CEO DECISION MEMO

DATE: 10/20/2023

TO: Laura Frigenti, CEO		
FROM: Padraig Power, FGO Manager; Jo Bourne, CEP Manager; Nilse Ryman, CEP Regional Manager; Kirsten Majgaard, Quality Assurance Team Lead; Sven Baeten, Grant Operations Team Lead		
SUBJECT: Approval of Guyana's System Transformation Grant		
Country: Guyana	**Grant Agent:** Inter-American Development Bank	**Cofinancing [if applicable]:** NA
Grant Type: STG	**Agency fee %(+US$ amount):** 5% (250,000)	**Expected Start Date:** January 16, 2024
Amount: US$5 million	**Grant duration:** 4 years	**Expected End Date:** January 16, 2028

Action request

Approve Guyana's System Transformation Grant application.

Grant Summary

The proposed program seeks to contribute to quality and equity in basic education in Guyana through strengthening school and district leadership and improving sector management. It aligns with the partnership compact and with the approved focus area of "strengthening instructional leadership at the district and school levels". It is also consistent with the 2021-2025 education sector plan, which identifies strengthening district and school leadership as a key strategy.

Component 1 (US$ 4,128,900) will set up a leadership academy to provide professional development to 200 education leaders in public schools to equip them with the necessary skills to improve student learning outcomes in their schools and districts. The academy will target both practicing and aspiring district and school leaders, as well as Regional Education District Officers and central Ministry officials. Component 2 (US$ 464,100) will develop a more equitable system to allocate human, financial and material resources to schools. It will also upgrade manuals for district and school leaders and improve mechanisms of collaboration among them.

To ensure that gender is adequately hardwired throughout the program, UNESCO-IIEP as lead technical partner will undertake a gender study that will aim to identify the barriers hindering the achievement of gender equality within the education system. The findings of this study will guide the development of gender- and culturally sensitive training modules and materials.

Current Portfolio

GRANT TYPE	GRANT PERIOD	GRANT AMOUNT (in USD)	AMOUNT UTILIZED	GRANT AGENT
Program implementation and multiplier	2021-2024	7,000,000	4,441,505	World Bank

Program Implementation/Multiplier: The grant currently under implementation is composed of a Program Implementation Grant of US$2,500,000 and a Multiplier grant of US$4,500,000 for which co-financing was provided by the World Bank. The program supports Guyana's Education Sector Plan 2021-2025, which was finalized and endorsed in November 2020. The objectives of the program were to: (i) improve learning conditions at the nursery level in select areas; (ii) increase the use of technology-assisted learning at the primary level in select areas; and (iii) improve the functionality of the education management information system. After some initial delays due to issues with the staffing of the program management unit, the grant is currently being implemented.

Outcomes of the ITAP assessment and Board decision

The partnership compact's development process led by the local education group was highly participatory and inclusive. It involved several workshops, consultations, and dialogue with over 60 national, regional and local education officials, school leaders, teachers, parents and development partners. Similarly, the analysis of the enabling factors, also completed by the local education group and reviewed by the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP), concluded that there were no high priority areas impeding system transformation in Guyana. Both data and evidence, and gender-responsive planning were rated as medium priority, while domestic financing and coordination were rated as low priority. The partnership compact outlines how key challenges will be tackled, and the Secretariat deems that both medium priority enabling factors were adequately addressed. The system capacity grant will be used to strengthen EMIS, as well as to support an impact evaluation of the leadership academy to generate evidence and inform the training of subsequent cohorts beyond the program's closing date. Similarly, although Guyana has sector planning policies and frameworks in place, gaps still exist, particularly with regards to gender equality. In that regard, the gender study supported by the program will help planning and policy actions aimed at achieving gender equality. Furthermore, there is more domestic financing expected in the future which would create an enabling environment in the country through additional resources and might facilitate smooth implementation.

The Board approved the strategic parameters for GPE support to Guyana in May 2023 and invited Guyana to apply for a system transformation grant of US$ 5 million. Co-financing for the allocation for the Multiplier has not been identified yet.

Significant Opportunities:

Guyana joined the partnership in 2002 and, in these past two decades, has expanded the inclusivity of its local education group and successfully implemented three Implementation Grants and one Multiplier. The local education group now involves all relevant partners at the country level, including government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations and teacher organizations. Under GPE 2025, the inclusive and thoughtful compact development process ultimately allowed for the identification of an innovative priority reform with a strong theory of change. Guyana diagnosed that a key bottleneck hampering system transformation was that district and school leaders lacked adequate capacity to improve student learning and catalyze system transformation. Therefore, the establishment of a leadership academy would

allow for adequately equipping them with the necessary skills to monitor, supervise and promote learning and lead transformational change from within schools.

This new program operationalizes the country's priority reform and, given that in the long-term all district and school leaders in Guyana will be required to participate in the leadership academy, the potential for transformational change is significant. It is also an opportunity to contribute to Guyana's mutual accountability framework, since partners have joined efforts and coordinated closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure that the priority reform is well-resourced and achievable. There is potential increase in domestic financing and therefore expected additional resources flowing into Guyana which may facilitate sustainability.

Significant Issues and Potential Risks

Although several partners expressed interest in the Grant Agent role, the Ministry of Education concluded that a joint effort where the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is Grant Agent and UNESCO-IIEP, the lead technical partner and implementer, is the best option for a successful implementation with less operational and transaction costs. Still, there is an institutional and financial sustainability risk that, at the end of the program, the leadership academy is not fully integrated into the current institutional architecture and does not prevail over time. To mitigate this risk, UNESCO-IIEP with be working with the Ministry of Education to develop the institutional structure of the leadership academy. Furthermore, the overarching policy governing the teacher profession is expected to be timely ready to set up the institutional framework for the academy to operate. The Ministry has also committed to incorporate costs associated with the academy to the national budget after the program closes. With respect to gender hardwiring in the grant, the Secretariat country team will continue to engage in a dialogue with the Ministry of Education, grant agent and the technical partner to help ensure that, after the gender analysis is completed, the commitment to adequately hardwire gender in the leadership academy design and implementation is followed through.

Recommendation

Based on the Secretariat's quality assurance review, the Review Meeting (RM) concluded **to recommend to the CEO the approval of an allocation of US$5,000,000 to Guyana with IDB as Grant Agent**.

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Grant: System Transformation Grant
Country: Guyana

CEO/2023/10-XX–XXXX

The CEO, in her delegated authority from the Board of Directors, approves the System Transformation Grant request for Guyana in the amount of US$5,000,000 plus an additional US$250,000 in agency fees to IDB as the grant agent.

Date: October 24, 2023



Laura Frigenti
CEO, Global Partnership for Education

The CEO Decision Memo should not exceed 3 pages.