EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANT ALLOCATIONS: REPORT FROM THE COUNTRY GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

For Decision

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are not public documents until the Board has considered them at the Board meeting.

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to request the Board to approve allocations for education sector program implementation grants (ESPIGs) to Ethiopia and Zimbabwe from the GPE Fund, as recommended by the Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC) following its discussion of the grant applications during its October 25–27, 2016 face-to-face meeting.

2. REQUESTED DECISION

2.1. The CGPC recommends the Board approve the following decision:

BOD/2016/12-XX–Approval of Allocations for Education Sector Program Implementation Grants: The Board of Directors with respect to the applications submitted in the second round of 2016:

1. Notes compliance with the requirements for accessing the fixed part of the respective maximum country allocations, as described in the applications and summarized in Annexes 2 and 3 to BOD/2016/12 DOC 11.

2. Approves allocations from GPE trust funds for education sector program implementation grants (ESPIGs), as described in the applications submitted in the second round of 2016, and summarized in Table 1 in BOD/2016/12-XX 2 (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. CGPC recommendations for funding include (all amounts in US$):
Quality education for all children

Table 1  Application Summaries and CGPC Allocation Recommendations for ESPIGs in US$:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Zimbabwe</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Maximum Country Allocation</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>29,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Allocation Requested (100%)</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>20,580,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Fixed Part (70% of a.)</td>
<td>70,000,000</td>
<td>20,580,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Variable Part (30% of a.)</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Allocations Recommended by CGPC</td>
<td>70,000,000 (Fixed Part)</td>
<td>20,580,000 (Fixed Part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Grant Agent</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Agency Fee % - Amount</td>
<td>1.75%–1,225,000</td>
<td>8%–1,646,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Expected Start Date</td>
<td>March 31, 2017</td>
<td>January 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Variable Part Disbursement Modality</td>
<td>Ex-Post</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>GPE Fund</td>
<td>GPE Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. With respect to the Ethiopia indicators on Equity, Efficiency, and Learning and their means of verification related to the Variable Part of the allocation:
   a. Requests the country to revise the timeline and targets related to the indicators on Equity, Efficiency and Learning in accordance with the recommendation of the CGPC in BOD/2016/12 DOC 11 Annex 1.
   b. Delegates authority to the Country Grants and Performance Committee to approve the revised proposal for the Variable Part and up to US$30 million as an allocation for the Variable Part.

4. Requests the Secretariat to:
   a. Include in its notification to each relevant developing country partner, grant agent, and coordinating agency, for distribution to the local education group (LEG), of the approval of the allocations and the expected timeframe for signing of the Grant Agreement and grant effectiveness, as applicable, as well as the conditions, requests for report-back, and observations on the program as recommended by the CGPC and set out in Annex 1 to BOD/2016/12 DOC 11.
   b. Include an update on the issues listed as “conditions” and “report back” in the annual Portfolio Review.

---

1 Includes US$500,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities (supervision fees). Per decision BOD/2015/10-02 supervision fees are funded from the maximum country allocation effective from the second funding round of 2016.

2 Includes US$1,600,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities (supervision fees). Per decision BOD/2015/10-02 supervision fees are funded from the maximum country allocation effective from the second funding round of 2016.
3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Committee assessed the grant applications and discussed whether they met the requirements of the funding model to access the fixed part of the maximum country allocations. The Committee notes that as part of the CGPC methodology for reviewing grant applications, the Committee has two opportunities during program preparation to assess whether the applications are on a path to success, and to provide feedback to countries. Approximately five months prior to submission of the application, the CGPC reviews how countries are preparing to meet the funding model requirements for accessing the fixed part of the maximum country allocation. Approximately two months prior to the submission, the CGPC reviews the draft proposals for accessing the variable part of the allocation.

3.2 The Committee notes that the application from Zimbabwe does not request the variable part of the maximum country allocation at this time. The country intends to submit a separate application for the variable part in a subsequent funding round, as permitted in the funding model.

3.3 Prior to the discussions of the respective applications, the following conflicts of interest were disclosed:

- Douglas Sumerfield, World Bank, with respect to the application from Ethiopia, as grant agent for the proposed program.
- Atif Rafique, Unicef, with respect to the application from Zimbabwe, as grant agent for the proposed program.

3.4 The CGPC had a rich discussion about several key questions regarding the applications. The most important points are listed in Annex 1.

4. **KEY DISCUSSION POINTS**

4.1 The discussion on the Ethiopia application highlighted the need to further refine the operational guidance for implementation of the Operational Framework of Incentives and Requirements in the GPE Funding Model (Funding Model; BOD/2014/05 DOC 03).

4.2 With regard to the government’s commitment to finance the ESP, the Funding Model specifies that “In countries that have not reached Universal Primary Education, the Global Partnership seeks commitment to allocate at least 45 percent of the education budget to primary education” (section 4.1.2 a). The Funding Model does not, however, spell out whether the 45 percent should be calculated on recurrent or overall budget. However, the *Methodological Guidelines for Education Sector Analysis*, adopted as GPE’s agreed guidance for sector analysis, advise that recurrent costs be...
used to guide the budgeting process since investment budgets are often volatile, which would create artificially great variations in the indicator value.\(^3\) They are also more often financed from development partners’ programs, which don’t represent the national effort. It is also relevant to note that the previous application from Congo Republic, which was rejected based on non-fulfilment of this requirement, used the recurrent budget as the basis for the calculation. The CGPC agreed that guidance on the fulfilment of the requirements should therefore specify that the 45 percent should be calculated based on recurrent budgets.

4.3 It is on the basis of committing to reach 45 percent for primary education in the *recurrent* budget for primary education that Ethiopia meets the 45 percent requirement.

4.4 The CGPC also discussed the need to clarify what would constitute a strong enough justification for leniency in cases where countries do not meet the 45 percent requirement, or in cases where significantly less than 20% of the national budget is allocated to education, what could be considered an acceptable trajectory of progress towards that benchmark. On the first issue, the CGPC is particularly concerned with equity implications of inflated budgets for secondary and higher education compared to primary education, given out of school children, dropout rates in primary, and that disadvantaged populations are less likely to reach higher levels of the education system. For the 20% benchmark, the Committee looks at trends prior to the application and assesses whether commitments made towards the benchmark are likely to be met. Although the Funding Model specifies that the benchmark is not absolute but that progress towards it is required, it does not specify how far from the benchmark a country can be to be accepted (including relative to circumstances such as fragility) or how fast progress towards the benchmark should be in such circumstances. The Secretariat informed that the Strategic Finance Working Group is also discussing the need to strengthen the monitoring of commitments once grants have been approved. The Committee agreed to discuss these issues further to enable greater clarity around expectations and consistency balanced with consideration of contexts.

4.5 With regard to the Ethiopia application, the Committee also discussed at length the very short implementation period. The application requested to disburse the allocation for the fixed part of the grant (US$70 million) by July 2017 and the allocation for the variable part (US$30 million) by December 2017. While the Funding Model references three- to four-year grants (and possibly five years including the variable part), it does not actually prescribe parameters for the minimum implementation period.

4.6 After a robust discussion, the Committee determined it possible for Ethiopia to disburse the fixed part in such a short time given that the pooled fund to which the grant would contribute has a proven track record of disbursing effectively.

4.7 With respect to the variable part, however, the Committee determined the proposed transformative effect or “stretch” required for the variable part would be limited by the short time period proposed. The Funding Model specifies that “To access the variable portion of the MCA, developing country partner governments in consultation with their LEG members will identify key strategies or policies in the three areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes, deemed likely to lead to substantial progress in the medium-term, and hence to be transformational” (Section 5.2.1). In Ethiopia’s case, the Committee determined that targets set only one year into implementation did not sufficiently fulfil the intent of the Funding Model. However, the Committee also agree that further clarification on what constitutes an acceptable “stretch” would assist countries in the application phase with selecting viable indicators and targets. The clarification should include guidance on acceptable implementation periods for the variable part, but it was agreed that the Ethiopia recommendation would set a precedent in terms of expectations in this regard.

4.8 Given the lack of a discernable “stretch” in one year, the Committee determined to recommend Ethiopia resubmit the proposal for the variable part and set out medium-term targets for the indicators, over a three-year period.

4.9 The CGPC agreed to meet in Washington, D.C. early 2017 to capture their lessons learned with the funding model in order to facilitate further refinement of operational guidance for its implementation. The outcomes will be shared with the newly constituted Committee and the Board. Depending on the meeting dates, the CGPC may also discuss the indicators for the variable part of the first round 2017 applicants during this meeting.

4. PLEASE CONTACT Margarita Focas Licht (mlicht@globalpartnership.org) for further information.

5. ANNEXES

5.1 This paper includes the following annexes:

- Annex 1 – CGPC Observations, Report-Backs, and Conditions
- Annex 2 – Compliance of Ethiopia ESPIG Application with Requirements for Accessing the Fixed Part of the Maximum Country Allocation
- Annex 3 – Compliance of Zimbabwe ESPIG Application with Requirements for Accessing the Fixed Part of the Maximum Country Allocation
5.2 The following is available on the Committee eTeam site:

- ESPIG Application Packages and Secretariat Final Readiness Reviews (CGPC/2016/10 DOC 03, 04)
### ANNEX 1 – CGPC OBSERVATIONS, REPORT-BACKS, AND CONDITIONS

| Ethiopia |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Observations** | The Committee appreciates Ethiopia's commitment to increasing the share of the national education budget to primary education by one percent every year. |
| **Report-Back** | The Committee will be monitoring annually the share of the education budget allocated to primary education, and will pay close attention to equity in educational opportunities, including the needs of the significant out-of-school population and the problem of high dropout rates in the lower grades of primary education. The Committee requests the country to report on progress on an annual basis for the duration of the grants, starting in 2017. |
| **Conditions** | The CGPC appreciates the country’s efforts to select indicators and set targets for the variable part indicators in the areas of equity, efficiency and learning outcomes, as well as the extensive and detailed planning around their achievement.  

The Committee recognizes that achieving the results set out in the proposal for the Variable Part will require significant preparation and systemic arrangements that the government is committed to undertaking with due consideration to the importance of these interventions for subsequent larger scale interventions to achieve progress on equity, efficiency and learning outcomes.  

However, the CGPC considers that the short timeline now presented compromises the intent of the variable part by limiting the targets to what is achievable within a year. It is important that the targets for the indicators are set over a three-year period with higher-level outcomes in year 2 and year 3, stretching further towards much needed transformation.  

Aside from the timeline, the Committee notes it has some concerns about the choice of the indicators. In particular, the CGPC discussed the indicator on increase in female school leadership, and the intended effect on improved gender sensitivity in classrooms. The country is advised to revisit this indicator, looking at both incremental milestones and targets that move towards outcomes. A stronger theory of change is needed with regard to this indicator specifically. At the same time, the Committee understands that there have been serious discussions in the country following feedback from the Committee in July 2016 on the proposed indicators and therefore determined to respect the indicators selected by Ethiopia.  

The Committee therefore recommends that Ethiopia expand and resubmit no later than mid-January the variable part proposal with a longer-term perspective, for a three-year period. Payout may be staggered upon achievement of milestone targets in each year so that some of the variable part funding would be available during GEQIP II. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Zimbabwe</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report-Back</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Requirement 1: A Credible, Endorsed Education Sector Plan (ESP) or Transitional Education Plan (TEP)

**Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)**

In May 2016, the Education Technical Working Group (ETWG) of Ethiopia endorsed the Education Sector Development Plan V (2015/16-2019/20) following an independent appraisal of the ESDP V and the costed Multi-Year Action Plan. The ESDP V was undertaken in a consultative process ("reflecting both a top down and bottom up approach") which engaged decentralized education sector authorities, development partners, civil society organizations (including teachers’ unions and NGOs), academia and government representatives from other line ministries. The process of developing the ESDP V was overseen by a multi-departmental taskforce, headed by the Department of Planning, with technical support from UNESCO IIEP. The ESDP V covers, *inter alia*, the areas of access, equity and quality in general education (including pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult education); technical and vocational education and training and higher education.

The Ministry of Education and ETWG members, based on the Appraisal Report’s recommendation and an emergency assessment, prepared a Strategy for Education in Emergencies in recognition of the effects of el Nino (and upcoming La Nina) on educational services in several regions.

Four recommendations from the ETWG following the independent appraisal were agreed with the MoE for the ESDP V, namely: 1) Undertake an increase of at least one per cent a year of the primary education budget share over the ESDP V period; 2) Develop a robust results framework by the end of 2016 to ensure coherence and integration between the key components of the ESDP V and Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP); 3) Strengthen the sector’s response to inequities, including barriers that relate to poverty, with consideration of partnership with safety net programs as a means of addressing the financial barriers to participation in education; and 4) Develop a joint coordination structure for implementation oversight of the ESDP V and implementation of the recommended external evaluative studies and monitoring commitments.

## Requirement 2: Evidence of commitment to finance the endorsed ESP or TEP

**Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)**

The Government of Ethiopia has demonstrated its commitment to investing in education. The share of education budget in the total government budget has remained steady at 25 percent over the past three years and is projected to remain so in the next five years. Public spending on education in Ethiopia increased by 70 percent in real terms between 2003/04 and 2011/12. This increase is largely a result of the expansion of the system, with school enrolment (up to Grade 12) rising from 10 million to 19 million during these ten years. Recurrent spending doubled during this period. A considerable increase in capital spending was supported and sustained as construction of the third generation of universities continued. The system continues to expand, with the total number of learners reaching 25 million in 2015/16.

In the 2015/16 academic year, the Government spent approximately 29 million USD in a school feeding program and in supplying educational materials in six drought affected regions to retain the children.
in schools. The amount is projected to be $46 million in 2016/17. The Government’s investment in basic education has increased further as of June 2016, due to an increase in teacher wages by 25%.

Ethiopia has an eight-year primary education system. A calculation shows that the country spent about 41.3 percent of its recurrent budget for Grades 1-6 until June 2016. The recent increase in teachers’ wages brings this share to 49.23 percent of the recurrent education budget —excluding the spending for the school feeding program and the promised increase in primary education budget as agreed with the ETWG. The promised increase will add another 4.3 percent over the next five years.

The MoE has proactively sought to increase the investment of development partners within GEQIP II which is presently supported by seven development partners and is embedded in ESDP V. UNICEF Ethiopia will start contributing to GEQIP II as of late 2016. Further, the education sector also benefits from funding provided by non-governmental organizations which has not been systematically captured within the financing resource data base overseen by the MoE. It is expected that the recent formation of a national Education NGO forum, will result in more targeted investment towards the ESDP V priority areas and that this will be reflected within the external aid assistance data base.

Requirement 3: Critical data and evidence for planning, budgeting, managing, monitoring and accountability, or alternatively, a strategy to develop capacity to produce and effectively use critical data

Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)

A. Availability of Recent Education Sector Analysis

An education sector analysis was conducted in 2014 which informed the development of the ESDP V (2015/16 – 2019/20) and. The sector analysis draws on administrative EMIS data and recent research and studies to review progress of the education sector (as against ESDP IV results) and to provide an analysis of barriers impacting on the policy priority areas for the ESDP V.

Particular attention has been paid to the situation of children who have not benefitted to the same extent as their peers in the expansion of educational services, notably children in pastoralist communities, girls and children with disabilities. The sector analysis has a dedicated section on cross-cutting equity determinants of gender, special needs and inclusive education and education in emergencies. The educational situation of these groups of children has been further analyzed and documented within the Mid-Term Review of the GEQIP II (July 2016).

Section 4 of the ESDP V (Implementing and Financing ESDP V) draws on analysis of sector costs and financing to establish government budget commitments and identify financial gaps. This analysis has been more recently supplemented with an Education Financing Study, supported by the World Bank.

The Ministry of Education and development partners jointly engage in an annual national Education Conference (usually held in the last quarter of the year), which serves as an opportunity to review emerging sector issues and document progress against the ESDP. In recognition of the opportunity this forum provides in serving as a comprehensive Joint Sector-Wide Review mechanism, the ETWG will draw on existing JSR guidelines to review the Terms of Reference for the 2016 Education Conference and align more closely with JSR good practice principles.
B. Availability of Basic Education and Financial Data

The latest year for which primary and tertiary education sector data is available within the UNESCO UIS database is 2013/14, and 2011/12 for the secondary education sub-sector. Whilst sector data is available within UIS from 2005, with the exception of 2012/13, there are gaps in relation to recent data on primary school survival and transition rates from primary to secondary.

Amongst the challenges faced in the production of robust, timely statistical EMIS abstracts are those of data quality—largely stemming from incomplete and delayed data submission by educational facilities to their decentralized administrative authorities. In addition, financial data for the sector is overseen by another government body which provides macro-financial data two years subsequent to the actual implementation. Sector partners have acknowledged that donor support has been fragmented to date and not based on a comprehensive joint EMIS strategy.

In 2015/2016, the Ministry of Education undertook an extensive review of enrollment data following concerns on EMIS reporting and a commitment to improve the quality of the EMIS Abstract. The findings from this review have allowed for a far more robust 2014/15 EMIS dataset. A diagnostic review of the Education Management Information System is currently underway, through the financial support of DFID UKAID, which will result in a comprehensive MoE/Development Partner road-map outlining strategies by which EMIS will be strengthened over the course of ESDP V period. The full costing of this road-map and confirmation of the government and development partner investment in this has not yet been finalized. Discussions are on a possible utilization of a pooled funding mechanism for supporting the roll-out of the EMIS strategy (through the Quality Education Strategic Support Program).

C. A System or Mechanisms to Monitor Learning Outcomes

A large-scale learning assessment system has been in place in Ethiopia since 2000, delivered and managed by the National Educational Assessment and Examinations Agency, housed within the Ministry of Education. The national learning assessments are administered at the ‘exit/transition’ grades therein at grades 4 and 8 (for primary education cycle) and grades 10 and 12 (for secondary education cycle). These sample based assessments are undertaken every four years. The most recent NLA was conducted in May 2015, for grades 4 (Mathematics, Mother-tongue Reading, Environmental Sciences, English) and 8 (Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and English) with a report submitted on the findings in May 2016. The NLA instruments allow (i) comparison of learning achievement between 2011 and 2015; and (ii) inference on the impacts of interventions on learning improvement. In addition to subject content (based on Minimum Learning Competencies), the NLA includes a background questionnaire (student characteristics, teacher/principal characteristics, school related characteristics) as a means of better analyzing the learning outcome results. GEQIP II will continue to support these developments in NLA.

A national public examination system, with the purpose of promotion, selection and certification of students, has also been in place since 1950 for grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. These annual examinations cover all subjects, including mother tongue reading, and are administered to all students in the relevant grade.
In addition to the NLA, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) for seven mother tongue languages and for English have been administered in Ethiopia in addition an Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA).

In the remaining two years, a school readiness assessment will be conducted using the internationally developed MELQO tool.
Requirement 1: A Credible, Endorsed Education Sector Plan (ESP) or Transitional Education Plan (TEP)

Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)

Zimbabwe has developed a credible and endorsed ESSP 2016 – 2020 to follow on from the previous Medium Term Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015, considered to be a credible transitional plan. The development of the ESSP has been a government-driven, highly consultative process with broad involvement by Government stakeholders at all levels, CSOs and development partners.

MoPSE’s ESSP does not cover the entire education sector. Prior to the Education Act of 1987 there was one education Ministry but now the education system is managed by two ministries, MoPSE – responsible for the infant to upper secondary portfolio, including in-service teacher training and non-formal education, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Development (MoHTESD) – responsible for tertiary education, including pre-service training of teachers as well as education managers at national and sub national levels.

The two Ministries have an inter-ministerial liaison committee that meets regularly and both belong to the same cluster under the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). They are designed to work collaboratively at all levels in order to ensure their respective sector plans align. MoHTESD was involved in the ESSP’s development and is a member of the Local Education Group (LEG) or Education Coordination Group (ECG).

In response to the Quality Assurance Reviews (QAR)’s which stressed the need to ensure strong linkages between MoPSE and MoHTESD, a joint sub-committee under the ECG has been reactivated. The sub-committee will help monitor pre-service teacher training, better ensuring sector cohesion, teacher quality and ascertaining complementarity and coordination while ensuring that the separate mandates are respected. MoPSE and MoHTESD are also enhancing their sector wide linkages through the medium term budget framework process being initiated by Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED). In addition, the reactivated sub-committee shall ensure sector wide monitoring and facilitate meaningful participation of MoHTESD in the annual reviews.

The ESP check and the in-country appraisals reveal a plan that provides a strong vision, is evidence based and provides contextually appropriate strategies to improve equitable access and learning. Zimbabwe adequately actioned the observations of the appraisal and QAR I which highlighted the importance of establishing the ESSPs credibility through operational plans (OP) that feature a clear hypothesis/results chain and the ESSP’s feasibility through a fuller costing exercise.

The three year program contained in the operational plans is a realistic perspective bringing in annual balance for what can be achieved year on year through internal negotiations and a process of attempting to define how different programs complement each other. The operational plans will align with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) medium term budget framework and the program based budgeting that is being introduced.
**Requirement 2: Evidence of commitment to finance the endorsed ESP or TEP**

**Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)**

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) budget reflected in the ESSP represents 5.6 percent of GDP and 20.3 percent of the total government budget, of which 99 percent goes towards salary related costs. The government’s spending on education represents an important share of overall government expenditures, 29.9 percent in 2014. However, while government commitment to education remains high, the financial capacity of government to fund all the components of education remains limited. The systematic underfunding of education from the late 1980s has left a system that is very dependent on parental and community support. Parents contribute approximately 96 percent of the non-salary costs to education, with resultant issues in terms of equity.

Of the overall education budget for MoPSE and MoHTESTD, the following allocations were made to primary education in 2013 – 46 percent; in 2014 – 46.2 percent; and in 2015 – 47.54 percent.

The ESSP acknowledges the lack of equitable distribution of resources to schools and plans to address this, at an immediate instance, through a schools financing policy, which will bring more systematization to household contributions with an aim of alleviating the burden on the poorest of households and reducing the imbalance between disposable incomes that schools can access. In addition, the Zimbabwean authorities have demonstrated strong commitment in taking important steps to advance macroeconomic and structural reforms. The government is starting to take steps to reduce public expenditure and public sector employment costs. In fact, through the policy debate supported by GPE processes, the ECG has activated an Education Finance Management Standing Committee (EFSC) in recognition of the need for long term development in funding education. This inclusive group will also be the reference group for the school finance policy work and monitor core areas of MoPSE finance management. The establishment of EFSC in such a context is a significant gain - it has potential to bring about deepened policy dialogue and action, increased transparency and mutual accountability.

**Requirement 3: Critical data and evidence for planning, budgeting, managing, monitoring and accountability, or alternatively, a strategy to develop capacity to produce and effectively use critical data**

**Evidence of Compliance (or Strong Justification for Exception)**

**A. Availability of Recent Education Sector Analysis**

Zimbabwe with the support of its education partners carried out a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (ESA Zimbabwe July 2015).

Equity in schooling, focusing on distribution of resources, special needs and access to the Schools Psychological Services are well researched and the ESA noted that these were all areas requiring attention. The most affected children in terms of learning outcomes come from the remotest and poorest schools with only 10% of children with disabilities in school. The ESA findings have informed...
the priorities in the ESSP at the policy and activity levels and have resulted in these being core areas for the GPE supported program. (2017-2019)

B. Availability of Basic Education and Financial Data

Zimbabwe’s data gathering capacity has been enhanced under the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) with Zimbabwe being able to generate the year’s basic financial and education data for use in the same year. The Teacher Development Information System (TDIS), financed with the current GPE grant, is operational and will be integrated with the Education Management Information System (EMIS) data which will yield key information for policy decision making.

The last submission of data to UIS was in 2013. And 2014 EMIS data is now available and was forwarded to UIS while 2015 data is being analyzed.

MoPSE intends to build its research capacity through the establishment of the Center for Educational Research Innovation and Development (CERID) – the Center will act as a spur to increase the relevance and timeliness of data collection, a focus for evidence based use of data and for developing the analytical capacity at the subnational levels.

C. A System or Mechanisms to Monitor Learning Outcomes

Zimbabwe has a long tradition of formal assessment with testing at the end of Grade 7, ‘O’ Levels after Form 4 and ‘A’ Levels after Form 6. MoPSE, aware of the need to monitor the performance of children in the early grades has introduced reading assessments. ZimSEC, in collaboration with MoPSE, Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) and UNICEF, have been carrying out Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessments (ZELA) of grade 3 students. In addition, capacity within ZimSEC has been built, to carry out these early learning assessments, which will now form a regular and annual part of the assessment procedures.