ZIMBABWE - COVID-19 AF: Approval Memo to CEO

The application was reviewed virtually (no meeting) by: Margarita Focas Licht, Matthew Smith, Lucinda Ramos, David A. Balwanz, Rudraksh Mitra, Simon Hall, Ana Tobar Lozano, Alice Yang and Dan Zhang.

Date of final proposal submission: May 7, 2020

1. **Grant Summary:**

The program is aligned to respond to the Zimbabwe COVID-19 Education Response Strategy and focuses on basic education (ECD A to Form 4, the highest grade of lower secondary education). The overall objective of the program is to ensure the continuity of learning using multiple approaches to reach most vulnerable children at home and prepare schools for better and safe reopening. At the response stage, the program supports provision of alternative education programs (through radio or digital platforms) and learning materials to ensure the continuity of learning during school closure. Proposed activities at the early recovery phase include developing guide notes and information, education and communication materials (IEC); providing sanitation and WASH to targeted schools; developing a "teacher kit" with protective equipment such as masks and hygiene supplies; and providing psychosocial support services to students. These interventions will be guided by the Education Cluster Technical Working Group (TWG) in charge of schools opening and will support the objective that students and teachers in targeted areas can safely return to improved schools.

2. **Key Information**

Country: Zimbabwe		
a.	Accelerated Funding Covid-19 Allocation	US$ 10 million revised to US$ 7 million by GPE Board on May 29, 2020
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	US$ 10 million
c.	**Allocation Recommended**	US$ 7 million[1]
d.	Grant Agent	UNICEF
e.	Agency Fee % + US$ amount	7% and US$ 490,000
f.	Grant duration	18 months
g.	Expected Start Date	6/5/2020
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: Grant is recommended for approval.**

4. **Decision Language:**

[1] Includes US$920,000 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 Zimbabwe 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 June 5, 2020, and an end date of November 30, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognizes with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Zimbabwe in preparing a 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 Zimbabwe is now US$ 7,000,000, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 10,000,000.

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.

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) To ensure public access to the government response plan, the Secretariat recommends that MoPSE post the plan on its website.

e) The Secretariat positively notes the synergy of the program with activities and financing of other partners, including the integration of activities financed through the GPE Global Grant to support COVID-19 Response (WASH, materials provision to disadvantaged learners, radio learning).

f) The Secretariat notes that school feeding for vulnerable children is included in the COVID-19 Response Plan and emphasizes that this is a critical aspect of support to ensure the most vulnerable children will be able to return to school. Since school feeding is not among the activities proposed for GPE funding (it is an option under the SIGs), the Secretariat encourages further dialogue among partners to ensure school feeding is prioritized, including in the most vulnerable areas, through other sources of funding.

g) As country partners finalize the 'essential package' for learners and teachers [activity 2.2.1] and the focus of the SIG [activity 2.2.2], the Secretariat recommends that due consideration be given to demand-side constraints to learners return to and participation in school.

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:			ZIMBABWE	
Grant Agent:			UNICEF	
Date of Submission:			Request submitted to GPE Secretariat: 5/7/2020	
			Secretariat Review completed: 5/28/2020	
Yes	No	N/A	**Eligibility**	
☒	☐	☐	Is the Country eligible for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding?	Yes, GPE Board approved originally on March 31, 2020 a US$ 10M allocation which was subsequently revised on May 29, 2020 to US$ 7M.
☒	☐	☐	Is the grant agent accredited by GPE? *Please confirm via COVID-19 FAQ list.*	Yes, UNICEF is GA.
☒	☐	☐	Has GA selection followed a clear and transparent process, with the process documented in the proposal?[2]	UNICEF was selected as Grant Agent (GA), and the local education partners were informed of this decision through the Permanent Secretary, after a transparent and open process called by the MoPSE for the selection of the GA for the COVID-19 accelerated funding.
☒	☐	☐	Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?	The application has been endorsed by the LEG and the Education Cluster.

[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.

☒	☐	☐	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 Education Cluster Strategy is not posted on the Ministry of Education website as at time of review, but the strategy is available online from websites of partners, and the Ministry provides a summary of the COVID-19 response plan on its website. The preparation of the strategy is fully supported by the Education Cluster and its partners. Led by the MoPSE, and co-led by Save the Children and UNICEF, the Education Cluster is comprised of more than 22 partners with long established presence and experience in implementing Education in Emergencies (EiE) programming in Zimbabwe. Proposed decision language (as an observation): **To ensure public access to the government response plan, the Secretariat recommends that MoPSE 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 implementation period is 18 months, from June 1, 2020 to November 30, 2021.
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?	The proposed program focuses mainly on basic education (ECD A to Form 4, the highest grade of lower secondary education in Zimbabwe). The proposed activities are within the boundary of eligible activities under GPE COVID-19 AF guidelines and are aligned to respond to the Zimbabwe COVID-19 Education Response Strategy to address response, early recovery and recovery phases of the plan. The overall objective of the intervention will be to ensure the continuity of learning using multiple approaches to reach most vulnerable children at home and prepare schools for better and safe reopening. The program plans to target the most vulnerable groups and disadvantaged schools, with targeting criteria clearly laid out in the proposal. At the response stage, the program supports provision of alternative education programs (through

				radio or digital platforms) and learning materials to ensure the continuity of learning during school closure. A set of activities for the early recovery phase includes developing guide notes and information, education and communication materials (IEC); providing sanitation and WASH to targeted schools; developing a "teacher kit" with protective equipment such as masks and hygiene supplies; and providing psychosocial support services to students. These interventions will be guided by the Education Cluster TWG in charge of school opening and will support the second objective that students and teachers in targeted areas could safely return to improved schools. The program proposes disbursing US$2.5 million in emergency school improvement grants (SIG) to Zimbabwe's most disadvantaged schools. The activity builds on a successfully implemented SIG system, with these SIGs, intended to be used to fill gaps which schools identify such as school feeding and procuring supplies that will ensure safety of children, as well as, potentially, a data bundle for head teachers to ensure regular communication with parents. The MoPSE has not yet finalized utilization criteria for the SIGs, however, these will be finalized, in consultation with the ECG before September 2020. School feeding is highlighted in the country response plan and mentioned at various places in the proposal including the description of the SIG and in the results framework. However, the sector approach to school feeding in the context of COVID-19 has not yet been finalized. There has been some discussion with other partners to address school feeding, particularly in drought affected areas, but funds for these are yet to come. It's noteworthy that a communication strategy is planned be adopted to ensure flow of information from MoPSE to stakeholders to inform them on decisions and ways they can access the services provided by the program. Proposed decision language (as observations): **The Secretariat notes that school feeding for vulnerable children is included in the COVID-19 Response Plan and emphasizes that this is a critical aspect of**

				support to ensure the most vulnerable children will be able to return to school. Since school feeding is not among the activities proposed for GPE funding (it is an option under the SIGs), the Secretariat encourages further dialogue among partners to ensure school feeding is prioritized, including in the most vulnerable areas, through other sources of funding. **As country partners finalize the 'essential package' for learners and teachers [activity 2.2.1] and the focus of the SIG [activity 2.2.2], the Secretariat recommends that due consideration be given to demand-side constraints to learners return to and participation in school.**
☒	☐	☐	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 proposed program will be targeted focusing on the most vulnerable groups and disadvantaged schools such as children in remote areas, children in special schools and girls. Most interventions are targeted. In terms of targeting criteria, all the primary and secondary Satellite schools and their learners and teachers will be supported as they are the most disadvantaged in the country. Additionally, 1,000 P3 (registered primary schools) that are 100 kilometers or more away from the district education office will be selected. The distance from the district office is an indication of remoteness of these schools and the additional costs they usually have to bear to get services and materials. The program proposes to reach children with disabilities with information dissemination, supplementary learning materials, and provision of psychosocial support.
☒	☐	☐	Does the program, to a sufficient degree, identify and address specific barriers to learning faced by girls due to COVID-19?	The program identifies barriers to girls' learning and targets support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children including girls. Activities include using radio lessons to reach out-of-school pregnant girls and teenage mothers and providing quality non-formal education materials to out-of-school girls.
☒	☐	☐	Does the proposal identify a relevant COVID-19 response coordination mechanism(s) and confirm that the program will be represented in this mechanism?	The Zimbabwe Education COVID-19 Preparedness and Response activities are led by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) supported by the Education Cluster, Education Coordination Group (ECG), which is the local education group (LEG) in Zimbabwe and the Ministry's partners. Implementation of the proposed COVID-19 AF will be overseen by the ECG, directly supported by the Grant

				Agent, UNICEF, in close coordination and consultation with the Education Cluster, and supported through relevant Education Cluster's Technical Working Groups (TWGs), such as TWG on Continuity of Learning and TWG on Back-to-School. Existing coordination mechanisms positively indicate that GPE financed activities will be well coordinated with COVID-19 response activities financed with support from other partners.
☒	☐	☐	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?	The Education COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan budget totals US$16.98 million. According to the program document, funds have also been received from Education Cannot Wait (ECW, US$175,000)[3] and the Education Development Fund (EDF). The ECW program is built on the MoPSE/Education Cluster COVID-19 strategy. As such the activities funded through ECW are directly contributing to the same objectives as the GPE COVID-19 funding. ECW recipients include UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International and World Vision. Proposed decision language (observation): **The Secretariat positively notes the synergy of the program with activities and financing of other partners, including the integration of activities financed through the GPE Global Grant to support COVID-19 Response (WASH, materials provision to disadvantaged learners, radio learning).**
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 per the application is US$10 million is consistent with the original GPE Board Approved maximum allocation for Zimbabwe, but above the revised allocation of US$7 million.

[3] The program document states US $ 2 million received from ECW, but this figure was later revised downward to US $175,000 to support the production of radio programming (email communication from the LEG).

☒	☐	☐	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) **	The program budget is structured per component and activity, with unit costs and quantities clearly shown. The budget also shows an amount of $920,000 for the GA implementation support cost, which represents 9.2% of the budget for the original requested US$ 10M, and is considered in line with the average admin cost of 10.2% for ESPIGs implemented in fragile countries, such as Zimbabwe. However, with the budget reduction to US$ 7M, it is anticipated that the implementation support costs will also fall. Proposed decision language: **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.** Observation: **An appropriate reduction 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? *	The proposal indicates that GPE COVID-19 funding is complementary to the funding of organizations reprogrammed to support the COVID-19 response and ECW. Although, the GPE element is stand alone, there is some cross over with the activities supported by ECW (education programmes through radio and digital platforms).
☒	☐	☐	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. **	The budget is consistent with the results framework, implementation plan and other parts of the 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?	The framework is costed, and M&E arrangements are adequate.

			[4] 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. **	A complete results framework is present, and all relevant indicators are disaggregated by gender.
☒	☐	☐	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 present, and the proposal confirms agreement to follow GPE reporting procedures.
☒	☐	☐	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 proposal describes how programmatic learning will take place, costs relevant activities, and proposes to develop a 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?	The Excel implementation plan contains clear roles and responsibilities, required actions and milestones, budget and implementation timeline.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?	The program document outlines the implementation arrangements, coordination mechanism and responsible actors.

[4] 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 are sufficiently described to determine flow of funds? *	The proposal adequately outlines flow of funds structures and mechanisms for disbursements.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context? *	FM, auditing and procurement arrangements are adequately outlined. Procedures will follow UNICEF HACT and MoPSE policies and procedures.
☒	☐	☐	Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?	According to the program document, the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding will use the program implementation modalities and procedures already in place in UNICEF. Disbursement through UNICEF is governed by the UN's Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT). For service contracts, UNICEF has the mechanism to engage with both individual and institutional consultancies, known as Special Service Agreements (SSAs), to provide necessary technical assistance to the program implementation.
☒	☐	☐	Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?	The implementation support and oversight are described adequately in the proposal. UNICEF is responsible for ensuring that implementation is in line with the proposed interventions and for providing proper monitoring and quality assurance of the implementation, with support through the relevant Education Cluster's Technical Working Groups.
☒	☐	☐	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? *	The proposal outlines that existing UNICEF and MoPSE resources, infrastructure and systems set in place for the SIG program will be employed. Rapid procurement will be facilitated through UNICEF's established supply chain and oversight of other procurement activities (as outlined in the risk matrix).
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?[5]	A broad risk analysis is provided in the proposal, and detailed mitigation actions are listed in Annex 3.
☒	☐	☐	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? *	Appropriate fiduciary risks are identified in the implementation section and risk matrix. FM risks not explicitly included in the risk matrix are implicit through HACT compliance requirements. Child safeguarding is a core component of activities to be funded by the grant. The nature of the planned activities suggests environmental risks are low, so are reasonably not identified as key risks.
☐	☐	☒	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.)?	Not applicable.
☐	☒	☐	Does the proposal trigger any GPE policies (e.g., GPE Private Sector Policy) which would require extraordinary consultation with GPE governance structures?	The grant will benefit only government public schools. Private schools, and community schools/NGO schools are not mentioned in the program document.
The section meets GPE's COVID-AF requirements: Yes ☒ No ☐				
Please provide additional comments/details, if necessary.				

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

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): Dan Zhang **Date:** 5/11/2020

Completed by (Risk and Finance related questions as per *): Simon Hall & Ana Tobar Lozano **Date** 05/18/2020

Completed by (M & E related questions as per **): Rudraksh Mitra **Date** 05/19/2020

Reviewed by (CL): Lucinda Elena Ramos Alcantara **Date** 5/24/2020

Reviewed by (QA): David Balwanz **Date** 05/24/2020

Reviewed by (Team Lead): Matthew Smith **Date** 5/27/2020

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 5/28/2020**

Approved by (Manager 2 if >$10m): n/a