Quality Assurance Review – Phase 3

Total Program Cost: US$15 million, of which
GPE: US$4.3 million; and IDA: US$10.7 million
Proposed Grant Amount
Fixed Part: US$4.7 million, including US$0.4 million for grant agent's
Implementation Support Costs; Variable Part: Not applicable
Implementation period: 5 years
Projected implementation start date: June 1, 2018
Grant Agent: World Bank

1. BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Home to approximately 1.8 million inhabitants Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world. The nation has massive foreign debt and an economy that relies heavily on foreign aid. The Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations ranks the country at 178 out of 188 countries. 60 percent of Guinea-Bissau's population lives in rural areas and over two-thirds of the population survives on less than US$1.9 a day. Only 46 percent of the adult population can read and write[1]. The economic performance is weak and the economic growth irregular because of its dependency on the only production of cashew nuts.

Guinea-Bissau has suffered from decades of political instability and remains a fragile state. Since its independence in 1974, there have been four *coup d'états* along with many additional attempts to stage coups. The 2015 RESEN (Rapport sur l'Etat du Système Educatif National) shows that since 1974, the government has changed 16 times. The last military coup happened in 2012 and a democratic election took place in 2014. But political tensions emerged again in 2015 and disrupt the public administration functioning; the parliament did not approve the 2016 and 2017 budget laws. Although there will be a Presidential election next year, political tension may continue.

Some of the fragmentation of Guinea-Bissau's society has its roots in the wide variety of ethnic groups, languages, and religions present in the country, but violence between groups has been minimal. While Portuguese is the country's official language, only 14 percent of the population speaks Portuguese. About 44 percent of the population speak Crioulo and the rest 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.

1 UIS data, 2014

Guinea Bissau	
Population:	1,815,698 (2016, World Bank)
Human Development Index Ranking	178th out of 188 countries (UNDP 2016)
GDP	US$1.126 billion (2016, World Bank)
GDP per capita	US$620.21 (2016, INE)
World Bank Income Classification Level	Low Income (2016, World Bank)

1.2. EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.2.1. Learning outcomes

The low quality of primary education represents the most significant challenge facing the education sector in Guinea-Bissau. Results from a learning assessment (PASEC type) conducted in 2014 for students in grades 2 and 5 in Portuguese and mathematics show very low levels of learning achievement. The average scores in Portuguese were 48 percent for grade 2 students and 40 percent for grade 5 students. Also, the average scores in mathematics were 50 percent for grade 2 students and 31 percent for grade 5 students. Moreover, the assessment also shows that nearly 94 percent of teachers in grade 5 were unable to answer all questions in Portuguese and 98 percent in mathematics of the learning assessment administered to students.

1.2.2. Equity[2]

Completion rates in Guinea-Bissau are quite low: 59 percent for primary school and 44 percent for lower secondary school. Children are unable to complete a full cycle of primary education for several reasons including late entry into school, poor education quality, a shortage of schools that offer classes for the full primary cycle (grades 1-6) and high repetition as well as dropout rates.

Girls and boys have equal chances of entering school, but girls are less likely to complete the first six years of primary school and continue to the third cycle of basic education. Out of the same generation of girls, 75 percent enter the first cycle of basic education against 80 percent of boys, and 48 percent of girls will reach the end of the second cycle against 72 percent of boys.

Children in rural areas are also less likely to go to school and complete primary school compared to children in urban areas, which is also true for children from poor households compared to children from well-off households. 66 percent of children in rural areas have access to school against 91 percent of children in urban areas. Looking at completion rates, the gap is even wider: 79 percent of one generation of children living in urban areas complete the first two cycles of basic education against 40 percent for children in rural areas. As for economic status, children from the richest households are clearly more likely to access basic

[2] All figures in this section are taken from the 2015 RESEN

education (83 percent) and complete six years of compulsory education (66 percent) than children from the poorest households; for the latter, access and completion rates are 67 percent and 49 percent respectively.

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

1.2.3. Efficiency

Due to internal inefficiencies, nearly 47 percent of resources allocated to education is lost in Guinea-Bissau[3]. About 23 percent of school aged children will never go to school and among those who have the chance to enter primary school about 18 percent drop out before grade 6. The greatest number of dropouts generally occur between grades 4 and 5 due to the fact that only 25 percent of schools offer grades 5 and 6. Repetition rates are also very high in Guinea-Bissau at 21 percent in the first cycle of basic education (grade 1 to grade 4), 19 percent in the second cycle (grades 5 and 6), and 17 percent in the third cycle (grade 7 to grade)[4].

Teachers are not deployed based on needs and have limited skills; for schools that have the same number of students, the variation in the deployment of teachers is about 24 percent[5]. The state recruits more teachers to work in Bissau than in other areas which results in a student/teacher ratio in Bissau of 1:25 whereas the ratio in the most underserved province is much higher at 1:65 on average.

1.2.4. Monitoring of Sector Performance

The 2011-2013 Transitional Education Plan (TEP) was endorsed in 2010 and the country organized its first and only Joint Sector Review (JSR) in 2014. The TEP could not be fully implemented due to the coup in 2012, when many donors withdrew. However, the country has taken some positive steps by planning to organize annual JSRs as part of its new Education Sector Plan (ESP) monitoring mechanism.

The Ministry of Education intends to use the JSRs to engage in dialogue with key stakeholders on education policy and strategy during the implementation of the new ESP. With the JSR, the Local Education Group (LEG) will take stock of activities implemented, challenges encountered during implementation and results achieved. The country also plans to conduct specific studies along the implementation of the operational plan to measure the impact of reforms and other activities that will be piloted. As regards the GPE-IDA co-funded project, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES) will present and discuss with the LEG during the JSR the progress made to ensure its links to the ESP so that recommendations developed for the coming year remain relevant.

The Coordinating Agency (currently UNICEF) will represent the LEG in the ESP steering committee. The LEG is chaired by the Minister of Education and has representatives from the public administration, donors, NGOs, Higher education institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and teacher unions. Members of the LEG, led by UNICEF, have strongly mobilized around the GPE model and have provided valuable technical and financial support to the Government in the preparation of the ESP 2017-2025. The activities

[3] 2015 RESEN
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid

proposed under the GPE-IDA co-funded project were prepared by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES) in close collaboration with other development partners working in the education sector, including international and national NGOs.

2. FIXED PART REQUIREMENTS

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

The 2017-2025 education sector plan was endorsed by development partners in July 2017 after it had been improved on the basis of recommendations of the external appraisal carried out in May 2017. The Secretariat QAR3 assessment confirms the robustness of the plan vis-à-vis GPE quality standards.

Conclusion: The Secretariat recommends that this requirement be considered as met.

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

Education does not fare well in the budget tradeoffs between sectors because of the political instability. A sector analysis revealed that a significant share was allocated to the security sector from 2006 to 2008 and represented 19.9 per cent of total public expenditures. When veterans' pensions were included in this figure, the share increased to 21 per cent of total public expenditures[6]. Over the same period, an average of 12 per cent of total public expenditures was allocated to the education sector[7]. This figure slightly increased to reach 13 per cent in 2013, 2014 and 2015[8]. Given the continuing political tensions which may not be entirely solved by the next presidential election in 2018, it is likely that the security sector will remain a priority at the expense of the education sector despite the commitment of the Government to gradually increase public spending on education (new Education Sector Plan and Government Letter).

In the next ten years, the Government has undertaken to increase public spending on education as a percentage of public revenues from 13 percent in 2013 to 15.3 percent in 2017, 15.9 percent in 2018, 16.5 percent in 2019 and 20 percent in 2025. On November 3, 2017, the Ministry of Finance confirmed the Government's commitment to support the implementation of the sector plan for the period 2017-2025. The donors' contributions to the implementation of the sector plan are presented in the operational plan (about US$32 million).

The share of current public spending for education earmarked for primary education has not been lower than 45 percent, although it slipped from 56.7 percent in 2006 to 55.2 percent in 2010 and 45.9 percent in 2013. During the coming years, the government is committed to progressively increase the share of primary education from about 50 percent in 2017 to about 52 percent in 2019.

Conclusion: The Secretariat recommends that this requirement be considered as met but the education public budget should be monitored closely because of the country context.

[6] World Bank 2009, p. 7
[7] RESEN 2015, p. 18
[8] Ibid, p. 18

2.3. **Requirement 3:** Availability of data

Analysis of the education sector: Guinea Bissau carried out a diagnostic analysis of the education system with assistance from the Pôle de Dakar (CSR) and published the analysis report in August 2015. CSR 2015 includes in-depth analyses of the vulnerability of the education system and the issues of equity and disparities.

Basic data on financing and education for sector monitoring: Education statistics are not available; the Ministry of Education has been unable to issue the statistical yearbooks since 2010 owing to the poor quality of the data collected, delays and the limited coverage of school surveys. However, data on education public expenditures are available.

In partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the GPE project that was closed on September 30, 2017 had supported the strengthening of the system for collecting and analyzing education statistics, including the revision of questionnaires and training of statistics officers. With this support, statistical data for 2014-2015 will be published shortly and collection of data for the other years has begun. The new education sector plan provides for the continued strengthening of the Education Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) to ensure the timely production of data and improve their quality, and the new GPE-IDA co-funded project will support the collection of school data and its processing for the coming years.

System or mechanism for monitoring learning outcomes: The country does not have a nationwide mechanism for the regular tracking of learning outcomes, but it carried out a PASEC-type study in 2014. The new sector plan envisages the development and implementation of a national strategy for assessing learning outcomes and the new GPE-IDA co-funded project will support a new round of the PASEC.

Transmittal of critical data to UIS: The most recent data published by UIS are from 2010 as regards education statistics and 2013 for financing. The data published on UIS website in 2010 met the minimum requirements for education data relating to lower and upper primary education and lower secondary education (10 out of the 12 indicators) but the data published in 2013 were limited to education financing (3 indicators). The support provided by the GPE-IDA project should enable Guinea-Bissau to provide UIS with more up-to-date quality data.

Conclusion: The Secretariat recommends that this requirement be considered as met. The country and its partners plan to continue actions that enable the production of quality data on a regular basis and the establishment of a national mechanism for assessing learning outcomes.

3. ESPIG

3.1. PAST ESPIG PERFORMANCE, IF APPROPRIATE

Guinea Bissau has been a GPE member since its first sector plan was endorsed in 2010 and the country received a US$12 million ESPIG grant, with UNICEF as grant agent (GA), in December 2011. The GPE grant was aligned to the sector plan that covered 2011-2013 period and contributed to: (i) improving quality of education in primary schools; (ii) promoting equitable access to lower secondary education; and (iii)

strengthening education sector management. The project was prepared by the World Bank but following the coup in July 2012 which forced the Bank to discontinue its activities in the country, the LEG decided to defer implementation of the project to UNICEF.

Although the effective implementation of activities started in May 2013, and in spite of limited capacities of institutions and recurrent changes in the government that slowed down implementation, significant progress was made. The GPE grant was critical in ensuring the country's progress towards 'Education for All' and it contributed to mitigating the impact of the political crisis on the education sector by increasing access for over 1,500 children through construction of 201 classrooms; making textbooks available for nearly 300,000 children; completing curriculum reforms in primary education (grades 1-4); augmenting the teacher training capacities by constructing three training centers; and strengthening the EMIS. The grant was also used to cover the cost of the 2015 RESEN, including the PASEC study and the development of the new sector plan.

3.2 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

The total cost of the program is US$15 million, including a US$4.3 million grant from GPE and US$10.7 million from IDA**.** The project has been designed to be co-financed by both IDA and GPE at 100 percent, the breakdown of cost per component and subcomponent is provided in Table A.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve the teaching and learning environment in grades 1-4 in targeted schools. Expected outcomes include: execution of school grants per school improvement plans; increase in the proportion of teachers with improved content knowledge in Portuguese and Math; increase in levels of student learning in grades 1-4 in Portuguese and Math; and increase in age-appropriate and on-time enrollment in grade 1 among all children, and girls in particular. The project has four components as follows:

Component 1 aims to strengthen and improve the teaching and learning environment in all community and public primary schools, focusing on grades 1-4, in the two poorest regions of Guinea-Bissau (about 455 schools), by (i) encouraging greater community participation in school management; (ii) providing financial resources at the school-level to purchase basic supplies, pedagogical materials, and to cover operating costs; and (iii) improving the inspection system to monitor school performance.

Component 2 aims to improve the quality of instruction, by (i) establishing standards and harmonizing the system for teacher training; (ii) introducing and rolling out the grade 1-4 new curriculum; (iii) improving in-service teachers' content knowledge and skills to effectively teach basic literacy and numeracy; and (iv) improving student learning outcomes in Portuguese and mathematics in early grades.

Component 3 aims to improve the overall functioning of the education system by increasing the availability of data to guide decision-making and by strengthening the overall capacity of the Ministry of Education. The component will include two sub-components: sector studies, and project management. Three different studies to collect additional data have been identified in addition to the creation of a website and online portal: (i) a school mapping exercise; (ii) a national learning assessment in grades 2 and 5; and (iii) an adapted Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) survey. The project management sub-component will also finance training activities for the Ministry of Education staff and the recruitment of additional expertise. The data collected through the school mapping exercise will help the Ministry to determine a cost-effective way to expand the current system.

Due to limited capacity within the Ministry of Education, a Program Implementation Unit (PIU) will be established to support project implementation. The project will open one Designated Account (DA) in local currency (XOF) managed by the PIU. The budget will be monitored directly using project accounting software, and the audits will be conducted by a private sector audit firm. The procurement activities under the proposed project will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank's Procurement Regulations.

Table A: ESPIG Components and Costs[9]

		GPE Financing US$	IDA Financing US$	Total Amount US$	% of total
	Total MCA	**4,700,000**			
Fixed Part					
Program Component					
A	**Strengthen School-Based Management Practices and Empower Communities**	**1,107,820**	**2,752,180**	**3,860,000**	**25.73%**
	- Establishment of school management committees			2,300,000	15.33%
	- School grants			800,000	5.33%
	- School inspection/M&E			760,000	5.06%
B	**Improve the Quality of Instruction**	**2,252,950**	**5,597,050**	**7,850,000**	**52.33%**
	- Teacher certification			350,000	2.33%
	- In-service teacher training			3,260,000	21.73%
	- Scripted lessons and IAI program			3,000,000	20%
	- Learning materials for the new curriculum			1,240,000	8.26%
C	**Strengthen Education Sector Management Capacity**	**800,730**	**1,989,270**	**2,790,000**	**18.6%**
	- Sector studies			1,190,000	7.93%
	- Project management			1,600,000	10.66%
D	**Contingency**	**143,500**	**356,500**	**500,000**	**3.33%**
	Sub-total of Components	**4,300,000**	**10,700,000**	**15,000,000**	**100%**
	Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*	400,000			
GRAND TOTAL (with grant agent's Implementation Support Costs)		**4,700,000**			
	Grant agent fee**	82,250			

**Includes the direct costs of the grant agent, such as program management, administration and any other direct implementation cost.*

*** 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.*

**** The funding is not ear-marked in the case of Guinea-Bissau. The computation of GPE funding is based on proportionality between GPE and IDA funding.*

[9] The Secretariat noted a slight inconsistency regarding the sub-total of components as well as the grand total and is waiting for GA clarification on this matter.

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT

- ***Program Design***

The Program generally fits within the framework of the Education Sector Plan 2017-2025 but choices have been made according to the context, the identified risks that include the country's weak capacity, and the available financial envelope. Political and institutional risks do not call for a too complex or demanding program in terms of political leadership and state services technical capacities. Nevertheless, the Program addresses main gaps identified in the RESEN 2015 and in the ESP and considers previous programs' achievements.

The program objectives are in conformity with the GPE objectives on efficiency, learning outcomes and equity and the program is based on a solid theory of change as explained in Annex 2. The first component of the program targets the four-grade community and public schools of the poorest regions of Guinea Bissau and aims to improve learning conditions of these schools and reduce late entry into school with a focus on girls, and by extension, reduce dropout risks. The second component of the program aims at improving academic and teaching skills of teachers and students' achievements in reading and mathematics. The third component aims to strengthen the whole education system, including its planning and data-production capacities.

The QAR II report flagged issues to be addressed to ensure that the country will be able to publish regularly and on time quality data on the education system**.** The program document clarifies several points, namely: (i) resources allocated for the annual collection and processing of school data; (ii) the capitalization of lessons learned on previous efforts to build EMIS; (iii) the use of school grant as incentive to schools to provide quality data on time; and (iv) the collaboration/synergies of the program with other donor-funded programs. The costs of the collection and processing of school data are imbedded in almost every sub-component of the project but inspectors and regional directorates will have adequate resources to collect data and monitor the implementation of the project activities. One of the main lessons learned from previous efforts is that high staff turnover has had a seriously detrimental effect on the Ministry's ability to produce timely and reliable data. As such, instead of focusing on training to fill out the questionnaires only on school directors, the project intends to train school management committees and school inspectors – groups which have shown to be more stable than the school director position. Moreover, the school data will also be collected through the school mapping study.

For the school grants, given the high risk, the main efforts will be focused on building capacity, ensuring an appropriate flow of funds mechanism, and collecting data at the school level. It is intended that once the program is successfully piloted, it will become increasingly results-based and extended to other regions. A summary of up-to-date information from all partners was added in the Annex 2 of the program document to present the links for collaboration/synergies on the role of partners for the school grants and other activities of the program.

- ***Program Budget***

The GA team prepared the program's budget in close collaboration with the Ministry and other partners and used as reference unit costs of similar activities that were previously conducted. The program document narrative outlines the Ministry requirements for technical assistance in relation to every sub-component of the project. As regards the teacher training cost, the program document makes it clear that the budget figures include all the teacher training related activities (and not only per diems). Moreover, the teacher training component plans the implementation of a comprehensive set of activities, including alternative low cost activities, such as complementary sessions at the school level and Interactive Audio Instructions which will be delivered via recorded broadcasts, in addition to face-to-face training. The complementary sessions at school level are less expensive given that the activities of the *Comissoes de Estudo* are already built into existing teacher contracts.

- ***M&E***

To strengthen the result framework in response to QAR II comments, the country conducted an in-depth exercise to reexamine its weakness and gap. In particular, the causal links between activities and selected indicators were strengthened to ensure that the project outcomes were monitorable and would reach completion. The country included a student learning outcome indicator in the PDO indicators to strengthen the results chain. Moreover, upon reexamining the project design, the country also decided to not include indicators that would be directly attributed to the project activities nested in the Results Framework, such as repetition and dropout rates which are believed to decline with improvements in quality though they will be closely monitored. The connection between project activities and on-time entry into school, one of the PDO indicators, was strengthened in the narrative and has been disaggregated by gender to allow the monitoring of the project impact on the late entry of girls to school. However, to account for the high level of risk and volatility in country context, the indicators were simplified and the number of the project targets reduced for the short-term but with an option to revisit during implementation if they are reached.

- ***Fiduciary, Implementation Arrangements, and Readiness***

The QAR II report concluded that the proposed implementation and fiduciary management modalities seem tailored to the situation of the country. To reduce implementation risks, as mentioned previously, the Program will be implemented with the support of a PIU which will be attached to the PIU of the World Bank's CDD project during the project' s first year. The CDD PIU is highly experienced in the decentralized implementation of activities and the World Bank procedures. Although the PIU will manage the funding, the directorates of the MESS will be in charge of implementing most of the program's activities and will benefit from technical assistance. The GA also developed an Implementation Support Plan which describes the frequency and nature of supervision and technical support. All processes and piloting, management and audit structures will be implemented at the Program effectiveness date. The main interventions are expected to be ready to be launched at the planned starting date.

- ***Risk Identification and Mitigation Measures***

The GA highlighted that in-depth discussions on the implementation arrangement were conducted with the MEES to ensure stronger collaboration across directorates and with the Teachers Union. The project identifies the most substantial risks that the project may encounter as well as measures to mitigate the impact of these risks (see details in Annex 2). To prevent the lack of communication and coordination between various directorates of the Ministry and regular strikes organized by teachers, which can both constitute critical risks to the success of the project, the Ministry and GA agreed on the implementation

arrangement, the structure of the Project Steering Committee and its members and the reinforcement of dialogue with the teacher unions. Moreover, to reduce the impact of political instability on the project implementation and results, the project will reinforce the community participation in school management to sustain the results achieved.

- ***Sustainability***

The Project explicitly promotes long-term sustainability by focusing on institution development and capacity building through (i) improving MEES' capacity to better manage its human and fiscal resources; (ii) developing planning and M&E capacity in the MEES; and (iii) developing national policies to guide future activities such as community participation in schools, processes for teacher certification, and textbook procurement**.** The project aims to provide technical assistance in a number of areas, including through the PIU, to ensure the success of the project as well as to continue building the capacity of the MEES. That said, Guinea Bissau will still need to rely on external aid in the mid-term to sustain its efforts; there is a risk that the government will not be able to sustain critical activities such as school grants, teacher training, and textbooks in the mid-term because of the fragility of the country. However, the strong link of the Project with the ESP and the government's ownership of the ESP processes demonstrate the government's willingness to sustain key reforms piloted through the project in the future. The Project has been prepared with a strong technical basis and its development has been very collaborative with significant participation from donors and the government.

- ***Aid Effectiveness***

Despite strong links with the ESP, the grant will not be directly executed through the national system, in particular utilizing the public funding mechanism and procurement procedures, due to the political instability in Guinea-Bissau resulting in poor capacity in the government. However, the project has recognized/emphasized the need to rebuild these systems within the Ministry and the capacity of Ministry staff for them to be better positioned in the future to receive more direct financing. To date, almost all external financing in the sector is executed directly by donors and NGOs and almost no financing passes directly through the Ministry. The previous GPE project was implemented directly by UNICEF as the managing entity. The assessment conducted by the GA during the project preparation has shown that the government capacity is currently very weak and not suitable for project implementation. Given this context, it is considered that the program is as aligned with the main criteria of aid effectiveness as feasible. It is expected that the support provided to the MEES through the PIU and other additional support planned will begin to lay the foundations for more aligned assistance in the future.

4. VARIABLE PART

Not applicable. The GPE Grant and Performance Committee (GPC) approved the ex-ante approach for the implementation of the Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) for Guinea Bissau on February 15, 2017.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The GPE Secretariat recommends that the GPC consider the three requirements to access GPE funding as met, but proposes the inclusion of a follow-up report to the committee on the share of education within the public expenditures and the share of primary education within the education public expenditures.

Guinea Bissau took necessary measures to improve the new sector plan for 2017-2025 to meet the challenges faced by the sector based on the recommendations from an external review conducted in May 2017. Shortly after, the ESP was endorsed by the LEG in August 2017.

The Secretariat deems the domestic financing requirement as met. The Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister have officially committed to increasing spending for education and to maintain the share of primary education above 45 percent, as planned in the sector plan for 2016-2025. Donors have also confirmed their contributions to the ESP during the project preparation. But because of the country context, the education public budget should be closely monitored.

On the requirement related to data, the country has planned several actions to sustain the progress achieved through the previous GPE grant, in particular to ensure the production of quality data on a regular basis and to conduct a new round of standardized learning outcomes assessment. The country has been working with UIS to rebuild its EMIS thanks to the previous GPE grant and hopes to deliver more timely data to UIS through the current plan. The Project will contribute to ensuring that the country is able to obtain the necessary data in a timely fashion.

Regarding the quality of the program, the Secretariat deems that the standard requirements have been met and advises that the Grants and Performance Committee recommends approval by the Board of the US$4.7 million grant to Guinea Bissau, including the grant agent supervision fees of US$400,000 for the duration of the project (5 years). The application proposes a coherent program which has taken into consideration high risks pertaining to the context of Guinea Bissau. Moreover, as the total cost of the program is US$15 million because of a co-funding of US$10.7 million from IDA, the application has come up with a realistic implementation timeframe of five years to mitigate the country's low absorption capacity. To promote institutional and financial sustainability, and considering the low capacity in the country, the project promotes long-term sustainability by focusing on institutional development and capacity building.

Annex 1: Major Interventions by Development Partners

Donor Name	Major Interventions	Financing
ADPP Humana People to People	Teacher Training School Cacheu 2019-2021. practice component and prepares primary school teachers to work in rural communities. The curriculum used has been approved by the central Ministry and teachers completing their pre-service training at this school are allowed to enter the system as civil servants.	US$1,200,000
European Union	*Firkidja di Skola* - Decentralization of Education Data Management. 2015-2018. Supports work to strengthen the country's EMIS through decentralization, developing a data management system for planning monitoring and evaluating education data, and creating information management hubs at the sector-level.	US$624,344
	Culturai nô balur - A Strategy for Culture/Education, 2016-2020. • This support includes studies and research on the country´s literature, music, crafting; training craft workers; creating a center on Guinean education and culture; postgraduate courses and continuing education courses; and regional workshops, craft and book fairs.	US$1,307,000
	ADVOCARE Project 2015-2018. The ADVOCARE project works with DREs to improve access and the quality of basic education for children with disabilities by creating didactic materials/kits in Braille and Sign Language and training teachers to use these materials.	US$576,617
	Promoção da Educação Inclusiva na Guiné-Bissau, 2015-2018. Finances work to develop a national plan and policy on disability; training to sensitize pre-service and in-service teachers on inclusive education; and guidance and support to children with disabilities at primary schools to access health services.	US$555,067

PLAN International	*Inclusive and Participatory Quality Education*, 2017-2021. Focuses on improving the quality of education in select primary schools in Bafatá and Gabú. Activities supported include in-service teacher training, inspector training, increasing girls attendance/participation, producing teaching materials, and encouraging SMCs and community participation.	US$1,270,000
	Early Child Care Development 2017-2021. The Early Child Care Development Project supports the construction of day care centers, community sensitization efforts, training in the areas of education, health, nutrition and hygiene, and supporting communities and SMCs to raise and manage funds.	US$1,830,000
Portuguese Cooperation	*Programa de Apoio à Reforma do Sistema Educativo* 2016-2020. PARSE provides technical support to the Ministry in the following areas: pre-service and in-service teacher training, school director training in management and school administration, and special education. Additionally, direct support is given to key central ministry departments including DGE, GEPASE, IGE and INDE	US$4,796,553
	Portuguese Language Training. The Portuguese Cooperation also funds on an on-going basis in-service training for primary school teachers in Portuguese Language Centers in all regions of the country and pre-service training in Portuguese for secondary school teachers at Tchico-Té.	US$614,000/year
UNICEF	*Education Equity and Quality* 2016-2018. UNICEF's support focuses primarily on early childhood care and primary education. Under its Child Friendly Schools initiative, it supports 46 pre-school and primary schools in various regions. Other initiatives include a study on out-of-school youth and a national campaign to encourage on-time entry into primary school at 6 years of age in grade 1.	US$1,000,000/year
World Bank	*Community-Driven Development Project* 2016-2019. The CDD Project has several activities – the ones in the	US$3,500,000

	education sector include community-based micro-projects such as school construction (275 additional classrooms) and a cash transfers programs under development that will encourage school attendance.	
World Food Program	*School Canteen Project*. WPF works in 758 primary schools in all regions of the country, except Bissau, by providing food and supporting a sub-group of SMCs known as a "School Canteen Commission" to oversee a national school feeding program. This commission includes the school director, a cook, a storekeeper, and a male and female representative from the community. The total for this program from 2016-2017 was US$12,000,000.	US$6,000,000/year

Annex 2: Quality Standards for the Assessment of Program Documents

Criteria	Description of Criteria	Comments
1. Program Design	Program addresses critical evidence-based challenge(s) identified in the education sector plan	**Yes, the program does address the shortcomings noted in the sector analysis with regard to access to education, governance of the education system and quality of instruction.** In terms of access to education, Guinea-Bissau must contend with low primary school completion rates as a result of intermittent suspension of classes, late entry into primary school and high dropout and repetition rates. The program mitigates problems with access to education and inequality by using school grants to cover operating costs and reduce expenses for communities. Campaigns will raise public awareness of the importance of enrolling children in school at age 6, especially girls, and discourage dropping out and repeating years. In terms of governance, the country's education system must contend with a lack of funding for education, which makes it impossible to offer decent pay for teachers or to cover schools' non-payroll expenses. This means schools depend on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and students' families for financing. It must also be noted that political instability promotes periodic turnover in the Ministry of Education staff, especially school directors, which is hardly conducive to implementation of reform. Another major problem is the lack of any framework for managing teachers' careers. This is partially because the Education Act passed in 2010 is still not operational and this issue gives rise to repeated teacher strikes. Under the circumstances, the program relies on NGOs at the local level to deal with the governance problem by creating and reinforcing school management committees, which will be responsible for managing and monitoring schools' financial resources. School directors and school inspectors will also be trained to provide pedagogical support for teachers. Furthermore, the program calls for harmonization of the teacher certification and training system to ensure better career management. The analysis of learning outcomes shows low levels of achievement in mathematics and Portuguese. This may be attributed to teachers' poor grasp of Portuguese, which is their second language. Regular teacher strikes also mean gaps in instruction and fewer classroom hours. The program aims to

		address the shortcomings in learning outcomes by training teachers in Portuguese and mathematics, implementing a new curriculum, and harmonizing the teacher certification and training system. The results of these actions will be measured through student performance, using PASEC scores and other tools. Furthermore, the program is designed based on lessons learned from previous projects, such as the Community-Driven Development Project financed by the World Bank and the Child-Friendly Schools model developed with UNICEF to increase community participation in school management, school grants, community action for on-time enrollment and the teacher training project implemented with the support of UNESCO. The document also refers to national and international studies to back up the selection of various program activities (PAD, pages 83-90).
	Program has a logical and evidence-based results chain between interventions, outputs and outcomes	**Yes, the program has a robust and logical results chain.** One of the objectives of the first component is to increase demand for education and reduce inequalities by giving grants to schools in the poorest areas. The school grants will reduce operating costs that used to be covered by families. These costs are a significant barrier to enrollment, particularly for girls and children from low-income families, and they increase dropout risks. Reducing parents' costs will increase enrollment, reduce dropout risks and improve pass rates in early grades. Therefore, the results chain is logical and coherent. The activities in the first and second components promote improved quality of instruction. Developing a new curriculum, in-service training for teachers, support for teachers from school inspectors and directors will improve the quality of instruction, as well as improve student performance. In addition, training for school directors and the establishment and reinforcement of school management committees will improve supervision of teacher attendance. This will help reduce absenteeism and lead to a significant increase in the number of classroom hours. Therefore, the results chain is clear and convincing. The results chain for the third component is also logical. The objective of this component is to improve the functioning of the education system by increasing the availability of data used to guide decision making and by strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Education. Three major studies

		will be conducted for these purposes (school mapping, PASEC assessment, and an SDI survey) and Ministry officials will receive training, particularly those officials responsible for financial and human resources management. The school mapping survey will enable the Ministry to produce reliable data for all schools and develop a realistic school expansion plan with a budget. The PASEC assessment will help the Ministry and local players identify actions that improve student performance. The SDI survey will be used to measure the project impact on service quality in schools (teacher skills and attendance).
	GPE's strategic goals and objectives are adequately reflected	**Yes, the actions reflect GPE's strategic goals and objectives regarding equity, effectiveness, and improving learning outcomes.** The program addresses equity by reducing income inequality with school grants that reduce parents' costs, reducing geographical disparities by targeting the most vulnerable areas, and reducing gender disparities by raising awareness of girls' education and involving women in the school management committees. The program addresses the learning outcomes objective with teacher training and certification, along with a new curriculum to improve student performance. The effectiveness objective is addressed by public awareness campaigns to lower repetition and dropout rates. It should also be noted that most of the activities under the second component dealing with quality of instruction (teacher training, improved monitoring and supervision, development of simple teaching materials, and the use of innovative technology for improved supervision) will have an indirect impact on effectiveness, particularly with regard to the repetition rate. Public information campaigns will stress the need to enroll children at the age of six since late enrollment has been identified as a major cause of high dropout rates. **In conclusion: The program design standard is met.**
2. Program Budget	Program cost is justified	**Yes, the program cost is justified.** The grant agent worked closely with the Ministry of Education and the technical partners to draw up the program budget. This budget is based on the lessons learned from the projects implemented by the various technical partners. Furthermore, the detailed budget presented by the grant agent for the QAR II provides fairly detailed information about the costs of the project activities

		under each component and sub-component and the current version of the PAD provides an annual disbursement plan for each sub-component of the project. Some costs are presented as lump sums (school grants in the first component, textbook grants in the second component), but the PAD provides unit costs for key activities (grant amount per school, compensation of teachers for local training sessions). The number of beneficiaries can be used to estimate unit costs as well (number of school management committees to be established and trained, number of school management committee members, number of regional directorates and number of school inspectors to be equipped and their operating costs, number of students to be provided with textbooks), along with the number of teaching tools to be produced. **In conclusion: The program cost standard is met.**
	Program is cost effective (assessment tool under development)	
3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Program includes an M&E framework comprised of a strategy and methods to ensure accountability for achievements	**Yes, the M&E strategy is very clear and is aligned with the monitoring mechanism for the sector plan.** The strategy will rely on the Education Management Information System to monitor certain indicators and will call on various departments of the Ministry of Education, while strengthening their capacities at the same time (Directorate responsible for statistics, Inspection body, etc.) The strategy will also call on NGOs and involve school communities to ensure more fluid circulation of data from the database to the Ministry. The program calls for a program results and execution report every two years, a mid-term evaluation, and an impact evaluation at the end of the project. The Ministry of Education must present the Project Implementation Report to the Local Education Group during sector reviews. The World Bank, which is the grant agent, also has a detailed mechanism for filing and investigating complaints. (PAD, page 36) **Conclusion: The program cost standard is met.**
	Results Framework is robust and covers all interventions	**Yes, the Results Framework is robust.**

		The indicators cover the expected results and outputs for all program components and sub-components. Indicators, benchmarks, and targets are explained in detail (pages 38-50). The indicators are broken down by targeted locations. The program development indicators include result and process indicators. Intermediate indicators cover key program activities and mesh well with the program development indicators. However, some indicators should be more clearly defined, such as "*Percentage of teachers who receive in-service training with improved content knowledge in Portuguese and mathematics".* This indicator measures the average improvement in teachers' content knowledge level without specifying the definition and computation of such improvement. How do we determine that content knowledge has been improved and is sufficient to have an impact on its supervision? This is also the case for the indicator that is supposed to measure the results of these activities for students' learning outcomes, "*Percentage of grade 2 students in targeted schools with improved content knowledge in Portuguese and mathematics".* The data sources and the roles and responsibilities are aligned with the proposals in the M&E strategy. Generally speaking, the program indicators are aligned with the sector plan monitoring indicators. **In conclusion: The Results Framework is robust.**
4. Implementation Arrangements and Readiness	Implementation arrangements are appropriate	**Yes, the implementation arrangements are appropriate to the country's circumstances.** The country is very fragile and its capacity is limited because of frequent changes in government. Fiscal reform is not operational. However, program execution will be achieved by the technical directorates at the Ministry of Education with the support of the Program Implementation Unit. Furthermore, the Program Coordinating Committee members are representatives of the technical departments of the Ministry of Education that will be involved in implementing the activities.
	Program is ready to be implemented	**Yes, the program is ready to be implemented.** The timetable is clearly set out in the PAD narrative. The administrative and fiduciary arrangements are clearly explained (PAD, pages 69-79). The start-up requirements are clear and justified. **Conclusion: The implementation arrangements standard is met.**

5. Risk(s) Identification and Mitigation Measures	Program includes appropriate risks matrix	**Yes, the risks are identified and the proposed mitigation strategies are appropriate (PAD, pages 32 and 33).** Political risk is high because of periodic changes in government that undermine the establishment of sustainable reform in the education sector. Therefore, the program opts for a community-driven approach and working with private-sector players, including communities and NGOs, to implement reforms that will have a lasting impact on the system. The risk of teacher strikes is also high. The Program Document states that teacher unions often call strikes to demand respect for teachers' rights. Plans call for working more closely with the unions when implementing reform of the system for harmonizing teacher training and certification in order to mitigate this risk. The risk related to fiduciary management capacities has also been noted, but appropriate prevention measures have been proposed. **Conclusion: The risk identification and mitigation standard is met.**
6. Sustainability	Program has been designed to be sustainable	**Yes, the program is designed to be sustainable.** The execution of reform by the Ministry of Education and its directorates ensures the sustainability of the program. In addition, the program was developed in collaboration with all the system players, technical partners and financial partners. This ensures ownership of the program by local players. The program also calls for strengthening the Ministry of Education's capacities for human and financial resources management, planning, and M&E. Teacher training for the new curriculum and the teacher support arrangements for Portuguese and mathematics will also have sustainable effects, along with capacity strengthening for local communities. **Conclusion: The sustainability standard is met.**
7. Aid Effectiveness	Program is aligned with the main criteria of aid effectiveness	**Yes, the program complies with aid effectiveness principles.** The program is aligned with the sector plan, but it will not be executed by means of or in accordance with public finance procedures. The justification for this choice is clearly documented in the PAD. The active involvement of the Local Education Partners Group in drafting and implementing the program, along with the links between the program and the technical and financial partners' initiatives (pages 79 and 80), will help improve the coordination and harmonization of aid relating to the sector plan objectives, and have the knock-on effect of making it more effective.

		The reform implemented under the program also aims to harmonize the technical partners' actions under the key strategies in the sector plan (strengthening community participation in school management, establishing a harmonized framework for teacher training and certification, development of a rational plan and budget for school expansion, etc.) **Conclusion: The aid effectiveness standard is met.**