GUYANA - COVID-19 AF: Approval Memo to CEO

The application was virtually reviewed (no meeting) by: Margarita Focas Licht, Matthew Smith, Talia Miranda De Chaisemartin, David Balwanz, Gauri Khanduja, Simon Hall, Ana Tobar Lozano and Anna-Maria Tammi.

1. **Grant Summary:** The program will help to support the MoE's national COVID-19 response and recovery strategies. It will specifically address initiatives that aim to benefit the most vulnerable populations who reside in the hinterland regions, and pockets of coastal regions in deep riverine and rural communities. These areas account for 46% (421) of schools, 30% (3,051) of teachers and 30% (51,734) of learners at the basic levels (nursery to lower secondary). The MoE COVID-19 response and recovery plan focuses on the following strategies: (a) supporting home based / distance learning; (b) developing various types of learning materials for learners and parents; (c) supporting the social and economic well-being of learners, teachers and parents; (d) making school environments safe.

2. Key Information:

Country: Guyana		
a.	Accelerated Funding Covid-19 Allocation	US$ 5,000,000
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	US$ 5,000,000
c.	**Allocation Recommended**	US$ 3,500,000[1]
d.	Grant Agent	UNICEF
e.	Agency Fee % + US$ amount	7% and US$ 245,000
f.	Grant duration	18 months
g.	Expected Start Date	06/5/2020
h.	Expected End Date	11/30/2021

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:** The review team conducted a virtual review of the above-mentioned request in accordance with the GPE standards and recommends the grant for approval.

4. **Decision:**

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 Guyana in the amount of US$3,500,000 plus an additional US$245,000 in agency fees to UNICEF as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 5, 2020, and an end date of November 30, 2021.

[1] Includes US$300,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Guyana 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 Guyana 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 with implementation immediately while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat by June 29, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework and budget), to be sent after grant approval, following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government on the changes including the prioritization.

2. Identify how development partners and civil society will be regularly updated on program progress.

The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are suggestions 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) Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis be prioritized over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose.

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

d) The program provides a strong focus on promoting learning continuity and preparing for the re-opening of schools. Once schools re-open, it is also encouraged that government and partners consider approaches to incentivizing the return to school and addressing learning remediation needs, particularly for the most vulnerable.

e) To ensure public access to the government response plan, the Secretariat recommends that the Ministry of Education post the plan on its website.

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: June 5, 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:			GUYANA	
Grant Agent:			UNICEF	
Date of Submission:			Request submitted to GPE Secretariat: 5/6/2020	
			Secretariat Review completed: 6/1/2020	
Yes	No	N/A	**Eligibility**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the Country eligible for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding?	Yes, for a revised Board allocation of US $3.5 million, a decrease from the original allocation of US$ 5 million.
☒	☐	☐	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. MoE launched a call for expressions of interest for Grant Agent, to which UNICEF responded and was selected by the selection committee.
☒	☐	☐	Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?	MoE distributed the proposal for endorsement to local education partners via email and received endorsement from three partners, including from the teachers union, and no objections.
☒	☐	☐	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*	Yes. The country has confirmed that the national response plan was distributed to key stakeholders such as, UNICEF, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Health and the National COVID-19 Task Force. The teachers union has also received a copy of the plan.

[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.

			publicly available (e.g., Government website, distribution to key stakeholders, etc.).	Observation: **To ensure public access to the government response plan, the Secretariat recommends that the Ministry of Education post the plan on its website.**
☒	☐	☐	Will the program become effective within one month of GPE approval, with completion within 12-18 months from the date of program effectiveness?	Yes, the program would be ready to start in early June and have an implementation period of 18 months.
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, the program covers nursery to secondary (Grade 9). Nursery is equivalent to pre-primary, for children aged 3 yrs 6 months onwards. (ii) Yes. Activities support mitigation and recovery and are aligned with the government's response plan. (iii) Yes. The program is robust and activities are likely to support objectives. The program makes significant investments in distribution of print materials, WASH and hygiene, distribution of PPE, and radio and television learning. The program also supports online approaches for continuity of learning, including hardware support and training for teachers. For the laptops procurement (activity 1.8), these will be distributed to 982 teachers in vulnerable communities in coastal regions, who are known to be engaging their students using digital platforms, and 40 education officers/curriculum specialists who will be providing support by way of training in the use of online platforms and monitoring and assessment support. The number/share of students who can be expected to be reached through these online approaches is 15,171, which represents 29.1% of the students who are from the most vulnerable communities. [These same children are expected to benefit from Component 3, teacher capacity building activities, activities.] Teachers will be expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Education, which will detail that teachers are required to replace lost or damaged laptops during its lifecycle. In addition, teachers' use of the devices for the intended purpose will be tracked.

☒	☐	☐	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 program will specifically benefit the most vulnerable populations (children with special education needs and those living in the riverine, deep coastal rural and hinterland communities). The highest percentages of the poor are in hinterland regions, where the largest proportion of the indigenous population reside. These regions account for 25% of schools, 16% teachers and 18% learners at the basic level. There are also communities/riverine areas in coastal regions that are considered vulnerable communities with similar levels of poverty as those in the above-mentioned hinterland regions. The vulnerable group in the coastal regions account for 28% of schools, 18% teachers and 16% learners. Venezuelan migrants are located in the hinterland regions. They will benefit from all interventions provided through this program, once they are registered in schools. The program document identifies that children with special needs may not have access to distance/ home-based learning opportunities. It proposes to address this by provision of materials and resources for learners with special needs (Strategies section, output 1) Proposed decision language (Observation): **The program provides a strong focus on promoting learning continuity and preparing for the re-opening of schools. Once schools re-open, it is also encouraged that government and partners consider approaches to incentivizing the return to school and addressing learning remediation needs, particularly for the most vulnerable.**
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, identify and address specific barriers to learning faced by girls due to COVID-19?	Yes. The programme will collect data on students and teachers who are affected by GBV, pregnancy, etc. to ensure they receive the requisite care and referral needed to improve their wellbeing. Additionally, the MoE plans to reach students and teachers through radio and television programmes, hotlines, and through on-the-spot counselling provided by the mobile psychosocial units.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal identify a relevant COVID-19 response coordination mechanism(s) and confirm	Technical responsibilities for implementation lie with the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) of the MoE. A mid-term review of the program will be conducted in consultation with key stakeholders including the development

			that the program will be represented in this mechanism?	partners, civil society and the private sector that will make up the Local Education Group (LEG). Suggested decision language: **Identify how development partners and civil society will be regularly updated on program progress.**
☒	☐	☐	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 World Bank is providing some financing and also adjusting an existing program to respond to COVID. Domestic resources are very limited given the political situation (no approved budget). According to the response plan, UNESCO and Caribbean Development Bank have also pledged support, but the amount is not known yet. (ii) N/A. ECW is not engaged in Guyana.
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? *	The proposed budget is the $5 million, which matches the original maximum country allocation, but is below the revised allocation of $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 budget spreadsheet is provided, which outlines components, activities, and GA implementation support costs, which are equal to 6% of the grant (at the original allocation) and this is considered reasonable. Decision Language: **The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework and budget), to be sent retroactively after grant approval, following discussion and agreement by the LEG, and reflecting the adjustments outlined in this decision language. It should be noted that an appropriate reduction is expected in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.**

☒	☐	☐	Is there a clear indication of the program's sources of funding, including which parts of the program are supported by each source? *	A high-level table listing potential funding from other donors and the components to be funded by each is provided in the MoE- COVID Response Country Plan.
☒	☐	☐	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. **	Overall, budget assumptions align with the results framework and other parts of the proposal document.
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 results framework, implementation plan and the budget together are likely to support effective monitoring of program implementation with roles and responsibilities 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 program includes a results framework with output indicators. All indicators will be disaggregated by gender and special education needs (SEN). The results framework has been updated to reflect the changes.
☒	☐	☐	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 have been included, the core indicator on assessments will also be included in the revised results framework.
☒	☐	☐	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) **	The program proposes documentation of best practices and lessons learned, contribution to knowledge generation and evidence-based planning particularly on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the response and recovery plan. The program budgets a mid-term review and learning from best practices.

[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.

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 timeline is sufficiently detailed and notes the responsible units for each activity.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?	Yes. The MoE would be the implementing agency for the Project. Technical responsibilities would lie with the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) of the MoE, while fiduciary responsibilities would be managed by the Planning Unit of the MoE. A Technical Coordinator would be responsible for supporting execution of project activities, agree work plans with the technical leads for each subcomponent, and coordinate implementation among MoE departments. The coordinator would report to the Crisis Management Committee and to the Chief Planning Officer of the MoE.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements are sufficiently described to determine flow of funds? *	Yes. Funds will be received into and disbursed from a designated treasury account.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context? *	Yes. Fiduciary responsibilities to be managed by the Planning Unit of the MoE, which currently handles financial management and procurement for existing programmes. Audit and procurement arrangements, including UN HACT compliance requirements, are included and appear appropriate.
☐	☐	☒	Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?	N/A. The GA will disburse the Grant on quarterly basis into an existing account from which the MoE will use them to implement all activities.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?	Yes. Implementation will be by MoE, with the GA responsible for negotiating fund transfer arrangements, fiduciary management, and ensuring quality assurance under the responsibility of the Deputy Representative, and with support by an Education Specialist. GA activities include providing operational and technical assistance, coordination and program reporting.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal ensure implementation arrangements will be in place to ensure rapid start-	Yes. Existing fiduciary staff in the MOE Planning Unit currently managing other programmes will handle procurement, financial management, accounting

			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? *	responsibilities. A designated account is in place. UNICEF LTA and Level-3 Scale-Up arrangements will allow for fast-track procurement.
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]	The MoE team reviewed risks as requested by the Secretariat as no risks relating to vulnerable populations were initially identified. MoE determined that students' dropout rate is likely to be highest among students living in hinterland and remote riverine communities, especially those who come from households where their parents' education level is low, and from schools with inadequate resources (teachers and materials). A mitigating factor would be the interventions (materials, training and other support for teachers and parents) provided by this programme.
☒	☐	☐	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. The risk matrix and implementation identify relevant fiduciary and procurement risks, mitigated mostly through UNICEF HACT compliance requirements. The activities to be funded do not include civil works, hence it is reasonable not to consider environmental impact as a key risk.
☐	☐	☒	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	No. While students from non-public schools will benefit from television and radio broadcasts, the program does not provide direct support to such schools.

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

			extraordinary consultation with GPE governance structures?	
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 5/7/2020**
Completed by (Risk and Finance related questions as per *): Simon Hall and Ana Tobar Lozano	**Date 05/07/2020**
Completed by (M & E related questions as per **): Gauri Khanduja	**Date 5/7/2020**
Reviewed by (CL): Talia de Chaisemartin	**Date 5/18/2020**
Reviewed by (QA): David Balwanz	**Date 5/27/2020**
Reviewed by (Team Lead): Matthew Smith	**June 1, 2020**
Approved by (jointly by QA and Team Lead if <$1m):	**n/a**
Approved by (Manager 1 if >$1m and up to $10m): Margarita Licht	**Date 6/2/2020**
Approved by (Manager 2 if >$10m):	**n/a**