System Capacity Grant Annual Progress Report Template

Status: Accepted

Country	Grant ID	Grant Agent	Grant Effectiveness/Start Date
Marshall Islands	GPE0000934	SCG	07/07/2023

Grant Amount	Timeframe Examined in this Report		Date of Report Submission
999,960 (USD)	From Date	To Date	10/06/2025
	07/07/2024	07/06/2025	

Area(s) and activity group(s) covered by grant

Window 1: Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact

- System diagnostics, compact development and education sector analyses
- Gender-responsive sector planning, including operational planning and budgeting
- Supporting policies and plans to identify and address multiple forms of exclusion (planning for children with disabilities, system resilience and inclusion of displaced children)
- Strengthening evidence-based diagnosis of critical implementation bottlenecks and identifying potentially scalable, transformative solutions

Window 2: Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change

- Strengthening sector coordination, including local education groups, joint sector reviews and monitoring the effectiveness of the country-level partnership

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall progress this reporting period [1]	Previous Rating
Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

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

The major accomplishments in the report period are:
- Completion of Education Sector Analysis (ESA)
- Final draft of Education Sector Plan (ESP)
- Human Resources system review ongoing: Summary progress report of activity attached.

The Education Sector Analysis is complete and highlights key issues and challenges indicating also recommendations to address them. The Education Sector Plan draws from the findings and recommendations of the ESA. The ESP is in final review, with validation set for mid-October. The development of the ESP has been highly consultative and has full ownership of PSS. Workshops have had a high level of participation and thoughtful debate and discussion. The ‘’pushing out’’ of timeline mentioned in the previous report has allowed the full integration of the STG programme of work into the ESP with solid understanding by stakeholders of how the two work together.
Work is now underway on additional research studies to better inform implementation strategies such as the learning outcomes study.

Since the last reporting period, Public School System (PSS) has also successfully applied for the remaining Systems Capacity Grant maximum country allocation adding activities under sector coordination and human resources systems. The review of the human resources system of the PSS resulted in a significant restructuring of the PSS organizational structure and clean up and archival of personnel data on PSS staff (including teachers).

Grant Implementation Progress, by Grant Window

Grant Window	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Window 1: Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Detailed Description:

The Education Sector Analysis is complete and the Sector Plan is in final review, with validation set for mid-October. The sector plan fully integrates the programme work of the approved Systems Transformation Grant as a priority area of the PSS. To be completed in the next reporting period are the thematic studies on learnings outcomes (already commenced) and gender.

Grant Window	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Window 2: Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Detailed Description:

The Coordinating Agency role continues with support to programme implementation by coordinating timely information and engagement of the LEG members and other stakeholders as required. This has allowed inline positions to focus on their own portfolio area whilst also remaining engaged with and informed of partner programmes and opportunities. This significantly contributes to alignment and collaborations.

Grant Window 3: Satisfactory

The work of window 3 focuses on Human Resource systems to support more effective and efficient implementation of education services. An HR consultant was recruited to carry out a review of the HR system, and come up with actionable recommendations. To date, the organizational structure of the PSS has been reviewed, rationalized and restructured, and personnel data on PSS staff, including teachers, cleaned and archived. In terms of restructuring, there has been a major overhaul of the leadership structure, with the creation of 3 Deputy Commissioners mandated to be responsible for 4 Associate Commissioners each as per their area of responsibility. This new arrangement not only streamlines the amount of responsibility and control held by the Commissioner but also allows for a clear pathway for mentoring and succession planning to the Commissioner role. The cleaning of the personnel data has led to 98 staff receiving back-pay and salary adjustments because their salary levels did not accurately account for their credentials. 7 of these people received back pay for up to 6 years, with two people receiving more than $15,000USD in retroactive payments. This process was approved by the Cabinet and payments have been received by the relevant teachers.

Another key recommendation for this review has been to upgrade the current HR Management Information System and this will be one of the follow-on activities of the work under the SCG funding.

Lessons, innovative/promising practices

Continuing from the Education Partnership Pact (compact) workshops noted in the previous report, the highly participatory approach to the ESP development, with time given to value the discussions and commitment to co-construction of the document, anecdotally has made a significant difference to the level of ownership all staff in PSS have of their new sector plan. Good practices have included:
- Focused but shorter times scheduled for workshops. By giving staff assurances that they would have sufficient time each day to attend to regular work they could give a greater level of concentration to the focused workshop period without trying to address day to
day work at the same time.
- Validation and cross checking of smaller sets/presentations of information. This meant staff could review and comment on workshop outcomes/ draft plan text etc which could then be synthesized into the final document. This meant there could be quicker turn
around post workshops/consultations and the workload did not inhibit people from being able to participate.
- Activity and outcomes focused workshops meant everyone left with a sense of achievement and having achieved the ‘’next step’’. This made people more inclined to return and contribute again as each step was seen as adding value as opposed to not seeing a
product until sometime later.

Impact stories

N/a

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

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	RMI Education Sector Analysis_2025 Final Draft.pdf	Knowledge Product	ESA
2	RMI Draft Education Sector Plan_V1.pdf	Knowledge Product	Draft ESP
2	Personnel Audit Progress Report.docx	Evaluation Report	Personnel Audit

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
999,960	567,522.04	56.75	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.
The financial absorption level is rated as off track since the expenditure is assessed against the maximum country allocation which was approved only December 2024 (and the activities under the second

tranche could start only by March 2025 following recruitment of consultant) as opposed to the first tranche of allocated funds. Needless to say, by the time of submission of this report, the implementation of activities, including additional activities under the revised/amended SCG programme, are fully underway and expenditure including commitments are at 70%.
UNICEF will continue to work closely with PSS to monitor both physical and financial progress, to ensure that funds are fully utilised before the end of the grant period in July.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period
999,960

Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period
567,522.04

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%
This reporting period has seen important programmatic advances that may not be reflected in expenditure yet but will be shortly when commitments are disbursed. Furthermore, PSS has made clear plans and commitments for next steps, including a realistic timeframe for implementation and expenditure of this grant. Regular check-ins and updates are undertaken between UNICEF and PSS.

Management Performance

Level of management performance
Satisfactory (S)

Detailed Description
The previous report noted that PSS had undergone a change of management in the reporting period. With the leadership team of the PSS now well established, there has been increased momentum in activity with decision making and clear direction. There is regular communication, and an embedded focal point in place for day-to-day implementation oversight.

Revisions to the grant

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

How likely is that the grant agent will submit a request for revision to the Secretariat in the next 12 months for their approval?
Unlikely

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EPP	Education Partnership Pact

PSS	Public School System
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
STG	System Transformation Grant

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

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

[3] tooltip