MAY 26, 2021

SECRETARIAT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ALLOCATION FOR AN EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANT ADDITIONAL MCA FOR GUINEA BISSAU

Reference	Decision
CEO/2021/05-02	**Allocation for an Education Sector Program Implementation Grant Additional MCA for Guinea Bissau** The CEO, in her delegated authority from the Board of Directors: (i) Notes compliance with the requirements for the additional maximum country allocation, as described in the application and summarized and assessed in the Secretariat quality assurance review phase III report. (ii) Approves an additional maximum country allocation (US $ 2.8 million) as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table 1. Requests the Secretariat to: (i) Include in its notification of approval to Guinea Bissau the report back set out in Table 2. (ii) Include an update on the issues listed as "report backs" in the Grant Performance Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

Table 1: Application Summary and Allocation Recommendations (in US $):

Country: Guinea Bissau			
	Type of Grant	**Amount**	**Notes (disbursement rate, disbursement modality flow of funds etc.)**
Background information (ongoing ESPIGs)			
a.	ESPIG	4,300,000	Disbursement: GPE: 15%
b.	COVID-19 AF	3,500,000	Disbursement: 39.8% (as of December 31, 2020)
Current request for approval			
c.	ESPIG Additional Maximum Country Allocation	2,800,000	
d.	Allocation Requested (100%)	2,800,000	
e.	Fixed Part	2,800,000	
f.	Variable Part	not applicable	
g.	**Allocation Recommended**	**2,800,000**	
h.	Grant Agent	Word Bank	
i.	Agency Fee % - Amount	1.75% or 49,000	
j.	Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs	150,000[1]	
k.	Period	4 years	
l.	Expected Start Date	July 15, 2021	
m.	Funding Source	GPE Fund	

[1] This amount is to be funded from the grant and is not in addition to the grant amount

Table 2 – Review Meeting Observations, Report-Backs, And Conditions

Country: Guinea Bissau	
Observations	None
Report Back	The Secretariat requests the country to update its domestic financing forecasts and commitments in light of the ESP implementation review during JSRs, and in line with equitable enrolment and universal primary completion objectives. Additionally, the Secretariat recommends keeping the two report-backs on requirement 2, requested at the time of approval of the current ESPIG.
Condition	None

Annex A – Secretariat quality assurance review phase III report

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – PHASE 3

MAY 14, 2021

GUINEA-BISSAU

Additional MCA

Proposed GPE Grant Amount: US$2.8 million
Fixed Part: US$2.8 million, of which US$0.15 million for Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs
Variable Part: N.A
Implementation period: 4 years
Projected implementation start date: July 15, 2021
Grant Agent: World Bank

1. BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Home to approximately 1.9 million inhabitants[1], Guinea-Bissau is one of the most fragile countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since its independence from Portugal in 1974, the country has suffered from decades of severe institutional instability with four successful coups —the last one took place in 2012— and many additional attempts to stage coups. Between 2000 and the present, 16 Prime-Ministers have been appointed to lead different Governments. Political tensions often disrupt the public administration functioning, as in 2015 when, after democratic elections held a year earlier, the Parliament did not approve the 2016 and 2017 budget laws. The last presidential elections held in December 2019 led to a political crisis as the defeated candidate filed a motion to challenge the election results. Consequently, in April 2020, ECOWAS and the EU intervened and recognized the election of Umaro Sissoco Embalo as President of the Republic, urging him to appoint a Prime minister and a government based on the legislative elections held in March 2019.

As a result of this long history of political and institutional instability, Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world and falls under the low human development category of the United Nations Development Program Human Development Index (HDI). The country has a weak

[1] World Bank data, 2019, available here: https://data.worldbank.org/country/guinea-bissau?view=chart

economic performance whose irregular growth is highly dependent on the only production of cashew nuts. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have severe socioeconomic consequences as growth is projected to decline between -1.5 percent and -3.1 percent in 2020.[2] With over two thirds of the population living below the poverty line, poverty is widespread and remains prevalent in rural areas, where 60 percent of the population is concentrated. While overall resources are limited, the allocation of these resources strongly favors the capital and urban areas where living standards and access to basic services, such as schools, health centers, markets, electricity, etc., are considerably higher.

While the Bissau-Guinean society comprises of a wide variety of ethnic groups, languages, and religions, inter-religion marriages are common and violence between groups has been minimal. Crioulo, a Portuguese-based creole language, is the most spoken language (44 percent of the population), far ahead of Portuguese, the official language of the country, spoken by only 14 percent of the population. The rest of the population speaks a variety of native African languages. 40 percent of the population is Muslim while the rest are Christians (22 percent), Animists (15 percent) and around 18 percent are either unspecified or belong to traditional African religions.

	Guinea-Bissau
Population	1,920,922 (2019, World Bank)
Human Development Index Ranking	175 out of 189 countries (2020, UNDP)
Learning-adjusted Years of School	N.A
GDP	US$1.339 billion (2019, World Bank)
GDP per capita	US$697 (2019, World Bank)
World Bank Income Classification Level	Low Income (2021, World Bank)

1.2. EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

In Guinea-Bissau, education is recognized as a basic right and is central to the country's vision for development. The urgent priority to provide a reliable and effective delivery of education is at the core of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2017 – 2025, which was developed, validated and endorsed by the Government and its development partners in July 2017. The ESP, which is

[2] PAD, p. 7

aligned with the national Country Strategy 2025 "Terra Ranka", is an ambitious, sector-wide programmatic plan structured around three components focusing on (i) a better and more equitable access to and completion of education, (ii) the improvement of education quality, and (iii) the strengthening of the education system governance. All educational matters are under the authority of the Ministry of National Education and Higher Education (*Ministério da Educação Nacional e Ensino Superior*, MENES), which is organized into a central structure and 11 regional directorates.

The political instability of the country has a significant impact on the sector as constant changes in political appointments result in high staff turnover across the sector. At the central level, this creates unclarity of roles and responsibilities and weakens institutional arrangements, which limits accountability, introduces delays in implementation and ultimately contributes to poor sector performance. The effective planning and management of the sector resources are also hindered by the weaknesses of the EMIS and the inability to produce regular data. The Education Sector Analysis conducted in 2015 (*Rapport d'Etat du Système Educatif National*, RESEN), is the latest available source of education statistics and is based on the 2012-13 school year data. The 2014-15 school census, although considered the most accurate and up-to-date school census data in the country, was never officially published.[3]

1.2.1. Equity:

Universal primary education is far from being achieved in Guinea-Bissau. Completion rate of primary education amounted to 59 percent in 2012-13 with 23 percent of children who never went to school and 18 percent who dropped out before completing primary education. Guinea-Bissau presents an unbalanced schooling profile: the high admission rate (158 percent) in the first grade of basic education contrasts with the sharp decline of the schooling profile as children advance in the system, with only 44 percent completing basic education. Among the possible causes of low completion, the ESP mentions three: a) incomplete schools prevent children to have a smooth education journey: 75 percent of schools do not offer the first six grades (basic education 1 and 2), affecting almost half of the children; b) high repetition rates leading to drop out; and, c) a high number of late entries in the education system which in turn reduces the chances to complete the primary education cycle.

Pre-primary education is not mandatory in Guinea-Bissau, still the number of children enrolled in pre-schools and early childhood activities has increased from just 480 in 1997-98 to 19,267 in

[3] In the absence of more recent data, all data used in the education overview section of this FRR is based on the 2015 RESEN, unless otherwise mentioned. However, political instability and teacher strikes in the recent years, as well as the current COVID-19 pandemic, are likely to have affected the education sector and the indicators presented in this section.

2012-13 due to an expansion of preschools, whose number has more than doubled during that period. However, the observed expansion benefits more urban areas than rural areas.

Inequalities in the education system are widespread and access and completion of primary education are affected based on the geographical location, gender, and family income —in that order. 40 percent of children in rural areas complete primary education against 79 percent of children in urban areas —a 39-percentage-point difference. 52 percent of girls complete primary education compared to 74 percent of boys —a 22-percentage-point difference. 49 percent of children from the poorest families complete primary education against 66 percent of children from the wealthiest families —a 17-percentage-point difference. On top of that, inequalities are cumulative, meaning that a girl from a poor family living in a rural area has only 15 percent chances to complete primary education, compared to 78 percent for a boy from a wealthy family living in an urban area.

In addition to socio-economic factors hindering their educational path, girls can be subject to gender-based violence. At school-level the risk of school-based violence and abuse is prevalent on the way to/from schools both coming from peers and adults (teachers, educators or community members). Inexistence of school policies, absence of referral mechanisms and inadequate training of educational staff contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based violence. At a more societal level, teenage pregnancies, forced child marriage, harmful gender stereotypes and social norms are affecting girls' education.[4]

While children with special needs are extremely marginalized in the country and consequently have limited access to basic social services such as education, no specific information and data on these children is available. The ESP indicates the need to collect data on children with disabilities to prepare the development of inclusive schools accessible to children with specific needs.

1.2.2. Learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes are not assessed on a regular basis in Guinea-Bissau. The latest learning assessment was made with the support of PASEC in 2014-15 and concluded that learning achievements were low and decreasing as students are moving to higher levels of basic education. In grade 2, the average score of Bissau-Guinean students is 48/100 in Portuguese and 50/100 in mathematics, indicating that only half of what children are supposed to know is mastered. In grade 5, more children are underperforming as the average score in Portuguese drops to 40/100 and decline even sharply in mathematics to 31/100. The percentage of students

[4] Gender-based violence risk assessment portfolio review, World Bank

experiencing learning difficulties was among the most important in comparison with other Sub-Saharan countries with respectively 22 percent and 38 percent of students in Portuguese and mathematics scoring below 25/100.

Although the learning crisis is likely to be multifaceted, the assessment points out to a crucial factor: the lack of content knowledge of teachers. Nearly 94 percent of teachers in grade 5 were unable to demonstrate a good command of Portuguese and 98 percent of mathematics.[5] Another key factor for learning is the availability of appropriate learning materials. The learning assessment conducted in 2014 analyzed the various factors impacting student performance and showed that –among other factors[6]– students who possessed textbooks in Portuguese performed better in grade 2 and grade 5 language tests.

1.2.3. Efficiency:

The Guinea-Bissau education system is characterized by a low internal efficiency with 47 percent of resources wasted in repetition and dropout during the first six years of schooling. Half of the dropouts occur during the transition between the first and the second cycle of basic education, i.e., after grade 4, mostly because of incomplete schools. High repetition rates are consistently observed in time and throughout basic education: primary education repetition rate amounts to 20.4 percent and is higher at the beginning of the cycle (22 percent for the first two grades). In the last cycle of basic education 17 percent on average repeat their grade.

Teacher allocation is suffering from great variations across the country. The average pupils to teacher ratio amounts to 45 but varies from 28 in Bolama/Bijagos to 65 in the Gabu region. The degree of randomness of teacher allocation amounts to 23 percent in the country. On top of suboptimal teacher allocation, teacher management has often been affected by strikes during the last years. More than 90 days of instruction time were lost in 2015-16 due to teacher strikes and almost the entire school year in 2018-19. The implementation of the revised Teacher Career Law in 2019 aimed to improve that situation.

[5] In this assessment a teacher is considered to master a topic when he scores 95/100 or more to the learning assessment administered to its students.

[6] Guinea-Bissau conducted a learning assessment in 2014 based on PASEC methodology with the support of IIEP-Pôle de Dakar. Among a set of individual-level, school-level and education policy-level variables, Portuguese textbook possession, socioeconomic background of the family, location of the school, gender, grade repetition, teacher status and attending preschool were found to have a statistically significant impact on students' performance.

1.2.4. Monitoring of Sector Performance:

The first Joint Sector Review (JSR) organized by Guinea-Bissau was held in 2014 and sought to take stock of the implementation of the Transitional Education Plan 2010 – 2013, whose implementation was disrupted by the coup in 2012. With the development of the new ESP (2017 – 2025) and as part of its monitoring mechanism, some positive steps were taken in 2017 to organize regular JSRs but these efforts were hampered by the continued political instability faced by the country. Consequently, no JSRs were organized during the first three years of the ESP implementation. However, in November 2020, a 'light' JSR was organized around two main objectives: (i) to monitor the progress of the ESP implementation and its three-year budgeted action plan covering the period 2017 – 2019, and (ii) to identify priority actions for the coming year. The 2020 JSR was an opportunity for the MENES to engage in dialogue with key stakeholders on education policy and strategy and led to the production of an action plan for the year 2021 that incorporates recommendations from the review. As a follow-up on the 2020 JSR, the government committed to organizing a comprehensive sector review in 2021 as well as regular annual JSRs for the next four years. It is expected that an Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) application be submitted in the coming months to support the government's efforts in organizing annual JSRs.

The MENES co-chairs the local education group (LEG) meetings alongside the coordinating agency (UNICEF), which demonstrates the national authorities' commitment to coordinating the sector with the partners. The LEG includes representatives from the public administration, donors and NGOs.. Civil society organizations (CSOs), including the Guinea-Bissau coalition (*Rede de Campanha de Educação para Todos Guiné–Bissau*. RECEPT GB), teacher unions and higher education institutions which are ad-hoc members of the LEG. Members of the LEG have strongly mobilized around the GPE model, provided valuable technical and financial support to the Government in the preparation of the ESP 2017-2025, and actively participated in the 2020 JSR.

2. FIXED PART REQUIREMENTS

Because this application for an additional MCA has been submitted more than two years since the current ESPIG was approved (January 2018), it is necessary to verify that the Education Sector Plan is still valid and that the domestic resource commitments linked to the current ESPIG are on track.[7] Therefore, this section provides the Secretariat's assessment of Guinea-Bissau's

[7] GPE Guidelines for Applying for an Additional Maximum Country Allocation, Page 3.

current status against the funding model requirement 1 and requirement 2 commitment at the time of the current ESPIG approval.

2.1. Requirement 1: A credible, endorsed Education Sector Plan (ESP), or alternatively, a Transitional Education Plan (TEP).

The current Education Sector Plan (ESP), adopted by the government and endorsed by development partners in 2017, covers the period 2017-2025 and was initially accompanied by a three-year budgeted action plan (2017-2019). Due to the political and institutional instability, development of subsequent action plans and regular monitoring of the ESP, although planned, have been a challenge. However, with strong technical support from the coordinating agency and the grant agent, a first 'light' joint sector review (JSR), led by the Ministry of Education (MENES), was held in November 2020. This JSR included a review of both domestic and external funding and focused primarily on the implementation of the 2017-2019 action plan, showing that only 15% of planned activities had been carried out, while 20% were ongoing and 65% had not started. The JSR also aimed to identify priority actions for the coming year. Therefore, as one of the outcomes of the JSR, a budgeted action plan covering the year 2021 was developed. Moreover, as a follow-up on the 'light' 2020 JSR, the government committed to organizing a comprehensive sector review in 2021 to formally update the ESP, as well as regular annual JSRs for the next four years. It is expected that an Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) application be submitted in the coming months to support the government's efforts in organizing annual JSRs.

Conclusion: The Secretariat deems that requirement 1 continues to be met.

2.2. Requirement 2: Evidence of commitment to ESP or TEP and its financing.

At the time of the current ESPIG approval, the government undertook to increase public spending on education as a percentage of government budget from 12.4 percent in 2015 to 15.3 percent in 2017, 15.9 percent in 2018, 16.5 percent in 2019 and 17.1 percent in 2020, to ultimately allocate 20 percent of total public expenditures to the sector by 2025 as per the ESP projections.[8] The updated domestic financing matrix covering the period 2017 – 2022 shows that spending increased compared with the 2015 baseline but only partially met the commitments. This was the case for 2017 (14.9 percent against 15.3 percent) and 2018 (13.5 percent against 15.9 percent), while the commitment made for 2019 was met and exceeded

[8] Based on the domestic financing matrix submitted with the current ESPIG application which was grounded in the 2017-2025 ESP forecasts and simulation model.

with the executed education budget accounting for 18.0 percent of total public expenditures (against 16.5 percent).

It is worth mentioning that the ambitious commitments made in 2017 were undertaken in a highly fragile context, which the country has been constantly suffering from since its independence from Portugal in 1974. Since 2017, political tensions and institutional weaknesses led to the lack of approval of the budget law by the Parliament (FY2017 and 2019) or its late adoption (FY2018 and 2020), hindering the ability of ministries to plan activities on domestic financing and limiting its scope to mostly paying teacher salaries. Moreover, the education sector is frequently affected by massive teacher strikes, as it was the case during the school years 2017-18 and 2018-19 when, for the latter, almost the entire school year was lost due to teacher strikes. Despite these challenges, the actual education expenditures as total government expenditures excluding debt service show an upward trend: From 9 percent in 2014 to 18 percent in 2019. However, this trend remains fragile and subject to fluctuations, such as in 2018 with a drop caused by the aforementioned teacher strikes. Based on the above justification, including the specific justification for the temporary drop in education share in 2018, and considering that the 2019 expenditure exceeded the prevision, the Secretariat considers that the country has sufficiently met its commitment in actual expenditures.

For 2020, actual expenditure figures are not yet available. While the budgeted education expenditures are at least maintained in nominal values compared to the previous years, they account for only 13.6 percent of the total public expenditures. This said, credibility of budget has been assessed as low, with often no or a very delayed budget law approved by Parliament, which has limited relation with the actual share of education spending. As education spending is mostly related to teacher salaries, the implementation of the budgeted education allocation is generally higher as average, and the share of education in real expenditure is generally higher. The budget document is however revealing in as far as projections for education expenditure which go up again in 2021 and 2022, both in nominal value and share with 15.5 percent and 16.6 percent of total budget allocated to the sector, respectively. Because this trend is explained by a teacher recruitment strategy as well as the implementation of the new teacher salary grid approved under the 2019 Teacher Career Law, the Secretariat deems that the country shows a credible commitment to increase education expenditure. Due to the extreme fragility of the country, the stability of this trend beyond 2022 to ultimately reach the 20 percent target in 2025 is difficult to assess.

Between 2006 and 2013, the share of public spending for primary education had not been lower than 45 percent.[9] At the time of the current ESPIG approval, the government committed to maintaining it above 45 percent, with 50 percent in 2017, 51 percent in 2018 and 52 percent in 2019. While the updated domestic financing matrix does not provide any information for 2017 and 2018, the executed 2019 share (43.5 percent) is slightly lower than the GPE benchmark and does not meet the country's commitment.

However, it is worth noting that the updated domestic financing matrix figures are estimated based on a calculation methodology which is not the same as the one used for the commitment taken at the time of the current ESPIG approval. The Secretariat deems this methodology logical and realistic and figures presented are consistent with those included in the Education Sector Analysis (RESEN 2014), and in the Public Expenditure Review (PER 2018). Moreover, the estimated budgeted share of financing to the primary sub-sector in 2020 exceeded 45 percent and reached 48.3 percent. Projections show a similar trend, with an average of 51 percent during the next two years (52.4 percent in 2021 and 49.8 percent in 2022). This increase is deemed realistic as it is mainly based on civil servant and temporary teachers recruitment projections.

Development partners' commitment to education for the period 2017 - 2021 is included in the updated domestic financing matrix and detailed information for the year 2021 is included in the 2021 budgeted action plan accompanying the 2020 Joint Sector Review report. Along with domestic financing figures, it helps to gauge the acute dependency of the ESP financing on external partners. For instance, the 2021 action plan shows that 90 percent of the total budget is to be funded by external partners.

Conclusion:

The sub-requirement on financing for education is met: Despite a temporary decrease of the education share in 2018 – linked to the teacher strikes -, there is an upward trend in actual education expenditures over the past years and a share of education expenditures above what was planned in 2019. The country plans to further increase the education budget in 2021 and 2022 based on the implementation of the new teacher salary grid and teacher recruitments. Beyond 2022, the country's fragility makes it difficult to assess the trend to reach the 20 percent by 2025.

The sub-requirement on the financing of the primary subsector is considered met: Although the 2019 primary share is slightly below the GPE benchmark and the country's commitment

[9] Final Readiness Review of the current ESPIG, 2017.

at the time of the current ESPIG approval, both the estimated budget for 2020 and the projections up to 2022 show a realistic upward trend, exceeding the GPE benchmark.

As issues are, to a large extent, explained and justified given the country's fragility and because there is a realistic upward trend to reach the GPE benchmark, the Secretariat deems that requirement 2 is met. However, the Secretariat requests the country to update its domestic financing forecast and commitments in light of the ESP implementation review during JSRs, and in line with equitable enrolment and universal primary completion objectives. Additionally, the Secretariat recommends keeping the two report-backs on requirement 2, requested at the time of the current ESPIG approval.

3. ESPIG

3.1. CURRENT ESPIG PERFORMANCE

4. Grant title	Grant Agent	Period	Grant amount	Status
Projeto Educação de Qualidade para Todos (PEQT)	World Bank	2018-2024	US$15 million GPE: US$4.3 million IDA: US$10.7 million	Ongoing - Disbursement: GPE: 15% IDA: 22% (as of March 2021)

Guinea-Bissau has been a GPE member since its first sector plan was endorsed in 2010. Based on the 2017-2025 Education Sector Plan, a GPE/IDA co-financed project (PEQT) was approved in 2018 for a total of US$15 million (GPE: US$4.3 million[10] and IDA: US$10.7 million) and is expected to close in October 2024. The project development objective is to improve the teaching and learning environment in grades 1-4 in targeted schools in Guinea-Bissau. Component 1 aims to strengthen school-based management through the establishment and support of school management committees and support to school inspection. Component 2 aims to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment through support to implement the new Teacher Career Law, in-service teacher training, interactive audio instruction and development of learning materials (teacher guides, students manuals, school kits that support literacy and numeracy in Grades 1-4), based on the new curriculum. Component 3 focuses on supporting the EMIS, measuring learning outcomes in 2021 and 2024, and supporting project implementation. Implementation challenges led to a restructuring of the project in October

[10] This amount does not include the US$0.4 million for grant agent's direct implementation support costs

2020. It aimed to simplify the project's original design by reducing the number of activities (the school grant component and related monitoring activities have been cancelled and more emphasis has been put on teacher management and training activities), extending the closing date and revising the implementation and disbursement schedules accordingly. Delays in implementation have been mainly due to: a) political instability; b) delays in establishing the project implementation unit; c)weak capacities of technical staff involved in the project implementation, d)teacher strikes during the 2018-19 school year; and, e)the COVID-19 global pandemic .[11]

The table below provides the latest updates for the report-backs included in the January 2018 Board approval:

Report-backs	Updates from the November 2020 JSR
The education budget as a share of the government budget stood at 13 percent as of 2013. It is projected to increase to 15.3 percent in 2017, and ultimately projected to reach 20 percent by 2025. The government has shown strong commitment towards achieving this goal, and the Committee requests updates from the LEG through the annual joint sector review (JSR) on progress made towards this objective throughout the grant implementation.	Due to the political instability, there was no JSR in 2018 and 2019. The JSR held in November 2020 included a comparative analysis between the ESP forecast and the 2017-2019 actuals. The share of the education budget in the government total expenditures in 2019 amounted to 18.0% compared to 16.5% in the forecast, showing that this commitment was met and even exceeded that year.
The current share of spending earmarked for primary education within the education budget is around 49.5 percent (2013), which is reflective of a downward trend from 2006 when it was 56.7 percent. Although the government has committed to increasing the share of primary education to 52 percent by 2019, and the funding model requirement of 45 percent or above has been met, the Committee requests close monitoring of the trend by the LEG and to be kept informed annually through the JSR.	The JSR held in November 2020 acknowledged that reporting on sub-sector expenditures remains a challenge in Guinea-Bissau as neither the Ministry of Education nor the Ministry of Finance are able to track expenditures by sub-sector due to the nature of the budget nomenclature. However, the JSR produced an estimation of primary education expenditure using teacher salaries as a proxy. Based on that, the JSR concluded that the ESP forecast of 52% for 2019 was met with an estimated primary recurrent education share of education recurrent expenditures amounting to 58.7%.

[11] Project Appraisal Document, World Bank, January 2021

Given the challenges related to efficiency in Guinea Bissau, the Committee requests a report back from the LEG on the progress made towards the improvements in dropout and repetition rates annually through the JSR.	The November 2020 JSR didn't report back on indicators and education statistics due to the weakness of the EMIS and the inability to produce regular data. This lack of monitoring has been pointed out in the JSR report and both the school mapping exercise and the operationalization of the EMIS are part of the recommendations to be implemented in 2021.

3.2 ACCELERATED FUNDING GRANT TO SUPPORT THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

A COVID-19 accelerated funding was approved by the Secretariat in two stages: On July 1st, 2020, and on August 5, 2020 for $3.5 million with UNICEF as grant agent. This two-step approval process was due to the inclusion of some activities in the initial proposal that the Secretariat, after its assessment, requested the country to revise.[12] The project supports the implementation of the national COVID-19 response plan and aims to ensure learning continuity during school closure (through the implementation of a non-formal radio education program, the development of a distance learning program based on TV, radio programs and printed materials) and to support school reopening while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and teachers (notably through a WASH program, psychosocial support, distribution of safe school kits, nutrition services, recovery classes, accelerated learning programs and learning assessments). In addition, the project supports sector coordination to ensure an efficient COVID-19 response and to strengthen national emergency response capacities more broadly. It also includes several activities specifically targeted to benefit the most vulnerable children, including children with special needs and children from the most vulnerable households. A set of activities focuses on girls and addresses School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) through teachers and school staff training.

The grant became effective on July 1, 2020 and is planned to close on December 31, 2021. The first two surveys, covering the period July 1 – December 31, 2020, showed a satisfactory implementation of the project, with $1.3 million disbursed. Major progress made during the reporting period pertain to the set-up of the Technical Committee in charge of the implementation of the national COVID-19 response plan, the support to disseminate the

[12] Following its assessment of the initial proposal, the Secretariat requested four activities to be revised: (i) the high volume of financing dedicated to an activity aiming to provide fabric masks needed to be further justified; (ii) the construction of latrines activity needed to be rebalanced in comparison with other WASH activities more focused on COVID-19; (iii) the activity on cash transfer program needed to be refined; and (iv) one activity (school-in-a-box kit), needed to be removed.

national response plan and school reopening. Main activities undertaken are the start of distance learning programs, the training on minimum hygiene standards for the prevention of COVID-19 for school directors and teachers, the purchase and distribution of safe school kits and hand washing systems for schools, and the set-up of the cash transfer program mechanism. However, schools in Bissau closed again at the end of January 2021 due to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases, and then reopened on March 3, 2021. In the meantime, a civil servants' strike broke out, resulting in the closure of many schools throughout the country. The next quarterly survey is expected by the end of April 2021 and will provide further updates on implementation progress.

3.3 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

The proposed additional financing, in the amount of $2.8 million, is to be managed as a stand-alone project[13], the Institutional Strengthening and Quality Education for All Project, with the World Bank as grant agent. The additional financing aims to strengthen institutional capacity within the MENES in order to improve sector performance and is expected to help strengthen the resilience of the country's education system. As it will complement the existing GPE/IDA co-financed PEQT project, the additional financing also includes activities that will help address challenges encountered in the first two years of the PEQT's implementation and would have the greatest potential to ensure its success. The proposed additional financing will be implemented over a period of four years.

The additional financing is designed around three components, with the first two components accounting for the majority of the project funding:

Component 1 aims to strengthen institutional capacity within the MENES through the development of clear organizational manuals and organigrams for each Directorate involved in the implementation of the PEQT.[14] These manuals will be accompanied by capacity building and training plans to ensure that the staff concerned effectively carries out their responsibilities and that key activities and initiatives are sustainable. Additionally, to further mitigate the ongoing risks related to the frequent changes in leadership, a full-time technical assistance will be deployed and based, until the project closure, in three of the five Directorates of the MENES

[13] It is prepared as a stand-alone project due to a change in the World Bank's rules which requires all new projects to be prepared using the World Bank's recently developed Environmental and Social Framework (ESF).
[14] The Directorates involved in the implementation of the PEQT are the Directorate of General Education (DGE), the Inspectorate General in Education (IGE), the Directorate of Human Resources (DGRH), the National Institute for Education Development (INDE), and the Directorate of Planning and Statistics (GEPASE).

involved in the PEQT implementation.[15] These 3 experts will provide both technical support for the day-to-day implementation of PEQT activities as well as on-the-job training based on the needs outlined in the organizational manuals.

Component 2 seeks to improve planning and management of resources by developing a survey instrument and then conducting a detailed mapping exercise to produce an up-to-date picture of the entire system —all levels of education, both state and non-state schools[16] and questions on inclusive education will be included— that will ultimately allow for a more effective management of resources. Building on the data collected during the school mapping exercise, clear procedures for textbooks and learning materials purchased under the PEQT will be developed so that these materials are effectively distributed, properly managed and used in a sustainable manner. These procedures will be accompanied by trainings for school directors and administrators, and shelves and storage cabinets will be purchased for the schools targeted by PEQT. Although an activity under the PEQT project already finances the purchase of basic shelves, the activity proposed under the proposed additional financing is designed to be complementary as the unit cost of shelves turned out to be higher than what was initially planned. Therefore, there will be no overlap between these two activities.

Component 3 focuses on citizen engagement and gender norms with the set-up of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and the recruitment of a Social Development Specialist who will help to design and accelerate the implementation of the GRM. Activities addressing school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) will include the development of codes of conduct for teachers (these codes of conduct will include provisions on sexual exploitation abuse and harassment as well as consequences for their breach), and support to MENES to build the capacity of education administrators and school staff in this field through trainings, etc. As these activities primarily focus on the policy and systems within the MENES, they will not overlap with activities addressing SRGBV included in the GPE COVID-19 accelerated funding allocated to the country in July 2020. Furthermore, the grant agent is liaising closely with UNICEF and all partners involved in the sector to ensure synergies and complementarity of interventions related to SRGBV.

[15] The full-time technical assistance will be based within the Directorate of Human Resources (DGRH), the National Institute for Education Development (INDE), and the Directorate of Planning and Statistics (GEPASE).

[16] The school mapping activity includes community schools and koranic schools as these represent a significant percentage of schools in some regions and in rural areas. However, no direct resources will be provided to these non-state schools. Once finalized, it is expected that the school mapping will be used to inform decisions on new regulatory frameworks, policies and procedures, some of which would aim to transform some of these schools eventually into public schools.

The main group of direct beneficiaries of the proposed additional financing includes 120 MENES staff that will be targeted by activities under component 1. All MENES staff, 496 school directors, 120 school inspectors, 40 regional education directorate staff and nearly 4,000 teachers will benefit from the gender-based violence training models to be developed under component 3. Management of learning material activity will benefit schools targeted by the PEQT in five different regions (Bafatá, Bissau, Cacheu, Oio, and Quinara), representing all four provinces in the country. Although the school mapping activity will not have direct beneficiaries, it is expected to improve service delivery which would in turn indirectly benefit the entire system.

Because of the country's fragility and weak governance system, the fiduciary risks of effectively channeling donor support through the government's systems are extremely high. In this context and in order to mitigate these risks, the additional financing will be overseen by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) set up for the existing PEQT project and whose performance has been consistently rated as satisfactory. More specifically, the PIU responsibilities will include: (i) overall fiduciary responsibility of the project; (ii) providing technical support to the implementation of project activities; (iii) preparing and managing bidding processes; (iv) managing project resources, ensuring that disbursements are made in accordance with the agreed procedures and practices; (v) preparing quarterly and annual financial statements of the project; and (vi) providing technical assistance to the MENES with activities related to overall M&E, data collection, and tracking progress. This modality, although not aligned on the country system, allows for a proper monitoring of the use of funds.

Table A: ESPIG Components and Costs

	Amount (GPE Financing US$)	% of total
Total MCA	**2,800,000**	**100%**
A Strengthen institutional capacity	1,300,000	46.4%
Organizational review, operation manuals and capacity building plan	200,000	
Capacity building	500,000	
Technical assistance based at MENES	600,000	
B Improve planning and management of resources	1,100,000	39.3%
School mapping	850,000	
Management of learning materials	250,000	
C Strengthen citizen engagement and address gender norms	250,000	9%

GRM, ESF and SRGBV	200,000	
Training on SRGBV	50,000	
Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*	**150,000**	**5.3%**
GRAND TOTAL (with Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs)	**2,800,000**	**100%**
Agency Fees**	49,000	1.75%

* Include Grant Agent's direct costs, such as Program Management, Administrative and other direct implementation costs.

** Agency Fee is not included in the MCA and is calculated as percentage rate (agreed with each GA) from the Total Fixed Part and Total Variable Part.

3.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT

- Program Design

The three components are clearly linked to the well-established challenges of the education sector in Guinea-Bissau in terms of institutional capacity, planning skills and gender equality. Not all activities are directly linked to the current project (PEQT), but they will all contribute to the successful implementation of not only the PEQT but also other future projects. This additional project is based on the lessons learned of the current ESPIG and its results chain reinforces that of the current project. GPE's strategic goals are well taken into account, especially equity through the activities on gender norms and efficiency through the institutional capacity building.

The project meets GPE's standard in terms of private sector engagement. The school mapping exercise will cover public and non-state schools, including community and Koranic schools. This activity is relevant as part of the overall effort to strengthen and oversee the education system. Engagement with non-state service providers for this activity is key to inform the education system planning. This activity does not imply any support to non-public schools.

- Program Budget

The program budget is clear, aligns well with the described activities and includes the grant agent implementation costs of US$150,000 (5 percent). The rate of expenditure is largely consistent with the disbursement timeline. The cost of the largest activity – the school mapping (30 percent of the budget) – is based on previous similar exercises and is justified by the breadth of the system coverage (preprimary, primary, secondary education, public and private providers, students with disabilities, information on teacher credentials) and methodology (census-based).

- M&E

The M&E arrangements are well described and rely mostly on: (i) a full-time dedicated M&E specialist within the project implementation unit; (ii) status reports on project implementation (biannually) and use of funds under the responsibility of the MENES (quarterly); (iii) implementation support mission every six months, mid-term implementation review and annual Joint Sector Reviews. The results framework includes outcomes and intermediary outcomes with targets, baseline and data source covering all the components of the project.

- Fiduciary, Implementation Arrangements, and Readiness

The project implementation unit (PIU) set up for the existing PEQT project will oversee the implementation of the project. The PIU performance in the fiduciary and administrative arrangements has consistently been considered satisfactory. The coordination of activities across the various MENES Directorates involved and the PIU as well as the implementation oversight (provision of strategic guidance to project implementation, approval of annual work plan, budget and project reports, assessment of project achievements) will be ensured by a Project Steering Committee, already established for the current PEQT project. The project document also includes a clear timeline of project activities, a table that summarizes the roles and responsibilities of Ministry units and a description of financial arrangements and audit – which remain basically the same as what is in place for the existing PEQT.

- Risk Identification and Mitigation Measures

The project document has assessed the overall risk as moderate. Political, technical design / institutional capacity risks are rated as substantial due to frequent changes in the government and low capacity in the ministry of education. To mitigate these substantial risks the project will recruit additional technical assistance in key departments of the ministry to provide robust technical ongoing support throughout the implementation. The project is prepared using the World Bank's new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and informed by the recent World Bank gender-based violence portfolio review for Guinea-Bissau. Based on this, the project document identifies a substantial risk of GBV/SEAH, a pervasive issue in the country including related to worker-community-education community interactions. These risks are expected to be prevented, managed and/or mitigated through the application of established mitigation measures as detailed in the project's Environmental and Social Framework instruments. The specific measures are funded under component 3 which aim to strengthen citizen engagement and address gender norms (development of codes of conduct that will include provisions on GBV/SEAH, capacity building of education administrators and school staff to prevent and report GBV/SEAH, recruitment of a Social Development Specialist to design and

implement a Grievance Redress Mechanism, etc.). The current Covid-19 pandemic is another risk assessed as substantial by the program document. To mitigate this risk, training activities will be designed to use distance learning platforms when possible. Other risks such as macroeconomic, fiduciary, and stakeholder risks are assessed as moderate and appropriate mitigation measures are provided.

- Sustainability

Most of the project's interventions aim at enhancing the capacity of the MENES to better manage its human and fiscal resources, developing capacity in planning and M&E, and policy development such as policies against GBV in schools. These interventions are expected to have effects in the long run on the system.

- Aid Effectiveness

Activities included in this project are aligned with the national ESP and continues to support the development of the sector and previous investments by GPE and UNICEF. Given the extreme fragility of institutions and processes in Guinea-Bissau, the project is not aligned with national public finance procedures.

4. VARIABLE PART

Not applicable.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Secretariat finds the proposed program to be relevant in the country context. It has been designed based on lessons learned from previous and ongoing programs as well as on the recurrent challenges stemming from continuous changes in government leadership leading to weak institutional structures. The program is well-aligned with the 2017 – 2025 Education Sector Plan, continues to support past and current investments, and intends to improve the performance of the current system to ultimately ensure a quality education for every child.

With a Joint Sector Review (JSR) conducted in 2020 and a commitment from the Government to organizing annual JSRs in the coming years, the Secretariat deems that requirement 1 continues to be met.

The Secretariat deems that requirement 2 is met and requests the country to update its domestic financing forecasts and commitments in light of the ESP implementation review

during JSRs, and in line with equitable enrolment and universal primary completion objectives. Additionally, the Secretariat recommends keeping the two report-backs on requirement 2, requested at the time of approval of the current ESPIG.