

User Research/Discovery TOR

Knowledge and Innovation (KIX) - Digital Learning Exchange Platform

Background

About GPE

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) plays a unique role in the international education development arena, serving as a catalyst for genuine partnership between developing countries, donor nations, international organizations, civil society, philanthropy, teachers and the private sector. Not only does the GPE provide a funding platform to support the development of education systems in 67 developing countries (aka ‘developing country partners’ or ‘DCPs’), but the GPE partnership collectively holds the knowledge and expertise necessary to accelerate progress towards achieving the partnership goals in the areas of learning, equity and strengthened education systems.

About IDRC-CRDI

Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) brings a long history of supporting innovation, research for development, and capacity-building initiatives driven by Southern researchers and knowledge users. For IDRC, “research” is a broad term that encompasses various forms of solution-oriented knowledge generation and innovation support. This includes the piloting and testing of innovative solutions, adapting, and improving existing solutions, and supporting the adaption and scaling of innovations. IDRC-supported research is engaged and made relevant to research users by involving them in knowledge generation, and through knowledge mobilization efforts that make sure research is readily applicable for policy, practice, and technological development. In this approach, research can be understood as a continuous process of learning and adaptation throughout all stages of innovation processes, from design to scaled solutions.

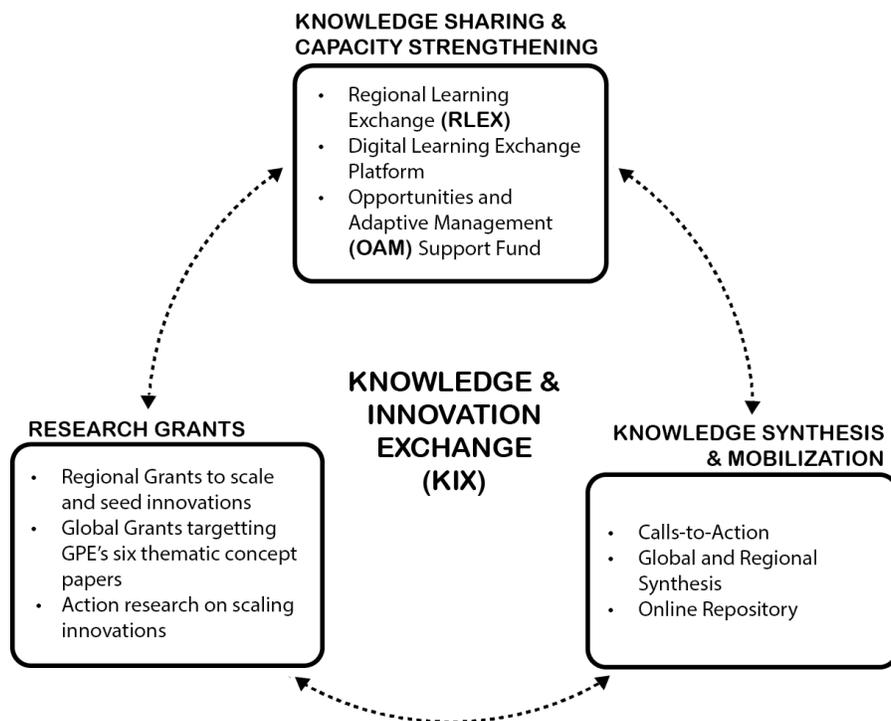
Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)

The GPE’s Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is an exciting new way to connect expertise, innovation and knowledge of GPE developing country partners to support better national policy dialogue and planning. KIX is designed to contribute to the improvement of policy and practice to strengthen national education systems of GPE member countries. Along the way, KIX will strengthen DCP capacity to more routinely integrate new knowledge and innovations into policy and practice at appropriate scales, tapping into national and regional knowledge generation.

KIX consists of a **learning exchange**, where partners come together to share information, innovation and best practices, and a **funding mechanism** that provides grants at the global and regional levels to invest in knowledge generation and innovation, and to scale up proven approaches. The two components will be supported by a Digital Learning Exchange Platform.

At the core of the KIX design are DCP-owned Regional Learning Exchanges (RLEX). Presently, three Regional Learning Exchanges (RLEX) will be established in Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, and one to cover other parts of the world. These RLEXs will serve as the space for cross-country exchange so DCPs can learn from the strategies and experiences of others and bring those insights home to improve policy dialogue, planning cycles and, ultimately, national education systems. The RLEX will be the mechanism for identifying education policy challenges, shaping both short-term and long-term knowledge generation and mobilization, including through regional and global grants.

The short-term activities include: 1) scoping of promising evidence-based solutions to these challenges; 2) rapid, short-term pieces of research or analysis; 3) peer exchange among DCPs; 4) capacity development; and 5) support for the use of KIX-generated evidence by DCPs.



Digital tools to support learning across KIX

The Digital Learning Exchange Platform is envisaged as a centralized platform for knowledge management and collaboration across KIX and will serve two main functions. The first is to be a knowledge repository that supports both the broader GPE Partnership and KIX. The second will be to support learning across KIX. The digital platform

may additionally support sharing of GPE operations-related resources, as well as thematically relevant resources from other GPE partners and external organizations.

1. Knowledge Repository: To build momentum and action, effective curation and mobilization of knowledge is imperative. In the form of evidence, resources, and tools, we anticipate KIX knowledge outputs will include:

- Knowledge developed via global and regional funding;
- Knowledge shared by countries on a voluntary basis;
- Knowledge and tools shared by partners;
- Regional and global solution scoping (i.e. responses to identified policy challenges);
- Regional analyses of policy challenges;
- KIX-related knowledge products produced by the GPE Secretariat; and
- Documents and proceedings produced for or from different KIX proceedings, such as regional and global events.

All content developed through KIX will be shared openly and online through the knowledge repository.

2. Supporting learning: We anticipate the need for a suite of tools and resources on a digital platform that will support the broader KIX processes of peer learning, knowledge uptake, and use. These tools might include:

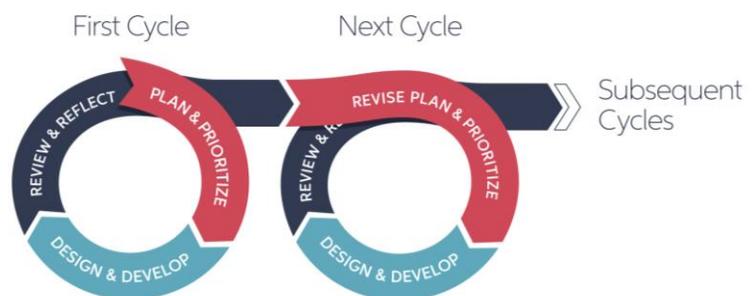
- An online forum and collaboration tools to facilitate sustained engagement and discussion among participants in the RLEXs;
- Webinar and event meeting tools with functionalities (e.g., recording, ability to break into small groups) to support exchanges between experts, innovators, and DCPs;
- Learning modules, automated newsletters, and other approaches to support knowledge and innovation uptake; and
- A safe, online peer exchange and discussion space—all knowledge sharing platforms must conform to applicable privacy and security standards.

A. Design and development

Success of the digital platform will not be measured by the breadth of tools built but by whether the digital technologies are useful, appropriate, and respond to a clearly identified need among DCP partners. For example, we would anticipate that applications designed to be used on mobile phones may prove popular given the relative dominance of mobile over fixed-line broadband in many GPE countries.

For KIX to be truly responsive to country level needs, the design and development of the digital platform will adhere to well-established [digital development principles](#). Key to these principles is that the process prioritize users, is collaborative, and is based on iterative

improvement. It must involve the end users throughout the problem definition, design and implementation



phases. This approach begins with a clear understanding of, and communication with, identified DCP users. It must be informed by their need, capacity, and process, and any assumptions validated through real-world application.

B. Digital Platform Project phases

The build out of the different technologies will be carried out through a phased process.

Phase I: User research and discovery

Exploratory research will provide a deep understanding of and engagement with DCP user groups and partners (governments, development partners, CSOs and other in-country stakeholders), and a clear expression of their priority education challenges and needs. This exploration must include an assessment the e-readiness of DCP user groups, related to connectivity, technological infrastructure, knowledge mobilization practices, and user preparedness - required to ensure that all DCPs can engage with and benefit from KIX technology investments. Furthermore, the design team will engage in user journeys through the KIX process itself to understand how this engagement can bring users in touch with digital tools and platforms.

Phase II: Repository design phase

Building on the user research, a technology supplier will be contracted by the IDRC to build the knowledge repository through a prototyping and testing process involving key users. The design will also require collaboration between IDRC, the GPE Secretariat, and DCPs. The process should be iterative in reusing and improving existing tools, while also building out functionality over time. The digital partner will primarily be tasked with supporting the development of the digital repository and the online network. Additional work to integrate other technology tools may also take place.

Phase III: Developing support tools for learning exchanges (following launch of RLEXs)

Once the RLEXs are established, the next step is to build digital tools and resources for supporting the peer-learning processes at the heart of KIX. This will be an iterative process of user research, design, and development. It will respond to the requirements of the DCP and its partners and facilitate peer learning and knowledge mobilization.

This document provides Terms of Reference specific to Phase I: User research and discovery.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of Phase I is framed by the need to gain a clear understanding of DCP stakeholders, their current ways of working, and developing a realistic framework from which to build a beneficial and usable website and knowledge repository. Ideally, this information would also be useful for future phases, including the development of digital tools to support learning across the KIX program. Indicatively, we anticipate that this would include a description of users (in groupings), as well as data on their context of digital infrastructure, current digital practices, knowledge needs and constraints, and digital knowledge practices (locating, sharing, etc), among others. We anticipate that the service provider will bring considerable user research and discovery experience and will help to shape the nature and focus of the research.

Deliverables	Dates
Draft Research Design including methodology and data collection tools Inputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KIX Proposal • Meeting with KIX teams in IDRC and GPE (also the Communications and Knowledge Management teams) • Understanding the GPE website and digital platforms 	May-June
Finalized research design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refined methodology and tools based on IDRC and GPE feedback on draft • Pilot test methodology & tools, with refinements as necessary 	June
Final report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the user research, analyze data. • Produce final report. The report (20-25 pages) will make concrete suggestions about design elements of the repository. The report will include the raw data from the user research. 	July-August

Timeline:

Work and services delivered for Phase I will take place over 3 months, beginning as soon as possible and concluding not later than 2nd September 2019.

Reporting:

The consultant will report to Ian Macpherson, Lead - Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) at the GPE Secretariat. Input and feedback will be provided by IDRC and GPE Secretariat colleagues in the Communications and Knowledge Management teams.

Submission:

Interested applicants are invited to submit a CV and a two-page (max) expression of interest that outlines relevant experience, methodology and data collection tools, and budget to undertake the Phase I research. These should be sent to Aditi Desai (adesai4@globalpartnership.org) not later than 13h00 EST on 29th May 2019.