



**The Republic of Kosovo**

**Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation**

**Executive Summary**

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK  
(ESMF)**

**Project:**

**Early Childhood Development Project  
for Kosovo's Human Capital Project**

**Project ID: P179656**

**October, 2023**

## **Executive Summary – Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**

### **Introduction**

*The Government of Kosovo, through the Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers, aims to secure funding from the World Bank for the implementation of the Early Childhood Development for Kosovo’s Human Capital Project. The overall objective of the project is to enhance access to and the quality of early childhood development services in Kosovo. The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Project for Kosovo’s Human Capital is structured to address key issues in early childhood development services in Kosovo. The project will assist Kosovo in improving access, quality, and equity in ECD and will support healthcare services in addressing children’s health challenges in the country. The project will also examine ECD promotion activities to increase public awareness of the importance of ECD for health and child development, resulting in improved parenting, early identification, and reduced child mortality rates. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) is the lead implementing agency for project preparation and related activities and will identify environmental and social management requirements for the project’s preparatory phase.*

### **The purpose of drafting the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**

*The main goal of the ESMF is to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential negative environmental and social impacts associated with project implementation. The Framework approach was chosen as the project finances a wide range of small/medium activities, rehabilitation, reuse of existing spaces as well as the construction of new kindergartens, most of which have not yet been identified and are expected to be specified when the implementation of the project begins. This ESMF framework ensures that the sub-projects that will be identified within the project for ECD, have been correctly assessed from an environmental and social point of view in full compliance with the WB Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and its applicable standards, and with Kosovo's environmental and social laws and regulations for mitigating potential impacts and/or unavoidable impacts. The framework serves as a guiding tool for the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) under the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), which holds the role of the implementing agency. In addition to this document, in the context of the project, other accompanying plans have been drawn up, which include the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), the Labour Management Procedures (LMP) and the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).*

### **Description of the Project and its components**

*The objective of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) project is to improve equitable access and enhance the quality of early childhood development services in Kosovo. The key expected results from the project's implementation will be evaluated through indicators, comprising:*

- ✓ *Indicator 1: Improvement in the quality of early childhood education services – categorized by the type of urban/rural institution.*
- ✓ *Indicator 2: Enhanced regulations for ensuring the quality of early childhood services in Kosovo.*
- ✓ *Indicator 3: The percentage of children assessed according to the national program/tool for child development and monitoring.*
- ✓ *Indicator 4: Increased access to childcare services: the registration rate for children aged 0-6 – disaggregated by gender, age, and minority group.*

The proposed project will revolve around four key components related to improving access, quality, equity, and inter-sectoral coordination of ECD services. The first component will strengthen the quality and equity of ECD services in Kosovo. The second component will foster multi-sectorial integration in ECD service delivery. The third component will focus on increasing access to preschool services for families and increasing enrollment rates. The fourth component will support project management, monitoring, and evaluation.

The project components will have a national and school-level impact. Components 1 and 2 will have a nationwide scope by reforming the approach to childcare and ECD services, building the institutional and human capacities of the country. Component 3 will involve interventions at the school level by constructing, renovating, and repurposing spaces to expand access to preschool education across the country. Component 4 will help build Kosovo's expertise in project management and the conduct of research, monitoring, and evaluation.

#### **Component 1: Strengthening the quality and equity of ECD services in Kosovo.**

- *Sub-component 1.1: ECD quality and equity reforms in Kosovo*
  - *Sub-component 1.2: Capacity building of ECD professionals*
- *Sub-component 1.3: Implementation of ECE module for the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Kosovo and general **overhaul of core EMIS system***

#### **Component 2: Fostering multi-sectorial integration in ECD service delivery.**

- *Sub-component 2.1: Promoting healthy nutrition*
- *Sub-component 2.2: Child monitoring and cross-sectoral integration of services*

#### **Component 3: Increasing access to ECD services.**

- *Sub-component 3.1: Repurposing, building, and renovating the preschool and ECD facilities in Kosovo*
  - *Sub-component 3.2: Equipment of ECD centers with new furniture and learning materials*
  - *Sub-component 3.3: Support for community participation and demand-side interventions*

#### **Component 4: Project management and monitoring & evaluation**

## **Environmental and Social Policies, Regulations and Laws.**

*Kosovo's environmental legal framework is important for the overall activities of the project, and especially the activities under component 3, which also includes the financing of medium-scale interventions, such as the rehabilitation and reuse of existing spaces, as well as the construction of new kindergartens, location of which will be identified at the beginning of the implementation phase of the project. Meanwhile, the legal framework and social policies are important for the overall project components. Law No. 03/L-214 for the Environmental Impact Assessment will be respected and followed for the sub-projects that will be subject to the National Environmental and Social Assessment and obtaining the relevant Permits. In relation to the Environmental and Social Standards of the WB, the environmental and social risk of the Project is estimated to be of medium level and the project will include the following applicable ESF standards, namely ESS 1 Assessment and Management of Risks and Impacts Environmental and Social, ESS 2 Labor and Working Conditions, ESS 3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management, ESS 4 Community Health and Safety, ESS 5 Land Acquisition, Land Use Restrictions and Involuntary Displacement, and ESS 10 Stakeholder engagement and information disclosure; as well as the World Bank Group Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines.*

### **Location and scope of the project**

*The proposed project has coverage at the national level and includes the administrative borders of the Republic of Kosovo. The location for the construction of the new kindergartens has not yet been determined at this preliminary stage and will be detailed after the project begins implementation, however, it is expected that the construction of the new kindergartens will be done mainly on public lands, which have been designated for this purpose according to the plans of development and are owned, or transferred to the respective beneficiary.*

### **Overall Preliminary Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts**

*The level of negative environmental and social impacts of the project, which will be mainly related to the implementation phase of the works foreseen under component 3, is estimated to be moderate, while the overall impacts expected from the full implementation of the project are expected to be positive. The implementation of works according to component 3 may be accompanied by moderate environmental and social impacts, of a temporary and local character, which can be easily avoided or reduced through the application of mitigation measures according to the guidelines of the WB standards, the WB occupational health and safety protection policies as well as by the respecting of the environmental and social legal framework of the republic of Kosovo. The main social impact, which must be taken into account during the implementation of the project in a way that is maximally avoided, is related to the risk of not including needy and disadvantaged groups, not giving them the opportunity to benefit from the project.*

### **Implementation procedures and organization.**

*Since the implementation of the project requires multi-sectoral involvement, the government's focal point for human capital, MESTI will be a key player that will be able to bring together all the ministries and agencies involved and interested, to achieve the results of the project. MESTI will be responsible for the overall implementation, coordination, monitoring of results and communication with the WB for the implementation of*

*all activities related to the project. A Central Unit for the implementation of the Project (PIU) will be created within MESTI. The main role of the PIU will be to provide technical and operational assistance to MESTI and the targeted Districts/Municipalities in the implementation of project activities, including functions such as procurement, financial management and will be responsible for managing environmental and social impacts. In order to improve the institutional capacities related to the implementation of the ESMF, the Environmental and Social Specialists of the WB will provide special training for the staff of the PIU and MESTI focused on: (i) Procedural aspects of preliminary environmental and social assessments (phases, main actors, main responsibilities etc.); ( ii ) Assessment of environmental and social impacts that may be related to sub-projects within the project; ( iii ) Consultation and approval of EIAs and monitoring plans; and ( iii ) preparation of the environmental and social management plan checklist ; ( iv ) Conduct field supervision and prepare progress reports.*

### ***Engagement of stakeholders, and development of public consultations.***

*This ESMF report as well as environmental and social documents accompanying the project such as SEP, LMP, RPF and the Environmental and Social Engagement Plan (ESCP), upon approval by the WB, will be posted on the official webpages of MESTI. The final version of the ESMF will be officially submitted to the World Bank for publication in English on the WB's website. Versions in English, Albanian and Serbian will be posted on MESTI official website. The final version of this document will be used by relevant government agencies and other stakeholders during project implementation. If during the consultations there will be comments or reactions to the ESMF document that will be published, they will be taken into consideration and will be added as an annex to the final version. MESTI/PIU will conduct national/local public consultations on this draft ESMF and will invite all interested organizations including local representatives and other government bodies, according to ECD project SEP guidelines.*