

GUIDELINES

GPE MULTIPLIER

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QUICK START

What is this document?

These guidelines introduce the **GPE Multiplier** and explain how to complete two documents needed to secure it: an **expression of interest** and an **application**.

Who is eligible?

Country eligibility and grant ceilings are available on [GPE's web site](#).

What do I need to do?

New and additional cofinancing triggered by the availability of the Multiplier unlocks the Multiplier grant. Countries complete an **expression of interest**, supported by the local education group, to specify the **amount** and **sources** of this financing, its debt sustainability implications and its alignment with the education programs to be supported.

GPE reviews the expression of interest and, if appropriate, approves the Multiplier allocation for use in preparing the grant **application**. The Multiplier amount allocated in this process is secured for **one year** from the end of the month in which the expression of interest was approved. Countries must prepare an application **within that time** to use Multiplier resources for a specific program.

Most will have completed an **enabling factors** questionnaire and analysis before submitting an expression of interest (figure 1). If not, the country will need to complete the enabling factors analysis **before** applying.

Some may have completed or be close to finalizing a **partnership compact**, specifying the priority reform to be supported by GPE funding. If not, countries are encouraged to develop a partnership compact **before** the application.

To support program development and implementation, countries—in consultation with the local education group—will need to select a **grant agent**.

Can I access other GPE grants at the same time?

Countries can apply for a **system capacity grant**, which offers resources to complete the enabling factors analysis and partnership compact as necessary. GPE also encourages partner countries that are eligible for the **system transformation grant** and the **Girls' Education Accelerator** to apply for any of these grants at the same time as their application for the Multiplier, maximizing GPE funding without significant added transaction costs.

How do I submit an expression of interest or application?

Countries can sign electronically and send it **by email**, copying the GPE country lead, via: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org

INTRODUCTION

The GPE Multiplier is an innovative financing facility that crowds in investment for catalyzing education system transformation. Countries unlock the Multiplier grant by securing **new and additional funding** at a ratio of US\$1 from the Multiplier for every US\$3 from development partners and dollar-for-dollar from businesses and foundations.

To obtain a Multiplier, partner countries first confirm the potential grant amount by submitting an **expression of interest**. This is not a grant application document; it provides specific information on the sources and types of new and additional cofinancing they have secured by leveraging the Multiplier. After GPE's approval, the country uses the amount secured as the basis for preparing a Multiplier **application**.

These guidelines describe how the Multiplier fits within GPE's approach to supporting partner countries. They explain the **grant's main features**, including how it can **combine with other GPE grants**, and provide **step-by-step guidance** for submitting the expression of interest and application. They also outline how to manage the grant, including **reporting** requirements.

The GPE approach

The GPE **operating model** is based on three stages of education system transformation that support countries in moving from assessment and diagnosis to prioritization and alignment, and finally to implementation, learning and adapting (figure 1).

Step 1: Assess and diagnose: Partners in the local education group review policy frameworks as well as the sector's performance, needs and existing evidence to identify a priority reform with the potential to drive system transformation. The review also includes an analysis of a country's performance under four **enabling factors** that are critical to catalyzing transformation:

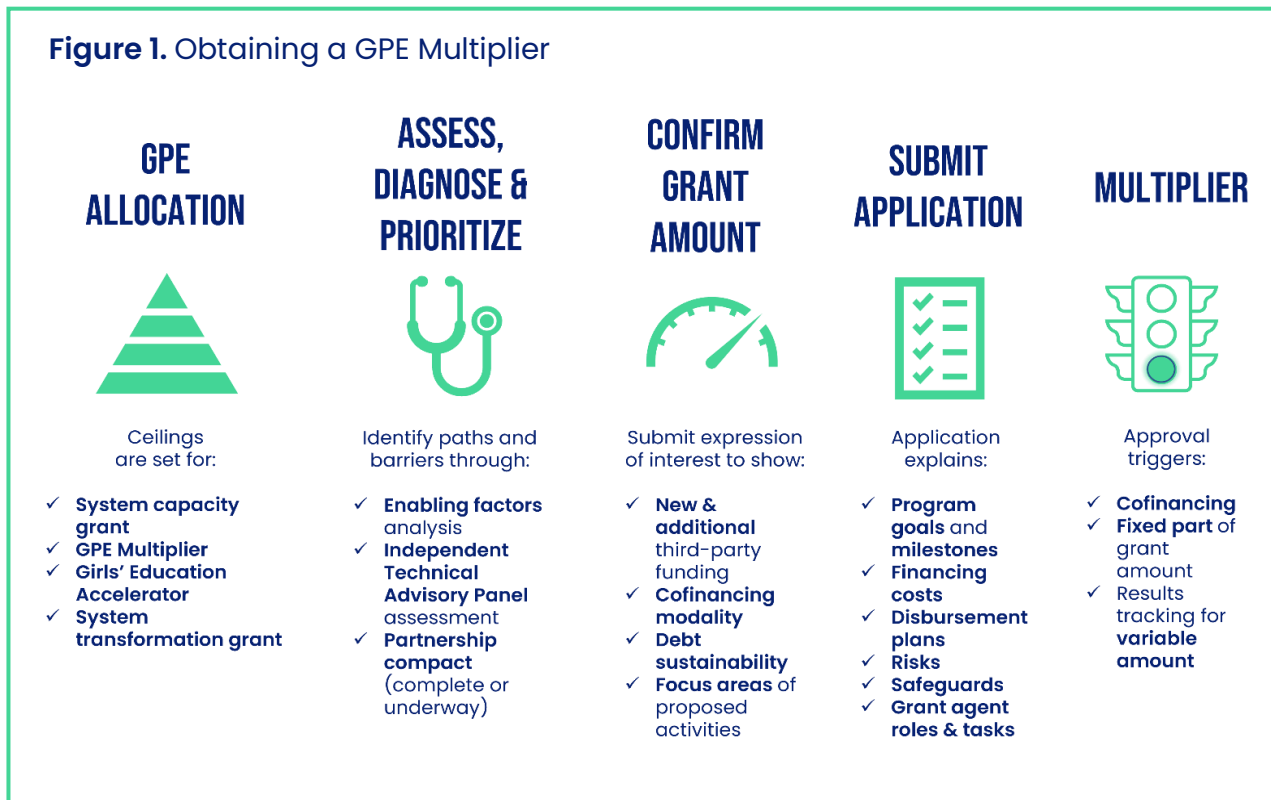
- Data and evidence
- Sector coordination
- Gender-responsive planning
- Volume, equity and efficiency of domestic public expenditure on education

Step 2: Prioritize and align: With its partners, the ministry of education prepares a **partnership compact** to align stakeholders and resources behind the priority reform.

The compact is a key strategic tool to drive system transformation through its focus on education sector obstacles and transformative solutions to address them. It allows each country to adapt the GPE model to its particular context, defines GPE's engagement and ensures that partner financing is complementary and harmonized.

Step 3: Act on evidence, learn and adapt. The country and its partners implement the agreed programs and reforms, with gender considerations integrated throughout the process. These efforts are reinforced by improved access to data and close tracking of agreed results. This in turn increases accountability and allows evidence-based course correction.

Figure 1. Obtaining a GPE Multiplier



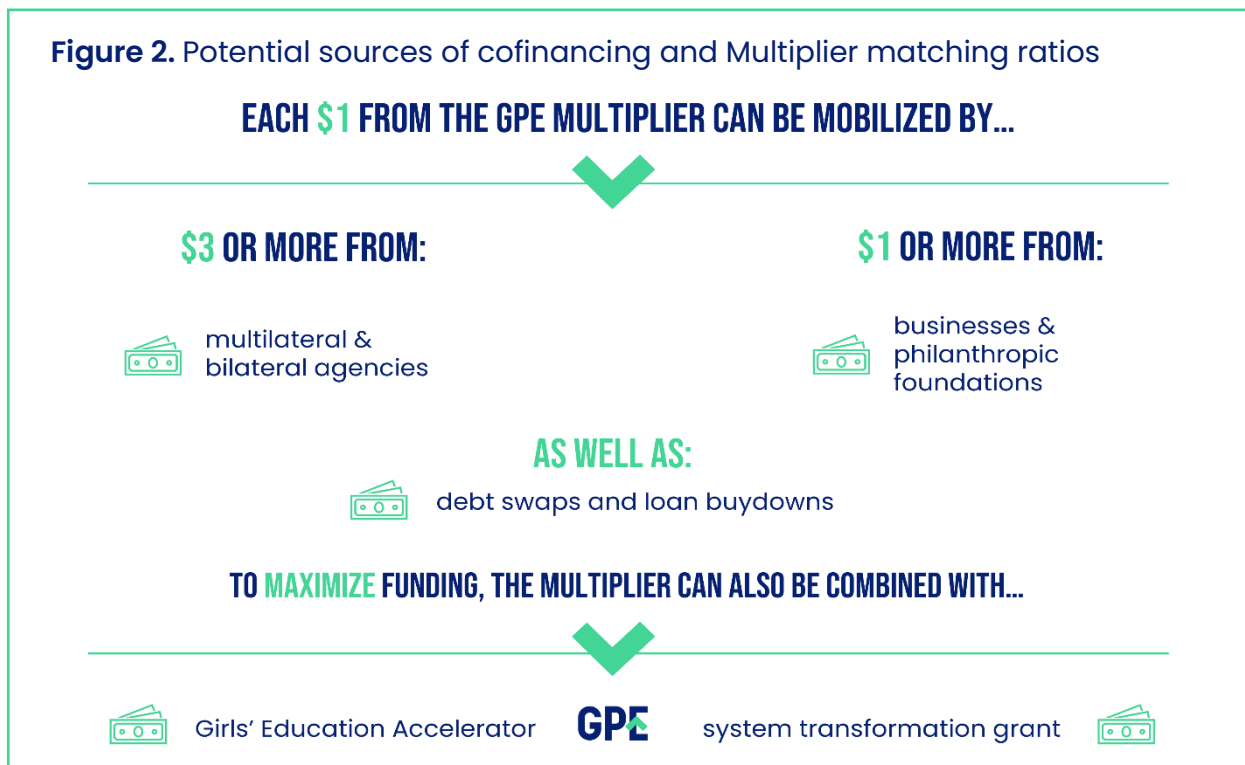
About this grant

GPE provides **US\$1 in Multiplier grant funding for each US\$3 in financing** mobilized from development partners up to a predetermined maximum per country. That ratio becomes **US\$1-to-US\$1 for financing from foundations and businesses**. Debt treatments, such as **swaps or buydowns**, can also count toward the cofinancing amount in unlocking the Multiplier (figure 2).

Each partner country has a **pre-determined ceiling for Multiplier grants set by the GPE Board and subject to the availability of funds**. The actual amount it receives—its **allocation**—is determined by the **type of cofinancing** that unlocks the grant.

GPE asks for specific confirmation that both the source of cofinancing and the education program have been considered and publicly supported **by the country's local education group**.

Figure 2. Potential sources of cofinancing and Multiplier matching ratios



Countries applying for the Multiplier will often have **already completed** the diagnostic and planning phases preceding GPE funding (figure 1). These involve undertaking the **enabling factors** analysis for education system transformation for assessment by the **Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP)**.

Countries are encouraged to develop a **partnership compact**, specifying the priority education reform to be supported by GPE funding. Countries that **already have a partnership compact** need only an approved expression of interest to apply for the Multiplier.

Applying without an endorsed partnership compact is only possible if the Multiplier is not to be combined with a system transformation grant or Girls' Education Accelerator. Countries without a partnership compact may develop one in parallel to completing this expression of interest.

If a compact is not yet in place and in consultation with the local education group, a country can base the focus areas in the expression of interest on **an education sector plan or similar high-level plan**. However, the country will **still need to conduct an analysis of the enabling factors** for the ITAP assessment.

The Multiplier can be employed as a financial package, in the form of a grant or as financing used to lower interest rates on concessional lending, e.g., from multilateral development banks or bilateral donors. Multiplier financing, and any other GPE grants that might be used in combination, aligns with the priority reform identified in the country's **partnership compact**. Countries yet to finalize a compact can use an education sector plan or similar planning document.

GPE offers the **program development grant** to assist with the costs associated with creating the specific program that will be supported by Multiplier funding.

Eligibility

Multiplier eligibility and grant ceilings are **set by the GPE Board** and available on the GPE site.

Combining the Multiplier with Other GPE Grants

In addition to the Multiplier, many partner countries can also apply for a **system transformation grant** and, if eligible, a **Girls' Education Accelerator** grant, or both. (See box 1 for an example).

GPE encourages countries to implement the Multiplier alongside the system transformation grant and/or the Girls' Education Accelerator to **maximize impact while minimizing overall transactions costs**. If countries choose to apply separately, they will be asked to explain this choice in the expression of interest.

Box 1. Applying for the Multiplier with other GPE grants

As an example: A partner country is eligible for a **US\$60-million system transformation grant**, a **US\$25-million Girls' Education Accelerator** grant and **US\$15-million Multiplier**. If the cofinancing required to access the Multiplier grant can be programmed and implemented at the same time as the other two grants, the country is encouraged to pursue a **single grant application for US\$100 million**.

To realize this total grant funding, the country first submits an **expression of interest for the Multiplier**, establishing that it can receive US\$15 million under this facility. It then prepares the **application** for all grants, in consultation with the local education group and with the guidance of GPE quality assurance.

In some cases, the timing of cofinancing made available by the Multiplier may make it difficult for eligible countries to combine grants. Accordingly, **countries can access the Multiplier independently of other grants to ensure they do not lose financing opportunities for education programs**.

Countries can use the GPE grant application to apply for these grants either singly or together, using the [system transformation grant guidelines](#) for detailed instructions in completing the application. Similarly, a country may program and implement their system transformation grant (potentially integrating the Girls' Education Accelerator) without a Multiplier because cofinancing is not available.

Countries seeking to combine a system transformation grant with the Multiplier and/or Girls' Education Accelerator specify this choice in their expression of interest. Once GPE has reviewed that document and approved the grant amount for the Multiplier, the partner country can apply for those grants simultaneously.

Gender

GPE expects that activities to address gender inequalities are identified in **all** grants, with the application setting out how gender equality will be advanced within the chosen priority reform area.

Combining with Existing GPE Grants

A country can submit an expression of interest regardless of the status of its existing GPE grants. GPE expects that **existing Multiplier grants are significantly implemented (disbursed)** or show successful and rapid implementation before committing further funding. This means countries can apply for a Multiplier when an ongoing Multiplier grant has been significantly disbursed, depending on country-specific circumstances or clear evidence that the existing grant(s) are being implemented effectively.

Types of Cofinancing

New and additional cofinancing can be mobilized from a range of **external sources**, such as development banks and bilateral partners (box 2). Domestic financing for education from the government or national authorities, however, is not regarded as external funding for the purpose of securing a Multiplier allocation. Debt forgiveness can present another path, covered below (box 3).

With the exception of the business community and foundations cofinancing threshold of 1:1, **most types of cofinancing can leverage the Multiplier at the ratio of US\$3 in cofinancing for each US\$1 secured in Multiplier resources**, up to the country's Multiplier allocation ceiling.

Box 2. Examples of how cofinancing sources unlock Multiplier funding

1. Development bank cofinancing (and the Multiplier ceiling)

A partner country has approached a **multilateral development bank** to secure funding for a \$210-million education program, explaining that their support would unlock US\$40 million in grant finance from the GPE Multiplier, which is the most available under its present Multiplier allocation **ceiling**.

Though the cofinancing would be enough to unlock US\$70 million based on the ratio of US\$1 from the Multiplier for every US\$3 from development institutions, the country's **maximum allocation** is US\$40 million.

2. Foundation cofinancing

A **foundation** is seeking opportunities to support early childhood development through a new innovative programming shown to be effective in low-income countries. It begins its discussions with a partner country government that is already in the process of drafting a partnership compact in consultation with the local education group.

Together, they decide that the foundation's approach could remove a key obstacle to wider participation in pre-school learning in that country. The foundation commits to a grant of US\$25 million, recognizing that the country ultimately stands to receive US\$50 million thanks to the Multiplier matching its contribution **dollar for dollar**.

3. Combining different sources of cofinancing

A country is in discussions with **a bilateral donor and two foundations** to support improving access to primary school. The bilateral partner could commit US\$30 million to the program, with each foundation contributing US\$10 million. For their internal approval of the program, the partners require counterpart funding from the government, which has exceeded its budget caps for the fiscal year.

To mobilize the resources, the government opts to use its Multiplier allocation, developing a **single joint program** with the bilateral partner as grant agent.

As a result, the country secures an US\$80-million program: US\$30 million in bilateral donor contributions that unlocks US\$10 million from the Multiplier and US\$20 million from the two foundations, which mobilizes US\$20 million from the Multiplier.

To support the mobilization of further resources for education and encourage new partners to contribute to education sector policy and programming, GPE's Board has approved a new incentive for cofinancing from **foundations and private sector partners**. This group of partners can mobilize resources from the Multiplier on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

In addition, for the 2021–2025 period, GPE's Board has approved a **debt forgiveness option** as part of the Multiplier cofinancing considerations (box 3). Donors can opt to **cancel or restructure loans** to governments with the stipulation that funding that would have been spent on **debt service is invested in education**. These resources can, in turn, be used to mobilize Multiplier funds, raising the impact of debt forgiveness.

Box 3. How debt treatments can count towards Multiplier cofinancing

A bilateral creditor agrees to cancel US\$75 million of an outstanding loan based on a commitment by the borrower country to **boost its domestic education spending by US\$45 million**. Although GPE is not a party to the debt transaction, this debt reduction **allows the country to access US\$15 million from the Multiplier**, based on the US\$3-to-US\$1 additional cofinancing ratio.

The agreement is between the **borrower and lender**. There is no GPE involvement other than confirming through the country's expression of interest that the agreement stipulates the increased education investment as evidence to trigger the Multiplier. GPE records the funding mobilized as leveraged funding for education from the lender.

With due consideration of the requirements of an aligned cofinancing modality, **different types of cofinancing can therefore be combined to secure a larger grant amount** under the Multiplier ceiling. To the greatest extent practicable, these combined resources should be invested through the same program, funding modality and grant agent.

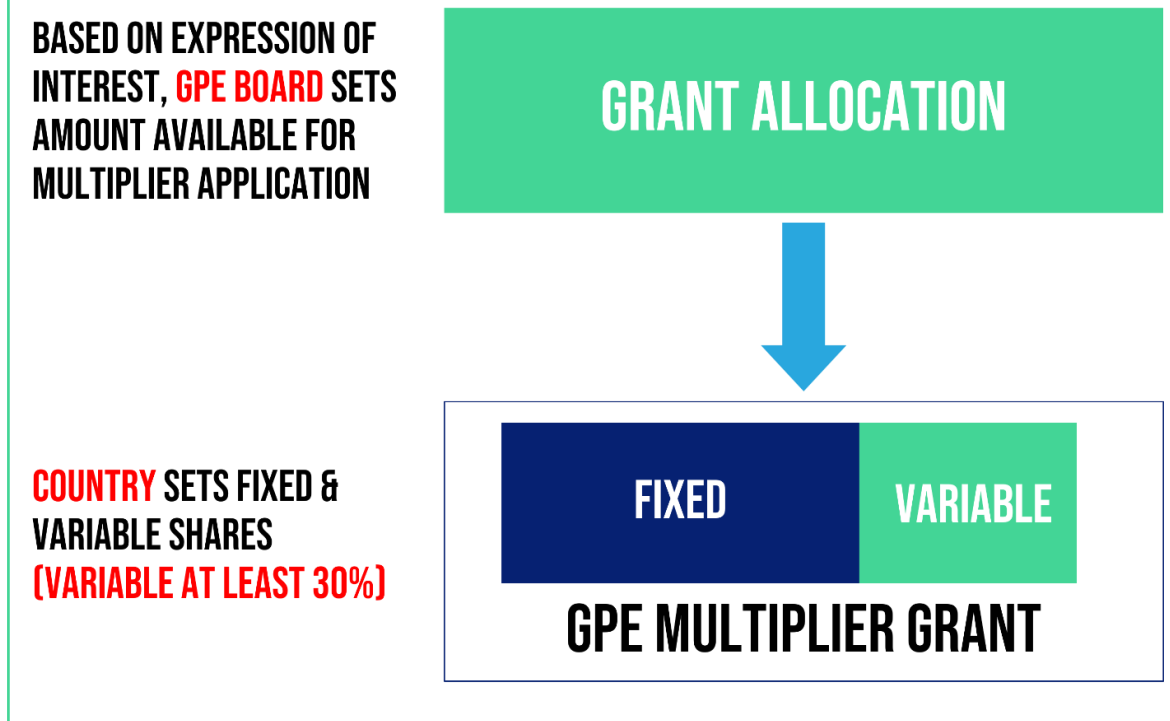
Variable Part

The GPE Multiplier and system transformation grant ask most partner countries to designate **at least 30 percent** of the total grant amount as results-based financing, known as the **"variable part"** of the grant (figure 3).

This variable aspect has shown promise in focusing country policy dialogue and results measurement on sector priorities, incentivizing implementation and maintaining focus on prioritized strategies over the medium term.

It also creates a framework that allows the country to pursue strategy prioritization and key program design choices.

Figure 3. Variable and fixed parts of a Multiplier grant (amounts below



In grants for which the allocation is **below US\$15 million**, programming a share of the grant as **a variable part is not required**. Additionally, GPE has **exempted** a small group of fragile and conflict-affected countries from the variable part requirement based on the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), specifically that part applying to public sector management and institutions. This area of the assessment includes factors such as the quality of budgetary and financial management and public administration, and transparency in the public sector. The full list of exempted countries is available on the [GPE web site](#).

GPE recognizes that successful results-based financing often requires additional capacity and specific expertise during program design, especially in the areas of **indicator selection and design, development of disbursement rules** and **means of verification**.

General guidance and assessment criteria

Variable part indicators and targets should be **fully aligned to the focus area** of the Multiplier grant and linked to implementation of a specific strategy (or set of strategies) that are the focus of the grant program.

Details on the variable part are available [online](#) but, in brief, assessment is based on:

Adequacy of proposed strategies: The variable part should be fully aligned to (and integrated with) the focus area of the Multiplier grant. The variable part should be designed to incentivize strategy implementation and advance the grant's transformative effects, with proposed indicators and targets integrated into a clear and convincing results chain showing how inputs, processes and outputs are expected to lead to intermediate outcomes and outcomes.

Adequacy of indicators and targets: Proposed indicators and targets may be at the process, output, intermediate outcome or outcome levels and should act as sound proxies of strategy implementation and progress toward the objective of the overarching grant. Indicators should be measurable. Proposed targets should reflect both realism and ambition. Results that can be fully achieved through use of financing from the fixed part of the grant are not a good fit for the variable part.

Reliability of means of verification: Process and means of verification for the attainment of results should be fully described, appropriate and reliable.

Pricing and disbursement: Indicator pricing and the disbursement rules and mechanism should be clearly described and reasonable.

Duration

An approved Multiplier grant has a maximum implementation period of **4 years**. However, the duration of activities will vary, depending on the grant window, activity group and country context. If cofinancing a program with a longer duration, GPE grants should be linked to the first 4 years of implementation.

The expected **start date and implementation period** should be indicated in the application form (see the Overview section). The program should begin as soon as possible following grant approval, and no later than 6 months after. A request for a later start date will require detailed justification.

The grant agent must notify the Secretariat once the program has begun, marked by the occurrence of an event defined in the grant application.

Any delay to the expected start date, the signing of the grant agreement (if applicable) or the grant closing date **must comply with the GPE grant policy**. As stated in the policy, permission to delay implementation must be requested from the Secretariat.

Grant prioritization

GPE grants should be **prioritized** in comparison with other sources of funding, including from the grant agent. If the utilization of GPE grants cannot be prioritized, this should be clearly indicated in the application form. Request for extension of GPE grants may not be approved if other sources of funding have been prioritized without prior agreement.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Unlike other GPE grants, Multiplier resources are competitively allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. **Grant allocations** therefore must be secured through an **expression of interest** that is reviewed by GPE **before** the country proceeds with an application. The expression of interest asks for information on four areas:

- **Additionality:** Indicating that the cofinancing is new and additional and unlikely to have been mobilized for education or mobilized as quickly had it not been **because** of the Multiplier.
- **Cofinancing:** Cofinancing should be for the **same program** as GPE funding and use the **same modality** as the program to be funded (or a **common funding mechanism**). All funding should target GPE **priority sectors** of 12 years of quality education and 1 year of pre-primary.
- **Focus area:** The Multiplier and the cofinancing will support **programs** that target education outcomes or areas of work identified in the country's partnership compact or, in its absence, an education sector plan or similar high-level planning document. This includes identifying how the programs will accelerate progress on **gender equality**.
- **Debt sustainability:** Where the proposed cofinancing is in the form of a loan, this lending should be consistent with applicable **debt policies**.

The sections below provide further detail on each element.

Additionality

Additionality cannot be proven, as it is not possible to know what financing levels would have been if the Multiplier were not available. Instead, this is evaluated based on a negative condition: is it clear that the cofinancing is not additional? If so, the proposed cofinancing is not eligible to help the country secure a Multiplier allocation (see examples in box 4).

Box 4. Additionality—Some examples of what counts, and what doesn't

Additional: New funding from a single cofinancing source

A GPE partner country has a completed partnership compact specifying its priority education reform. A bilateral donor has approved a US\$300-million allocation for the country for its new funding cycle, with the **sector focus of this lending yet to be negotiated** with the country and relevant partners.

The ministry of education concludes that the availability of the Multiplier can incentivize the donor to apportion at least US\$120 million of this total allocation to education. The expression of interest indicates **alignment between this cofinancing and the GPE grant** and confirms it will **target the priority reform identified in the compact**. As a result, GPE approves the expression of interest, and the country can develop a single cofinanced program for US\$160 million.

Not additional: Loan already in process but on track to be approved

A country seeks to mobilize US\$30 million in Multiplier funds alongside a system transformation grant. As evidence of cofinancing in its expression of interest, it includes a concessional loan from a regional development bank. The program to be funded by the loan targets primary schooling, one of GPE's priority sectors, and would be disbursed through the same grant agent and using the same modality as GPE's funding.

However, the loan has been **substantially processed and is on track for approval** by the cofinancing partner's board in one month. There is no evidence that the project is at risk. Accordingly, the additionality criterion is not met, and the expression of interest is returned to the country for reconsideration.

Cofinancing

To facilitate alignment of external funding and minimize the fragmentation of assistance to education, GPE requires cofinancing to be **integrated into the same programs and funding modalities as GPE funds** (box 5).

Box 5. Cofinancing—Some examples of what counts, and what doesn't

Integrated: Harmonizing support through one program and grant agent

A partner country seeks Multiplier funding to support enhanced access to schooling for marginalized girls in rural areas, who constitute 65 percent of the population of out-of-school children nationally. The funding is additional, as the cofinancing partner plans to redirect investment from a nonperforming program to the education sector, based on the understanding that this can unlock complementary financing from GPE. The expression of interest shows that GPE funds will be used for the same intervention but through a different program than the partner's funds.

In this case, the Secretariat encourages the local education group to advocate for **a harmonized program** drawing on the cofinancing and GPE's funds, delivered through a single grant agent. As a result, the country submits a revised expression of interest confirming this arrangement and the country **secures** its Multiplier allocation.

Fragmented: Lack of alignment outweighs new, additional funding

A country seeks Multiplier funding to support a drive to improve attrition rates between primary and lower secondary school, which targets the priority reform identified in the compact. A cofinancing partner is willing to mobilize new and additional funding in response to the incentive of the Multiplier. However, the partner would require its funds to be implemented in a **separate program** exclusively focused on providing scholarships for secondary-level students to study overseas, which falls outside the compact.

The expression of interest submitted to the Secretariat confirms the additionality and other relevant features of the proposed program but indicates the lack of alignment between the program supported by GPE and that supported by the cofinancing. As the proposed cofinancing supports a different program and **does not complement** the program to be supported by GPE, the expression of interest is not approved and the country **does not secure** a Multiplier allocation.

In practice, GPE defines the clearest evidence of cofinancing for the expression of interest to comprise:

- Funding delivered through the **same modality as GPE funding in a single program (typically with the same grant agent)**, or
- Funding through a **common funding mechanism**, like a pooled fund

In some cases, it may not be feasible for the cofinancing partner to support the same program or to use the same grant agent as that selected for GPE's funds. For example, a foundation may have fiduciary responsibilities requiring it to implement programs directly and preventing fund transfers to a second party.

If the modality of the cofinancing is **not** through the same program or funding mechanism, the expression of interest should **justify these choices (or likely choices)**.

Where cofinancing cannot support the same program, the work to be funded by the additional financing must complement the program funded by the Multiplier; this means that while the cofinancing funds a distinct and separate program, it clearly complements the program funded by the Multiplier.

The cofinancing is generally not transferred to GPE but is committed, managed and disbursed by the cofinancing partner or an implementing partner (designated by the cofinancing partner) at the country level. If the partner cannot disburse funding to the grant agent directly, it can be provided to the GPE Fund and channeled to the country under the GPE-funded program, provided it satisfies the [Contributions and Safeguards Policy](#).

Focus Area

The expression of interest should indicate the areas of work for the Multiplier and cofinancing, if already determined. If the country has finalized a partnership compact, the program is expected to **target the priority reform** in the compact. In other cases, the country is encouraged to **develop a compact after submitting an expression of interest** to identify the focus areas. **In all cases**, the expression of interest should specify how the program will accelerate progress on **gender equality**.

Debt Sustainability

Additional cofinancing may be in the form of a loan or similar instrument (i.e., a transaction that creates a liability for the government). As GPE is committed to **encouraging debt sustainability**, the expression of interest should confirm that any proposed lending is consistent with potentially applicable policies, such as the IMF's Debt Limits Policy and/or the World Bank Group's Sustainable Development Finance Policy. GPE can provide support if countries or cofinancing partners are unsure as to whether proposed cofinancing is consistent with these policies.

Submission and Evaluation of the Expression of Interest

The coordinating agency submits the completed and signed expression of interest, together with the required deliverables, to the Secretariat at the following email address, copying the grant agent, local education group and the GPE country team lead: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org

Timeline

Partner countries may submit an expression of interest any time during the GPE 2025 funding window, provided that Multiplier funds, which are allocated competitively, remain available. Within two weeks of receipt, the Secretariat will review the expression of interest and make one of the following determinations: **approve the amount sought; approve with clarifications; or request clarifications.**

If an expression of interest is either **approved** or **approved with clarifications**, the country **can proceed** to program and application developing, using the confirmed allocation amount. Points of clarification might include, for example, questions regarding the **complementarity of GPE funds with proposed cofinancing**. These clarifications must be addressed during quality assurance.

If clarifications are requested without approval, the grant amount has not been confirmed and the country can choose to submit a revised expression of interest addressing those points of clarification.

Countries that **did not complete an assessment of the enabling factors** for education system transformation by the ITAP before submitting an expression of interest **must** do so **before** the grant application can be approved. Consult the **Guide for Enabling Factors Analysis** on the [GPE website](#) here for details.

Countries that have secured their Multiplier grant amount can submit an application up to **one calendar year** from the end of the month in which the allocation was secured. For example, if GPE approved an expression of interest February 10, 2022, the country's grant application for these funds must be approved by GPE no later than February 28, 2023. To that end, countries are encouraged to consider this timeline and the **grant process options in box 6** when submitting an expression of interest.

For example, if the country and Secretariat anticipate it will take 6 months to prepare a grant application for a program scheduled to commence December 2023, the country should submit an expression of interest by at least May 2023; i.e., **7 months before the target effectiveness date**. This should result in an approved Multiplier allocation with enough time for robust quality assurance leading to a strong grant application and program.

Box 6. Multiplier grant process options

A **partnership compact must** be in place if Multiplier grant application is to be combined with system transformation grant or Girls' Education Accelerator. Compacts are **optional but encouraged** for partner countries seeking a Multiplier that are **neither eligible** for the system transformation grant or the Girls' Education Accelerator.

Option 1: Multiplier grant application **after** partnership compact



Option 2: Multiplier grant application **during** partnership compact development



The expression of interest is aligned to a high-level planning document in the absence of a partnership compact, as well as the likely priority reform to be targeted in the compact, if known.

Option 3: Multiplier grant application **before** partnership compact



The expression of interest is aligned to a high-level planning document in absence of partnership compact **if** applying for Multiplier only.



THE APPLICATION

You use the **GPE grant application** to seek a Multiplier grant as well as the system transformation grant and the Girls' Education Accelerator as appropriate. If applying **only** for a **GPE Multiplier**, complete the following sections:

- Overview
- GPE Multiplier
- Partnership Compact (if applicable)
- Program
- Aid Effectiveness
- Variable Part Information (if applicable)
- Safeguards Against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
- Grant Agents and Costs
- Application Development
- Signatures

To complete the application submission, you are asked to **also attach**:

1. A spreadsheet outlining the **budget** for the activities to be funded
2. **Minutes** of the local education group meeting endorsing the application

The following offers a guide to completing each section of the application.

Overview

The overview summarizes significant elements of the application, including the grant amount requested, the share of fixed and variable parts (if applicable), grant agent and fees, other sources of funding for activities that will be supported by the Multiplier grant and the grant agents, amounts and key dates.

Applicants can **elect to receive the grant in euros**. The grant agent makes this decision in consultation with the government and the local education group and communicates it to the Secretariat (copying the coordinating agency) **before** submitting the grant application. The Secretariat will respond citing the World Bank **prevailing exchange rate** and the grant amount in euros. The applicant has 3 business days to accept or reject the converted amount, after which time the amount will be **fixed** in euros and cannot be converted back to US dollars.

GPE Multiplier

Countries are asked to provide the names of each cofinancing partner, as well as the amounts and types of cofinancing, such grants or loans. The amounts should equal or exceed the cofinancing specified in the expression of interest, and space is provided for explanation of any variation.

Girls' Education Accelerator

Subject to availability, the Girls' Education Accelerator provides eligible countries supplemental funding that can **only be accessed in combination with the system transformation grant, the Multiplier or both**. It is not a separate grant, rather it **must be integrated** into the program of work supported by the combined GPE financing. The amount sought through the Accelerator is specified in the overview at the start of the application.

The section of the grant application for the Girls' Education Accelerator (section 4) asks countries to provide the location in the relevant program document that specifies how it will contribute to **advancing girls' education**. Additionally, if the program document requests dedicated funding through the Accelerator, countries need to specify in the application the target outcomes under **at least one of a set of core indicators** (table 1) that will be used in the results framework.

Table 1. Core indicators for the Girls' Education Accelerator

Access	Girls' enrollment rate (net or gross) improved in supported schools/areas
	Number of girls benefiting from monetary and nonmonetary incentives to enroll in/stay in school (e.g., conditional cash transfers, stipends, fee waivers, unconditional cash transfers, school meal programs, uniforms, an increased supply of education)
	Number of schools where gender-responsive education facilities and infrastructure (e.g., separate latrines, boarding schools) have been developed or rehabilitated
Learning	Improvement in the number of girls meeting minimum proficiency levels in reading and/or mathematics, or the number of girls demonstrating adequate progress in academic and/or vocational skills in supported schools/areas
	Number of girls supported through direct interventions to enhance learning in supported schools/areas
Gender Equality	Number of schools that implement strategies, policies, or programs to retain or reintegrate pregnant girls or teenage mothers in schools as a result of the program
	Number of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education as a result of the program (based on Sustainable Development Goal 4 indicator)
	Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex and type) benefiting from programs that intend to prevent school-related gender-based violence
	Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex and type) benefiting from programs that intend to prevent early marriage and/or early pregnancy
	Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex and type) benefiting from programs that intend to change attitudes or behaviors harmful to girls' education (harmful social norms)

System Transformation Grant

In addition to the **Overview table** in the first section of the grant application, countries applying for a system transformation grant along with a Multiplier are asked to complete **all sections** from the system transformation grant (section 5) onward. Countries can use the information in these guidelines or also refer to the standalone system transformation grant [guidelines](#).

Partnership Compact

This section of the grant application asks the applicant to indicate whether it has a partnership compact. The compact identifies education system obstacles, including **gender inequalities**, and mobilizes partners at the country level to make strategic choices in support of a priority reform that is to be financed by GPE grants.

Given that the Multiplier is intended to support a key reform identified in the partnership compact, it is expected but not required that **most applicants will have already completed this stage**.

Program

Components and objectives

This section of the application asks for brief details on program components and objectives, beneficiaries, financing from other sources, key outputs, commencement dates, and how the program will contribute to **system transformation, gender equality and disability inclusion**.

Education providers

The applicant is also asked whether grant resources will be used to support non-state education providers, including for-profit schools, and for details about relevant regulatory frameworks.

No GPE funds can be used to support for-profit provision of core education services, including by either wholly or partially owned network or “chain” schools.

Where GPE funding is used to support not-for-profit nonstate providers of core education services, partner countries should either have actionable **regulatory frameworks** in place or under development. If they do not, and where there is no existing financing to develop it, some GPE funds should be used to help establish the regulatory framework.

Exemptions from this restriction may be granted to allow for bottom-up, community-derived networks and sole proprietor-owned schools that do not pay dividends.

Such exemptions can only be considered as a last resort where there is no available public provision of core education services for marginalized populations and no alternatively available not-for-profit provision. For further details, see the GPE [private sector engagement strategy](#) and [related exemptions](#).

Any request for an **exemption**, supported by the local education group, should be submitted to the Secretariat by the partner country during the communication of the program outline, at the latest. An emailed request should be sent to gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org, copying the grant agent (if already selected), coordinating agency and GPE country team lead.

Prioritizing children with disabilities

GPE partner countries increasingly prioritize education for children with disabilities in education policy and planning. Regardless of whether inclusion is chosen as a priority reform, the grant application asks whether all planned components are inclusive of children with disabilities. This will be assessed as part of the quality assurance process.

For some activities, it might not be relevant to consider disability inclusion. Where this is the case, grant agents will be asked to provide a brief rationale within the grant application, in consultation with the government and local education group. This rationale should set out why disability inclusion is not relevant to a particular activity. As part of the design process, partners could reflect on government policy and any global commitments on inclusion made by the government or its grant agent.

Program outline

For grants **greater than US\$10 million**, the grant agent prepares a **written outline** for the program to be funded, based on the key reform identified in the partnership compact or a high-level planning document in absence of a partnership compact. A key platform in the application process, this program outline should demonstrate an effective use of diagnostics and the targeted deployment of resources to unblock key bottlenecks in the education delivery.

The program outline is expected to include (a) its **objectives**, (b) proposed **components** and high-level interventions that mainstream **gender**, (c) **key results and indicators**, and (d) an overview of **implementation arrangements**, as well as the choice of **currency** (if opting for disbursement in euros). The outline should contain a **theory of change or results chain**, grounded in experience and evidence (plus root cause analysis) and linked to an indicative budget. The indicative budget should include program subcomponents and estimated grant agent implementation support costs.

If the grant includes a variable part, the program outline should identify **the strategy to which the variable part financing is linked**, along with proposed indicators and targets (which should be an integral part of the overarching program theory of change or results chain).

The program outline should be completed within **2 months** of the selection of grant agent. The outline is shared with the local education group for feedback, preferably within **10 business days**, and then shared with the GPE Secretariat.

The Secretariat will only provide feedback on the program outline **after** the government and grant agent have completed consultation with the local education group.

Program development timeline

Either as part of the grant agent selection or immediately after having been selected, the grant agent prepares a **program development timeline**. The grant agent may apply for a **program development grant** in support of this stage and the application process itself.

The program development timeline needs to be in line with the schedule set out at the grant agent selection stage. Once the grant agent has been selected, the timeline needs to be confirmed with the government and discussed with the Secretariat to streamline the **quality assurance reviews**, which are summarized below.

The grant agent shares the timeline with the local education group to ensure continued collaborative decision making and the timeline itself should specify future consultations. In this sense, “consultation” differs from “endorsement”, as it is not limited to submitting a document to the local education group for their approval. **The program development timeline is expected to be established within 4 weeks of grant agent selection.** Changes to the timeline will need to be communicated immediately to the local education group and the Secretariat.

Quality assurance reviews

To assist partner countries and their grant agents in the application process, GPE performs quality assurance checks to ensure program design is in line with the aims set out in the partnership compact, if in place, and that proposed activities comply with its policies. To streamline the process, **quality assurance reviews expand in scope** depending on the size of the grant sought.

Before the initial meeting on the program development timeline, GPE will provide the grant agent with a **quality assurance standards checklist**. Together with the government, the grant agent can then check compliance with GPE standards and submit the completed checklist to GPE at the time of application.

The options of quality assurance support should be considered during this initial meeting and the request for the appropriate level of support from the Secretariat made in later stages.

The quality assurance review options

For any program to be financed by GPE with a **combined grant amount less than US\$10 million**, it can be agreed that no program outline will be submitted, in which case GPE conducts a quality assurance review when the **application is submitted**.

For **grant totals above US\$10 million**, the **program outline** will need to be submitted for an initial quality assurance review, while those **above US\$50 million** will proceed to a full review of the draft **program document** and **grant application**.

A full quality assurance review will also be expected for **regional applications**, as well as other **highly complex or innovative approaches**. Partner countries are encouraged to discuss whether they would benefit from additional quality assurance support, particularly in the areas of budget and grant agent costs, monitoring, fiduciary arrangements and elements related to the variable part (e.g., specifics on targets and their verification arrangements).

Initial review (two—three weeks)

The Secretariat's initial quality assurance review assesses the program outline to facilitate a robust and relevant program design for the grant that fully complies with relevant GPE policies, including efforts to advance gender equality.

The Secretariat considers how the program aligns with the priority reform and activities outlined in the partnership compact or high-level planning document and applies **three program quality standards**:

- Program design
- Sustainability
- Aid effectiveness

The quality assurance process also assesses the **adequacy of the proposed strategies under the variable part description** (if required) as well as any issues raised by the Secretariat during its review of the expression of interest, such as clarifications requested regarding the complementarity of cofinancing or additionality requirements.

The Secretariat issues a quality assurance review **report** and shares it with the grant agent, the partner country government and the coordinating agency.

It is expected that the recommendations will be discussed within the local education group and considered in the finalization of the grant application.

Full quality assurance review (3 weeks)

For grants and grant combinations of more than US\$50 million, the grant agent shares the **draft program document and application form** with the Secretariat for full review. In addition to the three quality standards criteria applied in the initial review, the Secretariat also considers:

- Program budget
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Implementation arrangements and readiness
- Risk identification and mitigation

The review also examines whether the program design has given adequate consideration to the GPE policy on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

In addition to examining the **proposed strategies** for the grant's **variable part**, the Secretariat also weighs the **adequacy of indicators and targets**, the **reliability of the means of verification** and the **pricing and disbursement mechanism**.

Finally, the Secretariat considers how the country and grant agent **resolved any issues identified in the initial quality assurance review** and then shares its findings in a report shared with them and the coordinating agency. As with the initial review, it is expected that any recommendations will be discussed within the local education group and accommodated in finalizing the grant application.

Aid Effectiveness

Funding modality

As with all GPE grants, countries and their partners are urged to channel Multiplier funding through **the most aligned modality possible**. The Multiplier grant and cofinancing should be channeled through **one program or pooled fund** to ensure alignment and harmonization. Where this is not the case, a strong justification for the approach has to be made in the expression of interest, partnership compact and application, as appropriate.

It should also be noted that this consideration can influence **grant agent selection**, as the agent **must** be able to use the selected funding modality.

If analysis of the enabling factors shows weaknesses with regard to funding alignment and a better option would not be available, the country could use the GPE **system capacity grant** to create a solution.

In addition, the GPE system capacity grant can be used to develop or reinforce a pooled funding mechanism.

Safeguards and Obligations

Sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment

GPE aims to ensure that there are adequate safeguards against **sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and related misconduct** (SEAH) during implementation of programs funded by its resources. While grant agents are expected to follow their own SEAH policies and procedures, the grant application will ask for confirmation that:

1. The grant agent has considered SEAH risks that are induced or exacerbated by the GPE grant
2. If SEAH risks are identified, then details of risk assessment and proposed mitigation measures are provided
3. If SEAH risks are not relevant for the GPE grant, then reasons for this conclusion are provided.

When an SEAH incident occurs in the implementation of a GPE-funded program, the grant agent is required to **immediately notify the Secretariat country team lead**, copying: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org

Misuse of GPE resources

GPE has a **zero-tolerance policy regarding the misuse of its resources**. In the event that it does occur, the grant agent's internal processes for dealing with such issues will apply, including steps to reclaim any misused funds, if applicable. The grant agent should also **immediately inform the Secretariat, in writing, of any concerns regarding misuse of funds** and remedial actions taken by the grant agent to mitigate the impact on the program in line with the GPE policy in this regard.

The notification should be sent to the Secretariat country team lead, copying gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org

The right to education

Countries and their grants should also note that GPE is guided by **five key obligations on states to ensure the right to education**, and **all GPE partners** are bound by these obligations:

1. Providing 12 years of free, quality, public primary and secondary education – of which at least nine years are compulsory – and at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education
2. Ensuring the right of access to public educational institutions and programs on a non-discriminatory basis
3. Ensuring that education conforms to the aims of education recognized in human rights treaties and is directed to the full development of human personality and sense of dignity
4. Respecting the liberty of parents to choose for their children schools, other than those established by public authorities, which conform to minimum educational standards
5. Using maximum available resources, including both domestic and international resources, to facilitate the progressive realization of the right to education, and without retrogression

Cofinancing Partners and Grant Agents

Partner countries receive GPE funding through **grant agents** who are **accountable for the use of the resources** throughout the grant's duration. Governments, in consultation with the local education group, are encouraged to select a grant agent who can best assist them in a particular area supported by each GPE grant.

For the Multiplier, potential cofinancing partners may stipulate their **being a grant agent** (or the selection of another party as grant agent) **as a condition of their cofinancing agreement**. The local education group should be made aware of this conditionality, and it should be specified in the expression of interest.

A country would normally select **one grant agent** for a Multiplier grant. Decisions to have more than one grant agent or to divide the grants between different entities are possible but should be justified.

Cofinancing partner selection process

Countries are strongly encouraged to **seek out potential cofinancing partners as they prepare a partnership compact**. The country should work with the local education group on the cofinancing selection process, with a call for expressions of interest to be open for at least 2 weeks. Alternatively, if a cofinancing partner presents a partner country with a proposal at another time, e.g., before the partnership compact, the partner country must still announce a call for expressions of interest to last at least 2 weeks before taking a final decision on any proposals.

Grant agent selection process

As highlighted previously, it may be possible that a cofinancing partner conditions its resources on the use of a specific grant agent in developing a Multiplier program. If the country is seeking the Multiplier alongside other grants, it should **still follow the standard grant agent selection process for those other grants** while accommodating this conditionality, informing the local education group and noting its approach in the expression of interest and application accordingly.

If a grant agent is yet to be selected, the country should work with the local education group on the [selection process](#) to ensure fairness and transparency. The government is asked to **request all members of the local education group to express their interest**. This could be announced at a meeting of the local education group or through the government's preferred communication channels and accompanied by written communication.

Candidates should be asked to present their expressions of interest to the government, responding to the defined criteria and notifying the local education group. Based on expressions of interest, an inclusive selection committee should propose a grant agent for decision by the government. This decision should be presented for agreement at the local education group, preferably by consensus.

If one or more development partners raise concerns with the process, recourse can be made to GPE's [Conflict Resolution Procedures](#). **Minutes of the local education group meeting endorsing grant agent selection should be sent to the Secretariat**. For full details on the process requirements, please refer to the [Selection Process for Grant Agents](#).

Grant agent responsibilities

To receive transferred funds, the grant agent must have **a financial procedures agreement with the GPE trustee, i.e., the World Bank**. If such an agreement does not exist, the designated agency should immediately seek to secure one after selection.

The [terms of reference for grant agents](#) set the general objectives and expectations for administering a system transformation grant. Agencies that are selected as grant agents meet certain minimum standards and are entrusted to follow their own policies and procedures including those related to audit, eligible expenditures, procurement, employment and supervision of consultants, and fiduciary oversight, including continued support and corrective actions during implementation.

While the government leads the planning process in close consultation with in-country development partners, the grant agent has the delegated **responsibility for developing the grant application** based on the agreed process. The grant agent will work with the government and its partners to ensure that all deliverables are prepared in accordance with the agreed scope, technical decisions and complementary funding from the grant agent and other partners.

The grant agent is responsible for ensuring that high-quality work is carried out in accordance with (1) applicable GPE policies and guidelines, (2) the grant application, (3) its own policies and procedures, and (4) the financial procedures agreement. The government leads the grant application process in close collaboration with the grant agent who engages in policy dialogue and provides technical support.

The grant agent is expected to work closely with the government to ensure full leadership and ownership of the grant-supported activities. It is also important for the grant agent to work with the coordinating agency to **ensure that the local education group is consulted and regularly informed** on the status of activities, including any implementation delays.

In addition, **the grant agent is expected to detect issues that may arise during implementation as early as possible** and to resolve them. If there are delays or issues that may adversely affect the quality and timing of the work, it is the responsibility of the grant agent to inform the Secretariat and the local education group. In doing so, the grant agent should also include an explanation of what is being done or considered to mitigate the impact of delays and ensure that the grant activities will be completed in a timely manner.

Submission

The complete Multiplier grant application package consists of:

- **Grant application**
- **Budget**, applying to the activities to be funded
- **Program document** and/or **outline** (depending on total grant size)
- **Minutes of the local education group meeting** that considered and supported the application

If the local education group wishes to submit any additional documents for consideration, these can be attached to the email when submitting the application.

The government and grant agent should validate the completed application, which should also be supported by the local education group. The coordinating agency works with the government and grant agent to identify individuals who need to be copied on the submission in order to facilitate country-level processes.

The coordinating agency submits the completed and signed application, together with the required deliverables, to the Secretariat at the following email address, copying the grant agent, local education group and the GPE country team lead: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org

The Approval Process

Final quality assurance review

Upon receiving the final application, the Secretariat verifies that the package is complete and proceeds with its final quality assurance check, using the system transformation grant quality standards that guided the initial and full reviews.

Should the Secretariat determine that the application does not meet these standards, it will inform the government, copying the coordinating agency and the grant agent. The government can then decide on revisions to the application, with the possibility to retract and resubmit.

Grant decision

GPE's CEO makes approval decisions on grant applications **up to a total of US\$10 million** (before agency fees). This amount **includes** the Multiplier, the system transformation grant and Girls' Education Accelerator. The CEO may refer the application to the Board for decision if found to require further deliberation.

Any **application amount totaling more than US\$10 million** will be recommended to the Board for ultimate review and decision. For all grants, the approving entity (either CEO or Board) will examine the findings of the final quality assurance review and decide whether the application represents a **good investment for GPE that would support education system transformation.**

Within 10 business days of approval, the decision, together with the expected timeframe for commencement of program implementation, is communicated to the ministers of finance and of education, copying the grant agent and the coordinating agency. The notification includes:

- Grant amount and duration
- Amount of the variable part, along with the actions and indicators that will be the basis for its release and its disbursement modality
- Designation of the grant agent

Revisions

The application package is considered an integral part of GPE's approval. Any changes to any of these documents after submission to GPE should follow GPE grant policy regarding revision. This includes any changes to the program documents during the grant agent's internal approval process.

Depending on the type of changes, the country partner and the grant agent should submit requests for revisions to the Secretariat via email to gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org, copying the coordinating agency and the Secretariat country team lead.

Risk Mitigation

GPE will support countries to mitigate risk throughout the grant application process. Outlined below are descriptions of **key risks** and the steps taken to manage them.

Cofinancing risk

There is a risk that cofinancing listed in the expression of interest **might not prove credible or likely to eventuate** at the time of submitting the **Multiplier application**, reducing the grant amount available to the partner country if the drop in cofinancing brings it under the threshold ratios (1:1 for private sector entities and foundations or 3:1 for other donors).

To mitigate this risk, GPE's **final quality assurance review** seeks to confirm that the cofinancing will be made available as stated in the expression of interest, notifying the partner country of any discrepancy and the potential impact on the Multiplier amount. To facilitate this process, partner countries **must** notify the GPE Secretariat of **any variation** in the proposed grant application from the expression of interest.

Exchange rate risk

Cofinancing might be listed in the expression of interest in currencies other than U.S. dollars and **fluctuating exchange rates may impact the U.S.-dollar value of these commitments** between the approval of an expression of interest and submitting a Multiplier application. To mitigate this risk, the Secretariat tracks the value of cofinancing, which should not change and cannot go below the minimum level required for the country's allocation (see "Cofinancing risk", above).

The Secretariat records cofinancing in both its original currency and equivalent U.S. dollar value at multiple points throughout the grant application process, beginning with the submission of the expression of interest.

Grant allocation risk

As there is a limited pool of Multiplier resources, allocations are “competitive”; one country securing and not using an allocation affects the ability of other countries to access Multiplier funds. To mitigate this risk, **allocations are only valid for one year.**

Partner risk

Companies or foundations can provide grants or in-kind support to unlock a Multiplier allocation. Such **contributions must comply with GPE’s Contributions and Safeguards Policy and Private Sector Policy.** To mitigate the risk that an expression of interest progresses with a foundation or private company with whom GPE is unable to work, the Secretariat should be consulted as early as possible to provide oversight and due diligence.

OFFICES

Washington

701 18th St NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
USA

Paris

6 Avenue d'Iena
75116 Paris
France

Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2nd floor
B-1000, Brussels
Belgium

CONTACT

Email: information@globalpartnership.org