

GPE 2025: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GPE 2025: COMMUNICATING WITH NON-PILOT COUNTRIES BEFORE THE REPLENISHMENT

GPE Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA)

What is it?	The Girls Education Accelerator is an additional thematic funding window for girls' education. It supports GPE's overall objective of hardwiring gender equality into and throughout our operating model.
How does it work?	Countries determine focus of interventions through partnership compact dialogue. Interventions can be inside or beyond the education sector. Countries need to have a compact to access the GEA.
Which countries are eligible?	The 30 countries specified in the GEA operational framework . Eligibility has been limited at this stage to countries where girls lag the furthest behind boys measured by the gender parity index at primary and lower-secondary and where the child marriage rates are highest. The Board might increase the number of eligible countries in the future based on demand and the availability of funds.
What are the criteria to access the grant?	Country-led: Eligible countries will codetermine the focus of the gender equality specific interventions as part of the development of the partnership compact, which will then feed into program design.
What is the process?	Funding will supplement ("top up") the system transformation grant and/or the GPE Multiplier for eligible countries. It is available "in full" (without the 60-40 split) and "up front." It is not a standalone grant: the GEA can only be accessed at the same time as a country accesses its system transformation grant, a Multiplier allocation, or both. Put differently, the funding must be integrated into the Multiplier or grant application.
Reference Documents	Operational Framework for the Girls' Education Accelerator GEA Quality Standards for the system transformation grants

Key Messages

The GEA is integrated into a country's system transformation grant and/or Multiplier application; it is not a standalone grant.

To secure the GEA, a country needs to make a strategic, high-level commitment to girls' education in its compact and use the funding to transform girls' education outcomes.

The GEA supports countries tackling the main barriers to girls' education by expanding the set of eligible activities to include alternatives within and outside the education sector.

FAQ

How much is available per country?

Allocations are based on the country's system transformation grant/Multiplier allocation. For grant-eligible countries, the allocation is set at the lowest between US\$25 million and 50 percent of their grant allocation. For Multiplier-only countries, the allocation is the lowest between US\$25 million and 50 percent of the Multiplier amount being deployed. Further details are available in the GEA operational framework.

How is the GEA allocation calculated when a country is eligible for both the system transformation grant and the Multiplier?

For countries that are eligible for GPE's system transformation grant, allocations from the Girls' Education Accelerator are set at 50 percent of a country's indicative allocation, up to a maximum of \$25 million.

For example, if a country's indicative allocation for the system transformation grant is \$120 million, it can seek the maximum Girls' Education Accelerator resources of \$25 million. If a country is eligible for a system transformation grant of \$30 million, it can seek up to 50 percent, or \$15 million.

Countries that are eligible for the Multiplier but not the system transformation grant access the Girls' Education Accelerator based on the funding they mobilize.

For example, if a country is eligible for up to \$50 million from the Multiplier, then its maximum Girls' Education Accelerator allocation is \$25 million. If this country mobilizes \$10 million of its Multiplier allocation, it can access \$5 million from the Girls' Education Accelerator.

Is the window first come, first served?

The funding window is set to be demand-driven among eligible countries.

Is there a possibility that funds will become unavailable while an eligible country is still preparing its application?

Depending on the demand, it is possible that the funds will become unavailable. The Secretariat will regularly make available information on the countries that have applied and amounts that have been approved.

Can countries combine their funds and make one application for the region?

A combined application would be permissible, but it would need to have agreement between all eligible countries.

In federal countries, what will the breakdown of the GEA allocation be?

The breakdown will follow the same allocation as the system transformation grant. The cap of \$25 million in the GEA allocation is applicable at a country level, including in federal countries.

What funding requirements are attached to the Girls' Education Accelerator?

The requirements for all GPE funding are harmonized across grants. To access the GEA, a country must fulfill the requirements associated to the system transformation grant or Multiplier in addition to (a) setting gender equality and girls' education as a priority within its compact; (b) proposing interventions grounded in a systematic assessment of the barriers to education that girls face in each context and backed by evidence on what works for girls' education, building on a coherent theory of change with a system transformation approach to gender equality (these activities must be costed within the wider program budget if relevant to the funding modality); and (c) making a commitment to results by contributing to important outputs and outcomes specifically associated to girls' education through the activities selected. These outcomes have been framed within a list of core indicators.

When can countries declare their intention to access the financing from this window?

To minimize the transaction cost, the intention to access this financing would be stated at the same time as the country announces its intention to access the system transformation grant or Multiplier grant (the latter at the expression of interest stage). Furthermore, the program design and approval process for the thematic funding window is the same as for the aforementioned grants.

Can the funds from the thematic funding window be accessed as a separate grant?

The funds from this funding window cannot be accessed as a separate grant.

Can the Girls' Education Accelerator be accessed as a "top up" for an existing education sector program implementation grant rather than having to wait for the new operating model pipeline?

No. The grant is part of GPE's new 2021-2025 operating model.

Is the amount of the GEA affected by the changes in the amount a country can access in its system transformation grant as a result of the review of the operating model enabling factors?

The amount of the GEA is available “up front and in full.” This means that the GEA allocation for a country will be made fully available regardless of the grant amount a country can access following the Board decision. For example, a country has a system transformation grant allocation of \$20 million, but it can initially access only 60 percent of its allocation, that is, \$16 million, after review of the enabling factors and the partnership compact. This country can still access the GEA full amount of \$10 million, conditional on the Board approving access to the country allocation. For example, if the volume of domestic public finance is very low and declining, and no agreement is reached to reverse this trend, the Board may decide as it reviews the partnership compact and the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) assessment to withhold the entire system transformation grant, Multiplier, and GEA allocations.

Should the GEA be clearly identified in the application package, at least within the application form?

Yes, the country would have to identify the GEA within the application form. The country must also discuss how the GEA would support a strategy to achieve gender equality in the education system.

Should the funding allocated to girls’ education interventions be specifically identified within the program budget?

Yes, interventions focused on tackling barriers to girls’ education should be specifically identified within the program’s budget. The approach of designating the interventions or components must be consistent with the funding modalities. For more integrated modalities, the identification may be on financing focusing on relevant outcomes for girls’ education, or by notionally associating the GEA to specific elements targeting girls’ education.

Can the gender equality–specific interventions supported by the GEA benefit both genders?

The objective of the GEA is to accelerate progress toward girls’ education. This means that the interventions selected need to tackle key barriers for girls’ education and must have results on girls’ education as the key results. This does not mean interventions financed by the GEA can only have girls as participants, or that the interventions must be designed not to benefit boys. Furthermore, including girls, boys and community members as part of an intervention may be the most effective way to deal with some of these barriers. For example, interventions focused on preventing school-related gender-based violence and early pregnancy may be more effective when there is wider community engagement. Using the GEA to support broad interventions (such as school construction) would generally not be admissible. An application seeking to use the GEA for broad interventions would need to

strongly justify why these interventions tackle the barriers specific for girls' education. Broad interventions fit better with the mission of the system transformation financing (system transformation grant/Multiplier) that is being accessed simultaneously to the GEA.

If a GEA is integrated into a Multiplier application, but the focus area of the Multiplier grant is not found amenable to add the use of the GEA, can we accept that the GEA focuses on a broader or different age group or set of issues?

Yes, the GEA can be used to finance actions outside the main area of focus of the Multiplier. The country together with the grant agent should consider both the focus on key barriers for girls' education and the best alignment possible between the main program and interventions financed by the Multiplier and the GEA. All countries accessing the Girls' Education Accelerator need to complete a partnership compact. This translates to a commitment to assess key barriers for girls' education. If as part of this process it is concluded that advancing girls' education requires actions outside the areas of focus of the Multiplier, the country can choose to dedicate part or all of the resources from the GEA to these actions. This does not exclude the need for hardwiring gender equality within the design of the Multiplier, including the role of gender in the area of action for the main program and indicating how the different GPE assets are being used to advance gender equality. Countries deciding to use GEA funds outside the main program must provide a strong justification for this decision considering the potentially negative effect on alignment.

The GEA is expected to be based on "evidence of what works for girls' education." When should countries present this evidence, what is the Secretariat's role in reviewing the evidence and at what point in the process?

A strong commitment to evidence should be clear in the compact development process and from the start of the quality assurance of grants. During this process, the Secretariat may request additional information on the evidence base behind the proposed activities. However, strengthening evidence-based decision making needs to be mainly a country-led process, including for grant development.

Can the resources from the GEA be used to cover the grant agent costs related to implementation support?

Yes, resources from the GEA can be used to cover an appropriate part of the related implementation cost. These costs need to be proportional, or lower, to the size of the GEA relative to the overall grant.

Is the 70/30 ratio of the fixed and variable part of the system transformation grant or Multiplier grant affected when accessing and applying the GEA amount?

Yes. The GEA is a separate resource that is integrated into the system transformation grant and/or Multiplier application. Therefore, the proportion of financing in the fixed and variable part must be calculated after considering the GEA amount. For example, a country with a

system transformation grant allocation of \$20 million integrating its \$10 million from the GEA would have a total GPE-funded program scope of \$30 million, of which at least \$9 million would comprise the variable part. Countries can decide on having a single variable part (\$9 million in the example above) or set a separate variable part associated to the GEA (\$3 million in the example above) solely focused on girls' education.

Does the disbursement of the variable part funds when accessing the GEA have to be associated with results for girls, or does it simply get pooled with the rest of the variable part with no specific expectations?

If there is a GEA, the program's variable part must set at least one indicator/target linked to girls' education. This translates to one of the strategies included with the variable part having a focus on barriers to girls' education. The requirement above is different from the hardwiring of gender equality into the variable part. Hardwiring gender equality would be assessed at the program level, not for each component. There is no requirement on indicators on girls' education for the variable part of a grant not accessing the GEA.

Once the results of the variable part associated to the GEA are achieved, does the country have to spend the funds on interventions specifically targeting girls' education or gender equality?

No, rules for spending the variable part associated to the GEA are the same as those for the "regular" variable part. Countries need to make sure the activities are eligible for GPE financing.

Can countries use part of the GEA to fund the program costs related to the implementation of the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) policy?

The overall objective of the GEA is to support girls' education. In a number of cases, this objective will intersect with the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment for children, teachers and other actors in the education system. The GEA can be used to support these efforts if the objective of the intervention links back to girls' education. For example, the GEA could be used to eliminate sexual harassment of female teachers to increase the percentage of female teachers in rural areas and increase girls' enrollment/learning.

Does the grant agent for the GEA have to be the same as the grant agent for the system transformation grant/Multiplier?

Since the GEA is integrated into the Multiplier and/or system transformation grant, it is expected that the grant agent of either the system transformation grant or the Multiplier grant will also be the grant agent of the GEA. However, where this is not practicable or where additional flexibility is required, the Secretariat would collaborate with the local education group and national authorities to explore other approaches.

How do the grant agent fees for the GEA work?

This thematic window is designed to be integrated into the system transformation grant and/or Multiplier. Grant agent fees related to the GEA follow the same rules as the fees associated to the system transformation grant and/or Multiplier and there is no need to disaggregate grant agent fees specific to the GEA.

Will GPE provide additional program development funds to GEA-eligible countries?

No.

If the GEA is earmarked, is it acceptable if the country would like to channel the GEA to a pooled fund?

The integrated GEA–STG and/or the Multiplier grant is compatible with any funding modality the country selects. As with any other GPE instrument, program design and reporting requirements will vary based on the implementation modality.

Can a country access the thematic window separately or together with the system capacity grant?

Funds from the GEA thematic window support implementation, so the current design integrates these funds into the relevant GPE grants (the system transformation grant and the Multiplier). This means the window cannot be accessed separately or with the system capacity grant. However, countries should consider including gender equality in their system capacity grant. This grant can be leveraged to promote gender equality through investments in capacity, planning or analysis.

How does the GEA relate to the partnership compact?

The partnership compact will be prepared by a partner country government and its education ecosystem to define priority areas for investment that, if addressed, could lead to transformational change. The principle of partnership and country ownership means that governments and local education groups determine which groups/interventions are targeted. For this reason, all countries that seek to access the GEA need to have gender equality and girls' education as a core priority within the compact.

If a Multiplier-only country accesses its Multiplier without developing a compact, can it access the GEA?

No, for a country to access its GEA it must first develop a compact with gender equality and girls' education as one of its core priority areas. Countries can access the Multiplier without a compact; however, countries that wish to access a combined Multiplier and GEA must develop a compact.

If a country eligible for both the system transformation grant and the Multiplier has already accessed the Multiplier without applying to the GEA, can it still access it as part of its system transformation grant?

Yes, the GEA can be accessed simultaneously through either the Multiplier or the system transformation grant. Alternatively, the country can access all three (system transformation grant + Multiplier + GEA) simultaneously as part of one program proposal. To the greatest extent possible, countries are encouraged to access their GPE grants at the same time to maximize impact and lower transaction costs.

Are there specific standards for quality assurance (QA) of the GEA?

Yes, the document is available [here](#).

Do these standards replace the “regular” QA standards for the system transformation grant or Multiplier?

No, these standards are in addition to the standards for the system transformation grant or Multiplier by which the Girls’ Education Accelerator is being accessed.

Do QA standards for the GEA apply to all of the grant or just the portion of the grant financed by the GEA?

The Girls’ Education Accelerator QA guidelines apply to the whole program financed by the system transformation grant/Multiplier when the GEA is included. This is not to say that the program must be only dedicated to girls’ education. This approach means that the program must be strongly responsive to gender equality, making clear assessments on the gendered impacts of its different components, in addition to having a clear girls’ education component.

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