CAMBODIA - COVID-19 AF: Approval Memo to CEO

Review meeting participants: Margarita Licht, Alexandra Solano Rocha, Anna-Maria Tammi, Rudraksh Mitra, David Balwanz, Simon Hall, Ana Tobar, Matthew Smith

Review meeting date: July 28, 2020

Date of proposal submission: July 17, 2020

1. **Grant Summary:**

The core focus of strategic component 1 will be to provide support for the ongoing delivery of continuous or distance learning services to children across the country, in urban, rural and remote areas. This support will be provided to children engaged in pre-school and all grades of basic education (grades 1-9) and will draw upon a number of diversified broadcasting platforms, including online/internet, television and radio. The core focus of strategic component 2 will be to provide comprehensive and practical information to support the safe return of children to school. The component will support a comprehensive nationwide back-to-school campaign as part of efforts to promote a safe return to school for children. To complement the back-to-school campaign, a Communication for Education initiative will be launched to directly reach and connect with communities to promote the importance of preparing their children for a safe return to school. This initiative will promote community demand for education and accountability of local authorities for the delivery of COVID-19 safe education. Component 3 would focus on two core areas: (i) improve hygiene practices in schools; and (ii) offer enhanced pedagogical support to deepen the impact of distance learning and specialized remedial support for children.

2. **Key Information:**

Country: Cambodia		
a.	Accelerated Funding Covid-19 Allocation	US$ 7,000,000 (reduced by GPE Board from original allocation of US$ 10M)
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	US$ 7,000,000
c.	Allocation Recommended	US$ 7,000,000[1]
d.	Grant Agent	UNICEF
e.	Agency Fee % + US$ amount	7% (US$ 490,000)
f.	Grant duration	18 months
g.	Expected Start Date	10/01/2020
h.	Expected End Date	03/31/2022

Secretariat assessment of proposal against program standards, with accompanying staff and management sign-off, is included as Annex 1. Grant Agent proposal is included as Annex 2.

3. **Recommendation: Grant is recommended for approval**

4. **Decision:**

[1] Includes US$ 465,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDED DECISION

In line with the delegated authority granted by the Board of Directors, the GPE CEO approves the COVID-19 accelerated funding request for Cambodia in the amount of US$7,000,000 plus an additional US$490,000 in agency fees to UNICEF as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of October 1, 2020, and an end date of March 31, 2022.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Cambodia in preparing a national response plan and grant proposal that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as support the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

Recognizing the GPE Board's intent to proceed with the COVID-19 funding on a timeline which acknowledges the COVID-19 emergency, the Government and Grant Agent are asked to move forward with implementation immediately while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat together with the first quarterly progress report:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to ensure that the high-level budget presented in the program document is aligned with the corrected budget spreadsheet.

The Secretariat also raises the following point of observation, which is a recommendation rather than a requirement:

Observation

a. Given the urgency of the crisis, grant implementation to commence on schedule and the Grant Agent to submit a cash transfer request within two weeks of approval to facilitate the timely release of funds in support of program implementation.

Reporting

Please note that during the implementation period, the GPE Secretariat will require the Grant Agent to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation. At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. Detailed information on the reporting requirement is available in the Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding on GPE website.

Reprogramming

The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram this grant, in consultation with the Local Education Group and where active the Education cluster, for an amount not to exceed 25% of the allocation without prior Secretariat approval but must disclose such cases to the Secretariat. For an amount of 25% or more, as well as for any extension, advance approval from the Secretariat must be sought. The process for advanced approval will be that of non-minor revisions of ESPIG which can be found here: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants

CEO Approval:
Alice P. Albright
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education



Date: August 4, 2020

CEO Memo - Annex 1
Program Standards for Assessment of
COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Applications (Country Grants)

(Last updated April 2020)

The GPE Secretariat will complete this matrix to assess country applications for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding.

Program Standards: COVID-19 Accelerated Funding				**Comments**
Country:			CAMBODIA	
Grant Agent:			UNICEF	
Date of Submission:			Request submitted to GPE Secretariat: 7/17/2020	
			Secretariat Review completed: 7/29/2020	
Yes	No	N/A	**Eligibility**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the Country eligible for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding?	Yes.
☒	☐	☐	Is the grant agent accredited by GPE? *Please confirm via COVID-19 FAQ list.*	Yes.
☒	☐	☐	Has GA selection followed a clear and transparent process, with the process documented in the proposal?[2]	Yes.
☒	☐	☐	Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?	Yes. The proposal has been developed under the guidance of the Local Education Group/JTWG and endorsed by LEG/JTWG members.
☒	☐	☐	Is the proposal based on a publicly available government response plan related to COVID-19, including education? *The proposal should explain where and how the response plan has been made publicly available (e.g., Government website, distribution to key stakeholders, etc.).*	Yes. The plan is publicly available on the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) website.

[2] If a grant agent has been selected for the 'regular' Accelerated Funding window announced in December 2019, the government can decide to maintain the same grant agent for the COVID-19 accelerated funding.

☐	☒	☐	Will the program become effective within one month of GPE approval, with completion within 12-18 months from the date of program effectiveness?	The program has a start date of October 1, 2020 and implementation period of 18 months. The start date is considered reasonable given the following context: • Since March 2020, MoEYS has established a distance learning programme for all students nationwide. While the initial programme was largely internet/online-based, MoEYS has worked progressively over the immediate term to diversify the nature of the program, expanding the broadcast of e-learning assets through a nationwide and dedicated education TV channel, and via radio, particularly to assist children living in remote and marginalized communities. • MoEYS has also begun the process of producing and disseminating paper-based learning materials. For the current second semester of SY2019/20 (25 April - 31 August), World Bank is providing additional budget to schools for the printing of weekly worksheets that children collect from school, take home to complete, and drop-off to school every week for marking and assessment. • The GPE-funded COVID19 response and recovery program will assist MoEYS to continue to deliver distance learning support, including from the beginning of the new school year 2020/21 (1 November 2020) to the end of the school year. The proposal to GPE includes provision for all key aspects of the MoEYS continuous learning programmes to be delivered over SY2020/21. • MoEYS is planning to undertake a nationwide rapid assessment to: (i) better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the education system; (ii) measure the level of access, quality and effectiveness of distance learning across different platforms for students; and (iii) identify current teaching and learning outreach efforts that are underway to better understand the capacity development needs of educators. Findings from this large-scale rapid assessment are expected to be available in August 2020 and will be drawn upon to inform the proposed interventions funded by this program. Thus whilst this program standard is not met (ie the program will take over one month to become effective) the reasons given are considered reasonable.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Yes	No	N/A	**Program Design & Coordination**	
☒	☐	☐	Are proposal activities (i) supporting basic education only, (ii) within the boundary of eligible activities under this funding window (see COVID-19 Accelerated Funding	(i) Yes. The program covers pre-primary and grades 1-9.

			Guidelines, which focus on recovery and mitigation), or, if not within the boundary, are from the government response plan and well-justified, and (iii) likely to support program objectives / progress toward expected outputs and intermediate outcomes?	(ii) Yes. The proposal outlines a comprehensive set of interventions that cover continuation of education through different modes of distance learning; demand and supply-side interventions that support a safe return to school, including back-to-school campaigns and hygiene interventions; and remedial education and related support to teachers on adaptive learning. The interventions are aligned with the national COVID response plan. (iii) Yes. Interventions are likely to support the four objectives that are outlined. Each intervention area has its own theory of change for how the program will address bottlenecks within that area.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, reach poor, vulnerable, or otherwise disadvantaged children, including girls, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? *For targeted interventions, the proposal should include the targeting criteria to ensure equity (i.e., that interventions reach vulnerable populations).*	Yes. The program has a nation-wide approach. All digital learning materials and hygiene-related print assets will be available/distributed to schools nation-wide. The program identifies important equity priorities, many of which are to be delivered through a school block grant (i.e., distribution of paper-based learning materials to vulnerable children, provision of remedial instruction). These block grants act as a 'top-up' to pre-existing School Operating Funds, which will allow schools to meet the additional costs associated with the COVID19 pandemic. The block grant funding formula represents a fixed cost (basic hygiene supplies required by all schools) and an additional 'per pupil' allowance based on expected printing/copying requirements. The need for additional support for remote or small schools is already recognized in MoEYS provision of School Operating Funds (SOF). Schools will be provided with School Block Grant Eligible Expenditure Guidelines to enable them to allocate spending and grant amounts according to their local needs. The equity weighting and value of the grants is such that it should allow schools not to have to choose between the purchase of basic hygiene or printing of learning materials. Targeting criteria for providing support (i.e., paper-based learning materials) to poor children are clearly stated in the proposal. The program identifies the lack of adapted distance learning materials as a barrier faced by children with disabilities. It proposes to produce specialized continuous learning materials for children with disabilities, including those in Cambodian sign language and braille. This will be reinforced with teacher professional development and procurement specialized equipment, where necessary.

				In delivering the program, UNICEF Cambodia will consider the relevance of UNICEF's five actions for gender equality in response to COVID-19 and apply these as relevant for the education sector. They are: (i) caring for carers; (ii) preparing for increases in gender-based violence throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; (iii) maintaining core health and education services and systems; (iv) engaging women and youth rights networks to support connectivity and the flow of vital information; and (v) ensuring gender data is available, analysed and actionable. An additional category is promoting gender equality in roles and responsibilities.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, identify and address specific barriers to learning faced by girls due to COVID-19?	The program identifies gender based-violence, domestic violence, sexual and physical abuse, forced labor, early marriage and the greater burden of household tasks as potential barriers faced by girls. It proposes to include relevant messaging in the back-to-school campaigns and "communication for education" interventions to address these barriers. It also proposes to consider all activities through a gender lens and incorporate additional actions for gender equality where appropriate.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal identify a relevant COVID-19 response coordination mechanism(s) and confirm that the program will be represented in this mechanism?	Yes. The proposal confirms that UNICEF will cooperate and collaborate closely at all stages with MoEYS' Directorate General of Planning and Policy (DGPP) in its role as coordinating body for the Cambodia Education Response Plan to COVID-19 Pandemic.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal (i) provide information on the sources of financing for COVID response and early recovery activities planned and (ii) information demonstrating that GPE funds will be complementary to government or other donor funding, including from Education Cannot Wait, where relevant?	(i) Yes. The proposal includes information on sources of financing in annex 6. Other donors include EU, UNICEF, World Bank, USAID and WFP, among others. (ii) Yes. Annex 6 outlines in detail how funding will be complementary. ECW is not engaged in Cambodia.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Yes	No	N/A	**Budget**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the proposed budget (excluding agency fee) within the GPE Board approved allocation for the country? *	Yes.
☒	☐	☐	Does the submitted budget clearly outline component, activity and grant agent implementation support costs?	Yes. In response to the secretariat's request, the GA provided a detailed budget spreadsheet in addition to the high-level budget provided in the paper. Unit costs

			*Estimated unit costs and quantities should be clearly indicated. (Budget can be provided in a separate document from program document, preferably in a spreadsheet format) **	are included where relevant and appear reasonable. GA support costs amount to $465,000, representing 6.6% of the grant, slightly higher than the UNICEF average but reasonable in the context of Cambodia. Note: two errors identified by the Secretariat in the paper's budget have now been corrected in reworking the underlying detailed budget spreadsheet. For the final verification submission, the high-level budget in the paper will need to agree to the budget spreadsheet, hence the proposed decision language below. Proposed decision language: **The Grant Agent is requested to ensure that the high-level budget presented in the program document is aligned with the corrected budget spreadsheet.**
☒	☐	☐	Is there a clear indication of the program's sources of funding, including which parts of the program are supported by each source? *	Yes. The GPE grant is standalone. Complementarity with other donors' funding is described in Annex 6.
☒	☐	☐	Is the budget, and its assumptions, coherent with other parts of the program design? *This includes coherence between budgeted quantities and results framework output indicators where possible. **	Yes. The activities costed in the budget are coherent with the components described in the proposal and with the results framework.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Yes	No	N/A	**M & E and Results Framework**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the proposed M & E framework costed and likely to support effective monitoring of program implementation and results reporting? [3] Are roles and responsibilities clearly mapped? **	The M&E framework is adequate, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program include a complete results framework, including the key output and outcome indicators, baselines and targets and data sources? *Indicators should be disaggregated by gender where relevant. **	The program includes a complete results framework and all relevant gender disaggregation.

[3] Government-led school census and EMIS activities may be disrupted because of the pandemic; the proposal should ensure available capacity and financing for data collection with this risk in mind.

☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal confirm agreement to collect and report on required core indicators (where relevant) and follow GPE M&E Guidance for COVID-19 AF Grants, including on standardized program reporting? **	All required core indicators are included and the program confirms agreement to follow GPE M&E guidance for COIVD-19 AF grants.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal include an activity line and budget for development and implementation of an approach to learning from evidence? *(see GPE M&E Guidance for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Grants) **	A costed learning from evidence approach is included.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Yes	No	N/A	**Implementation Arrangements & Readiness**	
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal include a sufficiently detailed implementation plan with a timeline, activities, and roles and responsibilities clearly described?	Yes. The implementation plan is included as Annex 4 and sufficiently details the timeline and activities. Roles and responsibilities are adequately described under each intervention area.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?	Yes. UNICEF Cambodia will work closely with the Directorate General of Policy and Planning (DGPP) to lead in the planning, coordination and monitoring of implementation. UNICEF will also work with other relevant MoEYS technical departments on specific activities. Where necessary, UNICEF will also engage with Provincial and District Offices of Education to ensure smooth and timely delivery of key interventions.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements are sufficiently described to determine flow of funds? *	Yes. Appropriate arrangements are described for the funds flow mechanisms from the GA to the Department of Finance (DoF) and thereon to schools, and from the GA to other implementing partners.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context? *	Yes. DoF and MoEYS will be responsible for financial management. UNICEF will provide technical assistance and oversight for financial management, financial reporting and procurement. DoF and MoEYS expenditure will be subject to approved procedural manuals. UNICEF will apply *harmonised approach to cash transfers* (HACT) procedures to financial management, procurement and audit.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?	Yes. Most of the budget will be distributed through school block grants, but component 2 (communication on return to school) includes sub-contracting to NGOs who have experience in this area. UNICEF will enter into a Programme Cooperation Agreement/s (PCA) with the NGO partner/s.

☒	☐	☐	Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?	Yes. UNICEF will provide technical support through a team of education specialists based in the country office and by bringing in additional technical experts as required. The program will also receive support from UNICEF Cambodia's other sectoral teams, such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, communications, child protection and social protection specialists. A technical-level steering committee comprising MoEYS and development partners will be formed to oversee the implementation of the program. It is envisioned that the steering committee will meet on a quarterly basis.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal ensure implementation arrangements will be in place to ensure rapid start-up? Specifically, will fiduciary and administrative arrangements allow for disbursement by the proposed start date? Will major interventions will be ready to be launched by the proposed start date? *	Yes. Fiduciary arrangements will use existing administrative and management structure developed between the GA, DoF and MoEYS. Provision for rapid procurement to prevent delay in provision of learning materials is adequately described in the proposal.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Yes	No	N/A	**Risk Assessment and Mitigation**	
☒	☐	☐	Are risks / insecurity that could threaten any vulnerable population (e.g. girls, displaced children) identified, with mitigation actions proposed?[4]	Yes. The proposal mentions that all children could be at a greater risk of: Gender-based violence/domestic violence; sexual and physical abuse; and forced labor. In the back-to-school campaign and Communication for Education interventions, emphasis will be placed on these risks and key messages will be developed in consideration of the situation of girls and boys in preparing to go back to school.
☒	☐	☐	Are risks related to fiduciary arrangements, including financial management, procurement, governance, and safeguards issues (harm to people or the environment) and adequate mitigation actions are identified? *	Yes. A financial risk assessment is included which adequately identifies appropriate risks and their mitigations. UNICEF will apply HACT procedures to financial management, procurement and audit. HACT procedures are designed to mitigate implicit risks of misuse and misappropriation of funds. Adequate description of financial controls to ensure that block grant expenditure is eligible and bona fide was provided by the GA in response to a request by the Secretariat. There are no significant civil works programmed in the activities, so environmental risks are understandably not identified as key risks.

[4] For example, does the proposal refer to international health and safety standards regarding school closure, or guidance on re-opening schools?

				Amongst the programmed activities is the distribution of advice and a handbook to assist teachers in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on students with regard to child protection.
☐	☐	☒	For grants exceeding US $5 million and the Grant Agent is an INGO: are there any significant risks regarding the capacity of the country office to perform the GA role that do not appear to be mitigated (e.g. through increased support from regional or HQ level, etc.)?	n/a
☐	☒	☐	Does the proposal trigger any GPE policies (e.g., GPE Private Sector Policy) which would require extraordinary consultation with GPE governance structures?	Non-public schools are not directly supported and will not receive any funding under the grant proposal. All continuous and adaptive learning resources produced are expected to be made publicly available and so will be accessible to pupils in any type of education - as well as parents supporting home learning and anyone else who is interested. The support to schools outlined in the proposal will be delivered to public government schools only, which are identified/registered in the MoEYS Education Management Information System
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Please provide additional comments/details, if necessary.				

Feedback in the above templated was completed, reviewed and approved for CEO decision by the following persons, on the date indicated:

Completed by (COVID-19 Education Specialist): Anna-Maria Tammi **Date:** 7/20/2020

Completed by (Risk and Finance related questions as per *): Simon Hall **Date:** 7/17/2020

Completed by (M & E related questions as per **): Rudraksh Mitra **Date:** 7/20/2020

Reviewed by (CL): Alexandra Solano **Date:** 7/28/2020

Reviewed by (QA): David Balwanz **Date:** 7/28/2020

Reviewed by (Team Lead): Matthew Smith **Date:** 7/29/2020

Approved by (Manager 1 if >$1m and up to $10m): Margarita Licht **Date:** 7/28/2020