

GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

LIBERIA ESPIG

Reference	Decision
GPC/2020/10-03	<p>Allocation for an Education Sector Program Implementation Grant to Liberia (Additional Financing):</p> <p>The Grants and Performance Committee at the request of the CEO in her delegated authority and with respect to the application to access an additional financing MCA in the third round of 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes compliance with the requirements on overall domestic financing for education, data, and the education sector plan for accessing the fixed part of the maximum country allocation (MCA) as described in the application and summarized and assessed in GPC/2020/10 DOC 03.2. Notes that Liberia is off track in meeting its commitment to increase the share of the recurrent education budget allocated to primary education and invites the government to course correct in order to meet the funding requirement.3. Notes compliance with meeting the requirements for accessing the variable part of the additional MCA and approves the indicators on Equity, Efficiency, and Learning and their means of verification as described in the application and assessed in

GPC/2020/10 DOC 03.

4. Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds for an ESPIG, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table 1 in decision GPC/2020/10-03 4 (c), subject to:

- a. Availability of funds.
- b. Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for ESPIGs in annual installments.
- c. GPC decision for funding, including (all amounts in US\$):

Table 1 – Liberia		
a.	Additional Maximum	5,900,000
b.	Allocation Requested (100%)	5,900,000 ¹
c.	Fixed Part Requested	4,130,000
d.	Variable Part Requested	1,770,000
e.	Allocation Decision by GPC	5,900,000
f.	Grant Agent	World Bank
g.	Agency Fee % - Amount	1.75% - 103,250
h.	Period	2 years and 9 months
i.	Expected Start Date	October 1, 2020
j.	Variable Part Disbursement	Ex-Post
k.	Funding Source	GPE Fund

5. Requests the Trustee to withhold the grant funds until the condition set out in Annex A has been met.

6. Requests the Secretariat to:

- a. Include in its notification of grant approval to Liberia the observation, requests for report-back and condition set out in Annex A to GPC/2020/10-03.
- b. Include an update on the issues listed as “report-back” in the annual Grant Status Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

¹ Includes US\$0.295 million for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

Annex A – GPC Observations, Report-Backs and Conditions

Liberia	
Observations	<p>The Committee appreciates that the proposal from Liberia prioritizes support to early childhood education (ECE). Consistent with the Committee’s emphasis in its approval of the previous GPE grant to Liberia, it reiterates that the expansion of early childhood opportunities should be equitable in their benefits, which requires steady progress towards fee-free services.</p> <p>The Committee notes the impact of the pandemic on education systems. The Committee invites the government and the grant agent, in consultation with the local education group, to consider adapting the proposed program to emerging issues, notably impact on children’s learning as a result of school closures, as needed. Other adaptations to consider could relate to mitigation measures on potential delays or other constraints that the pandemic may have on program implementation including, if necessary, a modification of indicator targets.</p>
Report-Backs	<p><i>For the grant agent:</i></p> <p>The Committee expresses concern over the verification challenges associated with the equity strategy of the parent program, as it relates to the performance of the current independent verification agency. Within six months of the new program’s start date, the Committee requests the grant agent to report back on efforts to resolve associated measurement and verification challenges</p> <p><i>For the government and grant agent:</i></p> <p>Recognizing the implementation difficulties around the variable part efficiency strategy of the parent ESPIG, the grant agent and the government are requested to review the strategy as part of the parent program’s upcoming mid-term review, take corrective action if necessary, and report back to the Secretariat via the grant agent’s mid-term review report.</p> <p>Regarding efforts to promote gender equality under the parent ESPIG, the Committee notes that only 14 percent of training</p>

beneficiaries in year 1 were women. This deviates significantly from the program commitment to prioritize female training beneficiaries. The Committee requests the government and grant agent to consider taking immediate action so that any future investment in training reflects the prioritization committed to in the parent ESPIG. The Committee requests an annual update on progress made in the grant agent's regular progress report.

For the government:

The government is requested to report back annually via the JESR report on the share of its recurrent budget allocated to education, and within that, the share allocated to primary education; as well as on progress made in tracking budgets and spending by subsector.

Building on the overage policy note produced for the 2019 JESR, the government is also requested to report back annually, via the JESR report, on progress made in policy dialogue and program implementation associated with addressing overage enrollment in ECE and primary education, and progress towards fee-free ECE.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is encouraged to strengthen the preparation of the next joint education sector review (JESR), building on the 2019 JESR, which was grounded in an ESP Implementation Progress Report and included dialogue on critical sector data and policy matters. Such dialogue and exchange may be even more important in the current pandemic and macro-economic context, where challenges remain in data collection, and where sound policy analysis and dialogue are required to support MoE progress across several ESP programs. The Committee requests the government to work with the local education group on preparation of the next JESR and report progress to the Secretariat on an annual basis via the JESR report.

Condition	<p>While acknowledging the high level of government spending on ECE, the Committee deems that there has been insufficient progress towards meeting the prior commitment to increase the share of the recurrent education budget allocated to primary education.</p> <p>The Committee therefore requests that, prior to the transfer of grant funds, the government explains, in a letter to the Secretariat, how it plans to meet the primary education financing commitment made when the current ESPIG was approved in 2017, including the more detailed strategies and annual targets. The letter should be shared with the local education group and sent to the Secretariat via the coordinating agency by November 30, 2020.</p> <p>The Secretariat will review the information received and determine if it is satisfactory in order to release the funds. If the information received is not sufficiently clear, the Secretariat will defer to the Committee.</p>
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