

Cover Note for

COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request

OVERVIEW	
Country:	The Gambia
Grant agent(s):	The World Bank
Coordinating agency(ies):	UNICEF
Program name:	Emergency Education COVID-19 Response Project
COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested:	US\$5,000,000
Agency fees amount (additional to COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested): ¹	\$87,500
Agency fees as % of total COVID-19 Accelerated Funding requested:	1.75%
COVID-19 Accelerated Funding application date:	5/6/2020
Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program start date:	5/31/2020
Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program closing date (must be last day of the month, e.g. June 30 , 2021):	11/30/2021
Expected submission date of completion report (At the latest 6 months after program closing date):	5/31/2022
Grant modality - (please enter 'X')	<input type="checkbox"/> Sector Pooled
	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Pooled/ Co-financed
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project/ Stand-alone

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Report No: PP40111

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

PROJECT PAPER

ON A

PROPOSED GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (GPE) GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF
US\$3.46 MILLION

TO THE

THE GAMBIA

FOR A

EMERGENCY EDUCATION COVID-19 RESPONSE PROJECT
JULY 8, 2020

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Currency Unit = USD

FISCAL YEAR

January 1 - December 31

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

E&S	Environmental and Social
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECF	Extended Credit Facility
EFA-FTI	Education For All – Fast Track Initiative
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program
FCS	Fragile and Conflict Affected State
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
LBS	Lower Basic School
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
NAT	National Assessment Test
NDP	National Development Plan
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PDO	Project Development Objective
RCF	Rapid Credit Facility
RED	Regional Education Directorate
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SH	Sexual Harassment
SMP	Staff Monitored Program
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
TSA	Treasury Single Account
UBS	Upper Basic School
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
VAC	Violence Against Children

**BASIC INFORMATION**

Is this a regionally tagged project? No	Country (ies)
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Classification Small Grants
Approval Date 08-Jul-2020	Closing Date 30-Nov-2021
Approval Authority CDA	Bank/IFC Collaboration No
Environmental and Social Risk Classification Moderate	

Please Explain

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project's Development Objective is to: (a) support implementation of the Education Sector COVID-19 Response Plan; (b) ensure continued access to educational services and (c) support safe and resilient learning environments for students returning to schools.

Components

Component Name	Cost (USD Million)
Component 1. Continuity of Learning	2,663,500.00
Component 2. Safe Return to School	485,000.00
Component 3. Community Engagement and Strategic Communication	42,000.00
Component 4. Technical and Institutional Support	269,500.00

Organizations

Borrower : The Gambia



Implementing Agency : Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	3.46
Total Financing	3.46
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	3.46
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	3.46

Expected Disbursements (in USD Million)

INSTITUTIONAL DATA

Financing & Implementation Modalities

Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints

Fragile State(s)
 Fragile within a non-fragile Country
 Small State(s)
 Conflict
 Responding to Natural or Man-made Disaster

Other Situations

Financial Intermediaries (FI) Series of Projects (SOP)
 Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs) Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)
 Alternative Procurement Arrangements (APA) Hands-on Expanded Implementation Support (HEIS)

Practice Area (Lead)

Education

Contributing Practice Areas



OVERALL RISK RATING

Risk Category	Rating
Overall	● Substantial

COMPLIANCE

Policy

Does the project depart from the CPF in content or in other significant respects?

Yes No

Does the project require any waivers of Bank policies?

Yes No

Have these been approved by Bank management?

Yes No

Is approval for any policy waiver sought from the Board?

Yes No



Environmental and Social Standards Relevance Given its Context at the Time of Appraisal

E & S Standards	Relevance
Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant
Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	Relevant
Community Health and Safety	Relevant
Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Not Currently Relevant
Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

Legal Covenants

Sections and Description

The Recipient shall by no later than three (3) months, after the Signature Date, update and thereafter adopt the project implementation manual (PIM) containing detailed guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the Project, including with respect to: administration and coordination, monitoring and evaluation, financial management, procurement and accounting procedures, environmental and social safeguards, corruption and fraud mitigation measures, a grievance redress mechanism, roles and responsibilities for Project implementation, and such other arrangements and procedures as shall be required for the effective implementation of the Project, in form and substance satisfactory to the Bank.

Conditions

**PROJECT TEAM****Bank Staff**

Name	Role	Specialization	Unit
Alison Marie Grimsland	Team Leader(ADM Responsible)		HAWWE2
Ryoko Tomita	Team Leader		HEAED
Mouhamadou Kabir Ndoye	Procurement Specialist(ADM Responsible)		EAWRU
Fatou Mbacke Dieng	Financial Management Specialist		EAWG1
Gina Cosentino	Social Specialist(ADM Responsible)		SAWS4
Sophie Lo Diop	Environmental Specialist(ADM Responsible)		SAWE1
Anta Tall Diallo	Procurement Team		AWCF1
Beth Anne Hoffman	Counsel	Counsel	LEGKL
Bintou Sogodogo	Team Member	Program Assistant	HAWWE2
Christine Makori	Counsel	Counsel	LEGAM
Khady Fall Lo	Team Member	Program Assistant	AWCF1
Lalaina Noelinirina Rasoloharison	Team Member	Program Assistant	HECED

Extended Team

Name	Title	Organization	Location
Aidan Mulkeen	Teacher training specialist		



GAMBIA, THE
EMERGENCY EDUCATION COVID-19 RESPONSE

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I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A. Country Context

1. **Three years into the transition from the previous regime which ruled from 1994 to 2017, the Government of The Gambia has taken important steps to lay the foundation for democracy and to set the country on a new development path.** Following Parliamentary elections in 2017, local elections were conducted in April 2018. The new Government has allowed for a free press, rejoined the Commonwealth, and rebuilt relations with Senegal and international financial institutions. Further, it has taken critical measures to restore independence of the judiciary, strengthen the governance and operational independence of the Central Bank, establish a treasury single account (TSA), and audit the civil service, uniformed services, and strategic state-owned enterprises (SOEs). In February 2018, the Government adopted a National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021 with strong financial support from donors. The Annual Progress Report on implementation of the NDP for 2018 showed satisfactory progress, notwithstanding the political and economic challenges faced. A draft Constitution is now published for comments including strengthening and clearly defining term limits, limits of presidential powers, and accountability to the National Assembly.

2. **Poverty incidence remains high and is associated with low endowment in human capital and assets.** Due to lack of growth in per capita income coupled with high population growth, the proportion of the population living in poverty—measured using the national poverty line—remained unchanged between 2010 and 2015, at about 48 percent. In absolute terms, however, the number of poor people grew from 0.79 million in 2010 to 0.93 million in 2015. Poverty remains concentrated in rural areas, with almost 70 percent of the rural population being poor. Inequality has been low and stable since 2010 with a Gini coefficient of 35.9 percent. Marked improvements have been achieved in literacy, especially among the youth (15-24 years) whose literacy rates doubled from 31.8 percent in 2010 to 67.2 percent in 2015. However, learning outcomes still remain low. Chronic malnutrition (stunting) affects 25 percent of children under the age of five, and non-monetary indicators of poverty linked to infrastructure, health and nutrition illustrate that the country is lagging vis-à-vis peers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Considerable inequities remain in access to basic facilities and services such as electricity and sanitation facilities. Jobs are predominately informal, and lack of off-farm activities in rural areas results in underemployment and outmigration among youth.

3. **Important progress has been made in restoring macroeconomic stability and reigniting growth.** Following strong performance under the 2019 IMF Staff-Monitored Program (SMP), with a sharp reduction in the fiscal deficit, and debt relief from key multilateral and bilateral creditors, The Gambia was able to exit from debt distress, paving the way for an Enhanced Credit Facility (ECF) approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Board on March 23, 2020. Supported by increased tax revenues and strong donor inflows, the fiscal deficit was reduced from 6.2 percent of GDP in 2018 to 2.6 percent of GDP in 2019. Growth has remained robust at around 6 percent despite the fiscal adjustment and external shocks, including in the tourism sector. International reserves have been brought closer to prudential levels, interest rates have eased, and inflation has remained stable.



4. **The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have severe socioeconomic consequences and slow efforts to consolidate public finances and enhance debt sustainability as well as the pace of poverty reduction.** The tourism sector, which represents roughly 10 percent of GDP and drives overall economic performance, has been affected by travel restrictions in Europe - The Gambia's largest market. This will drag down tourism-related services and industries. Weakened remittances will delay construction activities given the importance of investment in the sector by the diaspora. Agricultural commodity exports may experience a price decline given subdued demand in the Eurozone, but on the upside, lower oil prices will likely improve terms of trade as The Gambia is a net oil importer. Trade and supply disruptions will also affect investments. Domestically, private consumption will be affected by containment measures and social distancing, while reallocation of government resources to emergency health and social expenditure may curb public investment. As a result, growth is expected to temporarily decline to 2.5 percent in 2020 while the external current account and fiscal deficits will temporarily widen. To mitigate the impact of the ongoing pandemic—and in parallel with this proposed project—the IMF is providing additional support through its US\$21.2 million Rapid Credit Facility (RCF), and the World Bank is doing the same through its US\$10 million COVID-19 Emergency Response Project (P173798) focused on the health sector.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. **The COVID-19 pandemic has already had profound impacts on education due to school closures globally, and moving forward the damage will become even more severe as the health emergency translates into a global recession.** Unless The Gambia makes major efforts to respond, together these shocks will result in long-term impacts on education and human capital development. Disruptions to education include lost days of schooling, impact students preparing for standardized examinations with an unclear pathway forward, increase food security risks for students receiving meals through schools, increase risks of dropouts as opportunity costs of returning to school become higher, and have implications for students who must stay within the home environment with varying degrees of security or insecurity for long periods of time. The Gambia is especially at risk given its high poverty incidence (48 percent as mentioned above), reliance on remittances and tourism which together form the key sources of foreign exchange and are expected to drop to an all-time low, and overall fragility. The Gambia is classified as a Fragile and Conflict Affected State (FCS) by both World Bank and GPE classification due to high institutional fragility.

6. **Although prior to the pandemic the country's education system was beginning to show improvement, the sector was still characterized by critical access and quality challenges.** For example, while enrollment rates had been increasing prior to the crisis and now boys are enrolled at slightly lower rates than girls.¹ There are significant disparities remain by region. As of 2019, enrollment rates in upper basic schools range from 78 percent in Region 2 to as low as 38 percent in Region 6. Quality of Basic Education is also improving but the pace of improvement remains slow. For example, although Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data from 2007 to 2016 shows significant improvements in knowledge of letter sounds and word recognition, reading comprehension remains low. The 2016 EGRA, for example, showed that only one out of five of reading

¹ Gender Parity Index (GPI) of Gross Enrollment Rates (GERs) are 1.06 in Early Childhood Development (ECD), 1.08 in Lower Basic School (LBS), 1.10 in Upper Basic School (UBS), and 1.09 in Senior Secondary School (SSS), and GPI of Completion rates are 1.10 in LBS, 1.07 in UBS, and 1.09 in SSS. The shift toward boys now with slight underenrollment may be due to their representation in Majalis/Daaras or Koranic centers.



comprehension questions are answered correctly. Although a variety of systemic improvements related to teacher deployment and management, improved data collection and utilization have been fruitful, additional system strengthening is critical to accelerate the pace of access and quality improvements and maintain gains previously made. A more detailed overview of the Education Sector prior to the COVID-19 pandemic is provided in Annex 1.

7. **The physical distancing required to arrest the COVID-19 spread has had a severe impact on the functioning of the education system in The Gambia.** Following a presidential address on March 17, 2020, The Gambia closed all schools and education institutions as a measure to protect children and communities to control the spread of the virus. The school closure directly affects at least 674,300 children from early childhood to senior secondary school and more than 15,000 students in postsecondary institutions. On April 1, 2020, the President announced a State of Public Emergency which extended the school closure.. Following this additional closure, Grades 1-8 and 10-11 are now expected to reopen in September while grades 9 and 12 are expected to open at the end of June and the beginning of July, respectively given that they are considered critical examination years. Meanwhile, since early April 2020, the University of The Gambia has been working to transition to online classes where possible.

8. **Across all grade levels, immediate action is required to ensure continuity of learning during the crisis, and to prepare school systems to reopen.** Continuity of learning is not only essential to maintain and/or improve learning outcomes, but it is also critical to keeping children engaged with learning so that they are more likely to return to schools when they reopen. The economic downturn will put increasing pressure on families, which may put them in financial distress where they are less likely to send their children to school as was the case in neighboring countries following the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic. At the same time, sustainability measures are critical to building resilience of the sector to better guard against future internal and external shocks.

9. **The Government has developed an Education Sector Coronavirus Response Plan under the auspices of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE).** This emergency education strategy is anchored to the broader National Response Plan under the leadership of the Ministry of Health. The Education Sector Response Plan has the following objectives : (i) ensuring that children and their families have access to relevant information on COVID-19 to protect themselves from infection and reduce the transmission rate within communities; (ii) enhancing speedy recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector and improving the resilience of the sector; and (iii) ensuring continuity of learning during the school closure and progressively expanding curriculum coverage using multiple curriculum delivery platforms in the medium to long-term. The strategy was endorsed by the Local Education Group (LEG) on March 24, 2020 and has been made available publicly². In addition to support from GPE and the World Bank, The Gambia COVID-19 Sector Response Plan is supported by UNICEF which has provided technical support during the school closures and a Dutch philanthropic donor which has provided support for internet connectivity, and important contributions towards communications broadcasting.

10. **The Office of the Permanent Secretary (MoBSE) is responsible for coordination of the Education Response Plan with support from relevant Directorates, Units, and Development Partners.** To monitor the implementation of the emergency strategy, a MoBSE Emergency Response Group has been established. The Office of the Permanent Secretary is also tasked with coordinating with the Ministry of Health to ensure

² Key education messages on the education sector COVID-19 response have been available via the MoBSE website since early April and the full endorsed strategy has been publicly disclosed since early May.



complementarity of their response strategies. The emergency response efforts are underway. The approach has been to deliver television and radio programming in a multi-grade format using Gambian content and other open source education content (e.g. Khan Academy) via a network of 17 radio stations, and 3 main television channels. Radio coverage is nationwide, and 69.3 percent and 52.6 percent of families are estimated to have a radio and television, respectively according to Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2018 data, while 98.4 percent of families are estimated to have access to a phone.³ Call-in lines following the programming have proven to be a valuable way of receiving community feedback on buy-in to the distance programming, what may and may not be working, demands for additional programming, etc. and the response strategy includes development and distribution of printed materials for students who do not have access to radio or television. The educational programming is not only seen as a way to ensure continuity of learning, but also to keep children inside their homes as part of the effort to contain the spread of the virus. Regional Education Directors, Cluster Monitors, and Head Teachers have also been working to inform school communities of the evolving distance learning options and providing community feedback to MoBSE. Complementarily, several WhatsApp groups have been formed to support the initiative.

C. Higher Level Objectives to which the Project Contributes

11. The project is aligned with the Country Engagement Note (CEN) FY2018-2021 and specifically Objective 2, which focuses on investing in human capital and building assets and resilience for the poor. Activities under this objective aim to: strengthen government efforts to preserve stability and sustainability growth and support human welfare and human capital formation critical to the country's competitiveness; mitigate shocks on the poor and vulnerable; and provide targeted safety nets to the poor, covering the rural poor and underserved regions. By supporting continued provision of learning to children, with a particular focus on protecting the most marginalized, and readying schools for safe return, the aim is to mitigate the shocks of the COVID-19 crisis on the education sector.

12. The project is also aligned to the goals stated in GPE's Strategic Plan (2016-2020) of: (i) improved and more equitable learning outcomes; (ii) increased equity, gender equality and inclusion; and (iii) effective and efficient education systems. Furthermore, the project is aligned with the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window, which supports GPE countries to deliver interventions included in their publicly available government response plan to COVID-19—a plan which enables learning to continue and education systems to recover from school closures. The project activities have been wholly derived from the LEG-endorsed Emergency Strategy Response Plan.

³ In terms of access to radio, rural households are slightly more likely to own a radio (73.7 percent against 67.7 percent). In terms of television ownership the differences are dramatic with only 12.8 percent of rural households owning a television against 66.1 percent. Across wealth quintiles radio ownership varies between 64 percent and 75 percent (with the middle and fourth quintiles having the lowest rates of ownership), whereas television ownership shows large disparities with only .3 percent of the poorest quintile owning a television compared to 98.1 percent of the wealthiest households. Mobile phone ownership by household according to quintile ranges from 94.9 percent for the poorest quintile and climbs steadily to 100 percent for the wealthiest quintile.



II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. PDO

The Project's Development Objective is to: (a) support implementation of the Education Sector COVID-19 Response Plan; (b) ensure continued access to educational services; and (c) support safe and resilient learning environments for students returning to schools.

B. Project Beneficiaries

13. Project beneficiaries are the approximately 676,700 students (of which 52 percent are female) ages 3 to 18 in all 6 regions of the country. These students are expected to benefit from access to distance learning opportunities (radio, television, internet programming, and a smaller subset that will receive print packets) as well as improved sanitation measures and accelerated learning opportunities as part of the post-COVID-19 planning for safe return to school. The interventions benefit ECD (pre-primary), Lower Basic School (LBS) and Upper Basic School (UBS) students, with the exception of sub-component 2.1 Healthy Schools which readies schools for reopening via hygiene and sanitation measures and sensitization and has a broader set of beneficiary students. Sub-component 2.1 also benefits senior secondary school students (about 70,000) given that the vast majority of senior secondary schools (85 percent of public senior secondary schools) are attached to upper basic schools.

14. The project aims to support the most vulnerable in a variety of ways. This includes providing specialized distance learning support to primary school aged children with disabilities (estimated number to be confirmed); providing food to 88,000 of the most vulnerable primary school aged children; and distributing printed educational packets to children who may not have access to television or radio.

15. In addition, over 1,000 communities throughout The Gambia are expected to benefit from the sensitization efforts and critical public health messaging distributed through radio, television, and print channels.

C. PDO-Level Results Indicators

16. PDO Level Results Indicators are the following:

- a. Percentage of targeted communities benefiting from COVID-19 Education Sensitization Campaigns;
- b. Percentage of children in the program area supported with distance/homebased learning (by gender);
- c. Percentage of grant-supported schools offering remediation programs (by level of education);
- d. Percentage of schools with minimum hygiene standards⁴ for prevention of COVID-19 (by level of education)

⁴ Minimum hygiene standards will be developed as part of the project and a reopening strategy which includes these standards is included as an intermediate indicator. Standards will integrate WHO recommendations.



III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project Components

17. The project will consist of four components: (i) Continuity of Learning; (ii) Safe Return to School; (iii) Community Engagement and Communications; and (iv) Project Management and Evaluation.

Component 1. Continuity of Learning (US\$2,663,500)

18. Continuity of learning is essential to keeping education pathways open, continually engaging with learners, and providing a positive presence of the state in providing support to students, families, and teachers to prevent significant downturns in enrollment rates and learning outcomes. This is especially important for girls, children from poorer households, and children with disabilities.

Sub-Component 1.1 Extending Remote Learning Opportunities (US\$521,500)

19. MoBSE has already launched targeted radio, mobile, and television educational programming since schools have closed. The aim would be to support and increase these efforts so that the majority of children across the country have access to some form of education programming. As mentioned above, radio coverage is nationwide, and 69.3 percent and 52.6 percent of families are estimated to have a radio and television, respectively, according to Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2018 data, while 98.4 percent of families are estimated to have access to a phone. Building on the materials and early analysis developed during the initial 21-day closure, the project will support: (i) the development (or adaptation of internationally available) radio, television, and online programming; and (ii) printed educational packets (including stationary and writing implements) with priority for the most vulnerable communities who do not have access to educational technology, based on MICs survey data, triangulated with EMIS data and Regional Education Directorate information. Although the school year is drawing to a close, the aim is to make the television and radio programming, as well as printed packets, available during the summer break given the school interruption. In addition to developing and adapting content, this would include: (iii) equipping regional radio stations with the capacity to manage and implement education programming; and (iv) capacity building of teachers who are subject experts and radio and television broadcasters to adapt and deliver education content across these platforms. An indicative schedule of programming by grade and subject has been implemented and utilizes a multi-grade teaching approach for the broadest coverage of the student population.

20. Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable, and at a further disadvantage given that many forms of distance learning are not accessible to learners with disabilities, and specialized support is critical for them to be able to access learning opportunities. As such, the project (v) will support the network of itinerant teachers to continue to provide one-to-one support for special learners in primary school. This would take place through regular phone check-ins, remote psycho-social and educational support to families, and, where possible, provision of existent accessible materials (e.g. braille readers) directly to homes.



Sub-Component 1.2 Building Resiliency Through Sustainability Measures (US\$985,500 million)

21. The Gambia has been and remains vulnerable to internal and external shocks which could lead to additional school closures in both the immediate and mid-term. At the same time, extraordinary efforts to catalogue and pull together a variety of distance learning resources have been championed in response to COVID-19. As such, sustainability measures will be implemented at the school and regional level to ensure continued access to learning opportunities, and enhanced communications networks in the case of additional emergencies and school closures. This would include:

- **Provide access to online communication and resources for teachers.** The aim is to have a platform that would ensure that education content developed is not only made available digitally for those that have mobile devices, but that school districts, teachers, and head teachers can continue to access the content post-crisis through a closed user group for teachers, as well as a repository of digital content.⁵
- **Provision of routers and dongles to schools and regional offices** to tap into existing internet connections being made available by the philanthropic donor MRC-Holland. This ensures easier strategic communications at regional, cluster, and school levels and leverages pre-existing internet access points; and,
- **Provision of television within schools and radios to the most vulnerable families, particularly in rural communities.** Radio/television will not only allow for enhanced communication and learning opportunities during the traditional school year, but also allows for rural households—which may be without regular access to communication technology—to access critical life-saving messages and educational information in times of crises. Additionally, 5,000 mobile/radio combination phones will be distributed to poor households in the districts with the lowest radio penetration rates.⁶

Sub-Component 1.3 Supporting the Most Vulnerable (US\$1,156,500)

22. Until schools closed 238,742 children (approximately 30 percent) were benefitting from school meals. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education supported 88,000 children in Regions 2 and 4 as part of agreed school feeding take over regions from WFP for School meals programme. WFP supported 150, 742 children in Regions 1,3,5 and 6. 54 percent of the 238,742 children are girls. For the most vulnerable students, that was the most nutritious and sometimes only meal for the day. School meals were (and will be after the school re-opening) be provided by World Food Programme (WFP) in regions 1,3, and 6, and select districts in region 5. The aim of this sub-component is for the MoBSE to undertake take home rations in region 2, the remaining districts not covered by WFP in region 5 and all of the districts in region 4 similar to WFP's efforts in other regions. Food items will be delivered to the families with school age children to compensate for the school feeding the students have not had

⁵ For several years The Gambia has been implementing PSI-PMI (Progressive Science Initiative – Progress Math Initiative and Progressive Science Initiative) which champions ICT integration into teaching and learning with positive results. The efforts to build back better takes lessons learned from the PSI-PMI approach and builds upon the capacity already built in this area.

⁶ District level targeting will be based on MICs data which shows districts with the lowest radio ownership rates. Mothers Clubs and School Management Committees within districts showing lowest rates will then work with MoBSE to identify families at the community level who do not have radios.



access to since the school closure in March due to the pandemic. Even though the school year will have ended, provision of the food items during the holiday break is a critical effort to encourage reentry to school upon reopening and aligned with WFP's approach in the other regions. The financing will target the families of about 88,000 of vulnerable students in Regions 2, 4 and 5⁷.

Component 2. Safe Return to School (US\$485,000)

23. The return to school will require careful planning to ensure safety of children, teachers, and education personnel in alignment with health guidelines, as well as educational approaches which address missed instruction hours, and provide psycho-social support. As such, Component 2 will support activities aimed at: (i) promoting a healthy learning environment for safe reopening of schools; and (ii) providing accelerated learning opportunities, and psychosocial support to students and teachers.

Sub-component 2.1. Healthy Schools (US\$275,000)

24. To ensure that schools are prepared for reentry of students in the wake of COVID-19, the project will support efforts to ensure health and hygiene measures in schools. This will include: (i) cleaning schools and water treatment; (ii) providing soap, hand sanitizer, and basic hand washing materials; (iii) carrying out a campaign (including printed materials) to promote good hygiene and handwashing in schools; and (iv) providing protective equipment to facilitate safe reentry, e.g. thermometers, gloves, etc. Although pre-primary and primary schools are the main target of this sub-component, all secondary schools will also be included, given that over 85 percent of all secondary schools are attached to upper basic schools.

Sub-component 2.2 Accelerated Learning (US\$210,000)

25. Sub-component 2.2 will support the development, and implementation of accelerated learning opportunities to address the instructional hours lost during the crisis. Informed by data collected and analyzed under Component 4 of this project, the accelerated learning program will provide condensed learning opportunities at the reopening of the school year, as well as potentially provide extended instruction time to learners. This would include training of teachers to be able to deliver the accelerated learning programs. In addition, this subcomponent will provide psychosocial support to students and teachers.

Component 3. Community Engagement and Strategic Communication (US\$42,000)

26. **The extensive well-established networks of schools, school communities, education personnel and teachers, represent a key avenue to ensure delivery of critical messaging around health, safety, and learning both during the COVID-19 crisis, as well as during the post-crisis period when children begin returning to schools.** The project will support the Government's efforts to deliver critical messages related to the Education Emergency Response Strategy via various channels – television, radio, print, and via mass mobile messaging. These strategic communications would be focused on highlighting key messages related to learning, including, but not

⁷ Targeted districts include all of the Foni districts in Region 2 (Foni Barefet, Foni Bintang Karanai, Foni Bondali, Foni Jarrol, and Foni Kansala), select districts in region 5 (Upper Saloum, Nianjia, Niamina East, Fulladu West, Sami, Niani, and Lower Saloum) and all districts in region 4.



limited to: (i) school closure updates; (ii) current information on logistics, access, and availability of learning programs across all formats for students; (iii) any education emergency response updates; and (iv) a back to school campaign for reentry into school. The aim of this activity is to sensitize all school communities to the availability and importance of exploring and participating in distance learning opportunities, and returning to school at reopening. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring the safe return of vulnerable populations to schools, including girls, disabled children, and children from low-income backgrounds. The sensitization efforts will include engagement from the MoBSE Gender Unit, the Forum for African Women Educationalists – The Gambia (FAWEGAM), and the MoBSE Special Needs Unit to ensure targeted, clear messaging and engagement. The effort builds upon previous sensitization campaigns supported under the concurrent Education Sector Support Project (ESSP-P162890) particularly in region 5 which has the lowest enrollments, as well as the project's continued support to providing sanitary pads in schools to encourage continued girls enrollment.

27. At the same time, communications support would also be provided to reinforce messaging from the Ministry of Health around health and hygiene practices to minimize the spread of COVID-19. This would include providing child and family friendly messaging about prevention of and protection from COVID-19, messaging about social risks which impact girls including prevention of gender based violence and adolescent pregnancy, and psychosocial health during home-based learning (including print materials, television and radio messaging, and engaging children in poetry, drama, and storytelling).

28. The component would include sensitization of mothers' clubs, School Management Committees, Regional Education Directorate (RED) staff, teachers, and education personnel to ensure dissemination of clear and accurate information. Notably, the component builds upon and expands the preexisting call-in numbers attached to the radio and television programming which has been made available during the COVID-19 crisis. These call-in numbers provide an opportunity for community engagement and feedback, and for parents and students to pose questions. The sensitization efforts, and community engagement opportunities may also allow for identification of community-driven approaches to support distance education efforts, and community responses to the crisis.

Component 4. Technical and Institutional Support (US\$269,500)

29. This component will support data collection, analysis, and use, as well as project management and implementation (including operating costs). This includes the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of activities funded by the proposed project, a high frequency survey where possible, on which students are accessing distance learning opportunities and how often, as well as a rapid assessment of students upon their return to schools in order to inform accelerated learning programs.

30. The project is currently exploring synergies with the World Bank Poverty and Equity Global Practice which is working to establish a High Frequency Monitoring System (HFMS) in The Gambia in partnership with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS) to establish transmission channels and quantify as much as possible, impacts on households across the country. This involves monthly phone interviews to a sample of households across the country over a period of 12 months and includes assessing support provided during the crisis by the government. A module on education, and the educational services provided by the Government, are expected to be included with possibility for also including questions specifically for teachers/head teachers being explored.

B. Project Cost and Financing

Table 2. Project Cost and Financing

Component Name	US\$ (million)
Component 1. Continuity of Learning	2.6635
<i>Sub-Component 1.1 Extending Remote Learning Opportunities</i>	0.5215
<i>Sub-Component 1.2 Building Resilience Through Sustainability Measures</i>	0.9855
<i>Sub-Component 1.3 Supporting the Most Vulnerable</i>	1.1565
Component 2. Safe Return to School	0.485
<i>Sub-Component 2.1 Healthy Schools</i>	0.275
<i>Sub-Component 2.2 Accelerated Learning</i>	0.210
Component 3. Community Engagement and Strategic Communication	0.042
Component 4. Technical and Institutional Support	0.2695
TOTAL	3.46

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

31. The proposed project will be implemented over a period of 17 months and will utilize the preexisting institutional and implementation arrangements of the current ESSP (P162890) which is being implemented in parallel with IDA and GPE financing. Members of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) who have implemented World Bank financed projects such as the Third Education Project Phase II (P077903, 2006-13), EFA-FTI Project (P115427, 2009-13) and READ project (P133079, 2014-18) have not substantially changed in the last decade, and represent an experienced and technically able group of representatives. The PCU has been functioning in a satisfactory manner in previous World Bank financed projects and it is thus expected that this project will benefit gratefully from the existing arrangements of the MoBSE and PCU.

32. The MoBSE will be the key implementing agency, and the MoBSE Emergency Response Group under the Permanent Secretary of MoBSE, will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the COVID-19 Education Response Strategy. The Office of the Permanent Secretary will be responsible for consulting with the Ministry of Health for COVID-19 sensitization efforts, since health messaging oversight falls under its mandate. The Regional Educational Directorates (REDs) will be responsible for supervising all school-related interventions via the Head Teachers and Cluster Monitors within their respective regions including accelerated learning and school re-opening. The directors in the MoBSE headquarters will oversee all activities related to their mandates including curriculum planning and delivery, in-service teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, early childhood development, standards and quality assurance. The Special Needs Unit will be responsible for overseeing activities carried out by itinerant teachers in support of children with disabilities within the Basic and Secondary Education Directorate.

33. Food procurement and distribution under sub-component 1.3 is designed to complement the efforts of the WFP which does not currently provide coverage of all vulnerable districts. MoBSE will work with suppliers for



food provision in three lots to provide essential food items in the selected districts in region 2, 5, and all of region 4. Each Education Directorate of MoBSE, located within each region, has a school feeding focal point charged with regularly supervising and monitoring all of the School Management Committees in school to ensure the implementation of school feeding, including quality and quantity control. As such the activity will be implemented by the school feeding focal points and cluster monitors. On the ground assistance will be provided by WFP, given their previous experience with food distribution in the country with measures in place to minimize risk of COVID-19 spread. Third party verification will be completed by an external agency.

34. The Local Education Group (LEG), under the leadership of the Coordinating Agency (UNICEF Gambia), will provide oversight guidance to the project implementation by ensuring that the project is well aligned with the overarching objectives of the Education Sector Program. The LEG will also facilitate and coordinate period review and reporting on implementation progress.

35. Implementation will be done in phases, with short-term immediate interventions as part of the Response phase, medium-term interventions for the Recovery phase (e.g. school reopening), and longer-term interventions as part of the Resilience phase which will focus on mitigating vulnerability to future shocks. Tables which detail involved directorates per sub-component, as well as an overview of the phases of intervention, are included in Annex 2.

36. Implementation support by the Bank will comprise: (i) about two project supervision missions every year (with more if needed) with review findings and recommendations documented in Aide Memoires; and (ii) continued support via virtual communication methods in the periods between the supervision missions. In cases where travel may not be possible due to the public health crisis, virtual supervision missions will take place. In previous projects, these have been undertaken jointly with GPE, and with engagement from the LEG. This practice is expected to continue as are joint donor reviews which are conducted twice annually by the MoBSE, MoHERST, with support from GPE and the World Bank.

B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation

37. The Results Framework consists of the project development objective, PDO level indicators, intermediate indicators, baselines and targets, frequency of data collection, data source/methodology, and responsibilities for data collection and analysis. The approach has been to build capacity of county systems for monitoring as is evidence through the sustained development of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) year over year. As such, the project, does not use a stand-alone M&E system, but rather benefits from the M&E arrangements for the Education Sector Strategy directly within the MoBSE given its close alignment with sector priorities. MoBSE has the critical M&E function of coordination and implementation supported by the Directorate of Planning's EMIS team.

38. **Learning From Evidence Approach.** The project incorporates a Learning from Evidence approach as part of the M&E approach in line with the GPE objectives to: (i) learn continually from evidence and apply that learning adaptively to enhance program effectiveness; and (ii) generate knowledge and evidence on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of grants. It does so by addressing data gaps for certain project activities due to the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus, e.g. lack of preexisting methods to assess regular participation in distance learning modalities, and catch up program student assessment. This includes funding, utilizing, and analyzing results of high frequency mobile surveys to assess the response to the education interventions, the



assessment of learners upon return to school, and capitalizing upon the mechanisms for citizen engagement put in place as part of radio, and television programming, as well as through community reporting through regional directorates, cluster monitors, and other regionally embedded education personnel.

C. Sustainability

39. The project is designed to address immediate needs due to school closures, as well as to support longer term sustainability and resilience measures. By investing in an online portal to capture the compilation and development of distance learning materials, the project seeks to support accessible, sustainable instructional materials and content for students beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the project takes steps to create more resilient schools by providing improved hygiene measures and communication technology at the school level. Both are advantageous in the event of further school closures, or country emergencies due to health and/or security emergencies. Furthermore, the development of clear strategies for remediation learning and safe school standards will contribute to improved capacity in emergency planning and response of the education sector.

V. KEY RISKS

A. Overall Risk Rating and Explanation of Key Risks

40. **The overall risk of the proposed project is assessed as Substantial.**

41. **Political and governance risks are assessed as high.** The political coalition established in late 2016 after President Barrow assumed office is fragile. Previous reform efforts have been significantly delayed because of challenges in maintaining momentum. The authorities remain committed to the implementation of the reform agenda, but at the same time lack a solid institutional system and governance structures to backup and support the reform agenda. Implementation by an experienced PCU—which has historically had very limited turnover—and the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities within the team, is expected to help mitigate implementation delays due to political risks.

42. **Macroeconomic risks are assessed as high.** While the economic recovery further improved in 2019, debt sustainability remains a great challenge and the COVID-19 economic impact is expected to be substantial. There is very limited fiscal space for addressing urgent social needs and for undertaking major infrastructure investments in energy and other areas needed to support higher growth. It is critical that the Government maintain fiscal discipline, while pursuing structural reforms and improving debt and public investment management, including limiting contingent liabilities from the SOEs and capacity to properly select, implement, monitor, and maintain new investment projects.

43. **Institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability risks are assessed as moderate.** Although the PCU has substantial experience working on WBG operations, given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is limited experience within The Gambia developing and implementing distance learning activities and safety measures that are aligned with the physical distancing measures. The operation is also being carried out in tandem with the current ESSP (P162890) which places demands on the MoBSE and the PCU.



Mitigation measures include: building on preexisting technology platforms and data collection experience; using best practice examples from reopening schools following the Ebola crisis; fostering cross-sectoral coordination with the Ministry of Health and ensuring continued support from local education partners.

44. **Environmental and Social risks are assessed as moderate.** There are moderate risks associated with water treatment, and cleaning of schools for children prior to school reopening, and moderate social risks related to risks to vulnerable populations such as girls, children with disabilities, linguistic minorities and marginalized groups. These risks and mitigation measures are outlined in both the Corporate Commitments section under Appraisal Summary as well as the Environmental and Social section.

VI. APPRAISAL SUMMARY

A. Economic Costs and Benefits

45. The proposed project would provide three major economic benefits: (i) learning opportunities during school closure; (ii) essential food items to economically disadvantaged students; and (iii) assuredness that the majority of students will return to school upon reopening.

46. The project would provide learning opportunities through TV and radio programs, as well as other distance learning programs to students who otherwise would have lost learning opportunities during school closures. As the school closures are expected to last for months, without the provision of well-established distance learning programs, the learning loss would have tremendously affected students. During school closures, it is likely that financially disadvantaged and less educated families would suffer more, as they may not have TV, radio and internet to participate in the learning programs and would not be able to academically support their children. Therefore, the MoBSE will establish targeting guidance by taking into account equity of learning at home, with a focus on ensuring that students furthest from opportunity will not be additionally disadvantaged. Preparation of well-studied and planned distance learning would be necessary for the most vulnerable families to be able to benefit from education during school closures. It is estimated that 100,000 most vulnerable students will receive stationary packages and printed materials and 5,000 families who do not have radios will receive mobile-radio combos so that students can hear the educational radio programs that the MoBSE has developed.

47. School feeding is the most nutritious meal or the only meal that the most vulnerable students receive. However, students have not been receiving school feeding since the schools closed on March 18, 2020 due to the COVID-19. The government does not yet know when they can reopen the schools which leaves vulnerable students hungry and families increasingly concerned about food security. The project will provide essential food items to vulnerable students so that they receive minimum nutrition, can stay at home rather than risking outings in search of food, and can benefit from distance learning. It is estimated that 88,000 vulnerable students will benefit from the food delivery.

48. In addition, without the MoBSE's sensitization to communities on the importance of education and returning to school, it would have been likely that many students, especially the most vulnerable ones, would not come back to school, as they would lose motivation to study and potentially consider other options instead of returning to school (e.g. participating in farming). As such, the project will support the MoBSE's sensitization



campaign, involving governors, village chiefs, educators, parents and students to ensure that students will benefit from learning at school again once it is open. The MoBSE will try its best to ensure at least 60 percent of previously enrolled students will come back when schools reopen.

B. Financial Management

49. **The FM arrangements for the Gambia Emergency Education Covid-19 project would be based on the existing arrangements in place under the ongoing Education Support Project (P162890).** The overall performance of the PCU's FM is Moderately Satisfactory due to the qualified opinion that was expressed by the auditor on the 2018 financial statements. However, staffing has remained adequate and the project bookkeeping is up to date. The PCU is familiar with the World Bank FM requirements. The interim un-audited financial reports (IFRs) for the ongoing projects are also submitted on time, acceptable to IDA. FM satisfies the Bank's minimum requirements under Bank Policy and Directive on Investment Project Financing (IPF) effective in 2017.

50. Subcomponent 1.3 which consists of procurement and distribution of food in selected districts such as all of the Foni districts in Region 2, selected districts in region 5 (Upper Saloum, Nianjia, Niamina East, Fulladu West, Sami, Niani, and Lower Saloum) and all districts in region 4 to the most vulnerable student's families will be undertaken by MoBSE through their feeding focal points and cluster monitors with the assistance of WFP. However, a third party will be recruited to verify and confirm that provisions went to eligible beneficiaries.

51. In order to ensure readiness for implementation and maintain an adequate financial management system in place, the following measures should be taken no later than 3 months after effectiveness: (i) elaboration of a guidance note to describe the procedures for the food distribution activities (ii) the customization of the accounting software to take into account the bookkeeping of the new project (iii) include the project in the scope of intervention of the internal audit directorate (iv) the recruitment of an external auditor (v) recruitment of a third party for the verification of food distribution.

52. The overall FM risk is Substantial due to weak accountability mechanisms which may potentially undermine a fair and transparent selection process for the food provision and the risk that provisions might be distributed to non-eligible beneficiaries.

53. **Budgeting Arrangements.** A detailed work plan for the entire life of the project as well as disbursements forecasts will be elaborated and validated by the project's Steering Committee before submission to the World Bank's non-objection and before adoption and implementation. The PCU will report on budget execution as part of the IFR.

54. **Staffing.** The FM team is led by the financial controller with a team of qualified accountants. Most them have been implementing Bank financed projects for many years.

55. **Accounting.** The project accounts will be maintained on a cash basis, supported with appropriate records and procedures to track commitments and to safeguard assets. Annual financial statements will be prepared by PCU in accordance with Gambia accounting standards. The GESSP accounting software will be customized and used for the project.

56. **Internal Audit.** A memorandum of Understanding is to be signed with the internal audit directorate to



cover the GESSP project, this project will be included in the scope of intervention of the internal auditors and a report will be submitted to the bank every semester.

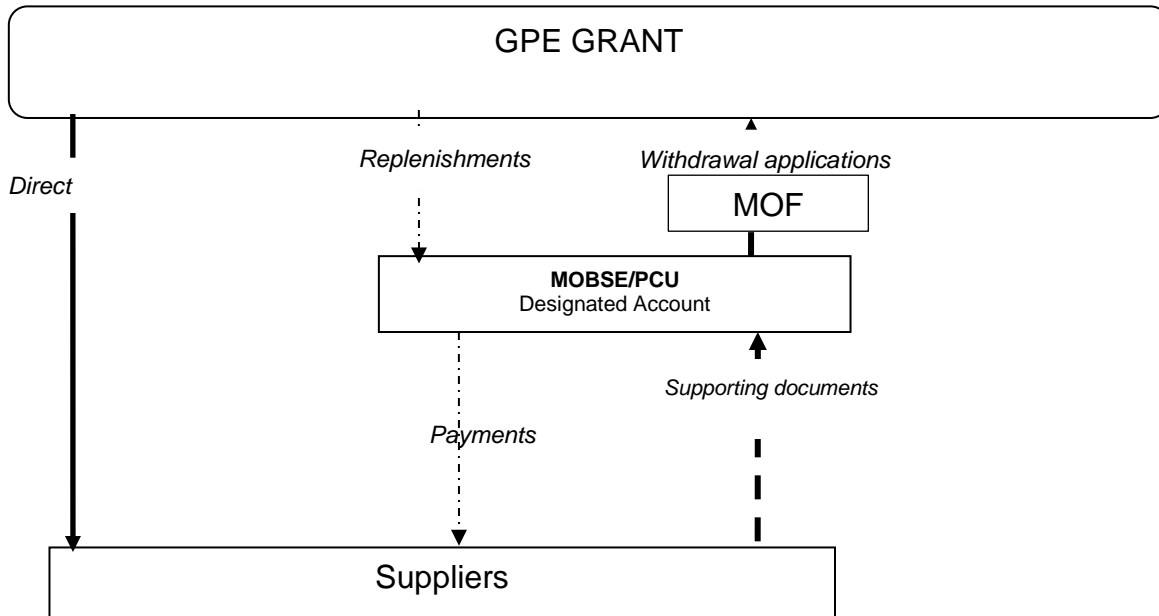
57. **Financial Reporting.** At the end of each quarter, budget execution reports will be generated from the system and provided to the internal management of the Ministry for planning and decision-making purposes. Unaudited IFRs will be produced by the PCU quarterly. The IFRs will be sent to IDA within 45 days after the end of the quarter. The IFR will have the following contents:

- A statement of sources and uses of funds for the reported quarterly period and cumulatively since project inception, reconciled with bank and cash balances with a column of project's Cash flow for the next 6 months.
- A statement of uses of funds (expenditure) by project activity/component comparing actual expenditure/loan advances against the budget, with explanations for significant variances;
- The Designated Account Activity Statement, reconciling the receipts into and payments out of the project's Designated Account;
- Supporting bank statements and reconciliations for the bank, cash and other fund balances at the end of the quarter.

58. **Funds Flow and disbursement Arrangements.** MoBSE as the recipient will open a designated bank account (DA) denominated in United States dollars (USD) at Central Bank of the Gambia (CBG). Payments will be made from the DA, managed by the PCU. The designated account ceiling will be indicated in the disbursement letter. Communication regarding opening the DA and the account signatories should be sent to the Bank before disbursements are made. A Dalasi transaction account will also be opened at the central bank to facilitate the payment of day to day activities.

59. **Disbursement under DA will be report-based.** The first advance will be released after effectiveness based on a budget forecast for the first six months of implementation. The authorized allocation would correspond to the cash forecast for two quarters, as provided for in the Unaudited Interim Financial Report (IFR). The other methods of disbursing the funds (reimbursement, direct payment and special commitment) will also be available to the project. The minimum value of applications for these methods is 20% of the DA ceiling. The project will sign and submit Withdrawal Applications (WA) electronically using the [eDisbursement] module accessible from the Bank's Client Connection website.

Figure 1. Funds Flow Chart



60. **External audit.** The annual financial statements of the project will be audited by an independent auditor approved by the National Audit Office based on ‘terms of reference’ (TORs) agreed with the Bank. A single audit of the project will be carried out and Audited financial statements for the project will be sent to the Bank within six months of the end of the project closing date, accompanied by a management letter. A single opinion on the audited project financial statements in compliance with International Federation of Accountants will be required. The external auditor will specially review a reasonable sample of the food distribution to ensure that the provisions went to eligible beneficiaries and carried out pursuant to the agreed procedures described in the note of procedures related to the food distributions activities.

61. **Implementation support.** A financial management supervision mission will be conducted twice every year based on the current risk assessment. The main mission objective is to ensure that strong financial management systems are maintained throughout the life of the project. FM activities during the supervision include but not limited to: (i) review of IFRs, audited financial statement reports, and monitoring of actions taken on issues highlighted in audit reports; (ii) adequacy of the FM arrangements; (iii) transaction reviews (if needed); (iv) capacity building support; and (v) FM risk and performance ratings to ISR.

Table 4 . Financial Management Action Plan

	Action	When	By Whom
1	Elaborate a guidance note for the implementation of food distribution	No later than three months after effectiveness	PCU
2	Update the accounting software	No later than three months after effectiveness	PCU
3	Include the MOU to be signed with internal audit directorate this project	No later than three months after effectiveness	PCU
4	Recruit the project auditor	No later than three months after effectiveness	PCU/NAO
5	Recruit the verification agent	No later than three months after effectiveness	PCU

C. Procurement

62. Procurement under the Emergency Education Coronavirus response project will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank's Procurement Framework. Procurement by countries will follow the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, dated July 1, 2016 (revised in November 2017 and August 2018). The project will be subject to the World Bank's Anticorruption Guidelines, dated October 15, 2006, revised in January 2011, and as of July 1, 2016. The Implementing Agency will use the Systematic tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) to plan, record and track procurement transactions.

63. The MoBSE will assume the fiduciary aspects (procurement) and responsibilities for reporting to the World Bank. The existing PCU have experience in handling procurement under World Bank's Financed projects. The PCU has already successfully implemented the Third Education Project Phase II (P077903, 2006-13), EFA-FTI Project (P115427, 2009-13) and READ project (P133079, 2014-18).

64. If requested by the borrower, the Bank will provide procurement hands-on expanded implementation support to help expedite all stages of procurement – from help with supplier identification, to support for bidding/selection and/or negotiations to contract signing and monitoring of implementation. A WB procurement accredited staff/consultant will provide support to the implementation unit during all emergency procurement stages.

65. The Borrower (with technical assistance from the World Bank) has developed the Project Procurement Strategy for Development (PPSD), which describes how procurement activities will support project operations for the achievement of PDOs and deliver value for money. It was approved on June 22, 2020. In addition, the existing Project Implementation Manual which includes the detailed process for procurement activities and relation between the PCU and other key actors, will be updated to include the specificity of the Emergency Education COVID-19 Response Project within 3 months of effectiveness. The procurement approach is summarized below.

66. The proposed procurement approach prioritizes fast track emergency procurement for the required emergency goods, works and services, particularly for the prevention phase and the relief phase. In this regard, key measures to fast track procurement include the following measures:

- use of simple and fast procurement and selection methods fit for an emergency situation including direct contracting, as appropriate
- procurement from UN Agencies enabled and expedited by WB procedures and templates
- use of procurement agents
- force account, as needed, and
- increased thresholds for Requests For Quotations and national procurement, among others
- Other measures like shorter bidding time, no bid security, advance payments, direct payments, will be applied on a case by case basis upon advice/guidance from the Accredited Procurement Specialist;
- Retroactive financing from March 31, 2020 i.e. procurement prior to project effectiveness
- Conducting post reviews

67. Major risks to procurement and proposed mitigation measures are summarized below.

Table 5. Procurement Risks and Mitigation Measures

Limited capacity to conduct emergency procurement.	The PCU will maintain staff with the appropriate capacity dedicated to the COVID-19 response. The WBG will provide support through a procurement accredited staff.
Managing fraud and corruption and noncompliance.	Ex-ante due diligence of firms being selected will be conducted using databases available in country and externally. Post review of contracts will be scheduled immediately on award of contracts for all contracts that would have been usually prior reviewed.
Capacity of the market and supply chain to meet the demand.	Proposed mobilization of existing service providers with the possibility to proceed with contracts extension for additional activities through contract amendment are expected to address the emergency medical service requirements. Measures for supplier preferences such as direct payments by WB, and advance payments, will be applied on as needed basis.

D. Corporate Commitments

68. **Gender and Gender Based Violence.** The project aims to reduce gender inequities and maintain gender parity in enrollment. These efforts are particularly focused in Component 3. Communications and Citizen engagement and sensitization to encourage girls to reenroll in school at reopening, as well as messaging about social risks which impact girls including prevention of gender based violence and adolescent pregnancy. These efforts will be supported by the MoBSE Gender Unit, and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEGAM).

69. In addition, under the ESSP (P162890) the Project Coordination Unit will hire a consultant to implement GBV prevention and response activities, particularly Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH). The project will use the same mechanism to tackle the GBV issues. The objective is to prevent, mitigate risks

and respond to GBV, including SEA, SH and Violence Against Children (VAC), related to its implementation and in the holistic support for survivors in the project area. This includes ensuring that there are clear reporting arrangements in place at the school and community level, including trained personnel, as well as response approaches in place which include clear mapping of services for survivors and a referral process, in line with the SEA/SH assessment as part of the social safeguards risks and also noted under the environment and social section below. The consultant will closely work with the MoBSE Gender Unit for capacity building in order to help the MoBSE handle this issue by itself in the long term.

70. **Disability Inclusion.** The project seeks to promote a disability inclusive approach to provision of educational services. It builds upon work being undertaken in the ESSP project which supports improved identification of children with disabilities; training for teachers, and education personnel on inclusive education approaches in and outside of the classroom; and provision of assistive materials to children with disabilities. Children with disabilities will vary in terms of whether they can adequately access the distance learning opportunities that will be supported through the project through radio, television, and printed materials. At the same time, close collaboration with families is critical to supporting students in a home-based environment. As such, support for regular mobile phone calls from itinerant teachers to families of children with disabilities, as well as distribution of accessible materials, where possible, will be supported for continued engagement of children and their families. The approach seeks to maintain flexibility, ensure communication, and minimize disruptions to the support that itinerant teachers traditionally provide in classroom settings.

71. **Citizen Engagement.** The project will support community sensitization efforts and engagement with citizens through weekly messaging via radio to communities and toll free call-in numbers that are available at the end of television and radio programming. These efforts will be further reinforced by regional focal points (cluster monitors, regional directorates, etc.) who will be embedded in communities. In addition, mass SMS messaging which is currently being pursued to further support critical messages and feedback, can allow for rapid survey assessment data and further promote citizen engagement.

A. Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

B. Environmental and Social

72. This Emergency Education Coronavirus Response Project is focused on adequately responding, recovering, and rebuilding the education sector in the context of COVID-19 and it is also aligned with World Bank support for the National Response Plan under the leadership of the Ministry of Health through three key preparatory actions, namely: (i) ensuring that children and their families have access to relevant and timely information on COVID-19 to protect themselves from infection and reduce the transmission rate within communities; (ii) enhancing speedy recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector and improving the resilience of the sector; and (iii) ensuring continuity of learning on a minimal curriculum delivery during the initial 21-day school closure and progressively expand curriculum coverage using multiple curriculum delivery platforms in the medium to long-



term. The strategy was endorsed by the Local Education Group (LEG) on March 24, 2020.

73. The project will be carried out across the 6 regions of the country and the activities will focus on assisting families and students on the continuity of education during this period of health crisis, the implementation of a strategy to resume school activities after the crisis and community involvement. The project will also ensure the distribution of essential food items to the most vulnerable families.

74. The project will be implemented by the PCU of the MoBSE which manages the ESSP (P162890) which has experience working on WBG operations. Given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is limited experience developing and implementing educational activities and safety measures which are aligned with the physical distancing measures. Mitigation measures, include building on preexisting technology platforms and data collection experience, using best practice examples from reopening schools following the Ebola crisis, cross-sectoral coordination with the Ministry of Health, and continued support from local education partners. In addition, the PCU does not have any prior experience working with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework, and currently does not have environmental and social safeguard specialists in place, although hiring is underway. The PCU is currently supported by one part-time environmental and social consultant. The capacity of the MoBSE to manage the environmental and social (E&S) risks is therefore considered weak. The WB will provide capacity support on an ongoing basis and will help train the environmental and social specialists in the PCU.

75. The Emergency Education COVID-19 Response Project will use the same Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that is being established under the ESSP(P162890). Grievances and questions about project activities, particularly with regards to voluntary land donation, have been largely managed through traditional community institutions and processes established under the previous Bank-supported project. As traditional community institutions do not typically sufficiently address potential project-level grievances, especially those which may require anonymity (for example, sexual exploitation and abuse and gender based violence that may stem from labor influx), a GRM is currently being finalized and will be operationalized and disseminated. The Bank team expects this GRM to be finalized by June 30, 2020.

VII. World Bank Grievance Redress

75. Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service>. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org.



VIII. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MONITORING

Results Framework

COUNTRY : Gambia, The

Emergency Education COVID-19 Response

Project Development Objectives

The Project’s Development Objective is to: (a) support implementation of the Education Sector COVID-19 Response Plan; (b) ensure continued access to educational services and (c) support safe and resilient learning environments for students returning to schools.

Project Development Objective Indicators

Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Name: Percent of targeted communities benefiting from COVID-19 Sensitization Campaigns		Percentage	0.00	90.00	Annual	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: GPE reporting includes number and percentage. End Target number 1,794 (90 percent).							
Name: Number of children in the relevant age-group in the program area supported with distance/homebased learning/tutoring		Number	0.00	168330.00	annual (one time during project duration)	MoBSE. Seeing if it is possible to use a high frequency mobile survey to sample participation in distance learning.	MoBSE



Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
programs							
Description: GPE requires percentage and target. Percentage is 50 percent.							
Name: Number of grant-supported schools offering remediation programs		Number	0.00	418.00	annual	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: Number 418 represents 60 percent of schools. Dis-aggregated be level of education.							
Name: Number of grant-supported schools equipped with minimum hygiene standards for prevention of COVID-19		Number	0.00	564.00	once	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: Target represents 70 percent of schools. Data should be disaggregated by region and school level for GPE.							

Intermediate Results Indicators

Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Name: Number of public primary school/lower secondary school students who receive		Number	0.00	100000.00	once	MoBSE	MoBSE



Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
stationary packages and printed materials							
Of which female		Percentage	0.00	50.00			
Description:							
Name: Number of children provided access to nutrition		Number	0.00	88000.00	annual (once)	WFP data, corroborated by cluster monitors and school feeding focal points	MoBSE, WFP
Description: Measure of one time food distribution by WFP to families with school aged children in select districts in region 2 and all districts in region 4.							
Name: Number of disabled students benefiting from mobile based support from teachers		Text	zero	to be determined	annual	Reports from itinerant teachers including call log report.	special needs unit
Description: To be calculated based on pre-covid 19 caseloads of itinerant teachers. Intervention targets primary school children. Should be disaggregated by gender.							
Name: Number of grant-supported schools reopened		Number	0.00	627.00	annual	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: Mandatory indicator by GPE. 627 represents 90 percent of schools. Should be disaggregated in final report by level of education.							



Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Name: Percentage of teachers in grant-supported schools (public LBS and UBS) who return to school once the school system is reopened		Percentage	0.00	80.00	Annual (part of annual EMIS exercise)	EMIS	MoBSE
Description: Mandatory GPE indicator. Should be disaggregated by gender for final report.							
Name: Number of teachers trained to provide accelerated programs to mitigate loss of learning during school closure		Number	0.00	2000.00	annual	InSET training reports	INSET unit within MoBSE
Description: Final training report should be disaggregated by level of education taught, gender, and region.							
Name: School Reopening Minimum Hygiene Standards developed		Yes/No	N	Y	annual (once)	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: A school reopening strategy which takes into account guidance from WHO.							
Name: Remediation learning strategy developed		Yes/No	N	Y	MoBSE	Validated strategy	MoBSE
Description: Strategy to address remediation approach upon reentry into schools, assessment, and managing examinations.							



Indicator Name	Corporate	Unit of Measure	Baseline	End Target	Frequency	Data Source / Methodology	Responsibility for Data Collection
Name: Number of citizen engagement messages distributed via radio		Number	0.00	27.00	annual	MoBSE report	MoBSE
Description: Calculated by counting radio programming to communities with availability of dial-in numbers. 27 represents a half year of weekly messaging.							
Name: Percentage of children previously enrolled in grant-supported schools who return to school once the school system is reopened		Percentage	0.00	60.00	Annual	EMIS	MoBSE
Description: Mandatory GPE indicator.							
Name: Number of mobile surveys completed		Number	0.00	2.00	MoBSE	MoBSE	MoBSE
Description: high frequency mobile survey to assess participation in distance learning.							
Name: Percentage of children whose learning was assessed to evaluate loss of learning during school closure		Percentage	0.00	20.00	annual (once at school reentry)	MoBSE analysis	MoBSE
Description: Based on a sample of grades 3 and 8 to assess learning loss during school closure upon reentry into school.							



Target Values

Project Development Objective Indicators

Indicator Name	End Target
Percent of targeted communities benefiting from COVID-19 Sensitization Campaigns	90.00
Number of children in the relevant age-group in the program area supported with distance/homebased learning/tutoring programs	168330.00
Number of grant-supported schools offering remediation programs	418.00
Number of grant-supported schools equipped with minimum hygiene standards for prevention of COVID-19	564.00

Intermediate Results Indicators

Indicator Name	Baseline	End Target
Number of public primary school/lower secondary school students who receive stationary packages and printed materials	0.00	100000.00
Number of children provided access to nutrition	0.00	88000.00
Number of disabled students benefiting from mobile based support from teachers	zero	to be determined
Number of grant-supported schools reopened	0.00	627.00
Percentage of teachers in grant-supported schools (public LBS and UBS) who return to school once the school system is reopened	0.00	80.00



Indicator Name	Baseline	End Target
Number of teachers trained to provide accelerated programs to mitigate loss of learning during school closure	0.00	2000.00
School Reopening Minimum Hygiene Standards developed	N	Y
Remediation learning strategy developed	N	Y
Number of citizen engagement messages distributed via radio	0.00	27.00
Percentage of children previously enrolled in grant-supported schools who return to school once the school system is reopened	0.00	60.00
Number of mobile surveys completed	0.00	2.00
Percentage of children whose learning was assessed to evaluate loss of learning during school closure	0.00	20.00
Of which female	0.00	50.00



Annex 1. Sector Context Prior to COVID-19

1. A general overview of the education sector, based on its functioning prior to the school closures is provided below. Although there have been some improvements, the education system still faces challenges in access and equity, quality of learning, and data driven decision making. These key challenges are outlined below.

Access and Equity

2. Enrollment had been increasing in The Gambia prior to the crisis. The gross enrollment rate (GER) increased from 2013 to 2019 at all levels of education (Education Management Information System, EMIS); in Early Childhood Development (ECD) from 36.5 percent to 54.6 percent; in Lower Basic Schools (LBS) from 92.8 percent to 117.9 percent; in Upper Basic Schools (UBS) from 68.1 percent to 70.4 percent; and in Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) from 39.0 percent to 49.6 percent. Although the primary completion rate increased from 73.6 in 2010 to 88.2 in 2019, the UBS completion rate has stagnated over the last 10 years (59.5 percent in 2010 and 59.0 percent in 2019).

3. Although universal primary completion has not been achieved, enrollment of girls has improved at all levels of education, with now slightly lower enrollment of boys at ECD, basic and secondary. The “traditional” gender disparities have been eliminated from ECD to senior secondary schools, however the post-secondary education level is still lagging at 69 percent in 2015. Girls register a higher GER and net enrollment rate (NER) at ECD, basic and secondary levels, as well as higher completion rates at lower and upper basic levels. Boys’ slightly lower enrollment at primary level may be due to higher enrollments of boys in Majalis or Koranic centers which are not included in the official school count figure. The current Education Sector Support Project (ESSP-P162890) has an intervention focused on providing foundational skills to children in majalis as well as reintegrating out of school children back into school.

4. Regional disparities in access to education are evident by variations in the GER. As an example, out of the 6 administrative regions, Region 2, close to Banjul, has the highest GER in ECD (65.8 percent) and in UBS (77.5 percent) while Region 5, a remote region, registers the lowest GER in both ECD (29.2 percent) and LBS (78.1 percent). Region 6 also has low enrollment particularly at upper basic level (37.4 percent) (EMIS 2019). The Government has been targeting interventions in these regions to mitigate socio-cultural and financial barriers that may negatively impact enrollment and completion rates, and it is possible these communities would be hardest hit in a COVID-19 economic downturn given job insecurity and lower access to health services.

Quality of Learning

5. Improving learning outcomes is a significant challenge. For example, although EGRA data from 2007 to 2016 shows significant improvements in knowledge of letter sounds and word recognition, reading comprehension remains low. The 2016 EGRA showed that only one out of five (20 percent) reading comprehension questions are answered correctly. Another EGRA, including 4th grade students for the first time, will be conducted this year. Additionally, the National Assessment Test (NAT) is conducted bi-annually in grades 3 and 5 and annually in grade 8. Although low, the scores, have shown some improvements over time. The test items of 2012 and 2017 NAT G3 and G8 and those of 2012 and 2016 G5 NAT were linked so that the scores of



these years would be comparable. The average scores of both English and Mathematics of all three grades have improved, as shown below. It is worth noting that English score change in gender that on average female students in grades 3 and 5 performed better in English in 2016/17.

Table 1. Average scores of National Assessment Tests of Grades 3, 5, and 8 in 2012 and 2016/17 (Common items only), public schools only. */** Gender difference in test score is statistically significant within the test.

English common item change by Gender

	Male	Female
G3 2012-2017	43.5*- 49.1%	42.9- 50.9***%
G5 2012-2016	45.3**- 52.9%	44.3 - 54.9***%
G8* 2012-2017	47.7** - 58.3***%	44.1 - 55.9%

Maths common item change by Gender

	Male	Female
G3 2012-2017	37.4**- 41.7%	36.4 - 42.0%
G5 2012-2016	45.9**- 51.7%	44.4 - 51.3%
G8* 2012-2017	40.2** - 50.0%**	37.7 -47.4%

Source: National Assessment Test. Scores are all statistically significant

6. A comprehensive curriculum revision for ECD, lower basic, and upper basic schools, with a particular focus on English, science and mathematics is underway, but not yet completed. At the same time, an overhaul of The Gambia College, which is the primary provider of teachers in the system is being planned including reforming the curriculum, degree tracks, and practicum requirements. At the same time, a bridge program which provides improved classroom mentorship and coaching for teacher trainees and new teachers is under development. All of these current and planned efforts are aimed at improving classroom instruction.

System Strengthening

7. Support over time to the development of an EMIS has been fruitful and has led to improvements in teacher and student management as well as better targeting mechanisms. However, additional updates are necessary to make the data more accurate and reliably available. In addition to providing more detailed information on teacher qualifications and student-level data, the revamped EMIS would also ensure proper coverage of the post-secondary level of education.



ANNEX 2. IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASED RESPONSE

Table 1. Implementing Bodies

Component Name	Implementing Agency	Involved Departments
Component 1. Continuity of Learning		
<i>Sub-Component 1.1 Extending Remote Learning Opportunities</i>	MoBSE	Science and Technology Education Directorate (STED), In-service training unit (INSET), Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD)
<i>Sub-Component 1.2 Building Resilience Through Sustainability Measures</i>	MoBSE	
<i>Sub-Component 1.3 Supporting the Most Vulnerable</i>	MoBSE (with support from WFP)	Regional Education Directorates (REDs)/School feeding focal points
Component 2. Safe Return to School		
<i>Sub-Component 2.1 Healthy Schools</i>	MoBSE	REDs and Basic Education Directorate
<i>Sub-Component 2.2 Accelerated Learning</i>	MoBSE	Curriculum Directorate, STED, INSET, SQAD
Component 3. Community Engagement and Strategic Communication	MoBSE	Communications Unit, Gender Unit Special Needs unit
Component 4. Technical and Institutional Support	MoBSE	Planning Directorate, Assessment Unit

Table 2. Response, Recovery, Resilience - Short-Term, Medium-Term, Long-Term Implementation

	Component 1. Continuity of Learning	Component 2. Safe Return to School	Component 3. Community Engagement and Strategic Communication	Component 4. Technical and Institutional Support
Short-Term (July 2020 -September 2020) – Response Efforts	1.1 Extending remote learning opportunities (remote learning, stationary packages, disability inclusion support) 1.3 Supporting the most vulnerable (food distribution)		COVID-19 Health and Education emergency messaging	Initial citizen engagement to inform program development
Medium-Term (September 2020 – February 2021) Recovery Efforts		2.1 Healthy Schools (cleaning, WASH/hygiene initiatives) 2.2 Accelerated Learning (training of teachers on remediation programs,	Back to school campaign	Assessment of Learning (assessment of learning lost)



Long-Term (indefinite end) – Resilience Efforts	1.2 Building Resilience through sustainability measures (online learning portal, radio provision to schools, connectivity)	delivery of remediation programs)		Ongoing evaluation, M&E, surveys, citizen engagement
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