June 15, 2020

Hon. Mr. A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal
Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance
Dhaka
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Hon. Dr. Dipu Moni
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Dhaka
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Hon. Mr. Md. Zakir Hossen
Minister of State
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Dhaka
PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Approval of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to Support Bangladesh’s Education Sector

Honorable Ministers,

On behalf of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), I am pleased to inform you that with the delegated authority from the GPE Board of Directors, I have approved Bangladesh’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding window in the amount of US$ 15 million. I have also approved a 1.75% agency fee for the grant agent, World Bank, in the amount of US$ 262,500.

The grant has a start date of June 15, 2020 and an end date of December 31, 2021. The full decision language of this approval can be found in the annex to this letter.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, Country Lead for Bangladesh.
We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of Bangladesh’s children.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Alice P. Albright
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education

cc:
Members of the Education Local Consultative Group
Hon. Mr. Mahibul Hasan Chowdhury, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education
Hon. Mr. Monowar Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Hon. Mr. Md. Mahbub Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Education
Hon. Mr. Md. Akram-Al-Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Mr. Md. Shahabuddin Patwary, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Md. Ruhul Amin, Joint Secretary (Development), GPE Focal Point, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Mr. Md. Alauddin Bhuiyan Jonne, Assistant Chief, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, United Nations Bangladesh
Mr. Tomoo Hozumi, Country Representative, UNICEF Bangladesh
Ms. Nor Shirin Md. Mokhtar, Chief of Education, UNICEF Bangladesh
Ms. Mercy Miyang Tembon, Country Director, World Bank Dhaka
Mr. Peter Darvas, Senior Economist, World Bank
Ms. Tashmina Rahman, Education Specialist, World Bank
Mr. Douglas Sumerfield, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank
Ms. Natalia Cherevatova, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank
Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat
Mr. Nilse Ryman, Regional Manager, GPE Secretariat
Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, Country Lead for Bangladesh, GPE Secretariat
Annex – DECISION LANGUAGE

In line with the delegated authority granted by the Board of Directors, the GPE CEO approves the COVID-19 accelerated funding request for Bangladesh in the amount of US$15,000,000 plus an additional US$262,500 in agency fees to World Bank as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 15, 2020, and an end date of December 31, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Bangladesh in preparing a national response plan and grant proposal that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as support the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

The GPE Board approved the COVID-19 funding mechanism on a first come, first served approach for the first US$ 125 million of the original US$ 225 million COVID-19 country funding window. Although the remaining US$ 100 million has been subsequently significantly increased to US$ 350 million by the Board, the demand for the COVID-19 funding mechanism still exceeds the available funds and the maximum allocation for Bangladesh is now US$ 15,000,000, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 20,000,000.

Unless otherwise indicated by the decision language request for Report-Back, and keeping within the original budget of each component, the government and grant agent have full authority to prioritize within the approved activities of the original application, after consultation with the local education group.

Recognizing the GPE Board’s intent to proceed with the COVID-19 funding on a timeline which acknowledges the COVID-19 emergency, the Government and Grant Agent are asked to move forward with implementation immediately while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat by July 7, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework, budget and implementation plan), following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government. This revised program document needs to prioritize activities so as to keep within the new grant allocation and must address the requirements noted below. Upon receipt of the revised program document, the Secretariat will verify compliance with each of the requirements below, but there will be no additional grant approval issued, nor further reassessment of the program.

i. Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis be prioritized over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose.

ii. Budget assumptions indicate that PIU costs are being calculated for 24-months which should be calculated only for the duration of the program. The Grant Agent is requested to reduce PIU costs to be based on the 18 month implementation period of the program.
iii. The Grant Agent is requested to disaggregate the indicator “Number of children provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns to minimize the negative impacts of school closures, with a focus on girls (Number)” by gender.

iv. The Grant Agent is requested to add the following required core indicators and report all core indicators as both number and the percentage of the relevant beneficiary population reached, in accordance with GPE guidelines for M&E of COVID-19 accelerated funding grants.
   - Number (and % of teachers in program area) of teachers trained on remedial education, distance learning strategies, and formative and summative assessment practices
   - (Core) Number (and % of children in program area) of children whose learning was assessed to evaluate loss of learning during school closure

v. The Grant Agent is requested to develop a costed learning from evidence approach in accordance with GPE guidelines for M&E of COVID-19 accelerated funding grants. This should include a description of what evaluative questions will be addressed during grant implementation and completion, how data for answering those questions will be collected and analyzed, and how lesson learning during implementation will be used for adaptive management.

The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are recommendations rather than requirements:

**Observations**

a) Given the urgency of the crisis, grant implementation to commence on schedule and the Grant Agent to submit a cash transfer request within two weeks of approval to facilitate the timely release of funds in support of program implementation.

b) An appropriate reduction in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget. We encourage finding efficiencies in the significant budget lines around consulting costs.

**Reporting**

Please note that during the implementation period, the GPE Secretariat will require the Grant Agent to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation. At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. Detailed information on the reporting requirement is available in the Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding on GPE website.

**Reprogramming**

The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram this grant, in consultation with the Local Education Group and where active the Education cluster, for an amount not to exceed 25% of the allocation without prior Secretariat approval but must disclose such cases to the Secretariat. For an amount of 25% or more, as well as for any extension, advance approval from the Secretariat must be sought. The process for advanced approval will be that of non-minor revisions of ESPIG which can be found here: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants