Final Decision

BOD/2020/05-03–Allocation for an Education Sector Program Implementation Grant to Niger: The Board of Directors with respect to the application submitted in the first round of 2020:

1. Notes compliance with the requirements for accessing the fixed part of the maximum country allocation (MCA) as described in the application and summarized and assessed in Annex B to BOD/2020/04 DOC 02.

2. Notes compliance with meeting the requirements for accessing the variable part of the MCA and approves the indicators on Equity, Efficiency, and Learning and their means of verification as described in the application and assessed in Annex B to BOD/2020/04 DOC 02.

3. Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds for an ESPIG, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table 1 in BOD/2020/05-03 3 (c), subject to:

   a. Availability of funds.

   b. Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for ESPIGs in annual installments.

   c. GPC recommendations for funding, including (**all amounts in EURO**):

Table 1: Niger (all amounts in EURO)		
a.	ESPIG Maximum Country Allocation	77,300,000
b.	Fixed Part	54,110,000
c.	Variable Part	23,190,000
d.	Allocation Requested (100%)	77,300,000
e.	**Allocation Recommended by GPC**	**77,300,000**
f.	Grant Agent	Agence française de développement (AFD)
g.	Agency Fee % - Amount	4% - 3,092,000
h.	Period	4 years and 6 months
i.	Expected Start Date	July 1, 2020
j.	Variable Part Disbursement Modality	Ex-Post
k.	Funding Source	GPE Fund

4. Requests the Secretariat to:
    a. Include in its notification of grant approval to Niger the observations and requests for report-back as recommended by the Grants and Performance Committee and set out in Annex A to BOD/2020/04 DOC 02.
    b. Include an update on the issues listed as “report back” in the annual Grant Performance Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

ANNEX A – GPC OBSERVATIONS AND REQUESTS FOR REPORT-BACKS

Niger	
Observations	The Committee notes that the approach through a pooled fund aligned on national PFM systems provides a structural leverage on education financing and funding at scale, systems strengthening and the broader dialogue on sector monitoring and coordination. Lessons learned from the past ESPIG in terms of operational and fiduciary risk management were well reflected in the application, with an adequate array of risk management protocols and support measures included in the new program. The variable part strategies target some key points of leverage for the three dimensions of equity, efficiency and learning with a relatively high level of ambition given the country context and the transitional nature of the education sector plan. The Committee notes the impact of the pandemic on education systems. The Committee invites the government and the grant agent, in consultation with the local education group, to consider adapting the proposed program to emerging issues, notably impact on children learning as a result of school closures, as needed. Other adaptations to consider could relate to mitigation measures on potential delays or other constraints that the pandemic may have on program implementation including, if necessary, a modification of indicator targets.
Report-Backs	*For the government:* There are some new or updated thematic strategies that are in development in Niger, awaiting finalizing in some cases and government adoption in others. It is understood that this is a normal process, particularly in the context of a transitional education sector plan. Continued focus on these new strategies is important, while factoring in the current COVID-19 related restrictions and lockdowns which may impede progress over the short term. The government is requested to report back on the finalization, arbitration and validation of new or updated thematic strategies. This is to be done through the regular joint sector dialogue channels and sector monitoring reports: meetings of the local education group, strategic working groups (former thematic working groups), joint sector reviews and the annual TESP implementation reports.