CEO DECISION MEMO

DATE: 06/16/2022

TO: Charles North, Acting CEO		
FROM: Nilse Ryman (CEP Regional Manager), Sven Baeten (Grant Operations Team Lead), Kirsten Majgaard (QA Team Lead), Alexandra Solano Rocha (CTL), Anthony F. Bentil (Finance) and Praveen Prasad (Innovative Finance), Yulia Makarova (Grant Operations Officer)		
SUBJECT: Moldova Multiplier Grant Approval		
Country: Moldova	**Grant Agent:** UNICEF	**Co-financing:** EU-USD 15 million; UNDP-USD 1 million 500 thousand; UNICEF-USD 1 million 400 thousand; UNFPA -USD 100 thousand; Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie -USD 27 thousand
Grant Type: Multiplier ESPIG	**Agency fee:** $327,102.63	**Expected Start Date:** 7/1/2022
Amount: US $4,672,894.70	**Grant duration:** 3 years	**Expected End Date:** 7/1/2025

Action Request

Approve the proposed Multiplier funding request for Moldova.

Grant Summary

The $5 million Moldova multiplier program aims to *improve learning quality and system resilience through digital technology*. This is in line with the government's vision for digital innovation within the education system to make it more resilient. The country also aims to improve education opportunities and modernize education to build a stronger workforce and to strengthen links between the education sector and the labor market. Given the large number of young emigrants, Moldova would like to invest in and retain its citizens to improve its economy.

The program consists of 4 components:

- Component 1: Equip general education institutions with appropriate information and communication technologies
- Component 2: Strengthen the digital learning environment by developing the pedagogical content of the syllabi for digital teaching and teachers' capacity to use these.
- Component 3: Improved efficiency of educational management using digital tools
- Component 4: Program management and implementation

These activities are an investment not only in digitalizing education but also for providing a framework and guidance on how to do it in an equitable and sustainable way. In the medium-term, Ministry of Education and Research (MER) expects these activities to contribute to improved learning outcomes, retention of

children in the system, increased enrolment of minority children, and greater system efficiency through timely evidence-based decision making.

Current Portfolio
Two education sector plan development grants were approved for a total of US $500,000 (in 2018 and 2020). The grants were managed by UNICEF to develop Moldova's Education Sector Analysis and Education Sector Plan (ESP) covering 2022-2030. The second development grant is still active until July 2022 to support ESP finalization. The latest GPE education sector program implementation grant for Moldova was for 2012-2015 and focused on improving access, quality and inclusiveness of preschool education in Moldova.

Requirements (GPE2020 model)

Requirement 1 (credible endorsed education sector plan), Requirement 2 (domestic financing), and Requirement 3 (data) are met

Significant Opportunities:
While there have been responses to the demands for ICT equipment and the use of digital tools for teaching and administration, these have not been developed within a clearly articulated policy and strategic framework for ICT and digital development, nor have investments been made considering reaching the most vulnerable children. By making equity focused, evidence-based ICT investments, this program can greatly support the resilience of the education system, which is particularly important given the impact of COVID-19 and the uncertainties of the war in Ukraine.

In addition, the development of the grant has positioned the Ministry of Education to initiate discussions on domestic financing (per GPE's requirement 2) with the Ministry of Finance, which had not been the case before. Not only will these discussions potentially improve reporting, planning and monitoring of its education budget, but it could also ensure the sustainability of the ICT investments.

This is also an opportunity for the local education group to be strengthened (it has otherwise been somewhat dormant), as they have now been assigned a clear, monitoring role with this program and will be the forum where domestic financing discussions take place.

Significant Issues and Risks:
There is a risk that the length of the program (three years) will not provide sufficient time to see if the quality of education improves. In terms of implementation, there is also a risk that the war in Ukraine negatively impacts the ability of the Ministry to implement in a timely manner.

Recommendation
The Review Meeting (RM) concluded, based on t
he Secretariat's quality assurance review, that it recommends CEO approval of US$4,672,894.70 and 7% agency fee for Moldova with UNICEF as the grant agent with one condition and one observation.

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Grant: Multiplier Grant
Country: Moldova

CEO/2022/06-XX–Allocation for Moldova Multiplier Grant Request: The CEO, in his delegated authority from the Board of Directors:

1. Notes compliance with the requirements and program standards for 2020 Multiplier Funding, as described in the application and summarized and assessed in the Secretariat quality assurance review phase III report.
2. Approves Moldova's application for a Multiplier Grant in the amount of US$4,672,894.70 and 7% agency fee for the grant agent, UNICEF, in the amount of US $327,102.63.
3. Requests the Secretariat to include in its notification of approval to Moldova the following:

Moldova	
Observation	The government and coordinating agency are encouraged to continue to have domestic financing discussions with the local education group and among the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance to assess how the country could improve planning, monitoring, and reporting of its education budget.
Condition	Prior to the transfer of grant funds by the Trustee for the second year of implementation, the grant agent is requested to share with the Secretariat i) the program's targeting and selection criteria, as informed by the needs assessment conducted in the program's first year; and ii) the completed results framework, including output/outcomes indicators that are SMART and appropriately disaggregated by gender and other relevant equity dimensions.

Date: June 16, 2022



Charles E. North, Acting CEO