EFA FTI Country Level Process Guide

April 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

The Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) is a global partnership focused on helping low-income countries to develop and implement education sector plans aimed at helping all children complete good-quality primary schooling.

The following guide is intended to give an **overview** of the basic process of joining and working within the EFA FTI Partnership at a country level. It is accompanied by **How To Notes** that detail individual processes (Annex 1). This guide refers to and links other EFA FTI knowledge products, such as the Appraisal Guidelines, the Capacity Development Guidelines and the Equity and Inclusion Tool, which can be found at the EFA FTI Web site: www.educationfasttrack.org

2. JOINING EFA FTI

There are four steps to joining the EFA FTI Partnership and a further step for countries wishing to access financial or technical support from the EFA FTI. These are elaborated in the following pages.

Step 1. Getting started

- The **FTI Secretariat provides information** to the Local Education Group (LEG) to ensure clear understanding at the country level around the EFA FTI Partnership and its processes.
- The Local Education Group engages a dialogue with the Government around its objectives and policy priorities for the education sector.
- **Government expresses interest in engagement with EFA FTI**.

Step 2. Developing a credible plan

- The Government takes primary responsibility for developing an education sector plan, informed in part by the FTI Appraisal Guidelines. Plans may be comprehensive or interim. Interim plans, which typically target only a part of the education system, may be the appropriate starting point in countries with low capacity or facing emergency situations. Participation in plan development will include the Ministries of Education and Finance, and should reflect broad dialogue with interested parties in country.
- The Local Education Group will support education plan development as appropriate. EFA FTI financing is available to support this process. (See EFA FTI support for Plan Development How To Note).

- If needed, a **joint fiduciary review** should be undertaken to assess overall fiduciary capacity and the need for capacity development and inform the choice of an effective and suitable modality for future donor support, including for financial support from the EFA FTI Fund.
- The FTI Secretariat is kept informed of progress throughout the process of plan development and provides feedback.

Step 3. LEG endorses the Education Sector Plan

- The **LEG** appraises the plan. External technical support may be used to introduce a new perspective on the work achieved. The **FTI Appraisal Guidelines** provide the framework for posing the pertinent questions and the **Progressive Framework** gives benchmarks which can be used to discuss current capacity and set appropriate targets in key areas.
- Using the appraisal report proposed by external technical assistance, the LEG produces a draft appraisal report.
- Before endorsement of the plan is finalized, the FTI Secretariat ensures, through an **External Quality Review**, that the appraisal is consistent with the FTI Appraisal Guidelines and that the plan is ready for endorsement.
- The government finalizes its plan and the LEG provides its endorsement. The Coordinating Agency informs the FTI Secretariat of the endorsement; the Secretariat informs the EFA FTI Partnership.
- The LEG agrees on a common action agenda in support of the endorsed plan. This will include further actions to strengthen the plan (policy decisions and actions on capacity development, public financial management and procurement reforms, and aid effectiveness).

Step 4. Accessing Additional EFA FTI Technical and Financial Resources

- Upon endorsement, donor organizations confirm commitments and make plans for scaling up and aligning support around the plan. The FTI Secretariat organizes a meeting of potential donors to address any remaining financing needs or needs for additional technical support. If domestic and donor resources are insufficient to implement the endorsed plan, low income countries may apply for financial and/or technical resources from the EFA FTI.
- Discussions begin on the nomination of a Supervising Entity (SE). The choice of SE will be partly driven by which agency can best support delivery of what activities are needed through the preferred modality (See Supervising Entity How To Note).
- LEGs may contact the FTI Secretariat for the following technical support:

Resource Centers. The FTI Secretariat will offer countries the technical support of a small number of specialist institutions through a "call down resource center" arrangement. This includes provision of consultancy services as well as information services which will be strategically targeted to plan development and implementation. This arrangement is intended to facilitate FTI partner countries' timely access to quality expertise and reduce transaction costs.

EFA FTI Country Support Team. The FTI Secretariat staff foster close ties with countries and provide technical support and guidance as needed, both on FTI processes as well as broader educational policy and planning issues. Subject specialists may also be available to provide support on key policy issues (e.g. education economics, public sector reform, equitable access) to partner countries.

- The LEG prepares a request for EFA FTI support. The request should:

  a) Specify what the EFA FTI resources will be used for and how they will complement the Government and other donors' funding.
  b) Summarize all domestic and external resources, along with an explanation of the limitations in increasing bilateral and multilateral funding to cover the identified funding gap.
  c) Specify the amount and duration of the requested EFA FTI support.
  d) Specify the grant modality and the Supervising Entity/Entities. Transfer agreements will be developed when the SE is not the World Bank.

The request would include the following documentation:

  a) The medium- or long-term plan and a detailed financing plan
  b) The appraisal report and endorsement of the plan by the Local Education Group.
  c) The program document[1]

The EFA FTI Partnership anticipates countries will use one of the following three modalities as a channel for EFA FTI support:

1. **Sector/General Budget Support**. These are preferred modalities for the EFA FTI Partnership. Program documentation should indicate what share of education expenditures will be covered by EFA FTI financing in the case of sector budget support.
2. **Pooled funding**. In countries where a joint financing mechanism is operational, it is expected that EFA FTI financing will co-fund this. It is important to show what share of the joint fund will be covered by EFA FTI financing and how the joint fund complements the efforts of government and donors outside of the joint fund.
3. **"Stand alone" project.** This may be the only option where a more aligned modality is not in operation or is, for some reason, not appropriate. If a more aligned modality exists, the request for EFA FTI support must explain why it is not being used. Project documentation must show how project activities are delivering key elements of the plan and how they complement the activities of others.

- Where possible, the same panel that conducted the initial review of the plan and appraisal will conduct an **External Quality Review** of the final application for EFA FTI support once it is formally submitted to the FTI Secretariat. The FTI Secretariat shares the findings with the LEG which provides a formal response to any issues raised. The FTI Secretariat transmits the documentation to the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors considers the request and makes an allocation which is communicated to the country via e-mail by the FTI Secretariat.
- Final arrangements are made for the EFA FTI fund allocation to be transferred to the agency/donor who has been nominated as Supervising Entity(s). In most cases, the Supervising Entity(s) will then enter a grant arrangement with the partner country.

[1] For a pooled fund this may be the pooled fund agreement as signed by government and donors; for a "stand alone" project or program, this would normally be a project document in line with the SE agency's norms.

Step 5. Monitoring implementation

- All Local Education Groups provide an **annual progress report** on plan implementation. When feasible, implementation of the plan should be monitored through a **Joint Sector Review** (see JSR How To Note).
- The FTI Partnership accepts the Joint Sector Review report/aide memoire as an annual statement of progress on plan implementation as long as it provides the basic information detailed in the FTI JSR How To Note.
- Supervising Entities provide a separate progress report and financial statement on EFA FTI grant expenditures. If joint monitoring does not take place, or is inadequate to meet FTI reporting needs, SEs are required to submit a separate annual progress report (link to template). The FTI Partnership can provide financial and technical support to build monitoring and evaluation capacity if needed.
- All Local Education Groups submit an EFA FTI grant **completion report** (link to template) once all EFA FTI resources are expended.
- By the last year of the grant period, as a part of the Joint Sector Review, the LEG considers the need for further support from the FTI and whether it is necessary to update the plan.
- In the case of a country with an interim plan, the LEG should also consider whether there is now sufficient capacity to develop and implement a comprehensive sector plan.

How to notes (links to website)

- How to elaborate an Education Sector Plan (ESP)?
- What is an Interim Education Plan (IEP)?
- Q&A for Supervising Entities
- Appraisal Guidelines (to be revised to include full education sector)
- Learning outcomes
- Joint Sector Review
- Focal Point system and EFA FTI support for ESP/IEP Development
- Activities that could be supported by the EFA FTI Partnership