May 28, 2020

Hon. Patrick Pruaitch  
Minister of Finance  
Ministry of Finance  
Waigani- Port Moresby  
The Independent State of Papua New Guinea

Hon. Joseph Yopyyopy  
Minister for Education  
Ministry for Education  
Waigani- Port Moresby  
The Independent State of Papua New Guinea

Approval of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to Support Papua New Guinea’s Education Sector

Excellencies,

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 Papua New Guinea’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US$ 9,440,000. I have also approved a 7% agency fee for the grant agent, UNICEF, in the amount of US$ 660,800.

The grant has a start date of May 28, 2020 and an end date of November 30, 2021. The full decision language of this approval can be found in the annex to this letter.

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.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Muhammad Tariq Khan, Country Lead for Papua New Guinea.
We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of Papua New Guinea’s children.

Sincerely,

Alice P. Albright
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education

CC:
Members of Local Education Group (LEG)
Dr. Uke Kombra, Permanent Secretary, National Department of Education, Government of Papua New Guinea
Mr. Walipe Wingi, Deputy Secretary, National Department of Education (GPE Focal Point), Government of Papua New Guinea
Ms. Regina Mabia, Director, Donor Aid Coordinator, National Department of Education, Government of Papua New Guinea
Mr. David McLoughlin, Country Representative, (Grant Agent – COVID-19), UNICEF
Mr. Simon Jan Molendijk, Chief of Education, (Grant Agent – COVID-19), UNICEF
Ms. Saadhna Panday, Global Education Partnerships Lead, UNICEF New York
Mr. Poonam Buttan, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF New York
Ms. Reiko Okumura, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF New York
Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat
Mr. Nilse Ryman, Regional Manager, GPE Secretariat
Mr. Muhammad Tariq Khan, Country Lead and Senior Education 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 Papua New Guinea in the amount of US$ 9,440,000 plus an additional US$ 660,800 in agency fees to UNICEF as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of May 28, 2020 and an end date of November 30, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognizes with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Papua New Guinea 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.

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 15, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. Given the urgency of the crisis, GPE expects grant implementation to commence on schedule and encourages 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.

2. While the school census is eligible to be funded, the Government and Grant Agent are requested to clarify what actions would be taken as a result of the census, e.g. to address reduction in enrollment resulting from COVID-19.

3. VET should be removed from the proposed program as GPE funding is focused on basic education only. The explanation from the country that VET is considered second chance education and will mainly benefit lower secondary aged students, has been assessed as insufficient in warranting exceptional approval of GPE funding of VET. The Government and Grant Agent are therefore requested to remove all budget items related to VET (US$ 561,540 from activities 2.66, 3.24, 4.18, 4.29, 4.36). This will reduce the grant to US$ 9,440,000 (with rounding). The Secretariat nevertheless recognizes the importance of this activity and encourages the country to explore alternate options to support the needs of the VET sub-sector through other funding sources.

4. The amount of funds for professional development and research (activities 4.4.2 and 4.4.4. respectively) are deemed excessive relative to the justifications provided and the Board approved focus of GPE COVID-19 funding. The Secretariat requests the Government and Grant Agent to reduce the budget for Activity 4.4.2 and 4.4.4 by 50%, and to reallocate these funds to other program activities.

5. The Government and Grant Agent are requested to ensure that the ICT infrastructure benefits Basic Education.
The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised results framework and budget, to be sent retroactively after grant approval, reflecting the above adjustments. Please include targets for the number of children with disabilities who will benefit from the program.

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