

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	PANAMA/CID - Isthmus & DR
▪ TC Name:	Support for the development and strengthening of foundational skills defined in Components 2 and 3 of the Programs PN-L1143 and PN- J0001
▪ TC Number:	PN-T1325
▪ Team Leader/Members:	DUENAS HERRERA, XIMENA (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; PARRA ALVAREZ, JULIANA (CAN/CCO); JOSE SANCHEZ (SCL/EDU); SILVANA GODOY MATEUS (SCL/EDU); BARRAGAN CRESPO, ENRIQUE IGNACIO (LEG/SGO); ALEJANDRA FORERO PEREZ (SCL/EDU); BLASCO, IVANA (SCL/EDU); CORRIOLS DIAZ, LEONOR ODILIE (VPC/FMP); ORELLANA, MIGUEL ANGEL (VPC/FMP)
▪ Taxonomy:	Operational Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	Program to Improve Efficiency and Quality in the Education Sector - PN-L1143 Program for the Improvement in the Efficiency, Quality and Inclusion of the Educational Sector of Panama - PN-J0001
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	20 Mar 2023
▪ Beneficiary:	Ministry of Education
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$200,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$0.00
▪ Disbursement period:	24 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	CID/CPN - Country Office Panama
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	Yes
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality ; Institutional capacity and rule of law

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 Support the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) of Panama in strengthening the technical aspects for the execution of components 2 and 3 of the Program for Improving the Efficiency and Quality of the Educational Sector (PN-L1143) and the Program for the Improvement of Efficiency, Quality and Inclusion of the Educational Sector of Panama (PN-J0001). The specific objectives are: i) to promote the development of foundational skills from primary to secondary school through the efficient use of resources from Components 2 and 3 of the operations, as well as carrying out the follow-up and support required by MEDUCA and the Education Division; ii) support operations PN-L1143 and PN-J0001 to achieve the desired objectives defined in Components 2 and 3; and iii) contribute to the preparation of technical notes that support the government in identifying priority areas for future interventions.

- 2.2 In November 2017, the IDB's Board of Executive Directors approved the Program for Improving the Efficiency and Quality of the Education Sector - MECSE (4357/OC-PN) for US\$100 million to support the education sector in Panama. The general objective of this investment loan is to increase the levels of learning and skills of Panamanian students in public schools, by improving the quality and efficiency of the provision of educational services. The specific objectives are: (i) improve the efficiency in the allocation of resources and guide educational policy decisions through a digital transformation of the information systems of the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA); (ii) strengthen the quality performance framework of the education sector; (iii) implement comprehensive pedagogical support for schools, with a focus on those with the lowest performance; and (iv) ensure adequate school maintenance and equipment for the four comprehensive schools. MECSE focuses most of its resources on improving the efficiency, quality and management of the educational system. To the above, it must be added that the government requested to be beneficiary from a Non-Reimbursable Facility (GRF), intended to support countries receiving sudden and large-scale intraregional migratory flows. This operation, structured as an independent Investment Grant (IG), approved in November 2021 (5396/GR-PN), is executed by the same Executing Unit within the Ministry of Education. More than 85% of the total costs of the programs are destined to introduce systemic reforms in the sector, thus Component 3 focuses on pedagogical support. This component emphasizes investments in foundational skills (mathematics and language). Proof of this is the investment made in the Panamatica (elementary math) and Aprendamos Todos a Leer (language intervention from transition to third grade) programs, and even a pilot in preschool with High Scope. Additionally, operation 5396/GP-PN, in its Component 3 includes development of socio-emotional skills as a foundational skill. Finally, both have in their Component 2, the evaluation of these skills and interventions carried out to replicate them. This technical cooperation aims to strengthen and improve these ongoing interventions, as well as to identify and analyze lessons learned from other countries that can be implemented in Panama that allows scaling and replicating these experiences in the rest of the region.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Development of an operational model for the implementation of strategies and/or programs that promote the development of foundational skills in children and adolescents..** Design a model to implement a strategy for the development of foundational skills in Panamá replicable to other countries. This component will finance: i) consultants to support the implementation of programs; ii) construction of a flexible operating model for those interested in promoting the development of such skills; iii) mapping strategies that have shown positive results in the development of foundational skills and differentiated according to learning levels.
- 3.2 **Component II: Technical support and advice to the Ministry of Education of Panama and other public and private entities in the selection of strategies that seek to promote the development of foundational skills..** Strengthen MEDUCA's capacity to adequately choose and implement programs that have shown positive results in the development of foundational skills. It will finance: i) discussions with experts in the implementation of programs on the development of this type of skills; ii) support the teams in the contextualization of pedagogical materials; iii) provide technical support to teams in the implementation of the strategies and in evaluations based on evidence.
- 3.3 **Component III: Technical assistance to identify priority areas for future interventions..** This component will facilitate the dialogue with the Ministry of Education and sector stakeholders to identify priority investment areas. It will finance: i) workshops with national and international stakeholders to discuss the priority areas

identified by MEDUCA; ii) preparation of a technical note that synthesizes the workshop's discussions.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Development of an operational model for the implementation of strategies and/or programs that promote the development of foundational skills in children and adolescents.	US\$80,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$80,000.00
Technical support and advice to the Ministry of Education of Panama and other public and private entities in the selection of strategies that seek to promote the development of foundational skills.	US\$80,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$80,000.00
Technical assistance to identify priority areas for future interventions.	US\$40,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$40,000.00
Total	US\$200,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$200,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 As requested by the Government of Panama, the Bank will execute the technical cooperation through its Education Division (EDU), as the unit in charge of procurement and disbursements, which will hire the services of individual consultants and consulting firms, in accordance with current Bank's policies and procedures. The Bank will work closely with the Executing Unit at the Ministry of Education, and with the technical teams assigned for each component, in order to ensure direct dialogue and involvement of key authorities and actors from the Ministry.
- 5.2 The supported operations by this TC are both executed by MEDUCA/MECSE, which shows an evident high workload for the coordinating unit, considering in addition that the loan and the IGR have 4 technical components. In 2022, MECSE only added a sub-coordinator to balance the load, but is still insufficient because of the complexity of the programs since the actions of both must be aligned to achieve complementarity, reduce duplication, and promote sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary that this TC to be executed by the Bank in order to achieve the effective execution of both operations, reducing MECSE administrative burden and guaranteeing the expertise in the sector and operational management through the education division team.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Low risks are expected for this TC since it: (i) will mainly finance consultancies and technical assistance; (ii) the Bank has extensive previous experience in related activities similar to those presented in this TC; and (iii) by executing the TC, the Bank can ensure that various interventions are well coordinated with the comprehensive vision that is required.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "undefined".