INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT
ON A
PROPOSED GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF SDR MILLION
(US$ 7.1 MILLION EQUIVALENT)

TO THE

KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

FOR A

BASIC EDUCATION STRENGTHENING PROJECT (BESP)

{RVP/CD CLEARANCE DATE}

{Education Global Practice}
{Africa East Region}

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CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective {Oct 14, 2020})

Currency Unit= Lesotho Maloti
Maloti 16.23¹ = US$1
US$1= SDR 0.708396²

FISCAL YEAR
January 1 - December 31

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Regional Director: Amit Dar
Practice Manager(s): Muna Salih Meky; Paolo Belli
Task Team Leader(s): Elizabeth Ninan Dulvy; Louise Victoria Monchuk

¹ Obtained from https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=LSL.
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DATASHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

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<th>Country(ies)</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
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<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP)</td>
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<table>
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<th>Environmental and Social Risk Classification</th>
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<td>P175065</td>
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**Financing & Implementation Modalities**

- [ ] Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA)
- [ ] Series of Projects (SOP)
- [ ] Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs)
- [ ] Financial Intermediaries (FI)
- [X] Project-Based Guarantee
- [ ] Deferred Drawdown
- [ ] Alternate Procurement Arrangements (APA)
- [ ] Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)
- [ ] Fragile State(s)
- [ ] Small State(s)
- [ ] Fragile within a non-fragile Country
- [ ] Conflict
- [ ] Responding to Natural or Man-made Disaster
- [ ] Hands-on Enhanced Implementation Support (HEIS)

**Expected Approval Date**
28-May-2021

**Expected Closing Date**
30-Sep-2024

Bank/IFC Collaboration
No

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**
To improve student retention and teaching quality in junior secondary schools in targeted regions of Lesotho and support the roll out of a new curriculum to strengthen ECCD service delivery

**Components**

<table>
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<th>Component Name</th>
<th>Cost (US$, millions)</th>
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Component 1: Improving student retention in junior secondary education 5.00
Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery 1.40
Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance 0.70

Organizations
Borrower: The Kingdom of Lesotho
Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education and Training
Ministry of Social Development

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

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DETAILS
Non-World Bank Group Financing

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INSTITUTIONAL DATA

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### SYSTEMATIC OPERATIONS RISK-RATING TOOL (SORT)

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<td>10. Overall</td>
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### COMPLIANCE

**Policy**

Does the project depart from the CPF in content or in other significant respects?

[ ] Yes   [✓] No

Does the project require any waivers of Bank policies?

[ ] Yes   [✓] No
### Environmental and Social Standards Relevance Given its Context at the Time of Appraisal

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**NOTE:** For further information regarding the World Bank’s due diligence assessment of the Project’s potential environmental and social risks and impacts, please refer to the Project’s Appraisal Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS).

**Legal Covenants**

**Conditions**
I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A. Country Context

1. The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small enclave country surrounded by South Africa. It has a population of about 2.1 million that is growing at a modest rate of 1.3 percent annually. The country’s population is youthful, with 76 percent being below the age of 36. With nominal per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of US$1,299, Lesotho is classified as a lower-middle-income country (LMIC) and is one of the poorest countries in its income group. The country is roughly divided into four geographic regions— the Lowlands, which are home to about 75 percent of the country’s population, the Foothills, the Mountains, and the Senqu River Valley. Recently, Lesotho’s economic growth has been slower than the average for LMICs, shrinking by about 3 percent in 2017 and growing only by 0.3 percent in 2018 and 1.4 percent in 2019. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the growth rate is expected to remain low and the projections for 2020 and 2021 are below 1 percent. The low rate of economic growth is likely to impact job creation and lead to the increase of the already high unemployment rate, especially among youth from rural parts of the country.

2. Over the past two decades, Lesotho has made strides in poverty reduction, with the poverty rate declining from 56.6 percent in 2002 to 49.7 percent in 2017. However, improvement has not happened evenly in all parts of the country. In fact, in the rural Mountains and rural Senqu River Valley parts of the country, poverty increased over the same time period. In 2017, 67.8 percent of Basotho living in rural Mountains region were considered poor, a significant increase from 56.9 percent in 2002. The slowing down of the economy and the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are likely to increase the poverty rate significantly, especially in already vulnerable rural areas.

3. Lesotho is making progress in improving human development outcomes, however, outcomes in education and health remain well-below where they need to be. The Human Capital Index (HCI) estimates for 2020 showed that a child born today in Lesotho will only be 40 percent as productive when he/she grows up as he/she could have been if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This figure shows an encouraging improvement from the 2010 HCI estimate of 34 percent. However, the deficiencies in human capital are still considerable, with the country ranking 146 among the 174 countries included in the 2020 HCI.

Figure 1: Poverty Incidence by Ecological Zones


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4. An examination of the individual components of HCI shows that improvements have been made in all areas of the HCI between 2010 and 2020. However, the pace of progress in most indicators has not been sufficient to equip a majority of children and youth with the optimal health and skills they need to be fully productive (see Figure 2). Currently, 92 of 100 children born in Lesotho survive to age 5. Children who start school at age 4 can expect to complete 10 years of school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, the 10 years of schooling become equivalent to only 6.3 years. Only 52 percent of 15-year-olds will survive until age 60. Thirty five of 100 children are stunted, facing a high risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can have impacts that last their lifetime.\(^5\)

5. Moreover, HIV & AIDS continues to pose a big threat to Lesotho’s human capital, with high prevalence rates of 23.6 percent among youth and adults ages 15-49. The impact of HIV/AIDS on women has been significantly worse, with women accounting for about 59 percent of those living with the virus.\(^6\) Overall, while there have been some improvements in the last decade, human capital outcomes remain low compared to other LMICs. To achieve better human capital outcomes, significant changes are needed to improve quality, efficacy, efficiency and equity of service delivery in health, education and social protection sectors of the country.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. The Government of Lesotho is committed to improving access to quality basic education as a core strategy for the country’s socioeconomic development. This commitment is reflected by the significant public investment that the country is making in the education sector. In the fiscal year 2018/19, for example, education spending accounted for 19 percent of total government spending, the highest among all sectors. In the same year, education spending as share of GDP was 8.9 percent for Lesotho, above the average for countries in the Southern Africa region which currently ranges between 6-8 percent of GDP.

7. Lesotho is making encouraging progress in the provision of basic education including early childhood education and has achieved universal access at the primary level. However, challenges related to access, quality and equity remain. Education in Lesotho is organized into four cycles consisting of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The first cycle, ECCD, aims to serve children ages 3 to 5, while primary education covers Grades 1 to 7, starting at age 6. Secondary education is divided into two levels—junior secondary, which covers Grades 8 to 10 and senior secondary, which covers Grades 11 and 12. The ECCD, primary and junior secondary levels together form the basic education sub-sector. Table 1 presents

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summary statistics on the basic and secondary education system. The country’s progress thus far in the delivery of basic education and some of the key challenges in the sub-sector are discussed in more detail below.

Table 1: Summary statistics on ECCD, primary and secondary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education (official age)</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>GER (%)</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Student to Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Share of education sector budget (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECCD (3-5)</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26,313</td>
<td>27,387</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (6-12)</td>
<td>1,486</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>184,443</td>
<td>176,028</td>
<td>10,691</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior secondary (13-15)</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45,998</td>
<td>58,374</td>
<td>5,218</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior secondary (16-17)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14,380</td>
<td>20,141</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Source: Lesotho Education Sector Analysis, 2020

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

8. Lesotho has identified ECCD as a priority area in its national Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2016-2026); however, the sub-sector remains under-funded and faces significant access and quality gaps. The sub-sector only received 0.3 percent of the education sector budget in 2018/19. This is significantly lower than the average for low-income countries (2.9 percent) and LMIC (7 percent).7 The different models of ECCD provision in Lesotho are: (i) reception classes that are attached to public primary schools and provide one year of free education for 5-year-olds before they transition to Grade 1; (ii) ECCD centers established by private individuals, churches or other non-governmental organizations that serve children ages 3 to 5; and (iii) Home-based ECCDs for orphans and vulnerable children that provide free service with the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) supplying teaching and learning materials, school feeding and limited in-service training for caregivers. Available data shows that there are 243 reception classes, 2,208 ECCD centers and 45 home-based centers across the country. Despite the large number of ECCD service providers, Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) at the ECCD level remains low at 31 percent as many of the providers operate at a small scale.

9. The MoET has developed a set of requirements for ECCD service providers to be registered; however, only 0.7 percent of ECCD centers have registered with the Ministry. This is in part due to the stringent registration requirements, which include having a constitution, a bank account, and permission from local authorities, many of which are unrealistic for small providers to meet. While the MoET has some information on the number of ECCD providers and collects data on reception classes as part of the annual school census, to a large part, data on private and home-based providers is not collected on a regular basis. This has created a significant information gap on the type and quality of ECCD services that are being provided across the country. The MoET recognizes that in order to better support ECCD service providers and strengthen accountability in the sub-sector, there is an urgent need to strengthen data collection and monitoring systems.

10. Given the low base the system started at, the progress thus far is encouraging, however in addition to the access-related gaps, there are challenges related to the quality of ECCD services. Two recent studies assessed the quality of ECCD services in Lesotho –the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Measurement of Early Learning and Quality Outcomes (MELQO)8 2019. The MICS 2018 found that most children were

8 MELQO is a tool designed to generate data on children’s learning and development at the start of school, and pre-primary learning
developmentally on track in the learning domain (95 percent), which refers to children being able to follow simple
directions and do things correctly and independently when given instructions. Children were also largely on track
in the physical domain (92 percent) (e.g., they could pick up small objects with two fingers, and the
mother/caregiver had not indicated that the child was too sick to play sometimes). However, only 15 percent of
children were developmentally on track in the literacy-numeracy domain (i.e., they could do two of the following:
identify/name at least ten letters of the alphabet; read four simple and popular words; know the name and
recognize the symbols of all numbers from 1 to 10). The child direct assessment parts of the 2019 MELQO found
that on average, children ages 5 and above attending ECCD education were only able to identify less than 2 of 16
letters presented; 22 percent could write their names correctly; and these children could, on average, name less
than 3 numbers out of 10 numbers presented to them.

11. Many of the quality challenges relate to the outdated ECCD curriculum, a lack of norms and standards
for the sub-sector, limited teacher training and lack of resources. The current ECCD curriculum dates back to
1998 and is not relevant for the needs of today’s society. The country does not have established standards for
early learning and development. Moreover, there is limited training for teachers and caregivers both at the pre-
service and in-service levels. The Government has started addressing some of these issues including using the
GPE-financed, World Bank-supported, Lesotho Basic Education Improvement Project (LBEIP) that comes to a close
in August 2021. For example, the ECCD curriculum is currently being revised with support from LBEIP. The
Government is seeking further support and partnership in order to pilot the curriculum once the revision is
completed, which will involve training teachers and caregivers and developing materials that are aligned with the
new curriculum.

12. There is also limited coordination of ECCD service delivery at the national level across relevant sectors.
ECCD is multi-sectoral in nature, spanning across education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and social
protection. The services provided fall under a range of Ministries including the Ministry of Education and Training,
Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Local
Government and Chieftainship Affairs, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Home Affairs etc. Strengthening
coordination across the different ministries is an important step for Lesotho to improve access to quality ECCD
services.

Primary and Junior Secondary Education

Access and retention in primary and junior secondary education

13. Enrollment in primary schools is close to universal, with almost 100 percent of boys and girls in rural
and urban areas accessing Grade 1. At the primary level, free primary education (FPE) was introduced in the year
2000 as a major strategy towards achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals. While this policy led to rapid increase
in enrollment, universal access was not achieved. The Education Act of 2010, which made free primary education
legally compulsory, was another critical measure by the Government of Lesotho. Following the enactment of this
Act, Lesotho achieved and maintained universal access to primary education in the following decade. However,
like other Sub-Saharan African countries, early on, GER was significantly higher than 100 percent, showing high
prevalence of overage enrolment resulting in mutigenerational classrooms. In the last five years, however,
Lesotho has successfully navigated this transition period. Between 2015 and 2018, GER declined from 105 to 101

environments with specific relevance to inform national ECCDE policy and inform global monitoring. It consists of two parts: (i) Measure
of Development and Early Learning – which measures children’s learning and development through a direct assessment and a
teacher/caregiver survey; and (ii) Measure of Early Learning Environments – which assess quality in early learning environments. UNICEF,
showing that the country has passed the catch-up phase, with most current students enrolling on time.

14. **Lesotho has also achieved significant results in improving access to junior secondary education over the last five years.** Between 2015 and 2018, GER in junior secondary increased from 65 percent to 72 percent, a 12-percentage point increase over 3-year period. A key contributing factor to this remarkable improvement was the abolishment of the primary school leaving examination (PSLE) in 2017, which is in line with the country’s ambition of ensuring universal access to basic education, including junior secondary education.

15. **Student retention, however, across basic education remains a big challenge for the sector with many students dropping out of school before completing primary or secondary education.** The dropout rate across primary grades is particularly high among boys and in rural parts of the country. Nationally, 9 out of 10 girls of the relevant age group access the last grade of primary education (Grade 7), compared to 2 out of 3 boys, which points to low primary completion rate for boys (see Figure 3). In junior secondary education, 3 out of 4 girls access Grade 8 compared to half of boys, while 6 out of 10 girls complete lower secondary (i.e. reach Grade 10), compared to 1 out of 3 boys. The disparity narrows in upper secondary, where the retention rate of boys is more stable than that of girls, but this comes late in the system when significant number of students have been lost.

16. **Taking into consideration gender, location and socioeconomic status, boys from the poorest households in rural areas are the most vulnerable while girls from the wealthiest households in urban areas have the most advantage in accessing and completing basic education.** In terms of ecological zones, children from the rural Mountains and rural Senqu River Valley, which are also the poorest regions, are the most marginalized, with only half of the children who get to school managing to complete primary school. In contrast, in urban Maseru nearly all (96 percent) children who access school manage to complete primary school (Figure 4). Nine in 10 children from Maseru are likely to access secondary education, compared to only 3 in 10 from the rural Mountains and 4 in 10 in rural Senqu River Valley. Regarding completion, half of the children from urban areas will access and complete primary and secondary cycle and only 1 in 10 children from the rural Mountain area is likely to complete senior secondary education.

---

**Figure 3: Access and Retention by Gender**

**Figure 4: Access and Retention by Ecological Zones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
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<tr>
<td>99%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9 Each trend line in Figures 2a and 2b illustrate the retention/schooling profile in 2017 school years computed based on non-repeaters in each grade and the theoretical population for the same grade, each point on the line being the access rate for respective grade.
17. Poverty and the cost of schooling are key factors that affect access to basic education and student retention, especially at the junior secondary level (see Figure 5). Many children are also orphaned and made vulnerable, including economically, due to the impact of HIV/AIDS on their families and communities, which significantly reduces their likelihood to stay in school. Even though primary school is free in Lesotho, poverty remains a key factor affecting the dropout rate, as there are still indirect costs related to school attendance (such as transportation, school uniforms) that households must bear. Unlike primary education, junior secondary education is not free and the burden of paying for education is disproportionately high for the poorest households. Household spending on junior secondary education accounts for 17 and 16 percent of household consumption for households in the poorest and poor households respectively, compared to 7 percent for the richest households.

Figure 5: Reasons for dropping out among 13 to 17-year-olds by gender and location

Source: Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey and Household Budget Survey 2017/18

18. Beyond the cost of schooling and poverty, a host of factors, including lack of interest and cultural and social practices among adolescent boys and pregnancy among adolescent girls contribute to the high dropout rate. About 15 percent of boys report dropping out early due to cultural reasons (e.g. initiation school10) or lack of interest. Moreover, pregnancy among teenage girls (ages 15–19) is high at 17.8 percent, with the rate being considerably higher among the poorest girls (25 percent), girls with primary or no education (32 percent), and girls who live in the Foothills (37 percent). There are also serious concerns that adolescent pregnancy rates may have increased during the extended school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Risky sexual behavior (for example, transactional sex, multiple and concurrent sexual partners, and early sexual debut), insufficient sexual health knowledge, and limited access to appropriate health services are drivers of the high adolescent pregnancy rate as well as new HIV infections among youth. Recent data shows that approximately 15 percent of girls and 5 percent of boys in Lesotho report experiencing sexual violence and have limited access to support systems. Emerging evidence from the region shows that boys and girls clubs which applies various methodologies such as community-based drama, leadership training and workshops can be important mechanisms to raise GBV awareness among adolescents and increase their knowledge about existing resources to access help.

10 ‘Initiation’ is a cultural and traditional practice that Basotho society follows to construct the ‘manhood identity’. It is a rite of passage for boys to enter adulthood and includes traditional circumcision. Traditional initiation schools are conducted over a period of time (ranging from a few weeks to six months) in secluded areas away from settlements.
Quality of primary and junior secondary education

19. Learning outcomes have been improving in recent years but are still low both at the primary and junior secondary levels, especially for children from the poorest households. Lesotho does not have a well-established national learning assessment system and has limited participation in regional and no participation in international assessments. At the primary level, learning assessment data from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) sheds some light on the progress Lesotho has made, with significant improvement in learning outcomes for Grade 6 students in SACMEQ IV (2013) compared to results in SACMEQ III (2007) and SACMEQ II (2004). More recent, but limited data on learning outcomes at the primary level from the 2018 MICS household survey. Nationally, only 45.4 percent of children ages 7 to 14 demonstrated foundational reading skills while only 15 percent had foundational numeracy skills. The correlation between poverty and poor learning outcomes is even more stark—children from the richest families had better results compared to children from the poorest households with 68.7 percent meeting competency standards in literacy compared to only 28.5 percent of children from the poorest families and 22.8 percent meeting competency standards in numeracy compared to 7.4 percent of the poorest children (MICS, 2018). Limited and inequitable access to quality ECCD services is likely a key contributing factor as many children are not well prepared to enter primary grades.

20. Data on learning outcomes at the secondary level is scarce, however, the available data shows some encouraging results in some subject areas including Sesotho. The available data at the junior secondary level comes from an assessment conducted by the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECoL) in 2016 as a baseline assessment for the World Bank financed Lesotho Education Quality for Equity Project (LEQEP). The results showed that at the junior secondary level, learning outcomes in Sesotho were encouraging with over 76 percent of students demonstrating competency, while 51.6 percent of students reached competency in English. On the other hand, learning outcomes were weak in Mathematics and Science, with only 26.3 percent of junior secondary students reaching the required competency level in Mathematics and 32.4 percent of students in Science.

21. The low capacity of teachers is a key factor that contributes to the poor learning outcomes in basic education. Data on teacher attendance, pedagogical skills, and amount of time spent teaching in class are currently not collected in regularly and systematically in Lesotho—a critical information gap that limits the MoET’s ability to improve quality of classroom instruction. The limited available data and evidence on teacher quality, which comes from the aforementioned 2016 assessment by ECoL, shows that most teachers have significant content knowledge gaps in the assessed subject areas. For example, among primary school teachers, only 51.4 percent demonstrated competency in literacy. Among junior secondary school teachers, 49.5 percent demonstrated competency in Mathematics, 41.7 percent in Biology, 66.3 percent in Chemistry and 52.3 percent in Physics. The lack of high quality continuous professional development (CPD) support for teachers is another key issue. The MoET’s capacity to develop and provide structured and effective in-service training and follow up support for teachers is limited. Most in-service training provided at scale tends to be one-off and there are serious concerns about the quality of the program and capacity of trainers.

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11 SACMEQ II was commenced in 2000 and was completed in 2004.
12 Foundational reading skills are measured by completion of three foundational reading tasks in either English or Sesotho where children are expected to correctly read at least 90% of words in the and in addition provide correct responses for three literal and two inferential questions from a reading comprehension. Foundational numeracy skills are measured by the successfully completion of three foundational numeracy tasks including reading of numbers, discrimination of numbers and addition of numbers as well as number pattern recognition and completion.
13 This assessment was conducted as baseline assessment of primary and junior secondary school teachers in a nationally representative sample as part of the Lesotho Education Quality for Equity Project (LEQEP). However, students were also included in the assessment provide critical data to assess quality related outcomes at this level. No follow-up assessment have been conducted since.
Box 1: The Impact of COVID-19 on Basic Education and the Government’s Responses

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant negative impact on Lesotho’s education system. The pandemic has forced school closures since March 2020 and is negatively impacting learning of all students in the country. An estimated 511,318 learners are affected nationally, with most coming from rural parts of the country. The more prolonged school closures are, the more likely students are to dropout permanently and the larger the learning loss even for those who may come back. Children from marginalized and poor communities are at a greater risk of dropping out and falling behind as they have limited access to distance learning opportunities.

To respond to the ongoing crisis, the MoET has prepared the Education Sector Response Plan, which is aligned with the national response plan and reflects the importance of a multi-sectoral approach to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The MoET has also developed the School Reopening Strategy and Operating Guideline for Schools during COVID-19. To help implement the COVID-19 response plan, Lesotho has successfully mobilized US$3.5 million GPE grant for COVID-19 response activities in June 2020. The GPE COVID-19 response grant is currently being managed by UNICEF.

The LBEIP project has also been restructured to reallocate US$ 0.6 million to support the COVID-19 response in schools through the purchase and distribution of protective kits including soap, sanitation materials, face masks and water using existing tanks, to enable schools to safely reopen in line with the Operating Guidelines for Schools.

The last grade of senior secondary school (Grade 12) opened in September 2020, while Grades 8, 9 and 10 opened in November 2020 with the academic year being extended to March 2021 from December 2020. No other grades have opened in public schools though some private schools have opened other grades. The plan is to provide schools with the PPEs and open schools in January 2021. Children in all grades that do not have national examinations will be automatically promoted to the next grade, and the 2021 academic year will be used to narrow and focus on the key parts of the curriculum to combine two years of learning into one. This will require the narrowing of the curriculum by the National Curriculum and Development Center (NCDC), training of teachers on the implementation of the narrowed and accelerated learning program so students can catch up, training of teachers to assess student performance regularly, monitoring of students who re-enroll and support to children who have dropped out, as well as monitoring of the COVID-19 safety standards within schools. These aspects are included in the MoET’s Education Sector Response Plan, financed jointly by the Government, the GPE Emergency financing and the restructured LBEIP project, though its implementation has been slow.

Education Financing

22. Lesotho is among the highest spenders on education among Sub-Saharan African countries, however the budget is not proportionally allocated among the different sub-sectors of education. The share of education sector budget allocated to ECCD is less than 0.3 percent\(^\text{14}\), while the corresponding figures are 43 percent for primary education, 23.5 percent for secondary education and 28.7 percent for post-secondary education. The share of spending on post-secondary level in general benefits the non-poor as the poorest children rarely complete secondary education and access tertiary education (less than 4 percent of students attending higher education come from the bottom two wealth quintiles). Yet Lesotho spends a significant amount of funding subsidizing higher education, which ends up benefiting the relatively well-off. Recent estimates show that 15 percent of the students who have access to post-secondary education consume half of the public resources.

\(^\text{14}\) In June 2019, a wide range of stakeholders conducted a diagnosis of the ECCD sub-sector through Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS, which found 0.3 percent of education sector budget being allocated to ECCD, while the estimate from the ESA, 2020 shows 2%.
Table 2: Spending and equity in participation by level of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>2018/19 (Million M)</th>
<th>Share of total spending</th>
<th>Unit cost (Maloti)</th>
<th>Share of students coming from the bottom two wealth quintiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1,333</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>3,689</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>5,447</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>8,839</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>36,544</td>
<td>14% (10% technical education, 4% higher education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Bursary*</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3,096</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bursary managed by national manpower secretariat.


23. **The majority of financing in basic education is spent on teacher wages.** This pattern of spending leaves very little funds remaining for recurrent non-wage expenditure such as instructional materials, operations and maintenance of schools, and teacher training, all of which could help improve the learning environment, quality of classroom instruction and possibly learning outcomes. Despite a large percentage of the education sector budget going to teachers, there have been teacher strikes in 2018/2019 mainly over wage disputes, resulting in schools being closed for prolonged periods. The school closures in 2018 and 2019 due to teacher strikes have dealt a huge blow to learning in Lesotho and may have also contributed to households’ and children’s lack of interest in education and the resulting increase in dropout rates observed in the last two years. The teachers’ wage issue seems to have been resolved in 2020 with a change in the salary structure and functions in schools that was implemented by the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS), with support from the World Bank financed Public Sector Modernization Project (P152398). However, beyond these structural changes, interventions aimed at building teachers’ capacity to address emerging learning gaps due to the prolonged disruptions, including through better- and more regular- teacher training programs are urgently needed. Moreover, linking teachers’ training and professional development with their career growth including through merit-based performance reviews can play a key role in translating structural change into improved educational outcomes for students.

The Government’s Response to Constraints in Basic Education

24. **The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho has shown commitment to addressing constraints in the basic education system to improve access and quality in the sub-sector.** On the demand side, the Government recognizes that poverty, the direct and indirect costs of schooling, and vulnerability due to the impact of HIV/AIDS are barriers many children face in attending school, especially at the secondary level. In response, the Government established social assistance programs that are aimed at supporting poor and vulnerable children in order to improve their educational and human capital outcomes. The most relevant programs are the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Bursary (OVC-B) program and the Child Grant Program (CGP), both of which are managed and implemented by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), as well as the school feeding program jointly administered by the MoET and the World Food Programme (WFP). The CGP provides an unconditional cash transfers to poor households in order to improve the living standards of vulnerable children, by reducing malnutrition, improving health status, and increasing school enrolment. The OVC-B program subsidizes secondary
school fees for orphan and vulnerable students from poor households. The program makes an annual payment in
the name of each beneficiary student directly to junior or senior secondary schools. The payment is intended to
cover tuition, registration, books and supplies, and fees.

25. **The OVC-B program has not achieved the intended coverage of children from the poorest households to improve their educational outcomes, and there are some concerns with the targeting and impact of the bursary.** The CGP program, while better targeted to the poor, is not sufficiently linked to health and education outcomes and benefit levels are well below what can be expected to generate impacts on poverty reduction and human capital outcomes. Some of the key issues include: (i) gaps in targeting with only 28 percent of OVC-B beneficiaries coming from the bottom two quintiles of consumption, while the CGP is relatively better targeted with the corresponding figure being 64 percent; (ii) limited impact of the CGP on school enrollment due to the very small amount of the transfer that is provided to households unconditionally (M150 per household per month on average equivalent to 8 percent of household consumption in decile 4)\(^{15}\); and (iii) ad-hoc fees charged by schools beyond what is covered by the OVC-B posing an additional barrier for many students. There is also limited accountability at the school level, with no mechanism in place to hold schools accountable for the retention of beneficiary students. The OVC-B also currently does not cover overage students and students who repeat a grade, also exceptions are sometimes made on a case-by-case basis. While these policies are put in place due to the limited available funds, they are likely to adversely and disproportionately affect the poorest children and contribute to the high inefficiency of the OVC-B program (for example, over 34 percent of OVC-B beneficiaries dropped out before completing secondary school in 2018/19 (Verification reports of 2018 and 2019)). The Social Assistance Project (P151442) financed by the World Bank is currently providing support to improve the efficiency and equity of the CGP, OVC-B and other social assistance programs including by strengthening the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) to more effectively target the poorest households.

26. **The MoET has also mobilized resources from development partners including the World Bank to address gaps in access and quality of basic education.** The World Bank has been providing support to improve access to education through large school construction programs, that have mostly been successful particularly at the primary education level. More recent projects focused on improving student retention and quality of maths and science education, including the ongoing projects of the GPE financed LBEIP and World Bank financed LEQEP. While there have been challenges in the implementation of these projects, there are also notable successes. To improve student retention, these two projects have made inroads in engaging parents, communities and school leaders to address the issue through the establishment of over 400 functioning school-based management committees (SBMC) in schools serving the poorest communities in Lesotho. These SBMCs, which have been trained under the project, have analyzed at a school level the reasons why students drop out of primary and junior secondary schools and what can be done to keep them in school. In most instances, as confirmed in household surveys, the high direct and indirect costs of schooling, and pregnancy for girls, are the main reasons behind students dropping out. While the school grants provided under the two ongoing projects have improved learning environments in schools, the intervention has been insufficient to improve student retention, and there is need complement this with demand-side interventions, i.e. Supporting families to send children to school. Other successes under existing projects include the Progressive Mathematics Initiative- Progressive Science Initiative (PSI-PMI) model, which has a strong online teacher training component has been successfully piloted

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\(^{15}\) Global evidence indicates that a benefit level of at least 20 percent of household consumption per months is needed for impact.
and promising results have been documented. Moreover, the revision of the ECCD curriculum is moving forward under LBEIP with support from multiple partners including UNICEF and the Lego Foundation.

27. Building on ongoing initiatives in the education and social protection, the proposed grant seeks to improve student retention and the quality of education in targeted regions of Lesotho by: (i) supporting adolescents to stay in school by improving the targeting and impact of the OVC-B and the CGP cash transfers, (ii) supporting adolescents through peer support and mentorship groups by expanding existing youth club initiatives, and (iii) scaling up the Mathematics and Science online training for junior secondary teachers to improve their content knowledge and pedagogical instruction in these subjects. The project will also support the MoET to build a system to monitor ECCD service provision in Lesotho, provide support to roll out the new ECCD curriculum and develop costed expansion strategy for the sector.

C. Relevance to Higher Level Objectives

28. The proposed project is aligned with a key objective of the National Strategic Development Plan (2018/19-2022/23) – to strengthen human capital development. The strategic priorities under this objective include improving access and quality of ECCD, primary and secondary education and promoting an inclusive and equitable education system. Some of these priorities are directly targeted under BESP. Other policies, which the sector is also governed by and the project will respond to, include the Education Act (2010), the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (2017), the Inclusive Education Policy (2018), the Lesotho Education Language Policy (2019) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy (2009).

29. The project is also aligned with the Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2016-2026, and the recently completed ESSP implementation plan update, which underpins the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special focus on Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5. The plan focuses on ensuring the education system delivers relevant and quality education to all citizens effectively, efficiently, and equitably. Specific priorities under the strategic plan which the proposed BESP project directly aligns with include: (i) reforming the national curriculum and assessment system to meet the needs of Lesotho, (ii) improving access to comprehensive ECCD, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and (iii) increasing access to quality secondary education. Finally, the project is aligned with the MoSD’s Integrated Social Safety Net (ISSN) Harmonization strategy as well as the new National Social Protection Strategy currently under development in 2021.

30. The proposed project is aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY2016-2020 and the human capital agenda which is a prominent priority in the CPF. Specifically, the proposed operation is in line with CPF Focus Area 1 – improving efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. Among the four strategic objectives under this focus area, the proposed project will directly contribute towards the objective of improving basic education outcomes. The CPF identifies persistent patterns of inequality in schooling and low quality of education as a key drivers of low human capital outcomes. The proposed project tackles some of these issues, including through demand-side interventions aimed at improving student retention at the junior secondary level and use of technology to improve in-service teacher training in Mathematics and Science. Under Focus Area 1 of the CPF, the proposed project will also contribute towards the objective of improving equity of the social assistance systems, by improving the targeting and impact of existing social assistance programs (i.e. OVC-B and CGP) to support children from the poorest households stay in school.

31. Even as the CPF timeline comes to close, the objectives of BESP remain relevant for Lesotho and are
likely to be priority focus areas in the coming years illustrated by the findings of the Performance and Learning Review (PLR) of the CPF completed in 2020. The PLR emphasized that given persisting deficiencies in human capital outcomes in Lesotho, the need to support interventions in basic education remains critical for the country. Specifically, the PLR identified investment in early childhood development as priority area for the next phase of support to Lesotho as well as the need to build on the finding of recent analytical works in secondary education to improve educational outcomes including by addressing adolescent childbearing, which has far reaching implication on human capital outcomes.

32. The project activities are also aligned with GPE’s three priorities of (i) improved and more equitable learning outcomes, (ii) increased equity, gender equality and inclusion, and (iii) effective and efficient education systems. The project’s focus on supporting disadvantaged students to stay in schools and to learn will contribute towards the first two goals. By reducing dropout rates and improving retention across grades the project will also help improve efficiency in the system.

33. The proposed project is aligned with the Education Sector Response Plan (ESRP) for COVID-19 and responds well to emerging challenges under current circumstances. Helping Lesotho recover from the impact of COVID-19 and mitigating future impact in the medium to the long-run is an emerging priority for the Government and the World Bank. Under BESP, while there is not specific component focused on COVID-19 response, the proposed interventions are relevant to mitigating the impact of the pandemic and rebuilding the education system. One of the key channels COVID-19 is likely to impact human capital outcomes is by affecting households’ income due to its impact on the local economy and declining remittance from Basotho working abroad. Due to extended school closures and continued limitation in movement, learning and support for teachers is also disrupted. The project’s focus on addressing demand-side poverty related barriers to improve student retention and the support towards integrating technology in teacher training is relevant under the current circumstances. These focus areas are also in line with the ESRP, which identifies among its priorities bringing students back to school and addressing learning gaps that might have emerged during school closure.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Development Objective

34. To improve student retention and teaching quality\textsuperscript{16} in junior secondary schools in targeted regions of Lesotho and support the roll out of a new curriculum to strengthen ECCD service delivery.

35. The following key results will be used to measure progress towards the PDO:

- Reduction in dropout rate (Grade 8–Grade 9) in targeted regions (disaggregated by gender)
- Improvements in content knowledge and pedagogical skills of math and science teachers in targeted schools
- Improvement in a child’s readiness\textsuperscript{17} to start primary education for children attending ECCD centers and reception classes selected for roll-out support under the project

\textsuperscript{16} Teaching quality under this project refers to teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills in Mathematics and Science.

\textsuperscript{17} Measured by the child direct assessment score which consists of: (i) literacy/language, (ii) mathematics/numeracy, (iii) executive function, and (iv) fine motor skills following the MELQO child assessment tool
B. Project Components

36. The proposed project will focus on key activities that are priorities for the MoET within the context of its ESSP, and the updated ESSP implementation plan, and build on lessons learned and opportunities arising from ongoing projects, including LEQEP and LBEIP. These include: (i) improving transition to and retention of students in junior secondary education; (ii) scaling up online teacher training program for junior secondary teachers in Mathematics and Science; and (iii) strengthening the delivery of ECCD services, including by supporting the roll out of the revised ECCD curriculum, mapping ECCD services to ensure data in the sector is systematized and used as a basis for the development of an ECCD expansion strategy. Across all interventions, inclusive education will be a key cross-cutting focus area that will be supported by identifying specific strategies to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities can fully benefit from the project interventions.

Box 2: Key principles of project design

- **Simplicity in the design:** Simplifying the project design by focusing the scope on selected priorities and aligning interventions with implementation capacity is a key principle applied during preparation.
- **Need-based targeting:** The project will not be able to address all the constraints that limit the efficiency and productivity of the basic education sector at scale. To maximize its impact, the project will target geographic areas with the highest dropout rates and focus on children from the poorest households.
- **Building on existing initiatives:** For many of the proposed interventions, there are already ongoing initiatives supported by the MoET, other ministries (e.g., MoSD), World Bank and DPs. BESP will support these initiatives, evaluate and adapt them to effectively address some of the most binding constraints in basic education.
- **Use of alternative implementation arrangements:** When appropriate and where there are capacity gaps, the project will use alternative implementation arrangements (e.g., collaboration with NGOs, universities, and firms), with strong emphasis on transferring technical capacity and knowledge to the MoET.

37. There are several reasons why the intervention areas (i.e., junior secondary and ECCD) are identified as priorities of the project. Within the basic education system, the dropout rate is the highest at the junior secondary level and is likely to worsen under the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic is expected to be worse at the junior secondary level as the economic impact of the lockdown is likely to make junior secondary education unaffordable for many students (junior secondary education is not free). Without addressing constraints on the demand and supply-sides, Lesotho’s ambition for ensuring universal access to basic education will not be realized. The added challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic make integration of technology in education service delivery, including in teacher training, more important than ever in order to mitigate the impact of health and safety measures (e.g., school closures, limitations on face-to-face training, etc.) and build resilience in the education system. At the ECCD level, there are significant access, quality and monitoring related gaps that are affecting the delivery of early childhood education. While this project will not tackle these gaps at scale, it will provide system strengthening support in selected areas, to lay a strong foundation to improve the delivery of ECCD in the future.

38. The components and sub-components of the project are listed in Table 2 and described in more detail below.
Table 2: Proposed project Components and Sub-Components

| Component 1: Improving student retention in junior secondary education (US$5 million) | 1.1: Improving the efficiency of cash transfer schemes for students from poor households (US$2.5 million) |
| Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery (US$1.4 million) | 2.1. Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers (US$1.1 million) |
| Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance (US$0.7 million) | 2.2. Mapping of ECCD service providers and developing a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy for the ECCD sector (US$0.3 million) |
| Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance (US$0.7 million) | Project management, capacity building and technical assistance in selected areas (US$0.7 million) |

Component 1: Improving student retention in junior secondary education (US$5.0 million)

39. This component will focus on improving transition to, and retention of, students in junior secondary education in targeted regions in Lesotho where poverty rates are high and student retention is low (see Annex 2 for details), as well as support improvements in Maths and Science instruction in schools located in these regions by supporting the scale-up of an existing online teacher training programs that has shown to improve student learning. To this end, the component will: (a) provide assistance to families to address financial barriers to secondary education, (b) support adolescent boys and girls through youth clubs and equip them with relevant life-skills and reproductive health knowledge to ensure that they stay in school, and (c) support online teacher training for Mathematics and Science teachers in junior secondary schools to improve the quality of teaching including related to remedial education such as continuous assessment of students to understand their level of learning and where they need additional support. This is particularly important considering the COVID pandemic and the impact it has potentially had on student learning (Figure 6).
Sub-component 1.1: Improving the efficiency of cash transfer schemes for students from poor households (US$2.5 million)

40. The objective of this sub-component is to address economic barriers that prevent boys and girls from transitioning to and completing junior secondary education. To this end, under this sub-component, the project will support two cash transfer programs - the Child Grant Program (CGP) and the Orphans and Vulnerable Children’s bursary (OVC-B) program - that are being implemented by the MoSD to address economic barriers to student retention (Table 3 below and Annex 2 have more information about these programs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Proposed interventions that will tested and evaluated under BESP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGP</td>
<td>Rural households with children below age 18 and classified as ultra-poor or poor in NISSA</td>
<td>Based on NISSA (community targeting and PMT validation)</td>
<td>50,000 HH (est. 135,000 children) in 2020; 64% of HH in the program in bottom 40% (^{18}) Currently only available in 64 rural community councils</td>
<td>Monthly benefit of M120-360 depending on HH size (average M150 per household per month)</td>
<td>• Providing bonus payment to households upon child’s transition to junior secondary and to help them stay in secondary school. • Provide information to CGP HHS on the OVC-B program and the enrollment process for the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC-B</td>
<td>Students age 18 or below, who come from the poorest families in Lesotho (ultra-poor or poor in NISSA as well as Categorical targeting (age level) and poverty targeting based on</td>
<td>23,000 student beneficiaries</td>
<td>M1,815 - M5,073, excluding exam fees for grades 10 and 12</td>
<td>• Assessment of policies and practices under the OVC-B program (e.g. policies on the secondary school fee schedule, exclusion of grade repeaters and overage children e.t.c.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{18}\) Bottom 40% is defined as bottom two quintiles of consumption estimated based on 2016/17 national household survey.
41. The proposed BESP project aims to use these programs to address two critical bottlenecks in the basic education system − low transition to secondary and low retention in junior secondary grades in targeted constituencies. To do so, the project will support the MoSD and MoET to strengthen these two programs and enhance their linkage with educational outcomes. The interventions under BESP will include:

42. **Improving transition from primary to junior secondary:** The proposed project will leverage the CGP to support and motivate households to keep their children in school and ensure that they transition to secondary school. To this end, the project will provide bonus payment as part of the CGP cash transfer to households upon a child’s transition to secondary school at the end of primary and to help those students who had previously dropped out. This bonus will be piloted and evaluated in selected constituencies that have high poverty and high dropout rate. In addition, an information campaign targeting CGP beneficiary households in the target constituencies will be supported to ensure that students from these households can successfully enroll their children into the OVC-B program as the children transition to secondary school. A more comprehensive package of social behavior change sessions and other nudges linked to strengthening human capital outcomes would be developed under a potentially forthcoming new social protection intervention.

43. **Continued enrollment and attendance at the junior secondary level:** The proposed BESP project will use the OVC-B program to improve student retention in junior secondary grades. To achieve this objective:

- The sub-component will support an assessment of policies and practices that may affect the effectiveness of the OVC-B program, including the adequacy of the OVC-B grant amount provided to schools, the level and causes of incompliance among schools with the school fee schedule (i.e. the practice of charging top-up fees beyond what is covered under OVC-B) and the impact of these policies and practices on eligible beneficiaries. In addition, the impact of the policy that excludes grade repeaters and overage children and gaps in the targeting of the OVC-B program will also be assessed.

- In targeted constituencies, the project will finance system and process adjustments to the OVC-B program based on the findings of the assessment. One of the key adjustments will focus on the review of the secondary school fee schedule and the alignment with the OVC-B grant amount. The MoET and MoSD will collaborate to review the fee schedule for secondary schools and pilot adjustments to the OVC-B amount to ensure that schools receive adequate funding and eliminate the need to charge top-up fees.

- The targeting mechanisms will also be improved consistent with the MoSD’s Integrated Social Safety Net (ISSN) Harmonization strategy, including by using EMIS education data and poverty data along with the NISSA to ensure that increased support is provided in poor constituencies with high dropout rate. In addition, the grant enrollment processes will be refined to ensure that the process is accessible and open to all...
beneficiaries, including children with disabilities.

- In order to improve the impact of the OVC-B on student retention, the project will support advocacy and communication campaigns to increase the role of SBMCs and communities in following up on beneficiary students and hold schools accountable for tracking where students are if they are not attending school. The advocacy campaign will be mainly targeted at community leaders, SBMC members and other stakeholders, to enhance the school-community collaboration to keep children, particularly OVC-B beneficiaries in schools. SBMCs will be strengthened to undertake follow-up monitoring to ensure that schools are complying with the fee schedule (i.e. do not charge top-up fees) and are taking action to ensure that the beneficiary students are staying in school.

- The key aspects of the interventions will be reviewed, and the findings will be used to refine the CGP and OVC-B program designs and implementation mechanisms to inform a Government led scale-up of the tested interventions in the future.

- The sub-component will also provide support to the MoSD, which is the key implementing ministry of this sub-component, on project management by providing additional support to the existing Project Facilitation Unit (PFU) that is currently implementing the ongoing Social Assistance Project (P151442).

44. **Targeting:** Given the limited funding and short project timeline, these interventions will be implemented in targeted constituencies that have a high poverty rate and low student retention rate at the junior secondary level. See Annex 2 for detailed discussion on the targeting.

**Sub-component 1.2: Scaling up implementation of youth clubs for girls and boys (US$0.5 million)**

45. This sub-component will support youth clubs and a “safe space” approach to empower adolescent girls and boys to enable them to make informed decisions- including about their schooling- by equipping them with relevant life-skills, information and knowledge including on reproductive health topics. This intervention will complement the regular Life Skills Education Program, which is implemented in all secondary schools to provide a safe space for young people to learn from their peers and mentors. The focus of the intervention will be on giving adolescents information on the benefit of education, equipping them critical life-skills (e.g., conflict resolution, self-determination, confidence, negotiations and leadership), and health awareness (e.g., basic health, nutrition, and hygiene, reproductive health, menstrual hygiene management (MHM)). These youth clubs will also serve as important platforms to raising adolescents’ gender-based violence/sexual exploitation (GBV/SEA) awareness e.g., approaches to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV/SEA, and refer adolescents to additional social services and support.

46. To implement this sub-component, the project will support promising initiatives which have shown signs of success in by Lesotho implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the ‘Herd Boys’, ‘Help Lesotho’, ‘Hub’ and ‘Skills Share’. Under this sub-component, relevant NGOs with a proven track record working with adolescents and school communities in relevant regions (e.g. student retention, out-of-school children, life-skills, reproductive health interventions for youth, GBV/SEA etc), will be competitively selected to provide support in targeted schools. The MoET will form an evaluation committee which will set out transparent criteria to competitively select the NGOs that will be supported under the project. The project will finance the selected NGOs to adapt their programs, as needed, to better align with the project development objective and scale up their interventions in the target constituencies. The project will also finance the evaluation of the different program/project models NGOs use to assess its impact on student retention and inform future scale-up efforts.

47. **Targeting:** This sub-component will be implemented in constituencies with high poverty and high dropout rate, which will be the same as those that will be targeted under sub-component 1.1 and focus on a sub-set of
schools in these constituencies.

Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models in Mathematics and Science for junior secondary school teachers (US$2.0 million)

48. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the digital divide that exists between rich and the poor households in Lesotho. Access to the internet is low in Lesotho with only about 27 percent of the population connected to the internet. The MoET is learning from current experience and would like to use this time to build a system where all students have access to digital devices with learning content, whether schools are open or closed. Even without internet connectivity, providing access to learning materials digitally helps students learn even during school closures. As a first step in building such system, teachers and school management need to be comfortable and adept at using digital content for teaching and learning. The project will thus start the process of employing digital technology to train teachers in mathematics and science to improve basic education service delivery in these critical subjects. This online teacher training will enable teachers to independently conduct the training at anytime and anywhere they want and is aligned to global good practice teacher training programs.

49. In Lesotho, besides the teacher education colleges, three organizations have provided teacher training related to STEM subjects. First, the Department of Science and Technology under the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology (MCST) conducted coding classes for teachers online as a part of the Africa code week. Second, an online, asynchronous teacher training as well as face-to-face training on math and sciences for junior secondary school teachers was implemented in 24 schools under the LEQEP.19 This program was conducted under the Progressive Mathematics Initiative and Progressive Science Initiative (PMI-PSI), supported by the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL). Third, face-to-face teacher training on the use of computer as well as the use of open education resources such as 'Khan Academy' and 'Rachel' has been conducted by Camara Lesotho, an NGO originating from Ireland. The organization also provides refurbished computers and laptops and support for schools in operating this hardware as well as waste management of electronic materials.

50. Building on these existing initiatives, this component will scale up ongoing online teacher training initiatives on math and sciences to: (i) train math and science teachers in the targeted secondary schools, (ii) evaluate the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers and the impact of the teacher training on students’ learning outcomes, (iii) provide continuous support for teachers in and outside of the classroom, and (iv) develop a sustainable model for the future online teacher training in collaboration with National University of Lesotho (NUL), Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and inspectors of math and science.

51. Teachers will receive laptops and basic ICT training at school to take the online training courses at their own pace. They will also receive continuous support during and after the training by joining the Whatsapp group administered by the training implementation partners. This group serves as a peer learning platform to exchange lessons learned, best practices, and share questions and answers. For those who do not have access to electricity at schools, a portable solar panel will be provided.20 Each laptop will be loaded with training content and a data card to access the internet. Once the training is completed, teachers will be able to use much of the training materials as their teaching materials and use data projectors provided to the schools to share the materials with

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19 Experiments in Lesotho, in which a subset of teachers at the training site learned online rather than in the classroom, have confirmed that online learning, when supported in the same way as face-to-face training, is at least as effective as face-to-face training.

20 The Lesotho topography greatly impacts network access in some areas, even if solar panels are provided. This might limit the projects targeting in some areas of the country.
The MoET will partner with a few organizations to implement this component. First, their main implementation partner will be the NJCTL, which provides: (i) online asynchronous math and science teacher training contents using the Moodle platform, (ii) pedagogical training, which includes formative assessment of students’ learning, and (iii) a course completion certificate accredited by the NJCTL. This training program is built on a small-scale pilot that NJCTL conducted amongst 15 teachers in Lesotho who used NJCTL online Math and Science courses in lieu of face-to-face training. They performed as well, or better, on unit exams compared to those who remained in the face-to-face training, supporting the efficacy of online training in the country. Based on this positive result, the project will scale-up this online teacher training modality.

To ensure the sustainability of the training, NJCTL will work closely with the NUL and LCE to transition the operation of online teacher training gradually. At the end of the project, NUL and LCE will be capacitated to run the online teacher training courses by themselves. Technical assistance will be also provided to the MoET to develop a sustainable online teacher training model with NUL and LCE. Second, the PFU will partner with a local organization that will procure and deliver laptops to teachers, train teachers on how to use the laptops as well as provide operation operations and maintenance support.

NJCTL, NUL, LCE and the local organization will create a Whatsapp group for the teachers to facilitate peer learning and provide support on the use of laptops and training contents. To increase the completion rate of online teacher training, various incentive mechanisms will be tested and evaluated during the project. Once the appropriate incentive mechanism is identified, it will be scaled up. Finally, the PFU will work with the Ministry of Communication Science and Technology (MCST) to zero-rate the teacher training website and organize an excellence in STEM teaching award during the annual STI week to recognize high performing teachers and provide a monetary award as an incentive. Those who can be nominated for the STEM teaching award need to have a completion certificate from the NJCTL.

The online teacher training will be conducted in a phased manner. The first phase will focus on 10 self-selected teachers from each district to develop an operational model in each district. During this phase, hard-to-reach areas will be prioritized so that the online training can be tested in challenging environments. In the second phase, 100 math and 100 science teachers from the same targeted constituencies as the sub-component 1.1 will participate in the training on a voluntary basis. During the third phase, another group of self-selected 150 math and 150 science teachers will participate in the training. The first two phases of the training will be conducted by the NJCTL and the third phase is to be operated by NUL and LCE, supported by the NJCTL. The total number of teachers who can participate in the training would be 500. However, depending on how quickly NUL and LCE can administer the training by themselves, the cost of training will be reduced, and more teachers can be trained.

During the implementation of the online teacher training, teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills— in addition to students’ learning levels— will be continuously measured. To test the content knowledge of teachers, formative assessments and exams, which are embedded in the NJCTL’s online teacher training courses, will be used. For the pedagogical skills, a field exercise, which is a part of the NJCTL’s training curriculum, will be used to assess teachers’ classroom performance. During this exercise, teachers record their lesson using the camera on their laptops and share the video with the trainer for a review. Depending on the COVID-19 situation, random classroom observations can be also conducted by inspectors. Based on the results, further assistance will be provided to teachers. To assess the students’ learning outcomes, teachers use the formative assessment that they learn during the training. If students need additional support, teachers provide remedial materials and support. In addition, the standardized student assessment will be conducted to measure the impact on students’ learning.
Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery (US$1.4 million)

57. This component will focus on selected interventions to strengthen ECCD service delivery in Lesotho by providing structured support to roll out the new curriculum, mapping of ECCD providers and developing a costed and comprehensive expansion strategy for ECCD in Lesotho.

Sub-component 2.1: Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers (US$1.1 million)

58. The MoET is in the process of revising the 1998 Early Childhood Care and Development curriculum for children between the ages of 0 to 5 years under the existing LBEIP project. The revised curriculum will reflect national and global policies pertaining to quality play-based learning and child development. Additional technical support is being provided by development partners such as UNICEF and the World Bank to ensure the quality and validity of the revision process. The revised ECCD curriculum is expected to be finalized in April 2021 with plans for rolling out implementation of the curriculum in ECCD centers during the second half of 2021. The project will support part of this roll out in a selected number of public reception classrooms and ECCD centers, including community based ECCD centers and potentially private ECCD centers that are located in poor, rural communities.

59. This sub-component aims to provide structured support to roll out the new curriculum across reception classrooms and ECCD centers. It will involve the following:

Phase 1: Pilot the revised ECCD curriculum in a small number of reception classrooms and ECCD centers. Prior to the pilot the MoET, with the support of technical consultants, will develop teaching and learning materials aligned to the new curriculum and print a few of these for the purposes of distribution to the ECCD centers and reception classrooms participating in the pilot. The MoET will undertake a rapid evaluation of the pilot to refine the teaching and learning materials, training manuals and training processes and prepare for scale-up. In parallel, the MoET will develop a strategy to roll out the new ECCD curriculum across the country. This strategy will include, but not be limited to: (i) describing the advocacy and communication campaign to inform communities and schools about the new curriculum; (ii) identifying the timelines and phasing of the roll out with priority given to ECCD centers in rural communities, including training of teachers; and (iii) costs of the roll-out. This phase will take a maximum of six (6) months.

Phase 2: The MoET will select a group of reception classes and ECCD centers, serving poor communities, that will be targeted for support under the project. The project will support the following aspects of the roll-out: (i) the nation-wide advocacy and communications campaign about the new curriculum; (ii) supporting the targeted ECCD centers and reception classes in terms of training of teachers, procurement and distribution of learning and play-based materials and teaching manuals to these centers; and (iii) an assessment of child development and education outcomes and early learning environment observations within the target centers both before and after the roll-out of the curriculum. The assessment will ascertain whether children in the target ECCD centers/reception classes are performing better across several domains, particularly in terms of literacy/language and numeracy/mathematics. In addition to the assessment, an early learning environment observation will be undertaken with a specific focus on changes in teacher pedagogy. The assessment and observation will be similar to the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) survey that was undertaken in Lesotho in 2018. A key consideration of this assessment will also be whether the new ECCD curriculum responds to the needs of children with disabilities and facilitates inclusive pre-primary education.
Sub-component 2.2: Mapping of ECCD service providers and developing a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy for the ECCD sector (US$0.3 million)

60. The project will support the mapping of ECCD service providers across Lesotho to get a comprehensive overview of service provision and move towards a systematized process where the data can be consolidated into the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the MoET and updated on an annual basis by the MoET moving forward. Currently, there is insufficient information on ECCD providers in the system, especially private providers, and the sector itself is not well regulated. The mapping will focus on what ECCD services are available in Lesotho and where these services exist. It will collect basic information on, but not limited to, the location, number of children by age category, number and characteristics of practitioners/caregivers/teachers, some details on the learning environment and the types of services offered. The current registration requirements are quite onerous (such as obtaining land titles), especially for smaller ECCD providers. The project will carry out an extensive communication campaign prior to the mapping exercise to explain the purpose of the mapping to collect basic information on existing providers and the number of children they support rather than it being a process to weed out providers that do not meet registration requirements.

61. The main purpose of the mapping is to get a comprehensive understanding of ECCD service provision in Lesotho and see how it can be systematically strengthened and scaled up in the future. The data will form the basis for the development of a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy for ECCD service provision in Lesotho by providing basic information about what services are available and where and how they could be better supported to expand access. While results from the 2018 MELQO and recommendations from the Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) initiative point towards the expansion of reception classes to expand ECCD access, the expansion strategy needs to include private providers as well given the needs in the country and limited public resources for the expansion of ECCD services. Based on the mapping exercise, the costed expansion strategy will include the construction of reception classrooms and public private partnerships that supports expansion of community based and private ECCD services in poor communities.

Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance (US$0.7 million)

62. The objective of this component is to strengthen institutional capacity of the MoET, which is the main implementer of most project interventions. Specifically, the component will provide support to strengthen key management and technical areas to ensure that MoET is able to effectively implement the project interventions and improve student retention in the target areas. Both under the MoET and MoSD, existing project facilitation units (PFUs) will be used to jointly coordinate the project implementation by supporting the implementing departments under their respective ministries. However, the project management costs for MoSD, including the hiring of additional consultants to strengthen the PFU to manage the implementation of sub-component 1.1 will be covered under the sub-component 1.1.

63. The existing PFU under the MoET will play a lead coordinating role including in planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring and reporting processes of the project. The PFU under the MoET will also provide support in key areas of planning, procurement, financial management, environmental and social safeguards aspects, supervision of project activities and monitoring and evaluation of the project sub-components as well as consolidating inputs from the MoSD. In order to enable the MoET PFU to effectively play these roles, this sub-component will finance the hiring of additional consultants based on need in selected specialized areas (e.g., Environmental and Social (E&S)). The project will also finance non-salary operating costs and services such as auditing services, training and seminars related to project implementation. Furthermore, consulting services costs will be covered under this component.
C. Project Beneficiaries

64. The primary beneficiaries of the project include boys and girls who will benefit from the cash transfer intervention along with the youth club intervention in the target constituencies (i.e., high poverty and high drop-out constituencies) as well as students who will be taught by the trained teachers. Over 3,700\(^{21}\) students are expected to directly benefit from the OVC-B and CGP grants through the project. In addition, 8,000 students enrolled in junior secondary grades will benefit from improved classroom instruction in mathematics and science as the result of the online teacher training intervention. An estimated 1,300\(^{22}\) children enrolled in reception classes or ECCD centers are expected to benefit through the implementation of the revised curriculum. Direct project beneficiaries will also include 500 math and science teachers and 100 ECCD teachers that will be trained as well as project staff at the MOET and MoSD, who will benefit from capacity building support and technical assistance.

D. Results Chain

E. Rationale for Bank Involvement and Role of Partners

Rational for public sector financing

65. As the Constitution of Lesotho recognizes the rights of education for all citizens in Lesotho, primary

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\(^{21}\) The estimate for the number of project beneficiaries will be finalized during project appraisal once the final list of target constituencies is agreed upon.

\(^{22}\) It is expected that about 50 ECCD providers will included in the piloting of the revised curriculum (i.e. in the treatment group) and the average ECCD provider size in Lesotho is 26 students.
education is compulsory and accessible for all. Primary education, which goes through grade seven, is tuition free and begins at age six. Secondary education is not free, but the government offers scholarships for orphans and other vulnerable children. The project is aligned with the government’s public sector financing for education and additional and better targeted financial support for orphans and other vulnerable children will improve access to secondary education.

**Value added of the World Bank’s support**

66. The rationale for the World Bank’s engagement in the basic education sub-sector of Lesotho includes: (a) building on its long-term support to address the most pressing needs in the education sector and other social sectors to improve human capital development; and (b) its multi-sectoral expertise to support the Government to tackle the most critical constraints to student retention holistically. The World Bank has significant experience supporting Lesotho’s education sector. It currently finances a US$25 million operation in addition to the US $2.3million GPE financed grant. The World Bank has a successful track record of analytical, technical and project management support to the Government of Lesotho. The World Bank brings global technical expertise in key areas including ECCD, teacher training, student retention and student learning as well as experience in other social sectors including social protection and health. Some of the interventions proposed under BESP are multisectoral (e.g. cash transfers) and will require the MoET to effectively work with other ministries (e.g. MoSD). The World Bank is well placed to support the Government during implementation, by leveraging a wide range of expertise within and outside the World Bank.

67. In addition, the World Bank has extensive experience overseeing GPE financed projects, which involves coordination with a number of development partners, academics and civil society organizations through the Local Education Group (LEG). The World Bank has the institutional knowledge and in-house financial and technical expertise to administer the GPE grant. The World Bank is also well placed to lead with financing modalities that encourage pooled financing, co-financing, and parallel funding.

**Role of Partners**

68. The project will leverage and scale up initiatives and tools launched by other development partners as follows: (i) scale up relevant student club activities conducted by local NGOs to address the retention issue, (ii) scale up online math and science teacher training pilot conducted by the NJCTL through LEQEP, (iii) pilot and evaluate new ECCD curriculum developed in collaboration with UNICEF and other development partners, and (iv) use of MELQO indicator developed by UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Brookings Institution to measure the readiness of children to enter primary schools.

**F. Lessons Learned and Reflected in the Project Design**

69. Lessons learned through the World Bank’s ongoing and longstanding engagement in the education sector in Lesotho and in the Sub-Saharan Africa region have informed the project design of BESP and are summarized below. Additional information on lessons learned also presented in Annex 2, table A2.23

70. From design perspective, ‘supply-side’ interventions are not enough to address the low transition to and high dropout rate at the secondary level. A key lesson that has emerged from ongoing project is that

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23 It should be noted that these lessons also relate to the key principles that have guided the project preparation, which are presented in Box 2.
interventions aimed at improving learning environments are not adequate to address the high dropout rate at the secondary level, as they do not address critical demand-side constraints to school attendance such as the direct and indirect cost of schooling, pregnancy among adolescent girls and a lack of interest in education. The BESP design takes into account these lessons, by directly addressing these critical constraints through financial support to students from poor households and expansion of youth clubs and life-skills related interventions. However, supporting students to enroll and stay in school is not enough to ensure that they are learning and improving the quality of education remains a critical priority under the Government’s updated implementation plan of its ESP. Recognizing this priority, BESP will support in-service teacher training to improve the teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach mathematics and science.

71. **Building on ongoing operations including those supported by other development partners is essential to build synergy and leverage existing resources.** The proposed project builds on the successful interventions under LEQEP and LBEIP such as the successful pilot of the PSI-PMI model under LEQEP by scaling up the teacher training components of the intervention under BESP. Under LBEIP, the outdated ECCD curriculum is currently being revised and BESP aims to support the piloting and evaluation of the revised curriculum. Under the youth club intervention, BESP will leverage and scale up successful initiatives that are being implemented by organizations supported by other development partners such as PEPFAR and UNICEF.

72. **Face to face teacher training did not work so well under the existing projects due to a lack of capacity of the MoET, teachers’ strike and COVID-19. On the other hand, use of technology in education service delivery will be essential for building resilience of the education system.** One of the hard lessons revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic is how susceptible the education system is to external shocks. During the school closures under COVID-19, distance learning options were largely limited to radio and television, which are not interactive and not as effective as other distance learning options such as google classroom, Seesaw and other online learning platforms. For many students, access to these distance learning options was limited and has accentuated the digital divide and existing inequalities between wealthy and poor students. Even as schools reopen, support to schools and teachers, which in general relies on face-to-face visits and interactions (e.g. through supervision visits and continuous professional development support) might remain limited as movement might stay restricted in the foreseeable future. Globally, trend of teacher training is also moving towards online asynchronous teacher training coupled with mentorship and in-classroom support for teachers. Thus, the proposed project will provide math and science teachers in target schools with opportunities to participate in asynchronous online teacher training which has been already piloted in Lesotho and proved to be successful. This new training modality will enable teachers to complete training anytime and anywhere using their individual laptops provided by the MoET for the training purpose. If successful, in addition to improving STEM education in target schools, it will provide a model that can be adapted and scaled-up in other subjects and can be used as the model for future continuous professional development of teachers.

73. **Sustained high-level oversight and enhanced implementation capacity will be critical for the successful implementation of the project.** While unforeseen challenges (e.g. extended teacher strikes and COVID-19 pandemic) affected the implementation of the LBEIP and LEQEP projects, capacity gaps and weak oversight of project activities (in part due to high turnover of MoET management) are also critical contributing factors to the slow implementation of the existing projects. Commitment from the Government side, to expand implementation capacity and strengthen close follow-up by management will be critical. Some of the key steps identified in this
regard include hiring additional personnel and consultants in key technical areas to strengthen the central team
that will coordinate project implementation and holding monthly progress review meetings headed by the
Permanent Secretary. In addition, several of the activities under the proposed project will be implemented by
third party service providers that will be delivering services directly to beneficiaries in schools while at the same
time building the capacity of the MoET in specific technical areas. These details will be further elaborated in the
project operation manual.

III. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

74. The MoET will be the main implementing entity for most sub-components (sub-components 1.2, 1.3, and
component 2 and 3). Under the MoET, the project will use the same Project Facilitation Unit (PFU) established
under the projects, including LEQEP and LBEIP. The PFU is a project coordination unit comprising of full-time staff
that is fully integrated in the MoET, under the Department of Planning (DoP), will be responsible for the day-to-
day coordination of project activities. The PFU will consist of a project coordinator and technical support staff in
administration, procurement, financial management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), environmental and social
safeguards aspects and will report to the Director of Planning. Individual MoET departments, for example the
Primary and Secondary Education Departments, and Education Management Information System (EMIS) team are
responsible for implementation subcomponents that fall within their mandates. Furthermore, the MoET will
collaborate with the Ministry of Social Development on the OVC-B and child grant provision and with the Ministry
of Communication, Science and Technology (MCST) on the online teacher training intervention.

75. The MoSD will be the implementing entity for sub-component 1.1 (i.e. the OVC-B and CGP related
interventions) working closely with the MoET. Similar to the other sub-components, the existing PFU for the
ongoing social protection operation supported by the World Bank will be used to help coordinate the
implementation of this sub-component.

76. A Coordination Committee, chaired by the MoET PS, will provide overall guidance for project
implementation, facilitate coordination of activities, and review progress reports. The Coordination Committee
will meet every six months to review progress on project activities with participation from the MoSD, MCST,
Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Development Planning (MDP). In addition to these semi-annual meetings,
the MoET PS will chair monthly meetings within the MoET with the participation of MoSD technical staff, to take
stock of project progress. Before this monthly meeting, the MoSD team will provide a briefing to the MoSD PS on
project progress. Development partner coordination and support will be facilitated through the Local Education
Group (LEG), which meets regularly to take stock of project progress in addition to a formal annual joint sector
review of the project to ensure the project stays on track with the priorities of the country’s education sector plan.

77. To ensure that project activities are completed on time and to build capacity of MoET staff in key technical
areas, the MoET will hire the required technical expertise for the following interventions: (i) Online teacher
training: Given this is a relatively new area of intervention for Lesotho, the MoET will hire NJCTL that has
experience with online teacher training for junior secondary education and experience in Lesotho; (ii)
Strengthening and Scaling Up Girls/Boys Clubs to improve retention: Lesotho has several entities that are implementing programs in schools and communities that are showing signs of improving the retention of students. The MoET will build on this experience by scaling up these initiatives through a competitive selection; and (iii) Mapping of the reception classes and ECCD centers: Since the total number of ECCD service providers are unknown and registration of ECCD centers are not comprehensive, the MoET will hire a firm to conduct this exercise to ensure that all the existing ECCD service providers are captured and their data is transferred to the EMIS to manage continuously.

B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

78. The MoET will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation and reporting on the Results Framework of the project. Monitoring of project results will be integrated in the existing M&E systems of the MoET. The proposed project includes a set of monitoring indicators to allow the effective measurement of the project outcome and results. Continuous monitoring, periodic reviews, and midterm evaluation will be based on predetermined indicators, which will measure inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. These indicators together with the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements are detailed in the Results Framework. Results Framework indicators and targets have been agreed upon by Government and the World Bank as reasonable development milestones to be achieved under the project. Semi-annual progress reporting against the agreed indicator targets in the Results Framework will be furnished by various data sources, including survey and reporting from implementation organizations, with oversight and guidance of the director of planning, complemented by the EMIS data managed by the EMIS Unit of the MoET. Progress under the Sub-Component 1.1 will be tracked by the MoSD and reported to the MoET who consolidates all the Results Framework data and report to the World Bank for review on time and in accordance with the agreed format. In addition to reporting on the proposed project results indicators and intermediate outcome indicators, the reports will include information on disbursements, FM, procurement, and social and environmental policies and guidelines, as well as an updated annual work plan. The World Bank’s implementation support missions will be conducted twice a year.

C. Sustainability

79. The project has been designed to include sustainability measures. First, the PDO and project-supported interventions are consistent with the education sector strategy as captured in the recently updated ESSP (2020-2023) and the ESSP implementation strategy. This alignment with the sector strategy will help ensure integration of all project supported activities into the Government’s basic education program. Moreover, the project design builds on existing Government programs and systems. For example, for the cash transfer interventions, which are the main demand side-interventions aimed at improving student retention, the project will use existing social assistance programs (OVC-B and Child Grant program), to ensure full ownership of the intervention by the Government and long-term sustainability. A key aspect of this intervention will be improving efficiency and impact of the CGP and OVC-B through better targeting, which will also contribute to long-term suitability of the project intervention. The online teacher training intervention is expected to provide a cost-effective mechanism to improve continuous professional development support for teachers. A key aspect of the intervention will be building the capacity to continue and scale-up the program in the long-run by building the capacity of NUL and LCE, who could potentially role out the online teacher training to other subjects other than Mathematics and Science.

80. At the ECCD level, the project focuses on supporting the MoET to put in place key building blocks that are
critical to improve service delivery in the sub-sector. The project will support the development of a systematized data collection process through the mapping, in which data on ECCD service provisioning can be consolidated into the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the MoET. Moving forward, this data can be updated annually by the MoET. The ECCD component will provide structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classrooms and ECCD centers, however, it will only support part of this rollout in a selected number of reception classes and community (and potentially private) centers in poor communities. Scaling up implementation at a national level will require additional financing and commitment from the government to increase the share of spending allocated to the ECCD sub-sector.

IV. PROJECT APPRAISAL SUMMARY

A. Technical, Economic and Financial Analysis (if applicable)

Technical Analysis

81. **Strategic relevance:** The proposed project design is well aligned with the Government’s strategy for sustainable and inclusive growth and poverty reduction as outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan (2018/19-2022/23) as well as the updated ESSP and implementation strategy.

82. **Technical soundness:** The proposed project’s technical design responds to some of the most binding constraints in the basic education sub-sector and is informed by evidence from the education and economics literature, experience from the World Bank and other development partner-supported projects within and outside Lesotho. Some of the evidence supporting the key interventions under BESP is summarized below:

83. **Financial support for households:** In many developing countries, cash-transfers or in-kind transfers often conditional on enrollment, school attendance, learning outcomes, or a combination, have been employed to alleviate the financial burden of schooling on families and incentivizing them to invest in their children’s education. Programs in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Mexico, Brazil, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Egypt have employed a mix of interventions at primary and secondary school levels to improve school enrollment and retention among disadvantaged groups including girls. There is evidence indicating that these interventions reduced dropout rate, improved school enrollment and attendance rates, increased test scores, and delayed marriage (Sperling, et.al., 2016; Evans and Yuan, 2019).

84. Within Lesotho, cash-transfers have been used to improve enrollment in basic education, both by providing unconditional cash transfer to poor households with school age children (CGD) and covering secondary school fees and some related costs on behalf of poor students. While robust impact evaluations are not available, there is evidence showing that these social assistance programs have been effective in improving human capital outcomes. The CGP has been linked to significant increase in expenditures on schooling, including a 26-percentage point increase in the share of pupils ages 6-19 with uniforms and shoes. It also led to improved food security among the poorest households and reduction in morbidity among children age 0-5, both of which are positively correlated with children’s cognitive abilities and readiness to learn in school. The evidence on the impact of the OVC-B is not readily available. However, given that cost of secondary schooling is a primary factor for high dropout rate at the secondary level, it is likely to have a positive impact on student retention. By improving the targeting of these interventions and ensuring alignment, greater impact on student retention is expected (World Bank, 2020).
85. **Provide life-skills education and safe spaces for adolescents using youth clubs:** Research provides evidence that equipping youth with life skills (e.g. psychosocial skills) and knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, including by strengthening peer groups/clubs and providing mentorship, can empower them to make informed choices. Most of the research on life-skills interventions that use clubs or peer groups has focused on impact on girls; however, most of the findings are applicable for boys as well. There are a number of life-skills and empowerment programs, most of which use peer groups, in Sub-Saharan Africa including in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Liberia that have achieved positive impact on beneficiaries educational outcomes, led to delayed sexual activity and reduced adolescent pregnancy rates and improved health outcomes (Kwauk et.al, 2018).  

86. **In-service teacher professional development and use of technology:** There is increased recognition that improving the quality and delivery of STEM education is critical to ensuring youth in developing countries are prepared well to compete in the increasingly technological global economy. Low outcome in mathematics and science in basic education systems of developing countries is emerging as a significant constraint to improved economic and social outcomes both at the level of the individual and of the nation. This is also the case in Lesotho as evidenced by the lower learning outcomes in mathematics and science subjects at the junior secondary level. To improve the quality of science and mathematics education, building teachers capacity needs to be a key interventions area, as teachers are arguably the most important factor that determine the quality of education. The 2018 World Development Report (WDR) recommends that in-service teacher professional development (TPD) program can be effective in improving teachers content knowledge and pedagogical capacity if it is targeted, repeated and with follow-up coaching.

87. However, implementing high-quality TPD programs that provide continuous support at scale is prohibitively costly in many contexts. It is also difficult to find high quality trainers and coaches to reach all teachers. Under COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional models of TPD that rely on face-to-face interactions are also not feasible. Emerging evidence on use of technology in TPD is showing promising results. At the primary level, for example, Kotze, Fleisch, and Taylor (2018) show that virtual coaching is as effective as the face-to-face coaching model in South Africa. By using technology to provide TPD support for teachers, the BESP approach will use technology to complement teachers, rather than substitute them – a key message from the WDR, 2018 on the use of technology in education.

88. As Lesotho works towards scaling early childhood education learning, it is critical that the country also invests in quality programs that will deliver better child outcomes. Ensure the delivery of quality early learning programs, among other things requires well designed curriculum and resources that are child-focused and developmentally appropriate, teachers/ facilitators that are adequately prepared and engaged parents (World Bank 2018). Currently, all these pieces are at a very nascent stage in Lesotho. The focus of this project to pilot the revised curriculum, which will involve developing aligned and high-quality teaching and learning resources and teacher training materials and engaging parents and stakeholders, is therefore a critical first step to improving early childhood education.

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Economic and Financial Analysis

i. Project development impact

89. The interventions under the proposed project will contribute towards Lesotho’s long-term development agenda through several channels, including:

90. **Building Lesotho's human capital for inclusive and sustainable growth**: Human capital is one of the most important factors for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, both by increasing labor productivity and by contributing towards innovation and diffusion of new technologies. Channeling more and better investment in the education of children and youth, including by addressing demand side constraints, can enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be productive and fully contribute towards their country’s growth.

91. **ECCD is a costs-effective investment**: Investments in early childhood have also been shown to be more cost-effective than investments that happen later in life, which often become remedial. While BESP does not address gaps in ECCD at scale, the proposed activities are likely to form a foundation on which the Government can build on to improve access and quality and hence the project is likely to contribute towards the realization of these gains in the medium to the long-run.

92. **Reaping the high returns of post-primary education**: There is a growing consensus that primary education as the terminal level of education may not be enough to equip youth with the skills they need to be productive in ever-changing labor markets that are increasingly influenced by digital technology. In Lesotho, the labor market returns to education are high, particularly at post-primary levels. Recent estimates show that each additional year of education increases average annual earnings by 12 percent. Rates of return to education are high for girls with each additional year of schooling being linked to 17 percent increase in annual earning. While these results are correlations, they are indicative of the positive relationship between schooling and economic wellbeing in Lesotho.

93. **Positive externalities**: There is an established body of work showing that education creates a wide set of positive externalities for society (e.g., improved fertility and health, increased social engagement and cohesion, etc.). In the case of Lesotho, secondary education is strongly and positively correlated with reduction in teenage motherhood. Lesotho has a very high rate of teenage pregnancy (17.8 percent nationally and 25 percent among the poorest girls). The rate is even higher among girls with only primary education (32 percent). By ensuring girls stay in school through targeted intervention, including by providing financial support, the high rate of teenage pregnancy can be reduced. This can in turn improve the outcomes of future generations of children. Women with secondary education have fewer children, on average, compared to women with lower levels of education their children have significantly better health outcomes.

ii. Rationale for public sector investment

94. There are several interrelated efficiency and equity related arguments for expanding public investment in the education system, including in junior secondary education.

95. **Addressing effects of poverty and credit market constraints**: On the demand side, lack of access to credit markets often prevents poor households from overcoming budget constraints to send their children to secondary

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school, even when they perceive the return to schooling as high. Public support (e.g., through subsidies to cover the cost of schooling) will be essential to ensure that children from poor households attend secondary school.

96. **Promoting social and economic equity**: A related argument for public sector investment in education stems from the need to promote social and economic equity. Stewart (2011) argues that within countries horizontal inequalities across groups (e.g. across genders, geographic areas, economic groups) including inequalities in access to services such as education, health care and housing are highly correlated with increased instability.

Targeted public investment in the education sector can curb widening inequalities and ensure that all children have equal footing.

97. **Mitigating impacts of information asymmetry**: Lack of interest in education is one of the widely cited reasons for the high dropout rate at the secondary level, which is indicative of information asymmetry. Information asymmetry on the direct and indirect benefits of education related to low perceived returns to schooling can discourage households from investing in their children’s education. Public intervention by subsidizing education for disadvantaged students who are at risk of dropping out and by improving quality of schooling so that the promised returns can be realized will be critical to change norms in school attendance.

### iii. Financial analysis

98. Interventions under BESP will have fiscal implication both on the MoET and MoED budgets, which are examined below.

**Implications on the MoET’s budget**

99. As mentioned earlier, Lesotho spends a substantial share of its public sector budget on education. A significant share of the education spending goes to recurrent expenditure and this share is expected to increase following recent increases to teacher salaries. The project investments will have some implication on the recurrent education budget of the MoET. Overall, the project costs (i.e. estimated at US$4.5 million focusing on sub-components the MoET is directly responsible for) account for 1.930 percent of the annual education budget. Sustaining and expanding the online teacher training interventions and youth clubs will require additional spending from the MoET side, even though the impact is expected to be small.

100. One of the key areas where significant commitment will be required is the scaling up of the revised, piloted and evaluated ECCD curriculum. Rolling the new curriculum nationally post BESP will require, among other things, training of teachers and provision of teaching and learning materials and gradually expanding access. Currently, the share of the education sector budget going to ECCD is about 0.3 percent and scaling up the curriculum will require substantial increase.

**Implications on the MoSD’s budget**

101. From the social protection side, sustaining the expansions to the OVC-B and CGP will require a small increase in spending in the long-run. The project costs for implementing the OVC-B and CGP interventions (inclusive of the budget allocated to sub-component 1.1 and management) is estimated at US$2.75 million over three years and US$0.92 million per year, which represents 11 percent of the MoSD annual spending on CGP and OVC-B combined. However, in the long run, through better targeting which will be tested under BESP, efficiency

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30 For the analysis the exchange rate use id US$1 to 14.59 Maloti.
gains could be made, which can offset some of the increase.

B. Fiduciary

(i) Financial Management

102. The PFU unit within MoET will be responsible for the project’s financial management for component 1.2 to 3, whereas the PFU at the MoSD will be responsible for sub-component 1.1 (including budgeting, accounting, payments, internal controls, transaction processing and quarterly and annual financial reporting). This responsibility is entrusted on the Finance Manager housed in the PFU at MoET and the Accountant housed in the PFU at MoSD. Both officials are conversant with the Bank financial management and disbursement guidelines, as they are currently implementing the existing programs which are similar to activities under preparation.

103. Budgets will be prepared based an approved work plans and procurement plans for the activities under MoET, and MoSD will be responsible for managing the grants based on prior agreed schedules. In accordance with the Bank’s financial reporting requirements, each PFU will be required to prepare and submit to the Bank unaudited Interim Financial Reports not later than 45 days after the end of each FY quarter to report on the project activities. The IFRs will also be used to further disburse on the project funds.

104. Disbursements under the project would be in accordance with rules and procedures as set out in the Bank’s disbursement handbook. Each PFU will open a segregated Designated Account, denominated in United States Dollars at the Central Bank of Lesotho to receive funds from the Bank. The project will use Advance disbursement method as the primary option and the Reimbursement and the Direct Payment are also available for the project. The IFRs will be used as the basis of further disbursement for the project funds.

105. The annual project financial statements, including the auditor’s opinion and a management letter, will be submitted to the Bank not later than six (6) months after the end of the fiscal year. The annual audit will be carried out by the Office of the Auditor General of Lesotho.

106. The overall conclusion of the financial management assessment is that the project’s financial management has an overall risk-rating of "Moderate" and the financial management arrangements satisfy the Bank’s minimum requirements.

(ii) Procurement

107. All procurement under the project would be conducted through the procedures as specified in the World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for Investment Project Financing Recipients - Procurement in Investment Project Financing Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, dated July 2016, as amended from time to time. The project will carry out implementation in accordance with the ‘Guidelines on Preventing and Combating Fraud and Corruption in Projects Financed by IBRD and IDA and Grants’, dated July 1, 2016 (the Anticorruption Guidelines). The procurement planning, execution and contract management processes will be tracked through the Systematic Tracking of Exchange in Procurement (STEP) System.

108. The procurement risk assessment will be finalized during appraisal using the World Bank using the Procurement Risk Assessment and Management System (PRAMS). A preliminary procurement capacity and risk
assessment has been carried out by the World Bank for MoET and MoSD to review the organizational structure for implementing the project and the interaction between the project’s staff responsible for procurement duties and management of the Ministry and is assessed as Moderate based on the existing procurement capacity under the MOET LBEIP and LEQEP projects and the MoSD Social Assistance Project. The MoET Project Procurement Specialist who had vast experience with Word Bank-funded projects implementation and procurement policy and regulations has left the project and the current officer assigned is familiar with the regulations however they will need training and closer implementation support at the start of the project. The MoET will have overall responsibility of procurement under the project. Mitigation measures include (i) training the PFU on contract management and (ii) putting in place an efficient contract management mechanism. The MoSD PFU will have responsibility for the procurement activities under Component 1.1. It is not envisaged that they would be any significant procurement activities under this sub-component, and therefore the existing procurement arrangements under the MoSD are deemed adequate.

109. Mitigation measures include (i) training the PFUs on the Procurement Regulations and contract management and (ii) the Bank team to provide close support and monitoring to the PFUs.

110. The MoET in collaboration with MoSD will develop a Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD) to inform (i) determination of optimal procurement approaches and (ii) the Procurement Plan for the first 18 months of project implementation. The PPSD will include detailed market, procurement approaches, and procurement risks analysis for the packages envisaged under the project; consulting services, procurement of IT equipment and works packages. The PPSD and the Procurement Plan maybe be updated during project implementation to reflect any substantial changes in procurement approaches and methods to meet the actual project needs.

111. The Lesotho Procurement Regulations of 2007, revised in 2018 have been assessed and indicate that the Country’s Regulations are generally consistent with international best practice, although some weaknesses were identified, which should be mitigated through adequate measures that ensures: (a) there is adequate advertising in national media; (b) procurement is generally open to eligible firms from any country; (c) contract documents have an appropriate allocation of responsibilities, risks, and liabilities; (d) publication of contract award; (e) the national regulations do not preclude the World Bank from its rights to review procurement documentation and activities under the financing; (f) implementation of an effective complaints review mechanism; and (g) maintenance of records of the procurement process. The request for bids/request for proposals document shall require that bidders/proposers submitting bids/proposals present a signed acceptance at the time of bidding, to be incorporated in any resulting contracts, confirming application of, and compliance with, the World Bank’s Anti-Corruption Guidelines, including without limitation, the World Bank’s right to sanction and the Bank’s inspection and audit rights.

112. With the incorporation of the above provisions, the Lesotho Procurement Regulations will be acceptable to be used under those procurements using open national approach not subject to the World Bank’s Prior Review as agreed with the Bank in the approved Procurement Plan.

113. Record keeping: All records pertaining to award of tenders, including bid notification, register pertaining to sale and receipt of bids, bid opening minutes, bid evaluation reports and all correspondence pertaining to bid
evaluation, communication sent to/with the Bank in the process, bid securities, and approval of invitation/evaluation of bids by would be retained by respective departments and also uploaded in the STEP.

C. Legal Operational Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Triggered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Environmental and Social

114. The proposed social risk is Moderate. Notably, the social risk rating during concept note stage for the proposed project was Substantial. At appraisal stage, a moderate risk rating is proposed due to following reasons: (i) project activities will no longer include any type of civil works, which means that there will be no risks or impacts associated with ESS5 such as physical or economic displacement; (ii) based on the Bank’s GBV/SEA/SH country-level risk assessment rating, the social risks of Sexual Exploitation/Harassment and GBV are rated as moderate; and (iii) project activities, by their very nature, serve as positive extenuation of some of the existing GBV risks in the country (such activities include assistance to low income households to achieve education outcomes/school retention; providing support to youth clubs within schools that serve as “safe space” to empower adolescent girls and boys to enable them to make informed decisions equipping them with relevant life-skills, information and knowledge, etc.). Thus, the project itself would not directly or indirectly cause or contribute to any of the pre-existing social issues related to gender-based violence, and in fact, would attempt to ultimately contribute to their mitigation through improving educational outcomes and school retention rates for girls and boys. Nonetheless, the project preparation took into account contextual risks of GBV as well as importance of safe environment schools, and GBV Action Plan (as part of ESMF) has been prepared. GBV Action Plan is proportionate to the GBV risks posed directly by the project activities (which are low to minimal), as well as cognizant of the broader GBV issues in education sector in Lesotho.

115. Social risks, therefore, mainly emanate on two fronts: (1) limited E&S capacity of the PFUs within MoET and MoSD; and (2) ensuring appropriate engagement with local communities and other relevant stakeholders (including with most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and ensuring their genuine stakeholder participation in decision-making processes of the project (especially those related to cash transfer sub-component). The following Standards will be particularly relevant to address social risks -- ESS 1, ESS2, ESS4, and ESS 10. The Project does not pose any social risks associated with ESS7. The following instruments have been prepared and disclosed: draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and Environmental and Social Management Framework (which includes GBV Action Plan and Labor Management Procedures, all proportionate to the project risks). The ESCP for the project also includes measures for monitoring the ESF commitments of both MoET and MoSD, as well as requirements for E&S staffing and collaboration between these two entities with regard to sub-component 1.1 on cash transfer program. Component 3 of the project envisions project management, capacity building and technical assistance support to both PFUs in MoET and MoSD.

116. The Project’s Environmental risk is classified as Low. During the Concept stage, the proposed environmental risk rating for the Project was classified as Moderate. This was due to construction works being
envisioned, the works have since been removed from the scope of the project, leading to the change in the environmental risk rating from Moderate to Low. Overall, the project activities are focusing on capacity building type of activities including supporting a cash transfer scheme for students from poor households; youth groups; piloting and evaluating the new ECCD curriculum and mapping of ECCD providers; as well as project management support. The Project will not support development of any physical infrastructure.

117. However, under Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models in Mathematics and Science for junior secondary school teachers, there will be some activities involving procurement of some ICT hardware (laptops) to scale up ongoing online teacher training initiatives. Additionally, under the same sub-component, the Project will support the procurement of portable solar panels for teachers who do not have access to electricity at schools. The repairs, servicing and end-of-life disposal of ICT equipment and solar panels may result in environmental risks related to electronic wastes (e-wastes), hazardous waste and solid wastes if not managed appropriately. Environmental best practices shall be in place for managing repairs and end-of-life disposal of ICT equipment and solar panels involved in the online training program. The type and amount of such equipment required, the associated cycle of replacement or upgrades, existing e-waste/hazardous and solid waste management measures in project implementing entities, regulatory framework, and in-country capacities, vendors, agencies to manage end of life disposal of electronic equipment, solar panels and parts will be analyzed during project preparation. As such, and in order to ensure the management of e-waste and other hazardous waste, the Project Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) includes a Waste Management Plan (WMP) proportionate to the level of risk. The WMP includes some simple technical guidelines on how to manage and arrange for the disposal of ICT equipment and solar panels (end-of-life and during repairs) in accordance with the requirements of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal which Lesotho is signatory to.

118. All in all, the project activities are not expected to have any major adverse impact on the environment and human health. No long-term or irreversible adverse impacts are expected from project implementation. The potential adverse environmental impacts are minimal and there are no significant adverse risks which are complex, diverse, sensitive or unprecedented. The environmental risk rating will be reviewed periodically throughout the project life cycle to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect the level of risk that the project presents. The following Standards will be particularly relevant to address environmental risks of the Project -- ESS 1, ESS2, ESS3, and ESS 10. The ESCP for the Project includes measures to strengthen the MoET and MoSD’s capacities to manage Project environmental risks and impacts.

119. All ESF instruments for the project, including ESMF (which contains LMP and GBV Action Plan), as well as SEP and ESCP will be disclosed by appraisal. The initial draft SEP has been disclosed in-country on January 14, 2020, and will be redisclosed again following consultations, all by appraisal completion.

V. GRIEVANCE REDRESS SERVICES

120. Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB’s Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB’s independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB
non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank’s attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank’s corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org.

VI. KEY RISKS

121. The overall risk rating is Substantial. The political and governance risk is rated as Substantial, given the political fragmentation and instability, frequent elections (2015, 2017), teachers’ strike and high turnover of Ministers and Principal Secretaries (PSs) between elections. There was a recent change of Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers in June 2020. This risk may be partly mitigated by the consistent presence of technical staff within the PFU, that supports implementation of the World Bank and GPE financed projects, as has been the case under LBEIP and LEQEP. The PFU reports to the Director of Planning within the MoET and at the Director level, there are not as frequent changes. The high turnover of Ministers and PSs requires adequate communication and feedback provided by the technical team to the new appointees to ensure the project stays on track. Since the PS is supposed to Chair the Coordination/Oversight Committee of the project, it is important that the Deputy Principal Secretary (DPS) be the co-Chair to ensure consistency and continuity in the management of the projects. While the teachers’ strike may not be mitigated, the proposed project is providing teachers with individualized training program using the laptops, which may reduce the disruption to the teacher training intervention.

122. The macroeconomic risk is rated Substantial as the country’s fiscal trajectory continues to be an area of concern. As revenue streams have reduced due to economic slowdown in the sub-region and the COVID-19 crisis, and the deficit has been partly financed by drawing down deposits at the central bank, there is an urgent need for fiscal adjustment in the country. As an emergency relief, significant funding was provided to the country both by re-distributing from the LEQEP and the GPE COVID-19 grant in order to maintain children’s learning. Safe return to normal school activities is work in progress. Yet this macroeconomic risk could still affect the sustainability of the project intervention after the GPE grant is over. The proposed project will focus on building institutional and individual capacity, providing appropriate incentive mechanism, improving data on ECCD management system and identifying efficient and effective use of resources through piloting several models on ECCD to sustain the impact.

123. The risk rating for institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability is Substantial. Lessons from the existing projects point to several issues of technical and implementation capacity within the MoET. Firstly, despite the existence of full-time staff under the PFU to support the project, there is weak project management and weak accountability for achieving results as well as and insufficient collaboration between departments in the MoET. Given the frequent changes in Ministers and PSs, oversight at a higher level in the MoET has been fragmented, which has resulted in the weak accountability, characterized by insufficient contract management and poor quality of several deliverables. The technical capacity of the MoET is also a concern given the quality of the teacher training program implemented under LEQEP and LBEIP thus far. The project will seek to address these risks by ensuring that the Coordination/Oversight Committee of the project, chaired by the PS and co-chaired by the DPS, meets every month to address bottlenecks in implementation and develop an action plan with deliverables to be achieved before the next meeting. Technical capacity constraints will be addressed
through the project hiring the necessary technical experts/firms to provide support in areas such as under the teacher training, the ERG program and the Girls and Boys clubs in schools, while the key aspect of the external technical assistance will be building the MoET’s capacity in these intervention areas.
## VII. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MONITORING

### Results Framework

COUNTRY: Lesotho  
Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP)

### Project Development Objectives(s)

To improve student retention and teaching quality in junior secondary schools in targeted regions of Lesotho and support the roll out of a new curriculum to strengthen ECCD service delivery.

### Project Development Objective Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>PBC</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>End Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved student retention in junior secondary level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout rate in junior secondary level (Grade 8-9) in targeted regions (Percentage)</td>
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<td>30.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female dropout rate in junior secondary level (Grade 8-9) in targeted regions (Percentage)</td>
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<td>28.00</td>
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<td><strong>Increased teaching quality in math and science in targeted junior secondary schools</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage gain in competencies level of math and science teachers who completed the online training (Percentage)</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scaled up implementation of a new ECCD curriculum and improved ECCD service delivery</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage gain in child's readiness to start primary education of children attending the pilot (Percentage)</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
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## Intermediate Results Indicators by Components

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<td><strong>Component 1: Improving student retention in junior secondary education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of female students joining support groups/student clubs (Number)</td>
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<td>Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female (CRI, Number)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,650.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition rate from primary to junior secondary (Grade 7 to 8) in targeted regions (Percentage)</td>
<td>46.80</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female transition rate from primary to junior secondary (Grade 7 to 8) in targeted regions (Percentage)</td>
<td>50.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning assessment in math and science conducted (Yes/No)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical skills of math and science teachers who participated in the online teacher training measured (Yes/No)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of target reception classes and ECCD centers which piloted the new ECCD curriculum (Number)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Indicator Name | PBC | Baseline | End Target
--- | --- | --- | ---
Number of ECCD providers included in EMIS (Number) | 0.00 | 3,000.00 | 

**Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance**

Number of semi-annual project progress report provided (Number) | 0.00 | 6.00 | 
Number of citizen engagement meetings held to keep track on retention rate (Number) | 0.00 | 6.00 | 

---

### Monitoring & Evaluation Plan: PDO Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Datasource</th>
<th>Methodology for Data Collection</th>
<th>Responsibility for Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropout rate in junior secondary level (Grade 8-9) in targeted regions</td>
<td>Dropouts are pupils which either no longer attend school, have moved to another school system or have died. The number of dropouts is determined as a ‘residue’. It is calculated by adding together the repeaters in grade (g) which are still in grade (g) in year (t+1) and the students promoted from grade (g) to grade (g+1) in year (t+1) and subtracting this total from</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>MoET will collect data, upload them on EMIS and provide them to the World Bank</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female dropout rate in junior secondary level (Grade 8-9) in targeted regions</td>
<td>Dropouts are pupils which either no longer attend school, have moved to another school system or have died. The number of dropouts is determined as a ‘residue’. It is calculated by adding together the repeaters in grade (g) which are still in grade (g) in year (t+1) and the students promoted from grade (g) to grade (g+1) in year (t+1) and subtracting this total from the total enrolment of grade (g) in year (t).</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>MoET will collect data from EMIS and share with the World Bank</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage gain in competencies level of math and science teachers who completed the online training</td>
<td>Competencies of math and science teachers who completed the online teacher training measured by the exam conducted through the NJCTL training.</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Exam results from NJCTL's training contents</td>
<td>MoET will collect data from NJCTL (NUL and LCE once the course administration is handed over)</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage gain in child's readiness to start primary education of children attending the pilot</td>
<td>This is measured by using the numeracy and literacy skills following the MELQO child assessment tool. This indicator compares the score of children who were in the pilot against children who did not participate in</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>MoET will conduct a survey by hiring a firm to collect data.</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Monitoring & Evaluation Plan: Intermediate Results Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Name</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Datasource</th>
<th>Methodology for Data Collection</th>
<th>Responsibility for Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students benefitting from the bonus payment through the CGP</td>
<td>Number of students who receive the bonus payment through the CGP</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Database of Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td>MoSD will collect data and report to the MoET who will consolidate the data</td>
<td>MoSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of female students benefitting from the bonus payment through the CGP</td>
<td>Number of female students who receive the bonus payment through the CGP</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Database of Ministry of Social Development</td>
<td>MoSD will collect data and report to the MoET who will consolidate the data</td>
<td>MoSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students joining support groups/student groups</td>
<td>Number of students joining at least one support groups/student groups</td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
<td>Competitively selected NGOs which implement the program</td>
<td>MoET will consolidate the data from the organizations running the support groups/student clubs.</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of female students joining support groups/student clubs</td>
<td>Number of female students joining at least one support groups/student clubs</td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
<td>Competitively selected NGOs which implement the program</td>
<td>MoET will consolidate the data from the organizations running the support groups/student clubs.</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers recruited or trained</td>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
<td>NJCTL</td>
<td>MoET will collect data from NJCTL</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teachers completed online math and science training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of teachers who completed the online teacher training.</th>
<th>Semi-Annual</th>
<th>Online teacher training provider (NJCTL)</th>
<th>MoET collects data from NJCTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Annual</th>
<th>NJCTL</th>
<th>MoET collects data of students who participated in the class taught by trained math and science teachers from NJCTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Annual</th>
<th>NJCTL</th>
<th>MoET collects data of students who participated in the class taught by trained math and science teachers from NJCTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Transition rate from primary to junior secondary (Grade 7 to 8) in targeted regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New entrants to the first grade of secondary education in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education in the previous year.</th>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>EMIS</th>
<th>MOET will collect data from EMIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Female transition rate from primary to junior secondary (Grade 7 to 8) in targeted regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New entrants to the first grade of secondary education in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education in the previous year.</th>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>EMIS</th>
<th>MoET will collect data from EMIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning assessment in math and science conducted</td>
<td>This indicator measures whether the student learning assessment in math and science for the students taught by teachers who completed the online teacher training is conducted. Students will be selected at a sample basis. The indicator will be achieved after completing two rounds of student learning assessments (before and after the online teacher training).</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>MoET conducts a survey and collect data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical skills of math and science teachers who participated in the online teacher training measured</td>
<td>Pedagogical skills of the first two cohorts of math and science teachers (300 in total) who participated in the online teacher training are measured twice (before the training and after the training).</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>MoET will collect data from online teacher training administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of target reception classes and ECCD centers which piloted the new ECCD curriculum</td>
<td>Pilot of the new curriculum includes development of syllabus, teaching and learning materials and teacher training modules. All of these need to be developed. Consulting firm which develop syllabus, teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>MoET will collect data from the firm conducting the pilot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ECCD providers included in EMIS</td>
<td>Existing ECCD centers are recorded in EMIS</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Firm which conducts data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of semi-annual project progress report provided</td>
<td>The indicator is counted when the semi-annual report is submitted to the World Bank</td>
<td>Semi-annual</td>
<td>MoET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of citizen engagement meetings held to keep track on retention rate</td>
<td>The indicator measures the number of citizen engagement meetings organized by the school management committee in the target schools to review the retention rate. School management committee consists of school management, community, and parents.</td>
<td>Every 6 months</td>
<td>School management committees from the target schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII. INDICATIVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE GUARANTEE (When Applicable)
ANNEX 1: Implementation Arrangements and Support Plan

COUNTRY: Lesotho
Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP)

1. **National Education Sector Plan.** The national education sector plan for 2016-2026 will serve as a guideline for donor coordination through the LEG, which meets regularly and reviews jointly to ensure the execution of each donor intervention is consistent with the sector plan.

2. **Institutional arrangements.** The project will be implemented by the MoET except for the sub-component 1.1, which will be implemented by the Ministry of Social Development. The overall organization of the project implementation and monitoring comprises a Coordination Committee, the ministerial departments including the DoP, and the PFU. They will interact as follows:

   **(i) Coordination Committee.** There will be a project Coordination Committee to monitor and review the progress of the activities. It has been agreed that this committee will oversee the project activities and meet every six months during the life of the project, or more often as needed. In addition to the MoET, these meetings will also be attended by the officer overseeing the Bank’s financed projects from the MoF, a representative of the MDP, and representatives of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD). The progress of the Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP) will also be presented at the regular meeting of the LEG.

   **Roles and Responsibilities:**

   The Coordination Committee will provide overall guidance for effective project implementation and to ensure sectoral coordination and consistency of project activities with sector policies and strategies. It will review project progress reports and audits and will suggest recommendations for facilitating implementation.

   **(ii) Ministry of Social Development.** Under the sub-component 1.1, the Ministry of Social Development will implement the Orphans and Vulnerable Children’s Bursary (OVC-B) program and the Child Grant Program (CGP) to support and motivate households to keep their children in schools as they complete primary education by providing a bonus payment upon transitioning. The MoSD will work closely with the MoET, DoP and PFU.

   **Roles and Responsibilities:** MoSD will be responsible for the implementation of the sub-component 1.1 and work closely with the DoP and PFU. The representatives of the MoSD will also attend the coordination committee meetings.

   **(iii) Departments (primary, secondary, and Learner’s care unit).** Each unit will lead the component and subcomponents of the project. CEO of each department will be represented at the coordination committee meetings. Sub-component 1.1 will be led by DoP implemented by the MoSD, sub-component 1.2 will be led by learner’s care unit, sub-component 1.3 will be led by secondary education unit, component 2 will be led by primary and ECCD unit, and component 3 will be led by DoP in collaboration with EMIS, teaching services and inspectorate.

   **Roles and Responsibilities:** The CEO of each department will be responsible for the smooth implementation and performance of the component and/or subcomponent under its responsibility.
(iv) The Department of Planning. The project will be under the overall responsibility of the DoP, which will coordinate project activities of all components with the support of a PFU.

Roles and Responsibilities: In addition to the Component 3 responsibility, the DoP will oversee the activities of the project in general and the PFU operating under his leadership. He will be in charge of reporting to the Coordination Committee on project progress on monthly basis and proposing any additional items to be discussed for advice and/or endorsement by the Coordination Committee.

(v) Project Facilitation Unit (PFU). There are two PFUs in this project. The one under the MoET is the main PFU of the project and another one under the MoSD will provide support for the sub-component 1.1 implementation, including financial management and project management. The main PFU under the MoET comprises a coordinator, a planning/monitoring/evaluation officer, an FM specialist, a procurement specialist, and administrative officers. The PFU will be under the administrative responsibility of the DoP.

Role and responsibilities: The PFU will be the facilitating unit in charge of overall coordination, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of project activities. It will also oversee the FM and procurement related to project activities. The PFU will oversee project activities on the ground in close collaboration with the departments in charge. It will prepare project progress reports (and all additional report/documentation needed) to be presented by the DP to the Coordination Committee.

3. Institutional project coordination. The overall project coordination will be handled by a Coordination Committee chaired by the PS (alternate is a Deputy PS) with members from all the heads of the MoET departments and representatives of the MoSD, MoF, MDP and MCST. This committee will meet every six months to ensure a full integration and appropriation of project activities by the MoET departments, evaluate progress of the project, and tackle institutional issues hampering project implementation. Figure 5 provides an overview of the project’s institutional arrangements. In addition to the higher level Coordination Committee, there will be a technical committee comprising of technical/operational staff from MoET, MoSD and MCST that would meet on a monthly basis to review implementation progress of the project. This monthly progress status meeting will be chaired by the PS MoET.

Figure 5: Institutional Arrangements
i) Component 1: Improving the retention of students and teacher quality in targeted junior secondary education
   a. Sub-Component 1.1: Improving the efficiency of cash transfer schemes for students from poor households

4. In this component, MoET will work with the MoSD. The cash transfer implementation will be led by the MoSD leveraging relevant staff from the PFU from the ongoing social assistance project.

b. Sub-component 1.2: Scaling up implementation of support groups/clubs for girls

5. Under this component, the MoET will run a call for proposal for the relevant NGOs to select initiatives showing the signs of success in retaining students at school and scale up their initiatives. Students from target schools will join the support groups/clubs and selected NGOs’ activities will be scaled up and evaluated. Another evaluation is also conducted before and after the NGOs run the program to assess the impact on students’ retention rate.
c. Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models in mathematics and science for junior secondary school teachers

6. Under this component, the MOET works with NJCTL to provide math and science online teacher training contents for teachers, local organization to procure laptops and portable solar panels for teachers (for those who do not have access to electricity), and projectors for the schools, provide ICT training and maintenance and repair support. These implementation partners will work with National University of Lesotho and Lesotho College of Education to transition the administration of the online teacher training in a phased manner.

ii) Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery
   a. Sub-component 2.1: Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers

7. Phase 1: The MoET, with the support of technical consultants through PFU, will develop teaching and learning materials aligned to the new curriculum. These will be printed and piloted in a small number of reception classrooms and ECCD centers, followed by a rapid evaluation to refine the materials and prepare for scale up. The MoET with the support of technical consultants will also develop a strategy for the roll out of the new curriculum across the country.
8. Phase 2: The MoET will select a group of reception classes and ECCD centers serving poor communities to be targeted under the project. The MoET through the PFU will procure and distribute teaching and learning materials to selected centers and classrooms and provide training to teachers in these centers. The MoET through the PFU will hire technical assistance to undertake an assessment of children to ascertain whether children in targeted centers/reception classrooms are performing better and an early learning environment observation to observe changes in teacher practice.

b. Sub-component 2.2: Mapping of ECCD service providers and developing a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy for the ECCD sector

9. The MoET hires a consulting firm through the PFU to collect data on ECCD service providers. After the initial data collection, MoET through PFU will reach out to ECCD service providers annually to update the information regularly. MoET, through the PFU, will hire separate technical assistance to support the development of an expansion strategy for the sector.
iii) **Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance**

10. Under this component, the project coordinator under the PFU of the MoET manages both project management team consisting of M&E, procurement, financial management and environmental, social safeguards specialists, administrative team as well as technical team consisting of CEO primary, CEO secondary, planning and development with ECCD, EMIS, and Learners care unit. The team meets weekly to update the status and anticipate any risks and issues ahead of time and mitigate them accordingly.
ANNEX 2: Detailed Project Description

1. The PDO of the proposed project is “to improve student retention and teaching quality in junior secondary schools in targeted constituencies of Lesotho and pilot the new curriculum to strengthen ECCD service delivery.” This annex provides additional details on: (i) the rationale for the prioritization of the proposed intervention areas, (iii) detailed description of the project intervention and their targeting, (iii) lessons learned incorporated in the project design and implementation arrangements, and (iv) areas of synergy and complementarity with ongoing projects.

   i. **Rationale for the selection of the intervention areas:**

2. There are several reasons that justify the focus of the project on junior secondary education along with the selected system strengthening interventions at the ECCD level. These include:

3. **Low transition to and retention of students at the junior secondary level:** The findings of the recently completed ESA (2020) show that there is significant inefficiency in the basic education system of Lesotho with high dropout rate across all grades. However, the dropout rate is particularly high at the critical point of primary to junior secondary transition and continues to be high in junior secondary grades. For example, in rural areas intake into Grade 7, the last year of primary grade is 70 percent, while intake rates into Grade 8 and Grade 10, the first and last junior secondary grades, are 51 percent and 36 percent respectively, showing that many children dropout before reaching the last grade in junior secondary education.

4. **The disproportionate impact of recent crises on secondary education:** Many of the factors that contribute towards the high dropout rate at the junior secondary level (poverty, pregnancy for adolescent girls and lack of interest for boys) are being exacerbated under the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Households’ financial stability is made precarious due to the economic impact of the pandemic, making secondary school unaffordable for many households. Adolescent pregnancy is likely to increase during the prolonged school closures. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions to education due to prolonged teacher strikes in 2018 and 2019 also had significant impact on junior secondary education. Mitigating the impact of these crisis on the sub-sector is an urgent priority for Lesotho, if the country is to achieve its ambition for universal basic education.

5. **Poor learning outcomes in STEM fields:** While there is need to improve student learning at all levels of the basic education system and for almost all subjects, the gaps in quality are particularly concerning in STEM subjects at the junior secondary level. For example, the ESA, 2020 shows that learning outcomes are very low in Mathematics and Science with only 26.3 percent of junior secondary students meeting the competencies for secondary Mathematics, 32.4 percent of students meeting competencies in Science. In contrast 51.6 percent met the competencies for English and over 76 percent of students demonstrated competency in Sesotho. Given the limited resources and capacity available under the project, priority is given to Mathematics and Science taking into account the need. However, the online teacher training model can potentially be adapted to cover other subjects in the future.

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31 For example, between 2017/18 and between 2018/19 dropout rate at the JS level increased from 22.1 percent to 30.1 in LEQEP schools and from 18.9 to 20.1 percent in LBEIP schools. At the primary level, between 2017/18 to 2018/19, dropout increased from 15 percent to 16.3 percent in LEQEP schools and it declined marginally from 14 percent to 12.9 percent in LEQEP schools. This time period covers some of the prolonged teacher strikes in Lesotho.
6. **Limited access and low quality of ECCD:** There are significant access and quality gaps in the ECCD sub-sector with only 0.3 percent of education budget going to the sub-sector and only 31 percent of children having access to pre-school education. The priorities identified under BESP are critical first steps that must be achieved before developing and implementing a large-scale intervention in this sub-sector. An important priority to address quality gaps is replacing the outdated curriculum. Another priority is mapping the existing service providers in order to provide support to them and monitor quality. These areas of intervention are prioritized under the project, to lay the foundation for large scale interventions that maybe supported by the Government or DPs.

ii. **Detailed component description and targeting**

**Component 1: Improving the retention of students in junior secondary education**

7. This component will focus on improving the retention of students in junior secondary education. The ongoing LBEIP and LEQEP projects sought to do this through the transfer of finances to schools (i.e. through school grants) to support implementation of their School Improvement Plans (SIPs) that were supposed to focus on interventions aimed at improving retention of students. However, initial data and anecdotal evidence from the target schools show that while the interventions financed under the SIPs/SG intervention improved the learning environment in schools (such as the purchase of heaters for the schools during the winter months, some basic renovations and refurbishment of schools), the drop-out rate has actually gotten worse in junior secondary education during the implementation period of the two projects. The lack of impact is in part to the significant barrier posed by demand-side constraints (i.e. poverty, adolescent pregnancy, social norms and lack of interest) that are not addressed by the ongoing projects. In addition, in order to improve quality of education, both LEQEP and LBEIP included teacher training interventions that uses the traditional modality of face-to-face training. These teacher training interventions were not implemented due to capacity gaps and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic curtailing face-to-face trainings.

8. Complementing the ongoing projects, this component will: (a) provide assistance to families to remove financial barriers to secondary education, (b) support adolescent boys and girls through youth clubs and equip them with relevant life-skills and reproductive health knowledge, and (iii) provide online teacher training for Mathematics and Science teachers in junior secondary schools.

**Sub-component 1.1: Improving the efficiency of cash transfer schemes for students from poor households**

9. The objective of this sub-component is to address economic barriers that prevent boys and girls from transitioning to and completing junior secondary education. To do so, the sub-component will leverage two existing social protection programs – CGP and OVC-B programs, to support and motivate poor households to keep their children in school. These two programs are described below in more detail.

**The Child Grant Program (CGP)**

10. The CGP was launched in 2009 and provides unconditional cash transfers to improve the living standards of vulnerable children, by reducing malnutrition, improving health status, and increasing school enrolment. Similar to the OVC-B program, the CGP is administered by the MoSD. The program coverage is expanding, with 26,681 households being supported (est. 80,000 children) in 2017/18, which was expanded to 50,000 households (est. 135,000 children) in 2020/21. The benefits are disbursed on a quarterly basis and the amount provided ranges
from M120-360 per household per month, depending on number of children under the age of 18 in the household. The average monthly transfer per household is around M150 as most CGP households only have one child. This amount is very small and is unlikely to cover costs associated to secondary schooling. Payments are made on a quarterly basis.

11. To improve the targeting of social protection programs the Government launched the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) a few years ago. The NISSA is a targeting tool for identifying poor households based on a community targeting exercise verified with a Proxy Means Test (PMT) formula and is intended to be a single registry system for all social assistance programs in Lesotho. In the NISSA, households are assigned to one of five poverty levels (NISSA 1 to 5); households from the bottom two categories (poor and the ultra-poor) are the main intended beneficiaries of most social assistance programs including the CGP and the OVC-B. The NISSA currently covers all 64 rural community councils, but the MoSD is in the process of expanding it nationally. It is currently being rolled out in the 12 urban councils and is expected to be available nation-wide by July 2021. Currently the CGP uses NISSA to identify beneficiaries, with only households that fall in the NISSA 1 or 2 categories and have at least one child aged 0 to 17 being eligible. Analysis of social protection programs in Lesotho showed that the CGP is in general pro-poor, with 64 percent of beneficiaries coming from the bottom two quintiles of consumption based on the 2016/17 national household survey.

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children’s bursary (OVC-B) program:

12. The OVC-B program was established in 2000 to subsidize school fees for students from poor households. The program makes an annual payment in the name of each bursary student directly to junior or senior secondary schools. The payment is intended to cover tuition, registration, books and supplies and fees. The program currently reaches 23,000 students which is about 11 percent of the total number of students enrolled in secondary education, and 1.5 percent of the total number of households in Lesotho. The OVC-B was previously managed by the MoET, until it was transferred to be under the MoSD in 2012.

13. Currently, the OVC-B program uses two targeting methods: self-targeting method (in councils where NISSA has not been rolled out) and NISSA where NISSA is rolled out. In areas where the self-targeting method is used, beneficiaries who have the need directly apply; enrollment into the program is decided by the bursary officer at the district office. In areas using the NISSA targeting tool, children from households eligible for the CGP program (i.e. children in NISSA 1 and 2 households) combined with their application is used to determine admission into the program. As part of the MoSD’s Integrated Social Safety Net (ISSN) Harmonization strategy the ministry is gradually phasing in the use of the NISSA in all councils were data are available and the NISSA will eventually be the key targeting tool for all of the OVC-B program. Currently about 41 percent of OVC-B beneficiaries are enrolled with NISSA. To remain enrolled in the OVC-B program, beneficiary students must successfully pass to the next grade. For those who fail and had to repeat a grade, they will be reinstated only after they move to the next grade (i.e. the OVC-B does not cover cost of repeating a grade, except in selected cases such as sickness). The OVC-B program was previously aimed for children who were orphans (who have lost one or both parents; have a sick, disabled or incarcerated parent) but the orphanhood requirement has been dropped and only the household poverty requirement remains.
14. Unlike other social protection programs, the OVC-B grant, is more likely to benefit non-poor households than poor households. Only 28 percent of beneficiaries receiving the grant are in the bottom two quintiles of consumption based on the 2016/17 national household survey. However, it is expected, as the NISSA has been used for targeting over the last few years, that the poverty targeting has improved, and that more OVC-B grant recipients are coming from the poorest consumption quintiles. The targeting efficiency will be reassessed when the next round of the national household survey becomes available. The MoSD also found that the program is not achieving its objective of retaining vulnerable children in schools, with dropout rate among bursary beneficiaries reaching 34 percent (Verification reports of 2018 and 2019). A key issue that is identified by the MoSD for the limited impact of the program relates to top-up fees schools charge, beyond what is covered in the OVC-B grant, which keeps secondary school unaffordable for many. This raises the concern on whether the spending per beneficiary (approximately M2,700) is sufficient to cover the majority of direct and indirect costs of schooling for poor households.

15. The recent extended teacher strikes that took place in 2019 adversely impacted the effectiveness of the OVC-B program. Many of the OVC-B beneficiaries did not pass to the next grade in the 2019 academic year due to the extended disruption to schooling. As a result, their bursary payment was suspended, which meant they had to pay to repeat the grade and pass, at which point they can be reinstated. Unfortunately, many students did not return to school in the 2020 academic year as they could not afford the schools fees. A similar challenge is currently arising under COVID-19; to resolve it the MoET is considering implementing a policy of automatic promotion, except the exist grades at the end of each cycle. However, the concern that children from disadvantaged households might fall behind and repeat a grade due to the prolonged school closures and limited and inequitable access to distance learning remains.

16. Under this sub-component, the proposed project will use the CGP and OVC-B programs to improve student retention, by addressing two critical bottlenecks in the basic education system: (i) improving transition from primary to junior secondary and (ii) ensuring retention of secondary students. To achieve this objective, the sub-component will support the piloting and evaluation of selected interventions to improve the effectiveness of the two programs in targeted constituencies/community councils. The key gaps in the CGP and OVC-B programs and the interventions that will be supported are summarized in Table A2.1.

### Table A2.1. Gaps in the CGP and OVC-B programs and proposed intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Gaps in program design or implementation</th>
<th>Interventions to be financed under the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CGP     | • The funding is unconditional and the amount it inadequate, limiting its impact on school enrollment and retention, one of the stated objectives of the program. | • Piloting and evaluation of a bonus grant top-up in targeted constituencies as part of the CGP program that will be paid to households upon a child’s transition from primary to secondary to improve the transition rate and reduce drop outs from secondary.  
• Information campaign for CGP beneficiaries on how to enroll into the OVC-B program to ensure that students in CGP... |
### Targeting

The interventions under this sub-component will be targeted towards constituencies that have high poverty rate as well as high dropout rate. Data analysis shows that some of the poorest constituencies in Lesotho also have very high dropout rates at the junior secondary level (see Figures A2.1).

**Figure A2.1: Correlation between poverty and dropout rates at the constituency level**
Specifically, constituencies that have a poverty head count rate of 55 percent or higher and a secondary dropout rate of 30 percent or higher will be the main target areas (covering 14 constituencies across 8 districts). In addition, two constituencies with the highest poverty and dropout rates are selected from the remaining two districts, resulting in total of 16 target constituencies (see Table A2.2). The list of target constituencies will be finalized during project appraisal. The enrollment profile by grade shows that there is a significant drop in the number of students showing the low retention of students across grades.

### Table A2.2: Target constituencies under sub-component 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Constituencies</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Enrollment profile in target constituencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berea</td>
<td>Mosalemane</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butha-Buthe</td>
<td>Motete</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. The detailed parameters of the bonus payment will be specified in the POM. The annual bonus top-up payment per student would be around M1000 and would be paid either once-off in a lumpsum at the beginning of the school year or divided into two payments at the beginning of the school year and at mid-term. Children between the ages of 12-18 who reside in CGP beneficiary households are eligible for the grant bonus if they are accepted into and enrolled in a public junior secondary school. MoSD social workers are assisting at-risk children and children who have previously dropped out of school to get back into school. Data from Lesotho indicated that the indirect costs related to going to school (uniforms, other clothes and supplies, transportation) tend to be the highest at the beginning of the school year. A school uniform costs around M800. During the project’s lifetime, two school cohorts would be supported with the GP bonus top up.

Sub-component 1.2: Scaling up implementation of support groups/clubs for girls and boys

20. Under this sub-component, the project will aim to provide adolescent boys and girls with an opportunity to acquire relevant life-skills and knowledge that will help them make informed decisions about their lives including school attendance. To this end, the component will use youth clubs (boys and girls clubs) to give adolescents safe space to learn from peers and mentors focusing on life-skills including conflict resolution, self-determination, negotiations, and leadership. In addition, they will be provided with information on basic health promotion, disease prevention, nutrition, reproductive health including menstrual hygiene management, and GBV awareness/prevention, among others.

21. The project will leverage existing initiatives that are being implemented by Lesotho-based NGOs such as the ‘Herd Boys’, ‘Help Lesotho’, ‘Skills Share’ and ‘Hub’ that support interventions related to keep students in school. As part of the project preparation, consultations with several NGOs has been conducted. Table A2.2 presents some information on some of the active NGO. Specifically, under this sub-component the following activities will be financed:

- The project will provide funding to competitively selected NGOs to help them refine and strengthen their
existing program to ensure strong alignment with the project’s development objective, with a strong focus on providing safe-space for youth and on building community-school linkages as key instruments to support and keep children in school. The project will also provide funding to the selected NGO to help them scale-up their interventions to reach more children that are at a high risk of dropping out.

- During the implementation of the activities by the NGOs, the project will finance the evaluation to assess the impact of the activities conducted by the NGOs on students’ retention rate.

**Targeting:** This subcomponent will be implemented in selected constituencies that have high dropout rate and poverty rate. The target constituencies will be the same as those targeted under sub-component 1.1.

**Table A2.2 Selected existing initiatives supporting adolescent boys and girls in Lesotho**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program</th>
<th>Brief description of relevant intervention supported by the consulted NGOs</th>
<th>Target district(s)</th>
<th>Target age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The Hub**     | The Hub was established five years ago as part of the Morija museum. They currently serve about 400-member youth and closely work with two secondary schools and nearby primary schools. Their initiatives include:  
  - After school program for students to access to computers and get help with homework; use Khan academy to provide additional help to students.  
  - Literacy club for secondary school students to teach creative writing, human rights, digital arts/graphic design and social justice.  | Maseru (southern part) | 8-20 years old (majority 12-25 years old and primary and secondary students) |
| **Sepheo**      | Sepheo is financed by local and regional grants, businesses and individuals. About 300 students per year participate in their programs. The initiatives they support include:  
  - Assisting OOS and street children attend school including by operating the Sepheo primary; supporting them to transition to secondary  
  - After school programs to prevent students from dropping out  
  - Provision of transport to and from the village, daily meal, bilingual instruction, technology education, counseling, and medical care  
  - Providing support to teachers in nearby schools on how to support students with psychological challenges.  | Maseru | 11-24 Out of school and street children |
| **Sentebale**   | Sentebale supports the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people affected by HIV in Lesotho and Botswana. They work mainly with the Ministry of Social Development but also have worked with the MoET through the district education offices. Their interventions include.  
  - Provision of scholarship that complements the OVC-B to cover stationary, uniform etc.; provide application documentation support for children to get access to scholarships and grants  
  - Run a tutor program and provide career guidance for students  
  - Provide comprehensive sexuality education (CSC) through community engagement, Saturday clubs and youth camps where sexual and reproductive health information, psychological support, and life skills training are provided to youth  
  - Recruiting and training “peer educators,” to deliver life skills workshops in schools and community youth clubs  | 4 districts: Mokhotlong, Leribe, Thaba-tseka, Maseru, Qacha’s Nek | Orphans, vulnerable children, children with HIV/AIDS, children who are malnourished. |
Support young people living with HIV/AIDS to improve their well-being.

| Help Lesotho | Help Lesotho has been working for 15 years in Lesotho with close collaboration with MoET, MoSD and MoH. Their work includes: **Education**  
- Provide financial support for students including school fees, stationary voucher, toiletry to transition to and complete secondary school.  
- Work with schools to provide life skills education through Youth Empowerment in Schools (YES) program using teachers as YES patron and selected students as advocates with training from Help Lesotho. **GBV and reproductive health**  
- Provide support for those who are sexually and emotionally abused.  
- Raise awareness at schools and public places on GBV/SEA through drama and community involved dialogue.  
- Train community facilitator and have a dialogue champion and talk about the topics; work with parents on sexual and reproductive health issues that affect adolescents  
- Provide sanitary pads to vulnerable girls in rural area. | Work in hard to reach areas including Leribe, Buthe Buthe, Thaba-Tseka, Berea, Quthing |
| Kick4Life | Kick4Life started in 2007 and having reached 100,000 children in Lesotho to date. Some of the interventions they support include:  
- Good health and wellbeing curriculum– a 14 weeks interactive program based on sports that provides students with health and HIV/AIDS education and tutoring. The program is conducted by visiting schools after school in collaboration with the MoET. After the program, they provide some token of completion including certificate which motivates students to stay in the program.  
- Soccer team for under 18 adolescents with the requirement that members must attend school, which is used as incentive to retain students in school required to go to school; facilitate peer mentorship.  
- Gender based violence: Working with a small number of beneficiaries the program engages with boys and girls separately and also together to increase awareness about GBV. | Worked in all 10 districts but now more in Maseru and its vicinity.  
12-18 years old |

Source: Developed by the team through consultations with MoET and various NGOs.

**Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models in Mathematics and Science for junior secondary school teachers**

22. Under this sub-component, the project aims to increase the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of math and science teachers at junior secondary level through online teacher training. Participation in the training is a voluntary basis and participating teachers will be provided laptops to conduct their training at their own pace. After the first 100 teachers from all 10 districts are trained as a pilot to establish an operational model, 200 teachers from the same targeted constituencies as sub-component 1.1 will be asked to join as the second phase participants. During the third phase, the rest of the 200 teachers will be recruited for training. In total, 500 number of teachers can be trained in this component and if the second phase participants do not reach this cap, teachers from the rest of the districts will be provided with an opportunity to join during the second and third phase. Once the teachers complete the courses, they will receive a completion certificate and become eligible to apply for the excellence in STEM teaching award which will be set up by the MoET in collaboration with the Ministry of...
Communication, Science and Technology (MCST). The monetary award will be provided to the teachers who receive awards annually.

23. Training contents will be provided by the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL) which has already piloted and showed positive results in increasing content knowledge of math and science teachers in Lesotho and other countries. Teachers will be also provided with ICT training to make sure that they understand how to use the computers before commencing the training. To ensure sustainability of the training, training administration will be gradually transitioned from the NJCTL to National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and the future implementation plan will be developed during the transition. During the course implementation, course administrators (NJCTL, NUL, LCE, inspectors and local organization which supports the procurement, delivery, ICT training and computer repairs) will manage whatsapp group for participating teachers to ask any questions and share lessons learned. Also, through the moodle dashboard, course administrators will closely monitor the progress of each teacher and provide any support as needed. After the training, teachers will use the contents from the online training for classroom teaching by projecting the contents through the projector.

24. Teachers will be evaluated on their content knowledge through taking an exam before and after the course completion using the assessment provided by the NJCTL’s proctored tests with Proctorio. At the end of the training, anonymous survey will be implemented to receive additional qualitative data from teachers. In addition, throughout the training, teachers will record their classroom teaching using the video on the laptops to measure the improvement of their pedagogical skills. If the classroom observation becomes possible by inspectors, random classroom observations will be also conducted to assess the performance improvement. Finally, students will be also assessed on their content knowledge using students’ assessment as well as formative assessments that teachers learn through the training. If the students are not performing well, teachers will provide remedial materials and support them further.

25. New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL) is an independent charitable organization focused on improving the teaching and learning of K-12 and early college (AP) science, maths, and computer science. Its free, editable, and comprehensive teaching materials use a unique pedagogy developed as part of the Progressive Science Initiative (PSI) and Progressive Mathematics Initiative (PMI). PSI and PMI integrate curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and professional development into a seamless whole using a blend of direct instruction and social constructivism, connected by formative assessment, to create a student-centered learning environment. NJCTL also creates new U.S. teachers of physics, chemistry, maths, and computer science, and is the number one producer of U.S. physics teachers, using 100 percent asynchronous, online courses. The PSI-PMI pedagogy is implemented online by weaving together videos of short direct instruction with interactive formative assessment questions along with videos explaining how to solve the problems. This Asynchronous Virtual Constructivist approach is the online version of Social Constructivism. Only a computer and internet access are needed.

26. PSI-PMI launched in The Gambia in 2013 and has evolved to become the national curricula. A 2019 report32 by the World Bank showed that PSI-PMI students qualified for university at three times the rate of their peers. Specifically, the program improved students’ mathematics scores by 11.9 percentage points, from 38.8 to 50.7, when the scores from the researcher designed exam was used and 9.2 percentage points using the WASSCE exam score. This success resulted in The Gambia supporting NJCTL’s development of a matching English Language

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32 https://njctl.org/gambia-2020-report/
Arts program (PELA) which is now also being used nationally.

27. In turn, this led to work in several other African nations including Rwanda, Nigeria, Niger, and Lesotho. MJCTL concluded a three-year project in Lesotho to train mathematics and science teachers and provide them with free, editable classroom teaching materials. Due to Covid-19, the evaluation was postponed, but should proceed in Spring 2021. During the Lesotho project, a small pilot of 15 teachers used NJCTL online courses in lieu of face-to-face (f2f) training. They performed as well, or better, on unit exams compared to those who remained in the f2f training, supporting the efficacy of online training in Africa. In total, there were 101 unique participants (50 math, 60 sciences) including teachers, NCDC staff, and professors from NUL and LCE.

28. **Targeting:** The first pilot phase will target 100 math and science teachers that will be selected from all 10 districts. In the scale-up phases teachers teaching in high-poverty and high-dropout rate constituencies (i.e. constituencies targeted under sub-component 1.1) will be the primary target. Teachers will be selected from these target constituencies based on their expressed interest to take part in the training. The final beneficiary teachers will be determined by giving priority to math and science teachers who are teaching in the most disadvantaged constituencies until the final target that can be covered under the budget is reached.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase (year)</th>
<th>Estimated unit cost</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Cost (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 (1)</td>
<td>$2800 (training) + $850 (HW) = $3650</td>
<td>$2600 (training) + $850 (HW) = $3450</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$355,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 (2)</td>
<td>$2800 (training) + $850 (HW) = $3650</td>
<td>$2600 (training) + $850 (HW) = $3450</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$710,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 (3)</td>
<td>$1400 (training) + $850 (HW) = $2250</td>
<td>$1300 (training) + $850 (HW) = $2150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$440,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portable solar panel add on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>$20,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HW for NUL/LCE</td>
<td>$850</td>
<td>$5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HW for inspectors</td>
<td>$850 + $150 (solar panel)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICT training and support by local NGO</td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250 (math teachers)</td>
<td>250 (science teachers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumptions: Each science teacher takes a total of 18 credits. Each mathematics teacher takes a total of 20 credits. Teaching method course for all teachers is 8 credits. In phase 1 and 2, the training cost per credit is about $100 (with NJCTL taking the lead role). In Phase 3, the per credit cost declines to US$50 as the local institutions take over. Each teacher gets a laptop US$500 and each school gets a projector estimated at US$350. However, in this calculation, it is estimated that each teacher receives one projector as the number of schools is unknown. For those who do not have access to electricity at schools, they receive a portable solar panel to charge the laptops, which is estimated at $150.

Note: The ratio of math and science teachers is based on the data provided by the MoET.
Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery (US$1.4 million)

29. This component will focus on selected interventions to strengthen ECCD service delivery in Lesotho by providing structured support to roll out the new curriculum, mapping of ECCD providers and developing a costed and comprehensive expansion strategy for ECCD in Lesotho.

Sub-component 2.1: Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers

30. This subcomponent will provide structured support to roll out the new ECCD curriculum that is currently being revised under LBEIP. To this end, the sub-component will support the following activities:

- Pilot the revised ECCD curriculum in a small number of reception classrooms and ECCD centers.
  - Develop teaching and learning materials aligned to the new curriculum.
  - Develop teacher training manuals aligned to the new curriculum and associated teaching and learning materials developed.
  - Transparent selection of a small sample of reception classrooms and ECCD centers to pilot the revised ECCD.
  - Printing and distribution of teaching and learning materials to selected centers.
  - Training of teachers in selected number of reception classrooms and ECCD centers.
  - Undertake a rapid evaluation of the pilot.
  - Refine teaching and learning materials, and training of teachers based on findings from the rapid evaluation and prepare for scale up.

Targeting: The small sample of reception classrooms and ECCD centers for the pilot will be selected by the MoET from the existing list of reception classrooms and known community (and potentially some private) ECCD centers.

- Develop a strategy to roll out the new ECCD curriculum across the country. The strategy will include, but will not be limited to:
  - Describing the advocacy and communication campaign to inform schools, ECCD centers and communities about the new curriculum and plans for roll out.
  - Identifying the timelines and phasing of the roll out with priority given to ECCD centers in rural communities.
  - Costing the roll out of the new ECCD curriculum.

- Support the roll out of the new curriculum in a selected number of ECCD centers and reception classrooms serving poor communities.
  - Undertake a nation-wide advocacy and communications campaign aligned to the roll out strategy.
  - MoET to select a sample of reception classrooms and ECCD centers located in poor communities to be supported under the project.
  - Undertake an assessment before the roll out to ascertain child development and education outcomes.
  - Conduct early learning environment observations in ECCD centers and reception classes, specifically to observe changes in teacher pedagogy.
  - Procure and distribute teaching and learning materials to the selected reception classrooms and ECCD centers.
The World Bank
Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP) (P175065)

- Procure and distribute teacher training manuals and undertake teacher/practitioner training related to the implementation of the new curriculum in selected ECCD centers and reception classes.
- Undertake an assessment after the rollout of the new curriculum in selected centers and reception classes.

**Targeting:** The MoET will select a group of reception classes and ECCD centers from the available list of known centers. The selected reception classes and ECCD centers will be those serving poor communities, and especially across rural areas.

**Sub-component 2.2: Mapping of ECCD service providers and developing a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy for the ECCD sector**

31. The project will support the mapping of ECCD service providers across Lesotho to get a comprehensive overview of service provision and move towards a systematized process where the data can be consolidated into the Education Management Information System of the MoET, and moving forward, be updated by the MoET on an annual Basis. Under this sub-component, the project will first consolidate existing information on ECCD service providers from the MoET’s EMIS system, development partners such as UNICEF, and other NGOs supporting ECCD providers nationally. It will then involve the development of a short survey to collect information on, but not limited to the location, number of children by age category, number and characteristics of practitioners/caregivers/teachers, some details on the learning environment and the types of services offered. The survey will be piloted and refined for ease of data collection and capturing into the EMIS system before being rolled out at scale. A survey firm will be recruited to administer the survey and collect data on ECCD providers nationally. A ‘snowballing’ approach or referral system will be used to locate unknown ECCD centers across the country. Data collected will then be captured into the EMIS which can be updated by the MoET annually.
32. The data collected from the mapping will form the basis for the development of a costed expansion strategy for ECCD service provision in Lesotho by providing basic information about what services are available and where and how they can be better supported to expand access. The expansion strategy will include different models for construction of reception classrooms and provide details on public-private partnerships to support the expansion of ECCD services in poor communities.

**Targeting:** All ECCD service providers in Lesotho will be covered by the mapping to help the MoET to get a comprehensive understanding of ECCD service provisioning in Lesotho and see how it can be systematically strengthened and scaled up in the future.

**Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance (US$0.7 million)**

33. The objective of this component is to strengthen key management capacities of the MoET and MoSD, which is the implementer of sub-component 1.1, regional and local education offices as well as PFUs under the two ministries, which will provide support in key areas including procurement, financial management, supervision of project activities and monitoring and evaluation. Support related to project management and monitoring are aimed at ensuring that project activities are implemented on time and in a satisfactory manner, using an implementation mechanism that promotes ownership and capacity building within the MoET and MoSD.
34. BESP will use existing PFUs that are currently supporting implementation of ongoing operations under the two ministries. The PFUs will be responsible for the daily management, administration and coordination of the project, including project accounting, procurement and disbursement, reporting, preparation of progress reports, and ensuring timely audits and monitoring activities. The PFU under the MoET will play a lead coordinating role especially in regard to supervision, monitoring and reporting on the project progress and results. To meet the increased demand from the new project, the PFUs in MoET and MoSD need to be strengthened including through the hiring of additional technical staff/ consultants in key areas (e.g. FM, procurement, M&E and environmental and social areas). This sub-component will provide support to ensure that the PFUs are well staffed and equipped to support the project implementation. The component will also finance activities costs of the MoET and MoSD relevant to the project management and supervision.

### iii. Lessons learned from ongoing project incorporated in the project design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges and lessons learned under LEQEP and LBEIP</th>
<th>How the challenges and lessons learned are reflected under BESP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Supply-side interventions (e.g. SIP and SG) supported under LEQEP and LBEIP are not sufficient to ensure students stay in school as demand-side challenges related to poverty, pregnancy, cultural practices are critical barriers. <br> - While COVID-19 has exacerbated many of these demand side challenges, thus far, the pandemic response interventions supported under ongoing projects have focused on supporting schools to reopen safely. | - BESP will support demand-side interventions that aim to address directly some of the demand-side barriers by supporting:  
  (i) Cash-transfer programs for poor households to ensure that they keep their children in school  
  (ii) Boys’ and girls’ clubs to provide adolescents with life skills and reproductive health information to enable them to make informed choices  
  (iii) Strengthening the role of SBMC to forge school-community collaboration to keep children in school and hold schools accountable for retaining students |
| - The traditional modality of face-to-face in-service teacher training is not feasible to implement under current circumstances; as a result all teacher training related activities are dropped or will be dropped under LEQEP and LBEIP. <br> - There are also serious capacity gaps in developing and providing high quality in-service teacher training. | - BESP will use online teacher training modality to support in-service teachers, building on a successful pilot completed under LEQEP. <br> - To mitigate for the capacity gap in this area, BESP will be using service providers with successful track records to develop and provide the training. <br> - Building internal capacity by involving NUL and LCE as part of the implementation and gradually transferring the training administration to them will be a key component of the intervention. <br> - The project will also support the development of a strategic plan on how online teacher training and technology-based follow-up support can be made a key component of Lesotho’s in-service teachers’ professional development program as a sustainable model for providing continued support for teachers. |
| - The hybrid PFU that is fully imbedded within the MoET, coordinated by the Director for Planning, and strengthened by hiring of technical consultants in critical areas in general works. However, several challenges are affecting its effectiveness: | - BESP will use the hybrid PFU model leveraging the existing arrangements under LBEIP and LEQEP. For MoSD, BESP will use PFU under Social Assistance Project (P151442). To strengthen the PFUs: <br>  o Additional technical staff will be added including by hiring additional consultants to meet the increased demand under |

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| PFU staff are overloaded as they provide support to the MoET beyond supporting the two projects. | the new project; to the extent possible these actions will be done during project preparation as part of the implementation readiness. |
| The PFU has limited authority to coordinate among implementing departments and make decisions leading to delays in implementation | o The composition of the PFU will also be reviewed and adjusted to ensure that all implementing departments are represented, there are enough staff and are actively involved |
| The PFU, especially the technical consultants, are not currently building capacity within the MoET as they are overstretched with project and non-project tasks | o Senior management members will be included in the PFU to facilitate better coordination and timely decision making |
| o As part of the TOR of the PFU members, building MoET capacity will be included. In the POM, specific activities on capacity building will be identified and included in AWPs. |

- The AWPs for LBEIP and LEQEP has served as the basis for planning and decision making and served as roadmaps for implementation and M&E. However, the MoET has capacity gaps in preparing complete AWPs on a timely basis, to a large part due to capacity gaps, the high workload of technical PFU members, and limited coordination with implementing departments.

- LEQEP and LBEIP suffered from limited accountability of the MoET and implementing departments for results in part due to limited oversight by senior management of the MoET and other Government entities.

- More recently, monthly performance review meeting chaired by the PS have been taking place.

- Under the two projects, there was very limited use of the POMs, leading to time consuming planning and decision-making processes. There are also concerns about the quality of the POM and its relevance given the evolving nature of the implementation context.

- Under BESP, the POM will be prepared as part of project preparation and before negotiation through the active involvement of the implementing agencies; it will serve as the basis for implementation.

- On annual basis a review of the POM will be conducted as part of the AWP preparation to ensure that it provides relevant guidance to the implementation of the project.

- The AWP will continue to be the basis for planning, implementation and M&E under BESP. To strengthen capacity in this regard, additional staff with the right technical background will be added to the PFU.

- AWP will also be prepared prior to the project effectiveness and in subsequent years before the beginning of a new fiscal year. The POM will include a template that will be used for AWPs to standardize and simplify the planning process.

To ensure increased accountability for results BESP will adopt two approaches:

- BESP will continue to use the monthly coordination committee meeting (involving all implementing parties, the LEG and WB) to review progress and make decisions.

- Under BESP, the POM will be prepared as part of project preparation and before negotiation through the active involvement of the implementing agencies; it will serve as the basis for implementation.

- On annual basis a review of the POM will be conducted as part of the AWP preparation to ensure that it provides relevant guidance to the implementation of the project.
ANNEX 3: Implementation Timeline

124. Implementation timeline of the project is summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 1: Improving the retention of students in junior secondary education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development of a communication strategy and material and conduct advocacy and communication campaign to the school management committees to hold school accountable for the OVC-B beneficiaries to stay in school and strengthen community-school relationship to improve student retention.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuous advocacy and communication campaign</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuous advocacy and communication campaign</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy and communication campaign on OVC-B and CGP bonus payment through the school management committees</td>
<td>OVC-B for 500 students in Grade 8, 1000 students in Grade 9, 2, 700 students in Grade 10.</td>
<td>OVC-B for 1500 students in Grade 8, 500 students in Grade 9, 1000 students in Grade 10.</td>
<td>OVC-B for 1500 students in Grade 9, 500 students in Grade 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of OVC-B to students enrolled in Grade 8-10 in year 1</td>
<td>CGP bonus for 500 students in Grade 8</td>
<td>CGP bonus for 1500 students in Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of CGP bonus to students transitioning from Grade 7 to Grade 8</td>
<td>Impact assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-component 1.2: Scaling up implementation of support groups/clubs for girls and boys</td>
<td>Call for proposal and selection of a few NGOs to work with targeted schools</td>
<td>NGO activity starts to support retention of participating students</td>
<td>NGO activity ends and will be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of NGOs and implementation of NGOs’ activities</td>
<td>Reach out to schools and identify participating students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models for teachers</td>
<td>Preparation of the online teacher training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparations of the online teacher training</td>
<td>Contract implementation partners and procure and deliver hardware for self-selected 100 teachers (50 math and 50 science) from 10 districts as a pilot.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the online teacher training</td>
<td>Work with target schools to identify 100 teachers (50 math and 50 science) from all 10 districts. Develop operational models while conducting online teacher training with implementation partners along with NUL, LSE and inspectors</td>
<td>NJCTL will conduct training along with NUL and LSE for 200 teachers (100 math and 100 science). Develop a transition plan from NJCTL to NUL and LSE for the online teacher training administration.</td>
<td>NUL and LSE will train 200 (100 math and 100 science) teachers supported by the NJCTL. Develop a sustainability plan to continue online teacher training run by NUL and LSE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up excellence in STEM teaching awards</td>
<td>Work with the MoSCT to develop an excellence in STEM teaching awards including selection criteria and operational model.</td>
<td>Operationalize the first excellence in STEM teaching awards.</td>
<td>Second year of excellence in STEM teaching awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Teacher take exams before starting the training. Students also take assessment tests before teacher starts the training. Formative assessment of teachers and students throughout the training. When teachers complete the online training, conduct end-of-the training exams for teachers and assessments for students. Pedagogical skills will be assessed by classroom teaching videos submitted by teachers and random classroom observations. Same evaluation activities as Year 1.</td>
<td>Same evaluation activities as Year 1 and 2. Compile the results as an evaluation report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery

### Sub-component 2.1: Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation and pilot</th>
<th>Roll out strategy</th>
<th>Support for roll out of new curriculum</th>
<th>Assessment and early learning environment observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Sub-component 2.2: Mapping of ECCD service providers and developing a comprehensive, costed expansion strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Mapping</th>
<th>Expansion strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire a firm to conduct mapping of ECCD service providers and a consultant/firm to develop expansion strategy.</td>
<td>Start mapping of ECCD service providers. Continue with fieldwork and data collection. Capture and consolidate results into EMIS.</td>
<td>Start with development of expansion strategy – different models of construction for reception classes and public-private Costing expansion strategy based on findings from mapping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
partnerships for expansion and support of private and community based ECCD providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project management</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 4: Economic and Financial Analysis

The economic and financial analysis has multiple purposes including: (i) highlighting the project development impact, (ii) providing rationale for public sector investment in the basic education system, especially at the ECCD and junior secondary levels, and (iii) conducting financial analysis to understand the long-term fiscal implications of the project investments.

i. Project development impact

125. The interventions under the proposed project will contribute towards Lesotho’s long-term development agenda through several channels, some of which are discussed below.

126. **Building Lesotho’s human capital for inclusive and sustainable growth:** There is a large body of literature that shows that human capital is one of the most important factors for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, both by increasing labor productivity and by contributing towards innovation and diffusion of new technologies\(^{33}\). However, the World Bank’s HCI reveals the low level of human capital in Lesotho, including in the education component of the HCI. This shows the urgent need to channel more and better investment in the education of children and youth, to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be productive and fully contribute towards their country’s growth.

127. **The importance of early childhood development for human capital formation is well documented.** The literature shows that quality ECCD interventions have strong and tangible impacts on cognitive skills, including language, literacy and numeracy skill and socio-emotional skills that set up children for success in school and later into adulthood.\(^{34}\) Investments in early childhood have also been shown to be more cost-effective than investments that happen later in life, which often become remedial. It is also an effective strategy to mitigate against entrenched patterns of marginalization, by helping children from poor and disadvantaged communities not to fall behind. ECCD is also positively linked with school readiness\(^{35}\) and can play an important role in reducing overage enrollment, repetition and dropout rates in subsequent grades—improving efficiency in the education system. Repeating a grade mechanically results in an additional year of educational costs for the system and leads to delayed labor market entry, while dropping out early means costly investment made up to time of dropping out doesn’t come to full fruition, both at the personal and system level.

128. **Access to quality childcare through ECCD programs helps parents, particularly mothers, work and be more productive.** Access to quality childcare increases stability for current workers by limiting absences, employee turnover, and other issues that reduce productivity. There is a pressing need for such access if Lesotho

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\(^{35}\) A simple definition of school readiness may include a child having basic behaviors and abilities, including literacy, numeracy, ability to follow directions, working well with other children and engaging in learning activities (Rouse, Brooks-Gunn and McLanahan 2005). Rouse, C., Brooks-Gunn, J. and McLanahan, S., 2005. Introducing the issue. The Future of Children, pp.5-14.
wants to increase the rate of female employment. Investing in the provision of quality ECCD programs therefore can improve the lives of children by enabling families to improve their economic situation. While BESP does not address gaps in ECCD at scale, the proposed activities are likely to form a foundation on which the Government can build on to improve access and quality and hence the project is likely to contribute towards the realization of these gains in the medium to the long-run.

129. **Reaping the high returns of post-primary education:** Beyond early childhood, ensuring that children who are already in the system stay in school and complete secondary education is also critical for Lesotho’s human capital development and to enabling youth to obtain gainful employment. There is a growing consensus that primary education as the terminal level of education may not be enough to equip youth with the skills they need to be productive and competitive in ever-changing labor markets that are increasingly influenced by digital technology. In Lesotho, the labor market returns to education are high, particularly at post-primary levels. Recent estimates show that each additional year of education increases average annual earnings by 12 percent.

130. **Rates of return to education are high for girls with each additional year of schooling being linked to 17 percent increase in annual earning.** Furthermore, workers with upper secondary education earn up to 2 times the average salary of workers with complete primary education. Poverty incidence declines significantly as educational attainment increases. Approximately 63 percent of uneducated people and 55 percent of people with complete primary education among the working-age population are poor. In contrast, the corresponding figures are 41 percent for people with lower secondary, 27 percent for those with upper secondary, and 7 percent for those with higher education. While these results are correlations, they are indicative of the positive relationship between schooling and economic wellbeing in Lesotho.

131. **Positive externalities:** There is an established body of work showing that education not only rewards the individual (e.g., through improved labor market outcomes) but also creates a wide set of positive externalities for society (e.g., benefits related to better fertility outcomes, improvements in health of the individuals, their offspring and families, increased social engagement and cohesion, etc.). These positive externalities are also relevant in the case of Lesotho. First education, particularly secondary education is strongly and positively correlated with reduction in teenage motherhood. As discussed earlier, Lesotho has a very high rate of teenage pregnancy (17.8 percent nationally and 25 percent among the poorest girls). The rate is even higher among girls with only primary education (32 percent). By ensuring girls stay in school through targeted intervention, including by providing financial support, the high rate of teenage pregnancy can be reduced. This can in turn improve the outcomes of future generations of children. Women with secondary education have fewer children, on average, compared to women with lower levels of education and they are more likely to have their children vaccinated and their children have significantly better health outcomes.

**ii. Rationale for public sector investment**

132. There are several interrelated efficiency and equity related arguments for expanding public investment in the education system, including at in ECCD and junior secondary education.

133. **Alleviating supply-side barriers in access to ECCD:** Children in Lesotho, particularly those from disadvantaged communities face formidable supply-side barriers to accessing ECCD, even when their families are willing to send them to school. Lack of economy of scale advantages are likely to limit private sector provision of
ECCD services in remote and mountainous districts. Without public investment to address the supply-side gaps in underserved areas, the level of ECCD participation will remain suboptimal. The proposed project lays some of the key building block for efficient expansion of the pre-primary sub-sector.

134. **Addressing effects of poverty and credit market constraints:** On the demand side, lack of access to credit markets often prevents poor households from overcoming budget constraints by borrowing for their children’s education, even when they perceive the return to schooling as high. The credit market constraint is particularly detrimental for secondary age children from poor households as they are unable to cover the direct cost of schooling or overcome the high opportunity cost of attending school in the short run, in order to reap benefits that mainly arise in the long-run. Public support (e.g., through subsidies to cover the cost of schooling) will be essential to ensure that children from poor households attend secondary school.

135. **Promoting social and economic equity:** A related argument for public sector investment in education stems from the need to promote social and economic equity. Stewart (2011), in a background paper for the 2012 WDR argues that within countries horizontal inequalities across groups (e.g. across genders, geographic areas, economic groups) including inequalities in access to services such as education, health care and housing are highly correlated with increased instability. Targeted public investment in the education sector has the potential of curbing widening inequalities by ensuring that all children have equal footing.

136. **Mitigating impacts of information asymmetry:** Lack of interest in education is one of the widely cited reasons for the high dropout rate at the secondary level, which is indicative of information asymmetry. Information asymmetry on the direct and indirect benefits of education related to low perceived returns to schooling can discourage households from investing in their children’s education. Public intervention by subsidizing education for disadvantaged students who are at risk of dropping out and by improving quality of schooling so that the promised returns can be realized will be critical to change norms in school attendance.

iii. Financial analysis

137. Interventions under BESP will have fiscal implication both on the MoET and MoED budgets, which are examined below.

**Implications on the MoET’s budget**

138. Lesotho is among the highest spenders in education, with about 8.9 percent of the share of GDP spent in education, which is beyond the 4%-6% recommended under the SDG4 framework. Significant share of the education spending goes to recurrent expenditure, however, more recently capital investment in the sector is increasing. The project investments will also have some implication on the recurrent education budget of the MoET. Overall, the project costs (i.e. estimated at US$4.5 million focusing on sub-components the MoET is directly responsible) account for only 1.9\(^{37}\) percent of the annual education budget. However, sustaining and expanding the teacher training interventions and youth clubs will require additional spending, even though the impact is expected to be small. One of the key areas where significant commitment will be required is the scaling up of the revised, piloted and evaluated ECCD curriculum. Rolling the new curriculum nationally post BESP will require

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\(^{37}\) For the analysis the exchange rate use id US$1 to 14.59 Maloti.
training of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials, among other things and can have significant implications on the education sector’s budget.

Table 3: Public Expenditure in Education, 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
<th>2018/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Education Expenditure (Curr - Million Maloti)</td>
<td>2,955</td>
<td>2,933</td>
<td>3,101</td>
<td>3,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Recurrent (Current – Million Maloti)</td>
<td>2,924</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>2,998</td>
<td>3,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending at MoET (Million Maloti)</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>2,321</td>
<td>2,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending at National Manpower Devt Secretariat (Million)</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>622</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending at Social Protection (Million Maloti)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Capital (Current - Million Maloti)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>102.6</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Spending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of Govt Expenditure</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of GDP</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from the ESA, 2020 which is based on data from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Training

Implications on the MoSD’s budget

139. From the social protection side, sustaining the expansions to the OVC-B and CGP will require a small increase in spending in the long-run. The project costs for implementing the OVC-B and CGP interventions (inclusive of the budget allocated to sub-component 1.1 and management) is estimated at US$2.75 million over three years and US$0.92 million per year, which represents 11 percent of the MoSD annual spending on CGP and OVC-B. However, in the long run, through better targeting, efficiency gains could be made, which can offset some of the increase.

140. Table 1: Social assistance and social protection spending (fiscal year 2017/2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Spending (maloti)</th>
<th>Spending /GDP (%)</th>
<th>Spending/total govt spending (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child grants</td>
<td>57,593,829</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School feeding</td>
<td>194,491,384</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash-for-work assistance</td>
<td>98,220,000</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public assistance</td>
<td>38,000,000</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age pensions</td>
<td>707,195,200</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC bursaries</td>
<td>57,259,851</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary bursaries</td>
<td>641,146,319</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total social assistance</strong></td>
<td>1,766,906,583</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social protection</td>
<td>491,186,641</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total social protection</strong></td>
<td>2,258,093,224</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>14.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 5: Synergy between BESP and WB and GPE Supported Education Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key interventions supported under each project</th>
<th>BESP</th>
<th>LEQEP</th>
<th>LBEIP (recently restructured)</th>
<th>GEP COVID-19 Response (managed by UNICEF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECCD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Structured support to roll out the new ECCD curriculum in reception classrooms and ECCD centers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mapping of ECCD service providers and development of a costed expansion strategy for the sector.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Secondary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improving the retention in junior secondary education through cash transfers for poor households</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Scaling up of boys’ and girls’ clubs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scaling up the online teacher training program for junior secondary education teachers in mathematics and science</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Online teacher training for junior secondary school teachers under the PMI-PSI implemented in 24 schools (pilot)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Teaching and learning materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- SIP, School Grants and implementation support by SIP facilitators; School report cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Construction of classrooms and latrines in selected JSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching and learning materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School Improvement Plans, School Grants and implementation support by SIP facilitators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School report cards</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
While there is not a separate component on COVID-19 response, all components will be designed to help the education system respond better to COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. by supporting online teacher training and supporting children at risk of dropping out, to a large part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

- Providing clean water (using existing water tanks) for hand washing and, sanitation materials (soap, and hand sanitizer and handwashing stations), face masks and fumigation supplies.
- Training of teachers and school staff on COVID-19 management
- Communication campaign to bring students back to targeted school

Short-term
- Awareness raising on COVID-19 in educational institutions
- Development and provision of ECD material for parents with young children
- Provision of learner packs
- Provision of take-home rations for vulnerable children
- Distance learning (radio & TV)

Medium term
- Establishment of online platforms for learning
- Provision of WASH
- Child protection and psychosocial support
- Subsidizing school fees for disadvantaged learners
- Back to school campaigns
ANNEX 6: Adjustments to the Country Program in Response to COVID-19

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Lesotho and government response

1. **The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant health and economic impacts in Lesotho.** The first confirmed case in the country was announced on May 13, 2020, and new cases have increased rapidly since then. Lesotho, like most countries in Southern Africa, is impacted by the spread of the disease due to its exposure and proximity to South Africa. In late October 2020, the government decided to extend the COVID-19 Disaster-Induced State of Emergency until April 2021.\[1\] The situation has been rapidly deteriorating in December 2020 and January 2021. As of January 14, 2021, the country has recorded 6,356 cases and 89 fatalities. In response, the government decided to put the country into Risk Mitigation color code red, high community transmission stage on January 13, 2021. Enhanced disease control measures include curfew between 7pm and 6am, no movements across borders except for essential services, and other services are only permitted subject to COVID-19 protocols.

2. **The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had dire consequences for Lesotho’s already strained economy with insufficient resources available to respond.** The national lockdown between March and May 2020 and the uneven “reopening” after May with frequent new retrenchments have caused a crushing economic impact, plunging the country into a deeper recession than it could afford. The textile and tourism industries, which had been the source of livelihood for many people, have come to a grinding halt. Production in diamond mining and construction are estimated to contract by more than 30 percent each. In comparison, textile manufacturing will contract by approximately 20 percent, impacted by the contraction of global demand and supply chains, especially China, the United States, and South Africa. Tourism inflows have practically vanished. Approximately 93,000 Basotho who worked across the border in South Africa returned home. This has added pressure to the already weak health and social welfare systems. Remittance income, which accounts for 17 percent of household income (US$440 million in 2018) is collapsing, as is non-farm income from trade and small business activities, which accounts for a further 8 percent of household income. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, GDP growth was projected to decelerate from 1.0 percent in 2019/20 to 0.4 percent in 2020/21. The growth projection was revised downwards in October 2020 to -4.8 percent in 2020/21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic\[2\], a year-on-year decline of 5.8 percentage points compared to 2019.\[3\] The local currency, pegged to the South African Rand, depreciated by 30 percent within a period of 3 months, from M15.8 in March to M18.8 in June against the US dollar.\[4\] The impact of the new measures in January 2021 is yet to be seen, but the economy is likely to be further affected negatively.

3. **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been acutely felt among already vulnerable groups.** It is anticipated that poverty will increase significantly with an additional 96,600 people likely to fall into poverty due to wage losses because of the pandemic. Poverty rates pre-COVID-19 were already high: in 2017/2018, the poverty rate was 49.7 percent. Scenario analysis of 6-month lockdowns indicate that poverty could increase by as much as 4.6 percent. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in Lesotho comes on the heels of the 2019 drought, falling per capita income will have stronger impact on rural households and will reverse gains made in poverty reduction, human security, and social development. Lower incomes will reduce access not only to food, but also to farm inputs, thus limiting crop and livestock production for the 2020-21 season.\[5\] Reduced crop production will reduce the demand for casual agricultural labor – which accounts for 21 percent of rural household incomes.\[6\] About a quarter of the population suffered from food insecurity due to the 2019 drought and weak macroeconomic
situations.

4. **The pandemic is having devastating impact on all levels of the education sector.** To contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, schools were closed across the country since March 2020. The Government started a gradual reopening of schools in September 2020, prioritizing higher grades with exit examination. However, due to the recent surge in cases, schools have not reopened for the academic year beginning in January 2021. The combination of prolonged disruption to schooling and the economic impact of the pandemic on households is likely to adversely impact educational outcomes, including by leading to worsening of the dropout rate and resulting in loss of learning for many children. Emerging anecdotal evidence is also showing a rise in pregnancy among secondary school age girls. The crisis is also likely to exacerbate pre-existing education disparities across gender, geographic areas and socio-economic groups by reducing learning opportunities for some of the most marginalized children coming from poor households and rural areas.

5. **Government Response.** Lesotho declared a state of emergency due to COVID-19 on March 27, 2020. The government institutionalized a Cabinet sub-committee on the COVID-19 pandemic which developed a Response Plan, declared a state of emergency despite having no confirmed cases of the disease, and introduced various “lockdown” measures, including closure of borders and a moratorium on public gatherings amongst others, to prevent the spread of the disease. The Response Plan includes economic and social relief to protect Basotho during the crisis, to retain jobs, maintain financial stability, provide businesses with access to finance, and to stimulate investment. The government’s plan comprises fiscal measures (tax and non-tax); food security and emergency activities (agriculture support and social protection); financing facilities for Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) (credit guarantees, matching schemes) and a monetary policy designed to stimulate the economy by cutting key interest rates and providing liquidity to local banks.[7] Although currently being implemented, the implementation of fiscal measures has been significantly delayed due to a lack of resources, prolonged discussions on budget reallocation, and capacity-related implementation challenges. The World Bank estimates the total response costs to be US$190 million or about 8 percent of GDP. The government decided to allocate US$70 million as outlined in the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan through reallocation of the budget.[8]

6. In the education sector, the Government has developed a COVID-19 response strategy and mobilized resources from domestic sources as well as development partners (DPs), including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to respond to the pandemic. Following school closures, TV and radio distance learning programs were made available to children until August 2020. Moreover, in preparation for school reopening, an operation manual for schools, which specifies health and safety procedures and other protocols for safe operation under the pandemic, has been prepared and approved. The reopening of all schools in line with the school operation manual under COVID-19 requires providing schools with critical safety material (e.g. soap, sanitation materials, facemasks etc.) and the Ministry of Education and Training is currently in the process of procuring these materials. However, there has been significant delay in this process and the safe reopening of schools remains an urgent priority for the education sector.

**WBG support for responding to the crisis**

7. As of January 2021, there are 9 national IDA-financed projects; 2 regional IDA-financed projects and 3
recipient-executed trust funds (RETFs) with a total commitment of US$330 million. The WBG country program has been adjusted to address the impacts of COVID-19. In addition to portfolio actions such as project restructuring and activation of Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC), the World Bank is also mobilizing additional IDA resource from the Crisis Response Window (CRW) and trust fund. The adjusted program corresponds to the four thematic pillars of the WBG Approach Paper (table 1).

- To **save lives**, the World Bank has mobilized financing through a combination of portfolio actions and new operations not anticipated in the CPF to strengthen the health response. In FY2020, the World Bank reallocated US$0.3 million from the Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Project (P155658) to procure personal protective equipment and to create a nation-wide campaign to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the World Bank formulated the Lesotho COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (US$7.5 million, P173939) in May 2020 to procure ventilators and in-country testing facility and invest in Intensive Care Unit facilities. The disbursement ratio of this project reached 71 percent at the end of October 2020. The Lesotho Basic Education Improvement project (P160090) has also been restructured to reallocate US$ 0.6 million to support the COVID-19 response in schools through the purchase and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as soap, sanitation materials, face masks and water using existing tanks, to enable schools to safely reopen in line with the Operating Guidelines for Schools. Finally, a planned DPO supports public health regulations that strengthen local COVID-19 diagnostic capacity.

- To **protect the poor and vulnerable**, the planned DPO will support scaling up the Child Grant Program to provide additional grants to households made more vulnerable because of the pandemic. Other Planned projects will expand and increase the resilience of services for the poor in health, nutrition and education, for example by scaling up remote teacher training.

- To **save livelihoods, preserve jobs and ensure more sustainable business growth and job creation**, in Q2 FY2021, the World Bank triggered the CERC of the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP) II (P165228, US$5 million), to assist 64,000 vulnerable households with the provision of agricultural inputs in line with the Government’s Emergency Response Plan. In addition, the planned DPO will support measures to assist Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) affected by the national lockdown as well as measures to expand digital financial services.

- To **strengthen policies, institutions, and investment for resilient, inclusive, and sustainable growth**, the planned DPO aims to enhance inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector job creation by strengthening national governance and accountability systems and by easing restrictions to doing business by simplifying business licensing and registration and improving MSME’s access to financing.

- To **protect gains in education**, the World Bank, in close collaboration with UNICEF and other DPs is currently providing support to the Government to strengthen the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and to ensure continued learning for all children. To this end, the GPE-financed Lesotho Basic Education Improvement Project (LBEIP) has been restructured in August 2020 to reallocated funding to COVID-19 response, and it is expected that the Lesotho Education Quality for Equality Project (LEQEP) will be similarly restructured. In the immediate short run, the support is focused on the provision of safety materials for schools to ensure that they can safely reopen. Moving forward, increased support will be provided to help the MoET to narrow the curriculum and develop an accelerated learning program so that students can catch up, training of teachers to assess student performance regularly and provide remedial support, monitoring of students who re-enroll and support to children who have dropped out.
so that they can return to school, as well as monitoring of the COVID-19 safety standards within schools.

8. **Projects under Preparation.** The government and the World Bank have broadly agreed on the projects to be prepared during the first and second years of IDA19 (July 2020-June 2022). These projects are based on financing needs to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., Development Policy Operation, DPO), the country’s key development challenge (Nutrition and Health System Strengthening project) and emerging needs to address COVID-19 (e.g., social protection project and additional financing of COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response project).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment Type</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Amount (US$ million)</th>
<th>Rationale / Note</th>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Action</td>
<td>Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Project (P155658)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Used for procurement of PPE and nation-wide PR activities.</td>
<td>FY20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Financing</td>
<td>Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Project (P173228)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Including components to support national efforts to respond to COVID-19</td>
<td>FY20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Financing</td>
<td>COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response project (P173939)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>2.5 (total 7.5 o/w 5.0 from FY20)</td>
<td>US$2.5 million has been used from IDA19 allocation (total project size of US$7.5 million)</td>
<td>FY20 and 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Action</td>
<td>Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP) II (P174378)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Activation of CERC</td>
<td>FY21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Financing</td>
<td>Lesotho COVID-19 Development Policy Operation (P174378)</td>
<td>DPO</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>To support the COVID emergency program and cover the financing gap together other development partners</td>
<td>FY21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Financing</td>
<td>Lesotho Nutrition and Health Systems Strengthening (P170278)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>22 (plus 4.4 grant)</td>
<td>To address Lesotho’s nutrition and health systemic challenges</td>
<td>FY21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Financing</td>
<td>AF of COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response project (P173939)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>3.0 10-20</td>
<td>To be financed by TF Through IDA country allocation</td>
<td>FY21 FY21 or 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New or Additional Financing</td>
<td>Social Protection Project</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>CRW eligibility note is being prepared.</td>
<td>FY21 or 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Financing (GPE)</td>
<td>Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP) (P175065)</td>
<td>IPF</td>
<td>7.5 (grant)</td>
<td>Will support continuity in the education sector to increase retention and enhance quality including by addressing economic barrier to junior secondary schooling and strengthening teacher training using technology</td>
<td>FY21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selectivity, complementarity, and partnerships

9. The government has requested development partners to finance the financing gap in the COVID-19 response plan. The government requested debt service suspension initiative (DSSI) of US$9.8 million from bilateral creditors to give it some fiscal space.\textsuperscript{[10],[11]} The response from development partners has been positive. The IMF approved an operation of US$49.2 million (SDR34.9 million)\textsuperscript{[12]} to support balance of payments. However, the IMF support will not be used as part of the relief package but will instead contribute to create buffers to international reserves. The European Union (EU) has committed US$5 million and the World Food Programme (WFP) has provided approximately US$5 million. The funds from the EU and WFP support the social assistance response in the form of top-up and expansion of grants to affected populations in urban and rural areas.

10. In the education sector, the support provided by World Bank and DPs towards COVID-19 response thus far has focused on supporting schools to reopen and ensuring continuity in education service provision. In the coming few years, there is need to accelerate improvements in the system, recover learning loss and building better systems. Addressing inequalities in access to education including by addressing economic barriers to schooling and scaling up the use of technology to strengthen education service delivery and build resilience are key priorities. The pipeline BESP project financed by GPE is an important step forward in these areas and complements ongoing operations.

\textsuperscript{[2]} International Monetary Fund (IMF) (October 2020) World Economic Outlook.
\textsuperscript{[3]} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{[4]} As of November 2020, M15.1 against the US dollar.
\textsuperscript{[5]} Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC), Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Report, April 2020
\textsuperscript{[6]} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{[7]} The government has also suspended expenditure on non-essentials goods and services and is rather prioritizing COVID-19 related expenditure, which will save approximately 5 percent of GDP. This year’s SACU transfers will increase by 8 percent of GDP, which in the absence of COVID-19, would have eased the government’s financing difficulties.
\textsuperscript{[8]} This estimate was made in April 2020 before COVID-19 was widespread in Lesotho.
\textsuperscript{[9]} This project frontloaded US$2.5 million from FY2021 national IDA allocation.
\textsuperscript{[10]} https://datatopics.worldbank.org/dssitables/monthly/LSO
\textsuperscript{[11]} The estimate from the government in May 2020 was US$9.3 million. However, the figure fluctuates due to exchange rate effect.
\textsuperscript{[12]} SDR1=1.41 and US$1=M17 as of 31 July, IMF website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Interventions</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Project Measures (Including Recommendations from SEA Assessment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 1: Improving the retention of students in targeted junior secondary education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sub-component 1.1: Expand the cash transfer scheme to junior secondary students from poor households | • Increased attendance due to the intervention may expose girls and boys to added SEA risks  
• Limited sustainability of cash transfers can lead to recipients dropping out and facing higher risk of early marriage or other types of exploitation | • Train teachers and head teachers on GBV/SEA risks to protect their students from GBV/SEA  
• Focus group/engagement with parents to understand risks of GBV/SEA and potential mitigation measures |
| Sub-component 1.2: Scaling up support groups/clubs for girls and boys | • Support groups/clubs themselves could expose to GBV/SEA risks | • PFU conducts focus group interviews with group/club members semiannually to make sure that they are not exposed to GBV/SEA but rather they are supporting each other.  
• Provide training for support groups/clubs on how to mitigate GBV/SEA risks and how to report if any incidents are identified. |
| Sub-component 1.3: Strengthening online training models in Mathematics and Science for junior secondary school teachers | • Teachers may perpetuate stereotypes and cultural norms that discourage girls’ interest in mathematics and science.  
• Some teachers request sex from female students in return for passing grades | • Integrate gender sensitive pedagogy as part of teacher training  
• Strengthen Teachers Code of Conduct  
• Inform and encourage students to use project’s SEA-Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM) to report any misconduct |
| **Component 2: System strengthening to improve ECCD service delivery** | | |
| Sub-component 2.1: Structured support to roll out the new curriculum in reception classes and ECCD centers | • New curriculum and teacher training may not include the information on the risk of GBV/SEA | • Ensure that the new curriculum and teacher training include the information and mitigation measures of GBV/SEA  
• Train teachers on how to address the risk of GBV/SEA to students and parents and how to report using the SEA-GRM for the project |
| **Component 3: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance** | | |
| | • Project members are not aware of GBV/SEA risks | • Conduct training on GBV/SEA to project staff and develop a GBV/SEA mitigation plan for the project  
• PFU to conduct semi-annual monitoring to check the status of GBV/SEA incidents and implementation of the GBV/SEA mitigation plan  
• PFU to set up a SEA-GRM |

Note: The table was adapted from Nigeria Agile project by the team. The framework will be enhanced during project preparation.