GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING WINDOW

April 2020

GPE Transforming Education

GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING WINDOW*

April 2020

*The initial COVID-19 Accelerated Funding window was approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting on March 31, 2020 (BOD/2020/03 DOC 02) and increased in scale at its meeting on May 29, 2020 (BOD/2020/05 DOC 02). These guidelines were released in April 2020, and subsequently updated.

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD AND FUNDING

Countries Eligible for Accelerated Funding in Response to COVID-19

1.1 Countries eligible for COVID-19 accelerated funding under these guidelines are those that are eligible for education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG) funding, linked to the 2018-2020 GPE eligibility list. These 67 ESPIG-eligible countries are listed in Table 2 of Annex 1.

1.2 All 67 eligible countries are eligible to apply for funding from the COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window, including ones that have an existing Accelerated Funding allocation as a result of the Board decision in December 2019. The funding for COVID-19 mitigation and recovery has a different purpose and focus than the Accelerated Funding envelopes announced in December 2019 which support country-level humanitarian appeals. The latter should be used to respond to needs identified in humanitarian response plans and flash appeals.

Implementation Period

1.3 The implementation period for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding is 12 to 18 months. It is expected that resources are used for activities to mitigate and recover from the COVID crisis as identified in a publicly available government response plan.

Amount of funding

1.4 The amount of accelerated funding to address urgent needs and early recovery activities related to COVID-19 is outlined in Annex 1.

1.5 The GPE fund initially made US$250 million available to the new COVID-19 accelerated

funding window on March 31, 2020. Due to high demand from developing country partners, on May 29, 2020 the GPE Board increased the total funding window to US$500 million.[1]

Activities Eligible for Funding

1.6 The COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window supports GPE countries to deliver interventions included in their publicly available government response plan to COVID that enable learning to continue and education systems to recover from school closures. As requested by the GPE Board, applications should clearly demonstrate the link with the response plan that determines the need for these funds, ability to utilize them within the implementation timeframe, and a focus on the most vulnerable. While immediate mitigation measures are eligible, the expected focus of the accelerated funding would be on the recovery phase.

Illustrative examples of support: from mitigation to recovery and reopening of schools

1. Production of learning continuity programs broadcast through radio, tv, and online, and the provision of resources such as radios, textbooks, study guides and equipment to the poorest. This can be accompanied through free call-in numbers for asking questions, or through establishing a remote tutoring service using toll-free numbers at a local level.

2. Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and teachers; make sure that children with special educational needs and disabilities are included in continuity of learning programs. Provide appropriate psycho-social support to children and teachers.

3. Conducting sample assessments at different grade levels to track progress in key

[1] https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2020-05-GPE-Board-COVID19-additional-funding-proposal_EN.pdf.

areas like early grade literacy and numeracy and key subjects at secondary. This is essential to know who is being reached and how well students are learning so that interventions can be adapted accordingly.

4. The poorest will be affected the most by economic shocks (household income in Sierra Leone fell from US$336 to US$131 during the Ebola epidemic and there was an increase in girls getting pregnant). Interventions will likely be needed to protect the poorest and most vulnerable and enable them to continue learning, such as conditional cash transfers.

5. Officials and teachers may have been on other duties or forced to leave their jobs. Crisis and post- crisis education budgets will be under pressure but for rapid and effective recovery national systems must keep their teachers. It is essential to support them through the crisis, enable them to support continuity of learning and prepare them for recovery and reopening as well as addressing recruitment gaps if these emerge.

6. Schools may have been used for other purposes and may need refurbishing and require new supplies of books and equipment. Reopening will need to be planned and prepared for with health and wellbeing ensured.

7. The closure of schools, even with mitigation measures, will result in slower learning progress. The poorest are likely to fall further behind their richer peers. When schools reopen, large-scale assessment can identify learning gaps and inform remedial programming and learning opportunities so that all children catch up to grade level rapidly.

2. PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

Step 1: Initiating the Process

2.1 The Government or the Coordinating Agency informs the Secretariat of their intention to apply and provides a timeline for the submission of their application to the GPE Secretariat.

Step 2: Designation of a Grant Agent

2.2 The government, in consultation with the local education group (LEG) and, where it exists, the education cluster, selects a grant agent to support implementation of the emergency and early recovery program related to COVID-19. If a grant agent has been selected for the 'regular' Accelerated Funding window announced in December 2019, which supports country-level humanitarian appeals, the government can decide to maintain this grant agent for the COVID-19 accelerated funding, provided that said grant agent is available and has the capacity to serve in this role. In other cases, the process should be open and transparent, but with reduced timeline to allow for rapid response. Particular attention should be paid to the agency's ability to support timely application and implementation of the program.

2.3 To avoid delays in the transfer of funds, grant agents must be selected among agencies that have a Transfer Agreement for the GPE Fund executed prior to the submission of the application. Pre-accredited international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are eligible to become grant agents, and the Board of Directors has waived the requirement for a formal grant-level assessment of INGOs for allocations above US$5 million, noting the Secretariat will assess risk as part of the review of any such allocations. Within those considerations, selection of the grant

agent can be further guided by the GPE grant agent standard selection process[2].

Step 3: Development of the proposal

2.4 The grant agent develops a proposal in close collaboration with the government, the LEG and, where it exists, the education cluster. The format and internal approval process of the proposal follows the grant agent's internal procedures for emergency assistance programs. While there is no template for proposals, the cover note for COVID accelerated funding applications should accompany the application.

2.5 The proposal must:

a. be based on the publicly available government response plan related to COVID-19;
b. provide information on the sources of financing for COVID response and early recovery activities planned and information demonstrating that GPE funds will be complementary to government or other donor funding, including from Education Cannot Wait, where relevant;
c. provide information on targeting and equity, notably how needs of most vulnerable including girls will be addressed; and
d. indicate activities, budgets, results framework, implementation modalities in line with program standards outlined in Annex 2.

2.6 Countries can combine their applications for ESPIGs, regular and COVID-19 Accelerated Funding. However, in these cases, the shorter COVID-19 approval process can only be applied on the COVID-19 accelerated funding request. In the program document, COVID-19 activities and costs including program management should be

[2] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/standard-selection-process-grant-agents.

clearly delineated from the 'regular' Accelerated Funding and/or ESPIG. Moreover, implementation timelines for the COVID-19 accelerated funding portion need to be clearly indicated to allow assessment of their timeliness.

2.7 Countries can use the COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to support an existing ESPIG (parent ESPIG). In such a case, although the COVID-19 Accelerated Funding proposal will be treated as an additional financing to the parent ESPIG, the proposed program activities will be clearly delineated for COVID-19 related response and recovery.

Step 4: Application submission

2.8 The LEG, and where it exists the Education Cluster, must endorse the proposal, virtually when needed. LEG and where it exists the Education Cluster should be consulted on a draft proposal, either through a (virtual) meeting, or by sharing it with members for their feedback. Due to the emergency setting, timelines for consultation and endorsement can be shortened, though this should be compensated by clear communication on timing of the consultation and endorsement. Government and grant agent should work closely with the coordinating agency on timing and timelines. The Secretariat will confirm with the Coordinating Agency that consultation and endorsement has happened.

2.9 The Coordinating Agency is expected to submit the application package to gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org with copy to the DCP Focal Point, the Grant Agent and the Secretariat Country Lead. Depending on circumstances, the DCP Focal Point or the Grant Agent can submit the package as long as the two other parties are copied in the communication.

2.10 The application package must include:

- The proposal

- The cover note
- The government approved response/recovery plan related to COVID-19

Step 5: Application review and decision

2.11 The Secretariat conducts a final readiness review of the application package, with due attention to the relevance, quality and feasibility of the planned activities in line with the program standards in Annex 2 and prepares a summary for decision.

2.12 The CEO will review the application package for COVID-19 accelerated funding and make a decision.

Step 6: Transfer of funds

2.13 Following approval, the Secretariat conveys the approval to the Trustee. The Trustee will send a commitment letter to the designated grant agent, who will in turn request a transfer of funds.

Anticipated Timeframes

Activity	**Estimated Timeframe**
Step 1: Initiating the process	1-2 weeks
Step 2: Designation of a grant agent	
Step 3: Development of the proposal Step 4: Application	1-2 weeks
Step 5: Application review by Secretariat and CEO approval	2-3 weeks
Step 6: Transfer of funds	1 week

3. REPORTING AND REVISIONS

3.1 The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram the 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 in the Policy on ESPIGs.

3.2 In cases where COVID-19 Accelerated Funding supports an existing ESPIG (parent ESPIG), none of the GPE Funds under the approved COVID-19 related components may be reprogrammed into other components in parent ESPIG without prior agreement from the GPE Secretariat. Also, if in an unlikely situation the parent program encounters delays, measures should be in place to ensure that the GPE supported COVID-19 response program continues to be implemented to the extent practicable.

3.3 For COVID Accelerated Funding grants, the Grant Agent will be required to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation.

3.4 At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. The completion report format will be shared with Grant Agents.

ANNEX 1. COUNTRY ALLOCATION AMOUNTS LINKED TO SCHOOL AGED POPULATION

Table 1. Eligible countries based on revised funding window of US$500 million[3]

Up to US$15 million	DR Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda, Bangladesh, Nigeria
Up to US$11 million	Afghanistan, Nepal, Niger, Yemen, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya, Myanmar, Sudan
Up to US$7 million	Burundi, Burkina Faso, Benin, CAR, Chad, Eritrea, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, Cambodia, Congo Rep, Lao PDR, Nicaragua, Senegal, Zimbabwe
Up to US$3.5 million	Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Djibouti, Lesotho, Mauritania, Guyana, Timor Leste, Somalia (Puntland/ Somaliland)[4]
Up to US$1.5 million	Zanzibar[5]
Up to US$750,000	Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Table 2. Eligible countries based on initial funding window of US$250 million

Up to US$20 million	Bangladesh, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, Tanzania
Up to US$15 million	Afghanistan, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Sudan, Yemen
Up to US$10 million	Burundi, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Rep, Eritrea, Guinea, Haiti, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda,

[3] Excludes the following countries that had already accessed their allocation by the time the Board revised the funding window to US$500 million: Rwanda, Zambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Federal Government of Somalia, Pakistan, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania. These countries are included in Table 2.
[4] At the time of the revised allocation, Federal Government of Somalia had already applied for part of the country's allocation, so the balance was to be split between Puntland and Somaliland.
[5] At the time of the revised allocation, Tanzania had already applied for US$18m, so this represents the balance available for Zanzibar.

	Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Somalia, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Up to US$5 million	Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Timor-Leste
Up to US$1 million	Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

ANNEX 2: PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT OF
COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING APPLICATIONS (COUNTRY GRANTS)
(Last updated April 2020)

Eligibility
- Is the Country eligible for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding?
- Is the grant agent accredited by GPE? *Please confirm via COVID-19 FAQ list.*
- Has GA selection followed a clear and transparent process, with the process documented in the proposal?[6]
- Has the proposal been endorsed by the Local Education Group (and the Education Cluster where relevant)?
- Is the proposal based on a publicly available government response plan related to COVID-19, including education? *The proposal should explain where and how the response plan has been made publicly available (e.g., Government website, distribution to key stakeholders, etc.).*
- Will the program become effective within one month of GPE approval, with completion within 12-18 months from the date of program effectiveness?
Program Design & Coordination
- Are proposal activities (i) supporting basic education only, (ii) within the boundary of eligible activities under this funding window (see COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Guidelines, which focus on recovery and mitigation), or, if not within the boundary, are from the government response plan and well-justified, and (iii) likely to support program objectives / progress toward expected outputs and intermediate outcomes?
- Does the program, to a sufficient degree, reach poor, vulnerable, or otherwise disadvantaged children, including girls, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? *For targeted interventions, the proposal should include the targeting criteria to ensure equity (i.e., that interventions reach vulnerable populations).*
- Does the proposal identify a relevant COVID-19 response coordination mechanism(s) and confirm that the program will be represented in this mechanism?

[6] If a grant agent has been selected for the 'regular' Accelerated Funding window announced in December 2019, the government can decide to maintain the same grant agent for the COVID-19 accelerated funding.

- Does the proposal (i) provide information on the sources of financing for COVID-19 response and early recovery activities planned and (ii) information demonstrating that GPE funds will be complementary to government or other donor funding, including from Education Cannot Wait, where relevant?
Budget
- Is the proposed budget (excluding agency fee) within the GPE Board approved allocation for the country?
- Does the submitted budget clearly outline component, activity and grant agent implementation support costs? *Estimated unit costs and quantities should be clearly indicated. (Budget can be provided in a separate document from program document, preferably in a spreadsheet format)*
- Is there a clear indication of the program's sources of funding, including which parts of the program are supported by each source?
- Is the budget, and its assumptions, coherent with other parts of the program design? *This includes coherence between budgeted quantities and results framework output indicators where possible.*
M & E and Results Framework
- Is the proposed M & E framework costed and likely to support effective monitoring of program implementation and results reporting? [7] Are roles and responsibilities clearly mapped?
- Does the program include a complete results framework, including the key output and outcome indicators, baselines and targets and data sources? *Indicators should be disaggregated by gender where relevant.*
- Does the proposal confirm agreement to collect and report on required core indicators (where relevant) and follow GPE M&E Guidance for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Grants, including on standardized program reporting?
- Does the proposal include an activity line and budget for development and implementation of a *Learning from Evidence Plan*? *(see GPE M&E Guidance for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Grants)*
Implementation Arrangements & Readiness
- Does the proposal include a sufficiently detailed implementation plan with a timeline, activities, and roles and responsibilities clearly described?

[7] Government-led school census and EMIS activities may be disrupted because of the pandemic; the proposal should ensure available capacity and financing for data collection with this risk in mind.

- Are implementation arrangements sufficiently well-described to identify program management structures, responsible actors and processes?
- Are implementation arrangements are sufficiently described to determine flow of funds?
- Are proposed financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements clearly described and appropriate for the country context?
- Are proposed sub-contracting arrangements clearly described and appropriate?
- Are implementation support and oversight arrangements by the grant agent well described?
- Does the proposal ensure implementation arrangements will be in place to ensure rapid start-up? Specifically, will fiduciary and administrative arrangements allow for disbursement by the proposed start date? Will major interventions will be ready to be launched by the proposed start date?
Risk Assessment and Mitigation
- Are risks / insecurity that could threaten any vulnerable population (e.g. girls, displaced children) identified, with mitigation actions proposed?[8]
- Are risks related to fiduciary arrangements, including financial management, procurement, governance, and safeguards issues (harm to people or the environment) and adequate mitigation actions are identified?
- For grants exceeding US $5 million and the Grant Agent is an INGO: are there any significant risks regarding the capacity of the country office to perform the GA role that do not appear to be mitigated (e.g. through increased support from regional or HQ level, etc.)?
- Does the proposal trigger any GPE policies (e.g., GPE Private Sector Policy) which would require extraordinary consultation with GPE governance structures?

[8] For example, does the proposal refer to international health and safety standards regarding school closure, or guidance on re-opening schools?