

CEO DECISION MEMO

DATE: 11/25/2024

TO: Laura Frigenti, CEO	
SUBJECT: Approval of a system transformation grant for Vanuatu	
Country	Vanuatu
System transformation grant allocation	US\$2,500,000
Allocation requested (100%)	US\$2,500,000
Allocation recommended by Secretariat	US\$2,500,000
Results based financing	No
Grant agent	Save the Children Australia
Agency fee (% and amount)	7% - US\$175,000
Period	3 Years
Expected start date	1/1/2025
Closing date	12/31/2027
Funding source	GPE Fund

Action request

Approve an allocation from GPE trust funds for a system transformation grant, in support of the Vanuatu System Transformation Grant program, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table above.

Grant Summary

Vanuatu System Transformation Grant (STG) program aims to improve literacy rates in primary school. The program aligns fully with the partnership compact which was developed and endorsed to improve literacy rates in primary school, by ensuring equitable allocation and implementation of innovative resources, while fostering a holistic Vanuatu curriculum. By closely mirroring the core activities outlined in the partnership compact, the STG program systematically tracks key indicators, contributing to measurable improvements in student literacy and other educational outcomes.

In addition to the partnership compact, the STG program is strongly aligned with the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (VETSS) 2020-2030. This alignment allows the STG to support numerous VETSS strategies, particularly strategic pillar 2, which seeks to 'improve the quality of education'.

The STG program also aligns with GPE's priority areas, emphasizing learning, quality teaching, gender equality, and inclusion. The program components include activities to improve parental involvement in literacy, strengthen teachers' and principals' skills, improve teaching and learning, and increase the availability of culturally relevant teaching and learning materials (TLMs).

Current Portfolio

GPE's current portfolio in Vanuatu includes a Program Development Grant (PDG: US\$200,000) to support the development of the Systems Transformation Grant program of work and

budget. Vanuatu also has an active System Capacity Grant (SCG: US\$1,150,000) with Save the Children Australia as grant agent to finance priority activities that will help strengthen the education system in Vanuatu.

Enabling Factors Assessment:

The country has identified data and evidence and domestic financing as high priorities: In its enabling factors analysis, the government said the Vanuatu Education Management Information System was at risk of collapsing given its out-of-date system that had been seriously behind on production and analysis of learning data. Moreover, the government had highlighted its issues with efficiency and effectiveness of spending in terms of resource allocation to schools across the country.

These two areas will be addressed by the ongoing SCG program. Success of the STG program will rely on system strengthening and effective use and analysis of data to inform implementation.

Significant Opportunities:

Through the program, the government is taking action to address longstanding literacy and learning issues as well as applying lessons learned from the implementation of previous grants and programs. It finetunes a framework and is a clear investment in improving primary education as it supports a multi-faceted and holistic approach to boosting learning outcomes and literacy through improved curriculum and learning materials, improved teacher training to implement the curriculum, and engagement of families to support their children's learning.

The program aims to ensure that all students achieve foundational literacy, which will have a transformative impact across the learning system with the government envisioning improved literacy skills that enable students to access the full curriculum, take control of their own learning, and succeed in post-primary education as well as in their communities.

Gender equality is hardwired across the program, with a strong focus on gender-responsive pedagogy, and tackling harmful gender stereotypes within the literacy guides and textbooks, the at-home reading materials and in the expected results of literacy training. The programs put a strong focus on closing gender gaps in learning (to the detriment of boys). It will be important to consider the different needs of male and female teachers to access professional development alternatives as the program begins implementation.

Significant Issues and Risks:

The program document lists a number of risks that may potentially impede program implementation. Primarily, it cites possible issues that may arise with government operations or functions. For instance, although generally stable, changes in leadership may cause disputes over the direction and priorities of the program, and limited capacity, high turnover, and deficiency of certain skills among ministerial staff may contribute to delays and other issues. To mitigate these issues, the program will be aligned with the VETSS and there will be

regular reporting in senior management in the ministry to foster early identification of problems and any needed adaptation.

Moreover, the partners acknowledge the risk involved in Vanuatu's status as a small island country and its history of natural and climate-related disasters, which could pose threats to implementation. In fact, the government sees natural calamities in high probability of occurring, so they will prepare mitigation measures and contingency plans to keep operations going in such instances.

Recommendation

The Review Meeting (RM) concluded, based on the Secretariat's quality assurance review, that the **RM recommends to the CEO the approval of an allocation of US\$2,500,000 for Vanuatu with Save the Children Australia as Grant Agent.**

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Grant: System Transformation Grant

Country: Vanuatu

CEO/2024/25-11-2024

The CEO in her delegated authority from the Board of Directors approves the System Transformation Grant request for Vanuatu in the amount of US\$2,500,000 plus an additional US\$175,000.00 in agency fees to Save the Children Australia as the grant agent, as described in the application submitted and summarized in Table above, subject to:

a) Availability of funds.

b) Board decision BOD/2012/11-04 on commitment of trust funds for grants in annual installments.

Date: November 25, 2024



Laura Frigenti, CEO

The CEO Decision Memo should not exceed 3 pages.