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)
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands - STG	GPE0000835	SC240660

Grant Agent	Grant Type	Approval Date	Grant Effectiveness / Start Date
United Nations Children's Fund	STG	09/10/2024	11/01/2024

Expected Closing Date	Grant Amount	Timeframe Examined in this report		Date of Report Submission
		From Date	To Date	
12/31/2029	5,000,000 (USD)	10/31/2024	10/30/2025	01/30/2026

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall Progress this Reporting Period 1
Satisfactory (S)

Previous Rating
NA

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

During the reporting period, significant progress was achieved in establishing and operationalizing the Solomon Islands System Transformation Grant (STG). Key milestones included the successful programme launch, recruitment of the core team, and completion of the implementation planning process and stakeholder consultation. The programme baseline survey was completed across five target provinces, and subsequently endorsed by the Ministry of Education Senior Management Team (SMT)

The baseline assessment generated critical evidence on gaps and needs in teacher and school leader capacity and produced practical recommendations to strengthen teaching practices and improve learning outcomes. These findings are now informing the Ministry of Education and its partners in the review and redesign of the National Teacher Professional Development programme to ensure it is more gender responsive, inclusive, and aligned with identified needs and national education priorities.

The following activities summarize the key activities undertaken during the reporting period.
1. Programme Launch completed:

The Solomon Islands System Transformation Grant was formally launched at a high-level ceremony jointly officiated by the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD), the New Zealand High Commissioner (Coordinating Agency), and UNICEF leadership, demonstrating strong national ownership and partner commitment. Key stakeholders in attendance, included members of the Education Development Partners Coordination Group/Local Education Group (EDPCG/LEG), teachers, education providers, and national, provincial, and local authorities. The event presented the programme's objectives, targets, and geographic focus, ensuring a shared understanding of STG's purpose and strategic direction. The programme is fully aligned with the National Education Action Plan (2022–2026), the Education Strategic Framework (2016–2030), and the Education Act (2023), which introduces major reforms to decentralize and improve the quality of education services.

2. STG Programme implementation plan and establishment of operations completed.

During the reporting period, laying the foundations for the successful implementation of the System Transformation Grant (STG), including establishing the operational modalities for planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting, was completed. Recruitment of embedded technical advisors (1 M & E and 1 coordinator) supported MEHRD to successfully lead national consultations and a program planning workshop with senior officials, division heads, education managers, and key stakeholders.A two-year Operational Plan (2025–2026) for the STG Programme was finalized and formally endorsed by MEHRD. The endorsed plan provides a clear, government-led implementation roadmap with defined priorities, milestones, and mechanisms for partner coordination. MEHRD is actively using the plan as a living document, updating it to reflect emerging evidence and implementation needs. As a result, STG has entered the implementation phase with strong national ownership, clear direction, and coordinated stakeholder engagement.

3. Baseline Survey Assessment Completed

The baseline survey assessment for STG was completed during the reporting period, marking a critical milestone in generating evidence to inform teacher professional development and curriculum review. An international Technical Advisor with previous experience in the Solomon Islands provided oversight of the baseline, including literacy and numeracy components, ensuring technical rigor and quality throughout the process.
Key elements of the baseline process were as follows:
• Two standardized questionnaires for teachers and school principals were developed and finalized.
• 33 Ministry staff were trained as survey leads and enumerators, strengthening national capacity for large-scale data collection.
• Data collected from 80 schools, covering 607 teachers (351 female) and 110 principals, producing a robust evidence base.
• All data entered, cleaned, analyzed, and synthesized to identify gaps in teacher competencies and professional development needs.
• Findings were validated through a participatory process, and the final dataset and report were formally endorsed by the Ministry and education partners.

The completed baseline now provides an agreed evidence base to guide implementation of Teacher Professional Development reforms under the System Transformation Grant.

Project Implementation Progress, by Component / Objective

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Component 3: Teacher Professional Development	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:
To prepare for the implementation of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) activities in the next reporting period, key first-year activities focused on completing the national baseline survey for teachers and school leaders, which was successfully undertaken. The survey generated robust evidence on teacher competencies, capacity gaps, and system-level needs. Its findings and recommendations were formally reviewed, validated, and endorsed by senior Ministry leadership, provincial stakeholders, development partners, and teacher representatives. Following endorsement, a Terms of Reference was approved, and a TPD Technical Advisor was recruited to lead the review and design of a new national TPD model. This redesign process is currently underway and is expected to be completed in early 2026. In parallel, the Ministry has initiated the recruitment of TPD Facilitators who will lead future training, coaching, and mentoring activities. Together, these preparatory steps position the Ministry to roll out the new TPD model across 330 schools in five provinces, strengthening system-wide capacity for large-scale, high-quality professional development

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Component 4: Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Resources	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:
The initial consultation and planning for the development of 11 new curriculum titles under the System Transformation Grant (STG) have been completed. To support this initiative, the Ministry has commenced recruitment for the curriculum technical team, including the National Curriculum Coordinator and subject experts and writers to provide technical support in developing these titles.

A key challenge remains the limited staffing capacity within the Curriculum Unit, exacerbated by recent retirements that have created gaps in institutional knowledge and technical expertise. To maintain momentum, temporary arrangements are in place to ensure continuity in engagement, consultation, and decision-making while more sustainable staffing solutions are pursued. Curriculum review and development of new titles will start in 2026

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Technical Support, and Monitoring and Evaluation	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:
During the reporting period, substantial progress was made in strengthening the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development’s capacity to implement the System Transformation Grant Technical support, including the deployment of an embedded international technical advisor, accelerated planning, facilitated multi-stakeholder consultations, and timely establishment of the GPE grant implementation.

A key milestone was the completion of the terms of reference (TORs) for the Programme Technical Team, comprising a Programme Coordinator and a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer. Following the finalization of these TORs, MEHRD successfully recruited and appointed and suitably provisioned both officers to ensure they could begin work without delay. The grant agent (UNICEF) provided capacity-building sessions that strengthened the Ministry’s new program team and Heads of Division, enhancing their understanding of the GPE Implementation Grant Policy, as well as UNICEF’s financial rules and program management standards.

These sessions reinforced MEHRD’s readiness to manage the grant in full compliance with required frameworks. MEHRD now has three fully established core positions dedicated to implementing the System Transformation Grant: A Programme Coordinator, an M&E Officer, and a Finance Officer. All three are embedded within the Ministry under the Permanent Secretary’s leadership, forming a strengthened implementation unit that enhances planning, coordination, financial management, and monitoring of GPE-funded activities. This represents a major step forward in MEHRD’s capacity to deliver the System Transformation Programme efficiently, accountably, and with greater ownership.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Grant Agent’s Implementation and Support Cost	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:
The first year of implementation of the five-year STG program progressed smoothly. Several factors have led to progress. Timely recruitment and embedding a technical team within the Ministry of Education strengthened early preparation, consultation, and planning, ensuring timely coordination, high-quality technical input, and effective stakeholder engagement. Strong Ministry ownership also contributed to effective implementation. The Ministry team was fully engaged in setting grant priorities during design and planning, resulting in a shared understanding of program objectives, targets, and expected results. This enabled strong alignment of activities, efficient implementation processes, and steady progress against planned deliverables. In addition, strong alignment and complementarity between the SCG and STG in Solomon Islands provided a solid platform for system-level capacity development. This included technical support for the Ministry to undertake the Mid-Term Review of the National Education Action Plan (NEAP), assessing progress, relevance, and key implementation gaps and readiness.

Lessons, innovative/promising practices

1. Design of the Baseline Survey Assessment
The design of the baseline survey was a participatory, iterative process co-created by the Ministry and partners and proved effective due to strong leadership and ownership from the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. A key factor in ensuring the timely development and finalization of the survey tools, testing, piloting, and data collection from 80 schools was the establishment of a small task force that led the process from start to completion of the baseline survey assessment. This team provided consistent coordination, technical input, and quality assurance, which contributed significantly to the success of the design phase.

2. Participation and Engagement of Provincial Education Providers and School Leaders
One important lesson learned during the data collection phase was the value of early and meaningful engagement with Education Providers (EPs) and school leaders. Their involvement ensured smoother data collection, stronger local ownership, and timely mobilization of schools and teachers. Their contextual insights also enhanced the quality and accuracy of the information collected.
3. Technical Coordination Meetings with the Senior Management Team of the Ministry (SMT)
MEHRD convened biweekly technical and coordination briefing meetings with the Permanent Secretary and the senior management team. These meetings were essential for reviewing progress, addressing challenges in real time, and presenting key findings in separate sessions. Regular engagement proved to be one of the most effective practices, contributing to the timely and high-quality completion of the baseline survey and to the endorsement of its findings and recommendations.

4. Core Programme Coordination Team
A key lesson from the first year of the program was the importance of timely recruitment and embedding of a core technical team within MEHRD. Having dedicated program staff in place was critical for planning, organizing, and supporting the implementation of core STG activities. Their presence strengthened coordination, improved communication across stakeholders, and accelerated progress on planned deliverables.

Impact stories

This was the program's first year of implementation, and no impact stories were collected.

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

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	20251211-SLB- Updated Final STG Baseline Assessment Report.docx	Knowledge Product	Baseline Report
2	20242410-Final Joint Press Release_A transformed education system - Copy.docx	Knowledge Product	Press Release

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
5,350,000	522,688	9.77	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 absorption rate for this reporting period remains relatively low, reflecting the program's deliberate emphasis on foundational start-up activities and on building the Ministry of Education's absorption capacity. During this phase, efforts focused on detailed planning, recruiting the core technical team, and completing the baseline survey. The baseline assessment is a key Year 1 milestone, providing critical evidence and identifying capacity gaps for teachers and school leaders that will inform a bespoke training programme and subsequent activities under the teacher professional development component.

The major components of the STG program activities under Teacher Professional Development and curriculum and teaching and learning resources (components 3 and 4) did not start during this reporting period. However, critical preparatory steps, including the successful completion of the national baseline survey, did advance. Currently, the TPD technical advisor is working with MEHRD to review and redesign the national TPD program, while the Ministry has initiated recruitment processes for Teacher professional development facilitators to fast-track implementation. Once the revised TPD program is finalized and endorsed, full-scale implementation will begin, leading to a substantial increase in the absorption rate. It is worth noting that the program implementation timeline is 5 years (2024–2029). Hence, most activities and expenditures are planned for Years 2, 3, and 4. Therefore, the absorption rate will increase in the next reporting period, in line with the grant implementation plan.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period	Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period
1,500,000	537,466

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%

This reflects expenditure for Year 1, including commitments.

Management Performance

Level of Management Performance	Previous Rating
Satisfactory (S)	NA

Detailed Description

As the Grant Agent, UNICEF has effectively managed and safeguarded the grant while strengthening MEHRD's capacity to implement activities in line with the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) guidelines. Throughout the reporting period, UNICEF conducted targeted capacity-building sessions with MEHRD staff to strengthen financial management skills, support effective use of resources, enable joint activity monitoring, and enhance coordination with development partners in alignment with the Partnership Compact priorities.

As part of program management and supervision, the UNICEF team in Honiara conducted joint field monitoring and supervision visits with MEHRD during the baseline survey data collection. In addition,

UNICEF facilitated a GPE country mission during the reporting period, during which progress on STG-funded activities was presented and discussed with key stakeholders. The GPE mission engaged with Ministry officials and development partners and visited the STG target school, providing valuable insights into country-level education coordination systems, implementation progress, and on-the-ground realities. No revisions were made to the STG grant during this reporting period. It is also unlikely that the Grant Agent will submit a request for revision to the GPE Board within the next 12 months. The focus will remain on the roll-out of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) activities in target schools, in line with the approved grant objectives and implementation plan.

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?

Highly Unlikely

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
EP	Education Providers
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
NEAP	National Education Action Plan
TPD	Teacher Professional Development

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	N/A	0	0	

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	Not applicable in Year 1	0	0	

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	N/A	0	0	

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						
Of which, girls						
Of which, children with a disability (optional)						
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.

Not applicable in Year 1

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.