GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP for EDUCATION

**BOD/2019/03 DOC 02**
**Board of Directors**
**Decision via Affirmative vote**
**March 31, 2019**

# ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY (ASA) MECHANISM - PORTFOLIO APPLICATION

**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. OBJECTIVES

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to request the Board to approve the grant agent proposal for the Advocacy and Social Accountability mechanism (ASA) submitted by Oxfam IBIS (Annex 3), as recommended by the Strategy and Impact Committee (SIC), following its discussion during its February 26-27 meeting.

*Summary of Strategy and Impact Committee deliberations*

- The SIC endorsed the grant agent proposal developed by the Oxfam IBIS after some improvements in the management structure to align it with the KIX mechanism, clarification on the role of the different actors and the way sustainability would be supported by ASA and regular reporting by Oxfam on its efforts to strengthen safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse, were incorporated as requested by the Committee.
- The ongoing oversight arrangements for ASA grant management and performance should be clarified by the Coordinating Committee during its next meeting in March.

## 2. RECOMMENDED DECISION

2.1 The Strategy and Impact Committee recommends that the Board approve the following decision:

**BOD/2019/03 – 02: Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) mechanism – Portfolio Application:** The Board of Directors:

1. Approves an allocation from GPE trust funds of US$55,500,000 (inclusive of agency fees of US$3,630,841) to Oxfam IBIS as Grant Agent for the Advocacy and Social Accountability mechanism as described in the application (BOD/2019/03 DOC 02) subject to:
    a. availability of funds
    b. and commitment of funds in annual installments.
2. Requests the Secretariat to report on implementation progress to the relevant Committee(s) on an annual basis.
3. Approves the process set out in BOD/2019/03 DOC 02 for any programmatic revisions and extensions to the grant.

## 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The ASA Theory of Change and operational structure was adopted by the Board in December 2017:

**BOD/2017/12-12—<u>Advocacy and Social Accountability:</u>** The Board of Directors:

1. Approves the goal, objectives, outputs and operational components for the Advocacy and Social Accountability (ASA) funding mechanism.
2. Adopts the parameters for (1) eligibility criteria; (2) allocation of resources by objective; (3) frequency of grants as stated in BOD/2017/12-DOC 10.
3. Delegates authority to the Strategy and Impact Committee to approve stage 2 operational design options for the ASA mechanism. This includes the authority to:
    a. Approve the criteria and process for the selection of the grant agent(s).
    b. Approve selection criteria and procedures for calls for proposals.
    c. Review and approve the overall approach to reporting, monitoring and grant extension or restructuring

3.2 **Approval of the ASA Blueprint**: Throughout 2018, the Secretariat worked with the SIC to develop the proposal for the ASA mechanism. In early 2018, the Secretariat shared the mid-term evaluation of Civil Society Education Fund with the SIC and discussed its recommendations for the ASA design with the committee in May. The Secretariat also conducted monthly consultations with the Technical Advisory Panel through July, to inform the ASA Blueprint. The ASA Blueprint was presented to the SIC in July and the SIC approved the ASA Blueprint in September following minor revisions to the design.

3.3 **Recruitment of the Grant Agent:** The Secretariat developed Terms of Reference for the ASA Grant Agent in May and worked with the firm Second Muse/Bivee to conduct a recruitment and assessment of candidates. In July, the SIC considered the shortlist of Grant Agent candidates, and

requested further due diligence on the final candidate for Grant Agent, Oxfam IBIS, before approving Oxfam IBIS in September as the Grant Agent on the basis of this additional information. The Finance and Risk Committee formerly approved the accreditation in September following successful completion of an institutional capacity assessment.

3.4 **ASA Allocation:** Finally, the SIC recommended that the Board allocate US$60 million to the ASA mechanism initially and, based on a SIC review of implementation progress and demand in 2019, an additional US$10 million may be considered subject to available resources. On the basis of this recommendation, the Board approved this decision in June 2018 (BOD/2018/06-12). In December 2018, the Global Campaign for Education indicated its desire to submit a costed extension of its CSEF III program, to bridge the gap between CSEF III closure and the start-up of ASA with 9 months of funding amounting to no more than US$4.5 million. Therefore, the ASA Portfolio Application is based on the remainder of the ASA allocation of US$55.5 million.

## 4. PROGRAM READINESS REVIEW PROCESS SUMMARY

4.1 An internal Secretariat review team was established to assure the quality of the ASA proposal. The team met on 12th December to identify improvements and provide input to the grant agent for further revision to the proposal between 13th and 21st December. Feedback was provided to Oxfam IBIS on the basis of an assessment framework comprised of guiding questions for both ASA and KIX which were developed in collaboration with the Quality Assurance (QA) team and based on an adaptation of the ESPIG QA criteria. The management team did a final review of the draft ASA Portfolio Application on January 7. The findings of the Quality Assurance process can be found in the attached Program Readiness Review which is included in Annex 2.

4.2 A Board consultation was held on the draft proposal on January 30th which is also summarized in the Program Readiness Review. Finally, the Strategy and Impact Committee provided comments on the draft proposal requesting revisions in a number of areas. A table is included in the Program Readiness Review which outlines the requested changes, and the changes made to the proposal by Oxfam IBIS to address these comments.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

5.1 Upon approval of the program and completion of CSEF III, existing Secretariat resources will shift emphasis from supporting the design of the ASA proposal and oversight of the CSEF III to supporting the successful implementation and oversight of ASA. Any incremental resources required will be considered as part of the FY20 Budget and Workplan which will be considered by the Board in June 2019.

## 6. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Strategy and Impact Committee noted that responsibility for oversight of grant management and performance of any ASA grant is a responsibility of the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) per its terms of reference. Recognizing the heavy workload of the GPC over 2019/2020, it requested the Coordinating Committee to decide at its March meeting on the relevant Committee(s) that would be responsible for oversight of grant management and performance of the ASA grants, while the SIC is proposed to oversee overall ASA mechanism performance via its current mandate for Results Report and other monitoring.

6.2 The Secretariat in conjunction with Oxfam IBIS will provide an annual implementation update to the relevant Committee(s) for its/their review. Building on existing practice for ESPIGs and CSEF III, any material changes to the program design or extensions to the program implementation period are recommended to be treated based on the approach outlined in Annex 1.

## 7. RISKS

7.1 There are several risks may impact the timely operationalization of the ASA mechanism. These relate to any delays in the processes required to launch ASA. First is the possibility of non-approval of the proposal by the Board. Oxfam IBIS may also encounter challenges in the rapid recruitment of the staff required to operationalize ASA at both the global and regional management units. This would delay the proposal as additional revisions are made, likely leading to implementation beginning later in 2020. To mitigate these risks, the Secretariat has undertaken a thorough program review to quality assure, the Board has been given advance opportunity to feedback on and inform revisions to the proposal, and the Strategy and Impact Committee conditioned their recommendation to the Board on changes to the proposal. To mitigate the risk of delayed implementation and recruitment of ASA staff, Oxfam IBIS has developed a recruitment plan to be initiated upon approval by the Board, so that they can move quickly to operationalize.

## 8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 If the Board approves the proposal, Oxfam IBIS will begin set-up of the program, following execution of the Financial Procedures Agreement and transfer of funds from the Trustee.

9. **PLEASE CONTACT:** Sarah Beardmore, (sbeardmore@globalpartnership.org) for further information.

**ANNEX 1 - Process for Revision of the ASA Program**

**ANNEX 2 - ASA Portfolio Application Final Readiness Review**

**ANNEX 3 - ASA Portfolio Application**

## ANNEX 1 – PROCESS FOR REVISIONS OF THE ASA PROGRAM

### 1. DEFINITION OF REVISIONS

A change or series of changes to indicators and targets, modification of program scope or design, additions or cancellations of program components or subcomponents, as compared to the Board's Approval, are considered:

a. **minor revisions** if they result in a reallocation from GPE trust funds of less than US$2.5 million of the total grant amount.

b. **non-minor revisions** if they result in:

   i. a less than 12-month extension of the original end date of the grant implementation period;

   ii. and/or a reallocation of between US$2.5 million and US$5 million;

   iii. and/or the addition or cancellation of components or sub-components;

   iv. and/or any changes in the results framework;

   v. and/or any changes in the implementation modality.

c. **material change revisions** if they result in:

   i. an extension of twelve months or more of the original implementation end date;

   ii. and/or a reallocation of resources from GPE funds that exceeds US$5 million.

### 2. PROCESS FOR PROGRAM REVISIONS

The Grant Agent should provide a written notification ("Program Revision Notification") to the Secretariat prior to undertaking any revision to the ASA mechanism. In the case of non-minor or material changes, the Program Revision Notification should include:

- a clear case for the proposed revision, setting out the rationale and providing full details and a timeline. To assess the financial implications, the notification should provide both the original budget and proposed revised budget, highlighting revisions within main project components or headings and between components, and current spending as well as one-year expenditure estimates and projections;

- a description of how the proposed changes will affect the achievement of outputs and outcomes set out in the Results Agreement;
- an assessment of the risks arising from the proposed changes and any mitigating actions in place, or to be put in place; and
- where appropriate, an overview of alternative options considered and rejected.

The Board delegates authority to the Secretariat to assess whether or not a program revision is non-minor and/or material, based on the Program Revision Notification. The Grant Agent should not undertake the decision to implement a revision:

a. in case of a non-minor revision: without first receiving a no-objection from the Secretariat. The Secretariat will make a decision within 15 business days of receiving the Program Revision Notification to either provide a no-objection, object to the revision, or defer the decision to the relevant Committee. In the event that the Secretariat objects to the revision, it may refer the matter back to the Grant Agent for further discussion, along with the rationale for the objection. The Grant Agent can appeal to the Committee to revise the decision of the Secretariat or submit a revised Program Revision Notification to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will notify the Committee of any no-objections it has provided at its next face-to-face meeting.

b. in case of a material change: without first receiving a no-objection from the relevant Committee. The Secretariat forwards the Program Revision Notification to the relevant Committee, along with any other relevant documentation. If possible, the Committee decides on a no-objection basis whether or not to approve the proposed revision. The Secretariat notifies the Grant Agent of the decision of the Committee within ten business days of its decision. In the event that the Committee does not agree to a revision, the Committee may refer the matter back to the Grant Agent for further discussion, along with the rationale for the objection. After discussion, a revised Program Revision Notification may be submitted. The Committee may refer a proposed revision including a material change to the Board for decision.