

**GRA GRANTS AND TIMEFRAMES FOR GRANT AGREEMENT SIGNING: REPORT FROM
THE COUNTRY GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

For Decision

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this paper is for the Board to consider a recommendation from the Country Grants and Performance Committee (“CGPC”) to cancel a grant, “Learning Outcomes – Students’ Reasoning Skills”, under the Global and Regional Activities (“GRA”) program.

1.2 The grant was approved for funding by the Board in July of 2013 (BOD/2013/07-01) but signing of the grant agreement was heavily delayed. In the absence of an applicable policy for this type of grant to guide the issue, the CGPC recommends applying the relevant provisions in the Policy on Timeframes and Revision with regard to timeframes for grant agreement signing, in which case the grant would be automatically canceled.

2. REQUESTED DECISION

2.1 The CGPC recommends the Board approve the following decision:

BOD/2015/05-XX – in reference to BOD/2013/02-02 and BOD/2013/07-01 – Approval of Funding of GRA Concept Notes: The Board of Directors agrees to apply the provisions of the Policy on Timeframes and Revisions with respect to timeframes for grant agreement signing of GRA grants, effectively canceling GRA grants that currently do not have a signed grant agreement in place.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The GRA program was approved by the Board in November 2010 with the overall goal to help the Global Partnership develop and share knowledge, innovation and good practices by providing expertise and jointly identifying issues and knowledge gaps in GPE thematic areas at global and regional level. An Operational Manual for the program was approved by the Board in October 2012 following the adoption of the GPE Strategic Plan 2012-2015 in June of that year, ensuring alignment with the Strategic Plan and its goals and objectives.

3.2 In 2013, the Board of Directors approved a funding allocation of a total of up to US\$33,061,286 for 16 GRA concept notes in two batches (BOD/2013/02-02 and BOD/2013/07-01). When the last batch was approved in July of 2013, the Board further determined to discontinue the GRA program. Reasons for discontinuing the GRA included reservations about the GPE additionality or value-add in this work that might otherwise have been funded by partners.

3.3 One of the concept notes included in the Board allocation in the second batch in July of 2013 included “Learning Outcomes – Students’ Reasoning Skills” in the amount of US\$1,850,919 with the Center for International Cooperation in Education and Development (CICED) as Supervising Entity (BOD/2013/07-01).

3.4 Due to difficulties the Trustee was experiencing in confirming CICED’s eligibility to receive funding as a government entity of a donor partner, the signing of the grant agreement was delayed. Only by mid-2014, the Trustee indicated it was in a position to sign the agreement –a year after the grant had been prepared and first considered by the Global Partnership.

3.5 The delay in signing this grant agreement revealed a gap in GPE grant policies. Formal guidelines for grant agreement signing only exist for Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (“ESPIGS”), not for other types or grants such as GRA grants. The current Policy on Timeframes and Revisions stipulates that grant agreements for ESPIGS need to be signed within six months (or nine months including a one-time extension) of Board approval or the grant will be automatically canceled, but is silent on other grants.

3.6 In the absence of formal guidance, the Secretariat consulted the Coordinating Committee, which considered the issue during its September 19, 2014 audio call. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat inform CICED about the administrative issues that had arisen with regard to the extended delay in signing of the grant agreement, explaining that given the delay and the fact that the GRA program had since been discontinued, the matter would need to be considered by the CGPC and thereafter the Board. The Secretariat would next inform the Trustee not to sign the agreement until after the CGPC and the Board had considered it.

3.7 A second administrative lacuna in GPE policies then emerged. Under the terms of reference for the CGPC, the Committee had no mandate to consider funding proposals other than ESPIGS. The CGPC referred this to the Board, which agreed in December of 2014 that the CGPC would review and recommend on all grants not delegated to the Secretariat (BOD/2014/12-06).

3.8 Subsequently, the CICED grant was discussed by the CGPC during its February 4 audio call.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The primary reason for recommending canceling the grant is that all grants should be subject to the same rules and procedures, except where the Board has determined otherwise. As such, the relevant provisions in the Policy on Timeframes and Revisions should be applied.

4.2 Additional important considerations the Committee considered included that resource constraints necessitate prioritization of core business, and with the development of a new strategic plan, approving a grant under a discontinued funding framework intended to support the current strategic plan is not desirable.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES

5.1 The Board originally allocated US\$1,850,919 for this grant in July 2013. If the Board approves the recommended decision, the funds will then become available for allocation for other activities. If the Board decides to proceed with the grant, the funds would then be committed by the Trustee.

6. PLEASE CONTACT Charles Tapp at ctapp@globalpartnership.org for further information.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1 For further information, please see CGPC/2015/02-DOC 02 posted on the [Committee eTeam site](#).