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Report No: RES18813

RESTRUCTURING PAPER

ON A

PROPOSED PROJECT RESTRUCTURING  
OF  
READING EDUCATION (READ PNG) PROJECT  
TF-98729

MARCH 2, 2011

TO THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

MAY 28, 2015

GLOBAL PRACTICE EDUCATION  
EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BP	Bank Procedures
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CDD	Curriculum Development Division
CSTB	Central Supply and Tenders Board
DO	Development Objective
DOE	Department of Education
EA	Environmental Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FM	Financial Management
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IP	Implementation Progress
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MS	Moderately Satisfactory
MU	Moderately Unsatisfactory
OP	Operational Policy
PDO	Project Development Objective
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SBC	Standards Based Curriculum
USD	United States Dollars

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
READ PNG

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**DATA SHEET**  
*Papua New Guinea*  
*READ PNG (P105897)*  
*EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC*  
*GEDDR*

**Report No:** RES18813

<b>Basic Information</b>									
<b>Project ID:</b>	P105897			<b>Lending Instrument:</b>	Specific Investment Loan				
<b>Regional Vice President:</b>	Axel van Trotsenburg			<b>Original EA Category:</b>	Not Required (C)				
<b>Country Director:</b>	Franz R. Drees-Gross			<b>Current EA Category:</b>	Not Required (C)				
<b>Senior Global Practice Director:</b>	Claudia Maria Costin			<b>Original Approval Date:</b>	03-Mar-2011				
<b>Practice Manager/Manager:</b>	Harry Anthony Patrinos			<b>Current Closing Date:</b>	30-Jun-2015				
<b>Team Leader(s):</b>	Binh Thanh Vu								
<b>Borrower:</b>	Department of Education								
<b>Responsible Agency:</b>	Curriculum Development Division (CDD)								
<b>Restructuring Type</b>									
<b>Form Type:</b>	Short Form			<b>Decision Authority:</b>	Country Director Approval				
<b>Restructuring Level:</b>	Level 2								
<b>Financing (as of 10-Mar-2015 )</b>									
<b>Key Dates</b>									
Project	Ln/Cr/TF	Status	Approval Date	Signing Date	Effectiveness Date	Original Closing Date	Revised Closing Date		
P105897	TF-98729	Effective	02-Mar-2011	03-Mar-2011	28-Oct-2011	30-Jun-2014	30-Jun-2015		
<b>Disbursements (in Millions)</b>									
Project	Ln/Cr/TF	Status	Currency	Original	Revised	Cancelled	Disbursed	Undisbursed	% Disbursed
P105897	TF-98729	Effective	USD	19.20	19.20	0.00	14.17	5.03	74

<b>Policy Waivers</b>		
<b>Does the project depart from the CAS/CPF in content or in other significant respects?</b>	<b>Yes [ ]</b>	<b>No [ X ]</b>
<b>Does the project require any policy waiver(s)?</b>	<b>Yes [ ]</b>	<b>No [ X ]</b>
<b>A. Summary of Proposed Changes</b>		
<p>The overall objective of the proposed restructuring is to extend the project closing date by six months from June 30, 2015 to December 31, 2015. This is the second extension and would result in a cumulative extension of 18 months. An extension would allow the government to successfully complete two specific activities under component 1 “Increasing the Availability of Books and Learning Materials by Establishing Classroom Libraries”. Specifically, the extension would allow for the following: (i) under activity 1.2 “elementary learning material kits” (covering preparatory grade, grades 1 and 2), the distribution of learning aids from provincial centers to all elementary schools in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and ensuring the effective use of these materials to strengthen teaching and learning in elementary grades; and (ii) under activity 1.3 “elementary vernacular reading materials”, the furnishing of books in Tok Pisin, the most commonly-used language in PNG, to all schools in the country, and a selected number of books in nine vernacular languages to 190 schools in eight pilot provinces. The vernacular materials, combined with the learning aids provided under activity 1.2 aim at facilitating children’s ability to develop their oral skills in the school environment, which is critical to help children learning to read, especially for non-English speaking children. The completion of these activities are also critical to measuring achievement of the Project Development Objective (PDO).</p>		
<b>B. Project Status</b>		
<p>The Reading Education (READ PNG) project was approved by the World Bank’s Regional Vice President on March 2, 2011 for an amount of US\$19.2 million financed by a Grant (TF098729) from the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (now “Global Partnership for Education” - GPE). In March 2014, the project underwent a restructuring to: (i) revise the PDO; (ii) scale down Component 3 “Strengthening Early Grade Reading Assessment - EGRA” activities, in particular related to the collection of baseline data on student reading levels using EGRA tools; (iii) implement post-EGRA assessment interventions in selected provinces; (iv) adjust the results framework in line with the revised PDO and project scope; and (v) extend the project closing date by one year to June 30, 2015.</p> <p>Following the 2014 restructuring, overall implementation has significantly improved, and considerable efforts have been made to complete all activities by the June 30, 2015 closing date.</p> <p><b>Component 1: Increasing the Availability of Books and Learning Materials by Establishing Classroom Libraries in Elementary and Primary Schools</b> to help children develop their reading skills as part of the daily curriculum. Specific progress includes the following: <b>activity 1.1 “Supplementary reading materials to primary schools (Grades 3 – 8)”</b> is on track to delivering all supplementary books to all primary schools in the country, and train teachers as part of Component 2 (see below) in the use of these books ahead of the closing date: by mid-June 2015, all provinces received books and they have been distributed to 10,595 classrooms, teachers from these classrooms have been trained, and respective classroom libraries set up with books being used in daily classroom activities. The remaining classrooms are expected to receive their books, teachers trained, and classroom libraries set up by the end of June 2015. This is a commendable achievement considering the logistical and managerial efforts that were required to procure 1,100,000 books, repack them by grade and school, and organize container shipments to all 22 provinces of PNG, including very remote, hard-to-reach schools. Once completed, primary schools in PNG will again have supplementary reading materials for the first time in 30 years. Given the success of the</p>		

cluster-based training module used to train teachers on the use of classroom libraries under READ PNG, this model has also been adopted by the National Department of Education (NDOE) to conduct other types of trainings. Preliminary results of this activity have shown improvements in students' reading ability where supplementary reading materials are available in classrooms, which is consistent with international literature and research on the benefits of having books readily accessible to children.

**Activity 1.2 “Elementary Learning Materials”** provides support for the procurement and distribution of learning aids to PNG's approximate 8,420 elementary schools for preparatory grade and grades 1 and 2. These learning materials include teaching aids and toys designed to promote school readiness through the “learning through play” model for preparatory grade, and are also intended for the use by teachers in grades 1 and 2. One of the innovative aspects of these tools is that teachers can “customize” them to suit their children's language needs, i.e., translating an English word into the language most children are familiar with and consequently build their oral and reading abilities, while laying the foundation to acquire numeracy and literacy skills (see activity 1.3 below for targeted vernacular language interventions and expected benefits). As of mid-May 2015, containers of materials under two lots of awarded contracts have arrived at 18 out of 22 provinces, with the remainder expected to be delivered by May 31, 2015. This activity was significantly delayed due to changes in the NDOE's procurement process, which added review and endorsement steps to the already slow and cumbersome approval process of the Central Services and Tender Board (CSTB). As a result, these learning aids will only reach the 22 provincial centers by the current project closing date instead of being distributed to the school level. With the government financing delivery from provincial centers to the schools, and expected completion by September 30, 2015, the remaining months of the project if extended would allow time for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as required for reporting under the project results framework.

**Activity 1.3 “Elementary Vernacular Reading Materials”** aims to support early reading of non-English speaking elementary students by exposing them to reading materials in their spoken language. As mentioned under activity 1.2, using reading materials written in a language children are most familiar with can help develop their oral skills (which are critical for learning to read and count) and facilitate their learning in an English-only school environment. This has also been confirmed by the EGRA results supported by the project under component 3 (see below for more details). However, the process of identifying the procurement process and actually procuring these materials proved to be more complex than originally anticipated: The local market of suitable vernacular reading materials for small children is very limited, and identifying the vernacular languages best suited for project support in a country with over 800 spoken languages and approximately 8,420 elementary schools was challenging. It took the project team time to gather information regarding the number of children in a given school speaking a particular language which has available and appropriate reading materials for school use. Despite these challenges, the project completed a lengthy, complicated process of selecting 14 titles in nine languages to be procured off-the-shelf and distributed to select schools in eight provinces. In addition to these nine languages, the project also intended to procure and distribute reading materials in Tok Pisin, the most widely-used vernacular language in PNG, to all schools. By mid-May 2015, four of the five contracts have been signed, with the remaining contract expected to be signed by May 31, 2015. This means that materials are expected to arrive at provincial centers during June 2015. However, it will require additional time to ensure distribution of materials to schools for similar reasons to those stated under activity 1.2.

**Activity 1.4 “Activity 4 – Classroom Library Bookshelves and Reading Corners”.** This activity is no longer supported by the project as schools decided to finance for bookshelves from their own budget. Funding allocated for this activity was used to contribute to the government's efforts to distribute learning materials from provincial centers to schools under activity 1.2.

All activities under component 1 above support the setup of classroom libraries, which are made up of supplementary reading materials to the textbooks and learning aids made available in each classroom. This aims to give constant exposure of the child to literacy materials that form the best possible reading habits.

Evidence shows that there is a pedagogical advantage to having prints (books, newspapers, reading materials, etc.) readily available to students and teachers in their classroom, and that a strong positive correlation exists between the proximity of books and reading materials and their frequency of use by students. Closing this project without further extension could mean supplementary learning materials for elementary grades will remain in the provincial headquarters with a low likelihood that they will reach schools.

**Component 2 “Promoting Reading Through Professional Development, Teacher Networks and Public Reading Campaigns”.** Training for provincial facilitators and teachers on management of classroom libraries supported through activity 1.1 using a cluster-based approach is progressing as scheduled and will be completed within the current time frame. This intervention is based on research and other Bank projects that show an increased impact of classroom libraries on student reading if teachers are trained in: (i) how to use reading materials to teach reading and writing; (ii) how to integrate classroom libraries into their daily classroom routines; and (iii) how to encourage students’ use of classroom libraries. READ PNG has developed a system by which teachers, after completion of their training at the provincial level, bring books back to schools. This initiative has proven successful in that books have arrived at schools as intended and prevented the loss of books during delivery, as has been experienced by other projects in PNG. By April 2015, about 1,265 provincial facilitators and 11,044 teachers have received training and have provided positive feedback on their use of classroom libraries. This is based on evidence collected from M&E activities included as part of the project.

**Component 3 “Strengthening early grade reading assessment (EGRA)”.** Activities under this component remain on track and will be completed prior to the June 30, 2015 closing date. The assessments were completed in four provinces of PNG as scheduled, and results are in line with international research on reading development in a secondary language: among students tested, those who learn to read and write in a language they are familiar with read more fluently and with better comprehension than those learning to read in English, a language in which most students in PNG are not proficient. What is more, results also show that students in English-only classrooms make minimal gains in reading comprehension in comparison to their peers who learned to read in a language they knew well. As mentioned previously, these EGRA results underscore the importance and relevance of activities 1.2 and 1.3. In addition to the diagnostic assessment, the project supported two interventions in Madang and Western Highlands provinces to test an instructional approach that could help students in Grade 3 consolidate key basic reading skills. On average, students taught with the new instructional approach were able to read and sound letters, and read words and short sentences better than those outside of the intervention. The qualitative evaluation for both provinces has been completed, and the project and Bank teams are working together to analyze the information collected to support the write up of the post-assessment interventions. The final report, to be delivered by mid-June 2015, is expected to inform management decisions on how to improve student reading skills in the early grades in PNG.

**Component 4 “Project management and monitoring”.** The implementing agency, Curriculum Development Division (CDD), and the project team have made considerable efforts to speed up implementation of the project despite challenges on the ground. The project planning, budgeting and M&E activities have improved over the duration of the project. It is commendable that the READ PNG team has earned a reputation as the team other divisions/offices of NDOE go to for guidance and inputs. For instance, the READ PNG team provided support for the development of the new Standards Based Curriculum (SBC), which attests to the relevance of project activities and usefulness of the collected EGRA data in terms of informing curriculum planning. It is the first time that such information is being used in the development of a new curriculum in PNG, and highlights opportunities for evidence-based decision making going forward. The team’s involvement in planning and piloting reading interventions to improve classroom instruction also helped CDD officers to become more familiar with the curriculum development cycle, including reading resource development, teacher training, and the monitoring of instruction for improvement. These are positive developments that should be harnessed for the sustainability and possible scaling up of the project

interventions. If granted an extension, sufficient project funds have already been identified in a revised budget plan to cover the project management and monitoring expenditures for the additional six months.

In summary, only activities 1.2 and 1.3 cannot be completed by June 30, 2015, and additional time is needed to ensure learning aids and vernacular books reach schools.

## C. Proposed Changes

### Financing

#### Change in Loan Closing Date(s):

##### Explanation

As mentioned above, the objective of this restructuring is to extend the closing date by six months from June 30, 2015 to December 31, 2015 to ensure successful completion of activities 1.2 and 1.3 under Component 1. It would also allow the government to collect all data and information through the relevant M&E activities to report against the project results framework and provide evidence of achievement of the PDO. Given that the PDO reads “to promote better teaching and learning of reading skills in elementary and primary education”, the achievement of the objectives relies heavily on completing the key project activities 1.2 and 1.3.

In addition to PDO achievement, the importance of ensuring completion of activities 1.2 and 1.3 include:

- (i) The lack of learning resources at elementary and primary grades was identified as one of the main reasons for high dropout and low retention rates in PNG, while availability of such resources has been linked to better learning and increased success rates. Failure in providing learning materials to students would reduce chances of children succeeding in school;
- (ii) Having vernacular reading materials available in elementary schools has been shown to increase learning opportunities for children who do not speak English at home and who often belong to more disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, and as confirmed by EGRA results, elementary teachers often lack proficient English language skills to properly teach their students. The use of vernacular language materials would facilitate teaching and could help children develop their vocabulary in the language in which they are familiar. This would also enable them to better deal with the transition to learning a second language.
- (iii) The provision of learning aids and vernacular reading materials, in addition to supplementary reading materials, provides resources which are not available in classrooms or at home. Having prints (books, reading materials, newspapers) available and encouraging caretakers to read with children at an early age will help them develop their vocabulary, which is important for them to learn reading. Getting children into schools and keeping them in school will achieve little unless an equal opportunity is given to improve teaching and learning regardless of who they are and what language they speak.
- (iv) As mentioned before, closing the project without granting an extension is likely to result in supplementary learning materials and vernacular books remaining at the provincial centers with little chance of reaching schools, as has been the experience of other projects in PNG. It could also pose a potential reputational risk for the Bank if these two proven activities are left incomplete.

As mentioned before, a six month extension is justified because: (i) the extension would only be required to complete key project activities; (ii) the remaining activities have already gone through all required evaluation and approval steps, minimizing the risk for further delays; and (iii) the additional time would allow for collection of important M&E data to evaluate the project’s implementation effectiveness against the results framework and achievement of the PDO.

In addition, the request for a six month extension is in line with the government’s original request for an 18 month extension submitted at the time of the project’s first restructuring in 2013. However, the decision was

made at the time to only grant a 12 month extension.

The proposed extension of closing date does not entail any change to the objectives, scope or nature of activities, the project implementation arrangements, or safeguards category. The project's closing date has already been extended once for 12 months as part of the project's Level 1 restructuring, and if granted, this second extension would amount to a total of 18 months from the original closing date. The extension request is also supported by the Local Education Group (LEG) as stated in its letter dated May 5, 2015 as well as the GPE.

<b>Ln/Cr/TF</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Original Closing Date</b>	<b>Current Closing Date</b>	<b>Proposed Closing Date</b>	<b>Previous Closing Date(s)</b>
TF-98729	Effective	30-Jun-2014	30-Jun-2015	31-Dec-2015	30-Jun-2015