

Terms of Reference for Grant Agents of the GPE Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG)

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I. Introduction

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries in order to dramatically increase the number of children who are in school and learning.

GPE brings together developing countries, donors, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and foundations. Its mission is to mobilize global and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of equitable, quality education and learning for all, through inclusive partnership, a focus on effective and efficient education systems and increased financing.

GPE has adopted as its vision the [global goal for education](#), calling for inclusive, equitable quality education for all by 2030. [GPE 2020](#) turns this vision into actionable goals and objectives. GPE 2020 tasks the partnership with three clear and ambitious goals:

1. Improved and more equitable learning outcomes
2. Increased equity, gender equality and inclusion
3. Effective and efficient education systems

At country level, GPE partners hold each other accountable for delivering on GPE 2020's three country-level objectives:

1. Strengthening education sector planning and policy implementation
2. Supporting mutual accountability through inclusive policy dialogue and monitoring
3. Ensuring efficient and effective delivery of GPE support

The partnership is based on *mutual accountability*, whereby every partner is expected to commit and adhere to the accountabilities expressed in the Compact set out in the GPE Charter and fulfill corresponding roles and responsibilities. Each partner has a necessary and specific role to play to achieve the shared objectives of the partnership.

At country level, the partnership functions within the forum where the primary consultation on education sector development takes place between a government and its partners, referred to in GPE terms as the *local education group* (LEG). *Partnership framework* is a general term used by GPE to refer to the terms of reference (TOR), memorandum of understanding or other agreement established between the government and its partners to frame this collaboration.

The following *terms of reference* sets out the definition and role of the grant agent (GA) for the education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG).

II. Definition and Framing

A *grant agent* (GA) is any GPE partner approved by the GPE Board of Directors to receive funds directly from the Trustee, and is expected to ensure that GPE grants are appropriately managed, are fully aligned with broader education sector developments and add value to the country-level processes and results.

GPE provides grant funding for the implementation of country-owned education sector plans (ESPs). The ESPIG is meant to align to the ESP, facilitate progress towards GPE's strategic goals, and be complementary to other sector funding.

The TOR sets out the operational responsibilities and accountabilities of GAs in relation to the ESPIG.

The World Bank acts as trustee for the GPE Fund. An agency selected as GA must therefore enter into a Financial Procedures Agreement (FPA) with the Trustee. The GA at headquarters level ensures that the FPA is signed.

Specific *minimum standards* are required for all GAs, ensuring that each agency or organization selected as GA has the required capabilities to perform its role as intended. [Minimum Standards for all GPE Grant Agents](#) outlines the standards around financial management, institutional capacity, and self-investigative powers used to screen newly selected GAs.

GAs for the ESPIG are selected through a transparent process, approved by the government and endorsed by the other members of the LEG¹ as part of a broader sector dialogue. Detailed guidance is provided in the [Standard Process for Selection of Grant Agents](#). The Secretariat verifies adherence to the agreed GA selection process.

There is no expectation that the ESPIG GA should be the same as the GA for the education sector plan development grant (ESPDG).

The ESPIG GA has the following specific responsibilities:

(i) Support effective, inclusive partnership

- GPE grants are meant to leverage inclusive policy dialogue and strong sector plans. The GA is expected to engage in the broader GPE agenda as a partner and a member of the LEG – including such areas as systems building, sector planning and inclusive policy dialogue.
- In collaboration with the coordinating agency (CA), the GA promotes harmonized, inclusive policy dialogue and contributes to and participates in joint sector reviews (JSRs).

(ii) Grant application preparation

¹ The term “endorse” or “endorsement” in all GPE documentation means to offer public support. It does not imply formal approval or decision-making.

- Supports the government's proposal for GPE financing and preparation of the grant application package in consultation with the LEG.
- Supports the government in developing the program within the agreed scope of work and implementation modality and consistent with the ESP in consultation with the CA and other members of the LEG at agreed milestones in the process, and according to an agreed timeline.
- Supports the government to identify evidence-based programmatic solutions to address specific education sector challenges with regard to learning, equity and efficiency.
- Works with the government to clearly define its own role in relation to grant implementation – which can be limited to fiduciary oversight and monitoring, including technical support and capacity building, or encompass direct implementation, including program performance and achievement of results– and ensures this role is explained and budgeted for in the application.
- Evaluates the quality and effectiveness of the program and works with the Secretariat to define the respective roles of the GA and the Secretariat in quality assurance processes within an agreed timeline, ensuring they are well coordinated and complementary.
- Utilizes and aligns with country procedures and systems according to agreed GA criteria for the context and in compliance with the GA policies and procedures.

(iii) Fiduciary responsibilities

- Enters into a Financial Procedures Agreement (FPA) with the GPE Trustee and performs its fiduciary accountabilities in compliance with the FPA.
- Enters into a formal agreement with the grant recipient (usually the government) or recipients as appropriate to the GA's own policies and practices and the country context.
- Maintains books, records, documents and other evidence in accordance with its accounting procedures to sufficiently substantiate the use of transferred funds.
- Ensures the use of GPE funds is carried out in accordance with:
 - o its own policies and procedures, including those related to audit, eligible expenditures, employment and supervision of consultants and the procurement of goods and works and its framework to combat fraud and corruption.
 - o the applicable decisions of the GPE Board, including the purpose for which the specific allocations have been approved by the Board.
 - o [Policy on ESPIGs](#).
- In the event of suspected misuse of funds, the GA follows its internal procedures on misuse of funds as well as the [GPE Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds](#).

(iv) Program implementation and monitoring

- Ensures that the implementation of activities is in line with the endorsed ESP and the approved program document.
- Follows and implements the [Policy on ESPIGs](#), which details procedures with respect to approval and notification processes, implementation period, reporting requirements, revisions and amendments.
- Builds government capacity and provides technical support, as laid out in the approved program document for use of supervision fees and operational budgets.
- Supports the government to assess quality and effectiveness of the program outcomes and/or outputs and to pursue the best programmatic solutions.

- Diagnoses in a timely manner and works with the government to resolve any implementation issues that may adversely affect the desired outcome of the program and/or prevent the program from reaching the variable part targets.
- Supports the government to notify the LEG of any actions that impact the overall progress of the program, including variable part targets, and how it impacts the ESP implementation and variable part targets. Such notification should include an explanation of what is being done to resolve the issue(s).

(v) Reporting

- Uses the GA's own procedures and reporting formats and the GPE standard reporting template to facilitate the tracking of overall grant performance.
- Provides an annual progress report through the tools described above to the Board via the Secretariat.
- Supports the government to periodically share with the LEG policy-related issues from ESPIG implementation relative to ESP implementation (or reports directly if directly responsible for implementation of the ESPIG). Frequency and intensity of reporting will likely vary depending on the modality and the role of the GA vis-à-vis the government, but updates to the LEG must be provided at least twice a year. As relevant, reporting should be integrated in JSRs within the broader assessment of ESP implementation.
- Holds semi-annual portfolio meetings with the Secretariat to facilitate joint problem-solving and keeps the Secretariat regularly informed on performance of the ESPIG to ensure good flow of information and timely reporting by the Secretariat to the Grants and Performance Committee and Board.
- GA must submit a completion report within six months of the ESPIG's closure.

Annex: Useful documents for ESPIG grant agents

USEFUL DOCUMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE Charter • GPE Country-Level Process Guide • ESPIG Guidelines • Multiplier ESPIG Guidelines • Terms of Reference for ESPDG Grant Agents • Standard Selection Process for Grant Agents - ESPIG • Conflict Resolution Procedures • Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds • GPE Fund Governance • Grant Agent Minimum Standards