

 MARCH 22, 2021

GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

VIA NON-OBJECTION

SOUTH SUDAN ADDITIONAL FINANCING ALLOCATION

Reference	Decision
GPC/2021/03-06	<p>Allocation for a Costed Restructuring of the South Sudan Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (Additional Financing)</p> <p>The Grants and Performance Committee in its delegated authority from the Board and with respect to the application for an additional financing allocation submitted in January 2021:</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 additional financing maximum country allocation as described in the application and summarized in GPC/2021/03 DOC 04.2. Notes that South Sudan 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. Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds for a costed restructuring of the ESPIG, as described in the application submitted and

summarized in Table 1 in GPC/2021/03-XX 3 (c), subject to:

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

Table 1 – South Sudan		
a.	Maximum Country Allocation	6,000,000
b.	Fixed Part	6,000,000
c.	Variable Part	-
d.	Allocation Requested (100%)	6,000,000 ¹
e.	Allocation Decision by GPC	6,000,000
f.	Grant Agent	UNICEF
g.	Agency Fee % - Amount	7% - 420,000
h.	Period	2 year and 10 months
i.	Expected Start Date	May 1, 2021
j.	Funding Source	GPE Fund

4. Requests the Trustee to withhold the grant funds until the condition set out in Annex A has been met.
5. Requests the Secretariat to:
 - a. Include in its notification of grant approval to South Sudan the observation, report-backs and condition set out in Annex A.
 - b. Include an update on the report back and condition in Annex A in the annual Grant Status Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

¹ Includes US\$617,925 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

Annex A – GPC Observation, Report-Backs and Condition

South Sudan	
Observation	<p>Given implementation delays in construction of learning spaces and the uncertainty of the pandemic context, it is unclear whether implementation can be completed within the proposed timeframe. The Committee therefore approves an implementation period of 2 years and 10 months while encouraging the grant agent to implement according to its planned timeframe.</p>
Report-Back	<p><i>For the grant agent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given implementation delays on component 1 of the current ESPIG, the grant agent is requested to report back on progress on (i) school construction and refurbishment under the current ESPIG and the additional financing, through the grant agent’s regular progress reports, and (ii) provide a mid-year status update in between the annual reports (in September of every year). Given the challenge of measuring the access indicator “% children in the target areas enrolled in basic education who were OOSC” (Out of School Children), the grant agent is requested to report back, through its scheduled progress report due in March 2022, on (i) further refinement of the indicator (for example, “OOSC in previous school year”) with the understanding that the grant agent will discern a methodology for measuring and reporting on the indicator; and (ii) the findings of the proposed rapid assessment of a representative sample of the 2,400 learning centers. The results framework in the additional financing proposal lacks specific targets for women/girls. Such targets should be reported back, through the grant agent’s regular progress reports. The grant agent is requested to report back, through its regular progress report, on the support provided by the program to reinforce government capacity on budget execution and reporting. <p><i>For the coordinating agency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee requests the coordinating agency on behalf of the local education group and via the joint sector review to report on the further development of a regulatory framework for not for profit non-state schools, or alternatively, community schools. This could be a

	<p>session topic in the next JSR. As mentioned in the Secretariat’s approval of the COVID-19 grant (June 2020), the development of such a regulatory framework could be financed by the current ESPIG.</p> <p>The Committee further affirms the two ongoing report-backs from the GPE approval of the current ESPIG remain in place:²</p> <p><i>For the coordinating agency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee requests the coordinating agency on behalf of the LEG and via the JSR to report annually on the education budget and expenditure. <p><i>For the grant agent:</i></p> <p>The Committee observed that not all indicators in the results framework are disaggregated by gender and disability, the two key elements of inequity in South Sudan. The Committee requests the grant agent to include this disaggregation in its regular progress reports in order to track progress in this area.</p>
Condition	<p><i>For the government</i></p> <p>The Committee requests that prior to the transfer of funds the government of South Sudan reaffirm its commitment to maintaining education budget share allocated to primary at or above 45 percent for the remaining period of the ESPIG. This can be done through a letter to the Secretariat that explains the government’s detailed strategies and annual targets towards achieving the 45% target. The letter should be shared with the local education group and sent to the Secretariat via the coordinating agency within one month of the date of the grant approval letter to South Sudan.</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>

² The report-back for the grant agent on Out of School Children is already covered above, so is not repeated here.

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – PHASE 3¹

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

ADDITIONAL MCA

Total Program Cost: Additional MCA of US\$6 million

Fixed Part: US\$6 million, of which US\$617,925 for Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs²

Implementation period: 1 year, 10 months

Projected implementation start date: May, 1, 2021

Grant Agent: UNICEF

1 BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Republic of South Sudan is ranked as the world's 3rd most fragile state³. After decades of civil war within Sudan, and independence in 2011, the South Sudanese civil war (December 2013 – February 2020) caused around 400,000 deaths and displaced some 4 million people. A unity government was formed in February 2020, yet ethnic fighting still occurs.

South Sudan is in a protracted humanitarian crisis caused by ethnic violence, locust infestations, COVID-19, and flooding. Out of its 11 million population, 7.5 million⁴ people (54 percent children) need humanitarian assistance; 5.8 million are acutely food insecure. Women and children are disproportionately affected. 1.6 million are internally displaced, and 2.3 million are refugees or asylum seekers; South Sudan remains Africa's largest and world's third largest refugee crisis.⁵ Humanitarian access is constrained by flooding, lack of paved roads⁶, and insecurity⁷.

¹ The Secretariat has used the delegated authority template in drafting this QAR III report, since this is an additional MCA (top-up) of less than US\$10 million.

² The program is fully funded by GPE and has no ex post Variable Part. The GPC approved South Sudan's application for an ex ante approach to the Variable Part in July 2018.

³ Fund for Peace: [Fragile States Index 2020](#). The bottom five are Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and DR Congo.

⁴ OCHA [South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)

⁵ UNHCR [South Sudan Operations Portal](#) (Dec 31, 2020); [Regional overview of South Sudan situation](#) (December 31, 2020)

⁶ Index Mundi [South Sudan Economy overview](#) (updated November 27, 2020). Only 2% of roads are paved.

⁷ OCHA, October 20, 2020: [South Sudan Quarterly Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July–September 2020](#)

South Sudan is oil dependent: 98 percent of the government operating budget and 80 percent of GDP is oil-derived⁸. With the COVID-related drop in oil prices, negative GDP growth of 24 percent is forecasted for 2021⁹. Besides oil, livelihoods depend on subsistence farming and pastoralism¹⁰; 82 percent of South Sudanese live in poverty¹¹. Government investment prioritizes defense and security; water, sanitation and health largely relies on external funding. South Sudan ranks as the world’s most dangerous country to live in during COVID-19.¹²

South Sudan	
Population	11,062,113 (2019, World Bank)
Human Development Index Ranking	185 out of 189 countries (2019, UNDP)
Learning-adjusted Years of School	2.5 years (No gender disaggregation available)
GDP	US\$11.998 billion (2015, World Bank)
GDP per capita	US\$1,119.7 (2015, World Bank)
World Bank Income Classification Level	Low Income

1.2. EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

South Sudan’s education system can be characterized as a low capacity, but high demand system. The state building and peace building efforts of the national plans put high demand on the education system to expand fast, reduce inequity, and to provide appropriate teaching. But public expenditure is one of the world’s lowest for education. At the same time, the basics of the sector administration and management are rudimentary and started to develop only after the 2005 Peace Agreement (like the rest of South Sudan’s civil service); yet conflict has interrupted governmental capacity building efforts.

The General Education Sector Plan (GESP), 2017-2022, titled Planning for Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion, is an effort to contain this stress on the system, and to give the sector a direction towards stability based on data, evidence and financing outlays. The first two years of the GESP, 2017-2018, were framed as a transitional plan expected to rapidly increase enrolment along with building new infrastructure, supplying basic teaching and learning materials, regularizing teacher salary and

⁸ Ibid

⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>

¹⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview>, updated October 13, 2020

¹¹ Ibid

¹² [United Nations South Sudan, 2020 COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan](#), p.5

training teachers to cope with the increased enrolment. The following three years of the GESP, 2019–2022, focus on institutionalizing teacher training, school supervision, and expansion of secondary and technical education.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education ministry (MoGEI) decided to close all schools from March to October 2020. MoGEI opted for a phased approach to school re-opening. Phase 1 started in October 2020, with the re-opening of candidate classes, Primary 8 and Senior 4. In Phase 2, all school and classes are expected to re-open on April 5, 2021. Consequently, the education data available (and cited in the application) are pre-COVID-19 data.

South Sudan's education system consists of 4,564 schools (as per the latest 2019 joint sector review held in January 2020) of which the vast majority are general education schools (grades 1–8) and around 120 are secondary schools (grades 9–12). There is just one university and only one functional teacher training college.

South Sudan has the lowest literacy rate in the world at 35 per cent for the population above 15 years¹³.

In 2018, around 2.2 million primary and secondary school-aged children were not in school, according to a UNESCO 2018 study¹⁴. Notably, these figures do not take into account the impact of COVID-19 and related school closures into account where UNICEF estimates that an additional 2 million have been left out of school¹⁵. The following sections give a brief outline of the three priority areas of education in the country.

1.2.1. Equity:

Universal Primary Education remains a major challenge in South Sudan. Between 2013 and 2018, conflicts eroded earlier gains made in access. Gross enrollment at primary level contracted 11.6 percentage-points, from 71.6 percent to 61.0 percent, in the nine years following 2009¹⁶. In 2018 only 7.9 percent of secondary-aged children entered secondary schools, a minute increase from the 7 percent figure in 2009. Transition and completion rates were not reported on in the 2019 JSR report. Gross enrolment in pre-primary in 2018 was 8.1 percent.

¹³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015

¹⁴ Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: [South Sudan Country Study](#). UNESCO 2018.

¹⁵ Additional MCA Program document, p. 10. In 2020, MoGEI has conducted an out of school children mapping, which indicated 2.8 million children were out of school, but this study remains a draft and questions have been raised about the accuracy of the data collected. UNICEF South Sudan continues to use the 2.2 million OOSC figure from the UNESCO 2018 study. (ibid, p.30)

¹⁶ FRR of current ESPIG (p.4), 2019 GEAR report citing 2018 data, p. 6

The gender parity index (GPI) in South Sudan for primary education as of 2018 is low at 0.78, though it marks an increase from 0.59 in 2009¹⁷. The increase however, masks regional disparity in girls' enrollment. At primary level, 35 percent of students are female in Akobo county (Jonglei State) in comparison to 53 percent in Latjoor country (Greater Upper Nile State). For secondary GPI, the increase is from 0.41 to 0.60 since 2009¹⁸.

UNESCO's 2018 Out of School Children study found a range of demand and supply side issues for the high number of children not in school. One of the main demand side issues was that only 27 percent of schools offer the full 8 grades of primary schooling in the country, leading to a high dropout at grades 5 and 6. The other key issues identified were:

- Child labor: In 2016, over 86 percent of children attending school were also involved in child labor (including children helping their own families with subsistence farming or other livelihoods), putting them at risk of being unable to keep up their school participation due to work responsibilities¹⁹.
- Children displaced by conflict: Children make up around 60 percent of South Sudan's internally displaced persons (IDPs)²⁰, and at least 16,715 children are estimated to be missing, separated from families, and unaccompanied since December 2013.
- Children with disabilities: Data generated by MoGEI in 2015, covering seven former states, reported that 18,000 primary school students displayed a range of impairments. Additionally, more than 2,300 children are estimated to have been killed or hurt in the conflict, and 900,000 children suffer from psychological distress. These figures are estimated to be substantially lower than actual numbers.
- Children in pastoralist communities: At least 60% of the South Sudanese are engaged in pastoralism. In pastoralist communities, there are strong economic and cultural factors which influence decisions on whether it is more beneficial for children to participate in early marriage, working with livestock, or spend time in formal education.

¹⁷ FRR of current ESPIG (p.4), 2019 GEAR report citing 2018 data, p. 7

¹⁸ FRR of current ESPIG (p.4), 2019 GEAR report citing 2018 data, p. 7

¹⁹ UNESCO 2018, p. 52. The report defines child labour as follows: "Child labour is work that harms children's physical and mental development, taking away their potential and dignity. It refers to work that is dangerous and interferes with a child's education, either depriving them of the chance to attend school, necessitating their early exit from school, or forcing them to try to attend school while working long hours (based on ILO's description of child labour)". (p.50, footnote 40)

²⁰ As at December 31, 2020, there are an estimated 1.6 million IDPs in South Sudan (UNHCR [South Sudan Operations Portal](#)). Of these, an estimated 960,000 (or 60 percent) can be assumed to be IDP children.

1.2.2. Learning outcomes:

According to several learning assessments, learning outcomes are weak for both literacy and numeracy and regional disparities in learning are wide. An EGRA and EGMA assessment conducted in 2016 with funding from South Sudan's first ESPIG concluded that learners are not being effectively taught to read in English or their national language. At the end of P3, most learners cannot identify a single word in their national languages or English. South Sudanese children generally perform better and closer to the levels expected at the end of P3 in numeracy, than they do in literacy.²¹

The cited literacy assessment showed that 92 percent of the learners could not correctly sound out any of the letters in the English alphabet (in their national language, the figure was over 50 percent). 40 percent could not read any of the fifty familiar English words presented to them (in national language, 71 percent, surprisingly). 45 percent could not correctly answer any of the five questions asked at the end of a listening comprehension passage, after the passage was read twice, in English (in national language, 83 percent)²². The study showed significant variations across the five different language groups assessed, where one language group with access to NGO support and textbooks far outperforming the others²³.

The results on the EGMA numeracy assessment results were somewhat better than for literacy. On average, learners could answer most of the number identification questions (16 correct responses out of 20) and number discrimination questions (8.33 correct out of 10)²⁴, but struggled with identification of missing numbers (3 correct of 10), simple subtraction (10 correct out of 20) and simple addition (12 out of 20 sums were done correctly).

Poor learning outcomes have been mapped to unqualified teachers, insufficient time on task and unavailability of learning materials in mother tongue. According to UNICEF (2020), only 37% of teachers have teaching qualifications²⁵. Unqualified teachers are often deployed in early grades, which hampers the opportunity for early learning. The medium of instruction is often not the local language. The first GPE-funded ESPIG developed textbooks and test materials in 9 local languages. Under the current ESPIG, 7,500 of these pilot textbooks in national languages (and 900 teacher guides) have been printed and distributed.²⁶

²¹ Montrose (2016). [South Sudan Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessment Report](#), p. 5. The assessment was administered in 5 languages to 250 learners in 25 primary schools. It was funded partly by GPE through the ESPIG (GPE I).

²² Ibid, p. 15

²³ Ibid, pp. 17-18

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 19-20

²⁵ UNICEF South Sudan [Education Briefing Note, September 2020](#), p.2.

²⁶ UNICEF South Sudan presentation at UNICEF-GPE Secretariat Portfolio review, December 2020 (slide 6)

1.2.3. Efficiency:

School life expectancy of South Sudanese children is among the lowest in the world. On average, a South Sudanese child can expect to receive a total of 4.7 years of schooling²⁷, compared with 7.7 years on average for a sample of African countries.

Early dropout generates major efficiency loss in South Sudan. In 2015, the internal efficiency coefficient was only 25% for primary education. However, the situation has improved since 2009, when the global internal efficiency coefficient stood at 11% in primary²⁸.

Teachers and textbooks are not distributed according to the needs in South Sudan. Only 39% of schools have adequate numbers of teachers. This means that in 61% of cases, schools of a comparable size do not benefit from the same number of teachers. The degree of coherence of teacher deployment varies across levels. It is relatively stronger in secondary (61%) but weaker in pre-primary (27%)²⁹.

Textbooks are short in supply. On average there are three pupils per textbook for both English and mathematics—far from the policy of 1:1. ³⁰ The number of pupils per textbook ranges from 2.3 to 5.5 with upper grades facing a more acute lack of textbooks than lower grades. This ratio is high across the country, but higher in rural areas, further increasing inequities in the system.

1.2.4. Monitoring of Sector Performance:

The Local Education Group (LEG) is called the National Education Forum (NEF). It is chaired by the MoGEI Undersecretary; NEF members include all 5 MoGEI Directors General; the Coordinating Agencies USAID and FCDO; Canada, the EU, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UNICEF, UNESCO; 2-3 civil society representatives (representing the 70 CSO members of the National Education Coalition); and a Teacher's Union³¹. The NEF supports the Joint Education Sector Reviews and monitors program implementation. There is also an Education Donors Working Group (EDoG) which ensures donor coordination. Humanitarian education coordination is ensured through the Education Cluster, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children; the Cluster is represented both on the NEF and EDoG.

Annual Joint Education Sector Reviews – known as General Education Annual Review (GEAR) – were held in March 2019 (reviewing implementation in 2018) and January 2020 (reviewing 2019). The GEAR is attended by state education ministers and officials, along with development partners and CSOs.

²⁷ World Bank. [2020 Human Capital Index \(HCI\) – South Sudan](#). (Dated October 2020, using pre-COVID 19 data)

²⁸ FRR of current ESPIG

²⁹ FRR of current ESPIG

³⁰ The 1:3 pupil:textbook ratio is cited in the MoGEI's 2020 study, though this data does not take into account recent textbook distribution under the current ESPIG.

³¹ However, the Teacher's Union is not strong enough to represent [all] teachers, in the NEF. (Exchange with GA, Feb. 2021)

GEAR allows the ministry to present EMIS reports and reports from the technical committees on progress against ESP indicators. Education cluster and donor funded projects also present their progress report at GEAR, making it a comprehensive event for discussing sector performance.

2 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

2.1 CURRENT ESPIG PERFORMANCE

South Sudan became a member of the GPE in 2012 and has since benefitted from three Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIGs)³² totaling US\$77.7 million. UNICEF has served as Grant Agent (GA) for all the ESPIGs.

The main objective of the current ESPIG of US\$35.7 million is to ensure that by the end of 2022, the number of boys and girls out of school in target areas of South Sudan decreases by 15 per cent; while ensuring an increased equitable access to quality education through working closely with other development partner-funded programs. Component 1 aims to increase equitable access to education for boys and girls. Component 2 seeks to improve the quality of education through increased provision of trained teachers, relevant curriculum and active school management committees. Component 3 works towards strengthening policy, administrative systems and donor coordination at all levels to improve overall access to education in target areas.

The program has been under implementation for two years³³ and has utilized US\$10.7 million (30%) of the grant amount³⁴. In accordance with the agreed reporting schedule, the Grant Agent has produced a progress report, in March 2020, on implementation between April and December 2019. The Additional MCA program document rapidly reviews current ESPIG implementation as at October 2020. Implementation highlights up to December 2020 were presented to the Secretariat at a UNICEF portfolio review in December 2020 and the grant agent assessed implementation progress as On track. Progress under each of the three strategic objectives is described below:

Under Strategic Objective 1, the activity on school construction and refurbishment has been delayed: during two years of implementation, 66 site assessments have been undertaken, against an end-target of 2,000 completed schools after four years. An out of school children mapping exercise has been completed across the states in the country. A report has been produced on the mapping, and dissemination at the state level is now expected to take place over the coming months. The Secretariat has undertaken bilateral meetings with the GA, the Government and several other development partners to discuss the implementation delays in the construction component and

³² South Sudan received two ESPIGs and one Accelerated Funding grant since 2012.

³³ The current ESPIG was approved in November 2018, became effective in January 2019 and is closing in December 2022.

³⁴ as of November 30, 2020

actions by the GA to accelerate activities. Prior to COVID, the GA had in place a team of engineers to initiate the assessment process of the learning spaces. The GA expects that once the process (re)starts, it can significantly expedite the rehabilitation/construction process, concurrently starting in all the 10 states and 3 Administrative Areas

Under Strategic Objective 2, progress has been made in textbook distribution and printing, teacher training, and alignment of curriculum to examinations and teacher training. 1.9 million textbooks for odd grades (P1, P3, P5, S1, S3) have been printed and distributed to schools whilst 2.7 million textbooks for even grades (P2, P4, P6, P8, S2, S4) are being printed to be distributed in the first quarter of 2021. 6,000 primary and secondary teachers and 1,280 Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers were supported to attend orientation sessions on the textbooks. Teacher training has been halted due to COVID-19. Exams have been aligned to the newly developed curriculum and teacher training syllabi are now updated to reflect new curriculum and textbooks.

Strategic Objective 3 supports strengthening utilization of the Annual Education Census (AEC) data, strengthening Education Management and Information System (EMIS) and the General Education Annual Review (GEAR). An annual sector budget brief for 2019/2020 has been developed and is ready to be published.

Implementation in South Sudan is prone to challenges posed by accessibility, security, weather and communications, systemic weaknesses and governance challenges. The development of the proposed program was preceded by a rapid assessment of the current ESPIG.

2.2 REPORT BACKS

The following report-backs were requested as part of the Board of Directors' Decision on the original ESPIG application approved in November 2018, and their status remains ongoing³⁵:

³⁵ Both report-backs were marked as completed in August 2019. However, this was an error and the status has now been changed back to ongoing.

Report Backs	Status and Actions (as of January 2021)
<p>Issue or concern System: education financing</p> <p>Recommendation (report-back) The GPC appreciated the government’s decision to increase allocation to education in the national budget from 4% in 2017 to 10% in current fiscal year and deemed the financing trajectory sufficient to meet the domestic financing requirement of an upward trend towards 20%, considering the fragile context. However, the GPC requests the coordinating agency on behalf of the LEG and via the JSR reports to report annually on the education budget and expenditure.</p>	<p>Status Ongoing</p> <p>Action Taken to Address the Issue in FY20 Education financing was discussed briefly at the 2019 JSR (GEAR) held January 2020. “The GEAR was closed by the vice president H.E James Wani Igga. In his speech he assured attendees of long-lasting peace and increase or ensure 15 % of the national budget goes to education”³⁶</p>
<p>Issue or concern System</p> <p>Recommendation (report-back) The Committee observed that not all indicators in the results framework are disaggregated by gender and disability, the two key elements of inequity in South Sudan. The Committee requests the grant agent to include this disaggregation in its regular progress reports in order to track progress in this area, as well as to clarify the total number of out-of-school children reached exclusively by GPE-financed project activities.</p>	<p>Status Ongoing</p> <p>Action Taken to Address the Issue in FY20 The GA has committed to submitting, by end of March 2021, a revised RF for the current ESPIG (with indicators disaggregated by gender and disability) as part of its regular progress report.³⁷</p> <p>The grant agent has not clarified the total number of out-of-school children reached exclusively by GPE-financed project activities. The current proposal indicates some methodological issues OOSC mapping and estimating changes in OOSC over time: The PD confirms completion of an OOSC catchment study (which is being used to inform site selection for the 2,000 Learning Spaces) and the Additional MCA provides additional budget to update OOSC mapping (to assess COVID-19 related changes in OOSC populations and</p>

³⁶ 2019 GEAR Report p.1

³⁷ Email exchange between Secretariat and grant agent, February 24, 2021

	<p>support site selection for the additional 400 learning spaces). While the mapping activity appears adequate for LS site selection for learning spaces, the PD indicates that it may not be possible to track the change in the number of OOSC – in part due to the absence / incompleteness of recent population and household survey data. To address this concern, the GA has proposed an alternative indicator, “% children in the target areas enrolled in formal or non-formal basic education (including pre-primary schools/early childhood learning spaces) who were OOSC” with the understanding that the GA will discern a methodology for measurement of / reporting on this indicator. Alternatively, the GA has also indicated the possibility of using a rapid assessment / representative sample approach to estimating the impact of the 2,400 learning centers on access to education in the target areas (in Q4, 2021 – before the end of the academic year). Either of these measures would be sufficient to deal with this monitoring issue.</p>
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2.3 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

The proposed Additional MCA is in the amount of US\$6 million and will serve as an additional financing to the existing ESPIG grant (US\$35.7 million) supported by UNICEF. The program for the additional financing builds on the current ESPIG and continues to contribute towards the implementation of the General Education Strategic Plan (GESP), 2017-2022. The program is complementary to South Sudan’s US\$7 million COVID-19 grant, also with UNICEF as GA.³⁸

³⁸ The US\$7 million COVID-19 accelerated funding grant supports, with UNICEF as grant agent: awareness campaigns on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures; self-learning materials to students; customized radio programs for children of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary levels; WASH and safety/hygiene facilities, and menstrual hygiene management support for girls; school building disinfection; guidelines, policies and safety measures to reopen schools; and a back-to-school campaign to encourage students to return to school.

The program was developed in consultation with members of the Local Education Group. While a number of issues raised during the consultation have been resolved, the Education Donors Group (EDoG) endorsed the proposal with four caveats (see endorsement letter)³⁹ which have been taken into account in the assessment.

The proposed additional financing will have the same overall components as the ESPIG. The main activities planned are described in Table A. Table B compares the current ESPIG and the proposed additional MCA, by subcomponent and their share of the budget.

³⁹ The specific caveats related to Activity 2.2.2, Activity 2.3.1 and Output 3.1. The caveats document is included in the application package. The number of unresolved donor concerns during the month of December 2020 shrunk considerably thanks to consultations.

Table A: Strategic outcomes, outputs and key activities

Components/Sub-components	Key activities
Strategic Outcome 1: Equitable Access: By end 2022, equitable access to education of boys and girls in target areas will increase, especially among the out of school children (US\$2.12 million)	
Output 1.1: Create, expand or renovate 400 learning spaces (US\$2.12 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Construct/renovate/expand 400 learning spaces: 70 at ECD level, 180 at primary and ALP level, 120 at upper primary, 30 CECs; targeting areas most in need (pastoralist areas; areas affected by conflicts; areas without schools; without upper primary classes; without CEC teachers) b. Community mobilization to identify resources, plan and construct/maintain learning spaces c. Map and select implementation areas, using updated OOSC data (criteria as in current ESPIG)
Strategic Outcome 2: Quality Education: By end 2022, quality of education will improve through increased provision of trained teachers, relevant curriculum and active school management committees (US\$2.91 million)	
Output 2.1: Provide additional textbooks (US\$0.63 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Print and distribute 386,200 textbooks, and 80,000 teachers' guides, for grades P1-P8 for 100 schools, going towards one set of textbooks per student
Output 2.2: Upgrade quality of 12 County Education Centers (CECs) (US\$1.77 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. On-the-job training (one week duration) of 60 teacher tutors from 12 CECs b. Strengthen and equip 12 CECs with teacher training packages covering new curriculum and English teaching c. 60 CEC tutors to deliver customized training courses for 600 teachers d. Develop and disseminate videos and booklets with case studies e. Design monitoring system to track achievement and challenges across the CECs
Output 2.3: Develop intensive course and distance learning packages for language teachers (US\$0.52 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Two-week English language training for 600 teachers (grades 4-8), delivered through the newly upgraded CECs. Courses will be delivered through a blended modality: residential plus distance learning and ongoing support.
Strategic Outcome 3: Efficiency: By end 2022, effective policy, efficient administrative systems and donor coordination at all levels will improve to meet the increase in the enrolment of boys and girls in target areas (US\$0.35 million)	
Output 3.1: Support for Public Financial Management (PFM)(US\$0.25 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a Budget and Transfers Transparency Dashboard to track state implementation b. Capacity building on PFM oversight on education for National/State Legislative Assemblies c. Strengthen citizen understanding of and engagement in the budget cycle by publishing a state-level citizen's budget and national education sector budget briefs
Output 3.2: Support for Monitoring and Coordination (US \$0.1 million)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish and activate Education Transfer Monitoring Committees (ETMC), with monthly reporting on whether states have submitted accountabilities for their previous education transfers to ensure the releases of transfers by the MoFEP Directorate of Accounts.

Table B: Comparison of current ESPIG and proposed additional MCA

Current ESPIG	Curr. ESPIG budget (US\$)	Additional MCA (US\$)	Add. MCA budget (US\$)	% of add. MCA
Strategic Outcome 1: Equitable Access: By end 2021, equitable access to education of boys and girls in target areas will increase, especially among OOSC	8,629,700	Strategic Outcome 1: Equitable Access: By end 2022, equitable access to education of boys and girls in target areas will increase, especially among OOSC	2,121,500	35%
Output 1.1: Increased access in most marginalized areas	1,478,500	Output 1.1: Creation, expansion or renovation of 400 learning spaces	2,121,500	35%
Output 1.2: Increasing learning spaces with community support				
Output 1.3: Community mobilization and advocacy/ awareness				
Strategic Outcome 2: Quality Education: By end 2021, quality of education will improve through increased provision of trained teachers, relevant curriculum and active school management committees	15,641,380	Strategic Outcome 2: Quality Education: By end 2022, quality of education will improve through increased provision of trained teachers, relevant curriculum and active school management committees	2,909,774	48%
Output 2.1 Training	11,056,375	Output 2.1 Provision of additional textbooks	626,200	10%
Output 2.2 Development of textbooks and material for new curriculum	3,309,470	Output 2.2 Upgrading the Quality of 12 County Education Centers (CECs)	1,766,600	29%
Output 2.3 School management, supervision and inspection	1,275,535	Output 2.3 Development of an Intensive Course and Distance learning packages for language teachers	516,974	9%
Strategic Outcome 3: Efficiency: By end 2021, effective policy, efficient administrative systems and donor coordination at all levels will improve to meet the increase in enrolment of boys and girls in target areas	6,196,450	Strategic Outcome 3: Efficiency: By end 2022, effective policy, efficient administrative systems and donor coordination at all levels will improve to meet the increase in enrolment of boys and girls in target areas	350,800	6%
Output 3.1 EMIS	2,770,520	Output 3.1 Support for Public Financial Management	250,000	4%
Output 3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation	1,603,085	Output 3.2 Support for Monitoring and Coordination	100,800	2%
Output 3.3 Sector Coordination				
Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*	5,232,470		617,925	10%
GRAND TOTAL (with Grant Agent's Imp. Support Costs)	35,700,000		6,000,000	100%
Agency Fees**	2,499,000		420,000	

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

** Agency Fee is not included in the MCA and is calculated as percentage rate (agreed with each GA) from the Total Fixed Part and Total Variable Part.

3 RECOMMENDED DECISION

The country has prepared a well-articulated program expanding the scope of the current ESPIG and grounded in sector plan priorities. The challenges of a highly fragile context, including the lack of reliable data on out-of-school children and the need to strengthen public financial management in the sector, are taken into account to the extent possible; the efforts made by the country given this context are positively noted.

On the funding model requirements, the application is assessed using the Additional MCA guidelines and is assessed as meeting Requirement 1.

On Requirement 2, the data provided are incomplete and there are concerns around their accuracy, though based on what is provided, the Secretariat concludes that the government does not meet the funding model requirement, as commitment for primary financing to stay above 45% is lacking.

As requirement 2 is assessed as not met, the Secretariat was therefore unable to recommend the application for approval by the GPE CEO under the delegated authority, and instead recommends that the GPC approves the application with the following observations, conditions and report backs (as per Board Decision BOD/2019/12-10)⁴⁰ :

Recommended Observations

Given implementation delays in construction of learning spaces and the uncertainty of the pandemic context, it is unclear whether implementation can be completed within the proposed timeframe (one year and 10 months). It is therefore recommended that the Committee approve an implementation period of 2 year and 10 months.

Recommended Report-backs

For the grant agent

- Given implementation delays on component 1 of the current ESPIG, it is recommended that the grant agent report back on progress on (i) school construction and refurbishment under the current ESPIG and the additional financing, through the grant agent's regular progress reports, and (ii) provide a mid-year status update in between the annual reports (in September of every year).

⁴⁰ [BOD/2019/12-10-Increasing Efficiency through Delegation](#): The Board of Directors: (...) 2.b Delegates standing authority to the CEO to approve ESPIG/Multiplier grants (including accelerated financing and additional financing) not to exceed US\$10 million or its equivalent in Euros plus applicable agency fees, provided that the Secretariat's assessment is that all applicable requirements and standards have been assessed as fully met. In cases requiring deliberation/exceptions, the Secretariat shall refer the application for GPC review and decision.

- Given the challenge of measuring the access indicator “% children in the target areas enrolled in basic education who were OOSC” (Out of School Children), the grant agent should be requested to report back, through its scheduled progress report due in March 2022, on (i) further refinement of the indicator (for example, “OOSC in previous school year”) with the understanding that the GA will discern a methodology for measuring and reporting on the indicator; and (ii) the findings of the proposed rapid assessment of a representative sample of the 2,400 learning centers.
- The results framework in the additional financing proposal lacks specific targets for women/girls. Such targets should be reported back, through the grant agent’s regular progress reports.
- The grant agent should be requested to report back, through its regular progress report, on the support provided by the program to reinforce government capacity on budget execution and reporting.

For the coordinating agency

- The coordinating agency on behalf of the LEG and via the JSR should be requested to report on the further development of a regulatory framework for not for profit non-state schools, or alternatively, community schools. This could be a session topic in the next JSR. As mentioned in the GPE Secretariat’s approval of the COVID-19 grant (June 2020), the development of such a regulatory framework could be financed by the current ESPIG.

The two ongoing report-backs, from the GPE approval of the current ESPIG, remain in place, specifically⁴¹:

For the coordinating agency

- The Committee requests the coordinating agency on behalf of the LEG and via the JSR to report annually on the education budget and expenditure.

For the grant agent:

- The Committee observed that not all indicators in the results framework are disaggregated by gender and disability, the two key elements of inequity in South Sudan. The Committee requests the grant agent to include this disaggregation in its regular progress reports in order to track progress in this area.

⁴¹ The report-back for the grant agent on OOSC is already covered above, so is not repeated here.

Recommended Condition

For the government

- Prior to transfer of funds the government of South Sudan should reaffirm its commitment to maintaining education budget share allocated to primary at or above 45 percent for the remaining period of the ESPIG. This can be done through a letter to the Secretariat that explains the government's detailed strategies and annual targets towards achieving the 45% target. The letter should be shared with the local education group and sent to the Secretariat via the coordinating agency within one month of the date of the grant approval letter to South Sudan.

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.