the use of data to improve previously identified key education outcomes;
- Conduct the development of the selected feature(s), i.e., data visualization tools to produce interpretable and relevant information for a wide range of users, and the validation of the feature(s);
- Conduct piloting, monitoring, and evaluation of the selected feature(s);
- Conduct the purchase of hardware to operate the feature(s) in an integrated fashion, if needed;
- Conduct training for users in schools and institutions on the use of data analytics; include training on the use of added feature(s) for improved management, teaching, and learning processes for school principals, teachers, and Ministry and NACET staff.

Subcomponent implementation risks and ways to mitigate them

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>
Target groups are not ready to use ICT both in teaching and learning processes and for administrative purposes	Organization of regular promotional and publicity events by MoESCS and CEP PIU among schools and universities. Organize training for representatives of schools and universities on the use of ICT
Operating difficulties could arise with some IT technology at schools	Preparation of user guidelines, conducting presentations, provision of consultancy, organization of trainings.
The trained staff member is replaced.	Creation of technical support and advice portal.
Teachers' reluctance to use up to date	Organization of regular promotional and

educational equipment, facilities and e-materials.	awareness raising events by MoESCS, NACET and CEP PIU among schools and teachers. Training activities in the use of ICT and e-materials are anticipated in the project.
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Expected Outputs

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>
Data visualization tools for monitoring and evaluation outcomes.	2025

2.1.4 Subcomponent 1.5 Equipping General Education Schools

Upgrading and re-equipment of schools is currently one of the priorities of education. Most schools lack science laboratories, and the existing ones no longer meet the requirements of modern education. To this end, the priority is to establish science and engineering laboratories in schools, equipped with modern equipment and necessary furniture. Activities originally carried out under Subcomponent 1.2 focused on 107 Upper Secondary Schools, which have already been equipped with necessary laboratory equipment and furniture for natural science subjects (335 laboratories in total).

According to the provisions of paragraph 3 (Education) of Section 4 (Human Capital Development) of the RA Government Program 2021-2026 (RA Government Decree 1363-A dated 18.08.2021), implementation of the following activities is foreseen:

“Create modern natural science and engineering laboratories in all 1,400 schools of the RoA by 2026, thus essentially improving the quality of Education”.

This new subcomponent (modeled after subcomponent 1.2 that focuses on upper secondary schools) would aim to improve the teaching and learning conditions of general education schools by providing science laboratory equipment, furniture, and materials to approximately 200 general education schools. Targeted schools would be selected from across the country (by the direction of MOESCS), with the exception of schools in Tavush, which will receive equipment, furniture, materials, and training through the EU4Innovation Trust Fund. Once

targeted schools have been selected, this sub-component would finance the scale-up of the following activities under the parent project.

Main activities in the frames of the sub-component would be directed to provision of ICT and science laboratory equipment originally carried out under Subcomponent 1.2 to approximately 200 General Education schools. AF activities would include identification study to select participating schools, needs assessment and adequate mechanisms to ensure basic infrastructure is in place, and implementation of a system to monitor use of laboratory equipment. Activity revisions would include the addition of a training module for teachers and school principals on gender-sensitive teaching methods and practices to better engage female students in STEM subjects. The teacher training module will include methods on: (i) sensitization of teachers about their potential biases, restrictive stereotypes and perceptions towards different genders, including those on men's and women's innate abilities, and social norms about gender roles; (ii) creating positive STEM identities for female students during in-classroom teaching; (iii) introducing female students to female role models in STEM; (iv) creating environments that enable female students to analyze and process data, communicate effectively, build confidence, and that allow male and female students to effectively cooperate; and (v) engaging in discussions with parents to sensitize them to potential biases and misperceptions about men's and women's innate abilities and gender roles.

Activities under the sub-component would ensure that the procurement of energy efficient laboratory equipment is considered to reduce energy consumption and GHG emission and that adequate training on its use is provided to teachers.

The goals of this subcomponent are:

- Establishment of science and ICT laboratories in approximately 200 general education schools.

The main objectives of this subcomponent are:

1. Improve the teaching and learning conditions of general education schools by providing science and ICT laboratory equipment, furniture, and materials.

Main activities of this subcomponent are as follows:

- Carrying out an identification study, including the definition of criteria to determine which schools would be selected to receive support

- Conducting a needs assessment in each school to determine which schools lack basic infrastructure (water supply and sanitation) and put adequate mechanisms in place to ensure local governments supply these schools with basic infrastructure prior to receiving equipment and furniture;
 - Provision of STEM laboratory equipment, prioritizing equipment of high energy efficiency standards to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions whenever possible to the selected target schools;
 - Provision of adequate furniture;
1. Development and provision of teacher and principal training along with user-guides and demonstration videos on operating and maintaining (energy-efficient) laboratory equipment as well as using it along modern teaching methodologies and digital learning materials in the classrooms. Activity will include (a) development and implementation of training along with handbooks and short videos on gender-sensitive teaching methods to strengthen teachers’ capacity to better engage female students in STEM and (b) development and implementation of a system to monitor the use of lab equipment through classroom visits and recordings on a regular basis.

Sub-component implementation risks and ways to mitigate them

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>
Lack of necessary infrastructure (water supply and drainage systems) in educational institutions.	Carrying out works with relevant structures to resolve the issue jointly.
Outflow of the teachers from the educational institutions trained in the use of laboratory equipment in the educational process	Providing manuals to educational institutions on the use of laboratory equipment in the educational process

Expected Outputs

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Time schedule</i>
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200 general education schools with established science and ICT laboratories.	2025
1000 teachers trained in the use of laboratory equipment in the educational process	2025

Chapter 2.2 Component 2. Mainstreaming of the Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) into full implementation

Component Description

Under the EIP, CIF has supported projects that aim to make improvements in the following three cross-cutting areas: (i) labor market relevance, (ii) organizational efficiency, and (iii) equity in enrollment and other opportunities. CIF grants were given on a competitive basis to implement innovation and development programs in universities, to strengthen their overall capabilities, such as teaching and learning environment, research capacity, etc. At the same time, the mentioned grants were aimed at promoting the quality of educational activities of higher education institutions, increasing the efficiency, management system, modernization of professional educational programs and teaching methods, introduction of scientific research in the educational process, as well as development of labor market relations. CIF supported university programs aimed at increasing the modernity, relevance, efficiency and accessibility of education. In the frames of EIP, 15 universities were beneficiaries under the implemented 18 grant projects, which enabled to strengthen the capacity of implemented innovative programs. The state-of-the-art laboratories and centers of excellence set up in higher education institutions in the near future will become a new standard of quality for these fields, both locally and internationally.

According to the provisions of paragraph 3 (Education) of Section 4 (Human Capital Development) of the RA Government Program 2021-2026 (RA Government Decree 1363-A dated 18.08.2021), implementation of the following activities is foreseen:

“Continuous improvement of the quality of higher education, the ongoing increase of the research component in higher education, development and introduction of new methodology

for learning and teaching through the application of modern information and communication technologies in the educational process, introduction of Master's Degree programmes for professions in accordance with the new demands in the labor market through inclusion of relevant academic programmes in the list of academic programmes according to professions, upgrading the higher education in areas of natural sciences, bringing it to an internationally competitive level through state support and institutional investments”.

Based on the above stated and keeping a focus on the same cross-cutting areas, the call-for-proposals under the round supported by the AF would welcome proposals that aim to develop innovative approaches to strengthen STEM education in both HEI and basic education. Activities would scale-up the provision of grants to HEIs proposing to develop innovative approaches to strengthen STEM education in both Higher and basic education. Activity revisions would include adding requirements for participating HEIs to establish quotas and targets for women in student enrollment and faculty membership to achieve gender-balance and for rolling-out information strategies to attract and retain female students and faculty in STEM fields. Particularly new criteria for CIF proposals will be included under component 2 for HEIs to: (i) establish targets and quotas for females in student enrolment and faculty membership to improve gender-balanced participation and representation in HEIs, and (ii) design and implement outreach and awareness raising strategies targeting potential female applicants, including the ones in general schools to attract females to enroll in STEM fields. These mechanisms can include organizing STEM-related presentations at general schools; organizing STEM boot-camps/fairs and other events, also by teaming up with relevant industries; preparing brochures to guide/advise female students on STEM career orientation; and preparing stories, articles, and videos for the (social) media and for general dissemination, with a focus on female role models in STEM.

The goal of this Component is:

Enhance the higher education quality, relevance, innovativeness and accessibility, improve and modernize educational and infrastructural capacities.

The main objectives of the component are to:

- Increase the quality of education provided by HEIs;
- Promote the modernization and relevance of HEIs;

- Increase efficiency and equity of HEIs;
- Strengthen the links with the priority areas for economic development;
- Increase access to new academic programs;
- Promote cooperation between universities, private sector and research institutes.

To achieve these objectives the following main activities will be undertaken under CIF component:

- Revision of CIF operational processes and procedures to include, inter alia, an eligibility requirement to incentivize HEIs to attract more female students into STEM fields of study and jobs and have more female teaching staff working in STEM-related programs;
- Call for proposals, selection of projects, provision of grants to HEIs;
- Monitoring of the CIF implementation process, including surveys among students and faculty from participating HEIs to measure quality, efficiency, and relevance;
- Cooperation with private/public sector and potential donors to mobilize additional financing for CIF sustainability;
- Training for HEIs managerial staff and other relevant staff members on project preparation, management skills, procurement issues, project monitoring and evaluation issues.

Sub-component implementation risks and ways to mitigate them

<i>Risks</i>	<i>Mitigation Measures</i>
Insufficient capabilities within HEIs to prepare and implement grants	Organize trainings for administrative and management staff of HEIs; issue manuals and guidelines based on need and request, provide guidelines to HEIs.
Lack of partnership opportunities and collaboration experience with NGOs, private sector, etc.	Arrange conferences, seminars, round tables, informal discussions, create interactive web page.
Lack of sustainable co-financing from HEIs for all the phases of the project.	Explore ways and options to raise funds and provide recommendations.
Insufficient readiness of private and public sector	Carry out awareness-raising campaigns;

to finance innovative projects of HEIs.	create incentives for more active involvement of stakeholders.
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Expected Outputs

<i>Output</i>	<i>Time schedule (years)</i>
Enhanced partnership in higher education sector by increasing the number of consortia projects at least by 1	2025
5 CIF grant projects implemented	2025

PART 3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION, GOVERNANCE

Chapter 3.1 Project Management and Implementation

The Role, Functions and Responsibilities of CEP

The PIU titled “Center for Education Projects” (CEP) was established by the MoES in 1996 for implementation of the first WB funded loan and grant projects. It has been operating since then and has successfully executed its responsibilities, ensuring timely and successful implementation of the projects.

The CEP will be responsible for the general administration, ongoing coordination, implementation, and monitoring of activities under the “Education Improvement” loan project with AF. It will be also responsible for financial management, disbursements, accounting and accountability of project funds, as well as for ensuring safeguards compliance, procurement of all goods, works, and services, and monitoring of the Grant Projects.

The CEP will be responsible for arranging regular meetings with various stakeholders within the Project, which will assist the CEP in overall Project implementation.

During the whole Project implementation cycle, the CEP will be responsible for keeping informed all interested parties, groups and policy-makers, government structures (including National Assembly/Parliament, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the general public), as well as the WB on the Project status through regular awareness and coverage, through submission of relevant reports. The CEP’s information process also serves to identify obstacles early on, in order to find out mutually agreeable solutions.

The CEP will also act as the coordinating agency for other donors and NGOs implementing projects in the same field, ensuring compatibility with the RA Government strategy for education sector reform.

The CEP will coordinate the overall public information and consultation campaign to implement profound reforms under the EIP and to ensure information-sharing with the public on the activities and achievements of the Project.

The operation of all PIUs in Armenia is unified and regulated by the Government and Prime - Minister's Decrees and by the orders of the Minister of Education and, Science according to which the CEP is a State Agency founded by the Government.

According to the Charter the main functions of the CEP are as follows:

- On behalf of the Government of RA, implement functions of the Client envisioned under Loan/ Credit and Grant projects;
- Administer and coordinate the Projects, including coordination of activities with other organizations and institutions involved in implementation of the Project;
- Liaise with the World Bank for administration and supervision matters of the projects such as submission of various reports for review, obtaining the required approvals; consultations on emerging problems, finding of joint solutions;
- Prepare annual budgets and time schedule of Projects' implementation activities for submission to the approval of the relevant structure / body if needed;
- Prepare the Projects' annual and current procurement plans for purchase of goods, services and works and submit them to the relevant structure / body for approval if needed;
- Organize Procurement /selection processes using appropriate selection methods as indicated in the current procurement plan, and in accordance with the RA legislation and the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 2016 revised November 2017, August 2018 and November 2020 (hereinafter Regulations);
- Prepare and sign contracts related to the implementation of the Projects in accordance with the RA legislation and the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 2016 revised November 2017, August 2018 and November 2020 (hereinafter Regulations);
- Undertake project's financial management (including planning and budgeting, accounting, internal controls, funds flow, financial reporting, external audit) and disbursement function ensuring the process of replenishments of accounts and be accountable for the use of the Projects' funds;

- Prepare monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual progress and financial reports for the submission to the relevant structure/ body with appropriate required dimensions;
- Monitor and evaluate Project activities through assessment of Projects’ inputs and outputs and using monitoring indicators;
- Ensure the annual audit of the projects and publish audit reports of PIU CEP official website and on WB’s “Client Connection” electronic system;
- The MoESCS will maintain the CEP throughout the Project implementation period. The CEP will also be responsible to ensure the safeguards compliance of the project with WB Safeguard Policies and be responsible for any assessment required by the Safeguard Policies, seeking advice, as required, from expert consultants and the World Bank staff.

The CEP Structure

According to the charter of CEP, the director of the PIU is appointed by the decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia based on the selection results according to the procedures described in the GoA Decree № 1668-N, dated December 16, 2010. The Director is responsible for employing the CEP staff.

The working relations with the Monitoring and evaluation of the subcomponent activities current staff members of the CEP will be continued, revising their job responsibilities upon necessity. CEP currently employs individual consultants on a contractual basis (in particular the project PR consultant, the safeguard specialist) with whom the contractual relations will be continued under the AF based on the continuity of services, revising their Terms of References accordingly.

New staff members will be selected competitively, according to the decision of the RA Government N 1668-N, dated December 16, 2010.

CEP with AF will have the following positions:

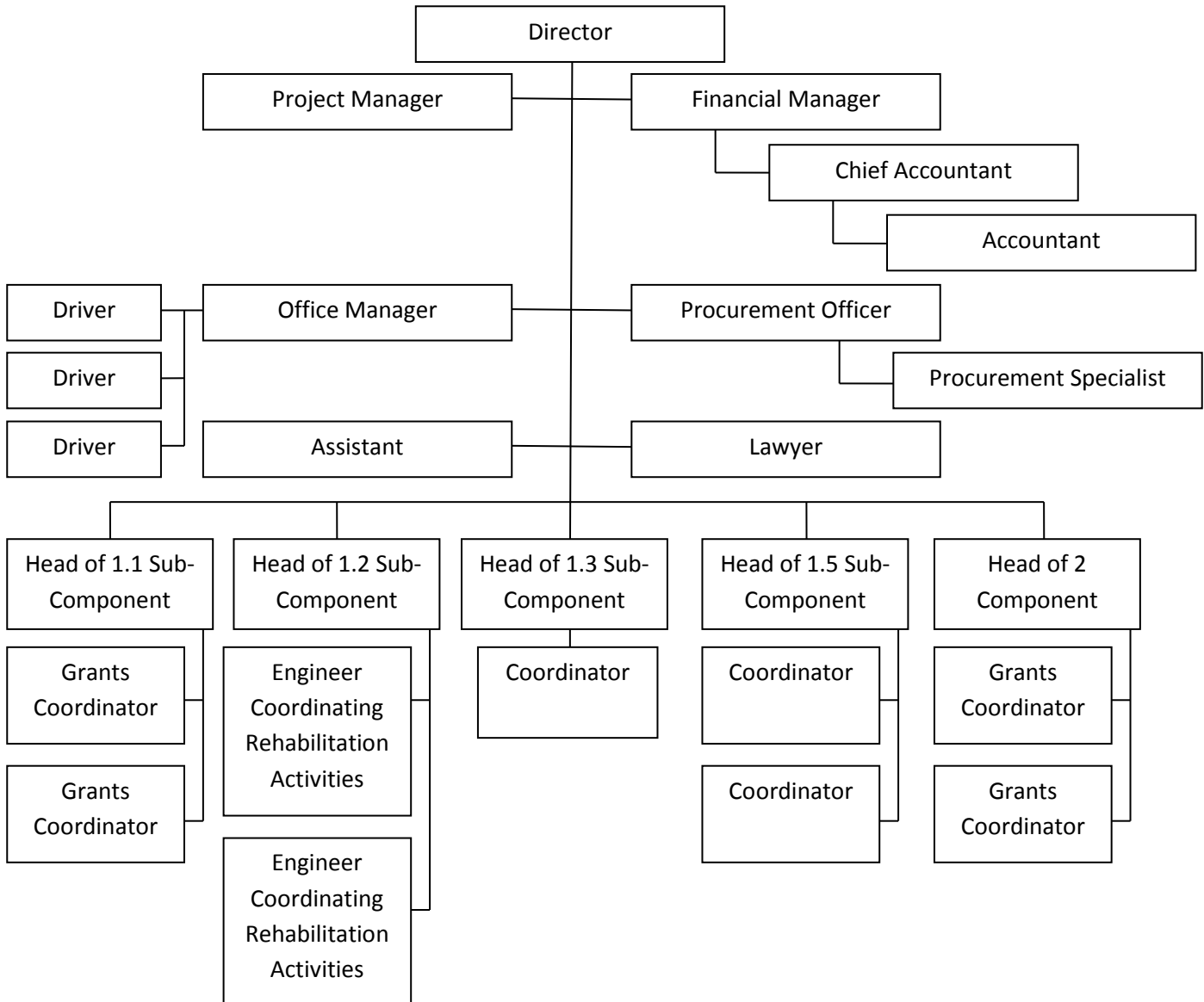
No	Position	Staff per position
1	Director	1

2	Projects Manager	1
3	Financial Manager	1
4	Chief Accountant	1
5	Accountant	1
6	Office Manager	1
7	Procurement Officer	1
8	Procurement Specialist	1
9	Lawyer	1
10	Assistant	1
11	Head of 1.1 Sub-component	1
12	Grants Coordinator under 1.1 Sub-component	2
13	Head of 1.2. Sub-component	1
14	Engineers coordinating rehabilitation activities	2
15	Head of 1.3	1
16	Coordinator under 1.3 Sub-component	1
17	Head of 1.5 Sub-component	1
18	Coordinator under 1.5 Sub-component	2
19	Head of Component 2	1
20	Grants coordinator under 2 Component	2
21	Driver	3

The experience and qualifications for above listed positions should meet the requirements set by the job description of the given position. The Component/Sub-Components heads under

the supervision of Projects Manager will be responsible for overall implementation of each Component/Sub-component related activity. Besides, local consultants and experts will be hired for implementing various tasks under the project.

Below is the new Organizational Chart of the CEP.



Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The following institutional and implementation arrangements have been identified and defined:

- At the central level, the MoESCS through its different departments will carry out the overall supervision of this project, as well as for provision of relevant guidance and reference documents, approval of normative documents developed in the scope of the project.
- At the Marz level, departments will be progressively empowered to play a substantial role in the promotion phase, will provide support to data collection, give feedback to the ministry on specific implementation issues, and will assist in monitoring of implementation of the project at Marz level.
- At the community level, community heads and school principals will be assigned with a higher responsibility in terms of overall management and co-financing of preschool services.
- The NACET will actively be involved in preparation of all activities targeted to strengthening of its capacity building.
- NACET will participate in data collection and analysis, also will be responsible for dissemination of information
- CEP will support the implementation of the Project by organizing the procurement, implementation, outcome management and monitoring processes.

Grievances Redress Mechanism

To help project management and enhance operational efficiency, Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be implemented. This will ensure that beneficiaries and the wider community have an outlet through which to engage with the Project, provide project staff with practical suggestions/feedback that allows them to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive to beneficiaries and increase stakeholder involvement in the project. The GRM will also help to generate public awareness about the project and its objectives; deter fraud and corruption; mitigate potential project risks; and support effective internal organizational processes within the CEP.

The following core principles are embodied in the GRM:

- i. Grievances will be treated confidentially, assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
- ii. The Project beneficiaries may use a range of contact options (telephone number, e-mail address and postal address, etc.). The GRM is accessible to all stakeholders.
- iii. The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of complainants.
- iv. All grievances, simple or complex, will be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance will be swift, decisive, and constructive.
- v. A wide range of project-affected people will be encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of the project authorities.

For EIP, the grievance system is designed to function at the project level. The grievance redress functions are integrated into the job description for the following CEP staff: Projects Manager, Financial Manager, Office Manager, Procurement Officer, Lawyer and the Heads of Components/Sub-Components under the instruction issued by CEP Director. The main responsibility of grievance redressing is on the CEP Director. Since dedicated and passionate grievance redress personnel are essential to the success of a GRM, sound recruitment practices, continuous training and learning opportunities, and systematic review and feedback regarding staff members' performance will be conducted in the scope of the project.

Grievance redress is one of the project's core activities. Management makes the GRM part of the project's axis by regularly reviewing grievance data and trends at project management meetings. In addition, project management regularly analyzes reports and other monitoring and evaluation data on grievances, which will provide the management with insights into the effectiveness of the project implementation. All project progress reporting to the World Bank will include data on grievances received to date, their handling and their resolution.

The grievance redress process comprises the following steps:

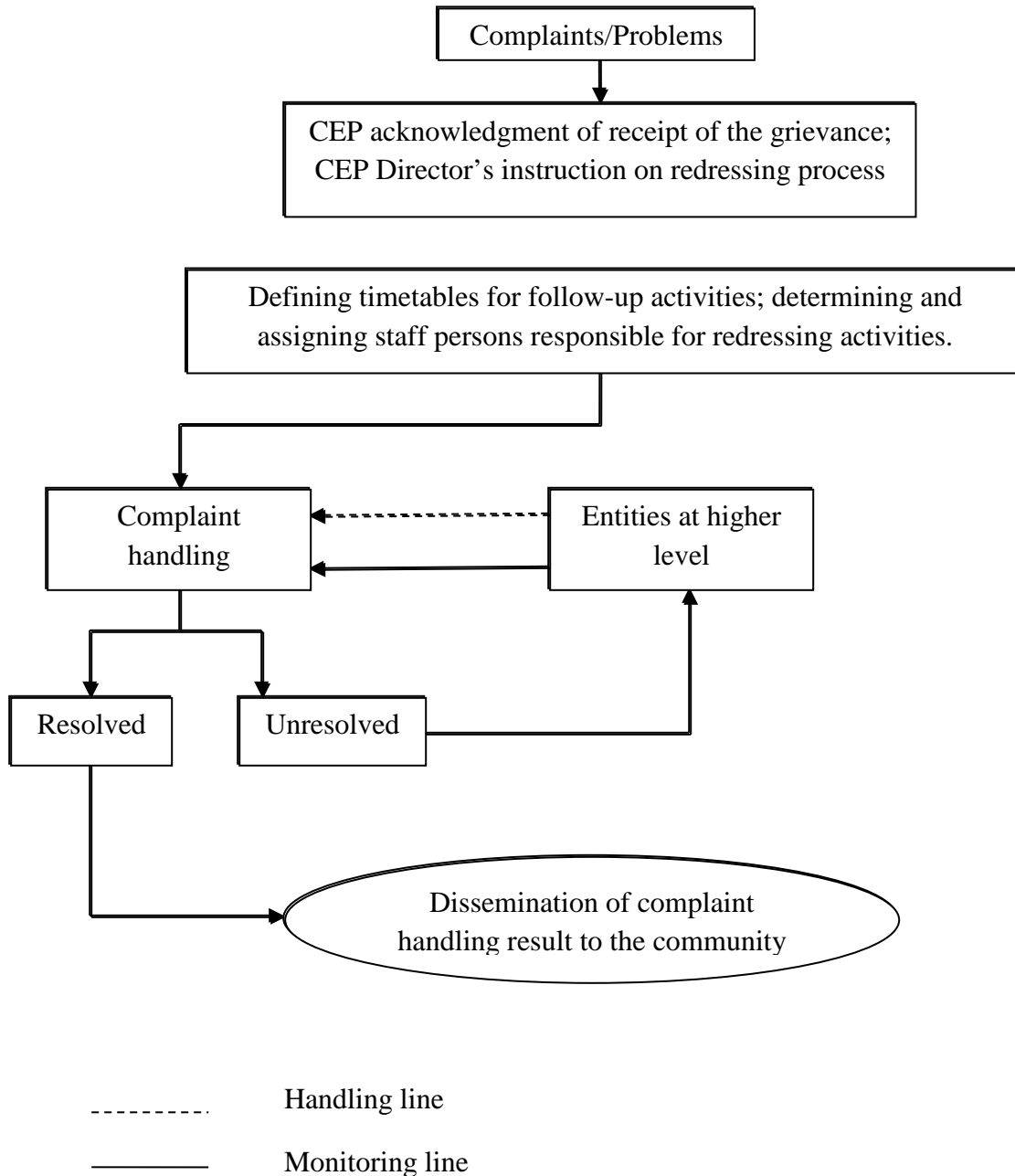
For EIP, the project beneficiaries and stakeholders may use a range of contact options directly to contact CEP including telephone number; e-mail address; postal address; CEP official webpage. Furthermore, grievances might be submitted through MoESCS and Marz/Regional Education Departments.

Since various types of grievances typically require different follow-up actions, grievances need to be categorized, assigned priority, and routed to the appropriate entity/staff. In particular, the CEP Director will receive a grievance and together with the CEP Lawyer will categorize it and prepare corresponding instruction on redressing the grievance. The CEP

Projects Manager will coordinate the redressing process under the responsibility of the CEP Director.

After a grievance is submitted and assessed, the grievance redress process is started in accordance with the CEP Director's corresponding instruction. CEP will acknowledge receipt of the grievance to the person lodging the grievance within 5 working days. Depending on the grievance category, detailed responsibilities for grievance redress process (including recording all efforts made to resolve the issue, communicating with the person lodging the grievance, keeping grievance data, etc.) will be specified, assigned and distributed among the CEP corresponding staff in accordance with the CEP Director's corresponding instruction. In addition, in the instruction it will also be mentioned the grievance analyzing and redressing steps, clearly defined timetables for follow-up activities, the employee's name and position responsible for each activity, etc. In case the responsibility is beyond CEP functions, the grievance will be escalated to the entities at higher level (such as MoESCS, Regional Authorities or other corresponding Institution, under supervision of which the person lodging the grievance works) in accordance with the RA Legislation. And in case the complaint does not pertain to the Project, it will be formally referred to the national authorities. Complainants will then receive periodic updates on the status of their grievances.

Flow of Grievance Redress in EIP is presented below:



After the grievance is acknowledged, information will be gathered about the grievance to determine its validity, and actions will be taken for resolving the grievance.

Grievances that are straightforward (such as queries and suggestions) can often be resolved quickly by contacting the complainant. Potential actions include responding to a query or comment, providing users with a status update, imposing sanctions, or referring the grievance to another level of the system for further action in accordance with the RA Legislation.

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to the success of any GRM. In accordance with the CEP Director's corresponding instruction on Redressing Grievances, the CEP Projects Manager will be responsible for the GRM monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring refers to the process of tracking grievances and assessing the extent to which progress is being made to resolve them. And evaluation involves analyzing grievance data and using it to make policy and/or process changes to minimize similar grievances in the future. Therefore, reports on grievances data (e.g., average time to resolve grievances, percentage of complainants satisfied with action taken, number of grievances resolved at first point of contact) should be submitted regularly by Projects Manager to CEP Director. Senior project management should monitor grievance resolution data and grievance trends in their progress review meetings and should randomly call complainants from different areas and groups to get feedback on whether the GRM is functioning effectively.

Monitoring and evaluation data will be directly input into CEP internal network to ensure the accessibility of general data about the GRM for CEP staff. The GRM users will be informed about their right to an appeal if they are dissatisfied with the decision, specifying both internal and external (e.g. judicial review, ombudsman, line ministry) review options.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

To effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EIP with AF, the CEP will conduct the monitoring and evaluation of the project in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation framework which addresses the following questions:

1. What is to be monitored and evaluated – all the components and subcomponents of EIP with AF should be adequately monitored and evaluated, resulting the overall monitoring and evaluation of the EIP.
2. Activities needed to monitor and evaluate – all the activities listed under each component and subcomponent of EIP should be included in the monitoring and evaluation process. Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities – the main responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities is the CEP Projects Manager who will supervise and coordinate all the activities in this regard. The coordination of monitoring and evaluation activities under each component/subcomponent is under the responsibility of respective component/subcomponents' heads.

- When monitoring and evaluation are carried planned – monitoring and evaluation of EIP AF should start at the beginning of the project implementation and continue during the project serving as a tool to follow the progress of the project implementation and its results. CEP will develop monitoring and evaluation plan for the project based on specified activities identified by project components and update it on an annual basis each year till February 15. This plan will be used for coordination and assessing the progress of project implementation. Monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed in the form presented below:

Form for the Monitoring and evaluation plan for EIP project						
Results framework Indicator	Monitoring and Evaluation Indicator definition (and unit of measurement)	Data collection methods/sources	Frequency / schedule	Person(s) responsible	Summary/provision of the information	Information use/audience

- How monitoring and evaluation are carried out (methods) – the methods to be used during the monitoring and evaluation of the EIP with AF will be defined in the monitoring and evaluation plan of the EIP project based on the nature of the activities to be monitored. The list of main methods to be used is the follows:
- Site visits organized by CEP to follow the project implementation progress, identify any obstacles or problems occurred during the project implementation and give relevant solutions. The schedule for site visits under each component/subcomponent will be defined in the monitoring and evaluation plan updated annually.
- Regular meetings and discussions with stakeholders – this method will be used for all subcomponents and components of the EIP AF project to assess the needs of stakeholders, to receive feedback from the stakeholders both in regard to the implementation process and on the potential need for changes in the process and on the results of the implementation.

4. Studies and surveys – studies and surveys will be carried out according to the EIP AF activities and will be included in the monitoring and evaluation plan updated annually.
5. Collection and analysis of relevant data and statistics – CEP will continuously use the analysis of relevant data and statistics to follow the progress of the project. Results framework to be used for the monitoring and evaluation of EIP AF is presented in the Project Documents (Results Framework of EIP with AF). Further details of the results framework will be conducted in the monitoring and evaluation plan of EIP with AF.

Procurement and Contract Management Arrangements

Preamble: Procurement for the proposed project will be carried out in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Financing Agreement and Investment Project Financing (IPF) Regulations for Borrowers dated July 2016 revised August 2018 and November 2020 (hereinafter Regulations) and the provisions stipulated in the Legal Agreement. The World Bank Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD Loans and IDA Credit and Grants dated October 15, 2006 and revised on January 2011 and as of July 1, 2016, will also apply.

Procurement will be carried out by CEP, which implemented the first Education and Quality Relevance Project (APL 1), the Second Education Quality and Relevance Project (APL 2), Education Improvement Project and is implementing EU4Innovation Project. CEP has satisfactory experience and knowledge of the Bank's Regulations.

1. **Notification and Advertising:** The General Procurement Notice (GPN) will be published in the UN Development Business and the Bank's external website. The Specific Procurement Notices (SPN) will be published for all RFB /open, international, national/ contracts in UNDB on-line through STEP system, and in the website of the Implementing Agency.

Procurement Plan:

The Procurement Plan contains all the relevant procurement information. The PPSD with the procurement plan, covers the entire project and its updates or modifications, shall be subject to the Bank's prior review and its having no objection before implementation. The PPSD and its updates will be uploaded to the STEP system before implementation.

Consultant Services: Consultancy services to be provided by consulting firms estimated to cost US\$300,000 or more will be procured through Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method. Consultancy services to be provided by consulting firms estimated to cost less than US\$300,000 may be procured through Consultants' Qualifications (CQS) method. Individual consultants will be selected in accordance with Approved Selection Methods for Individual Consultants of the Regulations.

Steering Committee:

The evaluation results of the procuring activity with the cost estimate USD 100,000 and above are subject to approval by the steering committee. More details are provided in Chapter 3.2 below

Contract management arrangements

The staff of the relevant component will be involved in contract management of the respective contracts along with Procurement, Financial specialists to ensure successful execution of the contract: particularly for the coordination of appropriate activities under the contracts, acceptance and approval of the reports and other deliverables. Necessary steps shall be implemented to meet the requirements described in Regulations for each case/contract. All kind of amendments will be uploaded/sent to the WB through STEP system regardless of Prior or Post review.

1.Procurement Methods and Steps

Procurement of Civil Works

Request for Bids (open/national)

Steps to be followed for procurement of civil works:

1. Establishing an evaluation committee with an appropriate working groups' members, signing declarations on impartiality and independency with committee members;
2. Preparing the Bidding documents based on the standard procurement document, considering that for all Civil Work Contracts
 - the bid securing declaration will be required,
 - the bid submission period should be at least 28 calendar days,

- the bid validity period should be at least 60 calendar days after the bid submission deadline,
 - the performance security should be 10%,
 - price adjustment provisions will be applicable only to the Contracts, which extend beyond 18 Months.
3. Publishing the Specific Procurement Notice through STEP and on www.cfep.am website, also uploading the full package of the Bidding Documents on ArmEPS and www.procurement.am;
 4. Bids opening and uploading of Bids Opening Minutes to STEP system;
 5. Preparation of Minutes based on the Evaluation Committee Meetings
 6. Preparation of an evaluation report and contract award based on the WB Evaluation Form;
 7. Presenting/submitting tender results to the Steering Committee for the approval.
 8. Sending notification of intention to award to all Bidders and upon expiry of the Standstill Period notify the successful Bidder through Letter of Acceptance.
 9. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.
 10. Signing contract with the Bidder offering the Most Advantageous and substantially responsive Bid with the lowest evaluated price /getting all required documents on time: Performance Security, Environmental and Social (ES) Performance Security and Advance payment security (if will be requested by the contractor), Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form, etc./
 11. Publishing the contract award.
 12. Keeping all documents on file.
 13. Mainin the STEP on timely manner

Procurement of Goods

Request for Bids (open/international)

Steps to be followed for procurement of goods based on the standard Bidding Documents:

1. Establishing an evaluation committee with an appropriate working groups' members, signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members;
2. Preparing the list of required items of goods and their technical specifications with the relevant department;
3. Preparing the Bidding documents based on the standard procurement document, considering that for all Contracts for procurement of Goods mentioned in this paragraph
 - the bid submission period should - be at least 30 Business days,
 - the bid security will be required,
 - the bid validity period should be at least 60 Calendar Days.
4. Publishing the Specific Procurement Notice on www.cfep.am/ based on the standard Bidding Documents form/ and also uploading the full package of the Bidding Documents through STEP system and on www.procurement.am
5. Bids opening and uploading of Bids Opening Minutes to STEP system;
6. Preparation of Minutes based on the Evaluation Committee Meetings.
7. Preparation of an evaluation report and contract award based on the Procurement of Goods - Evaluation Form;
8. Presenting/submitting tender results to the Steering Committee for the approval.
9. Sending notification of intention to award to all Bidders and upon expiry of the Standstill Period notify the successful Bidder through Letter of Acceptance.
10. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.
11. Signing contract with the Bidder offering the Most Advantageous and substantially responsive Bid with the lowest evaluated price /getting all required documents on

time: Advance payment security if requested by the suppliers, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form, etc./

12. Publishing the contract award.
13. Keeping all documents on file
14. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Request for Bids (open/national)

Steps to be followed for procurement of goods:

1. Establishing an evaluation committee with an appropriate working groups' members signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members;
 2. Preparing the list of required items of goods and their technical specifications with the relevant department;
 3. Preparing the Bidding documents based on the standard procurement document; considering that for all Contracts for procurement of Goods mentioned in this paragraph
 - the bid submission period should - be at least 28 Calendar days,
 - the bid security will be required,
 - the bid validity period should be at least 60 Calendar Days.
4. Publishing the Specific Procurement Notice through STEP and on www.cfep.am website, also uploading the full package of the Bidding Documents on ArmEPS and www.procurement.am, websites;
5. Bids opening and uploading of Bids Opening Minutes to STEP system;
6. Preparation of Minutes based on the Evaluation Committee Meetings;
7. Preparation of an evaluation report and contract award based on the Procurement of Goods - Evaluation Form;
8. Presenting/submitting tender results to the Steering Committee for the approval;

9. Sending notification of intention to award to all Bidders and upon expiry of the Standstill Period notify the successful Bidder through Letter of Acceptance.
10. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.
11. Signing contract with the Bidder offering the Most Advantageous and substantially responsive Bid with the lowest evaluated price /getting all required documents on time: Advance payment security if it is requested by the supplier, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form, etc./
12. Publishing the contract award.
13. Keeping all documents on file.
14. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Request for Quotations (open, national)

Steps to be followed for procurement of goods:

1. Establishing an evaluation committee with a minimum of three or maximum of five members signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members;
2. Preparing the list of required items of goods and their technical specifications with the relevant department;
3. Preparing RFQ using the Sample Invitation to Quote (ITQ), the latest edition, which will be adopted accordingly;
4. Advertise in www.procurement.am, ARMEPS, STEP and www.cfep.am websites;
5. Obtaining Quotations through ArmEPS;
6. Conducting evaluation;
7. Preparation of an evaluation report based on the Procurement of Goods Under Shopping - Evaluation Form;
8. Preparation of recommendation of contract award ;

9. Signing the contract with company submitted the lowest evaluated substantially responsive quotation
10. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.
11. Publishing the contract award.
12. Keeping all documents on file.
13. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Requests for Quotations (limited, national)

Steps to be followed for procurement of goods:

1. Establishing an evaluation committee with a minimum of three or maximum of five members signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members;
2. Preparing the list of required items of goods and their technical specifications with the relevant department;
3. Preparing the list of suppliers broad enough to generate effective competition, as required. Such a list is prepared based on past experience and/or direct market research;The procurement specialist in cooperation with the specialist from the relevant department will be responsible for the preparing the list of suppliers.
4. Preparing RFQ using the Sample Invitation to Quote (ITQ), the latest edition, which will be adopted accordingly and
5. Sending RFQ to the suppliers through ArmEPS;
6. Receipt of the quotations by the deadline and evaluation;
7. Preparation of an evaluation report by the procurement specialist based on the Procurement of Goods Under Shopping - Evaluation Form;
8. Preparation of recommendation of contract award;
9. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded
10. Signing the contract with the company submitted the lowest evaluated substantially responsive quotation

11. Publishing the contract award.
12. Keeping all documents on file.
13. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Direct Contracting

Steps to be followed for procurement of goods:

1. Preparing justification for Direct Selection; Submit to the Bank the request for direct contracting for no objection;
2. Agree conditions of the contract with the supplier;
3. Make sure that the prices being charged under the direct contract are at least the same as the supplier charges to its other customers;
4. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.

1. Contract signing;
2. Publishing the contract award.
3. Keeping all documents on file.
4. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Selection of consultants

Selection of firms

Selection of Consultants under Quality and Cost Based Selection / Least-Cost Selection (LCS) methods

Steps to be followed for the selection of firms under QCBS and LCS:

1. Establishing a selection committee of at least three members but not more than five members; signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members
2. Preparing Terms of Reference (TOR) and the budget estimate in terms of person/days (weeks, months, whatever is applicable), assignment duration, etc.;
3. Establishing evaluation criteria;
4. Submitting/sending the TOR to the World Bank for No-Objection through STEP system;
5. Requesting expressions of interest and qualification information on the consultants' experience and competence relevant to the assignment, through advertisement in an appropriate website and through dissemination of information about the assignment to professional associations, etc;
6. Comprising the list of short listed firms based on the qualification information on the consultants' experience and competence relevant to the assignment;
7. Preparing the draft Request for Proposals (RFP), including short-list of the consultants ;
8. Sending the RFP to the short-listed firms;
9. Obtaining technical and financial proposals;
10. Opening of the technical proposals and evaluating them while keeping the financial proposals safe and secured;
11. Preparing the technical evaluation report;
12. ;
13. Informing the firms of their technical scores and the day for opening of financial proposals;
14. Opening of financial proposals;
15. Preparing the combined technical and financial evaluation (final) report and contract award
16. Negotiating the contract with selected firm

17. If the negotiations fail to result in an acceptable contract, the negotiations with the firm are terminated and the next ranked firm is invited for negotiations. If the contract is subject to prior review, request the Bank's no objection before termination of negotiations and proceeding with the second-ranked firm.
18. Keeping the process confidential until the contract is awarded.
19. Sending notification of intention to award to all Consultants who has submitted a proposal and keeping the Standstill Period,
20. Signing the contract, considering that for the contracts exceeding \$100,000, the Steering Committee's approval should be obtained prior to the Contract signature;
21. Publishing contract award.
22. Keeping all documents on file.
23. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Selection based on the Consultant Qualification (CQS)

Steps to be followed for the selection of firms under CQ method:

1. Establishing a selection committee of at least three members but not more than five members; signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members
2. Preparing Terms of Reference (TOR) and the budget estimate in terms of person/days (weeks, months, whatever is applicable), assignment duration, etc.;
3. Submitting/sending the TOR to the World Bank through STEP system;
4. Establishing qualification's assessment criteria;
5. Publishing the request for Expressions of Interest and qualification information on the consultants' experience and competence relevant to the assignment, mainly through advertisement in an appropriate website, through STEP system, and through dissemination of information about the assignment to professional associations, etc.;

6. Comprising the list of short listed firms based on the qualification information on the consultants' experience and competence relevant to the assignment;
7. Preparing an assessment Report;
8. Sending the Request for Proposal to the firm with the best qualifications and relevant experience for the assignment and to submit technical and financial proposals;
9. Drawing on the technical and financial proposals negotiate terms and conditions and in case of necessity propose amendments;
10. Signing the contract , considering that for the contracts exceeding \$100,000, the Steering Committee's approval should be obtained prior to the Contract signature;
11. Keeping the process confidential until contract is awarded;
12. Publishing the contract award.
13. Keeping all documents on file.
14. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

If the negotiations fail to result in an acceptable contract, the negotiations with the firm are terminated and the next ranked firm is invited for negotiations.

Direct Selection (DS)

Steps to be followed through **Direct Selection**:

1. Preparing TOR for the assignment;
2. Preparing justification for DS;
 - a. Agree conditions of the contract with the consultant;
3. Receiving the Bank's No-Objection to the DS and uploading the draft contract in the STEP system;
4. Keeping the process confidential until contract is awarded;
5. Contract signing;

6. Publishing the contract award.
7. Keeping all documents on file.
8. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Selection of individual consultants (IC)

Individual consultants are selected on the basis of their qualifications for the assignment. An Individual Consultant will be selected through comparison of at least three candidates whose qualifications meet the minimum criteria.

1. Steps to be followed for the selection of Individual Consultants:
2. Establishing a selection committee of at least three members but not more than five members; signing declarations on impartiality and independency of committee members
3. Preparing TOR and the budget estimate in terms of person/days (weeks, months, whatever is applicable), assignment duration, etc.;
4. Submitting/sending the TOR to the World Bank through STEP system;
5. Establishing assessment criteria;
6. Based on the expression of interests (and additional information/clarification) received, preparing a short list of qualified candidates;
7. Evaluating the CVs;
8. Preparing an evaluation report;
9. Negotiating the contract with the highest-ranked consultant;
10. Keeping the process confidential until contract is awarded;
11. Signing the contract;
12. Publishing contract award.
13. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Direct Selection

Steps to be followed through **Direct Selection**:

1. Preparing TOR for the assignment;
2. Agree conditions of the contract with the consultant;
3. The Bank's No-Objection to the Contract and uploading of the draft Contract in the STEP system;
4. Keeping the process confidential until contract is awarded;
5. Contract signing;
6. Publishing the contract award.
7. Maintain the STEP on timely manner

Project Awareness Raising Arrangements

Education-related issues, particularly needs of reforms in education sphere, development and improvement of education in different levels of education system touch interests of almost all age and social groups of the population, therefore activities on raising public awareness about EIP activities implemented with AF should be consistently fulfilled. CEP will develop a communications plan on the annual basis (for each calendar year) for the whole duration of the Project with definitions of the main strategic issues to be presented to the public, publicity actions to be implemented and topics to be discussed. According to that plan CEP will arrange project awareness raising activities. The CEP will organize and support dissemination of information according to the plan through mass-media, publication, workshops, seminars and public discussions which should build a rational interest to the project and widespread understanding of its goals and methods, create two-way feedback system for the Project. The Component/Sub-components Heads will be responsible for developing, monitoring and collecting data on the communication activities by each component for further reporting. The selected Consultant will assist CEP on implementation of the awareness activities and coordinate Project awareness raising campaign. The aim of the Project awareness raising campaign is to maximize the impact, visibility and the main message of the project. The

general output of this awareness raising campaign is the enhancement of the awareness of involved stakeholders. Preliminary steps of the awareness raising campaign are directed to “create a community of interest”, to approach and attract the target group and stakeholders, to actually reach, involve and engage them.

In order to ensure the efficient implementation of activities under EIP, a public awareness program should be designed, which will include the following measures:

1. Performance of works with the beneficiaries, including:

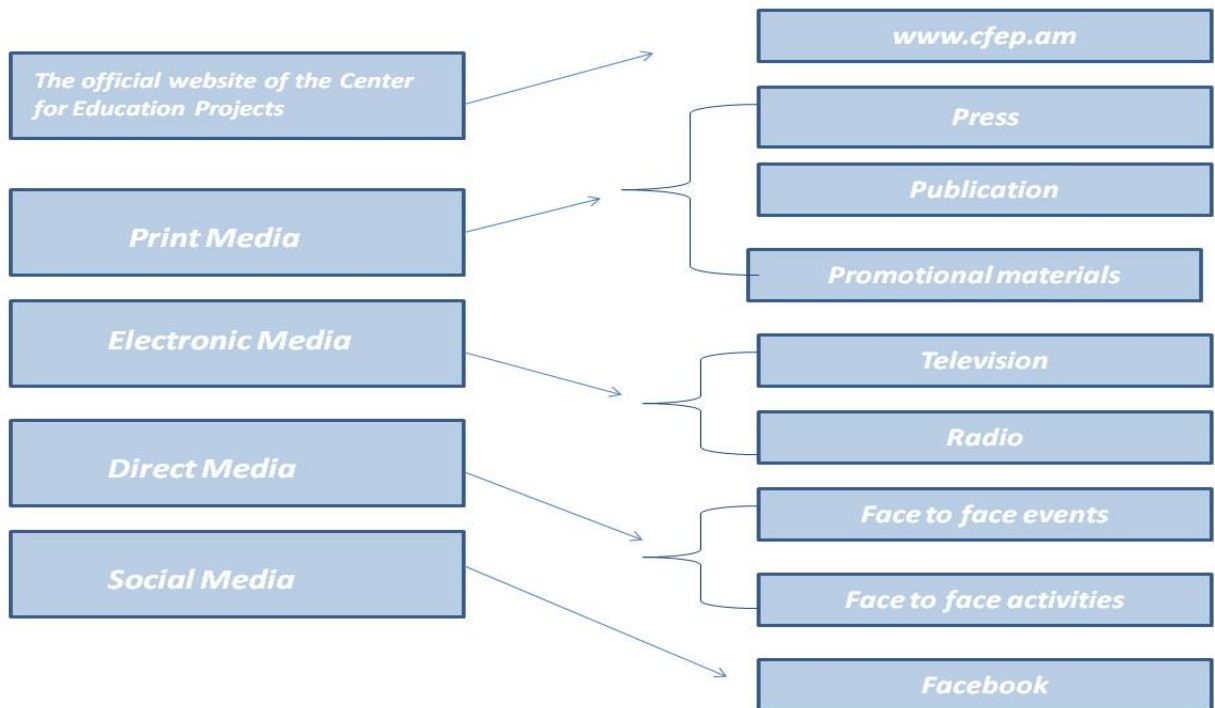
1. preparation and delivery to mass media information on principle topics related to EIP with AF;
2. organization of round tables introducing EIP components for the public;
3. implementation of promotional meetings in the regions of RoA for promoting communities to participate in pre-school grant projects;
1. fulfillment of promotional campaigns in universities promoting them to take part in CIF projects;

2. Cooperation with the representatives of the organizations involved in EIP activities, including:

2. organization of seminars for state management bodies, state institutions involved in project implementation, NGOs and private organizations;
3. preparation and dissemination of methodological and other manuals related to the project.

In this context, the following dissemination actions will be carried out:

The Project awareness campaign strategy will include non-digital and digital channels of communication, such as (see figure below):



1. The official website of the Center for Education Projects

The whole information, announcements, events about EIP will be placed on the www.cfep.am website which will be updated regularly. The site will provide contacts for stakeholders' feedback.

2. Print media

Print media campaigns will provide messages to large audiences using boards, and newspapers, press releases and other Promotional materials. These campaigns aim to increase knowledge, influence attitudes and beliefs.

3. Electronic media

Electronic media is the media that one can share on any electronic device for the audiences viewing, unlike static media (Print) electronic media is broadcasted to the wider community. Examples of Electronic media are things such as the television, the radio, or the wide internet. Electronic communications let us combine numerous media - text, graphics sound, video, etc. - into a single message. That can result in far more meaningful communications tailored to the nature of our particular audience

1. Direct media

The face-to-face events will constitute a very powerful resource in transferring information about the project and relevant knowledge about education issues, and on top of that in creating

meeting and interactive opportunities for different subjects to interact with each other, in view of a participated and integrated approach of education management.

1. Face-to-face events and activities: meeting, training, conferences, info-point, word of mouth.

1. Social media

Social media is a broad term which refers to a collective of online communication channels built on community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. With more than 2.60 billion users, Facebook comprises of the largest blend of demographics of any social platform. It provides an extraordinary medium to reach target group worldwide. The role of social media had been increasing and they continue to play a key role when raising awareness. An effective social media awareness raising campaign can be a great recruitment tool, a convenient way to quickly share announcements, an effective way to build a community, and so much more. The possibilities are endless!

The abovementioned events and actions shall be conducted regularly and in parallel, ensuring final success of the public awareness and civic participation in the implementation of the EIP with AF.

In addition, in terms of communication effectiveness, having a unique and coherent communication strategy is important to keep up the focus on principal topics related to EIP with AF which is at the very basis of each step illustrated in this Manual.

Partnership Possibilities

The EIP continued effective working relationships established under the previous projects. Under the EIP effective collaboration has been established with National Center for Education Development and Innovation; National Institute of Education, Yerevan State Pedagogical University after KH. Abovyan (training of preschool teachers). In the frames of EIP the organization conducting teacher trainings had been selected through direct selection method. The two parties of the contract were the Educational Institution and the selected organization. In the frames of EIP with AF the organization conducting the training will be selected competitively thus the two parties of the contract being the selected organization and PIU, which will further coordinate all the training related activities.

In the frames of EIP with AF it is possible to collaborate with the following partner organizations:

For conducting the training of preschool teachers and school principals, collaboration with the

2. State Pedagogical University after KH. Abovyan and UNICEF is possible. In the training of principals related to disaster risk management and prevention (including activities such as earthquake drills or climate-related emergency response training) the inclusion of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) is possible.
3. Collaboration is foreseen with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for the renovation of preschools and high schools, and the provision of energy-saving equipment with UNDP providing up to 20% co-financing.

The main approach regarding the partnership with civil society and local actors under the EIP AF is that the work with civil society and local actors should be considered as part of an overall approach to bring the state and society together, which is intrinsic to human development. The partnership with civil society and local actors can include the following areas depending on the content of the tasks to be carried out:

1. Civil society/local actors can be engaged as an implementing partner, as a responsible party (as a contractor/ supplier); or as a contributor of funds to a project;
2. If civil society/local actors have wide networks and knowledge at grassroots level, their involvement in EIP AF can help improve quality of results in terms of local initiatives and support to sub-national target beneficiaries since EIP AF assistance typically focuses on national issues and government institutions.

Environmental and Social Management

The WB safeguard policies are applied to all projects financed from the proceeds of the WB loans and credits and are critical for ensuring that potentially adverse environmental and social impacts of these projects are identified, avoided, minimized, mitigated, and compensated as required. EIP AF triggers two safeguard policies of the WB: OP/BP 4.01 Environmental Assessment and OP/BP 4.11 Physical Cultural Resources. According to OP/BP 4.01, the project is classified as environmental category B, which means that no individual investments that qualifies for environmental category A may be financed from the proceeds of EIP. Although EIP AF does not trigger OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement, it is

crucial and triggers physical relocation and land loss resulting in: (i) relocation or loss of shelter; (ii) loss of assets or access to assets; (iii) loss of income sources or means of livelihood, whether or not the affected people must move to another location.

Civil works to be undertaken under the project will require (i) environmental screening to ensure that each individual investment also falls under category B, and (ii) site-specific environmental management planning for the provision of mitigation measures against potential negative impacts and for the establishment of mechanism for monitoring application of these measures. Also, the school buildings proposed for rehabilitation under EIP AF must be checked for possible belonging to the formal list of Armenia's cultural heritage, so that in case any of them carries special historic value the rehabilitation works are designed and conducted in the way respective of a building's conservation needs as required by OP/BP 4.11.

During the project preparation, Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was developed (Appendix 4). The ESMF provides general guidelines for applying environmentally sound practices to school infrastructure rehabilitation. In particular, the ESMF provides (i) the background information currently available, (ii) legal and institutional framework for the project implementation, (iii) assessment of environmental and social risks of the civil works which may be undertaken under the project to the extent these risks may be identified at present, (iv) a generic set of risk mitigation measures which are likely to be applicable to the project-related environmental and social risks, (v) an outline of additional information to be obtained as part of the site-specific environmental management planning for the individual school buildings, and (vi) institutional arrangements for implementing site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs).

According to the ESMF, ESMPs shall be developed for all types of physical works to be supported under EIP with AF according to the template applicable to low-risk construction/rehabilitation activities. This template of a checklist ESMP is included in the ESMF. The ESMPs shall also be compliant with the requirements of the national legislation. ESMPs will specify environmental risks associated with construction and rehabilitation works to be carried out at the respective project sites, recommend respective mitigation measures, and provide monitoring schemes for tracking adherence to the mitigation plans. Draft ESMPs must be publicly disclosed, and beneficiary schools/communities be consulted on the environmental

and social implications of the individual project activities prior to tendering of works. The finalized ESMPs shall be included in the tender documents for civil works, so that potential bidders are able to incorporate costs related to ESMP implementation into their bids. Later, ESMPs shall be integrated into the works contracts and be mandatory for implementation like any other clause of works contracts. Adherence to the ESMPs in the course of civil works will allow preventing or minimizing possible adverse impacts and will be sufficient for keeping environmental impacts of the Project at the acceptable minimum level.

The Head of the Sub-component 1.2 will be responsible for oversight of safeguards compliance under the supervision of Projects Manager. Besides, a Safeguard specialist will be contracted for assisting the Sub-Component Head and the Projects Manager. The Safeguard specialist shall develop a monitoring plan depending on the construction timetable and a schedule of site visits. During each site visit, the Safeguard specialist must fill in the Field Environmental Monitoring Checklist using the template provided in the ESMF and create photo documentation. Checklists must be properly filed and kept available for the PIU management and the WB upon request.

ESMP monitoring information should be used in project management. In particular, if cases of incompliance with ESMPs are revealed and/or damage to the environment is discovered at any project site, a plan of corrective actions must be developed, follow up actions carried out and, if necessary, possible changes introduced to the project design.

Responsibilities of various organizations with respect to ESMP implementation and monitoring are summarized in Appendix 4 of the OM: ESMF; Section 9: Site-Specific Environmental Impact Assessment and Management Planning.

Chapter 3.2 Project Governance

The Project has a Steering Committee (from here on SC) which is responsible for project management.

Project Steering Committee

The personal staff of the Project Steering Committee was approved by No. 127-A / 2 order of RA Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports dated 31.01.2022. Currently it consists of 7 people. The SC consists of the following members: Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; 2 Deputy Ministers, Adviser to the Minister, Head of the Department for General Education, Executive Directors of NCEDI and “Hayastan” All-Armenian Fund (per their agreement).

According to the SC procedures, the SC is chaired by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

The duties of the SC are:

- ✓ supervise the operation of the CEP;
- ✓ supervise the expenditures of the preparation funds during the preparation period of the Project, and as for grants and loan projects during Project implementation;
- ✓ review and approve the Project annual time schedules, PPSD and the budgets;
- ✓ approve the Project annual progress and financial reports;
- ✓ approve the final results of tenders for procurement of works, services and goods costing more than US\$ 100,000 with respective justifications;
- ✓ approve changes in the estimated cost of the operation in excess of US\$ 100,000 during project implementation, prior to agreeing with the WB;
- ✓ adopt decisions on actions eliminating the breaches and deficiencies, deviations from approved annual schedules and budgets revealed during implementation of the projects and supervise the implementation of those decisions;

Organizations responsible for the Project Implementation

The Borrower is the Republic of Armenia, which is represented by the Ministry of Finance in financial issues and MoESCS for content issues. The MoESCS will be responsible for all policy and content decisions of the Project.

To effectively coordinate the activities of pre-school education, micro-projects implemented under the Subcomponent 1.1, a Steering Committee will be established by the order the RA Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the scope of responsibilities of which are defined in the respective OM (Appendix 5. Operational Manual for Pre-school Education Micro-Project Grants).

To effectively coordinate the Grant Projects under Component 2, CIF Steering Committee will be established by the order the RA Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the scope of responsibilities of which are defined in the respective OM (Appendix 6. Operational Manual for Implementation of Competitive Innovation Fund (CIF) for Armenian Higher Education).