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)
Tonga	Tonga - STG	GPE0000836	03603880

Grant Agent	Grant Type	Approval Date	Grant Effectiveness / Start Date
Save the Children Australia	STG	12/12/2024	01/01/2025

Expected Closing Date	Grant Amount	Timeframe Examined in this report		Date of Report Submission
		From Date	To Date	
12/31/2028	2,200,000 (USD)	12/31/2024	12/30/2025	04/16/2026

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall Progress this Reporting Period 1
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Previous Rating
NA

Detailed Description including factors that lead to an upgrade/downgrade in the rating
Component 1

Completed translation of 35 titles from the Library For All (LFA) shelves from English to Tongan – Year 5 & Year 6 for the classroom libraries.

Adaptation of 20 titles from LFA shelves, including illustration and content, for Year 5 and Year 6 for the classroom libraries for primary schools.

Translated 20 adapted titles(from LFA shelves) for Year 5 and Year 6.

Finalised the translated front and back book covers – currently under peer review.

Year 3 and Year 4 peer review and selection for titles off LFA shelves currently underway.

Challenges:

Component 1 has made solid progress in delivering translated and adapted reading materials for Years 5 and 6; however, several key challenges affected implementation. A major constraint was limited funding, which meant locally authored Tongan titles could not be developed within the scope of the STG, requiring reliance on off-the-shelf resources from Library For All. This created some challenges in

contextual relevance and ownership. The process to overcome this involved significant back-and-forth between stakeholders, particularly around the renewed focus of content adaptation and translation, which slowed timelines. Copyright limitations also posed a challenge, but the MET and its provider worked together constructively to negotiate interim solutions to proceed. In response, process adjustments were introduced to streamline coordination and improve efficiency; however, these challenges highlighedt the need for clear understanding of what is feasible in terms of outputs against limited budgets, to be reflected in any future agreements.

Component 2

No activities are scheduled during this reporting period

Component 3

3.1.1 Identify suitable candidates for counselling course.

The counselling course started on 17 June with 35 teachers (22F: 13M) enrolled in the courses. The delivery of the course started in June and ended in December 2025.

Graduation of 1st cohort completed in December 2025.

Component 4

LEG meeting#3 was held on 24 October 2025.

PSC meeting#7 was held on the 28 November 2025.

Appointment of new Program Manager

Project Implementation Progress, by Component / Objective

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Classroom libraries	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:

Component 1

Translations, adaptation, illustrations of Y5 and Y6 titles

2026 Priority Activities

Component 1: Classroom libraries

Develop classroom libraries in progress

Write, adapt, translate & illustrate Y5-6 Classroom Libraries. – Final stages of adaptation

Printing of Y5-Y6 titles / Y3 &Y4 (110 titles) – (Moved printing for years 3-6 to end of year 2026, for one big bulk shipment)

Approve titles for Y3 & Y4 / Approve titles for Y1 & Y2

Translations, adaptation, illustrations of Y3-4 booklets and Y1 and Y2

1.2 National reading in-service program as planned in Q4 2026

Component / Objective	**Level of Progress this Reporting Period** [2]	**Previous Rating**
Home reading program.	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:

Planned to initiate and start workshops and production of journal in 2026 January

2026 Priority Activities:

Component 2: Home reading program

2.1. Home reading program scheduled for 2026

Planning of the Home Reading Journal & Flip Chart workshop with writers

2.2 Home reading campaign scheduled for 2026

Component / Objective	**Level of Progress this Reporting Period** [2]	**Previous Rating**
Boys’ education support	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:

Cohort 1 – a total of 35 graduates graduated with a certificate L4 in Counselling, they will join former graduate counselors in a Community of Practice?

2026 Priority Activities

Component 3: Boys' education support

3.1 School counsellors –

Planning of the 2nd cohort for February 2026 with Hala Ki ‘Emeasi Counselling program

Planning of the 3rd cohort under USP program in March - calling for interested participants now

Planning & Commencing of the Standard operation procedure and community of practice for counselling – Workshop Style

3.2 Reading booster program as planned, schedule for 2027

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period [2]	Previous Rating
Program management and learning.	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:
LEG Meeting, PSC Meeting and Recruitment of Program Manager for the program.

Lessons, innovative/promising practices

- Engaging MET officers and LFA in the discussion of LFA action plan for the classroom libraries activities
- Producing a small working committee to progress approvals for book process more quickly – LFA, MET – CDU, PMU, Pacific Reading Specialist, TA (SCA)?

Impact stories

Counselling course – case study (awaiting approval to share on social media & MET website)

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

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	TON GPE STG Results Framework (Jul-Dec 25) - 260313 (1).xlsx	Results Framework	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
2,200,000	220,291.21	10.01	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.

A change in Government at the beginning of 2025 resulted in shifts in national priorities and internal restrictions within the Ministry. Key stakeholders were temporarily unavailable or required time to realign sector plans and activities with updated Government priorities. Consequently, the signing of the Financial Agreement was delayed, which postponed the request for the first disbursement. Funds were only received in May 2025, significantly shortening the effective implementation period for the year. Following receipt of funds, the recruitment process for new project staff was initiated; however, staff were only recruited and onboarded in August 2025, further delaying the operationalization of planned activities. A subsequent Government transition in November 2025 also contributed to the low financial absorption rate during the reporting period. Additionally, payments for printing services have been delayed but are planned for execution in 2026.

Despite these challenges, the overall expenditure trajectory is set to rise sharply in the next reporting period. Several significant expenses—including printing, bulk procurement of supplies, and planned training workshops—have been shifted only a few months later into Q1–Q2 of 2026. Had these expenses been processed as originally scheduled, they would have added substantially to the burn rate in the current period. Their deferral is a timing shift, not a reduction in planned spending.

To ensure catch-up and improve future spending rates, the following controls and measures have been put in place:

A monthly expenditure acceleration plan with clear milestones and owner accountability.

Bi-weekly cash flow forecasting to identify and resolve payment bottlenecks early.

Pre-approved procurement frameworks for recurring expenses to reduce processing delays.

Dedicated follow-up with government counterparts to fast-track outstanding approvals.

Risk-based monitoring of spending against a revised, realistic implementation schedule that reflects the late start and staff onboarding timeline.

These steps are already showing early results, with projected expenditure for the next quarter expected to exceed the current period's spending by over 45%, putting the project on a clear path toward full annual absorption.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period	Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period
451,050.69	220,291.21

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%

As mentioned above, the variance is primarily due to implementation delays arising from the change in Government, 2025 which led to shifts in national priorities and restructuring within the Ministry. The signing of the Financial Agreement was also delayed, shortening the the time available for implementation of yr 1 activities. Recruitment of project staff completed in August, 2025, further delaying in commencement of activities. Government transition again in November, 2025 also affected implementation progress. Procuring the classroom libraries will speed up expenditure.?

Management Performance

Level of Management Performance
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Previous Rating
NA

Detailed Description
Financial Management: Financial management was Moderately Satisfactory as expenditures continued to be managed within the approved STG budget and financial reporting requirements. Despite leadership transitions during the period, financial oversight and coordination between PMU, MET, and SCA remained stable and ensured continued accountability of funds.

Procurement: Procurement is rated Moderately Satisfactory. While procurement activities are progressing, timelines are affected by standard MET government procurement procedures, which typically require 2–3 months to complete, as well as coordination requirements with the LFA under Component 1. These processes contributed to some delays but remain compliant with government and grant requirements.

Safeguards: Safeguards implementation is Satisfactory as the program continues to adhere to the established safeguards framework and procedures. No major issues were identified during the reporting period.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Monitoring and evaluation is Satisfactory, with program monitoring continuing through coordination between PMU, MET, and SCA to track progress of the Home Reading and School Counselling activities and ensure reporting requirements are met.

Implementation Arrangements: Implementation arrangements are rated Moderately Satisfactory. The appointment of the Head of PMU and the formation of the new Government in November 2025 temporarily slowed decision-making and coordination processes. In addition, delays in signing the MOU with the LFA affected the timely commencement of some Component 1 activities. With the PMU leadership now in place and coordination mechanisms strengthened, implementation has stabilized and activities are progressing.

Governance: Governance is Satisfactory, as oversight structures remain in place and coordination between PMU, MET, SCA, and the LFA has improved following the management transitions, supporting continued progress toward program outcomes

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 Unlikely

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description

CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
LFA	Library for All
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
PMU	Program Management Unit
SCA	Save the Children Australia
STG	System Transformation Grant
TA	Technical Assistance

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		0	0	

GPE Indicators

Teachers trained

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during	This system transformation grant	Comments

		this reporting period)	annual progress report is learning oriented and seeks to:	
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		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.

The reading materials for Year 5 and Year 6 are scheduled to be distributed in 2026; therefore, the number of students who will directly benefit from the program has yet to be determined.

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.