Project Information Document/
Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (PID/ISDS)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: March 14, 2019 | Report No: PIDISDSC24991
### BASIC INFORMATION

**A. Basic Project Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Parent Project ID (if any)</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>P164932</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary Education Teaching for Results (P164932)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Estimated Appraisal Date</th>
<th>Estimated Board Date</th>
<th>Practice Area (Lead)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>Apr 15, 2019</td>
<td>Jul 02, 2019</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Financing Instrument</th>
<th>Borrower(s)</th>
<th>Implementing Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Project Financing</td>
<td>Liberia Ministry of Finance and Development Planning</td>
<td>Liberia Ministry of Education</td>
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**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

Improve access to and quality of secondary education in target areas and science subjects.

### PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

#### SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (US$ Million)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Project Cost</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Financing</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>of which IBRD/IDA</td>
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<td>Financing Gap</td>
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#### DETAILS

**World Bank Group Financing**

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<td>IDA Credit</td>
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B - Partial Assessment

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Have the Safeguards oversight and clearance functions been transferred to the Practice Manager? (Will not be disclosed)

No

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The Republic of Liberia, covering approximately 111,000 square kilometers on the West coast of Africa, is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.** Its population of approximately 4.5 million people is young, with over 70 percent under the age of 35. This is largely driven by a high fertility rate, estimated at 4.7 children per woman in 2015. The country is comprised of 15 counties ranging in population size from one hundred thousand to over one million persons.¹ Despite its abundance of natural resources (e.g., iron ore, diamonds, gold, natural rubber, timber, and agriculture-conducive land) it remains among the world’s poorest countries, with a recorded gross national income (GNI) per capita of US$370² in 2016. Historically, Liberia has relied heavily on remittances, which have steadily been increasing and reached US$549 million in 2016, accounting for 27 percent of GDP, the largest percentage of any country across Sub-Saharan Africa.³

2. **Before the Ebola outbreak, Liberia experienced rapid economic growth following the post-conflict boost.** After having been devastated by civil wars from 1989-1997 and 1999-2003, the annual GDP growth averaged at 7 percent between 2009-13, among the highest growth rates in the world at that time. However, Liberia saw its economy and people ravaged once again by an Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) crisis in 2014-15. These incidents, along with a protracted slump in global commodity prices since 2015, created an economic slump and exacerbated Liberia’s underlying development challenges.

3. **In addition to the macro-economic issues, variations in poverty rates underscore the country’s uneven development as access to healthcare, education, and public services are marked by acute rural-urban disparities.** More than half the population (51 percent) were living in poverty in 2016, thus unable to meet their basic needs. Economic inequality is deeply rooted in the bifurcated structure of the Liberian economy where formal economic activity is focused on the export of commodities (i.e., rubber and iron ore) and thus subject to the macro-economic uncertainty, and informal activity (e.g., subsistence agriculture, piecework, small scale shops and services), in which the majority of Liberians are engaged, does not lead to high productivity. Not surprising, poverty is higher in in rural areas where most households are farmers and are far from key infrastructure, markets, and public institutions. There are also pockets of poverty in urban areas, largely in the informal sector, often among those involved in microenterprises.

² Data sources including the HEIS 2016 and ASYCUDA indicate that Liberia’s official annual GDP of about US$2 billion underestimates its actual level of economic activity. Revisions to the national accounts are expected in mid-2018, but preliminary IMF figures suggest that nominal GDP for 2016 will be approximately 1.6 times higher than the current official estimate. However, even if this revision occurs, Liberia will remain a low-income country with a GNI per capita close to the levels of Afghanistan and Guinea-Bissau.
³ Private Transfers, Remittances and Welfare in Liberia (draft report; June 2018)
4. **Social factors compound the vulnerability of Liberia’s population, especially its young children who are often experience malnutrition, poor health, disability, and/or food insecurity.** Human development outcomes remain poor – with the country ranking as one of the lowest (177 out of 188 countries) on the Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2015). Challenges stem largely from civil wars and their aftermath that the country is still trying to address. For example, fourteen years after the end of the conflict, during which rape was used as a weapon of war, the population continues to experience high incidence of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.⁴

5. **Liberia’s new government has put human development among its priorities.** The new administration has declared a commitment to fight corruption, promote private sector development, and invest in accelerated job creation for its youth. Its poverty-focused development agenda emphasizes economic inclusion and improved access to quality education. The Government has also expressed its commitment to delivering the Getting to Best Education Sector Plan (G2B-ESP), a strategy developed for 2017-2021 with priorities that include: strengthening access and quality of education at all levels; improving efficiency, effectiveness and condition of service for teachers; improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education; and strengthening accountability and management systems at the central and local levels.

**Sectoral and Institutional Context**

6. **Liberia’s education is based on a 3-6-3-3 system.** The first three years refer to pre-primary years targeting children ages 3-5. Primary education includes grades 1-6 while grades 7-9 comprise the junior secondary (lower high school) level, and senior secondary (upper high school) covers grades 10-12. Basic education, covering primary and junior secondary education, is compulsory and tuition free. Entry into junior secondary school is automatic after successful completion of grade 6 (end of primary). However, entry into senior secondary school is contingent on passing the Liberia Junior High School Certificate Examination (LJHSCE) set by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) at the end of grade 9. At the senior secondary level, students can pursue a general education track, with a curriculum focused on preparation for university level studies, or a vocational and technical education and training (TVET) track, typically provided by TVET institutions. Those who pursue general education must take the West African Senior Secondary Certification Examination (WASSCE) at the end of grade 12 to progress onto tertiary education (universities, poly-technics, and teacher training institutes).

7. The table below highlights key indicators of the Liberian education sector, including the breakdown of student enrollment by level and profile of service providers and distribution of the teaching workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Education Sector at a Glance</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>539,660</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>655,049</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>272,832</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11,871</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1,479,412</td>
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<tr>
<td>273,670</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>334,536</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>143,675</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>6324</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>758,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴According to Liberia’s Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, a total of 892 sexual and gender-based violence cases were reported between January and September 2017, of which 506 were rapes, and 475 involved children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>265,990</th>
<th>49%</th>
<th>320,513</th>
<th>49%</th>
<th>129,157</th>
<th>47%</th>
<th>5547</th>
<th>47%</th>
<th>721,207</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>116%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools 5</td>
<td>5080</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>5178</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>2425</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>2494</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1555</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>14,311</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30,438</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>18,140</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>6166</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>24,176</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>16,436</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>8145</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>6262</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1704</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>7160</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19,191</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>13,113</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>7151</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11,247</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5027</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8. In the public sector, overall Government spending on education hovered at 12-14 percent between FY2012-FY2017. In the FY2018/19 fiscal year Government budget, US$84 million or approximately 15 percent of government expenditures was allocated to education, channeled through a number of sources including the Ministry of Education (MoE) (US$45 million), other government learning institutions, and other line ministries that contribute to the sector. These figures generally put Liberia among the bottom one-third of African countries in terms of public spending on education as a proportion of its budget. The government does not have a clear formula for allocating resources to levels of education, nor does it clearly track education expenditure by sub-sector. Using the share of teacher salaries as a proxy, the Education Sector Analysis estimated 2014/15 sub-allocations as follows: primary receiving 40 percent, junior and senior secondary receiving 13 percent, TVET institutions receiving 5 percent and higher education getting about 30 percent of the allocation.

5 Government schools are operated and financed by the Government of Liberia. Private Schools are run by secular individuals and/or groups, including private sector organizations and corporations, without financial support from the Government. Mission schools are run by institutions with religious affiliations and funded through tuition and fees, but receive some support from church organizations or religious non-government organizations. Community schools are are often prevalent in rural and remote areas, and run by communities, with the expectations that the government will eventually take over the responsibilities for managing and financing the school, including teachers. (source: ESA 2015)

6 This number is based on the schools who submitted the annual school census survey. There is likelihood that the number of TVET institutions is much higher, closer to 140 however, data on these institutions is not available or verifiable (School Census 2015/16)
Recent achievements:

9. **Since its civil war era, Liberia has seen clear progress on education achievements.** Between 1981 and 2015, the number of students enrolled in the education system (ECE to senior secondary level) increased from 300,000 to 1.5 million students. The primary completion rate rose from 43 percent in 2007 to 54 percent in 2013 and correlations between educational attainment and key indicators were demonstrated in the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (fertility rates (lower), contraception use (higher), women’s age at first childbirth (higher), use of vitamin A supplements (higher), and HIV testing (more likely to get tested)). From 2007-08 to 2015-16, the teaching workforce more than doubled in size, from 26,359 to 63,396 teachers. Over the same timeframe, the share of qualified ECE and primary teachers increased from 29 percent of teachers to 59 percent.

10. **The increase in demand for education has fueled the need for human development investments which Liberia has met with a strong reform agenda.** Since 2003, the MoE with the support of various development partners has been rebuilding and strengthening the formal and non-formal educational systems. In 2011, the authorities adopted the Liberia Agenda for Transformation and Education Reform Act which, among many updates, introduced decentralization of school management and establishment of school boards at county levels. In 2016, the MoE with support from the World Bank and other development partners developed the Getting to Best Education Sector Plan (G2B ESP) to cover the period from 2017-2021.

Key Challenges facing the sector:

11. **Despite substantial progress in rebuilding a system ravaged by war, Liberia’s education suffers from challenges at all levels.** In 2015, the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) at the primary and secondary school levels stood at 87 percent and 47 percent, respectively. However, the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) was just 48 percent at the primary level and 26 percent at the secondary level largely due to out of school kids and substantial overage enrolment. An average of 20 percent of school-age children have never attended school. This figure reached 63 percent in the year after the Ebola crisis. Among those who do enroll, many drop out and/or never transition to junior secondary education. Many others are enrolled but overage for their grade - a persistent problem that impedes effective teaching and learning as overage children are less likely to attend school regularly, more likely to face academic, social and disciplinary challenges, and more likely to drop out. Congruently, education is also linked to socio-economic status, exposing inequities in access. Among wealthier households and households in urban areas, 48 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 11 attend primary school, compared to 26 percent of children from poorer households and households in rural areas. Gender disparities are also evident, with the median young woman from a poor, rural household having on average just 1.8 years of formal education.\(^7\) It is, therefore, no surprise that unemployment is especially high among young women and is associated with a series of interrelated issues, including early marriage/childbearing, lower levels of education and skills, and social norms that emphasize women’s reproductive roles over income generation.

12. **For those enrolled, the quality of services seems low, and thus learning is severely delayed.** In a 2010/11 oral reading fluency sub-section of the 2011 EGRA assessment, nearly 35 percent of grade 2 students and 17 percent of grade 3 students could not read a single word\(^8\). The results are equally grim at junior and senior secondary levels. In 2014, LJHCE

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\(^7\) Demographic and Health Survey 2013; Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2014-2015.

and LSHCE pass rates were 59 percent and 48 percent, respectively, with nearly no one receiving highest marks on the LSHCE.

13. Apart from access and quality issues, the education system also suffers from weak systemic governance structures and limited accountability mechanisms. Data on the sector is not regularly collected and schools are not often monitored, making it difficult to understand and address key issues affecting the sector’s performance. The assignment of schools to district education officers is often uneven rendering effective monitoring and reporting on schools somewhat impractical (459 schools for one District Education Officer (DEO) in Paynesville, Monserrator in comparison to 54 schools to one DEO in Klay, Bomi County).

Secondary Education

14. At the secondary education level, main challenges become more acute, specifically in the areas of: (a) access; (b) quality and relevance; and (c) governance. Collectively, these challenges are driven by limited supply of schools and/or poor conditions of school infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers and learning materials, ineffective management and a lack of a strong accountability chain.

15. Access: In the 2015/16 school census, Liberia’s secondary GER stood at just 47 percent compared to a primary GER of 87 percent and an ECE GER of 116 percent. Thus, access to secondary education is a significant challenge for some groups, namely the poorest quintiles, those in rural areas and female students. The ESA estimated that fewer than 15 percent of school-age girls in rural areas transitioned to secondary school in 2014/15. Further, despite the increase in coverage, large areas of Liberia still have limited or no access to secondary education. Six out of fifteen counties together have fewer than five percent of all senior secondary schools. Twenty-four districts (out of about 90) cannot offer senior secondary schooling as there are no senior high schools. On the other hand, four districts in Montserrado county (home to one-third of the Liberian population) have over half the junior and senior secondary schools in the country.

16. The transition rate from primary to junior secondary education is low and further highlights the inequities in access. In 2015, the Gross Intake Ratio (GIR) for Grade 7, was 44.4 percent, despite primary and junior high school being compulsory and free as per the Education Reform Act of 2011. Available data show a steady dropout of students through the primary grades that continues up the chain. The lack of transition to secondary education is particularly marked for girls and children from rural counties. Adverse effects of poverty, school costs and fees, influence of household economic and income generating activities, and distance to school all seem to negatively affect retention. In some counties, there are no schools offering senior secondary education and thus very few are able to travel the necessary distances. For example, River Gee reported 11,112 students enrolled in primary schools, but only merely 449 students enrolled in senior high schools (and 14 teachers) in 2015, likely because there are not schools for most students to matriculate to at higher levels.

17. Many secondary schools lack basic infrastructure and amenities such as permanent classrooms, access to clean water and latrines. The Secondary Education Sector Analysis estimated that over one-third of Liberia’s secondary schools do not have solid construction, with percentages being as high as 80 percent in some counties. Even classrooms of solid

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9 Liberia Education Statistics Report 2015-16. Solid construction (made with cement blocks) is one of four categories of classrooms in Liberia’s school census. The other three are semi-solid (made with mud blocks); makeshift/temporary (made of mats and sticks) and open air (under a tree, no structure).

10
construction, overcrowding is an issue with student-classroom ratio averaging 73:1 in public high schools. Nationally, 23 percent of all schools do not have any handwashing facilities. Further, just 56 percent of school toilets are functional and only 24.5 percent overall are designated for female students, which factors significantly on deployment of female teachers and enrollment of female students. Toilet-student ratios are high: roughly 1:150 in junior secondary school and 1:95 at senior secondary school level (the latter is lower ratio due to lower enrollment, not more facilities).

18. **Quality and relevance**: The quality of Liberia’s education system ultimately manifests itself through learning outcomes. These outcomes, even when one discounts for the 2014-16 years as outliers impacted by the Ebola crisis, have been trending downward, especially in the science and mathematics subjects (see figure 1). Overall, few students (less than 10) achieve the higher classification of passes (First Division and Second Division) in the WAEC 12th grade examinations. The figure highlights that even as the number of examinees increases and more students are able to sit for the examinations, proportionally, fewer students are passing.

![Figure 1. Performance on WAEC Examinations in Key Subjects 2014; 2016](image)

19. Among those who sat for the WAEC exams in 2017, 59 percent of male and 57 percent of female students passed (see figure below).\(^\text{11}\) Though it should be noted, that in non-government secondary schools, where female students outnumber male counterparts, passing rates were higher among female students.\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^{11}\) In 2018, the country adopted the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), also administered by WAEC. A total of 33,979 grade 12 students from 600 high schools sat for this exam. Among them, only 11,544 candidates (35%) successfully passed.

\(^{12}\) The World Bank team and Ministry of Education are undertaking a deeper analysis of secondary education using latest data and will seek to identify correlations driving the variances in performance of female students vis-à-vis male counterparts.
20. **Non-government schools significantly out-performed government schools in WAEC examinations.** The LJHSE pass rate for public schools was 52 percent compared to 73 percent for non-government schools. Similarly, the pass rate for LSHSCE examination was 44 percent for public schools and 63 percent for non-government schools. This highlights the poor quality of education provided in public schools.

21. **Factors contributing to poor learning outcomes in secondary education are yet to be fully analyzed, but available data suggest three main sources of adverse effects on learning.** First, teacher quality presents a major impediment. Overall, only a third of secondary teachers meet the minimum qualification for their position and only 21 percent of secondary teachers have a university education. Female teachers, representing 7 percent and 10 percent of the workforce in public and community schools, respectively, and are more likely to be under-qualified. Mathematics and science teachers are severely under-represented and many have not received any professional development or continued education since entering the service. The national Student Teacher Ratio (STR) in junior high school and senior high school is 13:1 and 16:1, respectively, but the low number of qualified teachers means a Pupil Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) of 39:1 for junior secondary schools and 48:1 for senior secondary schools. Additionally, inequitable distribution of qualified teachers in the country further contributes to the challenge. Disadvantaged counties are unable to attract and retain qualified teachers, leading to a lopsided distribution in the country. Rural and low-population counties are severely lacking in teachers. In the 2015-16 school census, Montserrado county registered 4224 teachers serving in senior secondary schools, while River Cess and River Gee registered 16 and 14 teachers, respectively. The figure below highlights the severe variance in student-qualified teacher ratio in secondary schools across the country.

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13 For teaching junior high school, teachers need at least a B certificate and an associate’s degree from a teacher training institute. For senior high school, teachers need bachelor’s degree in education or, as proposed in the Educator Management Policy, a bachelor’s degree in relevant subject plus an A certificate from a pedagogical training program. This policy is not yet finalized and the annual school census form continues to collect data on the AA certificate which was used previously. The current B certificate is a two-year in-service program.

14 The annual school census asks which subject/s (Language, Mathematics, Sciences, Social Studies and Other) the teacher is teaching rather than the subjects the teacher is trained to teach (e.g. major and minor subject).
22. **Second, Liberia’s current secondary education is outdated and does not meet today’s standards of both higher education and labor market.** Liberia’s secondary education curriculum was last updated in 2011 to include national and international syllabuses. It is compulsory for all public and community schools and is widely used by mission and private schools as well. In addition, WAEC historically publishes annual syllabuses for LJHSCE and LSHSCE examinations which schools are supposed to use to prepare students for exams. The national curriculum syllabuses are not widely available (for example, they are not on the MoE website and not distributed to newly qualified teachers) but the WASSCE syllabuses can be downloaded from the WAEC Liberia website or purchased from the WAEC office in Monrovia. In 2017, Liberia stopped administering LSHSCE and in 2018, 12th graders were required to sit only for the WASSCE. Many students who sat for this new exam reported a disconnect between class content and exam questions, which may explain the low national passing rate (35 percent).

23. **Lastly, functioning laboratories or libraries, two critical elements of hands-on learning and research, are missing from most senior secondary schools in Liberia.** Of the 640 (junior and senior) public and community secondary schools across the country, only 15 percent report having a functioning science laboratory (with equipment and supplies or in use), with varying disparities across counties. Only 22 percent of Montserrado County secondary schools have functioning laboratories- while 10 of the remaining 14 counties barely have any (Maryland has 2 percent, and River Gee has none). Without these basic facilities, Liberian students are graduating senior secondary schools with qualifications based solely on memorization and textbook knowledge, and not surprisingly struggling to excel in examinations and the labor market.

24. **The rigidity of the Secondary School general education curriculum has historically funneled students down academic paths for which they may not be most suitable.** The Education Reform Act of 2011 stipulates that a minimum of one school in each county should offer vocational skills and job apprenticeships to increase opportunities for students but this does not seem to be the case consistently. Furthermore, data on TVET in Liberia is limited and the services offered seem fragmented and outdated. In 2016, 148 institutions were formally registered as TVET institutions, of which 74 percent were non-state providers. Many institutions do not participate in the school census (either for lack of awareness or because they fall under the purview of the Ministry of Youth and Sport) and there has been little research carried out.
to understand the relevance of skills offered to job market demands. Anecdotally, however, there seems to be a significant mismatch between the skills offered by TVET providers and the skills required by employers or for self-employment. Key challenges include limited infrastructure and equipment, non-existent access to continued training for TVET instructors and a lack of standardized market-based curricula. The European Union has been working with the Government of Liberia to reform the TVET sector – specifically working to reform the curriculum and to upgrade key TVET institutions. In general, secondary education, the Government also plans to update curriculum and introduce vocational learning opportunities in selected subjects to equip secondary graduates with job-specific skills in selected subjects.

25. **Governance:** Weak management, monitoring and accountability mechanism are adversely affecting secondary education performance. At the core of these issues is a lack of quality standards or benchmarks against which secondary schools can measure their performance. District Education Officers (DEOs) are tasked with monitoring secondary schools yet do not have tools (or forms) to use during monitoring visits to assess and report on school quality systemically. Additionally, there are significant breakages in the accountability chain as most secondary schools report not receiving any inspection or monitoring visits. As a result, there is a lack of awareness of enrollment, student and teacher absenteeism and the age cohort of students across the sector and in schools. The EMIS tools (namely the school census) are outdated and do not capture nuanced data about senior secondary education. In the area of learning outcomes, schools do not always receive detailed information on subject-level examination performance of their individual students to understand how to help better the incoming cohort of candidates. Lastly, school leadership and management qualifications are not yet unified across the sector. Most schools report active school management committees (SMCs) and parent teacher associations (PTAs) but data is limited on the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Such weak governance and management chains eventually adversely affect learning outcomes in as much as proper incentives to focus on quality teaching are not in place for providers or the leadership.

26. To help address these challenges, the Proposed project will contribute to the implementation of the Government’s Education Sector Plan covering 2017-2021 as well as recently proposed ten-year strategy for education transformation spanning 2018-2028 (introduced by the new administration and building on the ESP). TI will focusing on its four key priorities namely, equipped infrastructure, teachers’ development, curriculum amendments and school management and leadership.

**Relationship to CPF**

27. The World Bank-Liberia Country Partnership Framework (CPF) covering fiscal years 2019 to 2023 supports interventions in education, youth skills-development and employment, and healthcare. Education-sector priorities include closing gaps in pre-primary and primary education, improving the quality of secondary education services, reaching young people outside the formal education system, and addressing gender-based violence, much of which is perpetrated within schools. In that regard, the CPF has identified “Building Human Capital to Seize New Economic Opportunities” as the second of four primary pillars of the strategy. Under this pillar, the CPF has three objectives aligned with governmental priorities and Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) recommendations for bolstering human capital.

28. Pillar II of the Liberia Country Partnership Framework is focused on “Building Human Capital to Seize Economic Opportunities”. Addressing that pillar, the CPF has indicated it will support the government’s efforts through interventions that strengthen primary education. It will aim to focus on teacher training and administrative reforms to promote accountability and transparency, strive to improve secondary education by boosting the supply of qualified teachers and
high-quality learning materials in key fields such as science and mathematics, and a focus on disadvantaged regions and communities. In that regard, this project supports the Bank strategy as laid out in the CPP by targeting such deficiencies in education access and in the quality of education services.

C. Proposed Project Development Objective(s)

29. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to: improve access to and quality of secondary education in math, science and vocational skills.

30. It will aim to benefit over 100,000 students currently enrolled in secondary education schools across the country, with a targeted focus on female students. 15 Additionally, it will benefit approximately 2500 teachers, principals, district and county education officers (at least 50 percent of whom will be female) through better qualifications and training, reformed curriculum, and investments for better deployment.16

Key Results (From PCN)

1. Increase in the number of students enrolled in targeted secondary schools (number)
2. Increase in the passing rates in mathematics and science subjects in targeted secondary schools (percentage)
3. Decrease in the qualified teacher-student-ratio at secondary level in targeted secondary schools (ratio)
4. Increase in the rate of senior secondary schools reporting through the School Quality Assessment (percentage)

Results number 1 and 2 will be disaggregated by gender.

D. Concept Description

31. The proposed project focuses on secondary education, namely enhancing the learning environment, developing the mathematics and science fields, expanding opportunities for young people by mainstreaming vocational curriculum into the general education track and improving governance of the education system. It would be national in scale, although some interventions would focus on areas and groups with greatest challenges. This would be the first IDA-financed investment in Liberia’s education sector in over 10 years and the first Project targeting secondary education. Its design will address specific service delivery challenges and use a result-based financing modality with technical assistance, building on the experience of the GPE-financed “Getting to Best in Education” Project managed by the World Bank.

32. The Government is preparing a comprehensive strategy for secondary education that would build on the priorities identified in the ESP, and articulate key interventions at secondary level. As such, this plan identifies key challenges in the education sector, policy directions and key implementation activities by implementing agency. This, along with a secondary education analysis currently underway, will serve as the foundation for World Bank support.

15 In 2016, 105,875 students were enrolled in senior secondary schools in Liberia. This number will likely show a slight increase when the 2016/17 school census becomes available in fall of 2018. The number of beneficiaries will be updated at that time.

16 In an effort to improve the representation of female students in secondary schools, key interventions have been proposed that reduce barriers, increase accommodations, and increase female role models (teachers at secondary levels).
33. **The proposed project will consist of four components**: (1) Improving the learning environment and incentives for teaching in targeted secondary schools; (2) Improving the quality and relevance of secondary education; (3) Improving governance through better monitoring and accountability; and (4) Project monitoring and management.

**Component 1 – Improving the learning environment and incentives for teaching in targeted secondary schools (US$9 million)**

34. This component will finance much-needed renovation of target schools to bring classrooms to a functional level, and support limited construction of new classrooms in overcrowded schools serving large populations. In addition, financing will be provided for refurbishment and/or construction of latrines, specifically in schools with low female enrollment as a means of reducing obstacles to their enrollment. Finally, to ensure qualified teachers are also available in target schools, the construction and maintenance of teacher housing in hard-to-recruit areas will be financed and managed through enhanced monitoring interventions. A full infrastructure needs assessment will be carried out by the Project during preparation to identify and prioritize areas with greatest need. **Financing of this component will be based on DLIs focused on the following milestones:**

- Number of units constructed (classrooms, latrines and teacher housing)
- Qualified teacher -Student ratio in targeted schools

**Component 2 – Improving the quality and relevance of secondary education (US$10 million)**

35. This component will focus on enhancing the quality and relevance of secondary education by training teachers in science and mathematics content and pedagogy, establishing laboratories and mobile libraries, and strengthening secondary education curriculum. Teacher training will include hands-on practical to upgrade their skills in laboratory settings. In addition, teachers will be provided teaching materials to facilitate their instruction, and to increase opportunities for learning. A subcomponent will finance the establishment of science laboratories and mobile libraries in secondary schools equipped with qualified educators and teaching supplies to allow students opportunities to advance their knowledge in science studies and to be exposed to research scenarios and methodologies. Further, under this component, support will be provided to create more opportunities for developing job relevant skills by expanding the general education curriculum to include vocational skills development. **Financing of this component will be based on DLIs that would focus on the following milestones:**

- Number of teachers trained in Mathematics, Science and Vocational pedagogy and practicum education
- Number of teachers with upgraded qualifications through teacher training in science and mathematics
- Percentage of schools having access to mobile libraries and laboratories

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17 The Project team is exploring short-term measures to address immediate gaps in science and mathematics education. As such, discussions are underway with the Government and partners about selecting university graduates from these fields to serve as para-educators in the shared laboratories and libraries.
Component 3 -- Improving Governance Through Better Monitoring and Accountability ($3 million)

36. This component aims to improve governance in the sector through better monitoring of secondary schools and increasing accountability at the school, district, and county levels. It will focus on developing quality standards for secondary education service delivery and supporting the MoE through county and district offices in enforcing them, with a view towards helping schools come up to, and maintain quality levels. **Financing of this component will be based on DLIs that would aim to achieve the following milestones:**
   - Number of secondary schools tested against standards developed and adopted.
   - Use of established regular school data collection mechanisms and feedback loops at the school, district and county levels.

Component 4 Project Monitoring and Management (tentatively US$3 million)

37. This component would cover specific technical assistance and training needs for project implementation and monitoring and evaluation (including third party validation, surveys, and impact evaluations). The Project Delivery Team established in the MOE would lead the coordination of all interventions financed by the Project, under the direction of the MoE. The team would also be responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress under the project as well as undertaking relevant communication activities to ensure achievements are impactful and highlighted. Throughout project implementation, this component would support evaluation of key activities and ensure proper measures are taken in the event of restructuring or minor modifications. The design of this component and the estimated budget will be finalized during pre-appraisal after needs are identified.

38. **Project Financing.** The proposed Project would be financed through a US$25 million Investment Project Financing with Disbursement Linked Indicators (IPF with DLIS) and would have four components: Components 1-3 would use a Results Based Financing (RBF) modality to support the implementation of the Getting to Best Education Sector Strategy over a period of five years. Disbursements would be made against selected (eligible) key budget line items of the MOE’s annual budgets referred to as Eligible Expenditure Programs (EEPs), up to a capped absolute amount. Disbursements would be conditional on pre-specified results, as measured by Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs).\(^\text{18}\) Under Component 4, IDA funds will be based on regularly updated procurement and training plans, which would be reviewed by the World Bank.

39. This approach has several advantages. It will provide incentives for the government to take actions tied to key milestones since disbursements are linked to achievement of measurable performance indicators. It will also promote the use of country financial management systems and build an incentive structure that shifts the focus from inputs to outputs and subsequently outcomes. Where applicable, technical assistance will be built into the project design to ensure MoE has access to knowledge and expertise it needs in implementing interventions and policy reforms.

SAFEGUARDS

**A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)**

\(^\text{18}\) DLIs will be defined in more details and agreed upon over the course of project preparation. Selected DLIs reflect the priority elements in the Government’s education sector strategy and would be critical to achieving the project’s development outcomes.
The project will be national in scale, with emphasis on areas with major challenges. The exact beneficiary schools and locations are yet to be defined. So, it is not possible to describe project locations and salient physical characteristics relevant to safeguard analysis. It is however expected that project activities will be implemented in existing school facilities-areas that may already be influenced by anthropogenic activities. A full infrastructure needs assessment will be carried out by the Project during preparation to identify and prioritize areas with greatest need.

B. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

The establishment of a Project Delivery team embedded in the Ministry and dedicated to day-to-day Project administration and monitoring will mitigate implementation and sustainability risks. Technical Assistance (TA) will be used for specific subcomponents and high-risk activities including any construction components will be delivered through Results-based financing (RBF). Pilots will be relied upon to test interventions, planned research or previous experience (such as the Early Learning Systems Research Program and previous GPE-funded school grants) will be referenced, and risk mitigation strategies for subcomponents will be implemented (including strong engagement with the National Teachers’ Association of Liberia.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Asferachew Abate Abebe, Environmental Specialist
Gloria Malia Mahama, Social Specialist
Sekou Abou Kamara, Environmental Specialist
Akhilesh Ranjan, Social Specialist

D. Policies that might apply

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<tr>
<th>Safeguard Policies</th>
<th>Triggered?</th>
<th>Explanation (Optional)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Component 1 of the project includes minor renovation works and construction of new classrooms, teacher housing, and sanitary facilities in selected areas. The extent of infrastructure need and the exact locations of renovation and new construction works are not known at this stage. However, it is obvious that activities proposed under Component 1 have the potential to generate negative impacts on the environment as well as expose workers and communities to construction related health and safety risks and hazards. An ESMF will be prepared that outlines, at a minimum, project safeguard implementation arrangement, procedures for screening project activities, and relevant environmental policies and requirements. ESMPs may be required after the project are activities are finalised, and the exact locations established. This will follow the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not affect natural habitats. The project will involve rehabilitation and construction works in existing school facilities- areas that are predominantly devoid of any natural vegetation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forests OP/BP 4.36</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project activities will not involve investment in forest or protected areas or related forestry activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pest Management OP 4.09</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not finance the procurement, storage, and transport of pesticide or pesticide application materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The exact project locations are not known at this stage. However, construction and rehabilitation works will be carried out at existing school facilities where discovery of physical cultural resources highly unlikely. For precaution, the project ESMF will include a generic chance find procedure which the construction contractor will be required to revise and update for reporting chance finds discovered during rehabilitation and construction works.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>This policy does not apply to the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>This policy has been triggered as a matter of precaution. Exact locations for construction and rehabilitation works are not known at this stage. Under Component 1, in addition to financing minor renovation works, limited construction of new classrooms and ancillary facilities such as teacher housing and sanitary facilities will be undertaken. Detailed infrastructure need assessment will be carried out to establish the infrastructure need and land take needs, if any. An RPF will be developed to facilitate project preparation, while a RAP or ARAP may be developed during implementation when the need arises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>The project will not finance rehabilitation of existing dams or construction of new dams or rely on the performance an existing dam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Project activities will not affect international waterways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Project activities will not be carried out in disputed areas.</td>
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E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

March 25, 2019

Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS safeguards analysis will be completed by March 2019

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## APPROVAL

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## Approved By

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