GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP for EDUCATION

BOD/2013/07 DOC 01
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Via Audio-conference
15 July 2013

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM FUNDING: SECOND ROUND OF PROPOSALS

For Decision

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to seek approval from the Board of Directors of the Secretariat's revised recommendations for funding of the second round of proposals under the Global and Regional Activities Program.

2. RECOMMENDED DECISION

The Secretariat requests that the Board of Directors approves the following decision:

BOD/2013/07-XX—Approval of Funding of GRA Proposals: The Board of Directors:

a. refers to its decision taken on 22 May 2013 requesting the Secretariat to further analyze the GRA's second batch of concept notes and to provide recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration by 15 July 2013;

b. approves an allocation of up to US$ **19,546,001** from the Global Partnership for Education Fund to fund the Global and Regional Activities ("GRA") proposals outlined below; and

No.	Idea/ Knowledge Product	Agency	Agency's Function	Approved Grant US$
1	Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning Program PEARL Quality/Learning Outcomes	World Bank	Managing Entity	8,505,075
2	Delivering on Teachers	UNESCO	Managing Entity	1,984,850
3	Out-of-School Children - Addressing the	World	Managing	1,583,027

	Out-of-School Children Data and Policy Gaps	Bank	Entity	
4	Disability/Health and Education in support of Learning for All	World Bank	Managing Entity	3,000,000
5	Learning Outcomes - Asia Region Learner assessment for instructional progress	UNESCO	Managing Entity	944,061
6	Information Feedback Processes and Tools for Increasing Accountability: Report Cards	UNICEF	Managing Entity	878,069
7	Central Asia Learning Outcomes – Students' reasoning skills	CICED	Managing Entity	1,850,919
8	Addressing School Related Gender Based Violence	UNICEF	Managing Entity	800,000
Total				**19,546,001**

c. notes that this is the last set of funding allocations under the GRA program and that the Secretariat will prepare options for dealing with innovation, knowledge gaps, regional issues and similar matters, for consideration by the Board of Directors at its next face-to-face meeting in November 2013.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Following extensive comments by the Board of Directors at its face-to-face meeting in Brussels on 21-22 May 2013 of previous recommendations (contained in BOD/2013/05 Doc 10), the Secretariat has developed a new set of recommendations for funding under the second round of the GRA program.

3.2 The Board of Directors asked that particular weighting be given to proposals that had strong alignment with the GPE Strategic Plan's Implementation Plan, addressed gaps in regional focus, and responded to strategic goals and diversity of partners when considering both first and second round funding proposals, and also supported activities that were not core business for the partner organization.

3.3 The revised recommendations now include 8 proposals at a cost of US$ 19,546,001. The scoring and detailed explanation behind the scoring for all 18 submitted proposals is contained in Annex 1.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 In May 2013, the Secretariat submitted document BOD/2013/05/Doc 10 to the Board of Directors (attached as Annex 2) for consideration at its face-to-face meeting in Brussels on 21-22 May 2013. During the meeting in Brussels, it became apparent that both the Secretariat and Board do not feel that the GRA program is fit for purpose for the Global Partnership. Accordingly the second round of applications for funding will be the last. The Board of Directors made the following decision:

> **BOD/2013/05-15 — Global and Regional Activities**: The Board of Directors requests the Secretariat to:
>
> a. further analyze the GRA's second batch of concept notes and provide recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration by 15 July 2013; and
>
> b. prepare options for dealing with innovation, knowledge gaps, regional issues and similar matters, for consideration by the Board of Directors at its next face-to-face meeting in November 2013.

4.2 The challenge facing the Secretariat and the Board is whether decisions can be made that: i) have sufficient integrity and objectivity; ii) reflect the additional priorities requested by the Board in Brussels; and iii) offer sufficient value for money when judged against other demands for GPE Fund resources.

4.3 On 10 June 2013, the GPE CEO wrote to the Board outlining the approach that the Secretariat was planning to take in finalizing its revised recommendations to the Board, as follows:

- giving more detailed information on the 9 concept notes with the best scores as there is a an obvious natural break between concept notes 9 (total score 29.7) and 10 (total score 28.4), but still recommending around 5 concept notes for approval out of these 9;
- focusing on how the concept notes respond to GPE strategic goals and objectives and explaining how objectives of particular interest that are not yet addressed in the first round (such as teachers) are prioritized;
- responding to regional issues and diversity of partners;

- asking the World Bank to submit a revised version of their concept note on out-of-school children to reflect the work being undertaken by UNICEF under the first batch of funded GRA program proposals.

4.4 The Donor 3 constituency provided feedback on this approach, requesting specifically that consideration be given to all 18 proposals, not just the previously top-ranked 9 and also that revised scoring be conducted. No other feedback was received from members of the Board. The Secretariat has expanded its consideration to all 18 proposals in this submission to the Board.

4.5 The additional information requested by the Board and explanation of the prior scoring is contained in Annex 1 of this paper.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The first part of the re-assessment of the 18 proposals by the Secretariat required an evaluation of whether the previous scoring and ranking submitted to the Board was sufficiently objective according to the GRA Operational Manual (previously approved by the Board). Although it is unfortunate that the GRA Operational Manual does not reflect the current priorities of the partnership, GPE Secretariat senior management found that the scoring process was sound, with external expert assessment being the primary driver of the scores and rankings. Individual organizations may question some of the specific judgments made, but there was no difference in approach for the May proposals to those considered and approved by the Board in January 2013 in the first round of GRA submissions. It is also important to note that under the original scoring, alignment with the GPE Strategic Plan was the most important factor in assessing proposals.

5.2 The only change that has been made to the original scoring under the GRA Operational Manual guidelines is for the World Bank "Out of School" proposal. The World Bank was asked to resubmit its proposal, after consultation with UNICEF, to ensure there was no overlap with the previously approved proposal under the GRA first round. The World Bank submitted a revised proposal to the Secretariat that received slightly higher scores when re-assessed under the GRA Operational Manual guidelines under the categories of "Ownership" and "Capacity Building".

5.3 The Board asked for more information on the proposals funded to date under the GRA. Table 1 below, sets out the grants made under the first round of the GRA funding.

Eight grants were approved, three for UNESCO UIS, two for AFD and one each for UNESCO IIEP, UNESCO IBE and UNICEF. There was strong regional focus on Africa, particularly on francophone Africa. There was strong technical focus on learning (Strategic Objective number 3 under the GPE Strategic Plan), with additional focus on Strategic Objective 5 (financing) and also on out-of-school children (Strategic Goals numbers 1 and 3). There was little focus on girls, fragile states and teachers.

TABLE 1: GRA First Round Approved Grants

Activity Name	Supervising/Managing Entity Agency Name	Total Grant Approved in US $
Development of methodologies to link reading assessments across regions and to draw lessons regarding best early assessment practices	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)	610,000
Learning outcomes in early grades: integration of curriculum, teaching, learning materials, and assessment	UNESCO International Bureau of Education(IBE)	2,999,082
Effectiveness of teaching and learning in bilingual context (School and National Languages Initiative ELAN/ Organisation de la Francophonie OIF)	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	1,408,200
Teaching and learning effectiveness for learning outcomes	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	997,000
Education financing - Development of methodologies to improve national reporting on financing flows	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)	2,119,074
Out of School Children: Closing the data gap	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)	1,100,000
Significant reduction in Out of School Children, 2nd Phase Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI)	UNICEF	3,284,900
Education financing - school grants	International Institute for Educational Planning(IIEP)	996,829

5.4 The next step was to review all of the proposals against the priorities set out by the Board at its meeting in Brussels. The Board asked that the re-assessment take into account the gaps left after the first round of GRA proposal submissions. The three main aspects for consideration were the following:

i) ensuring adequate distribution of focus between all five of the Strategic Objectives under the GPE Strategic Plan (i.e., proposals addressing fragile states, girls and teachers would score higher);

ii) ensuring a diversity of geographic focus (i.e., non-African regions would score higher); and

iii) ensuring a diversity of partners.

5.5 The Secretariat did not feel it could make a sufficiently objective assessment of whether activities were likely to be funded without GPE Fund support or whether activities fell within the normal core operations of a partner, and therefore would be expected to be funded by the partner itself. These factors have therefore not influenced the recommendations contained in this paper.

5.6 In order to provide an element of objectivity to the process, the Secretariat proceeded to score all 18 proposals according to the three criteria outlined in paragraph 5.4 above. To provide some consistency of approach, the proposals were scored out of a possible maximum of 2. These scores were then given a weighting of a factor of 5 (given the importance placed on this by the Board of Directors) and then the additional scores were added to the original scores, leading to new final scores and rankings.

5.7 Table 2 below, sets out the old and new scores and rankings. The final narrative column of Annex 1 provides more detailed explanations of how these new scores were derived.

TABLE 2: GRA Second Round Revised Scores and Rankings

New Ranking	Total Score new	Agency/ short Name of note	Amount requested $	Previous score	Previous ranking
1	40	WB/ PEARL	8,505,075	31.5	3
2	38.5	UNESCO/ EI Teachers	1,984,850	31.2	4
3	37.7	WB-UNICEF /OOSC	1,583,027	31.7	1
4	37.5	WB/ Disability and Health	3,520,600	31.2	5
5	34.8	UNESCO/ Bangkok	944,061	31.5	2
6	34.8	UNICEF/ Report cards	878,069	31.0	6
7	34.7	CICED/ Learning outcomes	1,850,919	29.9	8

8	34.6	UNICEF/GbV	800,000	27.3	12
9	34.2	AFD/	2,569,518	29.7	9
10	33.3	WB/ Eastern Caribbean	3,366,000	31.0	7
11	32.6	WB/ East Asia	688,600	27.6	11
12	32.5	DFID-CEI	2,400,000	26.2	14
13	32.4	IIEP-FAWE/ LO	1,554,739	28.4	10
14	32.0	UNICEF/ Hum	1,072,663	26.0	15
15	29.2	IIEP/ Finance	1,764,524	26.9	13
16	26.1	UNESCO ECCE	2,872,950	22.6	16
17	24.9	UNICEF S read	1,000,000	21.1	17
18	23.8	UIL/	2,500,000	20.0	18

5.8 Using this revised approach, the World Bank PEARL activity in the Pacific is the highest ranked. The total budget is US$8,505,075, considerably more than the US$3 million maximum recommended in the GRA Operational Manual. The Board will need to decide whether it wishes to cap funding to this activity at US$3 million or agree to finance the full sum. The Secretariat considers this proposal to be a very good and important approach to working in small island states where the traditional GPE model is not applicable or practical. Working in the Pacific is very expensive given the relative isolation of the Pacific island states. Taking this into account, the Secretariat believes that the proposal offers good value for money compared to working individually with these countries and also can test an innovative way of working beyond the traditional country implementation grant. The fourth ranked proposal also has a proposed budget of a little over US$3.5 million (World Bank Disability/Health). The Secretariat does not have a strong argument or justification for exceeding the maximum recommended in the GRA Operational Manual and suggests the funding be capped at US$3 million for this proposal.

5.9 The approach taken by the Secretariat broadens the partners beyond the first round to include the World Bank, CICED, Education International working with UNESCO, and UNICEF. There is a greater focus on fragile states, girls and teachers, though the predominant emphasis is still on learning outcomes, Strategic Objective number three in the GPE Strategic Plan. The geographic mix is more diverse after the second round, with a greater focus on Asia, the Pacific and Central Asia.

5.10 The Secretariat's recommendation combines the original technical assessment according to the GRA Operational Manual and also the priorities set by the Board in May 2013. Given that this will be the last round of GRA proposals until a new funding mechanism is approved by the Board and established, the Secretariat recommends funding the top 8 proposals listed in Table 3 below, for a total cost of US$19,546,001.

TABLE 3: GRA Second Round Recommended Grants

No.	Idea/ Knowledge Product	Agency	Agency's Function	Approved Grant US$
1	Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning Program PEARL Quality/Learning Outcomes	World Bank	Managing Entity	8,505,075
2	Delivering on Teachers	UNESCO	Managing Entity	1,984,850
3	Out-of-School Children - Addressing the Out-of-School Children Data and Policy Gaps	World Bank	Managing Entity	1,583,027
4	Disability/Health and Education in support of Learning for All	World Bank	Managing Entity	3,000,000
5	Learning Outcomes - Asia Region Learner assessment for instructional progress	UNESCO	Managing Entity	944,061
6	Information Feedback Processes and Tools for Increasing Accountability: Report Cards	UNICEF	Managing Entity	878,069
7	Central Asia Learning Outcomes – Students' reasoning skills	CICED	Managing Entity	1,850,919
8	Addressing School Related Gender Based Violence	UNICEF	Managing Entity	800,000
Total				**19,546,001**

5.11 If the Secretariat had simply accepted that all 18 proposals were technically good and only done an assessment according to the priorities recently set by the Board, the top eight proposals would have been ranked as follows:

1. World Bank, PEARL
2. UNESCO/EI, Teachers

3. UNICEF, Gender-based violence
4. DFID / CEI
5. World Bank, Disability and health
6. UNICEF, Humanitarian
7. World Bank, Out of School
8. World Bank, East Asia

The Secretariat has not recommended this approach to the Board of Directors since it takes no account of the basis upon which the proposals were called for in the first instance.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

6.1 There are no adverse implications for Secretariat resources. Indeed, should the recommendation not be approved and no proposals funded under the second round of the GRA, about 20% of a full time staff member would be freed up for other activities.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 Should the Board of Directors approve the recommendations contained in this paper, the Secretariat will work with applicants to finalize the proposals and ensure their funding.

7.2 As requested by the Board, the Secretariat will prepare a monitoring report and a final review of the GRA program. It will also prepare options for dealing with innovation, knowledge gaps, regional issues and similar matters, for consideration by the Board of Directors at its next face-to-face meeting in November 2013.