GUINEA-BISSAU - COVID-19 AF: Approval Memo to CEO

Review meeting participants: Margarita Focas Licht, Matthew Smith, Naoko Hosaka, Edward Davis, David Balwanz, Sissy Helguero, Ana Tobar Lozano, Anne Joncheray, Adrien Boucher and Alves Fatima.

Review meeting date: June 11, 2020

Date of proposal submission: May 22, 2020

1. **Grant Summary:**

Guinea-Bissau submitted a proposal for an 18 month program that focuses on preschool to basic education and is directly mapped to the MoEGB's COVID-19 Response Plan. The proposal supports the continuation of quality learning and the protection of the health and wellbeing of students, teachers, and the school community during the school closure. It also promotes the return of students after the reopening of schools. The proposal's highlights are a) Distance Learning (TV and Radio programs) b) the distribution of safe school kits (cleaning material, thermometer, and masks) c) supporting sector coordination for efficient COVID-19 response. A set of activities will address School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) through teachers and school staff training. Also, there is a set of activities to encourage returning to school, mainly through ensuring access to WASH facilities and the development of communication materials to raise public awareness of COVID-19. The reopening of school activities focus on developing assessment tools and development and training of teachers for accelerated learning programs.

2. **Key Information**

Country: Guinea-Bissau		
a.	Accelerated Funding Covid-19 Allocation	US$ 5,000,000 revised to US$ 3,500,000 by GPE Board on May 29, 2020
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	US$ 5,000,000
c.	**Allocation Recommended**	US$ 2,735,000[1]
d.	Grant Agent	UNICEF
e.	Agency Fee % + US$ amount	7 % (US$ 191,450)
f.	Grant duration	18 months
g.	Expected Start Date	07/01/2020
h.	Expected End Date	12/31/2021

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 partial approval**

4. **Decision language:**

[1] Includes US$ 466,600 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 Guinea Bissau in the amount of US$ 2,735,000 plus an additional US$ 191,450 in agency fees to UNICEF as the Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of July 1, 2020, and an end date of December 31, 2020.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Guinea Bissau 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.

The GPE Board approved the COVID-19 funding mechanism on a first come, first served approach for the first US$ 125 million of the original US$ 225 million COVID-19 country funding window. Although the remaining US$ 100 million has been subsequently significantly increased to US$ 350 million by the Board, the demand for the COVID-19 funding mechanism still exceeds the available funds and the maximum allocation for Guinea Bissau is now US$ 3,500,000, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 5,000,000.

Unless otherwise indicated by the decision language request for Report-Back, and keeping within the original budget of each component, the government and grant agent have full authority to prioritize within the approved activities of the original application, after consultation with the local education group.

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 immediately with implementation of the components of the approved amount (US$ 2,735,000), while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat by July 22, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework, budget and implementation plan), following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government. This revised program document needs to prioritize activities so as to keep within the new grant allocation of US$ 3,500,000 and must address the requirements noted below. Upon receipt of the revised program document, the Secretariat will verify compliance with each of the requirements below and will assess the revised documentation in order to make a decision on the remainder of the allocation that is not yet approved (US$ 765,000).

    i. Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis must be prioritized (including the radio-based learning program, WASH and school hygiene activities, the back-to-school campaign and the accelerated learning program) over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose. In particular, the Secretariat is requesting that stronger justification be provided if the following activities are maintained: 2.1.2 fabric masks: the high volume of financing does not appear to be justified; 4.2.4 the construction of latrines activity needs to be rebalanced in comparison with other WASH activities more focused on COVID-19 response; 4.3 the cash transfer program needs to be conditional and

linked to the return to school of vulnerable children. Based on a communication with the grant agent, the Secretariat agrees that activity 5.3.3 (school-in-a-box kits) can be removed. The Secretariat is available to accompany the country in the process to adjust the proposal to comply with the aforementioned requests.

ii. All indicators in the proposed Results Framework should be disaggregated by gender, where relevant.

The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are recommendations rather than requirements:

Observations

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.

b) An appropriate reduction in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.

c) The Secretariat notes the participatory approach used to develop the sector's response plan, and further encourages the authorities to make it available online and beyond the LEG membership.

d) The Secretariat recognizes the important role of community schools to the sector in reaching children in remote and marginalized areas. Recognizing the many areas of alignment between schooling and oversight in community schools and public schools, the Secretariat recommends government and local partners initiate a dialogue over, and support progress toward, the development and financing of a government regulatory framework for community schools. If needed, partners may consider drawing on financing in the existing ESPIG to support this work.

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, advanced 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: July 1, 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:			GUINEA-BISSAU	
Grant Agent:			UNICEF	
Date of Submission:			Request submitted to GPE Secretariat: 5/22/2020	
			Secretariat Review completed: 6/27/2020	
Yes	No	N/A	**Eligibility**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the Country eligible for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding?	GPE Board approved originally on March 31, 2020 a US$ 5M allocation which was subsequently revised on May 29, 2020 to US$ 3.5M.
☒	☐	☐	Is the grant agent accredited by GPE? *Please confirm via COVID-19 FAQ list.*	UNICEF is the GA.
☒	☐	☐	Has GA selection followed a clear and transparent process, with the process documented in the proposal?[2]	The proposal describes the GA selection process and mentions that UNICEF was unanimously designated as the GA during a LEG meeting, given UNICEF's comparative advantage in emergency response. Communications shared with the GPE Secretariat confirm the transparency of the selection process.
☒	☐	☐	Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?	The proposal mentions that the MoEGB was working together with partners (UNICEF, World Bank, European Union) to develop the COVID-19 Contingency Plan. The proposal also mentioned a validation meeting with the assistance of a UNICEF-led working group on May 21, 2020. Communications shared with the GPE Secretariat confirm that the

[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.

				proposal was shared through LEG email list to partners for their feedback and it was endorsed by LEG. There is no Education Cluster in Guinea-Bissau.
☒	☐	☐	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.).*	The government Contingency Plan is available to key stakeholders (LEG members) by email. Recommended Decision Language (observation): **The Secretariat notes the participatory approach used to develop the sector's response plan, and further encourages the authorities to make it available online and beyond the LEG membership.**
☒	☐	☐	Will the program become effective within one month of GPE approval, with completion within 12-18 months from the date of program effectiveness?	The Cover Letter shows a timeline from July 2020 to December 2021 (18 months). The proposal shows that some activities are already in place, demonstrating the proposal's capacity to become effective within one month of GPE approval.
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 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?	i) Yes. Students from preschool and basic education (grades 1-9) will be supported (public and community schools). ii) Yes. The proposal supports the continuation of quality learning and the protection of the health and well-being of students and teachers. The proposal focuses on components to support learning during the schools' closure and to prepare schools to reopen and is within the boundary of eligible activities under this funding window. iii) Most of the proposed activities are linked with the program objectives and intermediate outcomes. But some budgeted activities seem excessive in terms of volume in comparison with other activities or are poorly targeted. The proposal will support distance learning (TV/Radio/printed materials), and several activities will support schools' recovery and mitigate learning gaps, taking into account gender issues and children with disabilities. The proposal will also support to scale up psychosocial, health, WASH services, and a cash transfer program to mitigate the risk of dropout.

				Activities for the reopening of schools are focused on developing assessment tools and accelerated learning programs. The Secretariat is questioning inclusion of the following activities and will require stronger justification before approving them. It is therefore suggested that a partial approval is provided for an amount of US$ 2,735,000, which was calculated by subtracting the costs for the following activities: • 2.1.2 Child size fabric masks (US$ 1,210,000) • 4.2.4 Construction of inclusive and gender sensitive latrines, for girls and boys (US$ 300,000) • 4.3 Support for vulnerable families with children at risk of dropping out of school (US$ 690,000) • 5.3.3. School in a box kit (US$ 80,000) In case the country wishes to keep these activities (2.1.2&4.2.4&4.3), synergy with other activities need to be taken into consideration, and the activity needs to be clearly designed to focus on COVID-linked efforts to improve the learning of the most vulnerable children. In summary, the team evaluated whether US$ 2,734,723 of the activities comply with the requirements of the COVID window and determined that it does. Hence this element of US$ 2.735M will be approved. The remainder of the $3.5M new Board allocation (ie $765,000) will require further justification before approval. Recommended Decision Language: **Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis must be prioritized (including the radio-based learning program, WASH and school hygiene activities, the back-to-school campaign and the accelerated learning program) over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose. In particular, the Secretariat is requesting that stronger justification be provided if the following activities are maintained: 2.1.2 (fabric masks: the high volume of financing does not appear to be justified), 4.2.4 (the construction of latrines activity needs to be rebalanced in comparison with other WASH activities more focused on COVID-19 response), 4.3 (the**

				cash transfer program needs to be conditional and linked to the return to school of vulnerable children). Based on a communication with the grant agent, the Secretariat agrees that activity 5.3.3 (school-in-a-box kits) can be removed. The Secretariat is available to accompany the country in the process to adjust the proposal to comply with the aforementioned requests. Once this decision language is implemented then this program standard will be met.
☒	☐	☐	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).*	The proposal focuses on the most vulnerable children, particularly those attending the 20% of public schools that were affected by strikes at the beginning of the current school year (page 5). Also, there is a geographic focus on areas most affected by the spread of COVID (Bissau, Biombo, and Cacheu) and with the highest number of children out of school (Gabu, Bafatá, Oio, and Cacheu). The proposal also mentions that learning activities will target girls and children with disabilities. According to the GA's communication with GPE Secretariat, the proposal will support these children by creating a system for identifying children with special learning needs in collaboration with the national institute of women and children. Teachers as well as community members will be trained on how to identify such children and how to follow up with them to accompany their learning. For special cases, there will be a referral system to specialists at the central level.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, identify and address specific barriers to learning faced by girls due to COVID-19?	The proposal identifies that girls are at high risk of dropping out of school due to early marriage, pregnancy and participation in domestic and economic activities. The proposal addresses the barriers to learning faced by girls through teachers and school staff training on School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) issues. Girls at-risk of dropout will receive support from the cash-transfer program, however, the Secretariat requests a stronger justification for this program, which currently is not conditional on the return to school of vulnerable children (see above decision language).
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal identify a relevant COVID-19 response coordination mechanism(s) and confirm that the program will be represented in this mechanism?	The proposal describes the coordination mechanism - Technical Committee for the Implementation of the Plan (CTIP) - that includes close work between MoEGB and the GA (UNICEF) to provide support to ensure that COVID-19 implementation coordination functions effectively.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal (i) provide information on the sources of financing for COVID response and early	The proposal mentions that there are additional funds already in place from various partners including the World Bank, the European Union, and UNICEF as part of regular

			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?	support of partners. Communications shared with GPE Secretariat confirmed that the Contingency Plan on COVID-19 response will be solely fund by GPE COVID-19 AF, while complementarity will be sought with the school feeding programs supported by WFP.
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? *	Proposed budget per the application is US$ 5,014,723, slightly over the original GPE Board approved allocation for Guinea-Bissau, and above the revised allocation of US$ 3.5 million.
☒	☐	☐	Does the submitted budget clearly outline component, activity and grant agent implementation support 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) **	A separate spreadsheet is provided and structured per output and activity. Budget assumptions including unit costs and quantities are shown. The budget also shows an amount of US$ 466,600 for the GA implementation support cost, which represents 9% of the budget for the original requested US$ 5 million and is considered reasonable. However, with the budget reduction to US$ 3.5 million, it is anticipated that the implementation support costs will also fall (see standard observation decision language – since it is standard, it is not repeated here in the matrix but above in the decision language section).
☒	☐	☐	Is there a clear indication of the program's sources of funding, including which parts of the program are supported by each source? *	Proposal briefly indicates that GPE COVID-19 grant will be complementary to other funds from various partners including the World Bank, European Union, and UNICEF. In addition, a separate budget is provided for the national Emergency Response plan detailing costs, assumptions, sources of funding, and implementation partner per activity.
☒	☐	☐	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. **	Budget assumptions are in line with the program design.
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	M&E activities are costed, and M&E arrangements appear to be adequate.

			implementation and results reporting? [3] Are roles and responsibilities clearly mapped? **	
☐	☒	☐	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 proposed results framework includes output and outcome indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification, and frequency of reporting. The Grant Agent has confirmed agreement to include gender disaggregation in the proposed results framework. **Recommended decision language:** **All indicators in the proposed Results Framework should be disaggregated by gender, where relevant.** Once this decision language is implemented then this program standard will be met.
☒	☐	☐	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 core indicators are included in the proposed results framework. Reporting arrangements are adequate.
☒	☐	☐	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 learning from evidence plan and associated costs are 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?	The proposal includes a timeline and describes the roles and responsibilities for each activity.

[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.

☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?	The proposal describes an implementation arrangement including Technical Committee for the Implementation of the Plan (CTIP). The implementation arrangements also include the partnership agreements with some of the I/NGOs that already are in place.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements are sufficiently described to determine flow of funds? *	The program document highlights fiduciary risks if government partners were directly in charge of managing the project. To mitigate the impact of institutional fragility, project management will be ensured by UNICEF (GA). The GA indicated that it will manage the funds utilizing its normal policies and procedures (including HACT) with IPs.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context? *	In Annex 3, the document program explains how UNICEF as a GA will manage the funds utilizing its normal policies and procedures (including HACT). To mitigate the risk that cash transferred to IPs may not be used or reported in accordance with agreements, UNICEF will carry out a risk based micro assessment, spot checks and audits. Procurement arrangements are also described (i.e. competitive tenders, use of two panels to review tenders).
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?	The proposal mentions that UNICEF will use partnerships with NGOs to implement the activities, which is appropriate in the context of this application.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?	A Technical Committee for the Implementation of the Plan (CTIP) and an oversight group will also be established, including senior Ministry officials, members of all Directorates and representatives of key stakeholders such as members of the LEG.
☒	☐	☐	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? *	Implementation arrangements will be in place to ensure start-up of the project, including fiduciary and administrative arrangements. Following a request from the Secretariat, the GA confirmed that emergency procurement procedures exist and can be used in case of necessity, with 3 staff in HQ already in place to provide support.
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	The proposal presents a risk matrix. Communications shared with GPE Secretariat clarify that the proposal will address the risk related to the mitigating action for vulnerable children and girls in particular.

			children) identified, with mitigation actions proposed?[4]	
☒	☐	☐	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? *	**T**he application of HACT (for which an outline of procedures is provided in Annex 3) mitigates implicit fiduciary management risks. UNICEF's responsibility for the grant's financial management is a further mitigating factor. Following a request from the Secretariat, the GA briefly outlined specific risk mitigation measures applicable (i.e. program visits, spots checks, audits). Risk related to safeguards issues are considered in the proposal (i.e. actions for vulnerable children and girls in particular). As no significant civil works are planned, it is reasonable that environmental risks can be assumed to be low and warrant no specific address in the proposal.
☐	☐	☒	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?	The GA has confirmed that only not for profit providers of core education services will receive support from the program. The program does propose activities targeting approximately 300 community schools (or about 20% of all schools reached by the project); under PSES community schools are considered as not for profit non-public providers of core education services. In Guinea Bissau, community schools are generally schools established and financed by communities in remote and marginalized areas where there are no public schools. According to the GA, there is not yet a regulatory framework in existence for community schools in Guinea Bissau; however, the GA communicated that community schools are managed and follow the same rules and procedures as public schools; use the same curricula/ textbooks and are subject to the same supervision by inspectors as government schools. Recommended decision language: **The Secretariat recognizes the important role of community schools to the sector in reaching children in remote and marginalized areas. Recognizing the many areas of**

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

				alignment between schooling and oversight in community schools and public schools, the Secretariat recommends government and local partners initiate a dialogue over, and support progress toward, the development and financing of a government regulatory framework for community schools. If needed, partners may consider drawing on financing in the existing ESPIG to support this work.
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): Adrien Boucher **Date:** 6/22/2020

Completed by (Risk and Finance related questions as per *): Ana Tobar and Anne Joncheray **Date:** 6/10/2020

Completed by (M & E related questions as per **): Sissy Helguero **Date:** 6/6/2020

Reviewed by (CL): Naoko Hosaka **Date:** 6/23/2020

Reviewed by (QA): Edward Davis **Date:** 6/24/2020

Reviewed by (Team Lead): Matthew Smith **Date:** 6/27/2020

Approved by (Manager 1 if >$1m and up to $10m): Margarita Focas Licht **Date: 6/29/2020**