

System Capacity Grant Annual Progress Report Template

Status: Accepted

Country	Grant ID	Grant Agent	Grant Effectiveness/Start Date
Cambodia	GPE0000953	SCG	09/01/2023

Grant Amount	Timeframe Examined in this Report		Date of Report Submission
2,700,000 (USD)	From Date	To Date	11/27/2024
	09/01/2023	09/01/2024	

Area(s) and activity group(s) covered by grant

Window 1: Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact

- System diagnostics, compact development and education sector analyses
- Gender-responsive sector planning, including operational planning and budgeting
- Supporting policies and plans to identify and address multiple forms of exclusion (planning for children with disabilities, system resilience and inclusion of displaced children)

Window 2: Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change

- Strengthening sector coordination, including local education groups, joint sector reviews and monitoring the effectiveness of the country-level partnership
- Establishing and operating pooled funding mechanisms
- Strengthening budget processes and ministry of finance engagement; identifying opportunities to improve the equity and efficiency of education expenditure, including processes toward gender equality

Window 3: Strengthen capacity, adapt, and learn, to implement and drive results at scale

- Training and support for government staff and central and decentralized levels, including on the uptake and use of data and evidence
- Support for implementation capacity, including sector plan implementation monitoring, gender responsiveness of the sector and evaluation of sector plans and policies/programs in priority areas; assess monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity, including use of evidence in policy process

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall progress this reporting period 1	Previous Rating
Satisfactory (S)	NA

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

This is the 1st progress report covering the period from 1 September 2023 to 1 September 2024. The overall progress in implementing the grant activities in this reporting period is rated as satisfactory because of positive implementation progress across the three windows, despite some delays leading to challenges with financial absorption. Progress is evident in activity implementation, management performance, and compliance with reporting standards, though certain delays have impacted expenditure rates.

Window 1: Strengthening Gender-responsive Planning and Policy Development

The implementation progress for Window 1 is rated as satisfactory, with several key accomplishments achieved throughout the reporting period. The first major milestone was the finalization of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2024-2028, developed through a consultative process. The plan includes a detailed result framework and a financial simulation model, ensuring that policy options are both evidence-based and gender-responsive. The second significant accomplishment was the completion of the Inclusive Education Action Plan (IEAP) 2024-2028, which was informed by extensive research on both the supply and demand-side issues related to accessing quality inclusive education and the enabling policy environment. Thirdly, the Giga Internet Connectivity Mapping was completed, with 98% of schools now mapped on the online platform. Finally, the development of a new Multilingual Education Action Plan (MEAP) for 2024-2028 is currently underway, informed by formative research on the current MEAP implementation and communities' perceptions of multilingual education. Each initiative progressed well, although some delays were experienced in research-related work, primarily due to the extended time required to finalize research scopes and a Ministerial restructuring exercise. While these delays impacted spending rates, activities are now back on track and progress has resumed as planned.

Window 2: Mobilizing Coordinated Action and Financing

The implementation progress under Window 2 is rated as satisfactory. Substantial progress was made in building coordination mechanisms and financial efficiency. The Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) played a key role in fostering collaboration between the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport's (MoEYS) leaderships and development partners to address policy challenges and coordinate actions. Two high-level JTWG meetings were held during the reporting period, reinforcing cooperation, and facilitating transparent communication between MoEYS and partners. At the provincial level, the effectiveness of the JTWGs was enhanced through a comprehensive review of their operations and the provision of targeted mentoring. These efforts have addressed coordination gaps and supported more efficient management of funds and activities at the sub-national level. In terms of information systems, significant progress was made in upgrading the Aid Management Information System (AMIS), to resolve security and functionality issues. The upgraded AMIS platform, which is aligned with the ESP goals, will better capture underfunded programme areas, and streamline data collection and reporting. Additionally, efforts to improve budget performance were strengthened through workshops on performance-based budgeting. These workshops helped align the school operating funds framework with the ESP and the budgeting standards set by the Ministry of Economic and Finance.

Window 3: Strengthening Capacity to Implement and Scale Results

The implementation progress for Window 3 is rated as satisfactory. During this period, significant efforts were made to enhance the implementing quality of the Provincial Annual Operational Plans (AOPs). The MoEYS conducted quality assessments of these plans across 25 provinces, identifying capacity gaps and providing targeted mentoring to improve their effectiveness. Comprehensive support was also provided to the organization of the National Education Congress (NEC). This support included technical assistance and logistical services, which facilitated active participation by development partners, and ensured an inclusive dialogue, allowing for thorough discussions of priorities. Another key milestone under this window was the initiation of the second phase of the MoEYS Leadership Development Programme. This phase seeks to strengthen managerial competencies among senior education officials with a particular focus on supporting female leaders and improving skills in educational data collection and analysis.

From a financial perspective, some areas of budget execution were below expectations due to delays in certain activities, particularly those involving research. These delays are largely related to extensive consultations with government counterparts to achieve consensus. Despite lower-than-expected spending, resources were managed carefully to maximize cost-effectiveness and efficiency. For example, a single technical assistance partner was recruited for multiple activities (e.g., the leadership programme and CPD), funded under SCG, Multiplier, and System Transformation Grants (STG). This approach ensured synergies and facilitated the holistic implementation of programmes across all Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grants. Additionally, research activities (e.g., MEAP research) were aligned with broader initiatives (e.g., SEA-PLM), enabling a more efficient use of funds and extending research impacts beyond the initial scope. As a result of these measures, the expenditure rate is anticipated to increase in the upcoming period as delayed activities, such as diagnostics and research, have made significant progress, which will enhance budget utilization moving forward.

In terms of management performance, the SCG grant benefitted from its integration into the pooled Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF). This integration leveraged the well-established CDPF management and implementation structure which contributed to a reduction of transactional costs, streamline administrative processes, and the improvement of overall efficiency. Financial and procurement

practices followed UNICEF’s Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), ensuring compliance through regular audits, spot-checks, and field visits. Systematic monitoring and evaluation exercises were conducted, with quarterly reviews conducted by the CDPF Steering Committee, which is chaired by a senior MoEYS leadership. This high-level oversight was instrumental in addressing implementation challenges and ensuring that grant execution remained aligned with strategic priorities.

Overall Progress of the SCG Grant

The implementation of SCG grant activities has demonstrated satisfactory progress across all three capacity areas, despite experiencing some delays. The grant has prioritized evidence-based planning and effectively leveraged synergies with other GPE grants, ensuring optimal resource utilization, while maintaining a strong focus on equity and inclusion. Robust financial management and comprehensive compliance practices have been key to the successful advancement of the grant’s objectives. Overall, the grant is on track to achieve its goals, reflecting a productive and well-managed implementation period.

Grant Implementation Progress, by Grant Window

Grant Window	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Window 1: Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact	Satisfactory (S)	NA

Detailed Description:

The implementation progress of Window 1 is rated as satisfactory. Despite some delays in implementing certain activities due to extensive consultations with government counterparts, particularly for research related activities, most major outputs have been achieved while others are in progress.

Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2024-2028

A significant milestone in the past year has been the finalization and endorsement of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2024-2028 which includes a comprehensive result framework and a financial simulation model. Developed through a series of consultative workshops and supported by technical assistance from UNESCO IIEP, the ESP builds on the results of the Education Sector Analysis (ESA), finalized in December 2023. The ESA provided a foundation for policy options, helping to build the capacity of Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) officials to ensure the plan is evidence-based. The ESP further ensures gender mainstreaming, leveraging MoEYS’ enhanced capacity to integrate gender into sector plans.

Inclusive Education Action Plan (IEAP) 2024-2028

In 2024, the SCG significantly and successfully supported the development of policies and plans which address multiple forms of exclusion, notably for children with disabilities and children from indigenous ethnic minority communities. The most notable accomplishment in this area was the development of the new Inclusive Education Action Plan (IEAP) 2024-2028, launched in June 2024. Developed in collaboration between MoEYS and UNICEF, with support from UNICEF Innocenti, the new IEAP builds on evidence gathered through research on inclusive education. The plan was further informed by lessons learned from the implementation of the previous IEAP (2019–2023), and a wide range of consultations conducted at national and subnational levels with key stakeholders, including government ministries, development partners, schoolteachers, parents and children with and without disabilities. The IEAP operationalizes the overarching Inclusive Education Policy, providing a medium-term road map with concrete strategies and priority actions to ensure equitable, inclusive quality education for children with disabilities, supporting lifelong learning and national development. MoEYS plans to widely disseminate the plan, particularly among the sub-national administration and local councils to garner support for quality inclusive education. Based on the IEAP result framework, MoEYS will monitor progress and discuss results in its existing forums, including the annual Education Congress.

Multilingual Education Action Plan (MEAP) 2024-2028

The development of the new Multilingual Education Action Plan 2024-2028 (MEAP) is in progress. The new plan is based on formative research to assess the current implementation status of the MEAP 2019-2023 and identify needs for the next phase. Led by an international expert with the participation of MoEYS staff and UNICEF technical support, the research involved capacity building sessions for MoEYS staff from the Department of Special Education (now the Department of Non-Formal and Inclusive Education) and provincial and district staff from targeted provinces. Through these sessions and follow-up consultation workshops, MoEYS teams were able to successfully conduct a diagnosis on the implementation status of the MEAP 2019-2023 and examine perceptions of minority communities towards the MEAP programmes. The research findings will inform the new MEAP, which is expected to be finalized and launched in the last quarter of 2024.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP) Review

The recruitment of technical assistance for the review of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP) 2021-2025 and development of the new GMSP 2026-2030 is underway. This work will focus on transferring knowledge and reinforcing MoEYS personnel capacity gender-transformative education planning and gender-informed research. The GMSP will also serve as a tool to support the development of future policies and plans, including the mid-term review of the ESP planned for 2026.

Evidence Generation Activities

Evidence-generation activities have started and are progressing well. A research concept note for the “Diagnostic on Student Retention Factors” was developed in collaboration with MoEYS’ Department of Policy. National technical assistance is being recruited for the study, which will apply a gender lens to identify retention factors and generate gender-responsive policy recommendations. Another concept note focused on 21st century skill development is in the final stages of preparation.

ICT Capacity Diagnostic

The diagnostic of ICT capacity has experienced delays due to extended discussions between UNICEF and the Department of Digital Transformation (DDT) to clarify the study’s objectives and scope. However, the activity is now underway, with technical support. The assessment focuses on identifying the current ICT capacities of MoEYS staff across various levels (central, provincial, district and school levels, including Teacher Education Institutions). The goal is to identify skill gaps and desirable ICT capacities for teaching and non-teaching staff. Findings and recommendations from the diagnostic will inform the development of ICT-related training courses for education personnel at all levels. Key achievements to date include a literature review of the global ICT skill benchmarks and the development of data collection tools for the diagnosis. A DDT team was appointed to the research plan and methodology, including sampling and data collection methods. Data collection will begin in late 2024, with the diagnosis expected to be concluded by Q2 2025.

School Connectivity Digital Mapping

Another significant achievement in this implementation period is the completion of the school connectivity digital mapping supported by the UNICEF Giga initiative. This process involved consultations with the Department of Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS) to build their knowledge of the Giga platform, and their understanding of the importance of fixed-internet connectivity of schools (rather than mobile connectivity). Using data from the Annual School Census, Giga has integrated information into the Giga Maps platform, which now displays the locations and connectivity status of over 98% of schools in the country. The map (GigaMaps) reveals that only 8% of schools in Cambodia currently have access to a fixed internet connection. Following the finalization of the digital map, dissemination efforts have included presentations at the Education Sector Working Group meeting and at the upcoming Cambodian EdTech forum. This forum, which will gather representatives from the major telecom providers in Cambodia, will further provide an opportunity for MoEYS to utilize the connectivity map to create partnerships and mobilize technical and financial support to expand school internet connectivity.

Grant Window	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Window 2: Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change	Satisfactory (S)	NA

Detailed Description:

Progress under Window 2 is rated as satisfactory due to significant advances in key activities, despite minor delays.

National Joint Technical Working Group Meetings

Sector coordination has been strengthened, particularly through the two Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) meetings held in the reporting period. These meetings, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, with UNICEF as co-chair, served as an effective platform for policy dialogues. High-level representatives from development partners such as UNESCO, USAID, the World Bank, EU, JICA, KOICA, and the NGO Education Partnership participated in these meetings. The latter provided opportunities for MoEYS to present progress on critical policy reforms, including the development of the new Education Strategic Plan (ESP), model school standards, teacher development initiatives, and the implementation status of MoEYS' budget. Progress updates on Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grants are a standing agenda item, with GPE Grant Agents (UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank) reporting on implementation progress of their respective GPE-funded programmes. These meetings enable direct dialogue between development partners and MoEYS senior management. For instance, in the latest JTWG meeting, development partners raised concerns about MoEYS budget execution, which were addressed by the Minister, demonstrating the value of these meetings for promoting transparent communication.

Sub-National Coordination

At the sub-national level, coordination has also been strengthened through coaching, provided to provinces to support the reactivation of the provincial JTWG mechanism. The Department of Planning (DoP) conducted an internal assessment to evaluate the operational status of provincial JTWGs. The assessment revealed that over 50% of provinces lacked a functioning JTWG, underlining the need for capacity building, particularly on the objectives and purpose of provincial JTWGs. Based on the findings, DoP provided coaching support to 10 underperforming provinces, benefiting 30 education officials from the provincial JTWG secretariats. Furthermore, the DoP is planning to hold a provincial JTWG annual review meeting with 25 provinces in late Q4 2024. The meeting will cover topics identified as priorities during the assessment, with the goal of enhancing the functionality of the provincial JTWGs.

Performance-Based Budgeting

MoEYS capacity to implement performance-based budgeting in line with the Public Financial Management Reform programme has been strengthened through the organization of consultative workshops on the monitoring and evaluation of School Operating Funds (SOF) by programme and sub-programme. The workshops aimed to gather inputs for the revision of the SOF performance reporting framework and associated tools, and to ensure alignment of the framework with both the new ESP 2024-2028 and the Ministry of Economic and Finance's (MEF) new performance-based budgeting guidance. Through these workshops, MoEYS national and provincial staff from key departments responsible for utilizing the tool, including the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education, contributed to discussions on priorities to be included in the revised framework. The Department of Finance (DoF) is now in the process of revising the tool, based on the inputs from these key end-users. The revised framework will be rolled out nationwide in 2025.

Aid Management Information System (AMIS)

The review and upgrading of the Aid Management Information System (AMIS) is progressing according to the established timeline, with the new system expected to be operational early next year. The process began with an assessment of the current AMIS platform, led by a technical expert in close collaboration with DoP, to identify needs for technical upgrades. The assessment revealed that the existing platform was based on outdated technologies with low data security. Given the scale of required updates, it was determined that developing a new system with upgraded technologies would be more cost-effective. As a result, the development of a new AMIS platform has commenced, incorporating innovative technologies and enhanced security measures. A series of consultations were held with DoP, development partners and relevant sub-national officers to inform the system's development. Additionally, the data collection forms have been revised to align with the new ESP, enabling the identification of underfunded priority programmes. The draft version of the new AMIS is currently undergoing further review and testing.

Education Financial Simulation

During the reporting period, MoEYS officials also received capacity development training on the Education Financial Simulation, which was developed as part of the new ESP development process. The interactive training, supported by UNESCO-IIEP, brought together MoEYS staff from various technical departments and effectively enhanced their skills in utilizing the model. Participants gained valuable insights into leveraging this tool for improved financial planning and monitoring within the new ESP framework.

Grant Window	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Window 3: Strengthen capacity, adapt, and learn, to implement and drive results at scale	Satisfactory (S)	NA

Detailed Description:

Progress under Window 3 is rated as satisfactory due to significant advances in key activities, despite minor delays.

Provincial Annual Operational Plans (AOP) Development

In supporting the development of the provincial Annual Operational Plans (AOP) aligned with the new ESP, MoEYS conducted a quality assessment with 25 provinces, identifying capacity gaps and areas for improvement. The results indicated that, while 17 out of 25 provinces met the quality standard in 2024 (surpassing the target of 16), some provinces exhibited little improvement and required further support. These findings were presented and discussed in a consultative workshop attended by representatives from all 25 provinces. During the workshop, provincial action plans were developed, outlining key activities for improving the quality of AOPs. Based on the assessment results, MoEYS provided targeted coaching and mentoring support to low-performing provinces. Through the comprehensive support, including quality improvement plans and targeted support to specific provinces, the Department of Planning (DoP) has provided consistent capacity strengthening in AOP development, ensuring alignment with the new ESP. Additional AOP training sessions are planned in late Q4 to further support provinces in implementing their improvement action plans.

National Education Congress (NEC) Support

MoEYS received technical and logistical support in the preparation and implementation of the National Education Congress (NEC) during this reporting period, including inputs for organizing technical working group (TWG) meetings. These meetings extensively discussed and finalized the agenda, including topics such as the NEC report outline, event flow, presentation topics, and presenters. Support also included preparation of keynote remarks for the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) Chair, which was delivered on behalf of all development partners active in the education sector. These remarks highlighted shared priorities and commitments to jointly support key areas, including investments in youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This emphasis was influenced by the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA) results, which underscored the urgent need for substantial investments to enhance improve Cambodian students' skills in reading, mathematics and science. Furthermore, translation and interpretation services were provided for both the NEC as well as the Education Congress Report. This support ensured an inclusive dialogue, allowing development partners to actively engage and utilize the Education Congress Report for internal planning and monitoring, thereby aligning with national priorities and data systems.

Leadership Professional Development Programme (Phase 2)

MoEYS, with technical support financed by the SCG, launched the 2second phase of the Leadership Professional Development Programme. This initiative aims to enhance MoEYS senior personnel's overall managerial competencies, with a specific focus on advancement of female leaders. The second phase of the programme will be rolled out to the 20 remaining provinces from August 2024 to January 2027. During the reporting period, an implementing partner was recruited, and an online survey was conducted to identify key training topics to be included in the programme. The survey explored areas such as effective report writing techniques, educational data collection and analysis, and training delivery methods, while also assessing accessibility to information and communication technology particularly at the sub-national level. The survey results will inform the improvement of the existing courses from Phase 1 and the development of new courses tailored to the specific needs of the target audience. All training courses will be accredited as part of MoEYS' continuous professional development system. Training activities are scheduled to begin in early 2025, utilizing innovative approaches such as blended training modalities through the newly developed MoEYS Capacity Development Platform.

Lessons, innovative/promising practices

During this reporting period, several successful practices have emerged, primarily centered around evidence-based planning facilitated by rigorous assessments and research prior to implementation. This approach included conducting formative research before the development of the IEAP and the MEAP. These thorough research steps provided solid evidence and in-depth understanding of key issues, incorporating the voices of target populations. In turn, this contributed to identifying strategies that address the real needs of beneficiaries.

A similar approach was employed in assessing the quality of the provincial JTWGs and the provincial AOPs before initiating direct capacity building support. These assessments provided essential insights into current capacity gaps and ensured that the support was tailored to meet specific needs. This groundwork laid not only informed strategic approaches but also established benchmarks for progress monitoring.

Targeting Vulnerable Populations

Research-driven practices were particularly valuable for identifying and prioritizing support for vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations such as children with disabilities and children from ethnic minority communities. Embedding research and evidence generation into the early phases of policy and plan development helped to ensure that the resulting action plans (IEAP and MEAP) accurately and effectively target the needs of these populations.

Synergy Across GPE Grants

Another key success during this period was fostering synergy between SCG and other GPE grants, namely, the System Transformation Grant (STG) and the Multiplier. This alignment promoted a holistic and efficient approach across programmes, maximizing the impact of available resources. For instance, the formative research conducted for the development of the MEAP, provided an opportunity to gather additional information relevant to the oversampling of multilingual education students within the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), supported by the Multiplier grant. By incorporating some additional questions for Grade 5 teachers relevant to SEA-PLM into the MEAP research, the outcomes of the research served multiple purposes and maximized efficiency across the grants. The data collected through the MEAP formative research will also contribute to the analysis of the SEA-PLM data in 2025.

Additionally, a single institution was recruited to support multiple activities funded under the SCG, STG and Multiplier, particularly those related to MoEYS' continuous professional development initiatives. The initiatives included the development of additional courses on data analysis and report writing, the rollout of the leadership training programme to additional provinces and the training of mentors to support the programme implementation. This approach has enhanced synergy, coherence and efficiency across GPE programme areas, the overall impact towards the achievement of goals and targets set out in the Partnership Compact.

Impact stories

Cambodia Starts Five-Year Inclusive Education Plan to Ensure Quality Education for All Children, Including Those with Disabilities: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/press-releases/cambodia-starts-five-year-inclusive-education-plan-ensure-quality-education-all>

Cambodia's Inclusive Education Plan: Empowering Children like Duong Chay: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/stories/cambodias-inclusive-education-plan-empowering-children-duong-chay>

Inclusive Education in Cambodia: Success and Challenges: <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/stories/inclusive-education-cambodia-successes-and-challenges>

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

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	Education Congress Report 2024_English.pdf	Knowledge Product	Education Congress Report 2024
2	ESA 2023_English.pdf	Knowledge Product	Cambodia Education Sector Analysis
2	ESP 2024-2028_English.pdf	Knowledge Product	Cambodia Education Sector Plan 2024-2028
2	IEAP 2024-28_English.pdf	Knowledge Product	Inclusive Education Action Plan 2024-2028
2	PAVING~1.PDF	Knowledge Product	Inclusive education research conducted prior to the development of the Inclusive Education Action Plan 2024-2028
2	Cambodia Education Simulation Model for ESP 2024-28.xlsm	Knowledge Product	Education Financial Simulation Model developed as part of the Education Sector Plan 2024-2028.

The documents listed were submitted with the progress report. If you'd like access to them, please contact the grant operations officer for your country.

Financial Reporting & Grant Management

Financial Reporting on GPE Grant

Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate

Approved Budget to Date	Cumulative Expenditure	Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate	Level of Financial Absorption
2,889,000	642,176.75	22.23	Off Track

Since the financial absorption is not rated as 'on track', please provide an explanation that identifies the main activities that have been delayed and their corresponding unspent amounts, as well as reasons for the delay and steps taken to ensure that expenditure absorption gets on track in the next reporting period.

During this reporting period, overall expenditure was more than 10% but below the planned budget, largely attributed to delays in various activities as a result of extensive consultations between UNICEF and

MoEYS as well as Ministerial restructuring, and adjustments in execution strategies. Below is a breakdown of specific activities with underspending, corresponding unspent amounts, reasons for the delays, and plans for future budget utilization.

The budget for development of a course on report writing and data analysis has not been fully spent in the reporting period as this activity was strategically combined with other Continuous Professional Development (CPD) interventions funded by the System Transformation Grant (STG) and the Multiplier grants to ensure synergy in delivery approaches. While this approach has supported more effective and efficient delivery of related activities and funds, in the short-term, it caused some delays in budget execution, requiring additional time to identify the qualified institution. With the institution now selected and operational, the entire amount allocated (\$102,500) is expected to be expended within the next reporting period.

The Student Retention Study (\$60,000), Education System Resilience/21st Century Skills Study (\$82,000), and the National Education Policy Framework (NEPF) development (\$76,000) faced delays due to ministerial internal restructuring, which impacted the finalization of research scopes and plans. However, the concept note for the resilience/21st century skills study is being finalized now, and technical assistance recruitment for retention study is underway, with full budget absorption expected in the next period. Work on the NEPF is also in discussion. Similarly, the ICT Capacity Diagnostic (\$67,000) experienced delays due to prolonged discussions on study objectives and the selection of technical assistance. The recruitment process is now completed, and the budget is expected to be fully utilized in the next period.

Coordination of the JTWG meetings and associated sector retreats also saw underspending, with \$33,000 remaining. While two JTWG meetings were held in the reporting period (one in 2023 and one in 2024), they incurred minimal expenses due to the use of cost-effective blended (online/in-person) modalities. Furthermore, the planned JTWG retreat was postponed to early 2025 to accommodate MoEYS senior leaders' schedule. As a result of this postponement, this budget will be absorbed during the next reporting period.

The reactivation of provincial JTWGs also experienced some delays (\$30,444) following MoEYS' decision to add an internal assessment of the provincial JTWG to the workplan. This internal assessment aimed to ensure that future support was appropriately aligned with needs. Provincial JTWGs are expected to resume in 2025, at which time the remaining budget is anticipated to be fully utilized.

Other activities that experienced delays include the development of the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) (\$46,000), the Educator Sector Plan (ESP) dissemination/roll-out (unspent \$165,000), and the support to domestic financial efficiency improvements (unspent \$49,688), primarily due to the need for quality assessments prior to beginning activity implement, and as knock on effects from the delay in the finalization of the ESP. These activities are now on track, with the remaining budgets expected to be fully utilized in the upcoming period.

Low overall expenditure can further be attributed to underspending on the review of the current Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (GMSP), as it was decided to postpone the review to 2025. This approach, which combines the review with the new plan for 2026-2030, was more efficient and cost-effective, requiring only one technical assistant. The remaining budget of \$47,000 will be spent in the next period.

There was no spending on the mid-term review (MTR) of the Capacity Development Master Plan (CDMP) 2020-2024 as MoEYS has developed a new Human Resources Development Plan (HRDP) due MoEYS internal restructuring. As a result, a new and the CDMP MTR budget (around \$35,000) will now support the HRDP operationalization in the next period.

The mapping of school internet connectivity was completed in the reporting period in partnership with the UNICEF Giga initiative with less funding than expected. The remaining budget of \$70,000 will be used to enhance the initiative, including an education data quality assessment and the development of an action plan. The budget (much of which is currently committed) is expected to be fully utilized in the next period.

Delays in developing the Multilingual Education Action Plan (MEAP) and the Inclusive Education Action Plan (IEAP) also contributed to underspending. The IEAP, launched in this period, faced slight delays due to the decision to first conduct joint research with UNICEF Innocenti. This research, initially outside the IEAP's development plan, was commissioned to address critical knowledge gaps on educational access for children with disabilities. The findings provided a valuable evidence base for the development of both the ESP 2024-2028 and the IEAP 2024-2028. However, as work on the IEAP could not begin

until this research concluded, the timeline for the plan’s completion was impacted. The remaining \$44,000 for dissemination will be spent in Q4 2024. The MEAP is in its final stages, with the budget expected to be fully utilized by year-end. The MEAP on the other hand, which encountered delays due to the unavailability of focal points at the ministerial level and additional time required for the recruitment of technical assistance – is now in its final stages. The remaining budget of \$22,000 is expected to be fully utilized by year-end. with the final plan expected to be launched by the end of the year, and the entire budget expended.

In summary, the delays were largely due to internal restructuring, the completion of critical assessments, and the alignment of activities with the new ESP. Steps have been taken to ensure that all remaining budgets will be absorbed in the next reporting period.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period

1,800,000

Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period

642,176.75

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%

Management Performance

Level of management performance

Satisfactory (S)

Detailed Description

Impact of SCG Integration within the CDPF Mechanism

The integration of the SCG grant within the pooled-funding mechanism of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) has positively impacted its implementation. By leveraging the existing CDPF monitoring and evaluation (M&E) structures, the SCG has benefitted from the inclusion of a dedicated staff member for monitoring, evaluation, and coordination. This has minimized transactional costs and reduced the need for extensive orientation, allowing for a more efficient start to activities.

Revised M&E Framework and Improved Performance

In 2024, the overarching CDPF M&E framework was revised to better align with the SCG and other GPE grants based on the Partnership Compact. This revision has significantly improved both implementation and management performance, providing clearer guidelines and enhancing the capacity for tracking progress toward outcomes.

Financial and Procurement Oversight through UNICEF

The SCG grant has also benefited from UNICEF’s financial and procurement rules and regulations, particularly through the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT). HACT principles have bolstered fiduciary management and compliance by facilitating regular assurance activities such as financial spot checks, programmatic field visits, and financial audits for implementing partners. These activities have been consistently conducted for SCG implementing partners, particularly within MoEYS technical departments. This has ensured financial transparency and strengthened national capacities for management and accountability.

Role of CDPF Manager in Grant Implementation

A key component of the SCG’s management arrangement is the dedicated CDPF manager. This role has positively influenced the implementation of the grant by fostering high levels of coordination between

UNICEF team members and MoEYS staff. The central leadership provided by the CDPF manager has streamlined decision-making processes, allowing for timely responses to challenges, while ensuring alignment with the strategic goals of the grant.

Steering Committee Coordination and Governance

Coordination efforts have also benefited from the pre-existing CDPF steering committee, chaired by a Secretary of State of MoEYS. The committee meets quarterly, offering essential opportunities to regularly assess programme implementation progress among all relevant technical departments. The high-level engagement provided by the steering committee has facilitated the timely execution of key activities, reinforcing accountability at the highest levels of governance.

Revisions to the grant

This period, have there been any revisions to the grant other than those submitted to the Secretariat for their approval?

No

How likely is that the grant agent will submit a request for revision to the Secretariat in the next 12 months for their approval?

Moderately Unlikely

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AMIS	Aid Management Information System
AOPs	Annual Operational Plans
CDP	Capacity Development Platform
CDPF	Capacity Development Partnership Fund
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DDT	Department of Digital Transformation
DEMIS	Department of Education Management Information Systems
DOF	Department of Finance
DOP	Department of Planning
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Strategic Plan

ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
GMSP	Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HRDP	Human Resources Development Plan
IEAP	Inclusive Education Action Plan
JTWG	Joint Technical Working Group
MEAP	Multilingual Education Action Plan
MEF	Ministry of Economic and Finance
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NEC	National Education Congress
NEPF	National Education Policy Framework
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment for Development
SCG	System Capacity Grant
SEA-PLM	South-East Asia Primary Learning Matrix
SOF	School Operating Funds
STG	System Transformation Grant
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO-IIEP	UNESCO-International Institute for Education Planning

1 Highly Unsatisfactory- The grant has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory - The grant has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory - The grant has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory - The grant is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderate shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory – The grant is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory - The grant is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.

2 Highly Unsatisfactory – The window has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory – The window has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory – The window has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory – The window is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderate shortcomings.

Satisfactory – The window is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory – The window is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.

3 tooltip