

**MEMORANDUM TO THE DCI COMMITTEE  
CONCERNING THE**

**Annual Action Programme 2018 – Part I in favour of Nicaragua  
for Sector Support to Education to be financed from the general  
budget of the Union**

**1. Identification**

Budget heading	21.02.01.00
Total cost	EUR 43 000 000 of EU contribution  This action is co-financed in parallel by:  - The Government of Nicaragua, for an amount of EUR 3 700 000;  - The World Bank (WB) for an amount of USD 55 000 000.
Basic act	Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020  Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.

**2. Country background**

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean, only after Haiti. With an estimated population of 6,327.9 million, and real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of USD 2,090.8 in 2016, increased consumption per capita, and improvements in supply of basic services to the most vulnerable, the country has moved up to rank 124 (out of 188 countries) in the Human Development Index. Due to its geographic location and socio-economic conditions, the Nicaraguan economy remains exposed to external shocks (increases in oil prices and declines in non-oil commodity prices), highly vulnerable to natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanic activity) and the effects of climate change (flooding, drought). Nicaragua has had **limited resilience** to withstand and recover from these eventualities in the past, also due to poorly prepared human resources.

The country faces significant challenges as **inequalities persist** in terms of income, employment opportunities, and access to quality basic social services. Poverty is predominantly rural (70.9 %). The unemployment rate was 6.2 % in 2014, above the Central American average (4.8 %). Both informal economy and unemployment remain disproportionally high among the youth (11 % for the urban population between 15 to 24 years old).

The country is currently undergoing a **demographic transition**, with the economically active population representing 47.9 % of the total population in 2015, the highest economically active proportion of the population to date. According to the Economic Commission for Latin

America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), by 2050 the economically active population will represent 60 % of population. Rather than a guarantee of automatic improvement in living conditions, this situation represents a **window of opportunity to raise productivity and boost economic growth**, granted that adequate policies are supported and efficiently implemented. **Raising the skill levels of the young population about to join the labour force and ensuring the equitable access to and completion of quality secondary education are crucial to attain the potential dividends presented by the demographic bonus.**

### 3. Summary of the Action Programme

#### 1) Background:

The education sector is currently at a crossroads: it needs to face some key challenges and make strategic decisions for the development of Nicaragua. The first issue is **access to education in rural areas**, a prerequisite for inclusion. Indeed, while in the last decade there have been improvements in access and completion in all educational levels, large gaps remain in access to secondary and post-secondary education, which mainly affect rural population, i.e. lower income groups and the Caribbean Coast, where most indigenous people and afro-descendent live.

A second challenge concerns **low learning achievements**, as evidenced by poor performance in recent national and international standardised tests. Nicaraguan students perform below their regional peers in all subject areas, and a significant number of students fail to achieve the expected levels of learning stated in the curriculum. Secondary Education decision makers are facing the dilemma to offer access to education without compromising quality. For rural areas, this means defining what degree of consistency should be required in the curricula and expected levels of learning in the different modalities of full and part-time secondary education.

A third issue is the **pertinence of learning results** achieved through secondary education for national economic development and the livelihood of each student. Secondary education need to prepare students for work, either as entrepreneurs, employed or self-employed individuals. Based on a national survey of small, medium and large businesses to determine the principal factors limiting their development, the National Council of Private Business (COSEP) recently identified a number of skills that employers struggle to find in the labour force: writing and oral expression, arithmetic, soft skills (assertiveness, resilience, integrity...), business prone attitude.

Finally, recent studies confirm that many **barriers** to access and quality in secondary education are **associated with gender norms** and with the availability of adequate learning facilities, especially in rural areas. For instance, sexual violence, pregnancies, or early marriages (unions before 18 years of age) and gender norms emphasising the role of women and their responsibilities in the household are the most important barriers for school attendance and permanence for adolescent girls. For adolescent boys, the main causes of non-attendance and dropout have to do with the responsibility to become the economic support of their families, physical violence or abuse. Other barriers to attending school have to do with safety conditions, including the school distance and the overall state of school infrastructure.

#### 2) Cooperation related policy of beneficiary country

The main focus of the new Education Plan (EP) 2017-2021 is to raise the quality of education nationwide, at all educational levels. The Plan's strategic areas and activities are articulated around three objectives: (i) Quality Education, (ii) Access with Equity, and (iii) Human

Development and Institutional Strengthening. While the EP 2017–2021 is not a sector-wide plan and its multi-annual implementation plan is still in preparation, its design was supported by a solid analytical process, which included an evaluation of the implementation of the Sector Education Policy 2011-2015, a technical sector analysis, focusing on preschool, primary and secondary education, a diagnostic assessment of the state of the teacher training centres, the development of a conceptual, methodological framework which sheds lights on the challenges facing its planning and monitoring processes and systems, and the systematization of lessons learned from previous cooperation programmes financed, amongst other by the EU.

### 3) Coherence with the programming documents:

The national education policies and strategies are broadly in line with the EU policy framework. The overall objective of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) **2014–2020 for sector 2 “Effective Education for Employment”** is to "improve employability of the labour force, particularly secondary education graduates, by improving the relevance and quality of general secondary education and technical/vocational education and training". Its specific objective 1) aims to "support sectoral strategies and policies to improve rates of equitable access to, completion of and the quality of general secondary education for girls and boys".

In addition, the education policies and strategies are fully consistent with **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which seeks to ensure that, by 2030, "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes". They are also in line with the **new European Consensus on Development** commitment to "supporting inclusive life-long learning and equitable quality education at all levels -early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training and adult learning- with special attention to education and training opportunities for girls and women."

The proposed action will contribute to Priority 4 of the **Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2016-2020**, "Economic, Social and cultural Rights: Economic and social empowerment", notably objectives 13 "Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination" and objective 14 "Access to decent work for women of all ages".

### 4) Identified actions:

The proposed Action's **general objective** will be to support the implementation of the EP 2017 – 2021 and its strategies to improve the quality of secondary education, thereby improving learning outcomes and employability skills of the most vulnerable population.

The programme's specific objectives will be to:

SO1: Support a more pertinent, relevant, accessible and inclusive secondary education; and

SO2: Improve the efficiency of educational management and the offer of services to the education community.

### 5) Expected results:

The **expected results** are as follows:

#### **Component 1 – Quality and Equitable Access to Secondary Education**

**R1.** *Adjusted curriculum, centred on learning achievements and lifelong learning abilities.*

The programme will support incorporation of rural business development skills into the ongoing secondary curriculum renovation with a focus on rural students. Gender awareness, the rights based approach, critical thinking, socio-emotional and analytic skills, entrepreneurial skills, English as a second language, the use of technology, and resilience and disaster risk reduction will be emphasized in all secondary education curricula. Comparative research into learning results in all secondary education programmes, combined with field testing of potential alternatives and national learning tests, should inform decision-making related to learning processes, curriculum development, teachers training and practice, exams and assessments, amongst other. The elaboration and distribution of teaching material will help improve the secondary education offer, mainly in rural schools.

***R2. Improved teaching training and practices in secondary education at the national level.***

Teacher practices in secondary education shall be made coherent with the adjusted curriculum. (R.1). Accordingly, the action will support initial and in-service training of secondary teachers, nation-wide. The training will be tailored to the specific context where teachers work. On the one hand, teachers in regular secondary schools will benefit of continuing education programs that include both traditional and distant learning, based on self-education material (physical and virtual), amongst others. On the other hand, teacher in rural areas will require a specific training strategy, focused on teachers' practices in a specific rural context and developed over intensive sessions. In both cases, teachers training will include classroom observation and mentoring, as well as didactical material, with the aim to improve teachers practice. Gender training and combating gender stereotypes will be part of the training. Directors and other key school staff will also receive trainings on the issues covered by the programme.

***R3. Improved learning environments, which provide adequate conditions for secondary education.***

Rehabilitation of secondary schools in rural areas will help improve learning conditions. Locations will be selected to enhance opportunities for the most disadvantaged students, including members of indigenous and afro-descendent peoples and students with special needs<sup>1</sup>. All rehabilitation will comply with Ministry of Education (MINED) quality standards, including gender appropriate sanitation facilities, security and accessibility for all children.

**Component 2 – Institutional Strengthening for educational management**

***R4. Strengthened institutional capacities in MINED for managing, planning, monitoring and evaluating the sub-system of basic education in Nicaragua, with emphasis on secondary education.***

EU's support will focus on fostering capacities and developing systems for educational management (in particular for the management of physical, financial and human resources). It will also enhance articulation among the systems designed for planning, educational research, and statistics. The action will support the development of technical capacities, the implementation of tools and equipment (including the relevant adaptation of physical spaces) in order to strengthen national and local decision making and improve both institutional management and the provision of services to the educational community. Institutional strengthening on gender related issues and on inclusion of children with disabilities will be addressed both in trainings and through policy dialogue. For instance, the EU will suggest that MINED establish proactive measures to address stereotyped gender roles in the management of human resources (women tend to be pre-school and primary teachers, while men are most

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<sup>1</sup> Given that all special needs schools are currently in urban areas, the rehabilitation of those centres will be considered in combination with transport service for rural students. EU support to special needs centres will require ensuring transition to secondary education for special needs students.

represented amongst secondary teachers and school directors). MINED staff at all level (national, regional, departmental, municipal, school directors) will benefit from capacity building training.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, but also promotes progress towards Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); and Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries).

#### 6) Past EU assistance and lessons learnt.

The EU’s long-standing presence in the sector and the coordination with key development partners has provided the EU with a broad knowledge of the education system and a better understanding of its challenges. This action is the second phase of the Support Programme to Education Sector in Nicaragua (PROSEN, EUR 32 million, LA/2012/22-664), which is being successfully implemented by the World Bank. The EU is also committed to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), through the Support Programme for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Nicaragua (TECNICA, EUR 15 million, LA/2013/23678).

Valuable lessons have been derived from on-going projects. Supporting coordinated, common approaches to teacher training, school infrastructure, institutional strengthening, and incorporating social protection measures (nutrition, family engagement) has proven to be the most efficient way to maximise impact of the interventions and secure adequate conditions for learning.

Another lesson was that institutional capacity building does deliver results. Institutional strengthening needs to be programmatic and aimed at education management and supporting information systems in general, not limited to specific projects. Providing flexible and pertinent capacity building and knowledge transfer has demonstrated to result into a more efficient and performant management of the educational offer.

Finally, conditions for sector support to technical education are still to be developed. While national stakeholders are working toward a comprehensive TVET strategy, the definition of interinstitutional coordination, roles and competencies is underway. Donors could support the elaboration of such strategy, but in the meanwhile cooperation can only be directed to specific activities.

#### 7) Complementary actions/donor coordination.

The proposed Action will be part of a broader aid package to support implementation of the EP 2017–2021, which includes a World Bank project for USD 55 000 000 to improve teaching practices and physical learning environments, and a potential grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for a maximum of USD 4 500 000, focusing on preschool education. The WB will keep its main focus on primary education, with a major infrastructure component, and strengthening the quality focus by supporting research and teaching mentoring. Its new programme will also focus on improving in service teacher trainings, although this will be designed so as to complement the EU action, that also addresses initial training, making sure to avoid any overlapping. Combined, the two actions will allow reaching a higher number of teachers in the country.

In addition, there will be opportunities to build partnerships with other donors, including a credit from FIEM/Spain to equip mobile digital classrooms (technologically-enabled classrooms) in 720 secondary education schools for USD 27 000 000. Adding to EU and WB efforts, the Spanish credit will allow make technology available to a larger amount of schools and students.

Contributions to the EP from other donors include: i) the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)'s projects on school infrastructure and the revision of the math and science curricula; ii) the Organization of Ibero-American States' engagement in the curricular design for Youth and Adult Education; iii) the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)'s strengthening of teachers training through equipment, technology and capacity building (USD 3 million); and iv) the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s support to bilingual and intercultural education in the Caribbean Coast.

#### **4. Communication and visibility**

Strategic communication will be covered by the programme Nicaragua Technical Assistance Support (NITA-SUPPORT, LA/2014/037424), which includes a communication strategy on the EU cooperation with Nicaragua under the Country Strategy Paper 2014-2020.

As concerns specific visibility needs for PROSEN II, this action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

#### **5. Cost and financing**

Second Support Programme to the Education Sector Strategy in Nicaragua (PROSEN II)	EUR 43 000 000.00
Total EU contribution to the measure	EUR 43 000 000.00

The Committee is invited to give its opinion on the attached Annual Action Programme 2018 – part I in favour of Nicaragua for theme Sector Support to Education.



# **ANNEX 1**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2018 Annual Action Programme for  
Nicaragua

## **Action Document for the Second Support Programme to the Education Sector Strategy in Nicaragua (PROSEN II)**

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Second Support Programme to the Education Sector Strategy in Nicaragua (PROSEN II) – CRIS number: LA/2017/40481 financed under the Development Cooperation Instrument			
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Nicaragua  The action shall be carried out nationwide. Certain activities will target the poorest municipalities in the country or the most disadvantaged populations.			
3. Programming document	Country Strategy Paper and Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2014 – 2020 for Nicaragua.			
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Sector 2: Effective education for employment.		DEV. Aid: YES	
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 95 925 812  Total amount of EU budget contribution <b>EUR 43 000 000</b>  This action is co-financed in parallel by:  - The Government of Nicaragua, for an amount of <b>EUR 3 700 000</b>  - The World Bank (WB) for an amount of <b>USD 55 000 000</b> (EUR 49 225 812);			
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Sector support  Indirect management with an International Organisation or a Member State.			
7 a) DAC code(s)	11320 Secondary Education			
b) Main Delivery Channel	<Channel 1><Channel code> <i>example:</i> <i>World Bank – 44001</i>			
8. Markers (from	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective

<b>CRIS DAC form)</b>	Participation development/good governance	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Main objective</b>
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagship</b>	n/a			
<b>10. SDGs</b>	<b>Main Sustainable Development Goal (SDG):</b> SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. <b>Secondary SDG Goals:</b> SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere. SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.			

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The European Union has maintained a long-standing commitment to education in Nicaragua over the last fifteen years, keeping education as a priority sector in all its Country Strategy Papers since 2002. In line with the objectives laid out in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014 – 2020 for Nicaragua, the proposed <b>Second Support Programme to the Education Sector Strategy in Nicaragua (PROSEN II)</b>, will aim at improving the quality of secondary education, particularly in rural areas, and strengthening its linkages to the labour market so that the young population about to join the labour force acquires the knowledge and skills needed to insert themselves effectively in the labour market and address the country's development challenges.</p> <p>In spite of improvements in the economic situation over the last decade, Nicaragua remains one of the poorest countries in the region, with a third of the population still living below the official poverty line, and with persisting inequalities between urban and rural areas in terms of income, employment opportunities and access to quality basic social services.</p> <p>The country is currently undergoing a demographic transition, with the economically active population representing 47.9 % of the total population in 2015, the highest economically active proportion of the population to date. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), this transition, deemed as a 'demographic bonus', will</p>

peak in 2035 and by 2050 the economically active population will surpass 60 % of the population. Rather than a guaranteed, automatic improvement in living conditions, this situation represents a window of opportunity to raise productivity and boost economic growth, granted that adequate policies are supported and efficiently implemented. Raising the skill levels of the young population about to join the labour force and ensuring equitable access to and completion of quality secondary education are crucial to attain the potential dividends presented by the demographic bonus.

The government's education policy, embodied in the Human National Development Plan 2012–2016 (HNDP) and the Education Plan (EP) 2017–2021, recognises that the main challenges facing the education system lie in improving the quality of education. It will be fundamental in the medium term to transition from strategies to increase coverage, to strategies for strengthening all aspects associated with the quality of learning, while building on the improvements in access and completion recently attained.

The proposed Action will be part of broader support to the implementation of the EP 2017–2021, which includes a World Bank project for USD 55 000 000 to improve teaching practices and physical learning environments, a credit from Spain to equip mobile digital (technologically-enabled) classrooms in secondary education for USD 27 000 000, and a potential grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for a maximum of USD 4 500 000 focusing on preschool education.

## 1 CONTEXT

### 1.1 Country and sector context

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean, only after Haiti. With an estimated population of 6,327.9 million, and real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of USD 2,090.8 in 2016, increased consumption per capita, and improvements in supply of basic services to the most vulnerable, the country has moved up to rank 124 (out of 188 countries) in the Human Development Index<sup>1</sup>. Due to its geographic location and socio-economic conditions, the Nicaraguan economy remains exposed to external shocks (increases in oil prices and declines in non-oil commodity prices), highly vulnerable to natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanic activity) and the effects of climate change (flooding, drought). Nicaragua has had **limited resilience** to withstand and recover from these eventualities in the past, also due to poorly prepared human resources.

In spite of vulnerability, the implementation of **prudent economic and fiscal policies** has resulted in sustained economic growth levels, achieving 4.7 percent GDP growth in 2016<sup>2</sup> (among the highest in the Central American Region). These economic gains have allowed the country to favour **pro-poor social spending** which contributed to a reduction in general poverty (from 42.5 percent in 2009 to 29.6 percent in 2014) and extreme poverty (from 14.6 percent in 2009 to 8.3 percent in 2014).<sup>3</sup> The literacy rate among the population aged 15 years and older was 82.47 percent in 2015. In real terms, public spending in education increased in

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2016 Human Development Report.

<sup>2</sup> Nicaraguan Central Bank. 2016 Annual Report. The average annual economic growth has been 4.8 percent in the 2013 to 2015 period

<sup>3</sup> Poverty estimation is based on consumption. Nicaraguan Institute of Development Information (INIDE). 2014 Living Standards Measurement Survey.

average by 4.6 percent per year from 2007 to 2017. It is currently stable at around 4 % of GDP, although biased towards tertiary (29 %) and against preschool (2 %) and secondary (10 %) education<sup>4</sup>.

The country still faces significant challenges as **inequalities persist** in terms of income, employment opportunities, and access to quality basic social services. Poverty is predominantly rural (70.9 percent). The unemployment rate was 6.2 percent in 2014, above the Central American average (4.8 percent).<sup>5</sup> Both informal economy and unemployment remain disproportionally high among the youth (11 percent for the urban population between 15 to 24 years old).

The country is currently undergoing a **demographic transition**<sup>6</sup>, with the economically active population representing 47.9 percent of the total population in 2015, the highest economically active proportion of the population to date. According to ECLAC<sup>7</sup>, this transition, deemed as a ‘demographic bonus’, will peak in 2035 and by 2050 the economically active population will represent 60 percent of population. Rather than a guarantee of automatic improvement in living conditions, this situation represents a **window of opportunity to raise productivity and boost economic growth**, granted that adequate policies are supported and efficiently implemented. **Raising the skill levels of the young population about to join the labour force and ensuring the equitable access to and completion of quality secondary education are crucial to attain the potential dividends presented by the demographic bonus.**

The education sector is currently at a crossroad: it needs to face some key challenges and make strategic decisions for the development of Nicaragua. The first issue is **access to education in rural areas**, a prerequisite for inclusion.

Indeed, while in the last decade there have been improvements in access<sup>8</sup> and completion<sup>9</sup> in all educational levels, **large gaps remain in access to secondary, post-secondary and technical education, which mainly affect rural population**, i.e. lower income groups and the Caribbean Coast, where most indigenous people and afro-descendent live (in 2016, enrolment in the Caribbean Coast represented only 8.9 percent of total enrolment in lower secondary education). In rural areas, entrance to the education system happens later and access to secondary education is lower (only 24.8 percent of the school aged population were enrolled in regular lower secondary education in rural areas in 2015-2016, versus 75.2 percent in urban areas). Full-time secondary education is still concentrated in urban centres where it

<sup>4</sup> Source: World Bank. Central America Social Expenditures and Institutional Review. August 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Also slightly above the Latin America and the Caribbean region average (6.1 percent). World Bank. Central America Social Expenditures and Institutional Review. August 2016.

<sup>6</sup> At an early stage of this transition, fertility rates fall, and the labour force temporarily grows more rapidly than the population dependent on it, freeing up resources for investment in economic development and family welfare. (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2006/09/basics.htm>)

<sup>7</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (<http://www.cepal.org/en/>)

<sup>8</sup> According to MINED, Annex 1 of the Draft Education Sector Plan 2017 – 2021, preschool enrolment increased by 25.7 percent from 2009 to 2016, primary enrolment decreased slightly by 4.2 percent, lower secondary increased by 5.4 percent, and upper secondary increased by 22.1 percent in the same period. Notwithstanding, the number of school-age children out of the education system was estimated at 222,844 in 2013.

<sup>9</sup> 73 percent among 20 to 24 year old had completed primary education in 2014, compared to 52 percent in 2005, and 39 percent of the same cohort had completed lower secondary education in 2014, compared to 24 percent in 2005 (MINED).

serves less than half of the population between the ages of 12 and 18<sup>10</sup>, with 25.6 percent of the enrolment in private schools. Accessibility is also an issue for special need students, especially in rural areas, where transport service is not available. Indeed, special needs schools are concentrated in urban areas. While the Ministry of Education (MINED) has incorporated accessibility criteria in its infrastructure standards, most rural schools are still physically inaccessible and do not have staff trained in or available for teaching to special students.

Still, the success of the policy aimed at full coverage of primary education in rural communities has increased demand for secondary education in areas where low population density makes fulltime regular secondary education prohibitively expensive. For many years, the only available alternative was enrolment in one of the part-time post-literacy programs designed for older youth and adults, conducted by quasi-voluntary “popular teachers” who receive a limited stipend rather than a full salary, and who teach over 150,000 students in evening, Saturday, or Sunday classes<sup>11</sup>. Almost 25 percent of the students in these “youth and adult” programs are under the minimum age of 15 officially required for enrolment but—in the face of missing alternatives—not enforced. Girls are slightly overrepresented in this modality, as respect to regular secondary school: 51.6 of students enrolled in “youth and adult” programmes are female.

In 2014, MINED initiated a new modality called “*Secundaria a Distancia en el Campo*” (Distance Secondary Education in the Countryside - DEC), designed specifically for young students in the age group targeted by regular secondary education. DEC combines self-training modules with weekly meetings in 520 multi-grade<sup>12</sup> schools located in rural communities where a growing number of adolescents finish sixth grade. Students receive breakfast and lunch at school. With 34,623 students in 2016<sup>13</sup>, DEC now serves 13.1 % of all lower secondary students (grades 7 to 9) and 26 % of those students who study part-time. Beginning in 2017, it also serves 10,616 students (of which 5,171 girls) in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in 482 schools, and the plan is to add 11<sup>th</sup> grade and secondary school graduation in 2018. The majority of DEC students are the first members of their families to attend secondary school.

A second challenge concerns **low learning achievements**, as evidenced by poor performance in recent national and international standardised tests. Although the results attained in the 2013 Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE)<sup>14</sup> show an improvement when compared to the 2006 Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE), Nicaraguan students performed below their regional peers in all subject areas, and a significant number of students fail to achieve the expected levels of learning stated in the curriculum. While TERCE was applied only in primary schools, the results are consistent with

<sup>10</sup> Out of all secondary students, 32.5 percent are enrolled in rural areas. 49.7 percent of students are female.

<sup>11</sup> In 2016, the enrolment in these courses was 1,574 students in morning classes, 4,905 in afternoon classes, 8,729 in evening classes, 27,295 in Sunday classes, and 112,654 in Saturday classes.

<sup>12</sup> In the multi-grade modality, class groups are composed of students from different grades, under the supervision of one single teacher. Multi-grade allows offering education services in areas with low population density.

<sup>13</sup> 16,749 girls and 17,874 boys.

<sup>14</sup> TERCE is a UNESCO's large scale study of learning achievements applied in 2013; 15 countries took part (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay), plus the Mexican state of Nuevo León (Mexico). This study assesses the performance of pupils in third and sixth grades primary school in Mathematics, Reading and Writing (Language), plus Natural Sciences in the case of sixth grade.

those reflected in national standardised tests carried out in 2015 in 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades in regular full-time secondary schools. What would the results be if such tests were also applied in DEC and in the part-time secondary programs designed for Youth and Adults? Secondary Education decision makers are facing the dilemma to offer access to education without compromising quality. For rural areas, this means defining what degree of consistency should be required in the curricula and expected levels of learning in the different modalities of full and part-time secondary education. Learning achievements also show significant statistical gaps in learning when differentiated by sex: typically, boys score better in maths and science, while girls have better results in literature. Studies suggest that these results might hide cultural bias and stereotypes, both in the family and in school<sup>15</sup>, that orient children towards different professional choices, depending on their sex.

A third issue is the **pertinence of learning results** achieved through secondary education for national economic development and the livelihood of each student. Secondary education need to prepare students for either work (as entrepreneurs, employed or self-employed individuals) or continued studies. Based on a national survey of small, medium and large businesses to determine the principal factors limiting their development, the National Council of Private Business (COSEP) recently identified a number of skills that employers struggle to find in the labour force: writing and oral expression, arithmetic, soft skills (assertiveness, resilience, integrity...), business prone attitude. Accordingly, COSEP identified the Education System and Human Capital as one amongst five key strategic areas of intervention.

Finally, recent studies confirm that many **barriers** to access and quality in secondary education are **associated with gender norms** and with the availability of adequate learning facilities, especially in rural areas. For instance, sexual violence, pregnancies, or early marriages (unions before 18 years of age) and gender norms emphasising the role of women and their responsibilities in the household are the most important barriers for school attendance and permanence for adolescent girls. For adolescent boys, the main causes of non-attendance and dropout have to do with the responsibility to become the economic support of their families, physical violence or abuse. Other barriers to attending school have to do with safety conditions, including the school distance and the overall state of school infrastructure.

#### ***1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework***

The HNPD 2012–2016 reaffirms the country's commitment to improving the living conditions of all Nicaraguans, especially the poorest population. The Plan lays out a strategy based on 12 guidelines: economic growth, reducing poverty and inequalities, and improving shared prosperity by raising productivity and improving the skills of the labour force, through the expansion of education services and social programmes and promoting a more coordinated, multi-sectoral human development approach, which includes early childhood development, youth employment, and gender related issues. This provides continuity to the previous development strategy.

In line with the HNPD, the country's education policy seeks to guarantee the right to free education. The model in place aims to ensure that more people, especially those from rural areas and from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, enter the education system at the appropriate age and to facilitate their passage through the different educational levels.

<sup>15</sup> La Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES): <http://funides.com/la-calidad-de-la-educacion-en-nicaragua/>

Accordingly, the Strategic Education Plan (SEP) 2011–2015 included three components (Coverage and Equity, Quality, and Institutional Strengthening) and three key priorities: (1) expanded access to preschool education, (2) universal completion of six grades of primary education, and (3) universal access to lower secondary education (grades 7-9).

Results from the implementation of the SEP 2011-2015 confirm that the strategies pursued to improve access were appropriate, as there have been significant improvements: preschool net enrolment rate increased by 7.7 from 2009 to 2016, net enrolment rate in primary education was 92.8 percent in 2016, and the net enrolment rate in lower secondary increased by 4.6 percent from 2009 to 2016. Current projections indicate that **the offer of secondary education today would be insufficient to serve all potential applicants** of this level of education, with enrolment expected to increase by 15 percent and 16 percent in lower secondary education and upper secondary education, respectively by 2021.

The main focus of the new Education Plan (EP) 2017-2021 is to raise the quality of education nationwide, at all educational levels. The Plan's strategic areas and activities are articulated around three objectives: (i) Quality Education, (ii) Access with Equity, and (iii) Human Development and Institutional Strengthening. While the EP 2017–2021 is not a sector-wide plan and its multi-annual implementation plan is still in preparation, its design was supported by a solid analytical process, which included an evaluation of the implementation of the SEP 2011-2015, a technical sector analysis, focusing on preschool, primary and secondary education, a diagnostic assessment of the state of the teacher training centres, the development of a conceptual, methodological framework which sheds lights on the challenges facing its planning and monitoring processes and systems, and the systematization of lessons learned from previous projects financed by the EU, the World Bank and the GPE. The EP 2017-2021 is expected to cost USD 2,765 million in five years, with the Government covering USD 2,112 million with national resources (i.e. 422 million a year, in average). Accordingly, a financing gap of USD 653 million is foreseen. These figures are calculated based on a projection of the Mid-Term Budgetary Framework, which allocates to MINED 11-12 % of the government budget (in 2017, this corresponds to USD 426 million approximately). The EP includes result and process indicators, most of them with milestones, but with several line base figures still missing. As concerns competition of secondary education, for instance, the EP aims at increasing from 38.41 in 2017 to 39.18 %, in the population group 20-24 year old only. The Plan also establishes a target of 85 % of children 5-15 year old enrolled in school, in rural area, by 2021. It foresees the adaptation of curriculum for 30 educational levels / modalities by 2021.

The national education policies and strategies are broadly in line with the EU policy framework. The overall objective of the **MIP 2014–2020 for sector 2 “Effective Education for Employment”** is to "improve employability of the labour force, particularly secondary education graduates, by improving the relevance and quality of general secondary education and technical/vocational education and training". Its specific objective 1) aims to "support sectoral strategies and policies to improve rates of equitable access to, completion of and the quality of general secondary education for girls and boys". In addition, the education policies and strategies are fully consistent with **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which seeks to ensure that, by 2030, "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes", and with the EU and its Member States' commitment to, as stated in the **new European**

**Consensus on Development**<sup>16</sup>, "supporting inclusive life-long learning and equitable quality education at all levels -early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training and adult learning- with special attention to education and training opportunities for girls and women."

The proposed action will contribute to Priority 4 of the **Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2016-2020**, "Economic, Social and cultural Rights: Economic and social empowerment", notably objectives 13 "Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination" and objective 14 "Access to decent work for women of all ages".

Based on the above, the EU considers that the education policies in place are adequate, and that the Plan provides a credible and solid framework for the design and implementation of actions to support national efforts to improve the quality of education and further strengthen its institutional capacities and systems.

### **1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis**

The education system is composed of different sub-systems: Each sub-system governing body plays a role in the implementation of the EP 2017-2021. These are the action's main stakeholders:

**The Ministry of Education (MINED)**, governing body of the Basic and Secondary Education sub-system, which comprises all public and private preschool, basic education (grades 1 to 9) and upper secondary (grades 10 and 11), education for youth and adults, special needs education, and teacher training schools. This subsystem accounts for a total student population of 1.77 million in 2016<sup>17</sup>. MINED is in the lead of EP 2017-2021 formulation and implementation, and has been associated to the formulation of this action, in full respect of ownership principles. It has demonstrated its commitment to the new education strategy and shared its analysis with the EU. Although there is scope for institutional strengthening, including as regards gender mainstreaming, MINED has made efforts to improve its internal efficiency. Of all Nicaraguan institutions, MINED seems to be the more aware of gender issues, having incorporated some of them (gender friendly infrastructure, early pregnancy) in its own priorities.

**MINED's department, regional and municipal delegations** are the lower administrative level that will benefit from the action. They are in charge of implementing the national education policy at the local level. Their capacities tend to be unequal from region to region, often depending on personal abilities. Given the centralism of decision making, they have little autonomy. However, the institutional strengthening component will help develop tools for decision making at both the national and local level. It will also enhance delegations' capacity to offer support to the educational community.

The **National Technological Institute (INATEC)**, rector of the Technical Education and Vocational Education (TVET) sub-system, which includes all public (43) and private (around

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<sup>16</sup> EC Communication. Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development Our World, our Dignity, our Future. 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Distributed as follows: 267,988 in preschool, 979,744 in primary, 331,056 in lower secondary (grades 7 to 9) and 158,317 upper secondary (grades 10 to 11). It also includes 8068 enrolled in initial teacher training programmes.

400) technical and vocational education and training centres. Total enrolment in this subsystem is around 330,000 students. The EU has engaged in dialogue with INATEC through the programme TECNICA. However, political and institutional constraints limit this institution capacity to implement efficiently. EU efforts to increase INATEC gender sensitiveness have given poor results. As INATEC's budget is primarily financed by a 2 percent payroll levy from the formal economy, the **private sector**, represented by the **Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)**, plays a role in the definition of the training offer. COSEP was consulted on the private sector's views as regards priorities for education. As an influential stakeholder, COSEP is an ally of the EU in the political dialogue, pushing for a more pertinent education curriculum.

The **National Council of Universities (CNU)**, governing body of the Higher Education subsystem, which is made up of 59 public, community, and private universities, and tends to an annual student population of 110,000 students. There are important inter-institutional coordination efforts underway for the design of a comprehensive teacher training strategy that would include collaboration between MINED, INATEC and CNU. Accordingly, CNU will be associated to the action when discussing initial training of higher secondary education.

The South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (**RACCS**) and the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (**RACCN**), as the two regions in charge of the **Autonomous Regional Education Sub-system of the Caribbean Coast (SEAR)**, overseeing the interest of the population in the Caribbean Coasts, including Afro-descendants and indigenous groups. Amongst its priorities, it promotes cultural diversity and minorities' right to education. Given their limited human and financial resources, the role of these regional Secretariats is limited to curricular development and management of parts of schools in their territories.<sup>18</sup>

The **Education Community Counselling Network**, includes a total of 160,000 volunteer members of the extended education community, including parents, students, directors, teachers, and local community leaders. It will play an important role in supporting the EP 2017-2021 initiatives to improve retention and raise awareness on gender issues, including handling cases of gender-based violence. The MINED directorate in charge of counselling was associated to the formulation and will implement part of the action. It is the key actor to allow enhancing gender approach in the national education strategy. The action will have to focus on strengthening its capacities.

**Civil society organizations (CSO)** committed to education in Nicaragua are important partners for EU policy dialogue. Indeed, they contribute with critical analysis (funded by either the EU or other donors) that has enriched our contributions in this sector. CSOs' questioning of national policies has reduced their possibilities to directly engage with institutions. However, the Education donors group has channelled civil society's objections and searched opportunities for dialogue between them and the Government. Accordingly, CSO will not be actively involved in the project, but the EU Delegation will consult them regularly. A thematic call for proposal to support civil society initiatives in education will be launched soon, in order to complement the EU action in this sector. The EU is also supporting gender performance of Nicaraguan CSO through the "Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society".

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<sup>18</sup> World Bank. Central America Social Expenditures and Institutional Review. August 2016.

### *1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis*

There is overall consensus among policy makers, the private sector, academic institutions, independent think-tanks, and international organisations that low productivity and technological development, associated with **low levels of educational attainment, insufficient diversification and poor skills of the employed population**, are the main bottlenecks to reaching the country's economic growth potential and reducing inequalities. Hence, investments in human capital and quality of education are fundamental in order to meet the country's challenges of raising productivity and boosting economic and social development.

While the funds assigned to education have increased over the years, the financial allocations to the sector have lagged behind the rate of economic growth and have remained stagnant around 3.8 percent of GDP in the last seven years. **This level of investment is insufficient** (by international standards that call for education spending equivalent to at least 6 percent of GDP) for the country to make significant leaps in access and quality. Recent analyses recommend not only to substantially increase the levels of investment in education, but also to **improve the efficiency of the funds** already allocated to the sector.

While pre-school and primary education is properly covered by the Government and other donors (WB and GPE), secondary education still requires major investments for the offer to meet the demand. The basic and secondary education system also faces challenges relating to **high coverage rates, high repetition and dropout rates**, which eventually translate into low learning achievements. A survey conducted by the Nicaraguan Central Bank (BCN) and INIDE in October and November 2014 identified some of the reasons for non-attendance and points to **socio-economic conditions, inadequate learning resources and deeply rooted gender roles and norms** as the main causes of non-attendance, high dropout and low completion rates.

Based on findings from the sector analysis and the assessment of the implementation of the SEP 2011 – 2015, the EP 2017-2021 focuses all strategic areas and actions on tackling the main aspects affecting learning outcomes, including: (i) the quality of the teachers, teacher training and teacher practices in the classroom; (ii) pertinence of the curriculum, (iii) the quality of the learning environments (infrastructure, materials), (iv) the student's support system (involvement of parents and the extended education community), and (vi) the capacity and overall efficiency of the education management systems in place. Focusing on these issues is also consistent with the recommendations of recent studies conducted by local think-tanks<sup>19</sup>.

In conclusion, several sources confirm the areas that need to be supported in order to improve access, quality and inclusion in secondary, namely:

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<sup>19</sup> FUNIDES and IEEPP studies on quality education concluded, in sum, that education efforts should be geared to: the development of a comprehensive teacher policy that addresses all stages of the teaching career, reducing inequalities in access and completion of basic education (grades 1 to 9), and addressing the existing barriers to help close the learning gaps between urban and rural areas and between boys and girls, such as an inadequate curricular design, non-existent or poor physical learning conditions, persisting gender norms and roles. See FUNIDES: <http://funides.com/la-calidad-de-la-educacion-en-nicaragua/> and IEEP (EU funded): <https://www.ieepp.org/publicaciones/educacion/publicacion-9-532/>

- **Curriculum development**, especially in Secondary Education where there is a need to ensure the relevance of learning results for national economic development and the livelihoods of individual students. MINED is committed to an adaptation of curriculum, which opens the opportunity to strengthen subjects relevant for gender equity, rights based approach, resilience<sup>20</sup>, critical thinking, entrepreneurship and socio-emotional skills.
- The **quality of teaching** (particularly teaching practices in the classroom), combined with the support of families and their involvement in the learning process and attendance to preschool, is amongst the most significant factors influencing student learning achievements. A large share of in-service teachers lack initial training or formal certification. Apart from preparation in tough subjects, teachers, especially in rural school, need specialised training for the methodology of self-study materials combined with weekly meetings, for mastering Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a teaching tool, and for addressing the economic and cultural conditions of rural communities, with their special opportunities and problems such as high rates of adolescent pregnancy<sup>21</sup>.
- The state and availability of **physical learning environments** is a decisive factor behind school attendance, dropout and repetition, particularly in secondary education in rural areas, where it is combined with socioeconomic conditions and gender norms.
- Improvements in access to and quality of education are dependant to a large degree on the human and institutional capacities and on the creation of efficient **education management systems**.

## 2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
<b>Institutional Capacity and Governance Risks</b> , relating to the limited human resources and capacity of the systems in place and lack of effective coordination among the various governing bodies in the sector that may have a role in implementation of both the EP 2017-2021 and the programme.	Moderate	This is a risk that is generalised in Nicaraguan public institutions. However, in the education sector it will be possible to build on results of ongoing actions. As such, the EU programme will prioritise a component for human development and institutional capacity building, aimed at strengthening the technical capacities of staff, and addressing the critical weaknesses in MINED's information systems and technological platform: upgrading systems for planning, monitoring, human resources, and

<sup>20</sup> This includes both economic resilience (entrepreneurship, capacity to adapt to the needs of the market) and environmental resilience (adaptation to climate change in rural economies).

<sup>21</sup> Girls that get pregnant between 15 and 19 years tend to keep low levels of education for the rest of their life. Only 40 % of them get back to studying after giving birth, but in any case reach lower education level: in average, they study 3 years less than girls who were mother after 20 years old. Their expected pay is also 23 % less. Source: FUNIDES, [http://funides.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Causas\\_y\\_consecuencias\\_del\\_embarazo\\_adolescente\\_en\\_Nicaragua\\_Octubre\\_2016.pdf](http://funides.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Causas_y_consecuencias_del_embarazo_adolescente_en_Nicaragua_Octubre_2016.pdf)

		statistical processing, as well as enhancing capabilities for undertaking research and data analysis. Policy dialogue will emphasize sustained capacity building efforts, stability of the technical staff, and increased interinstitutional coordination.
<b>Poor integration of gender</b> mainstreaming in the sectors (education and employment) Weak institutional gender capacities, few gender aware teachers and directors.	Low	Making girls and women's empowerment and equal participation a consistent and explicit priority of EU support and raising it regularly at all instances. Institutional strengthening on gender equality to targeted stakeholders.
<b>Economic and Fiscal Risks,</b> related to uncertain external factors (deterioration of global trade and economic activity of key advanced and emerging economies, decline in prices of major export products) that may negatively impact Nicaragua's economic growth and compromise the country's ability to increase or maintain the current level of education spending.	Moderate	The EU will rely on a sustained policy dialogue, along with Member States and donors involved in the education sector, to keep education as a public expenditure priority and raise the need to meet international standards on basic education financing. The EU will also favour initiatives that help mobilise additional resources to the sector from other development partners (private sector institutions and other donors). Pressure from the private sector to improve the quality of education will also contribute to reducing this risk.
<b>Natural disasters and vulnerability to climate change,</b> given the country's geographic location, socioeconomic conditions and construction standards. School infrastructure is vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, and landslides, particularly in rural areas, which may affect school attendance and implementation of programme activities or jeopardise the sustainability of investments in infrastructure.	Moderate	The programme will contribute to reducing vulnerability by supporting school infrastructure interventions that follow international standards for environmental and safety considerations. In addition, the programme will support the updating of institutional norms and standards for planning, design and maintenance of school infrastructure so that they incorporate a gender analysis and they address adaptation to climate change, disaster risk management, and the care and maintenance of school facilities.
<b>Educational risk,</b> in case that the implementation of activities do not deliver the expected results.	Low	The Financing Agreement will set provisions for a continued monitoring system that will allow follow performance, so as to early identify any factor that lowers the quality of education and impedes reaching expected results. Immediate actions will be taken to adapt the implementation. The implementing partner will mobilize specialised technical assistance in order to make sure that teacher training, curriculum, material and

		infrastructures meet minimum standards.
<b>Assumptions</b>		
The feasibility of programme implementation is based on the assumption that there is policy continuity, that the sector strategy remains relevant, and that the authorities maintain a high level of commitment to the sector. Another assumption is that the variables upon which the EP 2017-2021 was designed remain valid throughout the programme: (i) the country maintains a stable macroeconomic and fiscal framework, with growth rates averaging 4 to 5 percent that allow the government to maintain education expenditures equivalent to, at least, 4.0 percent of GDP over the next five years, (ii) enrolment projections are on target, and (iii) stakeholders at all levels embrace gender goals and contribute to their fulfilment. In the framework of Steering and technical committees, the EU will be able to monitor the correct management of funds and risk mitigation measures.		

### 3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### 3.1 Lessons learnt

The EU's long-standing presence in the sector and the coordination with key development partners has provided the EU with a broad knowledge of the education system and a better understanding of its challenges. Valuable lessons have been derived from on-going projects:

- **Focus should be centred on the quality of education.** Challenges in terms of closing the gaps in access and coverage should not be disregarded, but are not enough to ensure that education meets the society and private sector's needs.
- **Quality requires a multi-sector and multi-dimension approach.** Supporting coordinated, common approaches to teacher training, school infrastructure, institutional strengthening, and incorporating social protection measures (nutrition, family engagement) has proven to be the most efficient way to maximise impact of the interventions and secure adequate conditions for learning.
- **Infrastructure works should be based on an integral approach.** Partial interventions, covering only some parts of a given school, would create resentment in the community. Moreover, learning-enabling environment does not only concern classrooms, but also sanitary, libraries, etc. Works in one single school funded from different sources result in cumbersome and inefficient administrative processes.
- **External cooperation sets the standards, and these are replicable.** The construction norms promoted by the EU and World Bank (WB) under current programmes have been adopted by MINED as its own. As a consequence, the quality of school buildings in the country has improved, together with community expectations.
- MINED is a complex institution, with national / regional / department / municipal decision makers and stakeholders. **Effective results require consensus from all levels.** Taking enough time to analyse, pilot innovations, systematise and disseminate findings, and engage all key line Directorates within MINED, including the technical and operations levels, is fundamental, before setting up targets or timetables for territorial application of systems and functions.
- **Institutional capacity building does deliver results.** Institutional strengthening needs to be programmatic and aimed at education management and supporting information systems in general, not limited to specific projects. Providing flexible and pertinent capacity building and knowledge transfer has demonstrated to result into a more efficient and performant management of the educational offer.

- **Gender equality can be enhanced through continued policy dialogue.** The EU has repeatedly brought this issue to the table, proposing concrete examples on how to enhance gender equality in most aspects of the EP. While PROSEN does address gender issues related to infrastructure and access, the new EP allows for further incorporation of gender sensitiveness, amongst others in curriculum, teachers training, retention of pregnant students, etc. The EU gender profile of Country Strategy Paper (CSP) priority sectors provides useful insights to enhance gender mainstreaming in education. For instance, it pointed to the need to increase awareness of families to send girls to school, as well as to challenge stereotypes that limit the opportunities for girls to access professions traditionally reserved for men.
- **Conditions for sector support to technical education are still to be developed.** While national stakeholders are working toward a comprehensive TVET strategy, the definition of interinstitutional coordination, roles and competencies is underway. Donors could support the elaboration of such strategy, but in the meanwhile cooperation can only be directed to specific activities.

A mid-term evaluation of the current education portfolio (PROSEN and TECNICA) will be carried out between July and August 2017.

### 3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

Since 2007, the Government of Nicaragua has maintained a strong leadership in education policy dialogue. The local **Education Donor Group**<sup>22</sup> has served as a coordination mechanism and a channel to exchange information with donors. The Group has served the objective to promote alignment, harmonisation and complementarity with the education policies and strategies, including the joint monitoring of the SEP 2011-2015 and follow-up to GPE-funded programmes.

The proposed Action will be part of a broader aid package to support implementation of the EP 2017–2021, which includes a World Bank project for USD 55 000 000 to improve teaching practices and physical learning environments, and a potential grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for a maximum of USD 4 500 000, focusing on preschool education. The WB will keep its main focus on primary education, with a major infrastructure component, and strengthening the quality focus by supporting research and teaching mentoring. Its new programme will also focus on improving in service teacher trainings, although this will be designed so as to complement the EU action, that also addresses initial training, making sure to avoid any overlapping. Combined, the two actions will allow reaching a higher number of teachers in the country. It should be noted that the World Bank might consider topping up their contribution, in case the EU joined the action. In this case, EU funds would act as leverage to increase the loan available for the country.

In addition, there will be opportunities to build **partnerships** with Member States, including a credit from FIEM/Spain to equip mobile digital classrooms (technologically-enabled

Deleted: other donors

<sup>22</sup> The active members of the local Education Group include the EU, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Korean Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (Lux-Dev), the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI), the Spanish International Development Cooperation Agency (AECID), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-group is currently led by Lux-Dev and has active participation from the EU, AECID, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), JICA, the Canadian Cooperation, OEI, KOICA and USAID.

classrooms) in 720 secondary education schools for USD 27 000 000. Adding to EU and WB efforts, the Spanish credit will allow make technology available to a larger amount of schools and students. In addition, the EU will seek collaboration with Lux-Dev, given their expertise and involvement in TVET in the country, when discussing the secondary education curriculum and raising the employability skills of the most vulnerable populations.

Contributions to the EP from other donors include JICA's projects on school infrastructure and the revision of the math and science curricula, OEI's engagement in the curricular design for Youth and Adult Education, KOICA's strengthening of teachers training through equipment, technology and capacity building (USD 3M), and USAID's support to bilingual and intercultural education in the Caribbean Coast.

The Government of Nicaragua has recently opened a space for **coordination with private sector's** initiatives related to education. The private sector's interest in improving the quality of the workforce's basic skills opens a window of **opportunity to mobilise additional resources** and harmonise efforts to enhance the pertinence of secondary education curriculum.

### 3.3 Cross-cutting issues

There is a great potential for the Action to have an unequivocal impact on gender equality, on inclusion of the most excluded sectors of the population, on environmental management and disaster risk prevention and on resilience to natural and economic crisis. The action will also implement the **EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child** (2017)<sup>23</sup> by ensuring that a **right-based approach** is applied in the formulation and implementation of all activities.

**Gender:** The Action will seek a positive impact on girls' school attendance and permanence, and eventually on learning outcomes and participation in the labour market. To this end, the programme will strongly support lines of action in the EP 2017-2021 that focus on eliminating gender barriers (including prevention of violence and early pregnancy) through engagement and participation of the extended education community. It will also support a gender sensitive revision of secondary education curriculum and consequent adjustment of teacher training and practices. Considering that girls miss school when they are menstruating and don't have access to sanitation and privacy at school, the programme will contribute to girls' school attendance by securing adequate water and sanitation facilities. The component of institutional strengthening will incorporate gender at all level, so that MINED capacities to analyse data, manage human resources and decision making take into account gender issues. For instance, the Ministry will be supported to generate sex-disaggregated statistics and manage the male/female teacher ratio.

**Vulnerable groups:** at the national level, the action will promote inclusive policies and practices. The importance to develop an inclusive special needs education and to ensure the rights of indigenous people, such as multicultural and bilingual education, has been repeatedly pointed out in policy dialogue. These issues will be also considered in the support to curriculum revision and teacher training, with a view to ensure that all children are given a chance to access regular secondary education. In particular, the action will provide the

<sup>23</sup> EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, 7 March 2017, 6846/17.  
[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/22017/guidelines-promotion-and-protection-rights-child\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/22017/guidelines-promotion-and-protection-rights-child_en).

opportunities to discuss with decision makers a strategy for the inclusion of children with minor disabilities in the regular education modalities. The action will prioritise education in rural areas, where the poorest population live. Infrastructure can also contribute to inclusiveness, by prioritizing indigenous and afro-descendant communities.

**Environment:** School rehabilitation and expansion will conform to and eventually expand the minimum physical quality standards<sup>24</sup> adopted by MINED with the support of previous cooperation programmes. Accordingly, it will incorporate environmental and safety considerations, including solid waste and wastewater management, control of erosion and stability of slopes, and avoidance of soil contamination, thereby ensuring that schools are better prepared to face natural disasters. The action should also support the inclusion of environment education and disaster preparedness in secondary curriculum as well as relevant teacher training. This aspect shall be further explored during formulation. Gender equality considerations will be added to the environmental measures taken by the action.

**Resilience:** The programme has a potential to improve national resilience to external shocks, as it will contribute to a better prepared labour force and, consequently, more performing economy. Keeping youngster in the education system and training them for entrepreneurship are key to foster employment, security and overall development.

## **4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **4.1 Objectives/results**

The proposed Action's **general objective** will be to support the implementation of the EP 2017 – 2021 and its strategies to improve the quality of secondary education, thereby improving learning outcomes and employability skills of the most vulnerable population.

The programme's **specific objectives** will be to:

**SO1:** Support a more pertinent, relevant, accessible and inclusive secondary education; and

**SO2:** Improve the efficiency of educational management and the provision of services to the education community.

The **expected results** are as follows:

#### **Component 1 – Quality and Equitable Access to Secondary Education**

**R1.** *Adjusted curriculum, centred on learning achievements and lifelong learning abilities.*

The project will support incorporation of rural business development skills into the ongoing secondary curriculum renovation with a focus on rural students. Gender awareness, the rights-based approach, critical thinking, socio-emotional and analytic skills, entrepreneurial skills, English as a second language, the use of technology, and resilience and disaster risk reduction will be emphasized in all secondary curriculum. Comparative research into learning results in all secondary education programs, combined with field testing of potential alternatives and national learning tests, should inform decision-making related to learning processes, curriculum development, teachers training and practice, exams and assessments, amongst

<sup>24</sup> Minimal physical quality standards include: (i) adequate classroom area per student (square meters); (ii) availability of adequate complementary service facilities (e.g., restrooms, libraries, computers, workshops, kitchens, storage and administrative offices); (iii) connection to water and sewage facilities and the pre-installation of electric services; (iv) compliance with safe school standards (regarding structural resilience to climate and disaster risks); (v) availability of security fences; and (vi) sufficient furniture or equipment.

other. The elaboration and distribution of teaching material will help improve secondary educational offer, mainly in rural schools.

***R2. Improved teaching training and practices in secondary education at the national level.***

Teacher practices in secondary education shall be made coherent with the adjusted curriculum (R.1). Accordingly, the action will support initial and in-service training of secondary teachers, nation-wide. The training will be tailored to the specific context where teachers work. On the one hand, teachers in regular secondary schools will benefit of continuing education programs that include both traditional and distant learning, based on self-education material (physical and virtual), amongst others. On the other hand, teacher in rural areas will require a specific training strategy, focused on teachers' practices in a specific rural context and developed over intensive sessions. In both cases, teachers training will include classroom observation and mentoring, as well as didactical material, with the aim to improve teachers practice. Gender training and combating gender stereotypes will be part of the training. Directors and other key school staff will also receive trainings on the issues covered by the programme.

***R3. Improved learning environments, which provide adequate conditions for secondary education.***

Rehabilitation of secondary schools in rural areas will help improve learning conditions. Locations will be selected to enhance opportunities for the most disadvantaged students, including members of indigenous and afro-descendent peoples and students with special needs<sup>25</sup>. All rehabilitation will comply with MINED quality standards, including gender appropriate sanitation facilities, security and accessibility for all children.

**Component 2 – Institutional Strengthening for educational management**

***R4. Strengthened institutional capacities in MINED for managing, planning, monitoring and evaluating the sub-system of basic education in Nicaragua, with emphasis on secondary education.***

EU support will focus on fostering capacities and developing systems for educational management (in particular for the management of physical, financial and human resources). It will also enhance articulation among the systems designed for planning, educational research, and statistics. The action will support the development of technical capacities, the implementation of tools and equipment (including the relevant adaptation of physical spaces) in order to strengthen national and local decision making and improve both institutional management and the provision of services to the educational community. Institutional strengthening on gender related issues and on inclusion of children with disabilities will be addressed both in trainings and through policy dialogue. For instance, the EU will suggest that MINED establishes proactive measures to address stereotyped gender roles in the management of human resources (women tend to be pre-school and primary teachers, while men are most represented amongst secondary teachers and school directors). MINED staff at all level (national, regional, departmental, municipal, school directors) will benefit of capacity building training.

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<sup>25</sup> Given that all special needs schools are currently in urban area, the rehabilitation of those centers will be considered in combination with transport service for rural students. EU support to special need centers will require ensuring transition to secondary education for special need students.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, but also promotes progress towards Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); and Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries). This does not imply a commitment by the country benefiting from this programme.

## **4.2 Main activities**

Lines of action included in the EP 2017-2021 to be supported under the programme include:

### **Component 1 – Quality and Equitable Access to Secondary Education**

#### **R1. *Adjusted curriculum, centred on learning achievements and lifelong learning abilities***

**A1.1.** Support to the adjustment of regular and rural secondary education. This will include, amongst others, incorporating the use of technology and English (as second language) as strategies to strengthen learning. It will also include gender awareness raising, right based approach, critical thinking, socio-emotional and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience and disaster risk reduction awareness.

**A1.2.** Implementation of adjusted secondary curriculum, with a focus on rural areas, including teaching material and guidance documents for both directors/teachers and students, as well as additional didactical material (such as basic sport equipment and chess sets) for secondary rural schools.

**A1.3.** Support to the design of continuing education strategy (for students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade) in rural areas.

**A1.4.** Design and implementation of national assessment of learning outcomes, at least for mathematics and Spanish language, for a representative sample of students from all secondary modalities,

**A1.5.** Comparative evaluation of enrolment, relevance and learning outcomes in all modalities of Secondary Education

**A1.6.** Incorporation of analysis of learning outcomes, pedagogical research, and modal testing in educational planning and evaluation processes. This includes the adjustment of exams applied nation-wide to secondary students.

#### **R2. *Improved teaching training and practices in secondary education at the national level:***

**A2.1.** Revision of teacher training programmes to incorporate focus on learning rather than teaching. This will include, amongst others, the incorporation of ICT and English as second language, as strategies to strengthen learning. It will also include gender awareness raising, right based approach, critical thinking, socio-emotional and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience and disaster risk reduction awareness. Training can be extended to directors and other key school staff.

**A2.2.** Support to designing and implementing the professionalisation of empirical teachers, with a focus on those in rural and peri-urban secondary education

**A2.3.** Support to designing and implementing In-Service Training Program for secondary teachers, with a focus on those in rural and peri-urban secondary education.

**A2.4.** Support to the strategy of classroom observation and mentoring for secondary teachers, as a complement to training, prioritising teachers in rural and peri-urban secondary education

**R3:** *Improved learning environments, which provide adequate conditions for secondary education*

**A3.1.** Rehabilitation of a limited number of school centres which promote equitable access to secondary education for boys and girls, targeting geographic areas that benefit rural populations, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, as well as special needs education. Infrastructure works will safeguard the minimum quality standards so as to address gender barriers (adequate water and sanitation facilities, secure schools), in line with quality standards established by MINED in the framework of previous cooperation programmes. Sanitation will be complemented by hygiene education for directors/teachers and students.

**A3.2.** Transport services equipped for special need students.

**A3.3.** Learning environments will be improved with the habilitation of libraries in targeted rural secondary schools.

## **Component 2 – Institutional Strengthening for Educational Management**

**R4,** *Strengthened institutional capacities in MINED for managing, planning, monitoring and evaluating the sub-system of basic education in Nicaragua, with emphasis on secondary education:* (building on progress to date through PROSEN in Education Management Information Systems, planning, monitoring and statistical capacity,):

**A4.1.** Automatising of key processes for educational planning and managing human, physical and financial resources at municipal, department, regional and national level, in order to strengthen both institutional management and the provision of services to the educational community.

**A4.2.** Updating and amplifying technological platform and communication services capacity.

**A4.3.** Provision of technological equipment for final users at the central and local level, including adaptation of relevant physical spaces.

**A4.4.** Training of technical staff, directors and pedagogical advisors at municipal, departmental, regional and national levels. Training will include: gender awareness, analysis of educational statistics and use of tools, systems and platforms for educational management, amongst others.

**A4.5.** Strengthening capacities of Community Counselling and other key MINED staff, in order to provide services to the educational community, especially addressing gender-based violence.

### **4.3 Intervention logic**

Previous chapters explain how students from rural areas, girls, special needs, and minority groups face proportionally more barriers to access quality secondary education. Yet, that level

of education is exactly the one that needs to be offered in order to skill the current generation of young Nicaraguans to be better prepared to face modern challenges. The action will therefore focus on secondary education offer to those groups.

The action will strengthen secondary offer to rural population, through different educational modalities. Indeed, rural secondary education tackles the needs of the first generation of adolescents who are finishing primary education in the impoverished rural communities that have suffered the inequities of Nicaragua's historically insufficient education coverage. Support to educational research will inform the development, during the 2017-21 period, of a national strategy for continuing education.

The programme will therefore contribute to strategic decision-making that national institutions will face in the coming years, as concerns the vision and model of secondary, technical and higher education.

The action will have a strong focus on action research. The accompaniment and observation of teachers in classes will result in adjusted curriculum and teachers / directors training. The different offers of secondary education will be tested, in order to raise objective information and statistics that will ultimately inform decision making on the education policy in rural area. Some components of the projects represent new strategies that might be applied nation-wide if they prove efficient.

Activities will be complemented by a continued policy dialogue on issues that are key to ensure the quality and impact of the programme, with a view of leaving no one behind. A main issue is the financing of the sector, and the Government commitment to increase funding for basic education. Gender equality and rights based approach will also inform policy dialogue at all levels. The EU will insist on the importance to elaborate a credible policy to address the needs of children with disabilities based on the principle of inclusion.

During the preparation of the Financing Agreement, the EU and WB will resort to specialised technical assistance to support the detailed design of the intervention in areas such as gender, special need education and teachers training.

Considering that there are both needs and absorption capacity for further investments in the field of secondary education, the option to increase the allocation for this action in a second phase, subject to the availability of financial resources, should be retained.

## **5 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **5.1 Financing agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

### **5.2 Indicative implementation period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.1. will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such

amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

### **5.3 Implementation modalities for an action under project modality**

#### **5.3.1.1 Indirect management with an international organisation**

This action will be implemented in indirect management with the World Bank in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. The WB complies with the conditions set out in Article 60(2) of the Financial Regulation. This implementation entails administration of the action "Second Support Programme to the Education Sector Strategy in Nicaragua" (PROSEN II).

This implementation is justified because in Nicaragua, the World Bank is a key development partner in the education sector. It should be noted that there are currently only two development partners in basic and secondary education supporting a sector approach (GPE) and with a similar amount (the World Bank). WB-implemented programmes have supported the design, implementation and monitoring of the education sector plans, over the last 16 years. The WB acted as Managing Entity of the GPE's grants for implementation (USD 16 700 000) and design (USD 500 000) of the education plan. As such, it was in a privileged position in terms of policy dialogue and it gained a deep knowledge of MINED and the education sector challenges. The WB has also served as implementing agency for a major component of PROSEN (EUR 28 780 000). In the latter, the WB has confirmed not only their implementation capacity, but the high value added by their technical expertise, deep knowledge of the sector, and the trust they have built over the years with the authorities. In PROSEN, WB has demonstrated to take care of EU interests and visibility, and to ally with the Delegation on important policy issues, such as gender. In addition, the World Bank will act as implementing entity for both a potential GPE implementation grant and for EU funds, which would simplify implementation and would help maximise the impact of the three interventions.

The entrusted entity will carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: supervision, coordination and monitoring of activities, launching calls for tenders and for proposals; definition of eligibility, selection and award criteria; evaluation of tenders and proposals; contracts and financial instruments; acting as contracting authority concluding, monitoring and managing contracts, carrying out payments, and recovering moneys due, reporting and evaluation and, if necessary auditing.

The entrusted entity will also carry out the following tasks: plan and monitor activities according to an annual plan developed with the Government of Nicaragua and approved by the EU, ensure proper EU visibility managing any reputational risk, and provide inputs for policy dialogue.

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred by the entrusted entity may be recognised as eligible as of the date of adoption of this decision, so as to allow the entrusted entity to take care of any preparatory action that might be needed before signature of the Administration Agreement (e.g. feasibility studies, safeguard studies, etc.).

### **5.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants**

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

## 5.5 Indicative budget

Components*	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Government of Nicaragua, in currency identified
Result1 - <b>Teaching quality</b>	<b>8 752 500</b>	
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	8 752 500	
–Result 2 - <b>Curriculum development</b>	<b>6 752 500</b>	
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	6 752 500	
Result 3 - <b>Learning environments</b>	<b>15 252 500</b>	
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	15 252 500	
Result 4 – Institutional Strengthening for educational management	<b>11 742 500</b>	
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	11 742 500	
<b>5.8 – Evaluation, 5.9 - Audit</b>	<b>400 000</b>	N.A.
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	400 000	
<b>5.10 – Communication and visibility</b>	<b>100 000</b>	N.A.
5.3.1.1. <i>Indirect management with WB</i>	100 000	
<b>Contingencies</b>	<0.00>	N.A.
Totals	<b>43 000 000</b>	

\*The World Bank already committed a parallel cofinancing of USD 55 000 000 to support the implementation of the EP 2017-2021. The WB will be granted a fee for implementing this Action, as foreseen in article 8 of Standard Provision, Annex 2 of the Framework Agreement dated 15 April 2016. This will be confirmed in the Administration Agreement to be signed between the World Bank and the European Union.

The expected co-financing from the Government of Nicaragua is EUR 3 700 000.

## 5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The action will be administered by the WB and implemented by MINED. When necessary, inter-institutional implementation agreements could be signed by national institutions: CNU, INATEC, and others. The Programme will be coordinated by MINED, which will be in charge of planning and executing contracts for the implementation of the 4 components. MINED will follow WB procedures, in line with the Administration Agreement. The WB will

facilitate operational and financial supervision, technical support and monitoring for all components.

For the planning and supervision of the Action, a Steering Committee will meet at least twice a year, and as often as necessary, for which an internal regulation will be elaborated. The Committee will be composed by representatives of MINED, WB, and the EU Delegation, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua. Upon request of the members, the Committee could invite to its meeting representatives of other institutions involved in or other partners cooperating with the Action. The Steering Committee will be assisted by a Technical Coordination Committee, composed by technical staff of the same institutions. The Technical Coordination Committee might decide to integrate and / or consult MINED local delegates, school directors and other stakeholders (such as CNU, INATEC, COSEP). MINED will coordinate both Steering and Technical Coordination Committees.

### **5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) or the list of result indicators (for budget support). The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

### **5.8 Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for learning purposes, in particular with respect to pertinence of strategic and policy dialogue, organizational, planning and management issues, level of implementation, respect of EU visibility and mitigation of any reputational risk.

The final evaluation It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that the action contributes substantially to the implementation of the national education strategy.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner

country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Indicatively, one contract for evaluation services shall be concluded in the third year of the action.

## **5.9 Audit**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

## **5.10 Communication and visibility**

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

Strategic communication will be covered by the programme Nicaragua Technical Assistance Support (NITA-SUPPORT, DCI-ALA/2014/037-424), which includes a communication strategy on the EU cooperation with Nicaragua under CSP 2014-2020.

As concerns PROSEN II specific visibility needs, this action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.5 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

## APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)<sup>26</sup>

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. When it is not possible to determine the outputs of an action at formulation stage, intermediary outcomes should be presented and the outputs defined during inception of the overall programme and its components. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for including the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant for monitoring and reporting purposes. Note also that indicators should be disaggregated by sex whenever relevant.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	To support the implementation of the Education Plan 2017 – 2021 and its strategies to improve the quality of secondary education, of learning outcomes and of knowledge and skills for employability of the most vulnerable population.	Average student's learning score in national standardised tests for language and mathematics in 9 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> grade.	48.25/100 language / 30.25/100 maths (2015) <sup>27</sup>	53.07/100 language / 33.27/100 maths [2021]	MINED national assessments of learning outcome (EP 2017-2020 Result indicator, Objective 1)	
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	Component 1: SO1: Support a more pertinent, relevant, accessible and inclusive secondary education.	1.1. Completion rates in secondary education/lower secondary education, disaggregated by sex** and location (rural/urban).  1.2. Net secondary enrolment rate**	1.1. 38.41 % of people 20-24 years old (2014)  1.2. Tbd (2016)	1.1. 39.18 [2020]  1.2. + 5 % (2022)	1.1. 2018 Census; 2014 and 2020 National households survey (EP Result Indicator 3, Objective 2)  1.2. EP Indicator 8.3	The EP is implemented as per the original official version. In case the Plan suffers adjustments, indicators shall be adapted further.
	Component 2: SO2: Improve the efficiency of educational management and the provision of services to the education community.	2.1. Results of educational research used for context analysis in strategic planning	2.1. 0 (2017)	2.1. At least 3, in strategic areas (gender, inclusion, teacher	2.1. EP Indicator 13.2	(i) the country maintains a stable macroeconomic and fiscal framework, (ii) enrolment

<sup>26</sup> Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '\*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '\*\*'.

<sup>27</sup> Figures to be confirmed in 2018, when the learning assessment exercises is finalised and official figures available.

		2.2. Percentage of schools that report managing differentiated support according to students needs	2.2. X (2018)	training, curriculum ) (2022) 2.2. X (2022)	2.2. EP Indicator 10.2	projections are on target
	<b>Component 1</b>					
<b>Outputs</b>	R1. Adjusted curriculum, centred on learning achievements and lifelong learning abilities.	1.1. Percentage of secondary school teachers implementing adapted curriculum.  1.2. Number of schools equipped with sport and chess kits	1.1. 0 (2015)  1.2.0 (2017)	1.1. At least 90 % [2022]  1.2. 20 (2022)	MINED, Secondary Directorate EP Indicator 2.1	MINED completes successfully a UNESCO-supported system of assessment of learning outcomes, which is validated and adopted nationwide (baseline might be corrected accordingly).
	R2. Improved teaching training and practices in secondary education at the national level.	2.1. Percentage of in-service teachers trained in the new curriculum, disaggregated by sex and location (rural/urban).  2.2. Number of secondary education teachers certified, disaggregated by sex and location (rural/urban).*  2.3. Number of secondary education teachers applying gender-sensitive/inclusive	2.1. 0 (2019)  2.2. 0 (2018)  2.3. 0 (2018)	2.1. At least 90 % [2022]  2.2. 2,000 out of 9,000 (2022)  2.3. 2,000 (2022)	MINED, Secondary Directorate and Statistics Department EP Indicators 2.2 and 1.3	Schools directors and teachers participate actively in trainings. MINED gives clear instructions to all staff.

		teaching practices, disaggregated by sex and location (rural/urban).				
	R3. Improved learning environments, which provide adequate conditions for secondary schools.	3.1. Number of students enrolled in of schools supported to provide drinking water, adequate sanitation, and adequate hygiene services, disaggregated by sex and location (rural/urban).*	3.1. 0 (2018)	3.2. 3,000 2022	MINED EP Indicator 4.2	Natural disasters do not delay /hamper infrastructure work.
		3.2. Number of programme supported schools meeting minimal physical quality standards.	3.1 .0 (2017)	3.2. 20 (2022)		
	<b>Component 2:</b>					
	R4. Strengthened institutional capacities in MINED for managing, planning, monitoring and evaluating the sub-system of basic education in Nicaragua, with emphasis on secondary education.	4.1. Number of school directors, pedagogical advisors and municipal delegation technical staff trained, disaggregated by sex and location (rural/urban).	4.1. 0 (2017)	4.1. 3,000 (2022)	MINED EP Result Indicator 5	stakeholders at all levels embrace gender goals and contribute to their fulfilment.
		4.2. Percentage of MINED services equipped with technological platforms / tools	4.2. 0 (2017)	4.2. 70 % (2022)		
		4.3. Number of management systems implemented.	4.3. 0 (2017)	4.3. At least 2 (2022)		
		4.4. Number of Community Counselling trained in gender equity and inclusion disaggregated by sex and location.	4.4. 0 (2017)	4.4. TbC (2022)		

Note: Indicators will be reviewed before signing the Financing Agreement, with the support of technical assistance that will be required to assess gender, special needs and teachers training aspect, and to develop at least one quality indicator for each of these factors.