TAJIKISTAN'S MULTIPLIER EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANT US$10 million

The Review Meeting (RM) met on December 02, 2019 and was led by: Jo Bourne (chief technical officer), Margarita Focas Licht (EPR Manager), (Sven Baeten (Acting Manager Country Support Team), Kirsten Majgaard (Quality Assurance Team lead), Nilse Ryman (regional manager Country Support Team). Written comments provided by Padraig Powers (chief financial officer). The RM agreed, on the basis of successful completion of the Secretariat's quality assurance review process, to recommend to the approval of an allocation of US$10,000,000 for a Multiplier grant the Republic of Tajikistan with the Islamic Development Bank as the grant agent.

Jo Bourne	Sven Baeten	Padraig Power
Chief Technical Officer	Acting Manager, Country Support Team	Chief Financial Officer

CEO DECISION – Tajikistan's Multiplier Grant:

Allocation for a Multiplier Grant to the Republic of Tajikistan: The CEO, in her delegated authority from the Board of Directors, with respect to the application submitted by Tajikistan in the fourth round of 2019:

1) Notes compliance with the requirements for accessing the fixed and variable part of the Multiplier maximum country allocation (MCAM), as described in the application and summarized and assessed in the Final Readiness Review (FRR).
2) Notes compliance with the requirements of co-financing, additionality, and debt sustainability for accessing the MCAM, as described in the application and assessed in the FRR.
3) Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds for a multiplier grant, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table 1 (below), subject to:
    a) Availability of funds.
    b) Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for ESPIGs in annual installments.
    c) Review Meeting's recommendation for funding, including (all amounts in US$):
4) Requests the Trustee to withhold the transfer of variable part funds until the condition set out in Table 2 (below) has been met.
5) Requests the Secretariat to:
    a) Include in its notification of grant approval to Tajikistan the condition, requests for report-back and observations as recommended by the Review Meeting and set out in Table 2.
    b) Include an update on the issues listed as "conditions" and "report backs" in the Grant Performance Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

Approved:

Not Approved:

Date: 1/17/20

Table 1: Application Summary and Secretariat's Allocation Recommendations for a multiplier grant in US $:

Tajikistan		
a.	Multiplier Maximum Country Allocation	10,000,000
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	10,000,000
c.	Fixed Part Requested	7,000,000[1]
d.	Variable Part Requested	3,000,000
e.	**Allocation Recommended**	**10,000,000**
f.	Grant Agent	Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
g.	Agency Fee % - Amount	1.75% - 175,000
h.	Implementation Period	4 years
i.	Expected Start Date	September 30, 2020
j.	Variable Part Disbursement Modality	Ex-Post
k.	Funding Source	GPE Fund
l.	Co-financing institution(s) -Amount	IsDB: 30,000,000; the Government of Tajikistan: 6,000,000 and UNICEF: 750,000 (in-kind)

Table 2 – Review Meeting Observations, Report-Backs, And Conditions

Tajikistan	
Observations	The Secretariat appreciates the focus in the grant application on improving the learning environment and the effectiveness of education services in Tajikistan. The Secretariat notes the positive feedback from development partners on strong collaboration and coordination in the development of the application. Given that the issue of the availability of qualified teachers will be a major issue in improving the quality of learning, Tajikistan is requested to consider developing a comprehensive strategy related to teachers and teaching practices. With respect to EMIS, the Secretariat recommends that Tajikistan consider integrating a plan for rolling out the EMIS at the national level in the next NSED, with sufficient financing to ensure EMIS functioning.
Report-Backs	*For the government via the joint sector review report:* 1. The Secretariat requests an update on the progress towards the development and finalization of the next education sector plan (NSED 2021-2030) and ensure that the plan is evidence-based and finalized in consultation with all stakeholders. In addition, given the issues of gender parity in upper secondary, the government is requested to include gender equality issues in the ongoing

[1] Includes US$ 0 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

	sector planning dialogue such as the annual joint sector review and include an annual update in the JSR report. *For the Grant Agent:* 1. With regard to the learning outcomes strategy in the variable part, the Secretariat requests an update via the grant agent's regular progress report on the development of a common framework for learning assessment (CFLA) implementation timeline with clear milestones (following development of the CFLA) and on integration of the CFLA into the next national strategy for education development (NSED) and its financing framework.
Conditions	1. With respect to the efficiency strategy in the variable part and prior to the transfer of variable part funds, the Secretariat requests the grant agent to update the project appraisal document (PAD) to reflect the clarification provided by the grant agent/coordinating agency through the email correspondence dated November 29, 2019. In addition, the updated PAD should include an estimate of the number of schools that will be reached by the efficiency strategy so that it is clear that the strategy has the potential for system-level change.

1) Background:

On November 04, 2019, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Tajikistan as the Coordinating Agency on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of the Government of Tajikistan, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Local Education Group (LEG) in Tajikistan submitted an application of US$ 10 million to access the GPE Multiplier Allocation for Tajikistan. The application and the proposed project were prepared by the GA under the leadership of the MoES in close consultation with the CA and other DPs including national CSOs. The application was reviewed and endorsed by the Local Education Group in Tajikistan.

2) Review Meeting (RM)

On December 02, 2019, the Secretariat's RM discussed the final application package and provided clearence for approval. The meeting included:

- **Management**: Jo Bourne (chief technical officer), Margarita Focas Licht (EPR Manager), (Sven Baeten (Acting Manager Country Support Team), Kirsten Majgaard (Quality Assurance Team lead), Nilse Ryman (regional manager Country Support Team). Written comments provided by Padraig Powers (chief financial office).

- **Presenters, peer reviewer and quality assurance reviewer**: Muhammad Tariq Khan (country lead Tajikistan), Katherina Hruskovec Gonzalez (education specialist and peer reviewer) and David Balwanz (Quality Assurance Team reviewer) Lida Homa (notetaker)

3) Internal Review and Main Conclusions

Following are RM main conclusions:

- Agreed to recommend the application for approval.

- Agreed that the requirements and program standards for accessing the fixed part of the Multiplier MCA are met, as well as the Multiplier-specific requirements on co-financing, additionality and debt sustainability.
- With regard to the variable part, considered the indicators on equity and learning outcomes met and recommended the efficiency indicator be revised with reference to the comments on the theory of change and scope of the intervention, and to integrate the finalized strategy and targets into the next ESP.
- Agreed on the following observations and report-backs:
  - Request the country/grant agent consider an evaluation for the assessment of impact of several components including teacher training at the end of the program to help with decision making and lessons learned.
  - Request a plan for rolling out the EMIS at the national level, with sufficient financing provided to ensure EMIS functioning.
  - Encourage the country to consider developing a comprehensive teacher strategy and discuss addressing gender disparities in access (which appear to grow starting from lower Secondary) as part of their new ESP.
  - Recommend the country integrate the completion of an implementation timeline with clear milestones as a part of the learning outcomes target.

4) Funding Model Requirements

Requirements/Criteria	Status
Fixed Part Requirements (Ref. pages 8-9 of FRR)	
Requirement 1: A credible, endorsed Education Sector Plan	**Not Applicable.** Tajikistan was granted the exemption from this requirement by GPC in April 2019.
Requirement 2: Evidence of commitment to ESP and its financing.	**The Country has met the requirement:** The government's total expenditure on education excluding debt service was reported at 18 percent for the fiscal year 2018-2019 against the budgeted amount of 23.9 percent. Over the next four years, Tajikistan is projecting that its total expenditure towards education after debt servicing will increase to 24.4 percent by 2022-23. Tajikistan has nearly achieved Universal Primary Education (UPE) and as such the sub-requirement of allocating at least 45 percent of education expenditures to 6 years of primary education does not apply for Tajikistan.
Requirement 3: Availability of Data.	**The Country has met the requirement:** Tajikistan has recently completed the initial draft of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) to inform the development of the next NSED. Overall, the ESA provides a good overview of the education system and key challenges. On EMIS, with support from DPs, mainly the European Union (EU), the MoES has been in the process of updating the EMIS. It has proposed to further strengthen the on-going efforts through the GPE/IsDB joint funded project. On learning assessment, ongoing technical support of development partners (DPS) in this area includes several interventions to improve both formative and summative assessment across all levels of education

5) Variable Part

Variable Part Criteria (Ref. pages 16-20 of FRR)	
(i) Sector alignment (ii) Relevance (iii) Transformative effect (iv) Adequacy of indicators and targets (v) Reliability of means of verification (vi) Clarity and adequacy of disbursement mechanism	**The Country has met the overall requirements:** 30 percent of the proposed GPE financing (US$ 3 million) is proposed as the Variable Part. The equity strategy focuses on eliminating triple-shift classrooms; the efficiency strategy identifies limited access to, and use of, data for decision-making at all levels of the education system as a key challenge; the learning outcomes strategy is focused on MoES development and adoption of a Common Framework for Learning Assessment (CFLA). Under the **equity** dimension, the disbursement will be based on the development and approval of a national strategy for the elimination of triple-shift schools and reduction of triple-shift schools by 50% in DRS region by 2022. Under the **efficiency** dimension, the disbursement is proposed to be linked with the dissemination of school dashboards (datasheets) to all stakeholders in ten districts and under the **learning outcome** dimension, it is proposed to link the disbursement with the development and approval of a "Common Framework for Learning Assessment" in order to accelerate the progress towards improved learning outcomes. Upon the realization of the proposed targets, the funds will be used to finance textbook printing, civil works and school furniture. With regard to the variable part, the RM recommended to consider the indicators on equity and learning outcomes met and recommended the efficiency indicator be revised with reference to the comments on the theory of change and scope of the intervention, and to integrate the finalized strategy and targets into the next ESP.

6) Multiplier

Multiplier Requirements (Ref. page 10 of FRR)	
(i) Additionality (ii) Co-financing (iii) Debt sustainability	**The Country has met the requirements related to the Multiplier.** The GPE Multiplier has mobilized US$ 30 million in co-financing for Tajikistan's education sector from the IsDB and has been helpful in securing an additional US$40 million from the World Bank. In June 2018, the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC), in its delegated authority from GPE's Board, approved Tajikistan's Expression of Interest (EoI) for a Maximum Country Allocation from the Multiplier (MCAM) of US$ 10 million based on reported co-financing of at least US$ 30 million, an indication of the modality used for GPE funds, and the country's debt sustainability rating.

	The Secretariat confirms that there is no change in the level of reported co-financing, the modality, or the country's debt sustainability rating.

7) Delays

- In July 2018, Tajikistan was notified the allocation of the Multiplier MCA of US$ 10 million,
- In January 2019, Tajikistan selected IsDB as the GA. The GA selection took longer than anticipated.
- In March 2019, Secretariat undertook the mission with the IsDB and later shared the QAR 1 report in August 2019 as there were delays in the development of the Concept Note by the IsDB.
- To allow for adequate country level consultation on the program design and variable part, the Secretariat agreed to a delay in the QAR II timeline, and as such, the QAR II was shared with the country on October 22, 2019.

8) Past Performance (Ref. pages 10-11 of FRR)

Tajikistan has been a member of GPE since 2005 and has so far received US$ 47.95 million through four GPE grants to support the implementation of its education sector plans. GPE funding had a catalytic effect on the mobilization of support and on the improvement in the use of national resources and donor funding. The first three grants under the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) with the World Bank as the Grant Agent (GA) supported Tajikistan in improving the physical learning environment; procurement of textbooks; financing reforms leading to increased transparency in the budgeting process; and establishment of the EMIS. The GA rated the first two grants as "Satisfactory" while the third grant performance was rated as "Moderately Satisfactory."

The Implementation Completion Report (ICR) of the last grant, produced by the Grant Agent, concluded that the project achieved its objectives satisfactorily and exceeded its defined outcome targets for most key indicators. The report stated that, "GPE's assistance provided an important 'umbrella' framework under which external support for Tajikistan's education sector could be provided in a coordinated and effective fashion." In addition, the report highlighted the importance of government commitment and ownership, along with strong donor coordination and support, to ensure the successful implementation of a curriculum reform. These lessons were considered during the design of the current program.

9) Risks and Mitigation Measures (Ref. pages 15-16 of FRR)

Risk identification and mitigation measures are relevant with realistic mitigation measures proposed in most cases given the context of Tajikistan. The program document includes a comprehensive and highly relevant risk matrix including operational risks, political, sector strategy and policies risk, project technical risk, fiscal and fiduciary risks. The overall project operational risk is rated medium on the basis of the experience of the MOES with similar programs – though implementation delays are noted as a potential risk. In response to the QAR II, the final PAD has updated the section on fiduciary risk with mitigation measures proposed for procurement and financial management risk, including annual external audits. Risk related to the variable part of the GPE grant is proposed to be mitigated through close coordination with the coordinating agency.

10) ANNEXES

Annex 1: Secretariat Quality Assurance Review Phase III (QAR III) Report

Annex 2: Tajikistan's Application for the GPE Multiplier Fund
Annex 3: Project Appraisal Document (PAD)
Annex 4 : Review Meeting Memo