Board Retreat Framing Note

1. GPE Strategic Planning Process – Where Are We Up To?

The Global Partnership for Education (Global Partnership or GPE) stands at a pivotal moment in its development. The new Sustainable Development Goals call for a global lift in ambition and financing for education to build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and ensure a quality education for all.

At the Board Retreat in December 2014, the Board mandated the Secretariat to commence work on a five-year Strategic Plan (2016–2020). In May 2015, the Board agreed to a Concept Note and a comprehensive plan for consultation beyond the Board on the Strategic Plan. Immediately following the May Board meeting, a Reference Group of the Board, 'Reference Group 2,' was established to finalize the Concept Note for external consultation. An online survey was a key component of the consultations and included 80 respondents representing over 600 partner organizations. The feedback from the consultations indicates strong support for the Strategic Plan Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives and Principles. In addition, an Independent Evaluation completed in September 2015 recommends that the Board further clarify the scope, scale and global levers of the Global Partnership as part of the Strategic Plan. Both the Evaluation and consultations on the Strategic Plan produce a rich and substantive body of perspectives that build on the direction of the December 2014 and May 2015 Board decisions.

In parallel to the consultations on the Concept Note, a Reference Group of the Board, 'Reference Group 1,' has developed a roadmap and set of recommendations for strengthening the GPE Operational Platform, drawing on extensive consultations with key country-level partners and stakeholders and benchmarking of the Global Partnership against similar organizations. The roadmap builds on the core recommendations from the December 2014 Organizational Review to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver a strengthened Operational Platform and facilitate impact at the country level.

The broad emerging direction from both the Evaluation and the consultations on the Strategic Plan is for the partnership to recognize the challenging global education agenda and aim for a higher level of ambition that adds value to its members and to the collective efforts of all partners. Concurrently, this direction recognizes the need for the partnership to put in place the necessary building blocks to achieve an expanded vision and accelerated level of ambition. Together, this expanded vision and ambition and the building blocks to achieve it could be considered to comprise the direction of the new five-year Strategic Plan.

2. Rising Ambition in the Global Education Agenda

The Incheon Declaration and draft Education 2030 Framework for Action that emerged from the 2015 World Education Forum challenged the global education community to come together in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4 with a transformative agenda that builds on the Education for All movement. In July, the International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunity was announced at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development with the aim to explore more effective, accountable, and coordinated ways to resource education in support of the Education 2030 Framework for Action and sustainable development agenda.

At the Financing for Development conference that followed, the Global Partnership was recognized as a key vehicle for delivering on this important call to action. The global community's call for a strengthened and scaled up Global Partnership in the Addis Action Agenda is an important step forward. The recently announced Commission on Financing presents a unique moment to explore how to finance SDG 4. The timing of the Commission opens up an important and timely opportunity for the Global Partnership to work in parallel with the Commission over the coming months. The Chair of the GPE Board has been appointed one of the commissioners to the Commission. The Board will need to define what a higher level of ambition is and consider in parallel financing for the Global Partnership in sequence with the work of the Commission on Financing.

3. An Overview of the Key Areas for Board Deliberation at the Retreat

Based on the Evaluation findings and the result of the consultations, three key areas for deliberation at the Board Retreat in October have been identified as central to defining a higher level of ambition for the Global Partnership. Consideration of these key areas by the Board will inform revisions to the current Strategic Plan Concept Note ahead of the final Board decisions in December. The Theory of Change and Results Framework will define how GPE monitors strategic goals and objectives.

a) Define Scope, Scale and Align with Strategic Financing

The Evaluation and consultations, and the rising ambitions captured in the Sustainable Development Goals each suggest a need for further deliberation on the GPE strategic vision and level of ambition. The Evaluation notes the challenges of meeting current ambitions on the basis of the 2014 replenishment and the growing external demands for an expanded vision. The consultations suggest that while some Board members prefer a continued focus on financing for basic education, other partners would like to expand the geographic and thematic scope and scale of the Global Partnership to also include funding a) graduates from GPE planning grant eligibility; b) a full cycle of education including upper secondary; and c) children affected by conflict and crisis.

At the Board Retreat in October, the Board will be asked to consider a path forward for the realization of an expanded vision and increased financial ambition for the partnership over the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan period, recognizing the key constraints and requirements, including that attracting more financing runs in parallel with aiming for a higher level of ambition. The proposed focus will be on exploring and sequencing the key elements that would need to be put in place to achieve an expanded vision in a staged manner.

b) Strengthen the Operational Platform

At the Board Retreat in October, the Board will be asked to review a roadmap and set of recommendations for strengthening the GPE Operational Platform from Reference Group 1, drawing on extensive consultations with key country-level partners and stakeholders as well as benchmarking of the Global Partnership against similar organizations. This roadmap defines roles and accountabilities and recommends a set of actions to strengthen the Operational Platform both in terms of its leveraging mechanisms and grant administration. The Operational Platform may need further refinements as a result of the strategic planning process and as GPE accesses additional financing.

c) Define Global and Cross National Levers

The Evaluation recommends that the Board "decide whether the Partnership will continue to aspire to fill a global role beyond resource mobilization and grant-making." In particular, it suggests the Board define the Partnership's role in promoting and financing global public goods, and describe how the Global Partnership will mobilize technical and policy knowledge and exchange of good practice from across the Partnership to catalyze GPE country-level impact. Findings from the Strategic Plan consultations indicate strong demand for the Partnership to play a role in these areas.

At the Board Retreat in October, the Board's deliberations of these issues will help to clarify the Global Partnership's level of ambition for the five-year period of the Strategic Plan.

4. A Roadmap for the Five-Year Strategic Plan

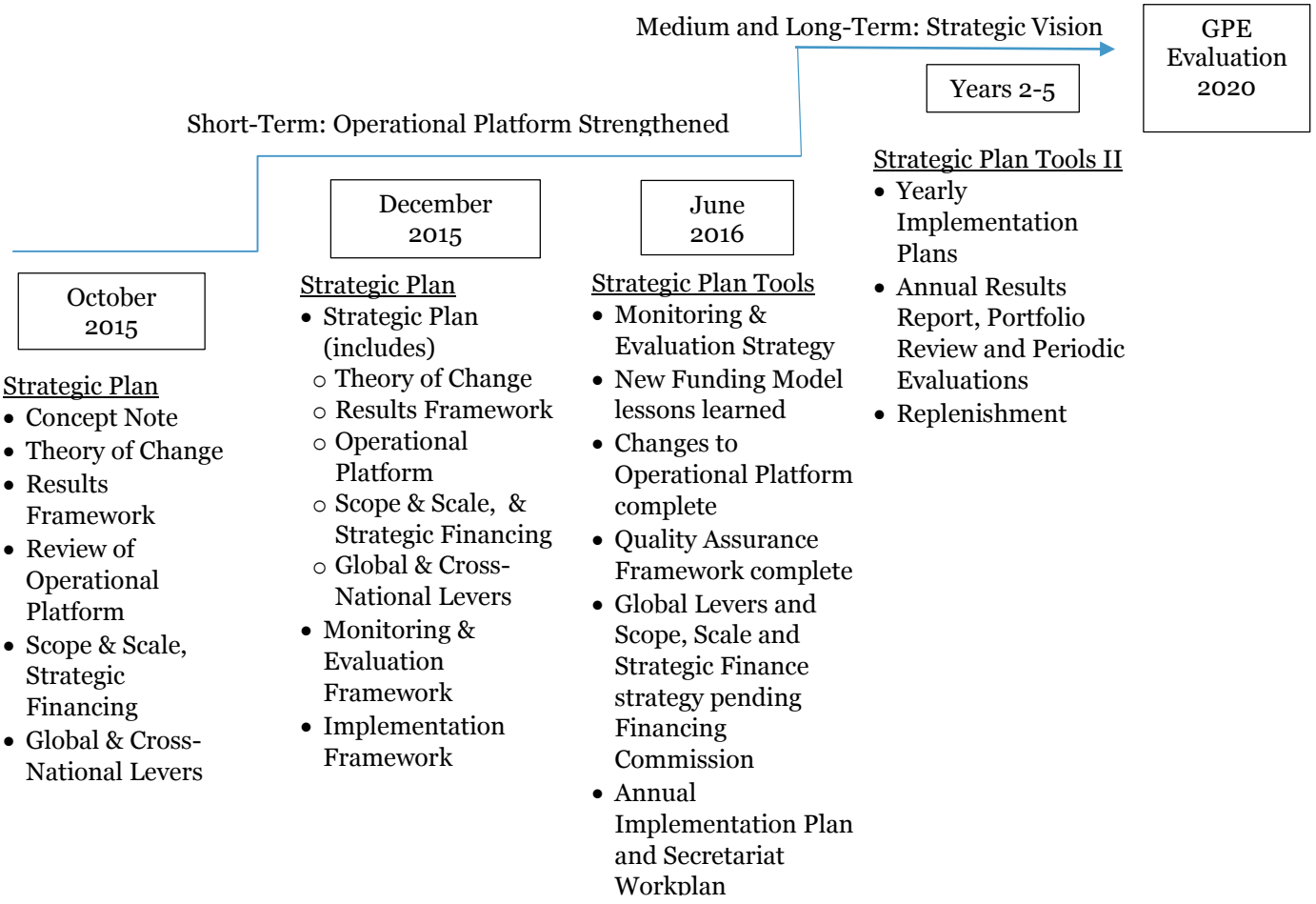
It is for the Board to decide the vision and new level of ambition for the Global Partnership. Figure 1 below may aid Board decision making by setting out diagrammatically a possible sequence of proposed building blocks to reach a potential vision and new level of ambition for the Global Partnership. This sequence prioritizes building consensus on the key elements of the Strategic Plan for the October Retreat, notably a strengthened Operational Platform, draft Theory of Change and Results Framework, and Strategic Plan Concept Note as well as clarify the scope, scale and global levers of the Global Partnership as part of the Strategic Plan.

Implementation of the roadmap and recommendations from the Reference Group to strengthen the Operational Platform could begin immediately following the October Retreat. These and other reforms identified via Committee or reference group would be completed by the Board meeting in June 2016, laying the foundation to reach this envisioned higher level of ambition.

At the December Board meeting, it is proposed that these key elements be melded together to become the Strategic Plan, which would then be accompanied by a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and an Implementation Plan. The Board would also be asked to consider key recommendations related to strategic financing. At the June 2016 Board meeting, it is proposed that the Board consider two final pieces on Global and Cross-National Levers and Scope, Scale and Strategic Financing via Committee or reference groups to bring recommendations on these issues to the Board.

Annual reporting and periodic evaluations beginning in December 2016 would contribute to an ongoing evaluation of progress throughout the strategic cycle to assess whether the Global Partnership has achieved the strategic vision in its 2020 Strategic Plan.

Figure 1: Roadmap to Deliver on Potential Vision and New Level of Ambition for the Global Partnership



Annex: Accompanying Documents for the October Retreat

The Board will receive two sets of accompanying documents for the October Retreat; with additional background documents available on the Board Registration site.

Retreat Component	September 25 Document Package I	October 2 Document Package II
1. Retreat Agenda	✓	
2. Draft Theory of Change and Results Framework	✓	
3. Report on Strategic Plan Consultations, including External Consultant's Report on Results of Online Survey	✓ *Consultation notes on the Board E-site	
4. Proposed Changes to Vision, Mission Goals, Objectives and Principles Arising from the Strategic Plan Consultations	✓	
5. Operational Platform Paper and Recommendations	✓	
6. Framing Paper	✓	
7. Independent Evaluation (Volumes 1 and 2) and Management Response		✓
8. Slide Deck: Scope, Scale and Strategic Financing		✓
9. Slide Deck: Global and Cross-National Levers		✓