REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (ITAP)

ASSESSMENT OF ENABLING FACTORS[1]

GUINEA | MAY 12, 2023

Background

In line with the GPE 2025 operating model, the government and country partners have analyzed country progress in the four enabling factor areas for system transformation. The *Contextualized Enabling Factors Analysis* completed by the local education group and supporting documentation were shared with the ITAP, tasked by the Board with providing an assessment of country status against the enabling factors.

The ITAP assessment seeks to contribute to country policy dialogue on the partnership compact. The ITAP considers the extent to which challenges in enabling factor areas act as bottlenecks to country education system transformation goals. Based on this assessment, it classifies each area as a low, medium, or high priority for action. A designation of high indicates that identified challenges may act as significant bottlenecks to transformation goals.

The ITAP report is shared with the government and country partners to collectively review for any major factual errors that may have affected the ITAP assessment.

The ITAP report is ultimately shared with the Board and feeds into Board decision-making on the system transformation grant allocation, with special attention given to how challenges in the high priority enabling factors are resolved in the country compact.

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[1] The ITAP operates as an independent advisory body to the GPE Board. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the ITAP country panel.. ITAP country panel members for this report: Susy Ndaruhutse (Chair), Theo Oltheten, Richard Sack, Hafedh Zaafrane.

Part A: Main Panel Conclusions

Data and Evidence

Even though references to an Education Management Information System (EMIS) are found throughout the documentation, the country's self-analysis states that there is no EMIS. It appears that the self-analysis expects an EMIS to be a fully "integrated" system whose database covers civil servants, teachers, construction, the data found in the Statistical Yearbooks (*Annuaires statistiques*), and much more. In any case, there is evidence concerning the poor quality and reliability of the data in the education Statistical Yearbooks, the most recent of which is for 2020/21. Different types of learning assessments have been conducted – most importantly, a national assessment that has been carried out five times since 1999 by a dedicated department within the Ministry of Pre-University Education and Literacy (*Ministère de l'enseignement pré-universitaire et de l'alphabétisation*) (MEPU-A); the most recent one was 2017. Data and indicators from the assessments and the available statistics are used for the sector analyses and the formulation of the strategic plan, including development of the financial simulation model. Several issue-specific studies are available (on inclusive education, gender disparities and low enrolment rates). However, even though implementation is weak, there is no analysis aimed at understanding the reasons and causes for this. Use of the available data and evidence is concentrated at the central level and limited mainly to the production of the strategic plans and performance reports. This means that more common management functions, many of which happen at the local levels, are not informed by much of the available evidence. Given that all signs point to the existence of an EMIS as it is usually defined, the ITAP is rating this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority.**

Gender-Responsive Planning, Policy and Monitoring

The 2020–2029 Ten-Year Education Programme (*2020–2029 Programme décennal de l'éducation en Guinée*) (ProDEG) is a coherent, comprehensive and reform-oriented sector program with clearly defined policy directions, core principles and budgetary tools. The ITAP concludes that the policy and gender-responsive planning tools of the 2020–2029 ProDEG are pertinent and solid; they demonstrate a strong political commitment to address the structural challenges of the education system; and they have the potential to substantially contribute to achieving quality education for all. However, the ITAP has not found evidence of effective gender mainstreaming in operational planning, budgeting and monitoring showing a disconnect between strategic plans and operational planning, budgeting and implementation. In addition, the 2020–2029 ProDEG misses an updated supporting legal framework and the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis that a revision of the Education Law (*Loi d'orientation de l'éducation*) would be instrumental for the reform agenda. The 2022–2025 Interim Program (*Programme de référence intérimaire*) (PRI) of the Transitional Government is in line with the policy priorities of the

2020–2029 ProDEG. Although the ITAP has not been able to confirm which of the two policy documents is leading at this moment, implementation of the broader policy framework of the 2022–2025 PRI would be conducive for the 2020–2029 ProDEG. The main concerns of the ITAP are twofold: (i) strengthening leadership and ownership of the 2020–2029 ProDEG at the various levels to better align operational planning, implementation and monitoring with the sector's policy priorities; and (ii) lack of thematic strategies, adequate budgetary provisions and updated legislation to address gender and geographical disparities, pre-school education, gender-based violence and inclusion of approximately 1.6 million out-of-school children and youth and other vulnerable groups. Under the assumption that the 2020–2029 ProDEG is the leading policy document, given the policy priorities of the Transitional Government, recognizing the implementation challenges ahead and considering the promising progress since the 2020–2029 ProDEG was launched, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis and is rating this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority.**

Sector Coordination

Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action:

Guinea has structures and processes in place for sector dialogue and coordinated action dating from the 2014–2019 Education Sector Programme (*Programme sectorielle de l'éducation*) (PSE2) and now adopted for the 2020–2029 ProDEG. These are broadly inclusive though the ITAP notes that trade unions and some development partners are less actively involved. Interagency and intergovernmental coordination takes place through established coordination committees with those at central level having greater capacity than those at decentralized level. However, the ITAP notes that the human and financial resource capacity of all of these committees needs strengthening. Interministerial coordination between the three education ministries remains weak although it is slowly improving. Overall, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis on this enabling factor and is rating it as a **MEDIUM priority**.

Coordinated Financing and Funding:

A small number of development partners have been providing pooled funding for a number of years including currently via an Education Pooled Fund/Special Budget Allocation (*Fonds commun de l'éducation/Budget d'affectation spéciale*) (FCE/BAS) established to support the implementation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG. At the same time, a larger number of development partners provide projectized funding. While having more development partners channeling their funds via the pooled fund could promote greater alignment, accountability and aid effectiveness, the execution rate of the FCE/BAS was much lower than that of projectized funding in 2021, demonstrating a clear bottleneck that needs to be addressed. As a result, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis and is rating this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority**.

Volume, Efficiency and Equity of Domestic Financing

The Guinean economy has shown particular resilience to health crises (Ebola and COVID-19) and to regional and international economic downturns. Despite the vulnerability regarding dependence on the mining sector, the medium-term economic outlook remains favorable. However, the ITAP notes that Guinea faces multiple challenges both in terms of the volume and in terms of the efficiency and equity of public spending. Public resources allocated to the education sector remain below the GPE benchmarks. The data show that the country devotes 14.2 percent of the government budget (excluding debt) to education, corresponding to 1.9 percent of GDP. This level is far from sufficient to expand access and achieve universal enrollment in a context where nearly one million children of primary and lower secondary school age (equivalent to 28 percent of the total school-aged population) are out of school. The ITAP also remarks that public financing of education is inequitable across gender and geography (region and rural/urban). Girls are more highly represented in out-of-school numbers, especially in rural areas where 70 percent of primary schools do not offer the required grades. Paradoxically, the poorest households in rural areas contribute the most to the financing of education: one quarter of public school teachers in rural areas are paid by the parents of students, compared with only 7 percent in urban areas. Public spending is also inefficient with one third of the resources invested in primary and secondary education wasted due to high dropout and repetition rates. The ITAP notes that improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending on education will require better traceability and greater transparency with the introduction of an accountability mechanism with stakeholders. The ITAP therefore concurs with the country's self-analysis and is rating this enabling factor as a **HIGH priority**.

Part B: Assessment of Enabling Factors

1. Data and Evidence

Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

References to an Education Management Information System (EMIS) are found throughout the available documentation. The prefaces to the 2020/21 Statistical Yearbooks (*Annuaires statistiques*) for preschool, primary and secondary education (three separate documents) all mention that data collection is computerized, and the 2020 GPE Summative Evaluation on Guinea observes improvements in EMIS capacities "in terms of publication of yearbooks and management of digital data collection", even though there are challenges because data quality and the lack of equipment and resources.[2] However, the country's self-analysis states that there is no EMIS; nor a school map (but a recommendation in the report of the 2020 Joint Sector Review calls for the updating (*réactualisation*) of the school map, which implies that one exists. It also states the need to move to computerized data collection. This is surprising since: (i) the computerization of data collection and EMIS development are generally closely linked technically; (ii) this computerization began, on a pilot basis, in 2017; and (iii) "base de données BSD/MENA" is stated as the source for some tables in the 2020–2029 Ten-Year Education Programme (*2020–2029 Programme décennal de l'éducation en Guinée*) (ProDEG). This contradiction between the country's self-analysis and existing documentation appears to be a matter of definition of, and expectations for a more effective and highly integrated EMIS database that would include extensive data concerning civil servants, teachers, school construction, the data found in the Statistical Yearbooks, and much more. In any case, EMIS and data issues are not mentioned as one of the four main planning and management challenges in the 2019 Education Sector Analysis (*Rapport d'état sur le système éducatif national*) (RESEN); nor are they mentioned as one of the nine major planning-related challenges in the 2020–2029 ProDEG.

Statistics on students are disaggregated by sex, location (rural/urban, region) and, where appropriate, by type of school (public, private, community). Teacher data are broken down by sex, level of educational attainment, region and whether or not they are in public schools. There is limited information in the 2020/21 Primary Education Statistical Yearbook regarding students with disabilities covering those with visual impairments, physical disabilities and albinism. The overall reliability of data has been questioned, and is illustrated by significant differences in enrolment rates between administrative data and

[2] Other documents that have references to an EMIS include: a World Bank Project Appraisal Document for the Project for Results in Early Childhood and Basic Education; a 2022 Implementation Status and Results Report for this project; and the 2020 Document cadre pour le co-financement PME/AFD/UNICEF en appui à la mise en œuvre du Programme décennal de l'éducation en Guinée (ProDEG). The first two documents were not included in the initial package of country documents shared with the ITAP.

data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (*Enquête par grappes à indicateurs multiples*) (MICS).

The MICS,[3] which are regularly carried out by UNICEF are a useful supplement to the EMIS data. Data from these studies have been used in the 2019 RESEN to supplement the available education statistics and assessment data; they have also been used for the formulation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG.

Learning Assessment Systems

Guinea benefits from a full complement of assessment studies:[4] (i) CONFEMEN's Programme for Education System Analysis (*Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN*) (PASEC) which was carried out in 2019 in primary grades 2 and 6 as part of a 14 (Francophone) country exercise; it is designed for international and temporal statistical comparability and not based on the national curriculum; (ii) four Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) have been administered in primary grades 1 and 2 between 2013 and 2017 in selected, targeted schools that are experimenting with a new approach for teaching reading; EGRA is carried out by the National Institute for Research and Pedagogical Action (*Institut national de recherche et d'actions pédagogiques*) (INRAP); (iii) the National Assessment of student achievement in primary grade 4 in numeracy and French (*Evaluation des acquis des élèves du CE2 en français et calcul*) carried out by the National Service for the Assessment of Learning Achievement (*Service national d'évaluation des acquis des apprentissages*) (SNESE), a dedicated department within the Ministry of Pre-University Education and Literacy (*Ministère de l'enseignement pré-universitaire et de l'alphabétisation*) (MEPU-A); five of these assessments have been completed between 1999 and 2017; and (iv) other assessments which have been undertaken for the specific needs of some partner agencies; the SNESE has been implicated in several of these assessments. According to the research from the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), five organizational entities – all within MEPU-A – are involved in these assessments: SNESE, INRAP, the Strategy and Development Office (*Bureau de stratégie et de développement*) (BSD), Provincial Education Departments (*Directions préfectorales de l'éducation*) and Regional Education Inspectorates.

The IIEP study identifies several issues in the overall configuration of learning assessment in Guinea: (i) dissemination is limited and does not include many potentially concerned stakeholders; (ii) the extent to which assessment findings are used for planning is uneven;

[3] This household survey was carried out in 2016. It is not education-specific. MICS provide data on the situation of children and women on a variety of social issues including education, health, nutrition, hygiene, security, access to resources, etc.
[4] The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has produced three publications on learning assessment in Guinea: Utilisation des données d'évaluation des apprentissages en Guinée (2021), which is an in-depth review and analysis of assessment activities, capabilities and utilization; L'évaluation des apprentissages en Guinée (2021); and IIEP Policy Brief: The use of learning assessment data: Guinea (2020).

(iii) management of the assessment findings is compartmentalized with little communication between relevant structures; and (iv) external pressures for assessments combined with limited capacity and leadership have been counter-productive and led to limited ownership.

Evidence Production and Use

Concerning implementation, the 2020 Annual Performance Report (*Rapport annuel de performance*) (RAP) notes the sector's weak capacity for the mobilization and implementation of resources for the sector, as well as weak coordination within the education system. This report finds that none of the curricular, training, or coordination activities had been completed according to plan. Shortcomings are ascertained, but there is no analysis of the causes.

Dedicated, issue-specific studies are available for inclusive education, gender disparities and low enrolment rates. These studies provide evidence-based analyses of their respective issues and conclude with recommendations. All three are produced by local researchers. A quick Google search indicates other studies by international researchers, including one on teachers.[5] A more thorough search is likely to produce other useful studies that could fill in existing knowledge gaps, especially the lack of in-depth analyses that could contribute to improved understanding of issues such as poor learning outcomes and low girls' enrolment in specific contexts.

Evidence production (in addition to the areas discussed above) appears to be adequate, even though there is clearly room for improvement, in both quantity and quality. The 2019 RESEN currently provides the most comprehensive, overall analytical view of the sector; it does not signal any issues regarding data quality or availability. Annual performance reports (RAPs) are available for three successive years (2019, 2020 and 2021).

Use of available evidence is signaled by several sources as problematic. In particular, a major challenge noted by the 2020–2029 ProDEG is that information is not sufficiently used for policy formulation and subsequent management. The 2019 RESEN was used for the preparation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG and the data (EMIS?) used for the production of the statistical yearbook provide the basis for the financial simulation model. The IIEP study of learning assessments points out that the assessment data was used to a limited extent in the preparation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG and that references to the assessments in monitoring and evaluation documentation is not systematic. It is also noted that the flow of information from the central to local levels is deficient. The ITAP notes the country's ambition to set up a digital data collection system which includes disaggregation at all levels to make it a useful tool to support planning, management and decision making.

[5] Schwille, J., Dembélé, M., Diallo, A. M., Bah, T. H., Abillama, F. (2001). "Teacher Improvement Projects in Guinea: Lessons Learned from Taking a Program to National Scale." *Peabody Journal of Education, 76*(3/4), 102-121.

Conclusion: Regardless of the conflicting reports about the existence of an EMIS, the usual complement of descriptive statistics and indicators, disaggregated by sex but with no information on children with disabilities, is found in the Statistical Yearbooks that are based on computerized data collection and used by the sector analysis, planning documents and the financial simulation model. Learning assessment data using different approaches are available from more than three sources, one of which is a service within MEPU-A that has been producing national assessments since 1999 (but not since 2017). Several other issue-specific studies are available on girls' education and inclusive education (including children with disabilities). It appears, however, that use of the available data and evidence are concentrated at the central level and limited mainly to the production of the strategic plans and performance reports. This means that more common management functions, many of which happen at the local levels, are not informed by much of the available evidence. Given that all signs point to the existence of an EMIS as it is usually defined, the ITAP is rating this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority.**

2. Gender-Responsive Sector Planning, Policy and Monitoring

Strategic Planning Frameworks and Practices

Under the previous government, a solid sector and reform-oriented 2020–2029 Ten-Year Education Programme (ProDEG) was officially launched and endorsed by the development partners. It was designed by a multi-sectoral National Technical Team from the three ministries in charge of education – MEPU-A; the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (*Ministère de l'enseignement technique de la formation professionnelle*) (METFP); and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation (*Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche scientifique et de l'innovation*) (MESRSI); relevant other government ministries (finance, economic planning, budget) with support from IIEP; and in partnership with the Local Education Group (*Groupe sectoriel de l'éducation*)(GSE) and other stakeholders through extensive country-wide consultations. A financial simulation model with three scenarios provided the budgetary requirements for its implementation.

The 2019 Education Policy Letter (*Lettre de la politique sectorielle de l'éducation*) (LPSE), signed by the then three ministers of education, the minister of economy and finance and the deputy minister of budget, summarizes the policy and programmatic priorities and their budgetary framework. It also explains the reforms to improve efficiency and transparency of budget allocation and to strengthen mechanisms for budget transfer to deconcentrated structures of the sector. The LPSE is closely linked to the country's Vision 2040; it confirms a strong political commitment to education sector reform; and it meets the international protocols and conventions signed by Guinea regarding the rights of children and of persons with disabilities.[6] Guinea's commitment to address the gender gap, regional and socio-economic disparities and reaching vulnerable groups has been strongly reconfirmed by the Transitional Government in its 2022–2025 Interim Program (*Programme de référence intérimaire*) (PRI).

The 2020–2029 ProDEG responds to the 'inclusive development of human capital' pillar of the 2016–2020 National Economic and Social Development Plan (*Plan national de développement économique et social*) (PNDES) and is based on the comprehensive 2019 RESEN as well as on thematic studies such as the expansion of basic education, the diversification of secondary education, child marriage and adolescent pregnancies, inclusive education, and risks and disasters.[7] However, specific policies and strategies to address these thematic areas are not yet in place: the draft pre-school policy still needs to

[6] See the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Body Database.

[7] UNICEF organized a workshop in December 2022 for the 'education crisis clusters' to train staff on how to respond to disasters while ensuring the right to education of children, including those whose vulnerability is exacerbated by crises. A 'national disaster' strategy as such does not exist in spite of Guinea's vulnerability to natural disasters and epidemiological outbreaks such as Ebola.

be validated;[8] no evidence-based strategy exists to enhance access to education for out-of-school children (around 44 percent of children aged 5 to 16);[9] nor a sector strategy to address the gender gap including gender-based violence, and its root causes.

Guinea's 1997 Education Law (*Loi d'orientation de l'éducation*) was revised in 2006. The ITAP concurs with the GSE's observation that a new legislative framework would be instrumental to legislate the reforms that have taken place since then (for example, basic education of 13 years composed of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary education for children aged 4 to 16) and to comply with the right to education in particular for out-of-school children and youth.

Operational Planning Instruments and Practices

For the implementation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG, a Multi-Annual Costed Action Plan (*Plan d'action pluriannuel budgétisé*) (PAPB) was developed for the sector for 2019–2022 and a further one is under development for the period 2023–2025. Each of the three ministries has its own detailed Annual Costed Action Plan (*Plan d'action annuel budgétisé*) (PAAB), structured around the various (sub)programs and their respective results. As mentioned in the country's self-analysis, operational planning is hindered by various factors and in particular by the limited planning capacity and involvement of local stakeholders which also limits the level of alignment of these annual operational plans with the respective Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF) (*Cadres de dépenses à moyen terme*) (CDMT) and the policy priorities of the 2020–2029 ProDEG.

In the present political context, the 2022–2025 PRI constitutes the transitional government's overall short-term roadmap or policy framework. No reference is made in this document to the 2020–2029 ProDEG, but the ITAP observes that the 2020–2029 ProDEG largely meets the planning policy guidelines of the 2022–2025 PRI, such as having a sector policy and strategy in place, the use of multi-annual budgetary planning tools (an MTEF), program budgets instead of resource budgets, the principle of results-based management, deconcentration and budget decentralization.[10] On the other hand, the proposed activities and targets of the 2022–2025 PRI are not always fully aligned with the annual operational

[8] The importance of pre-school education cannot be underestimated: according to the UN Gender Profile for Guinea, 50 percent of 36–59 months old are not 'on track' in terms of their physical and/or socio-emotional development. Pre-school education is the only opportunity to address this.

[9] This percentage is mentioned in the 2019 RESEN page 115, referring to the 2016 MICS. The actual number of 1.6 million in 2016 mentioned in the 2020–2029 ProDEG page 12, will be higher in 2023 because of the high fertility rate. Meanwhile, the 2023–2025 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), Annex 3, page 32, has a budget line to ensure non-formal education for 1,130 (!) young people aged 9 to 15. This illustrates how big the gap is to be bridged.

[10] The Organic Decree (*Décret organique*) of MEPU-A was issued in January 2022, only five months after the installation of the National Committee for Development Mobilization (*Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement*), which confirms the political priority of basic education of the current Transitional Government.

plans and budget of the 2020–2029 ProDEG.[11] Also, the ITAP wonders in this context which of these two policy documents is leading and whether or not adjustments might be needed to ensure coherence between these two important documents for operational planning.

Budget Programming and Monitoring

Several tools are used for budget programming and monitoring by each of the three ministries: (i) three-year MTEF with estimated expenditures for the implementation of priority activities by program, prepared by a dedicated MTEF Coordination Unit (*Cellule CDMT*); (ii) a simulation model that provides financial projections on the sustainability of the education and training sector policy for the period 2020–2029; and (iii) Annual Costed Action Plans (PAAB) with detailed information per program, sub-program, results, activities, specifying roles and responsibilities (central/decentralized levels) as well as financing source.

The three ministries use the same format for their respective MTEFs which as such are useful frameworks for annual operational planning and monitoring. However, Annex 3 of the 2023–2025 MTEF of the MEPU-A lists 294 activities and budgets without referring to the respective sub-programs, their results and targets, casting some doubt on its usefulness. The country confirmed that the database used for budget projections includes several lines that cannot be presented in the MTEF. Each activity is linked to a programme, sub-programme, objective and result. This justifies the programming of resources according to the MTEF approach, centered on programs and supported by tasks or activities. Despite this, according to the country's self-analysis, "it is difficult to establish coherence between defined policies and programs and operational planning", adding that more information about the 2020–2029 ProDEG and skills training are required to effectively involve key stakeholders at the regional/local level in these planning processes.

Sector Monitoring Mechanisms and Practices

Since the start of the 2020–2029 ProDEG, the three ministries of education and their partners have been conducting joint sector reviews, including field visits, to monitor and regularly report on progress and performance. The ITAP welcomes that these reports are joint sector reports. So far, two reports have been prepared (2020 and 2021), but seemingly only in draft rather than final form.[12]

Dedicated MTEF Coordination Units within each of the three education ministries are in charge of budget monitoring with Regional Inspectorates having responsibility for monitoring at the regional and prefectural level. The consolidated findings are used to

[11] A concrete example is the literacy target: 860,000 youth/adults (2022–2025 PRI/total) while the annual target of the 2020–2029 ProDEG is around 5,000. The country has since confirmed the objectives of the 2020–2029 ProDEG results framework are more realistic.

[12] The ITAP received the 2020 and the 2021 RAPs without an executive summary, texts still to be drafted and with comments in the margin or in the text; it was confirmed by GPE that the final drafts of these reports are not yet available.

produce the education sector RAPs. These systematically present results against targets, constraints encountered and provide recommendations to address them. However, follow-up of these recommendations remains weak. RAPs also report on budget allocation and expenditure. As for targets and results, cumulative results since the start of the 2020–2029 ProDEG are not included which would add value to these reports for trend analysis. The ITAP also notes that reporting on out-of-school children and youth is rather limited and incomplete because of lack of data.[13] Likewise, even though sex-disaggregated data are presented, gender and gender-based violence are underreported. The ITAP concurs with the observation in the country's self-analysis that the Technical Secretariat for the Coordination and Steering of ProDEG (*Secrétariat technique pour la coordination et le pilotage du ProDEG*) (ST/CP-ProDEG) could play a more pivotal role in monitoring and evaluation of the key reform areas.

Gender Mainstreaming Across the Policy Continuum

Each of the three education ministries has a Gender and Equity Unit in charge of promoting gender equity. To date, no gender sector policy and strategy has been drafted even though gender and inclusion are specifically addressed in the 2020–2029 ProDEG. Nonetheless, in 2014, MEPU-A developed a policy and strategy for accelerating girls' education. Then in 2022, MEPU-A conducted an exploratory study on gender equity in 50 sub-provinces (*sous-préfectures*) with the lowest education coverage, to take stock of the various obstacles to girls' schooling. This demonstrates a clear commitment to gender equity. The question is whether the findings of these and similar studies and initiatives are translated into budget allocation and specific interventions to address the constraints. The ITAP has not found strong indications that this is indeed the case. On the contrary, the country's self-analysis and the RAPs point out that budget allocation for gender equity and inclusion is insufficient.

Conclusion: The overall policy and planning orientations and objectives as outlined in the 2020–2029 ProDEG constitute a coherent and ambitious framework for operational planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring. The 2022–2025 PRI of the Transitional Government confirms its commitment to the education sector. The ITAP assumes that the 2020–2029 ProDEG is the leading policy document, supported by the provisions for the education sector as defined in the 2022–2025 PRI. Operational planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG are affected mainly by national and local institutional capacity limitations, insufficient information and ownership of the reform agenda at the regional/local levels and slow working of funding mechanisms. As for monitoring, the ITAP endorses the suggestion outlined in the country's self-analysis to strengthen the role of the ST/CP-ProDEG by adding monitoring and evaluation of the priority reforms of the education sector. Finally, clearly defined and validated critical sector policies

[13] For example, there are no data about the percentage of students that moved from non-formal to formal education, one of the key objectives of these 'second chance' facilities.

and strategies (and their respective budgets) are still lacking to achieve quality education for all, such as gender/gender-based violence, out-of-school children and youth, pre-school education, and natural disasters and crises. As a result, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis and is rating this enabling factor as **MEDIUM.**

3. Sector Coordination: Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action and Coordinated Financing and Funding

3.1 Inclusive Dialogue and Coordinated Action

Coordination Functions and Practices

In Guinea, having three government ministries with some responsibility for education and training creates some coordination challenges. As a result, the government has set up an Interministerial Steering and Coordination Committee (*Comité interministériel de pilotage et de coordination*) (CIPC) to promote coordination which is chaired on a one-year rotation by each of the education ministers.

Guinea's education sector has an overarching partnership framework which outlines modalities in relation to (i) information sharing, (ii) mechanisms for sector dialogue, (iii) monitoring and evaluation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG and (iv) financing. The partnership framework itself was not shared with the ITAP for review, but it is referenced in other documents which state that it includes several mechanisms for sector dialogue and coordination. In addition to the CIPC mentioned above, these include a Technical Secretariat for the Coordination and Steering of ProDEG (*Secrétariat technique pour la coordination et le pilotage du ProDEG*) (ST/CP-ProDEG) which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG and is managed by a Principal Secretary (*Secrétaire principal*) who sits outside of the three education ministries. It also includes a Local Education Group (*Groupe sectoriel de l'éducation*) (GSE) which meets every two months, is chaired on a one-year rotation by the Permanent Secretary of each of the three education ministries and enables exchanges between the government and the education sector development partners. There are also central and decentralized steering committees for education and training which include the Education Sector Steering Committee (*Comité sectoriel de pilotage de l'éducation*) (CSPE), the Provincial Education Steering Committee (*Comité préfectoral de pilotage de l'éducation*) (CPPE) and the Regional Education Steering Committee (*Comité régional de pilotage de l'éducation*) (CRPE). Further, a Joint Sector Review (*Revue sectorielle*) which takes place each year and includes teacher unions and journalists. All of these coordination bodies were created under the 2014–2019 Education Sector Programme (*Programme sectorielle de l'éducation*) (PSE2) and continue to exist (even if under a slightly different name) under the 2020–2029 ProDEG. As a result, sector dialogue has become more organized, frequent and inclusive over the years. However, two on-going challenges are that (i) the final version of the education sector's Annual Performance Report (RAP) integrating observations made during the Joint Sector Review, is not always sufficiently disseminated to key stakeholders; and (ii) follow-up actions from GSE meetings are often only partially implemented. For example, at the February 2022 meeting, only four out of seven of the recommendations

from the previous meeting had been fully implemented. This was a weakness raised previously for the 2014–2019 period in the 2020 GPE Summative Evaluation on Guinea.

Capacities for Coordination

Interministerial coordination takes place through the CIPC and the MTEF Coordination Unit while interagency coordination among development partners takes place through the GSE and the annual sector review process. The documentation that the ITAP reviewed points to weak functioning of coordination mechanisms and bodies, especially in relation to planning and budgeting at central and even more so, at decentralized levels. While structures are in place, the 2020–2029 ProDEG remarks that they have limited human and financial resources with which to function.

The GSE has clearly defined terms of reference and brings together representatives from different government ministries (education and beyond), development partners, civil society, and trade unions, suggesting it is a diverse group. However, representatives from teacher unions and the non-OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) development partners attend infrequently. There is also no representation from decentralized levels. This suggests that more could be done to promote active participation and greater levels of inclusion. The GSE thematic groups have not yet been established.

The ITAP could not find any evidence to suggest that the GSE has undertaken a self-assessment of the effectiveness of its work but it now meets every two months rather than monthly to allow sufficient time to complete actions between meetings. The annual sector review, like the GSE, involves a broad range of actors including from the three education ministries, civil society, development partners, non-governmental organizations, teacher unions and journalists.

Conclusion on 3.1: A process exists for inclusive sector dialogue, building on what was in place under the 2014–2019 PSE2. However, some stakeholders such as trade unions and the non-OECD DAC development partners are less actively involved. There are established coordination committees in place with some of them holding regular meetings that enable interagency and intergovernmental coordination. Those operating at central level have greater capacity than those operating at decentralized levels but there remains a need to strengthen human and financial resources to maximize their operations. Interministerial coordination between the three education ministries is slowly improving but remains weak. Taking all of these things into consideration, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis on this enabling factor and is rating it as a **MEDIUM priority.**

3.2 Coordinated Financing and Funding

Availability of Aid Alignment and Joint Financing Mechanisms

An Education Pooled Fund/Special Budget Allocation (*Fonds commun de l'éducation/Budget d'affectation spéciale*) (FCE/BAS) was established to support the implementation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG. Currently three development partners provide funding via FCE/BAS – the French Development Agency (Agence française de développement) (AfD), GPE and UNICEF. The FCE/BAS builds on an earlier Pooled Fund for Basic Education (*Fond commun de l'éducation de base*) (FoCEB) which was set up to support the implementation of the 2014–2019 PSE2 and also included a US$37.8 million GPE grant with the World Bank as grant agent, and some World Bank funding. This helped to promote coordination and harmonization and there was good execution of funds by the end. FCE/BAS funding is on plan, on budget and on treasury, fully aligned to supporting the implementation of the 2020–2029 ProDEG. The three development partners channeling funds through the FCE/BAS have committed to providing three-year financial contributions coherent with the MTEF and confirming annual contributions in June each year in line with the government's budget planning cycle. In the 2022 Finance Law (*Loi de finances*), FCE/BAS funds constituted 6.3 percent of overall budgeted resources for the education sector.

In addition to the FCE/BAS, a number of other development partners provide standalone projectized funding which is fragmented, partially on plan and included in the 2023–2025 MTEF, but increases transaction costs for the government.[14] Historically development partners have not always shared financial information in a timely manner to feed into annual planning and budgeting decisions. This implies to the ITAP that more could be done to coordinate and align these projects.

Accountability and Dialogue Around Aid Effectiveness

The 2020 GPE Summative Evaluation on Guinea reported on the reluctance of some development partners to include their funding in 2020–2029 ProDEG Multi-Annual Costed Action Plans (PAPBs) until late in the planning process. This results in weak integration of these projects in sector planning, more limited alignment of external finances and reduces accountability for aid effectiveness.

Regarding disbursement of funds, the 2021 RAP reported only a very low 6 percent execution rate for the FCE/BAS and for external project funds it was a higher 41.4 percent but with execution rates varying significantly across projects. This implies there is significant work to be done to improve mutual accountability given the much higher government

[14] These include GIZ, Irish Aid, the Islamic Development Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Kuwait Fund, the Saudi Development Fund, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and several non-governmental organizations, all of whom are mentioned in the 2023–2025 MTEF for MEPU-A.

education budget execution rate of 88 percent (excluding FCE/BAS), though this is largely spent on salaries. The minutes of the GSE meeting in September 2021 stated that challenges with disbursement from FCE/BAS were due to delays in activating certain treasury accounts, modifications to PAABs, compliance and burdensome government administrative procedures.

A criticism of the development partners found in the 2020–2029 ProDEG is that they focus largely on basic education, creating barriers between sub-sectors. They also provide insufficient funding to decentralized levels (regions and provinces) and where they do provide targeted support to certain provinces, this can generate problems of equity in financing.

Commitment Towards Greater Aid Effectiveness Practices

The existence of a pooled fund – FoCEB and now FCE/BAS – suggests to the ITAP that there is a commitment towards greater aid effectiveness practices. However, the FCE/BAS is a fund that was created recently in the context of COVID-19 and a coup that resulted in changes in senior staff within the ministries. Currently only three development partners are channeling funds through it, and the World Bank has moved to a project after having provided pooled funding through FoCEB. This implies that more work needs to be done to encourage a greater number of development partners to pool their funds, increase alignment and reduced fragmentation.

Conclusion on 3.2: Guinea has a history of development partners providing pooled funding alongside projectized funding. Encouraging more development partners to pool their funding would provide the potential for greater alignment, accountability and aid effectiveness, but the ITAP remarks that this would need to be accompanied by improved execution of pooled funding which is lagging far behind projectized funding. As a result, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis and is rating this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority**.

4. Volume, Equity, and Efficiency of Domestic Public Expenditure on Education

Volume

Over the past decade, Guinea has managed to maintain macroeconomic stability in the face of some major economic shocks. Indeed, despite the Ebola epidemic and falling commodity prices in 2015–2016, economic growth averaged 5 percent between 2010 and 2020, supported by stable macroeconomic policies, a resilient agricultural sector, and a booming mining sector. Inflation has declined over the past decade from a peak of 23 percent in 2011 to about 9.5 percent in the pre-pandemic years. The current account deficit has narrowed from 19.5 percent of GDP in 2018 to 13.7 percent in 2020. Growth is estimated at 4.1 percent in 2021 and 4.7 percent in 2022, reflecting a resilient performance of the mining sector. However, the non-mining sector has been affected by uncertainty, a sharp increase in domestic arrears, and a reduction in foreign aid following the 2021 coup. The ITAP notes that, despite the favorable macroeconomic outlook (average growth of 5.6 percent 2023–2027, according to the International Monetary Fund), signs of fragility remain due to dependence on the mining sector and the impact of the regional and international environment.

The ITAP notes that in 2022, the Guinean government allocated 14.2 percent of total public expenditure to the education sector, corresponding to 1.9 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Compared to other countries in the region, the public financing effort for education in Guinea is half the average for ECOWAS countries in GDP terms (4.0 percent) and remains below the regional average in terms of share of public expenditure (15.9 percent).

Table 1: Share of education expenditure in GDP and in total government expenditure (%)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	Act.	Act.	Act.	Est.	Est.	Target	Target
Education as a percentage of GDP	1.8%	1.6%	1.8%	1.9%	1.8%	2.9%	2.9%
Education as a percentage of government expenditure (excluding debt service)	16.2%	13.7%	17.7%	14.2%	11.9%	19.0%	18.2%
Recurrent education expenditure as a percentage of public recurrent expenditure (excluding debt service)	17.4%	14.1%	18.5%	23.3%	19.9%	28.7%	31.0%

Source: Computed from "Domestic financing matrix" completed by the country

The data in the 2023 Finance Law indicate that the resources allocated to the education sector represent 11.9 percent of the budget excluding debt service, corresponding to 1.8 percent of GDP. In terms of recurrent expenditure, the share of education in government

expenditure (excluding debt) represents 23.3 percent in 2022 and 19.9 percent in 2023. The evolution of public financing of education during the last five years shows that public education expenditure has averaged 1.8 percent of GDP with a certain downward trend in public resources allocated to education from an average of 15.9 percent between 2019 and 2021 to an average of 13.0 percent in 2022 and 2023. A better translation of the priority given to education at the level of budgetary arbitration remains necessary to reach a level compatible with the multiple challenges the education sector faces in terms of access, quality and equity.

In relation to the country's commitments expressed in the 2019 EPSL, the "Government is committed to progressively increasing the share of the education sector to 20% of *current* State expenditure excluding debt services by 2029". The ITAP believes that this level of commitment does not allow the 20 percent threshold objective to be reached in relation to *total* expenditure (excluding debt). Furthermore, it states "In order to achieve universal primary completion by 2029, the government will guarantee an allocation of at least 46% of current expenditure to primary education".

The internal distribution of the education budget shows an imbalance in favor of higher education, which in 2016 accounted for more than 42 percent of the education budget (compared to an average of less than 20 percent for Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (*Communauté économique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*) (CEDEAO) countries. By contrast, the share of primary education was 33 percent (48 percent for ECOWAS countries) in a context of low primary school completion. The ITAP commends the country for the rebalancing that seems to be taking place. Indeed, the data in the 2023 Budget Law limits the share of higher education to 30 percent, compared with 57.3 percent for primary and secondary education and literacy.

A substantial financial burden is placed on households, many of whom are paying for their children to attend private schooling. In 2021, the private sector accounted for more than 99 percent of preschool enrollment, 36 percent of primary enrollment, 43 percent of lower secondary enrollment, and 58 percent of upper secondary enrollment. This suggests to the ITAP that pre-primary education in inaccessible and secondary education less accessible to the poorest households.

Equity

The ITAP notes that education spending in Guinea is inequitable, particularly with regard to gender, regional distribution of resources, and socio-economic status. The relative proportion of girls to boys declines as girls progress through the system – from 49.1 percent in preschool to about 30 percent in higher education. The data show stagnation in girls' participation in primary school over the past 15 years, but there has been slow but steady progress in lower secondary (36 percent in 2006 and 40 percent in 2016) and rather significant progress in upper secondary (29 percent in 2006 and 36 percent in 2016).

According to data from the 2016 MICS cited in the 2020–2029 ProDEG, approximately 1.6 million Guinean children and youth between the ages of 5 and 16 (44 percent of this age group) were outside the education system. In 2020, according to UNESCO data, it was estimated that nearly 1 million children between the ages of 6 and 14 were out of school, or 28.1 percent of children of primary or lower secondary school age. This proportion rose to 34.9 percent for girls, who represented more than 61 percent of out-of-school children.

The very high level of incomplete cycle schools is a factor in early school leaving, particularly in rural areas. In 2021, more than 55 percent of schools were incomplete cycles. This proportion reached 70 percent in rural areas where 43 percent of students were in schools that did not offer the full six years of study against 7 percent in urban areas.

There are also large geographical (urban/rural and regional) disparities in access and retention. The gross primary completion rate was estimated at 68.2 percent in 2021 but was a much lower 37.8 percent for girls in rural areas, compared with 109.8 percent for boys in urban areas. Rural areas also remain disadvantaged in the deployment of teachers. The proportion of unqualified teachers averaged 8 percent in urban schools compared with 15 percent in rural schools and varied from 4 percent to 25 percent depending on the region. In addition, a quarter of public school teachers in rural areas were paid by parents, compared to only 7 percent in urban schools.

The ITAP was unable to confirm the presence of specific financing formulas for resource allocation that explicitly incorporate equity considerations. Potentially, two aspects could benefit from targeted budget allocations in the short term: (i) the education of girls and their retention in school; and (ii) the 50 subprovinces with the lowest levels of education in order to reduce regional disparities through positive discrimination.[15]

This highlights to the ITAP a need to integrate a greater focus on equity in education sector budget planning and expenditure by aiming for a more efficient and equitable distribution of domestic finances (human and material) between regions and rural/urban areas.

Efficiency

The ITAP notes that internal efficiency indicators are not improving. In 2021, the repetition rate at the primary level was 10 percent (9 percent in 2006), at the lower secondary level it was 13.4 percent (13 percent in 2006), and at the upper secondary level it was 9.6 percent (16 percent in 2006). In particular, the performance of the public sector remains fairly weak: the repetition rates for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary were 13.1 percent, 18.9 percent and 16.6 percent respectively, compared with much lower rates for the private sector. Similarly, the primary school completion rate did not improve between 2016 and 2021 and remains at 67 percent.

[15] This would entail implementing the financing the recommendations of the study carried out by MEPU-A in 2022 on gender equity in the 50 least educated subprovinces.

The internal efficiency coefficients are estimated at 68 percent and 65 percent respectively for primary and lower secondary schools. This means that nearly 32 percent and 35 percent of the resources invested in primary and secondary education are wasted, mainly because of the high dropout rate in primary education and both repetition and dropout in secondary education.

The ITAP notes that improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending on education also requires better traceability of public spending on education and greater transparency with the introduction of an accountability mechanism with stakeholders.

Conclusion: The ITAP notes the multiple challenges the country faces both in terms of volume and in terms of efficiency and equity of public spending. The volume of domestic resources allocated to the education sector is not aligned with the GPE benchmark either in terms of share of public expenditure (14.2 percent against a threshold of 20 percent) or in terms of weight in relation to GDP (1.9 percent against a threshold of 4 percent). Similarly, the allocation and distribution of these resources do not allow for the challenges of equity, inclusion, efficiency and improving the quality of learning to be addressed. Overcoming these challenges and ensuring universal access to basic education and the other ambitions in the 2020–2029 ProDEG, will require a clearer commitment by the government to allocate a higher volume of resources. Improving the efficiency and equity of public spending also requires more transparent management of public spending; better targeting of resources to the most disadvantaged regions, rural areas, girls and the poorest households; policies and action plans focused on inclusive education; and an improvement in the internal efficiency of public schools. Overall, the ITAP concurs with the country's self-analysis of this enabling factor and is rating this enabling factor as a **HIGH priority**.

Part C: High-Level Summary of Enabling Factors Assessed as High Priority

Enabling Factor	Challenges and Rationale for High Priority Rating
Volume, Equity and Efficiency of Domestic Public Expenditure on Education	**Challenge:** Domestic financing and its distribution do not promote equitable access to basic education in Guinea. Girls, rural children and those from the poorest families are the most affected by the inequity and inefficiency of public spending. **Rationale for high priority:** The volume of public expenditure allocated to education (14.2 percent of public expenditure and 1.9 percent of GDP) is not aligned with the GPE benchmarks. The government's commitment, expressed in 2019, to increase the volume of public expenditure to 20 percent of public recurrent expenditure (not of all public expenditure) remains not yet translated into budgetary allocations and covers a quite distant horizon (2029) while the system suffers from several shortcomings in terms of gender, geography and social equity, and in terms of inefficiency due to the high dropout, repetition rates and out-of-school numbers. A clearer commitment to allocate a higher volume of public resources to education and a more efficient and equitable allocation of these resources would make it possible to better address the challenges of equity, inclusion, efficiency and low learning outcomes.