

TC Document

I. Basic Information for TC

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL
▪ TC Name:	Supporting School Re-Enrollment and Learning Outcomes Recovery for Vulnerable Youth in Mesoamerica while Addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic
▪ TC Number:	RG-T3742
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Zoido Lobaton, Pablo (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; Fernandez Coto, Raquel Auxiliadora (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; Blasco, Ivana (SCL/EDU); Chavez Alzamora, Jose Carlos (SCL/EDU); Holguin Madrinan, Alejandra (SCL/SCL); Negret Garrido, Cesar Andres (LEG/SGO) Madrinan, Alejandra (SCL/SCL); Negret Garrido, Cesar Andres (LEG/SGO)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Operation Supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	02 Jul 2020.
▪ Beneficiary:	El Salvador, Honduras
▪ Executing Agency and contact name:	Inter-American Development Bank, Secretaría Ejecutiva Del Consejo De Ministros De Salud De Centroamérica (IADB: US\$700,000; SE-COMISCA: US\$300,000)
▪ Donors providing funding:	Japan Special Fund(JSF)
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$1,000,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$200,000.00 (In-Kind)
▪ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	24 months
▪ Required start date:	8/28/2020
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms; Suppliers
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU-Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL-Social Sector
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	no
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	no
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality; Productivity and innovation

II. Objectives and Justification of the TC

- II.1 **Objective.** The objective of this Technical Cooperation (TC) proposal is to support Honduras and El Salvador in the process of addressing the impacts of the COVID-19¹ crisis on their education systems, and sharing lessons learned with the rest of Mesoamerican countries². In particular, it will support country efforts to re-open schools providing a safe environment for learning and reduce the impact of the COVID-

¹ Honduras and El Salvador have been prioritized in this TC given that they are among the countries with the highest predicted dropout due to COVID-19 (in absolute and relative terms, respectively) in Mesoamerica and as such, their education systems require the most assistance.

² Mesoamerica comprises Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

19 pandemic on the re-enrollment of children and youth into school and providing support to vulnerable youth to limit learning losses during the crisis. The TC will outline and implement strategies for school reopening, provide schools with the minimum sanitary conditions required (personal protection equipment, hygiene kits, health monitoring kits), support educational authorities in their efforts to re-open and bring the student population back to school, encourage re-enrollment and sustained attendance of the hardest to reach population offering countries a scheme to implement monetary and non-monetary incentives, and train school staff to implement catching-up strategies to bridge widening learning gaps by focusing on vulnerable students who would have suffered the most learning loss during the pandemic. The development and initial implementation of these efforts will provide El Salvador and Honduras with means to address the emergency and tackle challenges to educational performance. In addition, tools and knowledge built through this TC will be shared with the rest of the Mesoamerican countries by involving all key regional cooperation institutions in Health and Education (COMISCA, CECC/SICA and Proyecto Mesoamerica). Finally, the scope of the TC can be widened in the future by working with local non-governmental partners to bring about change and make the most of the opportunities brought upon education systems by the pandemic.

- II.2 **Justification.** On March 11, the Director-General (DG) of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern, as a pandemic, due to its expansion across the world. The virus has rapidly spread from China to 185 countries and regions. In response, Mesoamerican governments enforced widespread school closures across their countries, affecting more than 64 million students (UNESCO, 2020).
- II.3 In the medium term, the discontinuity of educational services will have a negative impact on dropout and student learning, particularly for those lacking economic resources, parental support or access to effective distance-based learning programs (Cooc, McIntyre & Gomez, 2016). Based on the effects on education of previous economic crises, it is expected that close to one million youth (10-18 years old) will not come back to school in Mesoamerica, a number that represents at least a 20% increase in student absenteeism³. Preliminary analysis shows the crisis will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable: 4 out of 5 young people not coming back are poor or vulnerable middle class (BID, 2020)⁴. Even for those who will return, preliminary estimates suggest students may lose 30% to 50% of learning in reading and mathematics compared to a typical school year (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020⁵).
- II.4 In Mesoamerica, the crisis unfolds in a particularly unfavorable context. The educational exclusion rates prior to COVID-19 are high and concentrated in the most vulnerable and lowest-income population. While the vast majority start secondary education, more than two thirds of the region's poorest youth do not finish (Ramirez and Viteri, 2020). Among those who complete their studies, 1 in 20 achieve the fundamental basic competences and the transversal skills they need (Ramirez and Viteri 2020). The COVID-19 crisis will only exacerbate the situation.

³ According to current estimates, the countries with the most pronounced drop on assistance as a percentage of their number students will be El Salvador (3.1%), México (2.5%), Guatemala (2.3%) and Honduras (1.7%).

⁴ BID (2020), Educational contagion of COVID-19, Mimeo.

⁵ https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf

- II.5 The situation of the most vulnerable youth is challenging the education systems, as they are currently struggling on building a path forward for schools to gradually reopen, defining what are the minimum sanitary conditions they should offer, how to reach students from remote areas, how to incentivize assistance and support students who need to catch up with their peers.
- II.6 **Strategic Alignment.** This TC is aligned to the development challenges “social inclusion and equality” and “productivity and innovation” of the Second Update to IDB’s Institutional Strategy 2020 2023 (AB-3190-2) as it will contribute to increase the number of young people who graduate high school by reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on dropout rates and student’s learning loss. This TC is also aligned with the Country Strategies of the beneficiary countries: In El Salvador (GN-2828) with the objective of improving the quality of education; In Honduras (GN-2944) with the objective of promoting the accumulation of human capital of households in extreme poverty. Finally, it is also aligned with the “Five Dimensions of Success” of the Sectoral Framework Document on Education and Early Childhood Development (GN 2708-5), and with the Operating Guidelines of the Japanese Trust Fund with “policy and strategy formulation/implementation activities with priority given to C and D countries.”

III. Description of activities/components and budget

- III.1 This TC will support El Salvador and Honduras, in their efforts to recover enrollment rates and learning outcomes to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable youth. The regional nature of this TC will allow for peer-to-peer sharing of tools, knowledge and experiences with the rest of the Mesoamerican countries, building on the work of the Salud Mesoamerica Initiative and its extension into the education sector. This TC considers four components, each of which will be implemented based on country context, needs and policy priorities:
- III.2 **Component 1 – Sanitary conditions for schools (US\$ 300,000):** This component has the objective of providing the minimum sanitary conditions hardest to reach schools require for reopening. This component is essential for the execution of this TC as it will aid vulnerable students and schools to comply with the necessary protocols to maintain safe environments and prevent individuals who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others when schools reopen. This component will finance the acquisition of personal protection equipment (e.g. face masks)⁶, hygiene kits (e.g. antibacterial gel)⁷, and health monitoring kits (e.g. infrared thermometers)⁸ to benefit around 12,000 students, administration expenses required by the Executing Agency in charge of this component, as well as a qualitative or process evaluation of the use of these goods.
- III.3 **Component 2 - Strategies for school reopening (US\$ 190,000):** This component has the objective of developing a set of criteria, guidelines, and protocols under which schools can be re-opened to maintain safe environments both in urban and rural

⁶ Personal protection equipment (e.g. face masks) is essential to keep students protected not only in the course of the school day, but also during the journey from and back home.

⁷ Hygiene kits (e.g. antibacterial gel) contribute to adequate sanitation to reduce chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19.

⁸ Health monitoring kits (e.g. infrared thermometers) help to identify students or staff members who may have a COVID-19 infection and redirect them to healthcare providers.

settings. These tools will be used to diagnose whether or not schools should be re-opened and what measures to take when they are re-opened. Considerations will include gradual or phased reopening (based on students' education level or geographical areas), availability of hand washing points, existence of protocols to monitor the health condition of students, teachers and administrative staff, among others. This component will finance i) the elaboration of country-adjusted technical criteria, guidelines and protocols for restarting educational services and maintaining safe environments; ii) training of school staff on the implementation of these guidelines and protocols and iii) the development and implementation of traditional and innovative communication strategies to encourage reenrollment⁹.

- III.4 **Component 3 – Innovative monetary and non-monetary incentives (US\$ 270,000):** This component has the objective of designing and setting up a scheme to provide incentives to vulnerable youth to encourage specific school permanence metrics such as re-enrollment, regular school attendance, and adequate progress. This component will collect the experience and create alliances with other initiatives to incentivize youth development in the region¹⁰ and will finance i) the design of the incentive scheme; ii) the conceptual design of a tool to implement the incentive; and iii) the cost of identifying and bringing private partners into the scheme to support the provision of these incentives for youth at risk of dropping out of school early or not coming back to school after COVID19 related closures¹¹. This TC will not commit any resources for software development or the payment of the incentives themselves.
- III.5 **Component 4 – Catch up strategies (US\$ 240,000):** This component has the objective of providing teachers and school staff with strategies for reaching out to students at risk of deep learning losses due to the pandemic. This component will finance i) the development or adaptation of pedagogical resources that will help teachers support low performing vulnerable students; and ii) teacher training on the use of these resources. This component will leverage successful interventions in the region that use open source platforms to provide flexible supplementary education in low resource communities with limited internet access.
- III.6 **Expected Results.** As a result of the execution of this TC it is expected that Mesoamerican countries (in particular El Salvador and Honduras) will increase enrollment rates and learning outcomes to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable youth.
- III.7 **Budget.** The total cost of this TC will be US\$ 1,200,000, of which US\$ 1,000,000 will be financed by the Japan Special Fund (JSF) and US\$ 200,000 corresponds to in-kind counterpart resources. These in-kind contributions will cover the salaries of local technical experts from participating countries (El Salvador and Honduras). The total execution and disbursement period will be 24 months for all activities, including six months for auditing and evaluation.

⁹ This activity has the purpose of involving teachers, parents and local communities in the school reopening process by disseminating key messages such as the risks of COVID-19 and measures to mitigate them, the importance of attending school and the long-term returns of education and their role in protecting students from this disease.

¹⁰ Including the Jóvenes-Tech initiative in Honduras.

¹¹ Bringing private partners to the incentives scheme will provide opportunities to identify possible rewards for students who meet agreed upon metrics (e.g. enrollment, continued school attendance, promotion, academic performance in certain subjects), such as free data for mobile services, free internet service, food vouchers, among others. Fostering alliances between private partners and the Ministries of Education will contribute to scaling up and providing sustainability to the initiative after the TC is executed.

Indicative Budget
Indicative Budget in (US\$)

Component	Executing agency	IDB/JSF Fund	Local CT	Total
Component 1: Sanitary conditions for schools.	SE-COMISCA	300,000	-	300,000
Component 2: Strategies for school reopening.	IDB	190,000	90,000	280,000
Component 3: Innovative monetary and non-monetary incentives.	IDB	270,000	-	270,000
Component 4: Catch up strategies.	IDB	240,000	110,000	350,000
TOTAL	-	1,000,000	200,000	1,200,000

IV. Executing agency and execution structure (estimated length: 1 page)

- IV.1 **Executing agency.** The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and Executive Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and Dominican Republic (SE-COMISCA) will jointly act as the Executing Agency for the TC: COMISCA will be accountable for Component 1 and the IDB for Components 2, 3, 4 and project administration, in accordance with the provisions of Appendix X (Criteria Applied to Contracting by the Bank) of the Operational Guidelines for TC Products (GN-2629-1), given the regional nature of the TC.
- IV.2 COMISCA is the agency who leads the regional response of Central America and Dominican Republic to COVID-19 following the mandates of the Council of Ministers of Health of the region. COMISCA has experience and has managed similar regional purchases on an annual basis up as the Joint Negotiation of Prices. The Ministers of Health have delegated this mandate to the SE-COMISCA. The unit in charge of Component 1 will report directly to the Executive Secretary which will facilitate rapid decision making and project implementation. SE-COMISCA has professional staff and key operational and administrative tools to implement this project. SE-COMISCA is familiar with the Bank's reporting tools and the IDB's financial management and procurement procedures, and has proven to be an expert in: (i) managing TC resources, its implementation schedule and spending plan ; (ii) prepare the Terms of Reference and the bidding documents; (iii) carry out contract selection and award processes; and (iv) monitor the execution of the contracts.
- IV.3 The TC will benefit from synergies within the existing administrative structure in SE-COMISCA, which currently administers the following IDB-financed TCs: RG-T3544 (Efficient Health Systems: Roadmap for the reduction of diseases and deaths for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the Central American Integration System-SICA Region) and RG-T3492 (Results-based financing of regional entities in support of the Regional Initiative for the Elimination of Malaria (RMEI) in Mesoamerica and the Dominican Republic). SE-COMISCA also continues to work with countries and

other partners such as CABEL, PAHO and CDC towards a harmonized regional response.

- IV.4 A Letter of Agreement between SE-COMISCA and the IDB will be required to establish the terms and conditions regarding execution of Component 1. To start execution and receive agreed disbursements, SE-COMISCA will also need to comply with the General Conditions Applicable to Non-reimbursable Technical Cooperations to the IDB's satisfaction.
- IV.5 Additionally, SE-COMISCA will need to submit the following reports: i) semi-annual progress reports within thirty (30) days of the end of each calendar semester, which must include the execution of purchases made, an update on the delivery to the countries, a summary of the findings and conclusions, and a financial execution report; ii) a final report, within six (6) months from the date of completion of the last Project activity, which should include a summary of findings and conclusions; and a final report on financial execution.
- IV.6 The IDB is a multilateral organization with extensive expertise in Mesoamerica through its country offices, allowing agile coordination between countries and actors on the ground. Additionally, it enjoys regional recognition as a technical cooperation executing agency in education. The IDB has experience in the coordination of international donors, the monitoring of funds and has quick disbursement and spending mechanisms. Finally, it is appropriate for IDB to assume the responsibility of selecting and hiring consulting services considering that it would contribute to the sustainability of the implementation of the TC and no other regional entity with legal capacity to execute Components 2, 3, 4 has been identified.
- IV.7 Responsibilities for supervision and monitoring this operation will fall on SCL/EDU, including regular meetings with counterparts and providers. The designated focal point for El Salvador is Pablo Zoido (pabloz@iadb.org), Sector Lead Specialist (SCL/EDU) and project team leader who will be responsible for project monitoring and supervision and Raquel Fernández (EDU/CHO), Education Sector Specialist in Honduras. IDB Country Offices will be informed about the progress of the TC on a regular basis. It is estimated that the project will have a duration of 24 months for execution and disbursements counted from the date of approval of this TC.
- IV.8 **Procurement.** The activities to be executed in Components 2, 3, and 4 will be contracted in accordance with Bank policies as follows: (a) AM-650 for Individual consultants; (b) Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-executed Operational Work (GN-2765-1) and its Operational Guidelines (OP-1155-4); and (c) GN-2303-20 for logistics and other related services. For Component 1, COMISCA, will follow Policies for the Procurement of Goods and Works Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2349-9) and Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2350-9).
- IV.9 The TC will also benefit from the special measures under the Policies for the Procurement of Goods and Works, and the Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the IDB for the immediate public health response authorized by the Board of Executive Directors in response to the COVID- 19 Pandemic Outbreak (GN-2996).

- IV.10 All deliverables and any other material prepared under this TC are the sole and exclusive property of the Bank, and as such, the Bank has title, rights (including copyrights) and exclusive interests in the ownership of said works.
- IV.11 **Monitoring and Evaluation.** COMISCA and the Bank will monitor the output and outcome indicators as set out in the Results Matrix for the components each agency is accountable for and a project evaluation report will be completed within six (6) months after project completion. IDB will monitor the execution of the activities under this TC using administrative data generated by the project execution plan, disbursement plan, technical supervision, and the Audited Financial Statements and Final Audited Financial Statement which will be submitted by COMISCA to IDB for component 1. The project team will also share a progress report with the IDB Country representative, CID general manager, and FMP every six months. IDB country offices will also share reports with the corresponding Embassy Offices in each country.
- IV.12 **Visibility of JSF.** In keeping with Annex 1 of the April 2016 Operating Guidance for the JSF, once the TC is approved, a joint press release will be issued by the Bank and Government of Japan through the Japanese Embassy of the participating Countries. The press release will include the financial contribution from the Government of Japan and provide a summary of the project objective and activities of the TC that will address COVID-19 in the participating countries.

V. Major issues

- V.1 Given the time-sensitive nature of this COVID-19 public health emergency, it is critical that the executing agency carries out the project activities within the timeline established as conditions allow considering the still uncertainties around the pandemic and its development. IDB and COMISCA will monitor execution closely and jointly for the components each agency is accountable for. This requires solid project planning and execution; Both IDB and COMISCA have the experience, competences, and presence in all benefited countries.
- V.2 Due to the higher global demand of COVID-19 supplies and broken chain of production and distribution, there is a risk of important delays in availability; consequently, delaying the TC implementation. Mitigation actions include permanent monitoring of suppliers and their stocks as well as close coordination with other procurement entities.

VI. Exceptions to Bank policy

- VI.1 Given this public health emergency situation and recognizing that the time-sensitive nature of this COVID-19 pandemic requires critical inputs to enhance the capacity and response time of the education system, one exception is requested to the procurement of goods, should it exceed 30% of the overall budget is justified in keeping with TC Policy (GN-2470-2, Annex I, Par. 2.4).

VII. Environmental and Social Strategy

- VII.1 According to the Environmental and Safeguards Compliance Policy (OP-703), Indigenous Peoples (OP-765), and Gender Equality (OP-270), this TC is classified as category "C". The TC will not finance infrastructure or civil works. The proposed interventions are expected to cause minimal to no negative impacts. See filters [SPF](#) and [SSF](#).

Required Annexes:

[Request from the Client_26739.pdf](#)

[Results Matrix_30044.pdf](#)

[Terms of Reference_65082.pdf](#)

[Procurement Plan_11031.pdf](#)

* If TC Document is sent for BOD approval, the only Annexes that need to be translated are the Results Matrix and the Procurement Plan. The Request from Client and the ToRs should be included as links and no translation is required.