EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP REVIEW: REPORT FROM THE GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

For Decision

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are not public documents until the Board has considered them at the Board meeting. It is understood that constituencies will circulate Board documents among their members prior to the Board meeting for consultation purposes.

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to request the Board to assess and provide direction to the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) with respect to the report of the Effective Partnership Review conducted by Oxford Policy Management (OPM).

1.2 The report identifies issues and bottlenecks related to the Partnership's operational model at the country level that prevent GPE from functioning optimally in delivering on GPE 2020, and includes recommendations to address them.

Summary of Committee Deliberations

Following its review of the findings and recommendations of the draft report at its May 14, 2018 audio call, the GPC:

- **Appreciated the additional consultation by OPM with DCPs** at the DCP meeting on May 9-11, 2018 in Maputo, which has allowed the reinforcement of the DCP voice in the findings and the conclusions of the report. The Committee also appreciated the additional discussion with CSOs at the DCP meeting.
- **Endorsed the report**, assessing the findings and analysis to be relevant and pertinent, and accurately reflecting the complexity of the Partnership at country level, while also acknowledging the divergent views and perspectives that exist across constituencies and country contexts. The Committee praised OPM for having delivered within a tight timeline a detailed and well-organized report.

- **Agreed with the main conclusion** that no major adjustments in the GPE operational model are required at this time, but emphasized that key actions are needed to finetune the model and ensure the model functions more efficiently in the diverse contexts in which it is implemented, including in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. As such, the Committee agreed that the study invites a further *evolution* of the partnership but not a '*revolution*' or deeper reform.
- **Agreed that roles and responsibilities must be clearer, as they are operationalized** – the Secretariat's support to countries, where provided through the country leads, requires clear and transparent terms of reference (TORs), which should include support planned for emergencies. The TORs for country leads and those for grant agents and coordinating agencies respectively need to be coordinated and distinguishable. The Committee agreed that a consultative process with partners, including DCPs, is required to review these TORs and agree on them, and that the roles must be adaptable and further contextualized under the leadership of government and in consultation with the local education group. This should move ahead as soon as possible and the GPC is content to oversee this process. It was emphasized that in the spirit of an efficient and effective partnership this work should not result in adding to existing processes in this area.
- **Agreed that the underlying principle of mutual accountability for results is often not evident** in the Partnership in practice, and that this needs to be addressed as a priority by the Board/Partnership.
- **Agreed that capacity development of developing country partners, in particular via specific interventions of the grant agent (GA) and coordinating agency (CA), is key in the operational model** and that it should be transparently addressed including approach, responsibilities of the GA and CA, and funding, monitoring and evaluating such interventions.
- **Agreed that any adjustments made to the operational model should adhere to aid effectiveness principles**, and pay specific attention to avoiding duplicative and additional processes. Therefore, agreeing clear roles and responsibilities at country level should precede the assessment of support needed.
- **Requested OPM to have more strategic-level and actionable recommendations and reduce and combine the initial 18 recommendations** of the draft report into a smaller set of prioritized recommendations in its revised report. The Committee requested that the recommendations have stronger and more balanced linkages to the core of the findings, and clearer explanations for how they will help address the scale of issues and bottlenecks identified. The latter was also found valid for those recommendations that feed into ongoing workstreams (summarized in the annex of the report, Volume II).

- **Concluded that the study was comprehensive.** However, there was insufficient time to agree full consensus on whether a Phase 2 of the Review was needed. One concern raised was that the review did not adequately examine the role of the developing country partner as a central actor of GPE's country-level operational model; the current report focuses solely on the developing country partner with respect to the other key actors (GA, CA, LEG and Secretariat). However, there was equal recognition of the need to move forward as quickly as possible to address some of the issues identified in the report.

The Committee further noted that time for consultation had been limited prior to the May 14 audio call and further consultation within the constituencies would be required and may result in further input for follow-up on the report during the Board meeting.

It is also noted that the Committee reviewed the draft report and recommendations, but because of time constraints did not have the opportunity to discuss the finalized report that was shared with the Board (see Annex 1).

2. RECOMMENDED DECISION

2.1 The Grants and Performance Committee recommends that the Board approve the following decision:

BOD/2018/06-XX–Effective Partnership Review: The Board of Directors in reference to BOD/2016/12-19 and BOD/2017/03-06 7.b.iii:

1. Appreciates the report from Oxford Policy Management set out in BOD/2018/06 DOC 07A.
2. Agrees the GPE operational model overall is fit for purpose and no major adjustments are required at this time but endorses the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) view that further actions are needed to improve efficiency and effectiveness at country level.
3. Notes the GPC conclusions on the draft report set out in BOD/2018/06 DOC 07B, including recognition that some of the recommendations are addressed in ongoing work streams led by the GPC, the Finance and Risk Committee (FRC), and the Strategy and Impact Committee (SIC).
4. Requests [specific actions/next steps to be informed by the deliberations of the Board during the June 12-14, 2018 Board meeting, for example, on whether a Phase 2 of the review is needed and/or a costed action plan, or any specific action that warrants prioritization such as the development of enhanced TORs for the grant agent, coordinating agency, and Secretariat country lead].

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 During the December 2016 Board meeting in the context of discussing Secretariat capacity and efficiency, the Board decided to expand the discussion and look beyond just Secretariat capacity. The Board requested the Secretariat, with the help of an external firm, to examine how other key elements of the partnership such as grant agents, coordinating agencies, and local education groups can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible to deliver GPE 2020 (BOD/2016/12-09).

3.2 The Board at its March 2017 meeting further requested the work to incorporate clarifying responsibility and optimizing approaches for capacity building and technical assistance, including in fragile and conflict-affected countries (BOD/2017/03-06 7.b.iii).

3.3 Accordingly, in November 2017, the Secretariat retained Oxford Policy Management in Partnership with Dalberg to conduct a review of the Partnership effectiveness and efficiency at country level. The inception phase was overseen by the GPC, which was assigned oversight of the work stream by the Coordinating Committee. Following consultation with the Board in December 2017 on the overall approach to the study and through their GPC representatives, the inception report was finalized mid-March and shared with the Board.[1]

3.4 Next, OPM set out to interview and consult all grant agents and coordinating agencies, as well as a range of developing country partners, and civil society organizations, and the Secretariat to inform the analysis and recommendations set out in the report in Annex 1. This was followed by consultation with 51 DCP representatives at the DCP meeting in Maputo on May 9-11 on the draft report, as well as with a group of CSO representatives present at the meeting.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The GPC reviewed the draft report during its May 14, 2018 audio call and generally supported the findings in the report and came to some consensus on specific recommendations in the draft report, as set out in Section 1.2. However, the Committee emphasized that the constrained timelines did not provide sufficient opportunity to consult with the constituencies and therefore did not come to consensus on proposed specific recommendations to the Board. In addition, it is noted that subsequent to the GPC audio call, the report was finalized and the recommendations modified by OPM in an effort to incorporate comments from Committee members and the GPC did not have an opportunity to collectively discuss the final report and revised recommendations attached to this paper.

[1] Inception report: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/examination-key-actors-roles-gpes-country-level-operational-model-inception-report-volume-1

4.2 As a result of these circumstances but also in recognition that there are just over two years left to deliver on GPE 2020, the recommendation in this paper requests that the Board during the June meeting discuss the report findings and develop consensus on clear actions and timelines with regard to next steps. In particular, the Board may consider:

- Whether a Phase 2 of the review is required and – if agreed – the focus and timeline of a second phase.
- Whether the Board agrees to the need for a costed action plan especially for issues not being addressed within ongoing workstreams and – if agreed – the criteria, timeline and approval process for such an action plan.

4.3 The GPC emphasizes the need to move forward immediately with clarifying the roles of the grant agent, the coordinating agency, and the Secretariat country lead, and develop in a consultative process with partners enhanced, coordinated and distinguishable terms of reference (TORs) for the grant agent, coordinating agency and Secretariat country lead that are clear and transparent and give due consideration to adaptability to specific country-level contexts. The GPC proposes to oversee the process of formulating the TORs and testing in-country prior to Board review and approval. The Committee notes that this work could be funded from the set-aside referenced in Section 5.1.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

5.1 The financial implications are dependent on the outcome of the Board meeting. It is noted that the Secretariat budget includes a US$250,000 set-aside for follow-up to the Effective Partnership Review in the FY19 budget. Any resources required in addition would require a Board decision.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 Next steps are dependent on the outcome of the Board deliberations at the June meeting. It is noted, however, that there are several existing work streams linked to the findings that can absorb some of the report findings and related costs.

7. PLEASE CONTACT Margarita Focas Licht (mlicht@globalpartnership.org) for further information.

8. REFERENCES

BOD/2018/06-DOC 07A – Volume I - Effective Partnership Review: Examination 0f Key Actors' Roles in GPE's Country-Level Operational Model Towards GPE 2020 Delivery

Reference: Volume II – Annexes to Volume I is posted on the Board meeting registration site.