Tuvalu Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)
Department of Education

DRAFT 1

ENVIRONMENTAL and SOCIAL SCREENING

Tuvalu Learning Project (TuLP)
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Introduction
The Government of Tuvalu is seeking finance from the World Bank to implement the Tuvalu Learning Project (TuLP), with the involvement of the Tuvalu Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). The Project is designed to improve the school readiness of Tuvaluan children, improve reading skills of children in primary school and strengthen education system management in Tuvalu. The main beneficiaries of the project are the Tuvalu Department of Education and various stakeholders including students and teachers.

The proposed project builds on the analytical work carried out under the recently closed Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL) Program (2014-2019), funded by the Global Partnership for Education and executed by the World Bank in Tuvalu and other countries in the Pacific. In Tuvalu, PEARL carried out surveys of school readiness and early literacy, and piloted interventions to provide the government with evidence of what works to improve school readiness and early grade reading skills of children. Based on this evidence, the government developed a Tuvalu Early Education Roadmap 2019-2023 to scale up the successes of PEARL, and do more to strengthen children’s early experiences, both in preparing them for formal schooling, and improving their reading skills through improved teaching practices in the early grades of preschool and primary education.

As part of the requirements of the submission to the World Bank, the Government of Tuvalu is required to prepare environmental and social assessment in accordance with the bank’s Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). This document presents this assessment, resulting in a Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) for the Project.

Project Description

The proposed project would scale up the Pacific early Age readiness and learning (PEARL) activities across all early childhood care and education (ECCE) centers and primary schools in Tuvalu (18 ECCE centers and 9 primary schools). School-based interventions would focus on the first 3/4 years of primary education. However, given the small size of the education sector and the urgency of building human capital across all beneficiaries, the TULEP would include support beyond these grades and the primary level and include support at the upper primary and secondary grades. System-level strengthening, research and policy support would cover the entire education sector. Such system-wide activities would support assessments, policy reviews (e.g., curriculum, teacher policy), survey/research (e.g., stunting), teacher training (short term professional development) and school leadership strengthening. In addition, the proposed project may also support key actions related to improving school safety and resilience, such as inclusive evacuation procedures aligned with the proposed Development Policy Operation and an assessment of school infrastructure, initiated with support from the WB Pacific Disaster Risk Management team and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

The implementing agency for this project is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEYS) with support from the Ministry of Health, and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Finance. The activities under the project will be managed by a team led by the Director of Education. The Ministry of Finance will support in the areas of procurement and financial reporting.
The project is comprised of 4 components:

**Component 1: Strengthening early childhood care and education and school readiness for all children**
Component 1 would support early childhood education and community engagement to improve school readiness of all children in Tuvalu. Outreach to communities and parents is central to improve health and education outcomes. This component would scale up school readiness activities piloted under the PEARL Program to improve play-based learning in all pre-schools; sensitize communities, churches and parents on the importance of early childhood stimulation, health, nutrition and education. Further study on the scale and causes of stunting among young children (under Component 3) would also inform future messaging and targeted interventions under this project or those supported by other development partners (e.g., UNICEF). The ECCE centers, through playgroup interventions, encourage this linkage and help sensitize teachers, caregivers and parents in child stimulation, nutrition, importance of education, and inclusivity.

**Sub-component 1.1: Strengthen the delivery of ECCE services.** This sub-component would provide: (i) training of preschool teachers, parents and communities on playgroup methodology (play-based learning with caregivers and young children) and implementation of the ECCE curriculum with continuous mentoring support through lesson observations; (ii) conduct weekly playgroups at all 18 ECCE centers across the country; (iii) provide playgroup kits and pre-school learning materials/resources to the centers annually; (iv) develop and provide age-appropriate reading resources to ECCE centers, including training for teachers on writing and illustrating books themselves; and (v) support regular nurse visits to ECCE centers to carry out child health and hygiene monitoring and discussions with parents.

**Sub-component 1.2: Conduct public awareness program and community outreach.** This sub-component aims to raise the understanding of parents, caregivers and community leaders on the importance of early childhood stimulation, preschool, nutrition and health for school readiness. The outreach campaigns would include surveys and feedback from communities on attendance and barriers to access. In addition to focus groups, radio, community and church meetings, the project would support child protection and positive behaviour management strategies as well as messaging for inclusive education and disability screening. The awareness program would also support a “Read with your Child” campaign to encourage community support for a culture of reading.

**Component 2: Improving Local Language Literacy Outcomes in all Primary Schools**
Component 2 would support local language literacy in the early grades to ensure improved reading, understanding and writing skills. All teachers in grades 1-3 would be trained in the PEARL methodology for targeted instruction (scripted lessons) delivered daily in all primary schools. Regular coaching of teachers and student feedback are used to support teacher effectiveness. In addition, classrooms will have access to PEARL materials and supplementary reading materials. An e-reader pilot may be explored to significantly expand access to reading materials. A DFAT program is currently supporting English language instruction in the same grades and would start a program in teaching numeracy next year. The bilingual dual language approach requires consistent terminology and teaching methods in order to be mutually reinforcing and not cause confusion among teachers. This component could also offer remedial activities to students to strengthen literacy beyond the early grades.

This component would provide resources to improve reading in all primary schools through: (i) the
implementation of the PEARL reading program, including teacher training, teacher coaching and development of learning materials; (ii) implementation of remedial and catch up literacy classes in primary; and (iii) pilot the use of technology for distance education and expanded reading materials (e.g. e-readers).

**Sub-component 2.1: Implementation of the Tuvalu PEARL Reading Program (years 1-3)** to roll out Year 1 materials in all schools across the country, develop Year 2 and Year 3 materials, pilot and implement in all schools, and train teachers and coaches for roll out.
- Carry out in-service training for all teachers and school principals, head teachers and assistant head teachers in PEARL approach for Years 1-3;
- Provision of teacher guides (scripted lessons), student work books, classroom library books, basic instructional materials and equipment;
- Coaching and mentoring of all teachers implementing the reading program; and
- Develop a Gana Tuvalu (Tuvaluan language) Dictionary

**Sub-component 2.2: Remedial and catch up literacy activities for primary and secondary school students** to apply teaching methods from PEARL and DFAT-supported literacy program to ensure literacy across all primary grades.

**Sub-component 2.3: Use of technology to strengthen teaching and learning.** This sub-component would encourage ed-tech innovations to support teachers and students. This includes: (i) aligning e-learning resources and e-learning library to the curriculum and context; (ii) an e-reader pilot to expand number of reading materials available to students in both Gana Tuvalu and English; (iii) technology for distance education and for coaching of teachers; and (iv) Information Technology Centers for Schools.

**Component 3: Research, Learning Assessment and Policy Review**
This component would provide resources to strengthen the evidence base of what works in improving learning in Tuvalu through: (i) strategic research, surveys and analysis; (ii) strengthening the policy framework for education through key policy reviews and operationalization of newly adopted policies; and (iii) measurements of student learning and school readiness.

**Sub-component 3.1: Strategic research, surveys and analysis.** The lack of data and information available to inform government, community and development partner decisions around investments and priorities in education requires attention to ensure future decisions are based on evidence, including investments under the TuLEP. The knowledge gaps the project will make efforts to fill will be through: (a) a study on teacher and student absenteeism; (b) a gender analysis of enrolment and retention to understand why boys are dropping out of school in greater numbers than girls, and why boys are underperforming compared to girls, to inform government decisions, some of which could be supported by the project, to improve educational outcomes for boys; and (c) a workforce planning exercise to inform improved management of the MEYS staff. The project will fund the TA required for activities under this subcomponent, workshop and travel costs required for collection of data and information, and costs of dissemination of results and key messages.

**Sub-component 3.2: Strengthening the education policy framework.** The MEYS currently has very few policies to inform the activities it carries out and the responsibilities under its mandate. The project will support activities to: (a) develop recommendations to improve health and nutrition of preschool- and school-aged children, incorporating findings from the 2019 MICS carried out by
UNICEF on likely contributors to stunting and undernutrition in Tuvalu, and where possible provide support towards implementation of select recommendations; (b) carry out a holistic curriculum review from Years 1-13 to inform the government’s plans for an overhaul of the primary and secondary schooling curricula; (c) develop a teacher quality policy; (d) support implementation of the disability and inclusive education plan being developed with support from ASET; (e) share TEMIS data with schools and communities through school report cards, aligned with the ASET; and (f) host two iterations of the National Conference of the Child (2020 and 2024), to consider evidence and priorities for ECCE strengthening, and multisectoral collaboration, particularly across ministries of education, health and home affairs.

Sub-component 3.3: Measurements of school readiness and student learning. Under the PEARL Program, the MEYS carried out the Tuvalu Early Human Capability Index (TuEHCI) assessment in 2016 to measure the school readiness of preschool children across multiple domains of child development. The project will support another two iterations of the TuEHCI to provide the government with data to monitor progress on its efforts to improve school readiness outcomes, and to determine the effectiveness of project interventions carried out under Component 1. Under PEARL, the MEYS carried out the Tuvalu Early Grade Reading Assessment (TuEGRA) in 2016 to measure reading skills of children in Grades 1-3. The project will support another three iterations of the TuEGRA to monitor children’s reading development in the early grades, which has a significant impact on their learning outcomes later on in school and determine the effectiveness of project interventions carried out under Component 2. Support for these surveys under the project will include: (i) TA to develop/adjust the instruments, pilot, clean and analyze data, and produce reports and other dissemination materials; (ii) training enumerators to carry out the surveys; and (iii) data collection costs, including supervisor and enumerator travel. The project would further support the review of lesson observation tools (MELE and TEACH) for the Tuvaluan context to guide teacher coaching and mentoring at the ECCE and lower primary levels and provide regular feedback to teachers.

A school infrastructure assessment, initiated as a Bank-executed activity with support from WB Pacific Disaster Risk Management team and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), would be conducted in parallel with the project to identify the vulnerability of schools to natural hazards and climate change and identify contributing factors of risk in order to inform the development of a comprehensive strategic plan to enhance school building safety. The assessment will assess the institutional and policy environment and regulatory framework within which school infrastructure is planned, designed, constructed and operated, maintained, repaired and retrofitted, and make recommendations for institutional and policy actions necessary for planning effective implementation of safer schools, improving the enforcement of building codes, as well as building institutional capacity for risk reduction.

If any recommendations come out of this work in terms of curriculum or policy – i.e. inclusive evacuation drills, natural hazard awareness messages in learning material - then they may be incorporated into the work undertaken in this component of the project.

Component 4: Strengthening institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation and education sector management

This component will provide overall support to the other three components and help ensure the
activities are sustainable beyond the life of the project, including monitoring and evaluation (M&E), training, management, and operations related to project activities. In addition, the component will finance the establishment and operation of a Central Project Management Support Unit (CPMSU) to oversee and support the coordination, preparation and implementation of all World Bank-financed and co-financed projects in Tuvalu.

Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks
The Project has been assessed as having moderate risks as detailed in the Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS – 18/10/2019 – Report No: ESRSC00890). Impacts associated with the Project are expected to be largely positive. The project will scale up the Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL) activities across all childcare and education (ECCE) centres and primary schools in Tuvalu. Upper primary and secondary levels will benefit from system-level strengthening, research and policy support. The proposed project may also support key actions related to improving school building safety and resilience, such as evacuation procedures.

The environmental risks are considered low; a moderate risk classification was considered appropriate for social issues during concept stage, in order to ensure lessons learnt from other education sector projects across the Bank were assessed and incorporated where necessary. A review of the project’s design at appraisal stage has confirmed that social risk items identified during concept have been incorporated and addressed through good project design. The residual social risk at appraisal stage is hence considered to be low as well.

The Environment and Social standards (ESS) that are considered relevant to the Project are as follows:

- ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts
- ESS2 Labour and Working Conditions
- ESS4 Community Health and Safety
- ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosures

ESS 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are therefore not relevant and are not discussed further in this document. The following section discusses the key risks by the relevant (ESS):

ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts
The Project is not expected to result in any adverse environmental impacts, as no physical works are proposed and the project does not involve analytical, advisory or other activities which could have or lead to downstream physical, social or environmental impacts.

A school infrastructure assessment, initiated as a Bank-executed activity with support from WB Pacific Disaster Risk Management team and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), will be conducted to identify the vulnerability of schools to natural hazards and climate change and identify contributing factors of risk in order to inform the development of a comprehensive strategic plan to enhance school building safety. The risk assessment will assess the institutional and policy environment and regulatory framework within which school infrastructure is planned, designed, constructed and operated, maintained, repaired and retrofitted, and make recommendations for institutional and policy actions necessary for planning effective implementation of safer schools, improving the enforcement of building codes, as well as building institutional capacity for risk reduction. If any recommendations come out of this work in terms of curriculum or policy – i.e.
inclusive evacuation drills, natural hazard awareness messages in readers - then they may be incorporated into Component 3 of the project if/as relevant. None of these interventions would incur environmental risks or impacts, and the potential social impacts would be only positive.

Other positive social impacts are likely through research and strengthening of teacher capacity, consideration of vulnerable groups, and improvements in education attendance and outcomes. There are minimal adverse social impacts associated with the project. The risks of exclusion or impacts to vulnerable groups are considered limited but the Project may include the preparation of a disability and inclusive education action plan (component 3).

The project is likely to have positive benefits for inclusion through Component 3 (research, learning assessment and policy review). This will focus on access to quality education, and improved data collection on student and teacher attendance, a range of education and nutrition outcomes, support the implementation of the Tuvalu disability and inclusive education plan, and beneficiaries of interventions in enhanced learning. All data will be disaggregated by gender.

Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in primary education is 99 percent, surpassing many of the middle-income countries in the Caribbean States. However, Tuvalu’s NER in secondary education is only 58 percent (2017), lower than most of the Pacific and other small island states, such as Kiribati (69%), Tonga (75%) and Samoa (77%). The decline has serious implications for human capital development and the flow of skilled graduates available to enter the labor market, take up key leadership positions and influence future directions for economic growth. Recent analytical work\(^1\) indicates that some students fail to attend schools because parents cannot afford the indirect financial requirements (eg school uniforms, school stationery, lunches, transport to and from schools, PTA funds, field trips, sports gear, examination fees); quality of learning also has been identified as a possible cause of student drop outs, as students struggle to keep up with the pace of curriculum once they start to fall behind. Bullying/hazing in schools has been identified as a contributor to the high dropout rate at the secondary level.

Tuvalu provides free primary education for all, which includes Years 1 through 8. By law, it is compulsory for all children ages 6-15 (Years 1 to 10) to attend school. There are 18 community-based Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centers that receive support from the government through grants and teacher salaries; ten are on the main island of Funafuti, and one on each of the other islands and atolls. There are nine government primary schools (one on each island or atoll) and a faith-based primary school in Funafuti. Secondary education consists of five years of schooling (grades 9 through 13) and is delivered by two schools - a government-run boarding school on Vaitupu island (Motufoua) and a non-government day school located in Funafuti (Fetuvalu).

Data on students with special needs is not currently available. There is one special needs centre to cater for children with severe disabilities which currently has 20 students enrolled. The Project M&E framework includes capturing data on special education needs through ECCE centres, including those with physical and intellectual needs.

The gender gaps in education favour girls rather than boys. While gender parity is relatively even in ECCE and primary education, the percentage of boys in secondary education drops off significantly, with gender parity ranging between 1.27 and 1.55 between 2012 and 2017. Transition rate from

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\(^1\) Realizing Education Access for the Pacific (REAP) DFID and TuEHCI 2017.
primary to secondary education demonstrates the imbalance with 86 percent of females transitioning against 69 percent of males in 2017. Assessments also indicate gaps in learning outcomes with boys performing less well on standardized tests. Social analyses have pointed to the lack of parental supervision and encouragement for boys to focus on their school work and the poor quality of educational material to address gender biases and stereotypes. This has the potential to cause issues not only for the boys that are not reaching their full education potential or future employment prospects, but evidence from international studies suggests this can also lead to other social issues.

Girls outperform boys in both PILNA and TJC and students in urban areas perform better than students in rural areas. Literacy challenges, however, begin much earlier, with Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) 2016 results indicating only 20 percent of Year 3 students meeting the benchmark for reading comprehension, and 40 percent with zero scores for reading comprehension.

The project is likely to have a positive impact on gender issues through the incorporation of the following activities as part of project design including ECCE and parent sensitization on Safe School initiative, nutrition, child protection and inclusive education; teacher training including modules on child protection and positive behaviour management strategies, disability inclusiveness, and nutrition will also help ensure more comprehensive approaches to child development; analysis of gender stereotyping and skewed gender perceptions in teacher behaviour; gender disaggregation of PDO-level indicators on number of students directly benefiting from interventions to enhance learning, student attendance; provisions for the assessment of students with special education needs will be included in the development of the National Assessment Strategy; and improved data collection on students with special education needs for enhanced resource allocation and planning.

Existing national data on GBV in Tuvalu is limited to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) completed in 2007 which focuses on women’s experience of domestic violence. Unlike the Family Health and Safety Surveys completed in most other Pacific Island Countries, the DHS does not provide data on women’s experience of violence as children or children witnessing domestic violence. There is no specific data available on school-based violence in Tuvalu. Tuvalu has legislation specifically focused on child protection which in most cases requires some professions, mostly, but not exclusively public servants, to report any suspected or known harm to a child. The Child Protection and Welfare Bill, is currently being re-drafted which has been in development since 2016. In addition, the MEYS is also developing a Teachers’ Code of Conduct noting the need to educate existing and in-coming staff on new ways of managing their classrooms, as well as orienting School Advisory Committees and Parent Teacher Associations regarding school-based violence and gender-based violence. Regional reports (that include Asia and the Pacific) identify common forms of school-based violence to include corporal punishment, physical violence and abuse, psychosocial violence and abuse, bullying including cyber-bullying and sexual violence and sexual abuse. Consequences of school-based violence include lower educational participation, achievement and continuation. Therefore, during project preparation, a GBV assessment has been initiated to inform project design by understanding the school responses to GBV, services outside of school, and opportunities for teacher training and sensitization. Initial activities identified include: (i) training for teachers on classroom management, code of professional ethics, alternative discipline techniques, and identification of abuse and neglect; (ii) developing internal school procedures to ensure greater commitment to and accountability for dealing with suspected cases of abuse and violence against children (VAC); (iii) obtaining further information about the establishment of counselling services in schools and explore opportunities to ensure that counselling providers in schools can screen for GBV and VAC and refer to other services providers.
**ESS2: Labour and working conditions**

The risks associated with labour issues are considered to be low as the Project does not include any planned change in the number of teachers employed across all school levels; there are no planned changes to working conditions due to the Project and the risks associated with occupational health and safety are also considered low.

Project workers are classified as follows:

- **Civil servants:** including all primary and secondary teachers and staff of MEYS. The provisions of ESS2 are not applicable to this worker category with the exception of requirements relating to child labor and OHS.
- **Direct workers:** including ECCE teachers, who are not classified as civil servants under the Tuvalu law but instead express their interest directly to the Ministry of Education and are appointed via temporary contracts, based on student numbers/demand. Positions are not advertised and appointment does not follow the same procedures as for civil service positions. Approximately 70 ECCE teachers are currently employed and will be included within the project scope.
- **Contracted workers:** including those who will support project implementation such as project manager, specialist consultants. There are likely to be international specialists who will hold contract positions of varying lengths based on specific terms of reference and conditions. The number of contract positions is not yet determined.

The majority of teachers are female and have the requisite certification/qualification to teach. Out of 239 full time teachers, 184 are female, 66 are teaching in ECCE centers, 115 are in primary schools and 56 in the two secondary schools. There are two teachers in the special needs center. The highest numbers of teachers are on Funafuti and Vaitupu islands where the largest share of students attend school.

A labour management procedure (LMP) will be prepared during project implementation and will include a review of any gaps between local requirements and ESS2. The ESCP includes a requirement for this to be prepared by August 2020 and will include terms and conditions for ECCE workers, non discrimination and equal opportunity, recognition of workers organisations, the prohibition of child and forced labor and a worker grievance mechanism. It will be prepared in accordance with the LMP template, and will consider current Tuvalu labour law and ESS2.

**ESS4: Community Health and Safety**

No community health and safety issues are expected through project activities; nor will activities affect ecosystem services. ESS4 is not applicable in relation to emergency preparedness and response, though the impacts are likely to be positive due to improved and inclusive planning and response procedures. The Project is not expected to result in any adverse community health and safety risks and no construction works are planned.

**ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure**

While the project will have limited adverse environmental or social impacts, engaging community members in the design and development of resources for caregivers and ECCE teachers will be an integral part of the project to ensure any material developed is properly adapted to the local context. This engagement will be organized in a way that ensures equal participation of mothers, fathers,
teachers, children, and other relevant stakeholders. Component 1 includes a public awareness program and community outreach campaign, aiming to ensure beneficiaries such as parents, teachers and students are aware of Project activities. A draft SEP (including grievance mechanism) has been prepared and implementation of the Plan is required by the ESCP. The SEP identified key stakeholders such as government departments, parents, students and identifies appropriate engagement activities in line with ESS10.

Stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken as part of the preparation of the E&S assessment and SEP. Workshops were held with development partners (UNICEF, DFAT); government agencies (Ministries of Education, Finance and Health); schools, teachers and students (at various locations). The SEP outlines a program of engagement measures appropriate to each stakeholder group including vulnerable groups. For example, workshops will be held to share information and seek feedback; focus groups meetings will be help for special interest groups. All consultation activities held under the project will be based on the principle of inclusiveness and will strive to engage all groups of local society including disabled persons, women and youth as specified below. Where necessary, logistical assistance will be provided to enable persons with limited physical abilities and those with insufficient financial and/or transportation means to attend public meetings scheduled by the project. In cases where people may be reluctant or unable to participate in large scale community meetings the project will hold separate small group discussions with them at an easily accessible venue. The Project will ensure that they use varied means of communication (written, verbal, use of an advocate). Implementation of the SEP throughout the life of the project is included in the ESCP.

Summary of the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan

Impacts associated with the Project are expected to be largely positive. Strengthening of the education policy framework, teacher capacity and M&E of education performance are expected to lead to improved education outcomes. Beneficiaries are located across the country as the Project will be implemented in all nine islands of Tuvalu. The E&S risks associated with Project activities are expected to be limited and easily managed through project design and effective implementation. Measure to address inclusion, disability, vulnerability, gender based violence and gender are incorporated within Project design, and as such, the overall project E&S risk is deemed to be low.

The ESCP include the following commitments which will be undertaken during Project implementation:

- Preparation of labour management procedure, including worker grievance mechanism, by August 2020, in accordance with Tuvalu law and ESS2.
- Finalisation and implementation of the SEP, including project grievance mechanism.