GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP for EDUCATION

BOD/2019/02 DOC 01
Board of Directors
Decision via Affirmative Vote
February 28, 2019

BENIN EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANT ALLOCATION: REPORT FROM THE GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

For Decision

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are not public documents until the Board has considered them. It is understood that constituencies will circulate Board documents among their members prior to Board consideration for consultation purposes.

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to request the Board to approve an allocation for an education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG) to Benin, as recommended by the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) following its discussion of the grant application during its January 29-31, 2019 meeting.

2. RECOMMENDED DECISION

2.1 The Grants and Performance Committee recommends the Board approve the following decision:

BOD/2019/03-XX–Allocation for an Education Sector Program Implementation Grant to Benin: The Board of Directors with respect to the application submitted in the fourth round of 2018:

1. Notes compliance with the requirements for accessing the fixed part of the maximum country allocation, as described in the application and summarized and assessed in Annex 2 to BOD/2019/02 DOC 01.
2. Notes compliance with the incentives for accessing the variable part of the maximum country allocation and approves the indicators on Equity, Efficiency, and Learning and their means of verification, as described in the application and assessed in Annex 2 to BOD/2019/02 DOC 01.
3. Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds for an education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG), as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table 1 in decision BOD/2019/03-XX 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 include (all amounts in US$):

Table 1 Application Summary and GPC Allocation Recommendations for an ESPIG in US$:

Benin		
a.	Maximum Country Allocation	19,400,000
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	19,400,000[1]
c.	Fixed Part Requested	13,580,000
d.	Variable Part Requested	5,820,000
e.	**Allocation Recommended by GPC**	**19,400,000**
f.	Grant Agent	World Bank
g.	Agency Fee % - Amount	1.75% - 339,500
h.	Period	4 years and 3 months[2]
i.	Expected Start Date	July 1, 2019
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 Benin the requests for report-back and observations on the program as recommended by the Grants and Performance Committee and set out in Annex 1 to BOD/2019/02 DOC 01.
   b. Include an update on the issues listed as "report-back" in the annual Portfolio Review in accordance with the specified timeline.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Committee assessed the grant application from Benin and discussed whether it met the funding model requirements to access the fixed and variable part of the maximum country allocation.

3.2 Prior to the discussion, the following conflict of interest was disclosed:

- Douglas Sumerfield. World Bank, as representative of the grant agent for the proposed program.

[1] Includes US$500,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities (formerly supervision fees).
[2] The expected closing date is September 30, 2023.

3.3 The GPC had a rich discussion regarding the application and found that Benin met the requirements.

3.4 The primary discussion points are summarized in Annex 1. The evidence for meeting the requirements and quality standards is set out in Annex 2.

4. PLEASE CONTACT Margarita Focas Licht (mlicht@globalpartnership.org) in case of any questions.

5. ANNEXES

5.1 This paper includes the following annexes:

- Annex 1 – GPC Observations, Report-Backs, and Conditions
- Annex 2 – Secretariat Quality Assurance Review Phase 3 (Final Readiness Review)

5.2 The following is available on the Committee eTeam site:

- Benin ESPIG Application Package (GPC/2019/01 DOC 04)

ANNEX 1 – GPC OBSERVATIONS, REPORT-BACKS, AND CONDITIONS

Benin	
Observations	Taking into account that this is the third ESPIG that Benin is applying for, the Committee commends the continuity and consistency between the previous grant program (Common Fund Budget-Global Partnership for Education (FCE-PME) phase II) and the proposed grant program (FCE – PME phase III). Further, considering the importance of inclusion in the education sector, the Committee also commends the emphasis on disability in the proposed program and strongly encourages the country to reinforce the collection of data on disability to inform interventions in the education sector. In addition, given the significant number of out-of-school children, the Committee encourages the country to regularly monitor progress on access to education. Regarding the requirement on the share of domestic financing allocated to primary education, the Committee duly notes the government's commitment to reach the benchmark of 45 percent and strongly encourages it to meet it at the earliest opportunity. In the framework of the program's component aiming to improve education service delivery, the Committee strongly encourages strengthening gender and disability data, and reinforcing transparency and access to data by civil society organizations and donor partners in the course of program implementation. Given the equity challenges in Benin, the Committee recommends integrating an equity focus throughout the program. In this context, the Committee discussed in particular the degree of randomness in teacher allocation, which is particularly high in Benin compared with other countries in the region and which denotes inefficiency and inequity between schools. The Committee therefore strongly encourages Benin to address teacher allocation equity in the teacher deployment policy.
Report-Backs	*For the Local Education Group:* The Committee requests the coordinating agency on behalf of the local education group and via the joint sector review report to provide updates on the following: ▪ Progress on reaching the benchmark of allocating 45 percent of the domestic financing budget to primary education. ▪ Implementation of enhanced monitoring with respect to the Variable Part indicator relating to efficiency. The Committee requests to be informed of progress in this area to ensure that automatic promotions will not have an adverse impact on learning outcomes and quality of education. ▪ Access to and the use of data to strengthen policy dialogue and effective monitoring of the implementation of the education sector plan in the context of the GPE funding model requirement on data.

	▪ Progress on the reduction of the degree of randomness in teacher allocation in relation to the issue of equity in the teacher deployment policy.
Conditions	N.A

ANNEX 2 – SECRETARIAT QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW PHASE 3 (FINAL READINESS REVIEW)

Benin - Quality Assurance Review – Phase 3

Fixed Part: US$13.58 million, of which US$0.5 million for grant agent's implementation support costs
Variable part: US$5.82 million
Implementation period: 4 years and 3 monhts
Projected implementation start date: July 1, 2019
Grant Agent: The World Bank

1. BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Bordered to the west by Togo, to the east by Nigeria, and to the north by Burkina Faso and Niger, Benin, which had a population of 10.9 million in 2016,[1] remains a stable, democratic country. Six presidential, seven legislative, and three local elections have been peacefully conducted in the country since 1989. Presidential elections held in March 2016 were won by Patrice Talon, who adopted the Government Action Program [*Programme d'actions du gouvernement* PAG], which is structured around 45 flagship projects aimed at improving productivity and people's living conditions.

Benin's economy is heavily reliant on the informal re-export and transit trade with Nigeria (approximately 20 percent of GDP), and on agriculture. The tertiary sector as a whole accounts for 50 percent of GDP, with agriculture making up roughly 25 percent of GDP and providing between 45 percent and 55 percent of jobs. It is estimated that the informal sector accounts for 65 percent of total economic activity and employs more than 90 percent of the labor force.

Despite moderate annual growth of between 4 percent and 5 percent over the past two decades, poverty is on the rise. Weak per capita GDP of only 1.6 percent between 2006 and 2016 led to an increase in the national poverty rate from 37.5 percent in 2006 to 40.1 percent in 2015.

Benin is vulnerable to exogenous shocks such as weather events, fluctuating terms of trade (cotton and oil), and the situation in Nigeria, Benin's main source of economic activity (80 percent of Benin's imports go to Nigeria). Lastly, Benin continues to grapple with major corruption-related challenges, falling to 85th place out of 180 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2017 (83rd place in 2015).

[1] https://data.worldbank.org/country/benin?view=chart

	Benin
Population	10.9 million (2016, national census)
Human Development Index Ranking	167 out of 188 countries (2016, UNDP)
GDP	US$9.3 billion (2017, The World Bank, Macro Poverty Outlook)
GDP per capita	US$830 (2017, The World Bank, Macro Poverty Outlook)
World Bank Income Classification Level	Low-income country (2018, The World Bank)

1.2. EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

Developed in collaboration with the Local Education Group (LEG) and approved by the Government in June 2018, the new Education Sector Plan (ESP) for 2018-2030 introduces a 12- year basic education program that will cover pre-primary through to lower secondary education.[2] The ESP indicates that basic education will also cover non-formal basic education composed of alternative education and learning pre-professionalization programs.[3]

The education sector is managed by three ministries: (i) The Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education (MEMP); (ii) the Ministry of Secondary Education and Technical and Vocational Training (MESFTP); and (iii) the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS). In the case of the MEMP, at the decentralized level there are 85 primary school communes grouped into 45 subregional school inspectorates, which are headed by inspectors assisted by pedagogical advisers.

Broadly speaking, student numbers have increased since the 2010-11 academic year at virtually all education levels (formal and non-formal). The largest increases were observed in pre-primary schools (+39 percent over the period 2011-2015), in secondary schools (+35 percent), and in higher education (+27 percent). Between 2011 and 2015, the gross enrollment rates increased from 11.5 percent to 14.3 percent in pre-primary schools, from 107.8 percent to 116.2 percent in primary schools, and from 60.3 percent to 69.5 percent in lower secondary schools.

Increased coverage has, regrettably, not improved access to schools in Benin for all children and young people. A 2015 survey revealed that 25 percent of persons between the ages of 5 and 17 had never attended school, while 5 percent of them had dropped out of school. A sizable share of pupils drop out of school before completing their primary education. The cross-sectional enrollment profile presented in the sector analysis shows a gradual decline in access rates from the first to the last year of lower secondary education, pointing to a real retention problem.

[2] Based on the 2+6+4 cycle: two years of pre-primary school, six years of primary school, and four years of lower secondary school.

[3] During the 2016-2017 academic year, there were approximately 2.3 million pupils in primary schools and 0.9 million pupils in secondary schools. Pupils in private schools account for 23.2 percent and 17.2 percent of primary and secondary school populations, respectively.

1.2.1 Learning outcomes

The 2014 report on CONFEMEN's Program for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC), which assessed student performance in the core subjects of reading and mathematics, revealed significant learning gaps among students in the early grades (Year 2). They scored 458 in reading and 455 in mathematics,[4] placing Benin second to last among the 10 countries that participated in the assessment.[5] However, Beninese pupils in the last year of primary school (Year 6) performed better, scoring an average of 523 in French and 497 in mathematics. In PASEC 2014, Benin ranked 3rd and 4th, respectively, out of the 10 participating countries. This improved ranking between the beginning and end of schooling suggests that, unlike the other countries, Benin's education system is doing a much better job than the other countries of narrowing student learning gaps.

National results in the various tests confirm that a large percentage of children are not acquiring the necessary competencies for the level of study that they seek to complete. For example, the share of pupils who achieved the minimum score in the core subjects in the 2015 Certificate of Primary Education (CEP) examination was far lower than the officially declared success rate.[6]

Lastly, learning outcomes are tracked in a very ad hoc manner, owing to the dependence on funding from donors and limited use of data to guide polices and support schools. Although they are available to the MEMP, the results of assessments are not being used to review education policies and practices relating to (i) the design and implementation of policies and programs aimed at improving classroom instruction and learning; (ii) the identification of lagging pupils to facilitate adoption of the required mitigation measures; and (iii) the provision of assistance (training) for underperforming teachers and schools, thereby guaranteeing all pupils equal learning opportunities. The numerous strike days also led to reduced learning time in school, despite the regulatory requirement to provide 180 days of classroom teaching.

1.2.2 Equity

The enrollment profile shows that while many students do have access to school, a substantial share of them drop out before completing their primary education. In 2015, the gross access rate for Year 1 (*Cours d'Initiatio*n)[7] was 141 percent, but only 74 percent for Year 6 (CM2). As aresult, post-primary access rates are rather low. The gross access rate for lower secondary education is 66 percent while the completion rate for this same level is 45 percent and 28 percent for upper secondary education.

While the enrollment profile has improved relative to 2011, this improvement has been slow: the access rate was already high (126 percent) and the completion rate low (67 percent in CM2). School coverage at all educational levels nevertheless improved in 2015 relative to 2011

Gender disparities are non-existent in pre-primary schools and negligible in primary schools but begin to emerge at the lower secondary level. In the 5-24 year old cohort, 81.5 percent of girls attend schools, compared to 82.5 percent of boys.[8] These virtually equal access rates are

[4] The "sufficient" threshold in language is a minimum of 540 points. The "sufficient" threshold in mathematics is a minimum of 489 points on the score scale (National PASEC Report, p.33).
[5] Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.
[6] Indeed, while the officially declared success rate was 86 percent in 2015, an analysis of the declared individual scores shows that only 32.5 percent achieved the minimum score in reading, 43.8 percent in writing, and 37.6 percent in mathematics.
[7] First year of school
[8] Sector analysis note, p. 27, statistical data, 2015.

maintained throughout the cycle. By the end of primary school, the differences in completion rates are small (59.3 percent for girls compared to 59.9 percent for boys).[9] However, the differences are greater at the secondary level. Girls have less access than boys to the various classes, with an access rate in Year 7 of 62 percent for girls and 70 percent for boys. In Year 10, the gap widens a bit more: the access rate is 39 percent among girls and 51 percent among boys.

Children in urban areas have, on average, a 20 percent greater chance than rural children of going to school. The 15-point difference observed at the start of the education cycle (the primary access rate is 90 percent in urban areas and 75 percent in rural areas) is maintained throughout the cycle. The urban primary completion rate is 67 percent while the rural completion rate is 52 percent.

Socioeconomic disparities also play a very important role. The higher the quintile to which an individual belongs, the greater the chances of going to school. A close examination of the most extreme quintiles reveals that, in the case of the poorest, the primary access rate is 68 percent while the completion rate is 39 percent. However, among the wealthy, these indicators are 94 percent and 79 percent, respectively.

Wide disparities exist in the departments from the time children enter primary school and lasting throughout their school life. Departments can be placed into four groups, based on their enrollment profile. The first group contains just one department - Alibori - which, unlike all the others, has an extremely low school participation rate.[10] There are two departments in the second group: Atacora and Borgou.[11] The third group comprises Atlantique, Collines, Couffo, Donga, Plateau, and Zou.[12] The fourth group contains the departments with the best enrollment profile: Littoral, Mono, and Ouémé.[13]

The enrollment and retention rates among disabled children are even lower. The population census identified 92,495 disabled persons, 19,023 of whom are between the ages of 3 and 17 years old. Some 50.6 percent of them have never attended school, 39.5 percent were attending school at the time of the census, and 6.8 percent have never been to school.[14] There are significant differences between the departments: the departments in the north (Alibori, Borgou, Atacora, Donga) appear to have the highest percentage of disabled children who have never enrolled in school.[15] However, Atlantique, Littoral, and, to a lesser degree, Ouémé, have the lowest percentage of disabled children who have never enrolled in school.[16] A gender analysis of enrollment of disabled children in each department reveals disparities. The most significant gender disparities favoring boys in school enrollments for disabled children are observed in the departments of Mono, Couffo, Zou, and Collines. In the Collines department, 52.5 percent of girls compared to 47.5 percent of boys have never attended school.

[9] This gender parity in school participation can also be corroborated by an analysis of the school statistics for 2015. The girl/boy parity index for the gross preschooling rate is 1.02, 0.93 for the gross primary enrollment rate, and 0.91 for the primary completion rate.
[10] An access rate of 35 percent and a completion rate of 24 percent.
[11] An access rate of close to 68 percent and a completion rate of 56 percent for Borgou and 47 percent for Atacora. [12] In these departments, access rates range from 80 percent to 90 percent while completion rates vary between 56 percent and 65 percent.
[13] The access rate is 97 percent while the completion rate is 73 percent.
[14] (49.3 percent of girls and 51.9 percent of boys). Study on out-of-school children in the 77 communes in Benin, INSAE and UNICEF, 2017.
[15] With 75.2 percent, 63.6 percent, 68.7 percent, and 59.5 percent, respectively, ibid.
[16] With 41.7 percent, 24.3 percent, and 39.6 percent, respectively.

1.2.3 Efficiency

Since 2011, the average primary repetition rate remained virtually unchanged at around 11 percent. However, although secondary repetition rates over the period also remained virtually unchanged, they were higher at the end of the cycle than at the beginning. While the average repetition rate for both cycles was 23 percent in 2015, it was 31 percent in Year 10.

The estimated internal efficiency coefficient at the primary level is 0.65 and 0.66 at the secondary level. In other words, almost 35 percent of the resources invested in these two cycles are wasted by the twin impact of repetitions and dropouts. All told, because of school repetitions and dropouts, the education system on average needs to fund the equivalent of 9.3 academic years instead of six years to enable a child to graduate from primary school. At the lower secondary level, funding for almost six years of schooling instead of four is needed to allow a child to graduate.

Three categories of teachers provide an education to primary school pupils: permanent public employees, public contract employees, and other categories of teachers largely comprising teachers paid by parents (community teachers). Between 2010 and 2015, the Government made a significant effort to assume responsibility for the community teachers as the share of permanent public and contract public employees paid by the State had increased from 50 percent to 80 percent.

Figures from the sector analysis show a pupil-teacher ratio of 52:1. This situation would be even more serious if calculations included only the permanent public and contract public employees, because without the other categories of teachers, the ratio would be 65:1.

The information also reveals differences in teacher allocations to the departments. For example, the departments of Alibori and Plateau (pupil-teacher ratios of 72:1 and 63:1, respectively) have the worst pupil-teacher ratios, while the departments of Mono and Zou have the best ratios (44:1 and 47:1, respectively). This imbalance could stem from laws in effect in Benin that stipulate that teacher allocations are not based on the number of pupils but on the number of classes. The established rules state that once a class is formed, a teacher must be assigned to this class, irrespective of the number of pupils.

On a scale of 0 to 1, the degree of randomness in teacher allocation is estimated to be 0.73. This means that roughly 73 percent of teacher allocations in primary schools are not linked to the number of pupils. A comparison of the degree of randomness between 2010 and 2015 shows that teacher deployments worsened over time and was estimated at 52 percent in 2011.

1.2.4 Monitoring of Sector Performance

Benin's education sector is organized around the Local Education Group (LEG), which is chaired by the Minister of Pre-Primary and Primary Education and co-chaired by the lead development partner. There is broad representation of partners on the LEG, including unions, parent associations, NGOs and journalists specializing in education. In addition to this body, the development partners meet in the partner group that also includes the technical working groups for the sector's key subsectors.

Characterized by a large number of unions (roughly 80 at the primary level alone), dialogue between the Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education and the social partners takes place within the Sector Council for Social Dialogue (CSDS) that holds ordinary and extraordinary sessions.

This structuring of the LEG helps the Government and all sector partners organize regular joint sector reviews (since 2010). All subsectors are represented in the LEG and participate in decision making.

The LEG played a key role and was consulted during all stages of the design of the sector plan and the GPE-financed program, as well as during the finalization and validation of the various documents, including the sector analysis. In November 2017, the LEG reappointed the World Bank as the Grant Agent for the Global Partnership for Education. To ensure transparency and participation, an interministerial project preparation committee was established to include contributions from each partner to the design of the program, strategies, indicators, and targets of the variable part.

2. Fixed Part Requirements

2.1. **Requirement 1:** A credible, endorsed Education Sector Plan (ESP) or a Transitional Education Plan (TEP).

In 2016, the Government of Benin received a grant to develop its sector plan for the period 2018-2030. The plan was endorsed by the members of the Local Education Group on July 26, 2018, more than three months before the submission of the ESPIG application. The final version of the sector plan incorporated the recommendations provided by the independent appraisal conducted in December 2017.

To develop its sector plan, the Government of Benin drew on the country's development objectives laid out in the "Vision Bénin Alafia 2025," the proceedings of the Second Forum on Education held in 2014, and the national development plan (overall vision).

The sector plan is a single, comprehensive document detailing the objectives of the various subsectors, from pre-primary to higher education. In accordance with international commitments (strategic vision), the plan provides in particular for:

- The implementation of a 12-year universal basic education cycle in line with the universal right to education;
- The development of a basic post-education program that includes upper secondary education (with its general, technical, and vocational streams), higher education (general, technical, and vocational), and the structures for developing technical and vocational skills;
- The implementation of a "sector regulatory framework" that sets forth all the quality standards of the program, namely (a) the age of admission and the duration of the learning cycles for all sector components, (b) the certification requirements for each component, (c) the requirements for gaining access to and moving through the sector components, and (d) the requirements for training and interventions for non-formal education trainers and educators.

In addition, the sector plan's strategies are informed by recent data (evidence-based) obtained from a robust sector analysis, which identified the challenges pertaining to quality, efficiency, and equity that affect the overall performance of Benin's education sector.

The ESP is also based on a financial simulation model that identified a credible funding gap for the 2018-2021 implementation period (4 percent on average) and developed a costed, multiyear action plan (2018-2021) accompanied by a coherent results framework with a suitable capacity- building plan.

Lastly, the plan provides solutions to the disparities identified by the sector analysis and proposes analysis and risk mitigation measures suited to the Beninese context.

Conclusion: Based on the quality standards, this requirement has been met.

2.2. **Requirement 2:** Evidence of commitment to the ESP or TEP and its financing

It is important to note that when Benin began the process of developing its new education sector plan, the GPE Secretariat used the share of the education budget in recurrent expenditure excluding public debt to gauge the Government's financial commitment to implement its education sector plan.

Government commitment: The figures provided in Annex B.4 show a high level of non-debt recurrent expenditure on education (above 26 percent over the period 2014-2016). Projections indicate that the level of non-debt recurrent expenditure on education will increase between 31.7 percent and 33.6 percent during the period 2017-2020).

Projections show that the share of education in total public spending during the 2017-2020 period will increase and surpass the 20 percent threshold in 2019 (share of education in total public expenditure was 16.6 percent in 2017 and 19.2 percent in 2018 and will be 20.6 percent and 21.2 percent in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

The share of primary education in the recurrent education budget[17] fell from 49 percent in 2010 to 43.7 percent in 2015. Annex B.4 shows that the share of primary education in recurrent education expenditure will increase over the 2017-2020 period, but will fall short of 45 percent (it will, on average, hover around 44.5 percent during this period), despite an already low primary completion rate (74 percent). It nonetheless bears noting that Benin's level of government spending is higher than that of the other African countries, as spending in Benin since 2010 has been 8 to 10 points above the African average.[18]

To address this situation, the Government, in a comfort letter addressed to the GPE Secretariat, committed to meeting the requirement of allocating 45 percent for the primary subsector by 2023 by increasing tax revenues through government measures. It also bears noting that Benin will receive budget support - the disbursement of which is contingent on the hiring of 3,600 new primary school teachers - which will help increase the share of spending on primary education in public recurrent spending.

Commitment of partners: The sector plan indicates that the total budget for interventions planned by the development partners amounts to over US$72 million for the 2018-2023 period.[19]

Conclusion: Requirement 2 has been met

[17] Table 7 of the post-2015 sector plan (p.32).

[18] https://poledakar.iiep.unesco.org/en/indicateurs-en/indicator-database

Volume 1 of the post-2015 sector plan includes a section (p.143-145) that summarizes the programs that have been planned by subsector and by intervention zone of the key development partners. However, the final version of the program document indicates more than US$85 million from the development partners.

2.3. **Requirement 3:** Availability of Data

The sector analysis, which cites data from 2015, was completed in September 2017. The sector analysis is evidence based, drawing in particular from the 2013 General Population and Housing Census (RGPH-4).

Strengthened by the previous GPE program, Benin collects, analyzes, and regularly publishes school statistics, which is handled by the Directorate for Programming and Forward Planning in the Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education [*Direction de la Programmation et de la Prospective du Ministère des Enseignements Maternel et primaire* DPP/MEMP]. At the sector level, the Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education is on the verge of completing the implementation of a data center to develop data access and improve their equality and reliability. The challenge with the next sector plan lies therefore in improving the analysis and publication process for these data so as to ensure that decision making can be informed by timely, reliable statistics.

With regard to the reporting of basic data to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) for global monitoring of education outcomes (GPE's RF indicator #14), Benin reported on 10 of the 12 indicators in 2015 and on all 12 indicators in 2016.

Benin regularly participates in CONFEMEN's PASEC assessments, and the results of the most recent assessment reveal significant gaps among Beninese pupils at the start of schooling (Year 2), while the education sector diagnostic assessment notes a lack of reliability of the scores in the end-of-training examinations (CEAP, CAP). The results of student teacher assessments conducted upon completion of the program at the teacher training college reveal a very high failure rate in dictation. Close to half of the student teachers preparing for the CEAP exam failed to provide correct answers in the dictation exercise. The next plan is expected to include a mechanism for tracking learning outcomes, which will be implemented with the National Institute for Education Training and Research [*Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education* INFRE) and PASEC's national team. Benin's participation in the upcoming PASEC 2019 is a major step for the implementation of a long-term mechanism for monitoring learning outcomes.

Conclusion: Based on the above, Requirement 2 has been met.

3. ESPIG

3.1. PAST ESPIG PERFORMANCE

Benin has received two previous grants from the GPE Secretariat. The first grant totaling US$75.1 million covered the 2008-2012 period while the second, in the amount of US$42.3 million, covered the 2014-2018 period.

The first grant was incorporated into a pooled fund[20] for a total investment of US$177 million in the education sector. The main activities were focused in particular on increasing pupil access to education with a view to supporting the implementation of universal education: construction and rehabilitation of latrines and classrooms, as well as support with running school canteens, thereby improving school access and retention rates. The pooled fund also contributed to the construction of literacy centers and the provision of training for adults, especially women and girls. Training was also provided to primary and secondary school teachers and to inspectors.

In an effort to better target the most disadvantaged communities and improve the quality of Benin's education system, activities under the second FCB-PME program targeted the country's deprived communes, particularly (i) 25 of Benin's 77 communes with a gross enrollment rate (GER) of less than 95 percent or a primary completion rate (PCR) below 50 percent; and (ii) 23 communes with a GER for girls below 30 percent. This GPE-financed project sought to improve (i) access and equity; and (ii) the quality of classroom instruction at the basic education level, paying particular attention to disadvantaged communes. The program also supported a continuous teacher training program for roughly 9,000 teachers from 1,769 primary schools in the deprived communes, by strengthening the training program for secondary education teachers and allocating funds to disadvantaged schools for the purchase of teaching materials (Component 1). The program constructed and equipped 255 primary school classrooms and 192 secondary school classrooms in the 31 deprived communes, and supported school canteens in 396 schools in 25 targeted communes and the provision of school kits for all girls in the first subcycle (Years 1 and 2) (Component 2). Lastly, under the component to support management of the system, the program helped to implement EMIS and, thanks to an annual appropriation of US$800,000, to provide pedagogical support and supervision of teachers by education inspectors in all school districts.

3.2 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

Phase 3 of the FCB-PME project seeks to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in basic education, focusing on the early years of primary school, and improve equity in primary education, particularly in four departments in the country (Alibori, Borgou, Collines and Zou). Structured around three main components, Phase 3 of the FCB-PME project directly supports implementation of Benin's ESP. The project's new resources will use the Common Fund Budget (FCB) as the implementation mechanism. The Fund may also receive grants from other partners, such as Swiss Cooperation or *Agence française de développement*, that have demonstrated an interest in contributing to this Fund.

[20] Funded by partners such as DANIDA (US$25,886,196), *Agence française de développement* (US$16,681,792), KfW (US$20,989,784), the Government of the Netherlands (US$21,646,582) and the Government of Benin (US$17,383,404).

The first component, which targets the entire country, seeks to improve the quality of basic education (US$12 million), by supporting learning in the early grades of primary school and supporting sweeping reform of pre-service teacher training. This component therefore provides for the revision of primary and lower secondary education curricula[21] (in French, mathematics, physical sciences and English). Training targeting primary school teachers (years 1 and 2, and principals) and lower secondary school teachers will also be provided to enable them to master the content of the school curricula and use teaching materials effectively. Coaching training sessions will be provided for school principals to allow them to better support teachers. Lastly, improved pre-service teacher training is also planned and covers (i) revision of entry and exit profiles for primary education student teachers and the bivalence of lower secondary school teachers; (ii) capacity development for trainers at teacher training institutes for primary school teachers (ENI) and teacher training institutes for secondary school teachers (ENS); and (iii) the provision of additional equipment and multimedia tools[22]for resource centers.

The second component aims to improve equity in basic education in targeted regions (US$3.1 million). This component seeks to promote equitable access to education by providing support to (i) pupils in Years 1 and 2 in public primary schools in the poorest communes in the departments of Alibori and Borgou; and (ii) children with disabilities in the departments of Zou and Collines and specialized education and training centers.[23]

The program provides for the distribution of school kits to primary school pupils in the regions targeted by this component.[24] In light of the project's limited resources, activities and resources will be pooled with the UNICEF office. Lastly, the program will provide incentives to schools showing the highest increase in enrollment.

A successful pilot study, which was conducted during the previous phase of the FCB-PME program and helped boost enrollment of children with disabilities in the Zou department, will be replicated in the Collines department. The project will, therefore, provide the following support in the Zou and Collines departments: (i) awareness-raising and mobilization campaigns in communities; (ii) capacity building for education stakeholders involved in the implementation of inclusive education; (iii) medical check-ups and care for children with disabilities; (iv) provision of school kits; (v) training of community facilitators and mobile teachers; and (vi) the purchase of a bus to transport visually impaired children to and from home and school.

The third component aims to improve education service delivery (US$3.9 million), by supporting (i) capacity building in the ministries of education (MEMP and MESTFP), including in the area of monitoring and evaluation and (ii) project management.[25] This component aims to (i)

[21] Training will be provided to representatives of institutions in the four abovementioned subjects, who will in turn be responsible for replicating this training in their respective institutions. All representatives of institutions will also receive training to ensure better coaching of teachers. It bears noting that a portion of the variable share will be used to fund training for lower secondary teachers.
[22] A portion of the variable share will be used to fund this last activity.
[23] Virtually all the activities described below will be financed by a portion of the variable part.
[24] For 86,000 pupils, this includes a uniform, supplies, and a school bag for all pupils in Years 1 and 2 in public primary schools in the beneficiary communes.
[25] A part of the variable share will be used to finance the subsidies to the regional inspectorates (primary and secondary schools), the purchase of tablets needed for school visits, the extension of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to the secondary level and the hiring of statisticians to help collect data and produce the statistical yearbooks.

build the capacity of the regional school inspectorates so as to improve pedagogical support to teachers; (ii) build capacity to track learning outcomes through standardized testing; (iii) improve the monitoring and evaluation system of ministries involved in the implementation of the project.

Subsidies will be provided to the regional inspectorates, on the basis of performance-based contracts, to improve pedagogical support to teachers in primary and lower secondary schools and secure electronic tablets to allow pedagogical advisers and inspectors to collect data.

In addition, an operational structure for standardized assessments of learning outcomes will be established, and Benin intends to participate in PASEC 2019 and conduct a national assessment of learning outcomes in French and mathematics in 2022. During the first two years of the program, the new structure that will be put in place to conduct and manage learning outcomes assessments will ensure (i) the analysis of the results of the Primary Education Certificate examinations; (ii) the dissemination of the results of the 2017 national assessment; (iii) the development and implementation of an action and remediation plan that addresses the main recommendations of this assessment.

The project will also support capacity-building activities relating to the project's activities (provision of technical expertise; continuous training in the areas of procurement, statistics, monitoring and evaluation, and communication for technical personnel in central and deconcentrated units; and training for school principals and for COGEPs [school management committees] to share learning outcomes and design improvement plans).

Table A: ESPIG Components and Costs

	GPE financing – US$	% of total GPE
Total MCA	19,400,000	100%
Fixed Part		
Improving the quality of basic education	**12,000,000**	62%
1.1 Enhance programs to improve the quality of education	5,100,000	26%
1.2 Improve teachers' knowledge of teaching programs and practices	6,400,000	33%
1.3 Improve pre-service training of teachers in teacher training establishments	500.000	3%
Improving equity in basic education	**3,100,000**	16.0%
2.1 Promote equity in underprivileged communes in the regions of Alibori and Borgou	1,700,000	8.8%
2.2 Promote the inclusion of disabled children in schools in the regions of Zou and Collines	1,400,000	7.2%
Enhancing education service delivery	**3,800,000**	19.6%
3.1 Build capacity in the ministries of education (MEMP and MESTFP) and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system	2,700,000	13.9%
3.2 Ensure efficient project management	1,100,000	5.7%
Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*	**500,000**	2.6%
GRAND TOTAL (with Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs)	**19,400,000**	**100%**
Agency fees **	339,500	**1.75%**

	GPE financing – US$	% of total GPE
Variable Part		
A Equity	1,320,000	6.8%
B Efficiency	2,500,000	12.89%
C Learning outcomes	2,000,000	10.31%
Subtotal Variable Part	5,820,000	**30%**

* Include Grant Agent's direct costs, such as Program Management, Administrative and other direct implementation costs.

** Agency Fee is not included in the Maximum Country Allocation and is calculated as a percentage rate (agreed with each Grant Agent) from the Total Fixed Part and Total Variable Part.

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT

For this application, the quality assurance process performed by the Secretariat (QAR 1 and QAR 2) was completed as part of a pilot quality assurance project "aligned with the Grant Agent's quality assurance process." The overall objective of this pilot project was to enhance the efficiency of the quality assurance mechanism and to lower transaction costs through better alignment of the Secretariat's process with that of the Grant Agent and by reducing duplication of labor regarding the respective quality assurance activities. During phase 1 of the QAR, the GPE Secretariat provided the Grant Agent with comments on the Project Concept Note. The comments were also shared with the country, and the Country Lead participated in the decision meeting on the Concept Note as an assessor. For the QAR 2, the Secretariat provided comments on the preliminary draft of the program document and participated in the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) meeting as an assessor. All the QAR 2 recommendations on program quality standards were taken into account in the final version of the application.

Following the Secretariat's recommendations, the country paid particular attention to the lessons learned during the last project, ensuring that technical and administrative support and the necessary capacity- development activities would be prepared in a timely manner to support the Government's curriculum revision and provision of textbooks and guides. In the same vein, the recommendations encouraged policy dialogue with unions in the early stages of project implementation to ensure their support for the implementation of reforms associated with revision of curricula and the entry and exit profiles for the ENI and ENS.

Program design is anchored in the Beninese context and proposes responses to the challenges identified in the sector analysis, particularly the issues relating to quality and efficiency (poor learning outcomes in lower grades, geographic disparities in education service delivery, and the need to reform the teaching policy, specifically its allocation policy). The theory of change underpinning the coordination of the various components is clear, coherent, and evidence based (PASEC, SDI, or SABER).

The program budget is justified and the costs outlined are reasonable. Likewise, the budget aspects are aligned with the key activities presented in the program document. For program implementation, the country intends to make use of a sector pooled fund, the Common Fund Budget, which was established in 2008 and has been used by several partners. The detailed program budget also provides information on the unit costs for the planned activities as well as the direct costs of program management and monitoring, which represent 5.6 percent of the total amount. The Grant Agent's supervision costs amount to 2.6 percent of the total (US$500,000). Finally, the reserve and contingency fund stands at 1.9 percent of the total amount (US$373,000).

The program includes a detailed and adequate **monitoring and evaluation framework**. It is expected that the assessment units of the ministries will ensure program monitoring (Ministry of Pre-Primary and Primary Education, Ministry of Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Training) with an expert from the FCB-PME Phase 3 monitoring unit, the Technical Support and Monitoring Department (UATS). Capacity-development activities are also planned to ensure that regional directorates submit data (education statistics, classroom observation, learning assessment outcomes) through the EMIS. Moreover, in addition to program supervision missions, the FCB-PME will assist the Permanent Technical Secretariat with monitoring of the post-2015 sector plan and promote the organization of routine sector reviews. Finally, the results framework includes indicators as well as intermediary and program completion targets that are aligned with

the activities planned and the program's theory of change. Responsibilities are also clear and adequate for monitoring of each activity.

The fiduciary aspects, implementation arrangements, and degree of readiness are appropriate and clearly outlined and the program is ready to be implemented. Technical assistance and capacity-development activities are planned to support the MEMP in its role as the program implementation lead. A project steering committee chaired by the Secretary General (SG) of the MEMP, in collaboration with the MESTFP SG, will ensure project monitoring. A Technical Support and Monitoring Department (UATS) will provide technical support and ensure fiduciary management of the program and day-to-day project coordination. A Disbursement and Contract Monitoring Committee (CSDM) will facilitate the procurement and disbursement processes. Finally, the program document is accompanied by a timetable for each subcomponent of component 1. Most of the interventions under component 2 on equity will be implemented at the beginning of each school year. Moreover, the purchase and distribution of uniforms will be entrusted to UNICEF, who will then assume financial responsibility for this activity. Activities under component 3 will be implemented each year in parallel with activities under component 1 on expansion of the new curriculum. Furthermore, the activities relating to equity to be implemented in the departments of Alibori and Borgou will draw from the pilot project implemented under the preceding program with support from nongovernmental organizations and UNICEF.

The program includes **a very detailed analysis of the risks and appropriate remedial measures**. A matrix of risks, their assessment, and mitigation measures, is provided in the program document (p. 35-37). The major risks identified are associated with governance, the political climate, the sector, the technical design of the program, institutional capacities, and the financial aspects of the program. Appropriate actions are planned to address these different risks (recruitment of a financial management expert and an accountant whose qualifications satisfy the IDA terms of reference, an agreement with the Inspectorate General of Finance to include the project as part of its annual work program, the preparation of a financial and accounting manual of procedures, the recruitment of an external financial auditor for an annual audit), and dialogue between the Government and the unions is already under way regarding reform of the teaching policy.

The program document includes an analysis of **the sustainability of interventions** (p. 33-34). As specified there, the program is sustainable as it includes several capacity-development activities with potentially lasting medium- and long-term effects. These activities include curriculum revision, training of teachers and principals, enhancement of the school management committees, and capacity development of ministry officials in monitoring and evaluation and governance. With respect to activities such as the distribution of textbooks, uniforms, and materials, the increase in the government education budget, provided for in the sector plan, will allow the Government to gradually assume responsibility for these recurring expenses.

Regarding **aid effectiveness,** the program is aligned with the Education Sector Plan 2018-2030 and addresses the key challenges identified in it. It addresses three of the four ESP priorities (improvement of teaching and learning through component 1 of the program, the establishment of 12 years of universal basic education through components 1 and 2, and the development of more effective, efficient, and inclusive governance through component 3 of the program). Program implementation via a pooled fund will result in a considerable degree of alignment with national procedures. All project implementation arrangements are based on existing governmental

systems and procedures, although a number of these systems will be strengthened to mitigate weaknesses in technical and institutional capacities.

4. VARIABLE PART

4.1. Description of the Variable Part

The table below summarizes the Variable Part Indicators and the payment schedule set forth in phase 3 of the Common Fund Budget - Global Partnership for Education (FCB-PME).

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Benchmark	Program targets					
Equity							
Indicator:	Difference between the highest commune-level pupil-teacher ratio and the national pupil-teacher ratio average						
Definition of indicator	The indicator measures the gap between the pupil-teacher ratio in communes and the national REM average. (The pupil-teacher ratio represents the relationship between the number of enrolled pupils and the number of permanent public and contract public teachers available in public primary schools by commune/national level)						
Targets	52.9			40	30	20	20
Disbursement				US$518,000	US$401,000	US$401,000	
Efficiency							
Indicator:	National average promotion rate in public primary education						
Definition of indicator:	The indicator measures total enrollment, less those repeating one academic year n expressed as a percentage of total enrollment in academic year n-1 (the preceding year). It is only calculated for public schools based on the repetition and dropout rates provided annually by the MEMP statistical yearbook.						
Targets	68.40			70.00	72.00	74.0	76.0
Disbursement				US$714,000	US$893,000	US$893,000	
Learning outcomes							
Indicator:	Establish and launch a learning outcome assessment system for primary education						
Definition of indicator:	This indicator measures whether the basic elements of a learning outcome assessment system exist at the primary level. The basic elements include the following: (i) the overall enabling environment in the country for assessment activities (policies, organizational structures, human/budget resources); and (ii) the technical quality of tools used (design, program alignment, administration, analysis, appropriate use of results)						
Targets				Implement at least 80 percent of the newly revised curricula for years 1 and 2 in public schools		National assessment of Year 2 and Year 5 (CM1)	Publication and dissemination of results
Disbursement				US$400,000	US$400,000	US$1,000,000	US$200,000

In an effort to address the challenges identified in the sector analysis relating to efficiency (higher retention rates and lower repetition and dropout rates), equity (particularly better allocation of trained teachers in the most underserved communes in the country) and learning outcomes

(especially in the lower primary classes), the program proposes a theory of change guided by the following three indicators:

- Efficiency: national average promotion rate in public primary education (from 68.4 percent in 2017 to 76 percent in 2023);
- Equity: difference between the highest commune-level pupil/teacher ratio and the national pupil-ratio average (from 52.9:1 in 2017 to 20:1 in 2023);
- Learning outcomes: enhance monitoring of student learning in CP2 and Year 5 (CM1) through standardized learning assessments in French and mathematics.

For the indicator on equity, it will be necessary to ensure better distribution of teachers at the national level to reduce disparities among communes. Apart from the planned recruitment of almost 3,600 new teachers (a government commitment that will trigger the disbursement of World Bank budget support), the proposed strategy will be based primarily on the assignment of the newly hired teachers to underserved communes to address the existing disparities. Selection of communes will be based on calculation of the pupil-teacher ratios in public schools in the communes.[26] Assessment of the need for teachers will be based on a determination of the number of teachers to be assigned to priority communes and simulations done based on a baseline hypothesis aimed at significantly narrowing the gap between pupil-teacher ratios in communes and the national average. Once the underserved communes have been identified, the Regional Education Leads [*Chefs de Régions Pédagogiques* CRP] covering the beneficiary communes will be responsible for selecting the schools to which newly hired teachers will be assigned, prioritizing public primary schools in their jurisdiction with the highest pupil-teacher ratios.

Regarding efficiency, the objective is to increase the promotion rate in primary education to improve the completion rate. Achievement of this indicator requires that administrative measures be taken to limit repetition in Year 3 (CE1) and Year 5 (CM2) to 5 percent and 10 percent respectively. This activity will be enhanced by the following: (i) instruction of pupils by the same teacher within a subcycle and identification by the teacher of pupils with learning challenges with a view to implementing remedial measures and (ii) establishment by the teacher of work groups around remedial activities and/or review sessions outside of working hours. Textbooks and activity books will be distributed to pupils in Years 1 and 2 and performance contracts, aimed at improving school quality and outcomes, will be established with the *Chefs de Régions Pédagogiques* in their jurisdictions, particularly to ensure alignment with the school calendar and a complete learning period (by holding regular meetings of the Sector Council for Social Dialogue in order to prevent and anticipate crises with the potential to disrupt the academic year).

Improvement of **monitoring of learning outcomes** will be achieved through standardized assessments in French and mathematics. The INFRE will be responsible for learning assessments at the primary level. A decree will be issued to create an assessment unit within this entity and to provide adequate permanent resources. The unit will also be supported by a learning assessment specialist (technical assistant or consultant). This unit will collaborate with the national PASEC team in the short and medium term and will ensure that the PASEC assessment results as well as those from the next national assessment are broadly disseminated at the regional level. Lastly, the

[26] These pupil-teacher ratios are calculated based on data drawn from the most recent statistical yearbook according to the number of contract-based and permanent public teachers available in each commune.

ministry also plans to evaluate the use of new pedagogical tools (developed with support from the first component of the program) by teachers in the context of this dimension.

4.2. Assessment of the Variable Part

The strategies are aligned with the sector plan. The strategies selected for the variable part are an integral part of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and were discussed and validated by the LEG. The key disbursement-linked indicators selected for the variable part are included in the logical framework of the plan.

The variable part strategies are relevant. In addition to being contextualized, the variable part objectives and strategies very explicitly target the interrelated dimensions of equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes and propose a systemic response based on all factors. **With respect to efficiency,** despite considerable improvement in the sector, rates of access from the first year of primary education to the last year of secondary education posted a gradual decline, jeopardizing retention and access rates in the upper primary and secondary classes. As this situation is fundamentally linked to repetition and dropping out, **the efficiency dimension of the variable part will focus on increasing the primary promotion rate, thereby leading to a reduction of repetition and dropout rates.** The results of PASEC 2014 demonstrated that the majority of primary-level pupils have not met the minimum requirements in French and mathematics. **The objective of the learning outcomes dimension** is therefore to improve monitoring of student learning outcomes by creating an assessment unit in the National Institute for Education Training and Research (*Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education* INFRE). Moreover, the national assessment report produced by the new assessment unit will be made publicly available and the results will be shared with education inspectors and advisers in each of the 12 departments in the country. **The dimension relating to equity focuses on management of the teaching staff.** Poor management and disorganized deployment of teachers, which is a major challenge in Benin, have a significant impact on education conditions. The goal of lowering the pupil-teacher ratio in underprivileged communes will help with the implementation of effective measures aimed at reducing the inequalities noted with respect to teacher allocation and, by extension, in pupils' education conditions.

The variable part strategies on efficiency, learning outcomes, and equity are transformational. The efficiency strategy aims to improve the promotion rate and, in turn, completion of primary education rates. To this end, the interventions planned, such as reducing repetition, improving the immersion period for Year 1, providing textbooks in Years 1 and 2, improving the performance of departmental directors, adhering to the school calendar as well as the remedial measures planned in the other variable part strategies will help improve the completion rate. The disparities among regions in terms of learning conditions are a significant cause of **inefficiency in the system.** The strategy therefore proposes to ensure better allocation of teachers, prioritizing the most underserved communes. The theory of change is also clear and logical. **The learning outcome strategy is also transformational.** This strategy consists of creating a permanent learning assessment unit within the INFRE. The sustainability of this entity is ensured given that the staff will be made up of permanent public employees. This is a novelty in Benin. Moreover, the entity will be tasked with conducting a national learning assessment and disseminating the results.

The indicators and targets for the variable part strategies are sector based, appropriate, and ambitious (see the table at the beginning of the section). Regarding efficiency, the

variable part annex proposes an indicator (DLI1) with targets for the first three years of the program to measure outcomes relating to efficiency. Total financing of US$2.5 million is divided among the three (3) annual targets, with the highest amounts for years 2 and 3. This distribution is appropriate and enhances the stretch effect. **Regarding equity,** the annex on the variable part proposes an indicator with three (3) annual targets to measure results. The final indicator is the reduction of the gap in the pupil-teacher ratio by commune and the national average. The objective is to reduce this gap from 52.9 percent to 20 percent by year 3. This represents a reduction of over 50 percent in the highest pupil-teacher ratio per commune. **Regarding learning outcomes,** the final indicator (DLI2) for learning outcomes is the improvement of teachers' skills and operationalization of the learning assessment system. It requires the completion of a considerable number of actions such as the creation of the learning assessment unit, execution of the curriculum, improvement of teaching practices and the conduct and dissemination of the first learning assessment for Year 2 and Year 5 by this new unit. The amount allocated to this indicator is US$2 million, divided among four annual targets. Financing distribution is also appropriate.

The means of verification of results are appropriate. The verification process is clearly described[27] and the results of the indicators for equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes, as described in the program document, will be verified by an independent expert (as necessary) and validated by the LEG prior to submission to the Grant Agent.

The disbursement mechanisms are clear and adequate. The document explains that the financing received from achievement of the results of the variable part will be used to finance interventions under components 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1. Moreover, financing will be disbursed on a pro rata basis according to results achieved. This method is much more flexible and will help reduce delays in implementing activities that depend on this financing.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS[28]

The GPE Secretariat is proposing that the Grants and Performance Committee recommend to the GPE Board of Directors the approval of Benin's request for financing for the fixed part and the variable part, in the amount of US$19.4 million.

Regarding obtaining the fixed part of 70 percent, all the prerequisites have been met by the country, which has a high-quality sector plan, has demonstrated its willingness to finance the major reforms, particularly the establishment of a new education architecture in the form of a twelve-year universal basic education cycle. With respect to the portion of the national budget allocated to primary education, the Secretariat recommends that an annual report be prepared by the LEG on progress made toward achieving 45 percent, which could be done following the joint sector reviews. Similarly, we recommend that an annual progress report on implementation of the post- 2015 sector plan be validated by the LEG and sent to the GPE Secretariat, ideally after each joint sector review.

The proposed program addresses the challenges identified in the sector analysis with respect to equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes. The program activities aimed at improving quality and

[27] p. 53 to 55
[28] These recommendations were adjusted by the GPC. The final recommendations are found in Board Document BOD/2019/02 DOC 01 Annex 1.

efficiency are coherent and ambitious but, above all, address the structural challenges of the education system in Benin: poor learning outcomes, need for reform regarding the training of primary and lower secondary teachers, and support for accelerating equitable access for all children (including disabled children) in the most underprivileged areas of the country.

The strategies selected for achieving the variable part are formulated around clear and coherent theories of change. Although they are ambitious, the indicators and targets relating to efficiency, equity, and learning outcomes presume fundamental reforms regarding administrative and pedagogical measures to improve student promotion rates, measures for improving the deployment of newly hired teachers, as well as capacity development of the MEMP to ensure appropriate monitoring of learning outcomes and the establishment of a culture of assessment within the various departments of the ministries of education. With respect to the indicator relating to efficiency, we recommend the implementation of enhanced monitoring (through indicators for monitoring implementation of the sector plan in the joint reviews) to ensure that automatic promotions will not have an adverse impact on learning outcomes.

Annex 1: Major Interventions by Development Partners

Donor name	Major interventions	Amount (US$)
UNICEF	Program support in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion; (ii) quality; and (iii) management. (Technical assistance, provision of equipment, infrastructure and materials)	13,860,000
Swiss Cooperation (DDC)	Programs implemented by representatives in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion; (ii) quality; (iii) management; and (iv) vocational training and literacy.	26,753,000
GIZ	Project support in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion; (ii) quality; (iii) management; and (iv) vocational training.	5,963,000
EDUCCO	Project support in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion	2,181,000
The World Bank	Higher education access and quality	9,200,000
CRS	Program support in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion; (ii) quality; (iii) management; and (iv) vocational training.	23,310,000
Assistance and action	Technical assistance, provision of equipment, infrastructure and materials	227.000
International scope	Project support in the areas of (i) access, retention, equity, and inclusion	4,198,000