LOCAL EDUCATION GROUP MINIMUM STANDARDS: REPORT FROM THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE

For Decision

1.   STRATEGIC PURPOSE

1.1   The Global Partnership for Education 2016-2020 Strategic Plan (GPE 2020) Objective 2 commits the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to "*Support mutual accountability through effective and inclusive sector policy dialogue and monitoring.*" To facilitate measured progress against this Strategic Objective, the Board of Directors at its October 2015 meeting requested the Secretariat to develop Minimum Standards for Local Education Groups (LEGs). Minimum Standards for LEGs are expected to give clarity around GPE expectations around government-led, inclusive, sector-focused policy dialogue, and establish metrics to measure GPE's progress towards the Strategic Plan's Objective.

2.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1   The Local Education Group is the term used by GPE to refer to the group whose mandate it is to engage in policy dialogue and alignment and harmonization of education sector support to a country owned education sector plan (ESP). Generally led by the government, the specific composition, title and working arrangements of the LEG will vary according to context. To GPE, the LEG is the group where the primary consultation on education sector development takes place between government and partners, recognizing that decisions are made by individual actors and not by the LEG (specifically, government is the sovereign decision maker in sector policy)[1].

2.2   The Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC) with input from the Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC) reviewed an initial discussion paper and proposal on LEG Minimum Standards at their joint meeting on April 28, 2016. This led to the conclusion that, given the LEG is a country-owned mechanism, the LEG Minimum Standards should focus on the roles specifically ascribed to it by GPE. These roles, as well as expectations around government leadership

---

[1] The GPE Charter sets out expectations in terms of individual stakeholders' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities within the Partnership and LEG.

and inclusiveness, are summarized in the GPE Charter and further elaborated in the GPE Country-Level Process Guide. The Committees further recognized that efforts are needed to capture the diverse ways in which LEGs are organized in different contexts, to identify good practices and common factors of effective LEGs and thereby support progress based on principles without imposing compliance and uniformity in structures or format. While the Minimum Standards provide a mechanism to define and monitor the status of basic elements of LEG functionality, it is expected that the identification and sharing of good practices around LEG effectiveness will be the main driver of progress. Following the joint discussion, the SPC concluded that such efforts should be prioritized.

2.3   The LEG in its GPE-specific capacity is a forum for consultation around processes related to the Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG), Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG), and Program Development Grant (PDG). These roles are extracted from the Country-Level Process Guide (see Annex 3), and include broadly:

- The development and implementation of an ESPDG or PDG application;
- The process to determine the fulfillment of the Funding Model Requirements and Equity, Efficiency and Learning Outcomes indicators;
- The selection of a Grant Agent;
- The development of an ESPIG application;
- Joint sector and GPE grant monitoring;
- Reporting on sector and grant progress.

2.4   Based on the conclusions of the SPC, the following Minimum Standards, elaborated in a stand-alone template attached in Annex 1, are proposed:

- **Mandate:** The role of the LEG is formally mandated
    - LEG has a Terms of Reference (TOR) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
    - The TOR or MOU clearly defines the LEG's mandate
    - The TOR or MOU clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of LEG members, leadership and coordination roles
    - The TOR or MOU clearly defines the periodicity of LEG meetings
    - The TOR or MOU are publicly available, along with the list of members

- **Leadership:** The LEG is led by national authorities in a formal meeting structure
    - The LEG is chaired by a senior government/ministry of education official

- o LEG minutes are recorded and sharedA Sector Lead/Lead Partner (Coordinating Agency in GPE terminology) supports the government in its lead role and/or facilitates coordination of partners and communication with the GPE Secretariat

- **Inclusion:** LEG composition reflects key education sector stakeholders
  - o The LEG includes representation from: Ministry of Education; other line ministries; Development Partners; Civil Society Organizations; Teacher Organizations; Private Sector/Foundation partners, GPE Grant Agent (as relevant).

- **Participation:** The LEG is an active, participative forum
  - o LEG meetings are attended by government/ministry of education officials
  - o LEG meetings are attended by a majority of LEG members
  - o LEG meetings are attended by the designated CA
  - o Attrition among LEG members is staggered
  - o In countries with GPE grants, the LEG meetings are regularly attended by the designated Grant Agent

- **Sector Focus:** The LEG provides inputs to GPE supported programs and is engaged in the overall national sector dialogue and monitoring
  - o The LEG is engaged in all key steps of the GPE-related process as defined in the Country Level Process Guide
  - o The LEG engages in dialogue on the Education Sector Plan (ESP) or Transitional Education Plan (TEP)
  - o The LEG organizes a Joint Sector Review (JSR) or equivalent annually
  - o The LEG monitors ESP implementation, Sector results (including progress on ESPIG variable part indicators) and Sector financing

- **Alignment and Harmonization:** The LEG works to promote alignment and harmonization of education development assistance
  - o The LEG conducts mapping of development partner support as an integral part of ESP development and monitoring
  - o The LEG periodically discusses conditions and actions for better alignment and harmonization of development partner support
  - o Most discussions relating to donor-funded activities take place in the LEG or a LEG sub-group

3.   RECOMMENDED DECISION

3.1   The Strategy and Policy Committee requests that the Board of Directors approve the following decision:

BOD/2016/06-XX—Local Education Group (LEG) Minimum Standards: The Board of Directors:

1. Adopts the LEG Minimum Standards set out in Annex 1 to BOD/2016/06 DOC 08.

2. Requests the Secretariat to carry out a process to capture and share best practices and to develop tools to facilitate capacity building, including for representative structures that enable inclusive LEGs, set out in Annex 2 to BOD/2016/06 DOC 08.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The development of LEG Minimum Standards is a core element of the adjustments to the GPE Operational Model agreed by the Board of Directors in October 2015 as an integral part of the process to develop the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. It responds to the findings of the review of the Operational Model in June-September 2015, which highlighted:

- Concerns around the mandate/composition of the LEG and duplication with other dialogue bodies, and
- Risk of undermining government leadership, as well as confusion around roles and responsibilities.

4.2 In addition, findings of the Independent Interim Evaluation of GPE 2010-2014[2] highlighted the following:

- Since 2010 the Partnership has diversified the membership of LEGs, but while LEGs have been actively involved in developing ESPs and GPE grant proposals, they are less involved during ESP and grant monitoring.
- The consistent and meaningful participation of civil society organizations and private sector/foundation representatives in LEGs is an ongoing challenge.

4.3 A survey undertaken by the Secretariat as part of the 2013-2014 Sector Monitoring Initiative further highlighted lack of clear articulation of the roles of government and key LEG stakeholders, indicating the need for the development of clear terms of reference.

4.4 The proposed LEG Minimum Standards seek to address the concerns highlighted in sections 4.1-4.3 above. They are closely linked to the roles and responsibilities ascribed to the LEG in the GPE Charter[3] and Country Level Process Guide. While basic minimum standards are proposed around core elements of clarity of mandate, leadership, inclusion, participation, sector focus, and alignment and harmonization, more work is required to capture good practices and thereby drive learning and enhanced effectiveness. This will be done by compiling and reviewing good practices, adding information in the "Good practices" column of the Minimum Standards tool, and providing countries with support to enhance LEG effectiveness.

---

[2] R4D and Universalia Management Group, 2015.

[3] The Governance, Ethics and Finance Committee (GERF) is reviewing adjusted language on accountability in the Charter, focusing on clearer language around country level roles and responsibilities. These adjustments are aligned with the basic language on the LEG proposed in this paper.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

5.1   It is recommended that the Board of Directors adopt the LEG Minimum Standards so that GPE can provide greater clarity on expectations and enable leveraging, monitoring and measurement of its impact on inclusive policy dialogue.

5.2   In addition, capturing good practices, developing tools and supporting countries to improve LEG collaboration is essential in enabling the achievement of GPE 2020 Objective 2. The proposed standards are simple and will not capture effectiveness in a comprehensive, qualitative manner. For example, monitoring the presence of stakeholders will not determine how meaningful and effective their engagement is. However, it is expected that a focused and systematic effort to identify good practices and build out towards broader guidance will strengthen LEG inclusiveness and effectiveness over time.

5.3   The Secretariat will support LEGs, in conjunction with GPE grant applications, to self-assess, identify gaps, and discuss shortcomings. A memo on LEG effectiveness will be requested to accompany GPE grant applications (ESPDG and ESPIG), explaining how the standards are met and containing context-specific explanations for those that for various reasons cannot be met. The Secretariat will promote exchange around challenges and share good practices to enhance inclusiveness and effectiveness, as relevant, including identifying synergies between the LEG Minimum Standards, good practices and the Civil Society Education Fund. The Secretariat will also monitor progress and compile data on the Minimum Standards as an integral part of its annual results reporting.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR SECRETARIAT RESOURCES AND RISK ANALYSIS

6.1   The roll-out of the LEG Minimum Standards will be integrated in the Secretariat's existing support to countries. The capturing of good practices, development of tools and support to strengthen enabling conditions, and exchange of good practices will require resources in the longer run. These can be integrated in the GPE knowledge development agenda.

6.2   The establishment of Minimum Standards for LEGs, a country-owned mechanism for which accountability is essentially internal, incurs risks of distortion, such as the establishment of a mechanism for GPE processes that is parallel to the core policy dialogue mechanism. Mitigating measures include clear communication around the intent of the Minimum Standards and to systematically provide country level partners with the opportunity to explain gaps that exist due to contextual constraints or due to effective structures that meet the minimum standards in principle but not in form.

7.   NEXT STEPS

7.1   Once approved, the LEG Minimum Standards will be communicated to all DCP government GPE focal points, Coordinating Agencies, Grant Agents and other partner focal points at headquarter level. Discussion of the Minimum Standards will be integrated in Secretariat grant processes. Information gathered through LEG self-assessments, including context-based explanations for gaps/exceptions, will accompany grant applications, and the annual results report will include aggregated information on the Minimum Standards.

5.   PLEASE CONTACT Margarita Focas Licht **at:** mlicht@globalpartnership.org for further information.

6.   ANNEXES

6.1   This paper includes the following annexes:

Annex 1 – Local Education Group Minimum Standards (this is a stand-alone tool for the LEG Minimum Standards, to be completed with good practices as it is rolled out)

Annex 2 – Process to Compile Good Practices (this proposes a process for consultation to identify good practices and enhanced standards, and on this basis, guide the development of tools to facilitate more effective LEGs)

Annex 3 - Key Roles and Responsibilities of LEG, as per the Country-Level Process Guide (2015 version) and other key GPE documents (this summarizes the roles and responsibilities ascribed to the LEG by GPE, based on the Charter and Country-Level Process Guide)

ANNEX 1 – LOCAL EDUCATION GROUP (LEG) MINIMUM STANDARDS

GPE 2020 Strategic Plan's Objective 2 commits the Global Partnership for Education to "*Support mutual accountability through effective and inclusive sector policy dialogue and monitoring.*" To facilitate measured progress against this Strategic Objective, the GPE Board has adopted Minimum Standards for Local Education Groups (LEGs).

The GPE Minimum Standards for Local Education Groups (LEGs) consist of basic standards for effective education sector policy dialogue coordination.

The Local Education Group (LEG) is the term used by GPE to refer to the group whose mandate it is to engage in policy dialogue and alignment and harmonization of education sector support to a country owned education sector plan (ESP). Generally led by the government, the specific composition, title and working arrangements of the LEG will vary according to context. GPE recognizes that decisions are made by individual actors and not by the LEG (specifically, government is the sovereign decision-maker in sector policy; donors make decisions on financial support to the sector; etc.). In line with the Strategic Objective, the LEG is not intended to be a separate group established for GPE purposes.

The Minimum Standards do not seek conformity to a standard mechanism of policy dialogue, but focus on basic principles to facilitate effectiveness and inclusiveness. Linked to the application of the Minimum Standards, GPE will compile knowledge and facilitate exchange on good practices and common factors that lead to effective and inclusive education sector policy dialogue.

The GPE Funding Model extends GPE processes beyond grant-making to education sector analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. While Standards 1 and 2 are of a general nature, Standards 3-6 should be applied at a minimum to the LEG in its GPE-specific capacity as a forum for consultation around processes related to the application for an Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG), Program Development Grant (PDG) and Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG):

- The development and implementation of an ESPDG and PDG application;
- The process to determine the fulfillment of the Funding Model Requirements and Equity, Efficiency and Learning Outcomes indicators;
- The selection of a Grant Agent;
- The development of an ESPIG application;
- Joint sector and GPE grant monitoring;
- Reporting to GPE.

However, LEGs may choose to use the Minimum Standards more broadly to facilitate general progress towards more effective collaboration, especially drawing on good practices as these are compiled and shared. In conjunction with GPE applications, LEGs should self-assess against the Minimum Standards and:

(1) identify gaps and, if relevant, agree on actions to fill them;

(2) provide as a memo attached to ESPDG and ESPIG applications an explanation for any gaps that cannot be filled (due to context, capacity, etc.)

Minimum Standard Criteria		Good Practices
1. Mandate The role of the LEG is formally mandated	• The LEG has a Terms of Reference (TOR) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) • The TOR or MOU clearly defines the LEG's mandate • The TOR or MOU clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of LEG members o The TOR or MOU clearly defines the periodicity of LEG meetings o The TOR or MOU and list of members are publicly available	
2. Leadership The LEG is led by national authorities in a formal meeting structure	• The LEG is chaired by a senior government/ministry of education official • LEG minutes are recorded and shared o A Sector Lead/Lead Partner (Coordinating Agency in GPE terminology) supports the government in its lead role and/or facilitates coordination of partners and communication with the GPE Secretariat	

3. Inclusion
LEG composition reflects key education sector stakeholders
	• The LEG includes representation from the following groups:
	   o Representatives of the Ministry of Education
	   o Representatives of other line ministries (specify)
	   o Representatives of Development Partners
	   o Representatives of Civil Society Organizations
	   o Representatives from teacher organizations
	   o Private sector/foundation partners (as relevant)
	   o GPE Grant Agent (as relevant)	

4. Participation The LEG is an active, participative forum	• LEG meetings, are attended by government/ministry of education officials • LEG meetings are attended by a majority of LEG members • LEG meetings are attended by the designated CA • Attrition among LEG members is staggered • In countries with GPE grants, the LEG meetings are regularly attended by the designated Grant Agent	
5. Sector Focus The LEG provides inputs to GPE programs and is engaged in the overall national sector dialogue and sector monitoring.	• The LEG is engaged in all key steps of the GPE-related process as defined in the Country Level Process Guide • The LEG engages in dialogue on the Education Sector Plan (ESP) or Transitional Education Plan (TEP)	

	• The LEG organizes a Joint Sector Review (JSR) annually
	• The LEG monitors
	    o ESP implementation
	    o Sector results
	    o Sector financing	

6. Alignment And Harmonization The LEG works to promote alignment and harmonization	• The LEG conducts mapping of development partner support as an integral part of ESP development and monitoring • The LEG periodically discusses conditions and actions for better alignment and harmonization of Development Partner support • Most discussions relating to donor-funded activities take place in the LEG or a LEG sub-group	

ANNEX 2 – PROCESS TO COMPILE GOOD PRACTICES

Once agreed by the Board, the Secretariat will start a process to systematically identify good practices of LEGs across the Partnership. This will be done through various channels, including engaging LEGs in applying the Minimum Standards to facilitate discussion, identify gaps and compile good practices; sharing experiences in DCP meetings; and compiling perspectives and experiences from throughout the Partnership. The compilation of practices will also capitalize on existing knowledge and documentation, including the Sector Monitoring Initiative reports, the 2015 GPE Evaluation Report, and Secretariat experience and mission reports.

Based on this, a report on good practices and enabling factors[4] that contribute to better LEG collaboration will be compiled. Emphasis will be put on practices and enabling factors that allow for efficient CSO and representatives from teacher organizations and contribution to the LEG.

Besides the report, tools from countries will be compiled to serve as a reference for other countries. These will include tools that clarify the LEG role within a country, its composition, working arrangements, the development of representative structures, etc.

The above approach is tentative, and the Secretariat will adjust and refine it with inputs from stakeholders, with the primary objective to support country-level stakeholders in better organizing and working as a LEG.

Deliverables (may be adjusted in response to stakeholders' inputs)	**Proposed timeline**
• Tool for the LEG to self-assess its efficiency and inclusiveness (LEG Minimum Standards as in Annex 1) • "Toolbox/repository" with examples of effective tools from countries such as TORs, MOUs, and joint monitoring arrangements outlined in ESPs • Documentation on good practices and enabling factors (communicational, user-friendly products accessible to country-level stakeholders) N.B. These will be complementary to the current ongoing work to document good practices of JSRs.	June 2017 By end 2017 By June 2018

---

[4] For example, government leadership and willingness to use the LEG as a policy dialogue forum (and to reduce individual transactions with DPs), Pooled Funding or Sector Budget Support, coordinating agency engagement, DPs' engagement and HQ support to field office DPs and clear accountability to engage in LEG, the length/history of working together as LEG, general activeness and capacity of civil society organizations in the country, etc.

ANNEX 3 – KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEG, AS PER THE COUNTRY LEVEL PROCESS GUIDE (2015 VERSION) AND OTHER KEY GPE DOCUMENTS

Policy Cycle Stages	LEG Role in National Education Sector Policy Cycle
Sector Analysis	• LEG members provide technical and financial support to analysis according to their ability/capacity • LEG as a group reviews/discusses sector diagnostic and analysis
Plan Development	• LEG members provide technical support to plan development according to their ability/capacity • LEG members provide financial support (align own support to ESP/TEP) according to their ability/capacity • LEG as a group discusses possible aid modalities, in line with aid effectiveness principles (including the potential for alignment with national systems and the reduced fragmentation of external aid resources)
Plan Appraisal	• LEG members/Development Partners commission the appraisal • LEG as a group agrees on the appraisal memo • LEG members support the adjustment of ESP on the basis of the appraisal according to their ability/capacity
Plan Endorsement	• Government adopts ESP, other LEG members endorse it
Implementation	• Government leads/implements ESP and LEG members support implementation according to their ability/capacity
Monitoring	• LEG as a group engages in monitoring of sector activities and progress (with particular focus on equity and learning outcomes), domestic and external financing, availability and quality of data, and progress of recommendations of the appraisal • LEG as a group participates and plays an active role in the JSR • LEG members participate in the preparation of the Aide Memoire
	LEG Role in ESPDG Cycle
	• Government decides and LEG endorses decision to apply for an ESPDG • LEG nominates the Grant Agent and Government approves • (As necessary) LEG members participate in the ESPDG application development, including expressing technical/financial support as individual partners

	• LEG as a group signs off on ESPDG application
	• Government and Grant Agent agree and LEG as a group endorses revisions to the ESPDG application
ESPIG Cycle Stages	**LEG Role in ESPIG Cycle**
Initial Preparations	• LEG as a group assesses alignment with GPE Requirements (and proposed follow-up actions) • LEG as a group participates in the identification of the overall scope of the ESPIG, ensuring it is aligned to the ESP • LEG as a group determines the most appropriate and efficient way to channel the ESPIG into the education sector
GA Identification	• LEG as a group participates in the process of GA selection and nominates the GA, as per Standard Selection Process for GA; government approves • LEG as a group signs off on PDG application
ESPIG Application Development	• Grant Agent and government develop the draft concept note/outline of the project; LEG as a group signs off • LEG as a group discusses the Variable Part indicators (this may take place during ESP development) • LEG as a group engages in discussions with the Secretariat when it carries out the first phase of the Quality Assurance Review QAR I) • LEG as a group discusses the QAR Phase II recommendations and agree on the QAR Phase II memo • LEG as a group signs off on ESPIG application package
ESPIG Implementation	• LEG members support government and GA in addressing ESPIG implementation issues • As appropriate, LEG members provide technical support to implementation, in particular to ensure harmonization with other sector activities
ESPIG Monitoring	• LEG as a group monitors progress of the ESPIG implementation through JSRs or similar mechanisms • LEG as a group monitors the progress of the Variable Part through JSRs or similar mechanisms • LEG members sign off on proposed revisions to the ESPIG