



Republic of Kosovo

Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation

Executive Summary

***Stakeholder Engagement Plan
(SEP)***

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

Project ID: P179656

October, 2023

Executive Summary – Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

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.

Project Description and 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.

Purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)

The project is being prepared under the WB's Environment and Social Framework (ESF). The ESF specifies the WB's commitment to sustainable development through its policies and number of Environmental and Social Standards ("ESS"). As per ESS 10 on Stakeholders Engagement and Information Disclosure, the implementing agencies (IAs) should provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable, and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation.

The purpose of the present Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to outline the target groups, methods of stakeholder engagement and the responsibilities in the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities. The intention of the SEP is to activate the engagement of stakeholders in a timely manner during project preparation and implementation. Specifically, SEP serves the following purposes: i) stakeholder identification and analysis; (ii) planning engagement modalities

and effective communication tools for consultations and disclosure; (iii) defining role and responsibilities of different actors in implementing the SEP; (iv) defining the project's grievance mechanism (GM) and (v) providing feedback to stakeholders; (vi) monitoring and reporting of the SEP.

Concise Summary of the Objectives and Structure of SEP

Stakeholder engagement is an inclusive process conducted throughout the project life cycle. Where properly designed and implemented, it supports the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that are important for successful management of environmental and social risks identified in a project.

To provide clear and smooth communication between all interested and affected parties, the MESTI PIU has developed this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which is carrying out stakeholder engagement in line with the laws of the Republic of Kosovo, as well as the requirements of World Bank (ESS standards).

The main objectives of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) include:

- Compliance with the legal requirements of Kosovo.
- Alignment with World Bank standards.
- Identification of key stakeholders.
- Ensuring effective communication.
- Allowing stakeholders to influence project planning.
- Addressing grievances.
- Defining roles and responsibilities.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the SEP.

The SEP is a living document and will be continuously updated as the project starts being implemented.

Concise Overview of SEP Content

This SEP outlines the project stakeholders, who are divided into three categories: project-affected parties, other interested parties, disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups, each with distinct interests and potential impacts related to the project. According to the SEP, project stakeholders are individuals, institutions, or organizations that may influence or be affected by the project. They are categorized based on their influence and are subject to ongoing assessment and engagement as the project evolves.

The project recognizes these actors as key participants in its execution:

- Local and Regional Authorities
- Private Companies and Associations
- Preschool Staff and Local Communities

- Government and Regulatory Bodies
- Non-Governmental Organizations and International Organizations
- Disadvantaged/Vulnerable Individuals or Groups

Furthermore, this document covers the responsibilities of each stakeholder group, identifies key issues for discussion with different stakeholder groups, and includes a range of communication methods tailored to specific stakeholder groups.

Additionally, the SEP document describes a comprehensive strategy for stakeholder engagement, addressing key aspects such as the purpose and timing of the stakeholder engagement program. It also includes a proposed approach for information disclosure and consultations regarding the project and activities. Furthermore, it includes a dedicated strategy for engaging and communicating with vulnerable groups. The document also outlines the distribution of resources and responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities.

Another integral component is the establishment of a grievance redress mechanism, which includes an online platform and a grievance register. The primary goal of this mechanism is to inform all relevant actors about the procedures for submitting grievances related to project activities and to provide timely responses to their potential concerns.