TONGA - COVID-19 AF: Approval Memo to CEO

Review meeting participants: David Balwanz, Nilse Ryman, Daisuke Kanazawa, Ana Tobar Lozano, Yuri Borovsky, Simon Hall (offline), Gauri Khanduja, Alexandra Solano (offline) and Anna-Maria Tammi.

Review meeting date: October 14, 2020

Date of proposal submission: September 30, 2020

1. **Grant Summary:** Even though COVID has not yet become prevalent in Tonga, the country has chosen to adopt a plan to enhance preparedness in view of the particular vulnerability of small islands, and has chosen to use GPE funding accordingly, which is consistent with the parameters of the COVID window. The GPE AF grant will be used to support implementation of the COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness, and Response Framework (EPPRF). The objective is to support the development and delivery of multimodal lessons for early childhood education, inclusive education, and primary schools for home-schooling and the development of guidance for parents and caregivers to be used in the event of further school closures due to disasters or COVID-19 outbreaks. The program will also support the development of the capacity of teachers to be able to support students learning in a variety of media (TV, radio, online). This will enable Tonga's education systems to develop more capable and flexible teachers who will have enhanced skills. The program is designed to be flexible to allow MET to respond rapidly to the changing situation in Tonga (for example, if the national response coordination plans are updated). To date there are not yet any reported cases of COVID-19 in Tonga. Technical support will be embedded in MET to reduce the strain on personnel and systems from the dual emergencies. Additionally, the program is designed to be coordinated through the Ministry's Education Cluster (EC) and Local Education Group (LEG) with the national and international response, building upon other activities. Finally, the program is designed to be sustainable, building on investments in disaster risk reduction and resilience and strengthening the education sector in the medium to long term. Resources and training provided by the COVID program will be of ongoing benefit to Tonga's educational systems. The training of teachers and sharing of technical support will reduce costs and ensure more resources reach those in need for current and future emergencies.

Country: Tonga		
a.	Accelerated Funding Covid-19 Allocation	US$ 750,000
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	US$ 749,982
c.	**Allocation Recommended**	US$ 749,982[1]
d.	Grant Agent	Save the Children UK
e.	Agency Fee % + US$ amount	7% (US$ 52,499)
f.	Grant duration	14 months
g.	Expected Start Date	11/01/2020
h.	Expected End Date	12/31/2021

[1] Includes US$ 66,658 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

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.

2. Recommendation: Grant is recommended for approval

3. 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 Tonga in the amount of US$749,982 plus an additional US$52,499 in agency fees to Save the Children UK as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of November 1, 2020, and an end date of 31 December 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Tonga 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 Secretariat 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) Investments in developing resilient distance learning systems could support program objectives far beyond the 18-month duration of this accelerated funding program . Given this potential, the Secretariat appreciates MET and country partner attention to pursuing a sustainable and capacity-strengthening approach to integrating technologies (i.e., SMS, video and learning platform) into MET systems.

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: October 27, 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:			TONGA	
Grant Agent:			Save the Children UK	
Date of Submission:			Request submitted to GPE Secretariat: 9/30/2020	
			Secretariat Review completed: 10/20/2020	
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 (Save the Children UK). Save the Children Australia was selected as Grant Agent for GPE COVID AF but as of October 2020, it is waiting for accreditation from FRC. Given the pending accreditation would impact the timely transfer of funds to Tonga, Save Australia confirmed their agreement for SCUK to serve as Grant Agent for this program. The PD confirms the concurrence of country partners to this approach.
☒	☐	☐	Has GA selection followed a clear and transparent process, with the process documented in the proposal?[2]	Yes. The GA selection process was supported by open dialogue amongst local partners and the MET regarding different GA candidates. At the end of these deliberations, Save the Children was selected as Grant Agent by MET and endorsed by LEG on September 18.

[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.

☒	☐	☐	Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?	Yes. The program has been designed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) in coordination with the LEG. A letter has been annexed with the signatures of LEG members endorsing the application via a letter from Government of Tonga (GoT).
☒	☐	☐	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. Tonga's COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF) is available on the GoT's website and is aligned with Tonga's National COVID-19 Action Plan.
☒	☐	☐	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's start date is November 1st, 2020 and is to be completed within 14 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 proposal covers basic education up to Form 2 (lower secondary). Some activities could reach Early Childhood Education (ECE) and private schools but at no cost, such as radio and TV broadcasts/lessons. (ii) Yes. Schools in Tonga have not closed for the pandemic as Tonga has been COVID-19 free. However, Tonga is preparing for the potential damage caused by the pandemic. Given Tonga's experience with natural disasters, the country is aware that a spread of COVID in the island will lead to the closure of all schools. Therefore, the country has been testing scenarios in the event of further school closures and has used these trials to prepare the education system for flexible and distance learning. The proposal includes production of learning continuity programs broadcast through radio, TV and online as well as development and printing of guides for teachers, students and parents to ensure continuity of learning and the

				development of capacity in teachers to create and deliver lessons using distance/flexible education methods. (iii) Yes. A results chain is included outlining how the activities reach the expected outputs and outcome (outcome is part of Tonga's COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF)).
☒	☐	☐	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. While the scope of the program is national, the program addresses vulnerable populations such as children from poorer families and those living in rural areas by developing home-schooling materials in different, accessible medias. The program mentions that 42 percent of households have access to both internet and computer, so to address this, the program proposes a multimodal approach to include audio, video and internet in addition to printed materials. Parental literacy levels are also considered, as well as producing materials in Tongan and English. The program identifies that children with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable and plans to provide customized learning packages (transcripts, audio versions). These may also include assistive technologies such as screen readers, if applicable. The evaluation of the program also seeks to understand impact of providing such materials on the learning of children with disabilities.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, identify and address specific barriers to learning faced by girls due to COVID-19?	Yes. The program document shows that the enrolment for girls is higher than boys in Tonga. The document mentions that violence against women and girls is common; around half of Tonga women have experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence or both since they turned 15 (often from male family members). The program document confirms that "an equal number of male and female actors/presenters will be used and all scripts will be

				checked for inclusivity, positive messages and cultural appropriateness before recording." It was also clarified that women caregivers will be encouraged to act as positive role models, while male caregivers will be encouraged to recognize the importance of learning for girls to help alleviate barriers to girls' learning. Furthermore, parents will be encouraged to support girls in equal access of tools such as phones and tablets.
☒	☐	☐	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 MET COVID-19 Technical Working Group (TWG) will ensure effective implementation of the GPE activities as part of their overall responsibility to implement the Contingency Plan. The monitoring of the program will be done by MET with support from Save the Children. MET will share lessons learned and quarterly reports summarizing outputs and implementation progress with Senior Management Team, Education Cluster and LEG members.
☒	☐	☐	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. Program document mentions that GoT has invested USD1.7 million in its National COVID-19 Action Plan for the education sector, specifically for Tonga's COVID-19 Education Planning, Preparedness and Response Framework (EPPRF). UNICEF and Save the Children have also provided support to the "learn at home" Trials (with financial support from GPE). (ii) Yes. For example, this proposal responds to the needs identified in the Trials (mentioned above) where schools were closed and children were supported through home schooling. While MET has and will continue to address outcome 1 of the EPPRF (physical and emotional health of learners and teachers), outcome 2 (education system is more resilient, and all students have access to continuing educational opportunities) is being supported through this proposal. The program is designed to be coordinated through the Ministry's Education Cluster (EC) and Local

				Education Group (LEG) with the national and international response, building upon other activities and aid to avoid duplication of effort. ECW is not engaged in Tonga.
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. The proposed budget is consistent with the revised allocation of US$750,000.
☒	☐	☐	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) **	Yes. The proposed budget is structured per outcome, output, and activity with unit cost and quantities clearly indicated. Estimated unit costs are considered reasonable. GA implementation support costs of US$66,658 are also outlined and represent 9% of the total proposed budget.
☒	☐	☐	Is there a clear indication of the program's sources of funding, including which parts of the program are supported by each source? *	Yes. Program document presents a table indicating sources of funding to parallel projects that will complement GPE funding.
☒	☐	☐	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. Budget assumptions are consistent with other parts of the program design including the Result 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? **	Yes. Under the monitoring, evaluation and learning from evidence section, the document outlines that the Ministry of Education and Training will be responsible for monitoring the program supported by an embedded Save the Children MEAL Specialist. The framework has also been costed.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program include a complete results framework, including the key output and outcome indicators, baselines and targets and data	Yes. The program includes a complete results framework, including the key indicators, baselines, targets and means

[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.

			sources? *Indicators should be disaggregated by gender where relevant. **	of verification. Wherever relevant, the indicators are gender disaggregated
☒	☐	☐	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? **	Yes. The Grant Agent acknowledged that all core indicators proposed will be reported as both the number and the percentage of the beneficiary population reached. An updated results framework will be provided which reflects this.
☒	☐	☐	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) **	Yes, it includes a costed learning from evidence approach
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. A timeline with implementer, amounts and activities (as well as location of activity) is included.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?	Yes. While a Program Implementation Manual is to be developed with detailed implementation arrangements, the program document provides enough information and management of outputs (a Program Management Unit (PMU) is to be embedded into MET and MET divisions/ units will be responsible for the main activities).
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently described to determine flow of funds? *	Yes. Flow of funds arrangements are adequately described: funds will be transferred between the GA and a designated Govt. Account and releases of tranches of funds following submission of statements of expenditure.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context? *	Yes. Arrangements including staffing, procedures and systems are adequately described.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?	Yes. The program aims to sub-contract the national radio station regarding the radio script activities with clear arrangements clearly described. The main radio station to be used is the sole public broadcaster and is Government

				owned. The arrangements with the radio station worked very smoothly during the two Trial Days. There are also some private radio stations. During the trial days, a private broadcaster 87.5FM was also utilised and this arrangement went well. There are no privately owned TV stations and the Government owned TV broadcaster managed school lessons well during the Trial Days. Any costs incurred will be met as part of the Tonga Government's National Action Plan for COVID-19 by the National Emergency Management Committee. All human resource inputs required will be MET staff and are noted in the project budget.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?	Yes. While program oversight lies on MET through a Program Management Unit (PMU), the Grant Agent will support MET's oversight role, as well as provide performance management and technical support as part of its GA role.
☒	☐	☐	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. The Grant Agent will embed a small short-term PMU into MET to provide additional technical advice, compliance and fiduciary support due to the high demands on the Ministry during the COVID-19 emergency. Per the timeline, the PMU will be staffed by November, with a Program Manager and relevant PMU staff to be hired by Save The Children in consultation with MET, with Tongan locals preferred. Main interventions are to start in November 2020.
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. While the PIM will contain a full risk matrix and mitigation strategies, the program document includes a summary of the highest risks, including risks related to child protection or gender-based violence involving program/partner staff. MET and Save the Children will also put in place safeguarding policies and plans for children and vulnerable adults. In follow up with the GA, it was confirmed that adequate safeguards are in place for IT / laptop procurement and use.
☒	☐	☐	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. Risk rating is High for Operational and Fiduciary risks relating to recruitment and high turnover of PMU staff, as well as overreliance on PMU, difficulty in managing remotely and lack of capacity of MET staff. Reasonable mitigation measures are included to address these risks. Program investments in capacity building of MET staff and use of open source video hosting and learning platforms are positively noted. **Proposed Observation** Investments in developing resilient distance learning systems could support program objectives far beyond the 18-month duration of this accelerated funding program. Given this potential, the Secretariat appreciates MET and country partner attention to pursuing a sustainable and capacity-strengthening approach to integrating technologies (i.e., SMS, video and learning platform) into MET systems.
☐	☐	☒	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

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

☐	☒	☐	Does the proposal trigger any GPE policies (e.g., GPE Private Sector Policy) which would require extraordinary consultation with GPE governance structures?	No. The program document confirms that for profit schooling providers (incl. private schools and ECE centres) will not be directly supported by the project. Though these schools may benefit from some project supported activities (such as radio and TV transmissions). Community schools (not for profit non state schools) will benefit from some activities (such as the distance learning guides from component 1) directly financed by the program. These schools operate under the oversight of the Tonga National Council of Directors of Education Systems. In the Education Act 2013, the Government sets the agenda for all schools in Tonga, inclusive of non state and community schools. This includes licensing and certification of schools (Sec 3 Part II, 5(j)), development of curricula and instruction materials (5(h)), monitoring and evaluation of boards of education and other school authorities (5(k)), ensuring efficiency and effectiveness (5(r)), seeking assistance to support the educational goals of the Government (5(t)) accounting for donor funding and meeting reporting obligations to donor parties and development partners (5(u)), and registration and certification of teachers. Ministry authorities extend to the registration and inspection of all schools. The GA response notes that only staffing and remuneration is managed by the schools independently, as well as, at religious schools, curriculum for religion classes. [The Act was updated in 2016, but without changes to the above text]. Based on this information, this assessment confirms the presence of a regulatory framework for not for profit non state providers of core education services in the country.

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): Alexandra Solano **Date:** 10/01/2020

Completed by (Risk and Finance related questions as per *): Ana Tobar Lozano and Simon Hall **Date** 10/01/2020

Completed by (M & E related questions as per **): Gauri Khanduja **Date:** 9/30/2020

Reviewed by (CL): Daisuke Kanazawa **Date** 10/2/2020

Reviewed by (QA): David Balwanz **Date** 10/20/2020

Approved by (Reviewing Manager and Team Lead if <$1m): Nilse Ryman, David Balwanz **Date** 10/20/2020, 10/20/2020