June 8, 2020

Hon. Yuba Raj Khatiwada
Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance
Kathmandu
Nepal

Hon. Giriraj Mani Pokharel
Minister of Education, Science and Technology
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Kathmandu
Nepal

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

Hon. Khatiwada, Hon. Mr. Pokharel,

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 Nepal’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US$ 11 million. I have also approved a 1.75% agency fee for the grant agent, World Bank, in the amount of US$ 192,500.

The grant has a start date of June 8, 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, as the Secretariat’s Country Lead for Nepal, Ms. Aya Kibesaki, is on maternity leave, Ms. Naoko Hosaka will serve as the focal point for Nepal and may revert to you if necessary for any additional information.

We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of Nepal’s children.
Sincerely,

Alice P. Albright  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Partnership for Education

cc:  
Members of Local Education Group (LEG)  
Mr. Kapri Krishna Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology  
Mr. Baikuntha Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology  
Ms. Shannon Taylor, Director, Education Development Office, USAID, alternative Coordinating Agent Representative  
Mr. Mohan Prasad Aryal, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank, Grant Agent representative  
Ms. Karthika Radhakrishnan, Senior Education Specialist, World Bank, Grant Agent representative  
Mr. Mario Cristian Aedo Inostroza, Practice Manager, South Asia, World Bank  
Mr. Douglas Sumerfield, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank  
Ms. Natalia Cherevato, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank  
Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat  
Mr. Nilse Ryman, Regional Manager, GPE Secretariat  
Ms. Aya Kibesaki, Country Lead and Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat  
Ms. Naoko Hosaka, acting Country Lead and Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, 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 Nepal in the amount of US$ 11,000,000 plus an additional US$ 192,500 in agency fees to World Bank as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 8, 2020, and an end date of December 31, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Nepal 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 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 Nepal is now US$ 11 million, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US$ 15 million.

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 June 29, 2020:

**Request for Report-Back**

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework and budget), to be sent after grant approval, following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government on the changes including the prioritization.

2. The Secretariat welcomes the proposed investment to make the learning portal accessible to children with disabilities. Given the reduced grant amount and the need to reduce some of the activities, the Secretariat asks the country to prioritize:

   - Activities that will have an impact on disadvantaged children, including children with disabilities;
   - Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis.
3. The Secretariat notes and agrees with keeping the criteria around school grants simple, and requests that needs for sanitation and health improvements be taken into account.

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

**Observations**

a) Given the urgency of the crisis, GPE expects 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 is suggested in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.

**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