

Annex  
to the Decision of the Court of Accounts  
No. 58 of 15 November 2017

## THE COURT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



MD-2001, mun. Chișinău, bd. Ștefan cel Mare and Sfânt 69, tel.: (+373) 22 23 25 79, fax: (+373) 22 23 30 20,  
[www.ccrm.md](http://www.ccrm.md); e-mail: [ccrm@ccrm.md](mailto:ccrm@ccrm.md)

### REPORT

**on Auditing the Authenticity of Financial Statements related to  
the Implementation of the “Strengthening the Education Management  
Information System Capacities” Project**



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## List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	The abbreviated term
<b>IDA</b>	the International Development Association
<b>WB</b>	the World Bank
<b>GD</b>	Government Decision
<b>MEd</b>	Ministry of Education/Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MERP</b>	“Moldova Education Reform” Project
<b>EMIS Project</b>	“Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities” Project
<b>IFS</b>	Interim Financial Statement
<b>RM</b>	the Republic of Moldova
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System

## Glossary

**Designated Account** – the Borrower may open one or more designated accounts into which the World Bank may, at the Borrower’s request, deposit amounts withdrawn for the purpose of paying for eligible expenditures as they are incurred. A designated account may be established in two ways: as a Segregated Account and as a Pooled Account.

**Segregated Account** – a Borrower’s account into which only the World Bank grant proceeds may be deposited.

**Pooled Account** – a Borrower’s account into which the World Bank grant proceeds may be deposited and proceeds of other financing for the operation.

**Eligible Expenditures** – reasonable expenditures incurred for the procurement of goods, consulting services, non-consulting services, training and operation services under the Project, which are funded at the expense of the Grant as per the categories provided by the Grant Agreement.

**Terms of Reference (TOR)** – a document developed by the World Bank, on which basis the Audit Team shall audit the Project in compliance with the specified terms and conditions, and express its professional opinion regarding the financial position.

**Interim Financial Statements (IFS)** – summary reports that corroborate the eligible expenditures with the form and substance as the World Bank may specify.

**Financial Reports on Budget Execution** – reports developed in compliance with the general binding rules of accounting and financial reporting in the public sector, which form is approved by the Ministry of Finance.

### **Disbursement Methods according to the Grant Agreement:**

**Advance** – the World Bank may advance grant proceeds into a special account of the Borrower to finance eligible expenditures as they are incurred and for which supporting documents will be provided at a later date;

**Reimbursement** – the World Bank may reimburse the Borrower for expenditures eligible for financing pursuant to the Grant Agreement (“eligible expenditures”) that the Borrower has pre-financed from its own resources.

**Direct Payment** – the World Bank may make payments, at the Borrower’s request, directly to a third party (e.g., Supplier, Consultant) for eligible expenditures.

## **I. Opinion**

### ***Clean opinion regarding the Interim Financial Statements of EMIS Project.***

The EMIS Project Interim Financial Statements have been audited, comprising: (i) the Report on financial resources and the use of funds; (ii) the Summary of expenditures by the Project main components and by the main expenditure items, both for the year subject to audit and accumulated to date; (iii) the Statement on Designated Accounts; (iv) the Statements of Expenditures (SOEs) used as the basis for the submission of withdrawal applications.

In the Auditors’ opinion of the Court of Accounts, the aforementioned Financial Statements, under all material aspects, give a true and fair view of the financial position of EMIS Project as of 31 December 2016 and as of 30 September 2017 in compliance with the World Bank<sup>1</sup> requirements.

## **II. Basis for Opinion**

The audit has been conducted in compliance with International Standards on Auditing: ISSAI 100, ISSAI 200 and ISSAI 1000-2999. The duties of Auditors as per these Standards are described in Section “Auditor’s Responsibilities” of this Report.

The Auditors are independent of the entity subject to audit and have fulfilled the ethical responsibilities according to the Ethic Code of the Court of Accounts. The audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide the basis for the Auditor’s opinion.

It is mentioned that to support the audit evidence and the tested relevant arguments for the Financial Statements, the Audit Team requested the Declaration from the EMIS Project<sup>2</sup> Leadership, *the document being presented in Annex No.1 to the Audit Report.*

## **III. Presenting the audited area**

In order to implement the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project, on 3 November 2015, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the International Bank for Reconstruction

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<sup>1</sup> Grant Agreement No.TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association (IDA) to implement the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project, signed at Chisinau on 3 November 2015 (hereinafter referred to as Grant Agreement No.TF019354).

<sup>2</sup> ISSAI 1580 “Written Representations” and the Terms of Reference for auditing the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project during 04.04.2016-30.11.2017.

and Development/the International Development Association (*hereinafter referred to as the World Bank*) as the Administrator of grant funds under the Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, signed the Financing Agreement No.TF019354 on the provision of a Grant in the amount of USD 365.0 thousand. The Grant was provided to support the World Bank commitment for MERP, which helped the Republic of Moldova establish an EMIS and a Global Partnership for Social Accountability Initiatives and ensure the Education System quality and efficiency, as well as implement education policy on the basis of reliable/credible data.

On 15 February 2016, the Government adopted the Decision<sup>3</sup> ratifying the Grant Agreement to implement the Project. Subsequently, the Grant Agreement was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 03 March 2016<sup>4</sup>. The closing date for money withdrawal to cover the expenditures incurred was set until 31 January 2017<sup>5</sup>, with an extension until 31 July 2017<sup>6</sup>.

According to the Financing Agreement, the EMIS Project implementation period was set from 04 April 2016 through 31 July 2017, while the withdrawal applications could be submitted by 30 November 2017.

The World Bank credited the Grant amount in the currency of denomination of the Designated Account<sup>7</sup>. The persons authorized to sign the withdrawal applications were replaced once the new Government was invested based on the Letter of Authorization and on the internal regulatory acts of the MEd<sup>8</sup>. *Detailed information related to the provided Grant is displayed in Annex No.2 to this Audit Report.*

The direct Beneficiaries of the Grant are the MEd, the Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education, District Education Departments and schools across the country, which would have available more reliable evidence-based information for decision making. At the same time, thanks to the promotion of a favorable environment for social accountability, the Project indirect Beneficiaries would be pupils, their parents, teaching staff, school principals and communities as a whole.

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<sup>3</sup> Government Decision No.116 of 15.02.2016 “On the approval of the draft Law for ratifying the Grant Agreement No.TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association to implement the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project, signed at Chisinau on 03 November 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Law No.16 of 03.03.2016 for ratifying the Grant Agreement No.TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association to implement the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project, published in the Official Gazette of the RM No.77-89/148 dated 01.04.2016. (hereinafter referred to as Law No.16 of 03.03.2016).

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 3.03. of Grant Agreement No.TF019354.

<sup>6</sup> Letter of the World Bank dated 29.12.2016.

<sup>7</sup> Standard conditions for Grants made by the World Bank out of various funds dated 15.02.2012.

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Authorization No.13/1-7-187 dated 27.06.2016; Letter of Authorization No.13/1-7/166 dated 20.06.2017; Written Order of the Minister of Education No.425 dated 06.05.2016, Written Order of the Minister of Education No.490 dated 19.06.2017.

The MEd is the authority responsible for the implementation of EMIS Project and it has to ensure the general and financial management, reporting and monitoring the arrangements made for Project implementation. According to the Grant Agreement, the implementation of EMIS Project is based on the existing institutional and implementation arrangements of the World Bank, supported by the World Bank “Moldova Education Reform” Project<sup>9</sup>. Hence, the Grant is managed by MERP, which accounting office is part of the MEd accounting system, and consists of three sets: Technical Assistance of the Project, EMIS Project and Budget Component. The *EMIS Project implementation arrangements are graphically presented in Annex No.3 to this Audit Report.*

It is stated that, based on Parliament Decision No.189 dated 21.07.2017<sup>10</sup>, the Government issued Decision No.594 of 26.07.2017<sup>11</sup>, by which the name of the Ministry of Culture was changed into the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, reorganized through the absorption of the Ministry of Education and of Ministry of Youth and Sports, thus, having become the successor of their rights and obligations. Subsequently, by GD No.691 dated 30.08.2017<sup>12</sup>, the organization and operation of the newly created Ministry was approved, comprising the scope of work of the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports and the research area of the Academy of Science of Moldova.

The Audit Engagement was initiated and conducted upon the request of the MEd and the World Bank, under the conditions provided by the Grant Agreement concluded by the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association, ratified by Law No.16 dated 03.03.2016<sup>13</sup>. The obtained results are aligned with the requirements defined in compliance with the Terms of Reference for financial audit<sup>14</sup>, which covered the whole period when withdrawals were carried out from the Grant Account (4 April 2016 – 30 September 2017). *The Audit scope and Methodology are presented in Annex No.4 to this Audit Report.*

The EMIS Project Development Objective is to strengthen the quality, openness and use of education statistics to better inform the ongoing education reforms in the Republic of Moldova. Hence, the Project contains the following components, which are described in Figure No.1:

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<sup>9</sup> Project Document, Chapter 4A “Institutional and Implementation Arrangements”.

<sup>10</sup> Parliament Decision No.189 dated 21.07.2017 approving the list of ministries.

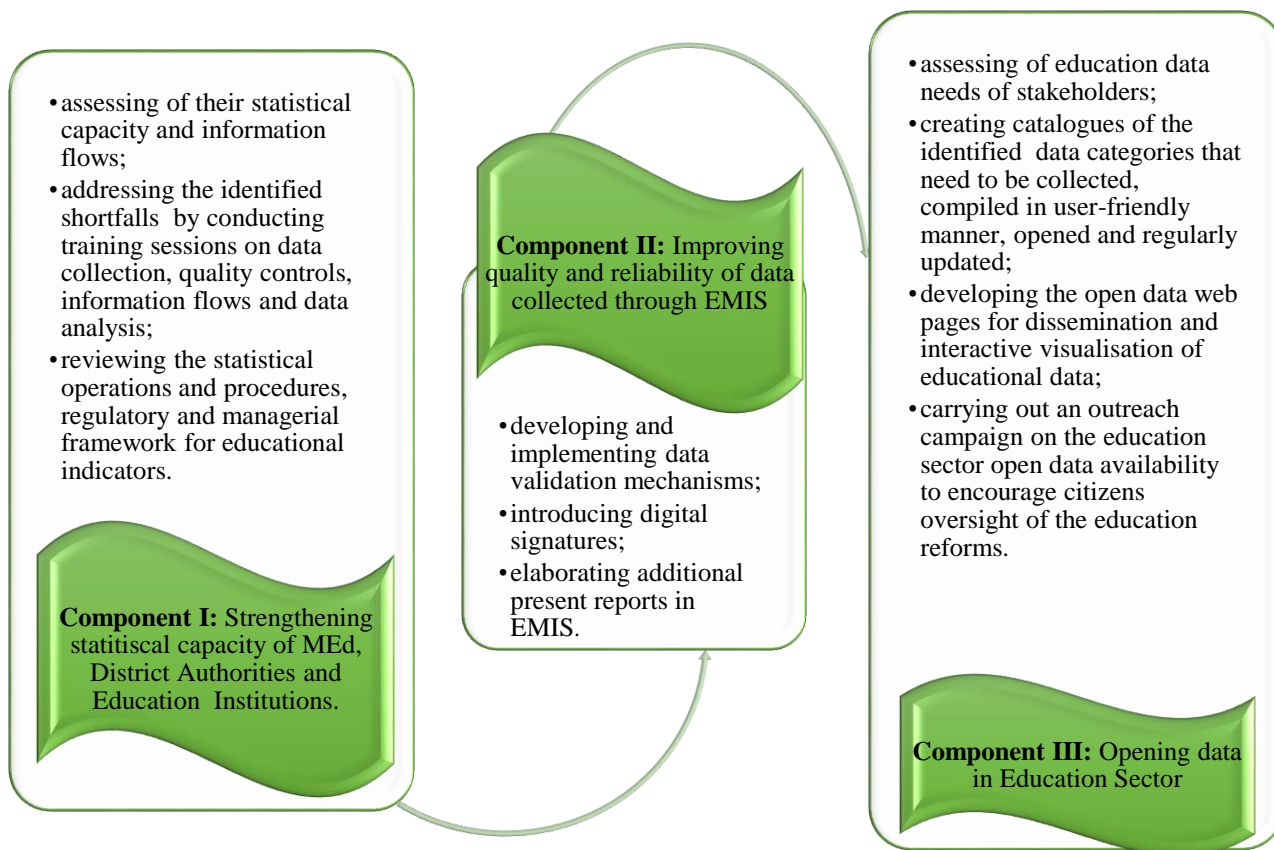
<sup>11</sup> Government Decision No.594 dated 26.07.2017 on restructuring the line Central Public Administration (hereinafter referred to as Government Decision No.594 dated 26.07.2017).

<sup>12</sup> Government Decision No.691 dated 30.08.2017 on the reorganization and operation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research”.

<sup>13</sup> Law No.16 dated 03.03.2016.

<sup>14</sup> Terms of Reference: Financial Audit of the “Building Capacity - EMIS” Project for 04 April 2016 - 30 November 2017.

## Components of the “Building Capacity – EMIS” Project.



**Source:** Grant Agreement No.TF019354 signed on 03.11.2015 and ratified on 03.03.2016.

According to the Financing Agreement, only the following disbursement methods may be used under the Grant: reimbursement, advance or direct payment, the minimum sum amounting to USD 30.0 thousand. The World Bank shall have the right to reject the applications that do not meet the aforementioned minimum sum. The disbursement of funds provides for financing the EMIS upgrading.

The MED spent the Grant funds to establish a strengthened EMIS and aims to develop a sustainable statistical system for the Education Sector of the RM, having involved all stakeholders to facilitate the use of data for the motivation of managerial decisions.

## IV. Audit Key Aspects

### *4.1 Audit Key Aspects related to Interim Financial Statements of EMIS Project*

According to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for 04.04.2016-30.11.2017, the MED shall submit to the World Bank, on a quarterly and yearly basis, the interim Financial Statements, which include: (i) the Report on financial resources and the use of funds; (ii) the Summary of expenditures by the Project main components and by the



main expenditure items, both for the year subject to audit and accumulated to date; (iii) the Statement on Designated Accounts; (iv) the Statements of Expenditures (SOEs) used as the basis for the submission of withdrawal applications.

Hence, the related Financial Statements shall be developed and submitted to the World Bank within 45 days after the end of the calendar quarter<sup>15</sup>.

**4.1.1. As of 30.09.2017, the Grant use rate was 94.2%, the deadline for disbursement being the end of November 2017.**

As of 30.09.2017, according to the procedures provided by the World Bank (based on withdrawal applications and direct payments), the amount of USD 344.2 thousand or MDL 6323.4 thousand was transferred directly to the Designated Account intended for building the EMIS capacity. Having analyzed the fund disbursement process, the Audit Team has ascertained its compliance with the provisions of the World Bank Disbursement Guidelines for Projects, as well as with the Disbursement Letter (Disbursement Guidelines – Annex to Grant Agreement). The Summary of Grant means spending is displayed in Table No.1.

**Table No.1**

*Summary of disbursements and of Grant funds spent to build EMIS capacity, as of 30.09.2017.*

Indicators	Total planned disbursement (thousand USD)	Disbursement method	Disbursed		Actual expenditures		Undisbursed balance (thousand USD)	Project implementation level
			thousand MDL	thousand USD	thousand MDL	thousand USD		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8=2-5	9=7/2*100%
<b>Total Project</b>	365.0	<i>Withdrawal Application/ Direct Payments</i>	6323.4	344.2	6266.9	343.7	20.8	<b>94.2</b>
<b>2016</b>	200.0	<i>Withdrawal Application</i>	988.3	50.0	27.8	1.4	x	<b>0.7</b>
<b>2017</b>	165.0	<i>Withdrawal Application</i>	1191.6	64.2	2095.5	112.3	x	x
		<i>Direct Payments</i>	4143.6	230.0	4143.6	230.0	x	x

*Source: Interim Financial Statements, Statements from the Special Account of EMIS Project.*

The analysis of data displayed in Table No.1 reveals that:

- the level of actual spending (*MDL 27.8 thousand*) by the MEd relative to the total amount of planned disbursements in 2016 for Project implementation is low,

<sup>15</sup> Grant Agreement No.TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association to implement the “Strengthening the Education Management Information System Capacities (EMIS)” Project signed at Chisinau on 03.11.2015 and ratified on 03.03.2016.



making up **0.7%**. Hence, according to the people responsible for implementing the EMIS Project, the low level of this indicator was conditioned by the long-lasting selection period of professionals to upgrade the EMIS. At the same time, the Audit Team found that the activity Coordinating Group<sup>16</sup> was created on 6 May 2017 or 13 months later after the Grant Agreement conclusion and ratification;

- the total amount of MDL 5335.2 thousand was disbursed throughout 2017, of which: on the basis of withdrawal applications – MDL 1191.6 thousand, direct payments – MDL 4143.6 thousand. The Audit Team ascertained that the actual expenditures for the reporting period (2017) totaled MDL 6239.1 thousand or by MDL 903.9 thousand more than it was disbursed during the stated period, and the difference of actual expenditures was covered by the funds not spent in 2016;

- as of 30.09.2017, the level of cumulative spending of funds disbursed from the Grant for the actions carried out under the EMIS Project reached **94.2%**.

***Note:** In light of the above, the Audit Team notifies that the balance available for disbursement in the amount of USD 20.8 was disbursed in full from the Grant on 13 October 2017.*

**4.1.2. The expenditures incurred are compliant with the criteria defined by the World Bank; however, not all the Procurement Plan activities were carried out under the Project.**

The procurement carried out under the Project is governed by the World Bank Guidelines on Procurement, as well as by the World Bank Guidelines on Selection and Employment of Consultants.

The preparation of a realistic Procurement Plan for a Project is critical for successful monitoring and implementation<sup>17</sup> of procurement procedures. Hence, the Project Procurement Plan (USD 365.0 thousand) was subject to World Bank prior review and no objection before implementation, the last update was performed in November 2016. According to the aforementioned Plan and the documents related to the procurement process, reviewed and approved by the Financier, the Audit Engagement ascertained that *consulting services worth USD 353.4 thousand were planned and, accordingly, the procurement of goods in the amount of USD 11.6 thousand.*

Having analyzed the Procurement Plan for each activity, the Audit Team ascertained that the amount of USD 5.0 thousand was foreseen at the expense of the Grant for carrying out the financial audit of EMIS Project, as it was not known yet that the audit would be conducted by the Court of Accounts; the World Bank made an

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<sup>16</sup> Written Order of the Minister of Education No.425 dated 06.05.2016 on implementing the Grant Agreement.

<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 1.25 of the Guidelines Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers.

announcement about this later (on 26.07.2016). At the same time, it was planned to buy digital signatures worth USD 20.0 thousand and of Consulting Services in the amount of USD 6.0 thousand, but those activities were not performed. Hence, the amount planned for those three activities (USD 31.0 thousand) was assigned to other planned activities, the reason being the exchange rate difference and the need of resources for other activities planned and accepted by the World Bank, which were critical for Project implementation.

Hence, the Audit Team ascertained that the people authorized for EMIS were forced to buy individual digital signatures to sign the entered data, while the assessment of the old system statistical capacity was performed by the Working Group established within the MEd<sup>18</sup>.

The Audit also found that six procurement procedures were carried out during 04.04.2016 – 31.07.2017 (one procedure through shopping, one individual consulting, four choices on the basis of Consultants' qualifications), resulting in the conclusion of six contracts in the total amount of USD 363.7 thousand or MDL 6618.5 thousand. At the same time, four additional agreements<sup>19</sup> were signed to the contracts concluded with the Financial Management Consultant and with the Procurement Officer according to the World Bank procedures, by which it was agreed to pay salaries to those persons in the proportion of 10% of the salary paid under MERP, and the total amount for both persons made up USD 1.7 thousand.

It is stated that the Terms of Reference for all procurement carried out were subject to the World Bank no objection review; the offers and contracts were evaluated as per the review procedure included in the Procurement Plan<sup>20</sup>.

Following the Audit Team verifications concerning the performance of contracts, based on primary documents, it was found that during 2016-2017 the actual expenditures were recorded in the amount of 6659.9 thousand MDL, cash expenditures in the amount of MDL 6266.9 thousand, having recorded a credit indebtedness in the amount of MDL 393.0 thousand. The main reason of the unsettled debt, as per the motivations provided by the responsible people, was the MEd restructuring<sup>21</sup>, and the fact that the due amount was smaller than the minimum amount for disbursement set by the Grant Agreement (USD 30.0 thousand). The Summary of actual expenditures is displayed in Table No.2.

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with the EMIS Project Coordinator held by Auditors on 18.10.2017.

<sup>19</sup> Additional Agreement No.1 dated 02.06.2016 and Additional Agreement No.2 dated 31.01.2017 to Contract No. CS/IC-7/SS dated 31.12.2015; Additional Agreement No.1 dated 02.06.2016 and Additional Agreement No.2 dated 31.01.2017 to Contract No.IC-15 dated 04.04.2016.

<sup>20</sup> *Prior Review (post review)* – the contracts are subject to WB's prior review; *Post Review (reviews)* – the procurement is subject to the Bank's post review. The Borrower shall retain all documentation with respect to each contract during project implementation until two years after the closing data of the Agreement.

<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 3 of Government Decision No.594 dated 26.07.2017.

**Table No.2**

*Summary of expenditures incurred at the expense of the Grant.*

(thousand MDL)

EMIS	Item	Project Activities	Total expenditures incurred in 2016	Total expenditures incurred as of 30.09.2017	Total Project
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>27.8</b>	<b>6239.05</b>	<b>6266.9</b>
	<b>I.</b>	<b>Consulting Services</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>6029.08</b>	<b>6056.9</b>
	1	Financial Management Consultant under MERP	15.3	13.5	28.8
	2	Procurement Officer as per the World Bank procedures under MERP	12.6	-	12.6
	3	for EMIS assessment (natural person)	-	88.2	88.2
	4	for the research on education data	-	274.7	274.7
	5	PR Consulting Services	-	522.7	522.7
	6	for EMIS improvement	-	4143.6	4143.6
	7	for the site development to disseminate and interactively view the education data in EMIS	-	986.3	986.3
	<b>II.</b>	<b>Goods</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>205.9</b>	<b>205.9</b>
	1	Software	-	205.9	205.9
	<b>III.</b>	<b>Non-consulting Services</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>
	1	Translation Services	-	4.1	4.1

*Source: Interim Financial Statements, primary documents of EMIS Project.*

The Audit considered the expenditures in terms of their eligibility based on the criteria defined in the terms set for the Grant Agreement; no ineligible expenditures were revealed. The recorded expenditures were incurred in line with the necessary supporting documents (invoices, contracts, tax invoices, reports of economic operators approved by the MEd), and this fact corroborates the truthfulness of transactions.

Following the verification of the veracity and fullness of expenditure calculation (MDL 41.4 thousand) intended to remunerate the Consultants (two people) it was ascertained that the calculations were accurate.

#### **4.1.3. Interim Financial Statements submitted to the World Bank are free from misstatements.**

The Audit verifications in terms of Interim Financial Statements (IFS) submission to the World Bank by the MEd revealed that the corresponding reports were submitted as per the established deadlines, and the reports were subsequently accepted by the World Bank. Once the IFS were accepted by the World Bank, the disbursement of funds was carried out, which was also a confirmation that the donor institution accepted the Financial Statements.

Following the consideration, by the Audit Team, of the Statement on Designated Accounts as of 31.12.2016 and as of 30.09.2017, as well as of Statements of Expenditures (SOEs) used as basis to submit the withdrawal applications for 2016-2017, it was found that all the withdrawal applications were motivated and corresponded to the needs of expenditures under the Project. The Audit did not identify any undue expenditures or payments made from the Designated Accounts. *The corresponding reports are presented in Annex No.5 (5.1-5.5) to this Audit Report.*

For 2016, the planned funds amounted to USD 200.0 thousand, of which: (i) USD 160.0 thousand – for Consulting Services (remuneration); (ii) USD 40.0 thousand – for the procurement of goods. Hence, following the testing of the Project financial statement and transactions, the Audit Team revealed that out of the planned financial means of USD 200.0 thousand, the expenditures incurred and recorded during the reporting period totaled USD 1.4 thousand, registering a usage level of 0.7%, of which:

- for the settlement of Consulting Services, the total amount of USD 1.4 thousand was spent, which represented 0.9% of the planned funds (USD 160.0 thousand);

- for the procurement of goods aimed at upgrading the EMIS the amount of USD 40,0 thousand was planned. The Audit found that the planned amount was not spent in full during the 2016 reporting period.

For 2017, the total amount of USD 165.0 thousand was planned, of which: (i) USD 154.0 thousand – for Consulting Services (remuneration); (ii) USD 11.0 thousand – for the procurement of goods. Hence, out of the 2017 planned amount of USD 165.0 thousand and out of the funds unspent during 2016 in the amount of USD 198.6 thousand, expenditures totaling USD 342.3 thousand were incurred up until 30.09.2017. Hence, the Grant funds were spent as follows:

- for the settlement of Consulting Services – USD 331.7 thousand;
- for the procurement of goods – USD 10.6 thousand.

Following the review of primary banking documents based on which economic transactions were recorded in accounting, the availability of payment statements and orders both in Moldovan Lei and in US Dollars was confirmed. Hence, it was ascertained that all economic operations, settled both in Moldovan Lei and US Dollars, were recorded during the periods they were incurred and were included subsequently into the corresponding sub-components and in the related IFS; no divergences were identified. *The data on spending these financial means are mirrored in the “Summary of expenditures by the main Project components and by the main expenditure items, both for the reporting period subject to audit and cumulatively until 30.09.2017”, which is presented in Annex No.5 (5.6) to this Audit Report.*

The procurement was documented by the Procurement Officer according to the World Bank procedures, while *the Report on financial sources and the use of funds as of 31.12.2016 and as of 30.09.2017*” (see Annex No.5 (5.7-5.8) to this Audit Report) was submitted to the World Bank by the Financial Management Consultant of MERP. For the EMIS Project implementation period, the Audit Team found that: four additional agreements to the existing contracts under MERP for Consulting Services were concluded, five contracts for the procurement of Consulting Services, one contract for the procurement of goods, and a tax invoice was prepared for the procurement of Non-consulting Services. As a result, payments were settled for: (i) Consulting Services in the total amount of USD 332.9 thousand or MDL 6056.9 thousand; (ii) Goods in the amount of USD 10.6 thousand or MDL 205.9 thousand; and (iii) Non-consulting Services in the amount of USD 0.2 thousand or MDL 4.1 thousand. The contracted amount spending level reached 94.0%.

Following the verifications carried out through testing in full a Consulting Service procurement procedure in the amount of MDL 4536.6 thousand (74.9%) and having tested the internal controls related to other Consulting Services and Non-consulting Services procurement procedures, the Audit Team did not find any deviations, and the World Bank acceptance was given to this end as well.

Hence, the Written Representations prepared by the people responsible for EMIS Project implementation are reasonable and consistent with the obtained audit evidence.

#### ***4.2 Audit Key Aspects related to Financial Reports on Budget Execution of EMIS Project.***

The accounting records are kept by the MEd Accounting Office and by the Financial Management Consultant of MERP in compliance with the general binding rules of accounting and financial reporting in the public sector, outlined by the Accounting Law<sup>22</sup>, the Methodology on the execution of component budgets of the National Public Budget and the Methodology on accounting and financial reporting in the budget system, approved by the MoF<sup>23</sup>, in force as of 01.01.2016.

According to Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015<sup>24</sup>, the prepared Financial Reports on Budget Execution shall include: (i) the Report on budget execution beyond the Treasury System (FD-040); (ii) the Balance Sheet (FD-041); (iii) the Report on Revenues and Expenditures (FD-042); (iv) the Report on Cash Flows (FD-043); (v) the Financial Report on budget execution separately for each component (FD-044); (vi) the Report on circulation of fixed assets, wear and tear of fixed assets

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<sup>22</sup> The Accounting Law No.113-XVI dated 27.04.2007.

<sup>23</sup> Written Order of the Ministry of Finance No.216 dated 28.12.2015 on the approval of the Chart of Account in the budget system and the Methodology on accounting and financial reporting in the budget system (hereinafter referred to as Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015).

<sup>24</sup> Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015.

and of intangible assets (FD-045); (vii) the Report on circulation of current material stock and of state reserves (FD-046).

During the audited period, the budget accounting of EMIS Project was kept in the Automated Accounting System of the MEd (Universal Accounting SL – budget version), and the data were submitted to the MEd General Division on Economy, Assets and Finance on a quarterly and yearly basis to be reported to the MoF.

**4.2.1. EMIS is not included in the MEd accounting, although the amount of MDL 5140.2 thousand was spent from the Grant for EMIS upgrading.**

According to paragraph 3.3.44 of the Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015, it is allowed to change the initial value of fixed assets only upon their completion, refurbishment, upgrading, reconstruction or partial liquidation. Hence, the expenditures for software upgrading (Account Group 317) shall increase the initial value thereof.

The Audit verifications concerning the observance of these provisions revealed that the software and its value (the old software) were not entered in the accounting records<sup>25</sup> of the MEd. At the same time, following the verification of integrity of mirroring the expenditures for EMIS upgrading, it was found that the Balance Sheet (MERP), as of 30.06.2017, comprised the amount of MDL 205.9 thousand in Account 317 “Intangible assets” goods (software); and expenditures for upgrading in the amount of MDL 1332.7 thousand, which were reported to Account 222990 “Services not assigned to other items”. It is stated other upgrading expenditures of EMIS in the amount of MDL 3807.5 thousand were recorded after 30.06.2017.

***Note:** Upon the Audit Team request, during the Audit Engagement the Financial Management Consultant entered an intangible asset in the total amount of MDL 5346.1 thousand into Account 317 “Intangible assets”, which included the value of procured software (MDL 205.9 thousand) and expenditures for upgrading (MDL 5140.2 thousand) incurred at the account of the Grant. At the same time, as the budget reports were not prepared as of 31.08.2017, the situations have to be taken into consideration upon their submission to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.*

Based on the aforementioned findings, the Audit Team deems it necessary the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research to appraise EMIS in compliance with the provisions of GD No.783 dated 30.06.2003 “On appraising the intellectual property items”, having mirrored the relevant expenditures in the increase of EMIS book value and setting its operating life.

**4.2.2. Initially the received Grant was not assigned to the intended account as per the new Budgetary Classification; thw situation was remedied in 2017.**

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<sup>25</sup> The MEd Accounting System (Universal Accounting SL – budget version), Inventory lists for Property, Plant and Equipment.

According to the Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015, the accounts under the sub-class 13 “*Grants received*” are intended for generalizing the information on grants received from the governments of other countries and from international organizations.

The Audit Team verifications of the performed transactions identified that upon the maintenance of accounting records according to the new procedures, the Grant in question was initially assigned to Account 131 “*Grants received from governments of other countries*”. At the same time, the Regulatory Framework<sup>26</sup> stipulates the need to show the grant value in Account 132 “*Grants received from international organizations*” and report the accumulated proceeds to the budget execution result at the end of the year.

At the end of EMIS Project implementation period, the Financial Management Consultant corrected this error, thus, the amounts (totaling MDL 1191.6 thousand) included in Account 131 were recorded in Account 132 “*Grants received from international organizations*”.

The situation occurred following the introduction in the 2016 provisional budget of a budget line, which was non-compliant with the new budget classification; the situation was remedied once the annual Budget Law was implemented.

#### **4.2.3. Failure to develop Financial Reports on Budget Execution by the people responsible for Project implementation when the deadline for report submission is not set by the MoF.**

Following the structural reorganization of line Central Public Administration, the MoF issued a Circular<sup>27</sup> by which it requested the absorbed central public authorities involved in the reorganization process to prepare the Financial Reports using the old codes<sup>28</sup>, as of 31.08.2017, and submit them to the absorbing central public authorities for totaling purposed by 30.09.2017.

It is stated that by the end of Audit Engagement, the Project financial reports on budget execution were not submitted to the MEd and, accordingly, to the Audit Team as the MoF failed to set the deadline for report submission for the subordinated institutions.

Consequently, the MoF issued two more Circulars<sup>29</sup>, on 06.10.2017 and on 08.11.2017, containing the detailed procedure for recordkeeping and financial reporting by the Central Public Authorities involved in the restructuring process, but no deadline was set for the submission of financial reports. Under such circumstances,

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<sup>26</sup> Paragraphs 3.1.39 – 3.1.46 of Written Order of the MoF No. 216 dated 28.12.2015.

<sup>27</sup> Circular of the MoF No.24/3-5-216 dated 21.08.2017 on ensuring the on-going restructuring process of line Central Public Administration.

<sup>28</sup> As of 1 September, the IBAN Codes for the collected proceeds of budgetary authorities/institutions subject to restructuring will be closed.

<sup>29</sup> Circular of the MoF No.24/4-4-134 dated 06.10.2017, supplement to Circular of the MoF No.24/3-5-216 dated 21.08.2017.



and taking account of the Audit Engagement timeframe, the Audit Team did not provide its opinion on these reports.

In light of the above, the consolidated Financial Reports on Budget Execution will be audited by the Audit Engagement to be planned by the Court of Accounts for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.

**4.2.4. Inventory of settlements and comparative information of the previous period with the reporting period are consistent.**

The Audit Team verified the data mirrored in the Notes to Accounts, the Ledger and budget reports, and corroborated the appropriateness of transaction records; accordingly, the data recorded at the end of 2016 matched the ones recorded at the beginning of 2017 (MDL 971.4 thousand).

In compliance with the provisions of ISSAI 1505<sup>30</sup>, the Audit Team requested external confirmations to check the balances, as well as the EMIS Project Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable rollovers. Hence, the Audit Team reconciled the rollovers and balances stated in Accounting Note No.6 “Cumulative Note on Settlements with Suppliers” with the requested external confirmations “Verification documents on mutual settlements” from three Providers of Consulting Services and Suppliers of Goods. As a result, no deviations were detected between the accounting records and the data showed in the verification documents on mutual settlements.

## **V. Mention regarding the follow-up events**

During the Audit Engagement, on 13 October 2017, the MEd made the last direct payment from the Grant in the amount of USD 20.8 thousand or MDL 362.5 thousand, and used the balance in the amount of USD 495.24 or MDL 8.6 thousand from the Special Account to cover the Account Payable entered on 31.07.2017 in the amount of MDL 393.0 thousand. Due to the USD exchange rate difference, the Grant means were not sufficient to cover the Accounts Payable in full; therefore, the outstanding amount, i.e. MDL 21.88 thousand, will be covered by the MEd.

The Audit Team shall state that the Grant means have been used in full (100%). Hence, EMIS is expected to contribute to the enhancement of quality, transparency and use of education statistics, as well as to better inform the ongoing education reforms in the Republic of Moldova. EMIS shall promote also a favorable environment for social accountability in the Education Sector of the RM by granting access to data and encouraging citizens’ oversight of the education services and the impact of the ongoing reforms. *The old version and the upgraded version of the EMIS Open Data Portal are presented in Annex No.6 to this Audit Report.*

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<sup>30</sup> ISSAI 1505 “External Confirmations”.

At the same time, during the World Bank Representatives working visits conducted on 16-17 October 2017, the EMIS performance outcomes were discussed and the need to develop Modules for Early Education (Kindergartens) and for Vocational Education with additional funding.

## **VI. Responsibilities of Leadership and of those assigned with the governance of Financial Statements**

The MEd is responsible for the preparation and submission of fair Interim Financial Statements to the World Bank in compliance with the World Bank requirements<sup>31</sup> and of budget reports to the MoF in compliance with the Written Order of the MoF No.216 dated 28.12.2015. Also, the MEd Leadership is responsible for the implementation of an efficient financial management and control system to ensure the preparation of the aforementioned reports, which shall be free from material misstatements, whether caused by error or fraud.

The “Moldova Education Reform” Project Implementation Team of MEd is responsible for ensuring financial management and for preparing Interim Financial Statements and Financial Reports on Budget Execution of EMIS Project.

## **VII. Auditor’s Responsibilities**

The Audit Team objectives were to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Interim Financial Statements as a whole submitted to the World Bank were free from material misstatements and to issue the Audit Opinion. Hence, the Audit Team assessed the appropriateness of accounting policy applied and the reasonableness of accounting estimates to provide reasonable assurance and has found that the values and data contained in the Project Financial Statements for 2016-2017 were recorded and counted accurately, are free from material misstatements and present a true and fair view of the financial situation of the audited area, following the application of appropriate audit procedures to obtain sufficient and relevant audit evidence. *More detailed information on the Auditor’ responsibility is presented in Annex No.4 to this Audit Report.*

***Signatures of the person responsible for audit  
and of the Audit Team Members***

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<sup>31</sup> Grant Agreement No. TF019354.

Audit Team Leader,  
Main State Controller

***Maia Savva***

State Controller

***Vera Borşevschi***

*Person responsible for audit:*

Head of General Division of Public Finance Audit/  
Public Auditor

***Natalia Trofim***

*Annex I. Written Declarations*

Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova

**Declarations of the Leadership**

**To:** The Court of Accounts

27.10.2017

This Declaration Letter is to give assurance for auditing the authenticity of financial statements related to the implementation of the “Strengthening the Education Management System Capacities” Project for the years 2016-2017, in order to express an opinion whether the reference financial statements<sup>32</sup> provide a fair and real situation of the financial position under all significant aspects, in compliance with the World Bank requirements on the withdrawal of financial means from the Grant TF019354.

With reference to the *Financial Statements for the period 04.04.2016-30.09.2017*, we confirm without doubts the following statements:

- All responsibilities for the authentic and truthful submission of the Interim Financial Reports in line with the above-listed financial reporting criteria, and namely, reporting accuracy on: a) financial means used from the Grant for procurements regulated by the World Bank Procurement Guidelines; b) expenditures by Project components, were fulfilled;
- There were no irregularities involving the management or the staff with an important role in the internal control system or that could have had a significant effect on the financial statements;
- Project’s accounting registers reflect the opening/closing balances and real financial transactions carried out under Project implementation;
- The Ministry of Education and the team of consultants within the Moldova Education Reform Project have observed all aspects of the Grant Agreement,

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<sup>32</sup> (i) Report on financial resources and the use of funds; (ii) Summary of expenditures by the Project main components and by the main expenditure items, both for the year subject to audit and accumulated to date; (iii) Statement on Designated Accounts; (iv) Summary of Statements of Expenditures (SOEs) used as the basis for the submission of withdrawal applications.

Disbursement Letter, Project Document, and this allows avoiding eventual significant non-conformities of the financial statements.

*Information provided to the audit team:*

- The entity provided: access to all information relevant for generating the Interim Financial Reports and Budgetary Reports, such as the registration of all transactions funded by the Bank, accounts and documentation and other aspects; additional information requested for the purpose of auditing and an efficient collaboration with the staff in charge under the Project;
- All information on eventual suspected fraud/evidence of fraud that could affect financial statements were submitted;
- The audit team had direct access to information systems, including accounting systems used to produce Interim Financial Reports, etc..

*Sincerely,*

Project General Director                      (signature)

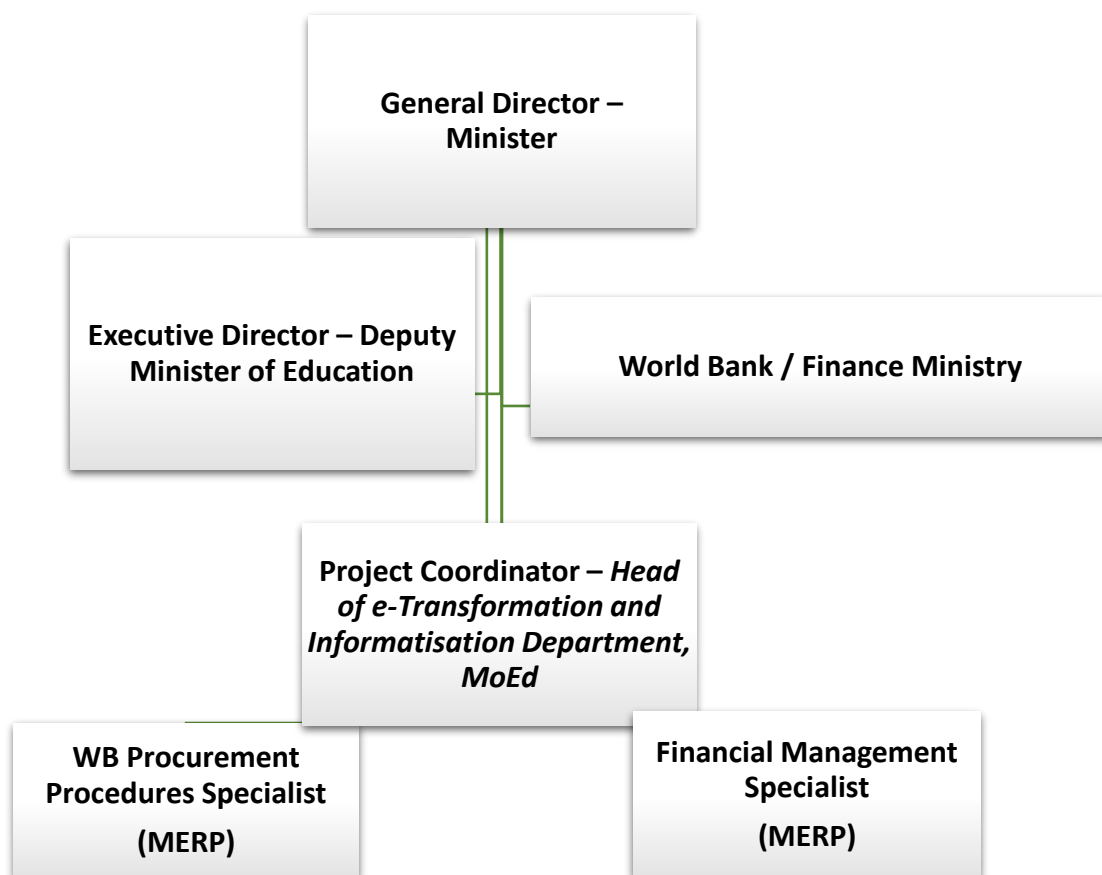
Project Executive Director                      (signature)

*Annex 2. Additional Instructions from the Disbursement Letter*

<b>Project Cost (Awarded Grant Amount)</b>	365.0 thousand USD
<b>Type of Designated Accounts</b>	Segregated
<b>Currency of Designated Account</b>	USD
<b>Financial institution at which the Designated Account is opened</b>	National Bank of Moldova
<b>Ceiling (maximum amount of the grant that may be deposited on the designated account)</b>	50.0 thousand USD
<b>Deadline for disbursement</b>	4 months after the closing date specified in the Grant Agreement
<b>Project's Funding Instrument</b>	Recipient Executed Trust Fund Grant (RETFG)
<b>Funding Source</b>	Trust Fund for Strengthening Statistical Capacities (TFSSC) under the World Bank

*Source: Grant Agreement No TF019354, Strengthening Capacity - EMIS.*

### *Annex 3. EMIS Project Implementation Arrangements*



*Source: Minister of Education's Order No 425 of 06.05.2016, Minister of Education's Order No 490 of 19.06.2017*



## **Scope**

The Court of Accounts of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the Audit Activities Program for 2017<sup>33</sup>, has conducted an audit of the financial statements of the “Strengthening Capacities of the Education Management Information System” Project, at the Ministry of Education, for the years 2016-2017. The audit mission was initiated and conducted at the request of the MEd, under the conditions provided by the Grant Agreement concluded between the Moldovan Government and the International Association for Development, ratified by the Law No 16 of 03.03.2016<sup>34</sup>, with outcomes being adjusted to the requirements established in line with the Terms of Reference for the financial audit developed by the WB<sup>35</sup>.

**The Scope of the Audit.** Proceeding from the materiality level and following the identification of areas with high probability of risk occurrence, the following were subject to the audit:

- ✓ Disbursement mechanism and the use of financial means from the Grant;
- ✓ Supporting documents and accounting records related to all Project transactions, including expenditures reported in the IFR;
- ✓ Compliance with specific provisions included in the WB Procurement Guidelines of the purchase of goods and services;
- ✓ Compliance with each financial commitment provided in the Grant Agreement.

**Audit approach.** To collect relevant and reasonable evidence, supporting the opinion, the authors have applied the substantive testing and the assessment of some significant elements of the internal control.

During the audit mission, when conducting the related activities, the audit team of the Court of Accounts was guided by: ISSAI 100, ISSAI 200 and ISSAI 1000-2999; Financial Audit Manual; Grant Agreement No TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association on the implementation of the “Strengthening Capacities of the Education Management Information System (EMIS)” Project, signed in Chisinau on 03.11.2015, subsequently ratified on 03.03.2016; Standard Conditions for World Bank Grants provided from various funds from 15.02.2012; Disbursement Letter; World Bank Guidelines on Disbursements for

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<sup>33</sup> Decision of the Court of Accounts No 47 from 05.12.2016 “On approving the audit activity program of the Court of Accounts for 2017” (with subsequent amendments and supplements).

<sup>34</sup> Law No 16 from 03.03.2016 “On the ratification of the Grant Agreement No TF019354 between the Republic of Moldova and the International Development Association on the implementation of the Strengthening Capacities of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Project”.

<sup>35</sup> Terms of Reference: Financial Audit of the Strengthening Capacity – EMIS Project for the period 04.04.2016 – 30.11.2017.

Projects from 01.05.2006; Guidelines: Procurement of goods, works and non-consulting services under IBRD loans and IDA credits and grants by World Bank borrowers from January 2011 and revised in July 2014; Guidelines on preventing and combating fraud and corruption in projects funded by IBRD loans and IDA credits and grants from 15.10.2016 and revised in January 2011; Guidelines: Selection and employment of consultant under IBRD loans and IDA credits and grants by World Bank borrowers from January 2011 and revised in July 2014; laws and regulations in effect related to the audited area.

**Audit Methodology.** To collect relevant and reasonable evidence, supporting the opinion expressed in the Audit Report, the authors have applied the following audit procedures: examination and analysis of documents, interviews, questionnaires, calculations and comparisons, as well as direct observations. According to the Terms of Reference developed by the WB, the Project's audited financial statements agreed with the WB have to include interim financial reports and financial statements used as a basis for disbursement and under the conditions of the structural reorganization of the specialty central public administration, the audit expressed an opinion on the IFR.

Given that the Grant financial means were fully utilized (100%) during the audit mission, the audit did not put forward any recommendations, but based on the *audit findings (4.2.1) from this Audit Report*, a requirement will be put forward to the MEd through the Decision of the Court of Accounts, on the evaluation and registration of the Information Program (EMIS) in line with the legal and normative framework in effect.

The audit checked the financial statements related to the EMIS Project, and when checking the availability of the EMIS, it found that the information program generates Statistic Reports. Hence, in order to determine the functionality of the EMIS upgraded from the Grant, the audit proposes to conduct an audit in information technologies.

*Annex 5. Project Interim Financial Reports for years 2016-2017*

<b>5.1 STATEMENT ON DESIGNATED ACCOUNTS,</b> <b>as of 31.12.2016</b>		<i>(USD)</i>
<i>Opening balance on 30.06.2016</i>		0
<b>Plus: Inexplicable cumulative discrepancy</b>		0
<b>Inflows during the year</b>		50000
<b>Minus: Repayment to the IDA throughout the period</b>		0
<b>Current transferred amount</b>		50000
<b>Closing balance on 31.12.2016 moving to the next period</b>		48617
<b>Plus: Amount of eligible expenses paid during the year</b>		1383
<b>Commissions</b>		0
<b>Minus: Interest rate</b>		0
<b>Total accounted for advance</b>		50000
<b>Differences</b>		0

<b>5.2 STATEMENT ON THE DESIGNATED ACCOUNTS,</b> <b>AS OF 30.09.2017</b>		<i>(USD)</i>
<i>Opening balance on 31.12.2016</i>		48617
<b>Plus: Inexplicable cumulative discrepancy</b>		0
<b>Inflows during the year</b>		64212
<b>Minus: Repayment to the IDA throughout the period</b>		0
<b>Current transferred amount</b>		65617
<b>Closing balance on 31.12.2017 moving to the next period</b>		495
<b>Plus: Amount of eligible expenses paid during the year</b>		112334
<b>Commissions</b>		0
<b>Minus: Interest rate</b>		0
<b>Total accounted for advance</b>		65617
<b>Differences</b>		0

### 5.3 Extract from the Project's Special Account, as of 31.12.2016

(USD)

<b>Opening balance of the special account on 01.01.2016</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Total credit (plus):</b>	IDA advance on the special account throughout the period	50000
	IDA financing on the special account throughout the period	0
<b>Total debit (minus):</b>	Eligible expenses from the IDA means paid from the special account throughout the period	1383
<b>Closing balance of the special account on 31.12.2016</b>		<b>48617</b>

### 5.4 Extract from the Project's Special Account, as of 30.09.2017

(USD)

<b>Opening balance of the special account on 01.01.2017</b>		<b>48617</b>
<b>Total credit (plus):</b>	IDA advance on the special account throughout the period	0
	IDA financing on the special account throughout the period	64212
<b>Total debit (minus):</b>	Eligible expenses from the IDA means paid from the special account throughout the period	112334
<b>Closing balance of the special account on 30.09.2017</b>		<b>495</b>

**5.5 Summary of Synthesis Reports or SOEs (Reports on Expenses) Used as a Basis for Submitting Drawing Requests for years 2016-2017**  
(USD)

O/No	Date	Total disbursed amount	TF Cat.1	TF Cat.2	TF Cat.3	Total paid	Payments made and accepted by WB			Paid
						USD	Cat.1	Cat.2	Cat.3	Date
1.	29.09.2016	50,000.00	50,000.00							Advance 28.09.2016
2.	07.02.2017					1,383.38	1,383.38			SOE 07.02.2017
3.	24.03.2017	4,138.50	4,138.50			4,138.50	4,138.50			SOE 16.03.2017
4.	15.05.2017	43,073.35	43,073.35			43,073.35	43,073.35			SOE 15.05.2017
5.	18.05.2017	56,074.19	56,074.19			56,074.19	56,074.19			Direct payment 18.05.2017
6.	28.07.2017	17,000.00	17,000.00			30,252.95	30,252.95			SOE 25.07.17
7.	08.08.2017	77,126.42	77,126.42			77,126.42	77,126.42			Direct payment 03.08.17
8.	08.08.2017	43,850.11	43,850.11			43,850.11	43,850.11			Direct payment 02.08.17
9.	07.09.2017	52,920.93	52,920.93			52,920.93	52,920.93			Direct payment 30.08.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>344,183.5</b>	<b>344,183.5</b>			<b>308,819.83</b>	<b>308,819.83</b>			

**5.6 Summary of Expenditures by the Project's Main Components and by the Main Expenditures Items, both for the year subject to audit and accumulated to 30.09.2017**

(USD)

Nr.	Project Components/ Activities	Actual		Planned		Difference	
		From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project
1.	Strengthening statistical and analytical capacities						
2.	Improving quality and reliability of EMIS data						
3.	Opening data in education sector:						
3.	<i>Goods</i>	10579	10579	11000	11000	-421	-421
	<i>Consultancy services</i>	331727	333110	154000	354000	179110	-20890
	<i>Trainings</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total general</b>	342306	343689	165000	365000	178689	-21311
	<b>Total expenditure of the Project</b>	<b>342306</b>	343689	165000	365000	178689	-21311

### 5.7 Report on Financial Resources and the Use of Funds, as of 31.12.2016

(USD)

	Executed		Planned		Deviations	
	From the beginning of 2016	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2016	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2016	From the beginning of the Project
<b>Opening balance</b>	50000	-	-	-		
Special account	50000	-	-	-		
Other accounts						
<b>Plus: Funding sources</b>	-	50000	150 000	200 000	(100 000)	(150 000)
TF19354		50000	150 000	200 000	(100 000)	(150 000)
GOM						
Other sources (Direct payments)						
<b>Total sources</b>	-	50000	150 000	200 000	(100 000)	(150 000)
<b>Minus: use of funds</b>						
Goods, Consultancy services, Trainings	1383	1383		200 000	1383	(198 617)
<b>Total used</b>	<b>1383</b>	<b>1383</b>		<b>200 000</b>	1383	(198 617)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>48617</b>	<b>48617</b>				

### 5.8 Reports on Financial Resources and the Use of Funds, as of 30.09.2017

(USD)

	Executed		Planned		Deviations	
	From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project	From the beginning of 2017	From the beginning of the Project
<b>Opening balance</b>	48617	-	-	-		
Special account	48617	-	-	-		
Other accounts						
<b>Plus: Funding sources</b>	294184	344184	66383	365000	227801	(20816)
TF19354	64212	114212	66383	110000	(2171)	4212



GOM						
Other sources (Direct payments)	229972	229972		255000	229972	(25028)
<b>Total sources</b>	<b>342801</b>	<b>344184</b>	<b>115000</b>	<b>365000</b>	<b>227801</b>	<b>(20816)</b>
<b>Minus: use of funds</b>						
Goods, Consultancy services, Trainings	342306	343689	165000	365000	177306	(21311)
<b>Total used</b>	<b>342306</b>	<b>343689</b>	<b>165000</b>	<b>365000</b>	<b>177306</b>	<b>(21311)</b>
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>495</b>				

## Annex 6. Old and Upgraded Version of the Open Data Portal - EMIS

