System Transformation Grant Annual Progress Report Template for Projects

Status: Accepted

Country	Name of project this grant is contributing to	Grant ID	Project ID (if applicable)
Maldives	Maldives - STG	GPE0000828	SC240314

Grant Agent	Grant Type	Approval Date	Grant Effectiveness / Start Date
United Nations Children's Fund	STG	05/06/2024	07/01/2024

Expected Closing Date	Grant Amount	Timeframe Examined in this report		Date of Report Submission
		From Date	To Date	
06/30/2028	5,000,000 (USD)	06/30/2024	06/29/2025	09/28/2025

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall Progress this Reporting Period [1]
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)

Previous Rating
NA

Detailed Description including factors that lead to an upgrade/downgrade in the rating

i) Major Accomplishments

Significant progress was recorded in three key transformative areas:

1) Strengthening the Teaching Workforce

New national programs for both general and Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers were successfully launched to address critical shortages, with a combined total of 128 new teacher trainees now enrolled across five universities. In addition, the 7th International Teachers' Conference was held, providing professional development to 250 educators with a focus on equity and inclusion.

2) Improving School Accessibility and Infrastructure

The physical accessibility of 15 schools was significantly upgraded with new ramps, walkways, and toilets, creating a more inclusive environment that directly benefits 14,630 students. Following these upgrades, essential assistive devices for students with complex learning needs were identified and are now being procured.

3) Modernizing Learning Pathways and Digital Tools

Learning is being modernized through the launch of the "TechPath" digital learning pilot in 15 schools, which uses technology to improve foundational skills. Concurrently, a new framework for multiple learning pathways for senior grades has been drafted and is ready for piloting in seven schools, supported by the reorientation of six skills hubs.

ii) Implementation Challenges, Reasons and Mitigation Measures

The implementation of the grant has progressed slower than anticipated due to systemic challenges related to policy, capacity, and operational processes within the Ministry of Education (MoE). These broad challenges have led to delays across several key components.

1. Delays in Strategic Policy Guidance and institutional oversight.
One of the initial challenges observed was the centralized decision-making structure within the Ministry of Education, which limited opportunities for cross-departmental dialogue on education transformation. While the issuance of policy guidance has gradually improved, policy-level supervision and stewardship with clear accountability mechanisms at the implementation level still require strengthening. In particular, arrangements to ensure that implementing departments adhere to agreed timelines for both conceptualization and execution remain underdeveloped and would benefit from further enhancement.

2. Operational Inefficiencies and Institutional Gaps. At the operational level, the governance and oversight arrangements established at the outset were not fully applied, impacting implementation efficiency. This has resulted in a time-intensive, multi-step review process for project concepts, creating significant delays. These operational hurdles are compounded by institutional capacity gaps and substantial workloads on staff within key departments such as the National Institute of Education (NIE), Department of Inclusive Education (DOIE), School Health and Safety Division (SHSD) and the Policy and Planning Division (PPRD).

3. Critical Project Dependencies and Long-Term Delays. These policy and operational challenges have created a domino effect, with key projects being significantly delayed due to their reliance on others. The most critical example is the next phase of the Digital Learning initiative (including digitizing textbooks and learning modules), which must be deferred until 2026 as it is entirely dependent on the completion of the integrated curriculum and syllabi revision.

What remains to be done

1. Delays in Strategic Policy & Institutional Guidance: (Initiatives stalled pending high-level decisions and role clarity)

Proposed Mitigation Measures
- Develop an accountability framework with clear delegated functions based on risk levels.
- Activate quarterly steering committee meetings to foster cross-department dialogue.
- Undertake bottleneck analysis of constrained activities and implement measures to accelerate actions.

Responsible Entity: MoE Policy and Planning division
Timeline: Q4 2025

2. Operational Inefficiencies & Capacity Gaps (Weak governance, lengthy approval processes, and limited partner capacity)

Proposed Mitigation Measures
- Review the current workflow guidance, streamline workflows and consistently monitor adherence to the workflow for concept notes and TORs with defined timelines and pilot a fast-track approval process for

low-risk activities.
- Conduct targeted capacity-building workshops on development of TORs and concept notes and results-based management and provide ongoing technical assistance for activity planning.

Responsible Entity: MoE, UNICEF
Timeline: Q4 2025-Q2 2026

3. Activity Dependencies & Inadequate Collaboration (Domino effect of delays and insufficient joint problem-solving)

Proposed Mitigation Measure:
- Refer to activity on activating steering committee. regular joint reflection sessions to be a regular agenda item of the steering committee meetings to help foster shared accountability, manage timelines, and identify parallel workstreams where possible.

Responsible Entity: UNICEF, MoE, Implementing Partners
Timeline: Q4 2025

4. Delayed Documentation of Impact (Implementation delays prevent the capturing of results and lessons learned)

Proposed Mitigation Measure
- Identify and implement activities to capture qualitative outcomes and impact stories as activities progress.

Responsible Entity: UNICEF, Implementing Partners
Timeline: Q1 2026

iii. Factors that led to any upgrade/downgrade in the progress rating above, compared with the previous reporting period (if any).
There is no upgrade or downgrade of progress as this reporting is the baseline.

iv. Any progress was made in mitigating previous reporting periods' challenges or delays? (if any)
This is the progress report for the first reporting period.

Describe priority actions planned for the following year to overcome constraints, build on achievements and partnerships, and use the lessons learned during the reporting period.
- Develop an accountability framework with clear delegated functions based on risk levels.
- Activate quarterly steering committee meetings to foster cross-department dialogue.
- Review the current workflow guidance, streamline workflows and consistently monitor adherence to the workflow for concept notes and TORs with defined timelines and pilot a fast-track approval process for low-risk activities.

- Conduct targeted capacity-building workshops on development of TORs and concept notes and results-based management and provide ongoing technical assistance for activity planning.

Project Implementation Progress, by Component / Objective

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Curriculum implementation enhancement	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

Curriculum improvements: Institutional capacity development for curriculum implementation. MoE and its departments have enhanced technical skills and steer the enhancements and implementation of a transformative, gender responsive, inclusive and equity focused national curriculum. (Moderately Unsatisfactory)

- Foundational work on curriculum reform is underway, with the potential for significant acceleration. The TOR for hiring a consultant to conceptualize the integrated curriculum delivery model has been finalized and recruitment for a local consultant is in progress.
- Concurrently, discussions on development of the curriculum framework has begun. The Ministry has expanded this scope to include a full revision of the syllabi for grades 1-8 and is sourcing an international firm for the task. Progress on this component is expected to accelerate upon contract finalization. It is anticipated that the project's expanded scope will require a budget allocation greater than what is currently planned.

Institutional development of the National Institute of Education (NIE) has not yet commenced.

Digital learning: A digitized and interactive learning content and competency-based curriculum delivery model implemented in all government schools with attention to the unique needs of girls and boys. (Moderately Satisfactory)

- Digital learning through a competency-based model is progressing steadily, led by the Ministry of Education's TechPath initiative, which was established with a complementary grant mobilized by UNICEF in 2024. The initiative is currently being tested in 15 schools, focusing on models for improving foundational literacy and transferable skills through technology and hybrid learning.
- Subsequent activities planned under this grant including the digitization of textbooks, creation of a data repository are dependent on the national syllabi revision (stated under progress for objective 1) and are therefore projected to commence in 2026.

Remediation and Learning Loss Recovery. Remediation and learning improvement programs that meet the guidelines and standards of the National Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (NLMS) implemented in 100 schools to address learning loss. (Moderately Unsatisfactory)

- The two activities have been combined and are being conceptualized. Progress on activities were stalled for a significant time due to a critical policy decision on the definition and scope of foundational learning and the institutional arrangements for oversight. These decisions have been taken now, however, lack of coordination between the Department of Inclusive Education and the National Institute of Education has stalled progress again. Once the coordination challenges are addressed, the National Institute of Education will engage a local consultant firm to develop the guidelines and tools, with a focus on individualized learning for students with complex learning profiles.

Multiple learning pathways. A gender transformative, multiple learning pathways program is developed and piloted in at least 7 schools (Moderately Satisfactory)

- Work is progressing on establishing multiple and inclusive learning pathways. The foundational framework, which encompasses delivery models, curriculum, and resource materials, has been drafted and are being piloted in Grades 11 and 12 across seven schools. The three pathways are 1) academic pathway 2) TVET Pathway and 3) Work-based apprenticeship pathway.
- Technical support is provided to orient existing skills hubs towards inclusive learning, with six selected schools now conducting a needs analysis to secure the necessary resources for their skills programmes. To support these initiatives, a consultant is being hired to update the Maldives National Skills Development Authority (MNSDA) certificate-level assessment modules, applying a differentiated approach to better assess students with complex learning profiles.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Teacher development and teaching	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

Teacher development. Ministry of Education and the Maldives teacher training institutes respectively offer in-service and pre-service training programs to increase the number of teachers who can manage classrooms and deliver the national curriculum using innovative and gender responsive teaching methods such as design thinking for competency-based learning, hybrid learning, differentiated learning methods and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). (Moderately Satisfactory)
- Efforts to strengthen the Maldivian teaching workforce are advancing through new pre-service training and continuous professional development initiatives. To address critical shortages, the National Teacher Training Program (NTTP), launched by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, now has 145 students enrolled across three universities in Malé.
- A parallel National SEN Teacher Training Programme was also launched by the Minister of Education, providing a bursary for a one-year diploma to its 74 enrolled trainees.
- For in-service teachers, the 7th International Teachers' Conference focused on equity and inclusion, engaging 250 participants and showcasing best practices from two schools.
- This professional development is being further supported by the recruitment of two consultants who will create e-learning modules on inclusive pedagogy and conduct Maldivian sign language training. While these initiatives progress, the planned revision of pre-service teacher training curricula is currently pending a policy decision on its operationalization

Quality assurance and Learning assessment. All 219 schools are implementing a robust, comprehensive, differentiated, and digitized nation-wide classroom quality assurance and assessment system that prioritizes the tracking of individual student learning outcomes, especially those with complex learning profiles, and gender differences in learning outcomes, and contributes to system wide education sector performance. (Unsatisfactory)
- This activity remains in the conceptualization phase, as progress is pending critical policy guidance and clarification of the institutional arrangements required for implementation.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Safe and inclusive school environment	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:
Minimum Infrastructure Standards (MIS). A costed framework for minimum Infrastructure Standards (MIS) for schools is in place and is applied to 30 schools to become prototype schools for safety and universal accessibility. (Moderately Satisfactory)
- Efforts to enhance school accessibility are ongoing, with 15 schools across Malé and atoll already upgraded to meet a minimum standard that includes ramps, walkways, and accessible toilets, directly benefiting 14,630 students. Each of these schools, allocated a budget of MVR 390,000, has also identified essential assistive devices for students with complex learning profiles, which are now being procured by UNICEF.
- To build on this practical implementation and establish a systemic approach, a consultant is being hired to develop a costed Minimum Infrastructure Standard (MIS). This standard will define a package of inclusive interventions, including assistive technologies and trained professionals, to align all schools with universal accessibility requirements.

Safe and inclusive learning environments. At least 20 schools have programs and trained staff for providing restorative practices for at-risk girls and boys, and promoting safe, supportive and gender responsive services for the well-being of students and teachers. (Unsatisfactory)
- These activities remain in the conceptualization phase. The institutional arrangements required for implementation of the activity on social support and community engagement for improving inclusion needs clarity.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Project Management Unit and Grant Agent Costs	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:
A project management unit consisting of a program coordinator, procurement officer and a monitoring and evaluation officer was hired in June 2024. The PMU provides day to day management support, coordination across different departments of the Ministry of Education and monitoring reporting of the progress of grant utilization and program implementation. Further, the PMU has supported the implementation of the Joint Sector Reviews as well as reviews with UNICEF, GPE and Ministry of Education. They have been instrumental in initiating the implementation of several activities of the grant and has overseen the implementation of Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT).

However, there is still room to empower the PMU through further capacity development and delegation of authority to convene and steer different implementing partners.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Grant Agent Support Costs	Satisfactory (S)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:
An Education Officer (Temporary Appointment) was recruited in July 2024 who leads the implementation of teacher development, inclusive and safe school learning environment activities. Further, the TA also provides support in monitoring and reporting of the STG and works closely with the PMU in the Ministry of Education. As such, the TA has effectively supported the implementation of the Joint Sector Review, enhancing the physical accessibility of 15 schools and provision of assistive devices and the the National SEN Teacher training program.

Lessons, innovative/promising practices

1) Successful Practices:
A strengthened focus on equity and inclusion is increasingly evident within the education system. This commitment is actively shaping policy dialogue and fostering the development of more accessible and supportive learning environments to better address the needs of every child.
A clear demonstration of this priority is the Ministry of Education's alignment with GPE’s emphasis on gender-disaggregated data. All data collection tools are now being designed to systematically capture gender-specific information, ensuring that planning and policy are informed by a deeper understanding of equity.

2) Innovative Interventions: The National Teacher Training Program (NTTP) is creating an innovative pathway into the teaching profession for students in Grades 11 and 12 through a unique dual-track approach. This model allows students to continue their academic studies while simultaneously enrolling in foundational teacher training, providing a valuable head start on their future careers. Upon completing the first year, participants earn a Teaching Foundation Qualification, which is officially recognized as MQA Level 4 and provides a formal credential for direct and early advancement in the teaching profession.

3) Lessons Learned: The implementation of the GPE STG in the Maldives has revealed key insights into the relationship between political prioritization and program progress. Activities that were aligned with political priorities moved forward effectively, while those lacking such alignment encountered delays and challenges. This highlights the need to strategically position education initiatives within the broader political agenda to ensure sustained momentum and support. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding the political context, engaging stakeholders early, and maintaining flexibility in planning to adapt to shifting priorities.

Impact stories

Due to delays in implementation, the initiative has not yet progressed to a stage where meaningful impact stories can be documented.

Tangible Outputs, Knowledge Products, Results Framework and other Supporting Documentation

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	STG results matrix .xlsx	Results Framework	

The documents listed were submitted with the progress report. If you'd like access to them, please contact the grant operations officer for your country.

Financial Reporting & Grant Management

Financial Reporting on GPE Grant

Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate

Approved Budget to Date	Cumulative Expenditure	Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate	Level of Financial Absorption
5,000,000	721,130.2	14.42	Off Track

Since the financial absorption is not rated as 'on track', please provide an explanation that identifies the main activities that have been delayed and their corresponding unspent amounts, as well as reasons for the delay and steps taken to ensure that expenditure absorption gets on track in the next reporting period.

Progress on activity implementation has varied. Approximately 15% of activities have shown satisfactory advancement, while 38% are progressing at a moderately unsatisfactory level, and 46% are currently facing significant challenges. The delays in implementation are primarily attributed to constraints in institutional capacity for program implementation.

UNICEF has maintained regular communication with the Ministry of Education (MoE), providing updates on implementation progress and financial absorption rates. In response to the challenges, UNICEF has taken steps to streamline the processes related to activity conceptualization, approval, and fund requests. Additionally, the Minister of Education has been kept informed of the status of grant implementation to ensure transparency and continued collaboration.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period
2,500,000

Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period
727,130.2

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%

The underspending during the reporting period is primarily attributed to limited implementation capacity among partners

Management Performance

Level of Management Performance

Previous Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) NA

Detailed Description

During the reporting period, some implementation challenges were observed, which appear to be partially linked to the current management arrangements. These have had an impact on both the pace and overall effectiveness of grant implementation.

While the Ministry of Education's leadership and commitment to the program are fully recognized, certain structural and coordination constraints such as delays in decision-making, limited technical capacity, and unclear role definitions have contributed to slower-than-anticipated progress toward planned outcomes.

In response, some measures have been undertaken to strengthen implementation:

1) Communication and coordination between UNICEF, the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Ministry of Education, and implementing partners have been enhanced.
2) Technical assistance has been provided to the PMU on UNICEF's HACT procedures, along with guidance to implementing partners on the development of Terms of Reference and concept notes.
3) UNICEF has instituted internal monthly management meetings to monitor grant utilization and address implementation challenges.

Revisions to the grant

This period, have there been any revisions to the grant other than those submitted to the GPE Board or Secretariat for their approval?
No

How likely is that the grant agent will submit a request for revision to the GPE Board or Secretariat in the next 12 months for their approval?
Moderately Likely

Detailed Description
The Mid-Term Review of the Partnership Compact is scheduled for November 2025. This will serve as a strategic opportunity to reflect on current priorities, assess the systemic challenges affecting their implementation, and consider any necessary adjustments in response to the evolving education landscape.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
MOE	Ministry of Education
PMU	Project Management Unit
DOIE	Department of Inclusive Education

Annex 2: Global Numbers Reporting Template

Provide the data related to GPE's three global numbers for this reporting period below

- Textbooks purchased and distributed through GPE grants
- Teachers trained through GPE grants
- Classrooms built or rehabilitated through GPE grants

Note: For cofinanced grants, please provide the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 50 percent of a teacher training activity, the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant for the number of teachers trained through that activity would be 50%. If the unit of analysis in the indicator is the number of schools and not classrooms, please enter an estimated number of classrooms and provide an explanation in the comments box.

GPE Indicators

Textbooks purchased and distributed

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	This system transformation grant annual progress report is learning oriented and seeks to:	Comments
1				

GPE Indicators

Teachers trained

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	This system transformation grant annual progress report is learning oriented and seeks to:	Comments
1	Number of teachers trained	62	100	There are 157 more teachers in training in addition to the 62 reported for this period.

GPE Indicators

Classrooms built or rehabilitated

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	This system transformation grant annual progress report is learning oriented and seeks to:	Comments
1				

Annex 3: Cumulative Beneficiary Children Reporting Template

Provide the **cumulative** number of children of pre-primary, primary and secondary school age (both in school and out of school) and other students (adolescents beyond secondary school age and adult learners participating in basic education programs), who **directly participated in project activities, received project-supported incentives or services, or benefited from project interventions so far. Also provide relevant disaggregated values by sex (applicable to all grants)**. If appropriate and available, provide disaggregated values by varied subgroups and by education level. Reporting beneficiary data cumulatively means counting all beneficiaries as a running total, adding up all beneficiaries since the start of the grant. Data on beneficiaries are to be collected using the methods and tools proper to each project. It is understood that some disaggregated data will only be collected if a project expressly targets specific subgroups through their interventions and uses their own methods for counting beneficiary children/other students.[i] Please provide the number or proportion of girls of varied subgroups in the comment section below, if available.

NOTE: For cofinanced grants, please provide the numbers for the entire program and indicate the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 40 percent of the program that is cofinanced by GPE and oher donors, enter 40% in "% atributed to this grant".

	Pre-primary (optional)	Primary (optional)	Secondary (optional)	Others (optional)	Total	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)
Number of children who directly benefited from the project					14,630	100
Of which, girls					7,141	100
Of which, children with a disability (optional)	22	567	384		973	100
Of which, refugee children (optional)						
Of which, internally displaced children (optional)						
Of which, out-of-school children, in school-age (optional)						
Of which, children from marginalized ethno-						

cultural/ linguistic minorities: specify which ones (optional)

Provide any comments on beneficiary children, if needed. This could include, for example, the definition employed by the grant for a particular subgroup (including a more granular description of these subgroups), the approach/tool used to calculate the number of beneficiaries overall or by subgroup, any limitation of the approach/tool employed for this calculation and reasons why data on beneficiary children are unavailable. Please provide the number or proportion of girls for varied subgroups in the comment section below, if available.

As this is the first year of implementation, activities has not yet matured in its implementation to get to this level.

Annex 4: GEA Indicators Reporting Template

GEA Core indicators	Baseline	Results for this reporting period		GPE contribution (optional for cofinanced grants)	Comments
		Target	Actual		
Indicator name					
Date					

1 Highly Unsatisfactory - The project has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory - The project has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory - The project has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs, but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory - The project is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderaten shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory - The project is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory -The project is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.

2 Highly Unsatisfactory - The component/objective has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory -The component/objective has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory -The component/objective has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs, but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory- The component/objective is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderate shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory- The component/objective is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory-The component/objective is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.

3 Highly Unsatisfactory – The GEA has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory – The GEA has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory – The GEA has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs, but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory – The GEA is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderate shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory – The GEA is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory – The GEA is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.