



# TEXTBOOK POLICY FOR GUYANA



Ministry of Education

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## Background

Providing appropriate textbooks and related materials for all students in Guyana's education system is a high government priority in achieving the ESP objectives. Textbooks are the essential tools whereby, with the aid of trained teachers, essential skills can be developed in young learners. The lack of sufficient copies of appropriate textbooks is internationally recognised as a critical cause of student disaffection with the school. Conversely, research has shown that textbooks are a cost-effective means of improving educational achievement, especially in the short to medium term. In educational environments where supplementary reading materials are scarce, textbooks can significantly impact student success<sup>1</sup>.

The provision of attractive and effective textbooks will help students enjoy their time in school and therefore assist GoG to achieve the goals stated in the ESP: "*Providing opportunities for quality, equitable education and lifelong learning for all*" as well as "*contributing to employability and reduction of poverty, by increasing performance at all levels and reducing the disparity between sub-groups*". Beyond helping bring needed skills to Guyana "*at a time in which it is expected that the extractive industries will be the key drivers of economic growth in the medium term*" (ESP), the effective use of textbooks will incorporate essential values for national unity and development such as "*the promotion of harmony, equity and respect among citizens of all races, economic groups, religions and gender*", as per the MoE's mission statement.

To provide appropriate textbooks to all students within an efficient and cost-effective provision system, the MoE has defined its key objectives and strategies. This policy document is a public statement of the standards, roles and responsibilities that all stakeholders in the textbook provision, including the end users, should follow within the framework of overall coordination by the MoE. It will, in particular, determine the nature of that essential relationship between

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<sup>1</sup> Frolich, M., and K. Michaelowa. 2005. *Peer Effects and Textbooks in Primary Education: Evidence from Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor.

Michaelowa, K., and A. Wechtler. 2006. *The Cost-Effectiveness of Inputs in Primary Education: Insights from the Literature and Recent Student Surveys for Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

Evans, D. K., and A. Ghosh. 2008. "Prioritizing Education Investments in Children in the Developing World." RAND Working Paper, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA.  
[http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working\\_papers/2008/RAND\\_WR587.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working_papers/2008/RAND_WR587.pdf).

McEwan, P. 2013. *Improving Learning in Primary Schools of Developing Countries: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Experiments*. Cambridge MA: Center for Education Innovations.  
<http://academics.wellesley.edu/Economics/mcewan/PDF/meta.pdf>.

Snilstveit, B., Stevenson, J., Menon, R., Phillips, D., Gallagher, E., Geleen, M., and Jobse, H. (2016). The Impact of Education Programmes on Learning and School Participation in Low and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review Summary Report. Systematic Review Summary 7, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, London.

government and publishers: a contractual link that will be established to improve the performance of the textbook supply chain so that it performs better and provides better value for money by reducing unit costs, and delivers curriculum-compliant teaching and learning materials in a cost-effective way and on a regular and equitable basis.

In the document context, the term “textbooks” means books for students in class and teacher’s guides, reference books, other classroom print materials such as wall charts and maps, and supplementary readers. The MoE is eager to provide a book-rich environment, both in and out of school, and to encourage school and community awareness of the value of textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM).

## 1. OBJECTIVES

### **Main objective**

To provide Guyana with an orientation and management document regarding affordable teaching and learning materials to improve its education system's efficiency.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To provide appropriate and attractive textbooks as a basis for the teaching and learning skills vital to personal, social and national development by joining forces active in government and the private sector
  - 1.1. To facilitate universal student access, in all regions, to all textbooks necessary for the study of national curricula, according to stated student/textbook ratios;
  - 1.2. To ensure that textbooks are compliant with the national curricula and the objectives stated in the ESP;
  - 1.3. To ensure that textbooks are attractive, durable, and reflect current regional and international perspectives and approaches.
  - 1.4. To ensure that those students with special educational needs are catered for.
2. To ensure that textbooks are procured and distributed efficiently and transparently according to objective criteria, transparent bidding processes and value for money.
3. To enhance access to textbooks and other reading materials to improve the reading culture in schools

## 2. STRATEGIES

### 2.1. Establish a fair and balanced Public-Private Partnership along the TLM chain

#### *2.1.1. Publishing*

To produce appropriate and attractive student books and teacher guides, the TLM publishing process is established as follows:

According to a publicly advertised publishing plan, realistic bid timetables and detailed bid documents, publishers are invited to submit whole manuscripts of their proposed student book and teacher guide along with a blank dummy for technical specifications. They will also submit their financial offer that, computed according to a publicly advertised mathematic formula with the marks awarded for content quality, shall allow the best value for money title(s) to be selected.

MoE/Book Management Unit develop tender procedures, transparent evaluation methodology/criteria, thorough bid documentation and management capacity to support the publishing and distributing of curriculum-compliant textbooks.

The evaluation/selection process allows a title to be featured on the Official Approval List (be it a single- or multi-title one) for a duration of five years and will be conducted according to the steps and modalities spelt out in the Supporting Documentation to this Policy.

Itemised evaluation sheets draw the evaluators' attention to specific criteria and sub-criteria to make an evaluation as objective as possible. A framework of textbook evaluation criteria (each of which carries a different weighting) to be used in publishing bids is provided below:

- Conformity to Curriculum (a minimum threshold will have to be reached)
- Content – Relevance, Accuracy, Topicality, Sufficiency, Appropriateness, Level, Organisation and Sequencing, Links with other subjects, Gender Balance, National Diversity, Cultural Sensitivity, Activities & Exercises, Methodology, Skills Development, Problem Solving, etc
- Language – Simplicity, Readability, Accuracy, Appropriateness, Editorial Quality
- Design & Presentation – Clarity & attractiveness of page format and layout, Accuracy and relevance of illustrations, Quality and interest of illustrations, Ease of use, Balance between text and illustrations
- Teacher Guide– Help with class assessment, Additional content, Multi-ability support, Low cost/no-cost ideas, Cross-referencing, Methodology, Assistance with Planning and Presentation, IT support

If the Approved Book List is set at one single title per subject per level, the evaluation/selection process doubles as the procurement process since the bidding documents will also include the number of copies to be procured per title. Beyond one title per subject per level, the goal of the evaluation/selection process will only be to fill the pre-defined number of entries of the Approved Book List, the final choice occurring at a level (school, region, cluster of schools/regions, etc.) and according to modalities to be defined.

#### *2.1.2. Printing*

Printing is an essential step in the TLM supply chain. But textbook quality, i.e. content quality, is developed in the publishing process. The publisher who wins the publishing bid thus has the right to select their printer according to financial and qualitative considerations, of which they himself are the judge and sign a contract with this printer.

### *2.1.3. Availability: distribution of physical TLMs and move towards e-TLMs*

The MoE entrusts the distribution of paper-based textbooks at the school level to the BMU, who, with the help of the Regional Education Officers and local communities, shall, in all transparency, identify the appropriate logistics providers to bring the textbooks to every school's doorsteps.

However, unfortunately, the problematic nature of the Guyanese terrain leads to inequalities in access to TLMs since it is complicated for paper-based textbooks to be regularly distributed to some remote communities, which thus cannot meet the student: TLM ratio objective. Switching from a 100% print TLM provision to a "blended learning" situation involving a growing proportion of e-TLMs is a way to mitigate this inequality. Adequate software and hardware, incentive policies and training programs, and projections over the total cost of ownership will have to accompany the deployment of e-learning materials. Teachers shall also be trained in the specific teaching and learning techniques that using e-TLMs in the classroom calls for.

TLMs at Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels are provided for free to public schools, according to a pre-defined TLM: student or TLM: classroom ratio.

### *2.1.4 Management and use of textbooks in schools*

To promote the effective use of textbooks, it is necessary to sensitise teachers, students and the community and develop and apply nationwide textbook management and control systems. All schools receive training and dedicated stationery for managing and caring for textbooks: their storage, lending, use, lifespan extension, stock management system, basic library management skills, and disposal procedures for outdated book stock. NCERD ensures that its initial and in-service teacher training curricula include a module on textbook selection, use, care and management.

## 2.2. Define roles, responsibilities and interactions within MoE

The MoE sees the provision of textbooks as a continuous process in which effective management of various activities is required. To ensure such effective management, the roles and responsibilities are divided among the various textbook-related entities as follows:

### *2.2.1. The Book Management Unit*

The BMU is the hub for textbook provision in Guyana. Building on the prerogatives of its former incarnation, the Book Distribution Unit, the Book Management Unit has been provided with an extended mandate that endows it with the responsibility for the upstream (planning, evaluation-approval) and downstream (publisher relations, training, monitoring) parts of the textbook supply chain: the BMU plans and macro-manages all TLM related operations; liaises with private sector partners (publishers and distributors), other government entities, and donors. To this end, it is provided with sufficient, predictable and recurrent funding.

The BMU, in cooperation with NCERD, ERDS, the DCEO for Amerindian and Hinterland Education Development, the ACEOs, MoE's Finance and Planning Units and REDOs, is in charge of:

- Coordinating and managing all participants and processes involved in textbook procurement
- Organizing and managing bids to update the approved and recommended lists
- Developing a Minimum Profile of TLMs per school level
- Anticipating, planning and addressing the textbook needs of schools
- Appointing, training and monitoring evaluators to evaluate the curriculum compliance, quality and price of textbooks submitted for use in schools

- Evaluating and selecting textbooks on a pre-submission basis and according to clear and publicly available criteria, as well as value-for-money objectives
- Developing and publishing a list of Approved Textbooks according to the number of titles per subject per grade that will be defined in the bid
- Signing approved list contracts with successful bidders
- In case of a single-title list: ordering books to the selected publisher(s)
- In case of a multi-title list: collecting orders from schools/regions, then placing orders with publishers
- Receiving and storing textbooks in its Georgetown warehouse
- Transporting textbooks to each Regional Education office and helping set up last-mile transportation via distribution loops
- Providing training for local officials, HMs and teachers, especially on TLM management and use
- Coordinating financial support for textbook provision from the MoE and donors and providing a liaison between the MoE and donors
- Monitoring, evaluating and, where necessary, making amendments to the system to improve cost-efficiency and effectiveness
- Sensitizing and informing schools, parents and the general public on textbook delivery, procurement and management
- Producing an Annual Textbook System Report for MoE, Development Partners and the General Public
- Providing advice to the Minister

#### *2.2.2. NCERD*

NCERD develops and revises the curricula on which the evaluation, selection, and publishing of new or revised textbooks will be based. In cooperation with the BMU and other relevant MoE entities, it develops a Minimum Profile of TLMs per school level and devises a plan that synchronises curriculum reforms with new TLM development and publication.

#### *2.2.3. ACEOs for Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education*

These Officers and their teams:

- With BMU, co-develop the criteria and specifications on the basis of which the TLMs will be evaluated and selected;
- Are part of the evaluation and selection process regarding those TLMs intended for their respective school levels.

#### *2.2.4. Planning Unit and ERDS*

MISU/the Planning Unit/ERDS provide accurate annual data on the location of schools, their current and projected enrollments, and their current textbook availability. ERDS is also in charge of monitoring the actual arrival and presence of TLMs in schools and maintaining a relevant nationwide database.

#### *2.2.5. National Procurement and Tender Administration*

In the case of a single-title Approved Book List, the NPTA officially issues tenders and awards markets to publishers for the provision and supply of the TLMs that have just been evaluated and selected through the tender. This official award grants these titles Approved Book List status.

In the case of a multi-title Approved Book List, the NPTA officially issues tenders and announces the TLM titles that have just been evaluated and selected through the tender. This official award grants these titles Approved Book List status.

#### *2.2.6. The Georgetown Regional Education Office and the Regional Education Offices*

The GREDO and the REDOs assist in last-mile distribution by mobilising all available resources to bring all TLMs to the doorstep of every school in their constituency. In collaboration with the ACEO Inspectorate and ERDS, they monitor the value of individual textbook titles for teachers and students, including curriculum coverage and student comprehension. They also monitor the availability, utilisation and distribution of relevant textbooks. Such information is fed back to the BMU via ERDS.

### 2.3. Define roles, responsibilities and interactions within the private sector and the community

#### *2.3.1. Publishers*

The MoE believes that professional publishing houses are best suited to produce quality, durable, good-value textbooks to be delivered on time for the beginning of each school year under strict selection and contractual guidelines enacted by the MoE. It supports a fair and balanced Public Private Partnership approach between the Ministry and private publishers to provide textbooks to be used in Guyanese schools, thus broadening access to textbooks and other reading materials and improving the reading culture in schools.

All foreign or Guyanese publishers are invited to compete to supply textbooks for the subjects and levels mentioned in the relevant publishing bids. These bids call for the finished goods, the textbooks, to be delivered in Georgetown.

In the longer term, the MoE also wishes to encourage the emergence of local Guyanese publishing resources: publishers that compete to supply textbooks must demonstrate a commitment to developing local Guyanese publishing skills. The form of this commitment may be specified by the MoE and included in the bidding documents.

Copyrights for textbooks supplied by publishers remain the property of the publisher (or of the author contracted by the publisher) since the transfer of copyrights from the publisher to MoE would have a significant negative impact on the commitment of the publisher to the development of the Guyanese market and on the number and quality of titles, if any, offered for bid. The MoE may exert an effective and fair control of reprint rights and prices by applying contractual terms that do not impinge on copyright ownership.

However, the publisher having won a bid for editorial formatting, relinquishes the copyright to MoE.

#### *2.3.2. Printers*

Printers are contracted by publishers who are awarded the publishing contract. Their work must comply with the technical specifications set out in the publishing bid.

#### *2.3.3. Regional logistics companies and communities*

With the help of the BMU (through its representatives sent into the regions) and the REDO teams, local communities, resources and entrepreneurs will implement the logistics to bring the textbooks to their end users, the schools. School management, teachers and PTAs will be accountable for the reception, care, internal dispatching and use of the textbooks.