

AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

April 2016

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest: Guidelines for Business Engagement¹

To maintain the integrity of its operations and brand, the GPE Secretariat needs to ensure that it engages with reputable and responsible companies² that subscribe to the vision and mission of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

GPE does not endorse or acknowledge products, services or methodologies and does not facilitate introductions for solicitation purposes.

GPE has a Conflict of Interest policy available on its website and all Board and Committee members are required to sign it. The following section sets out additional clarifying notes on potential conflicts of interest in relation to business engagement within GPE.

Definition

A conflict of interest occurs when a prospective or existing business member of the Global Partnership for Education uses their position to advance their personal interests, the interests of an institution with which they are affiliated, or those of a close associate, in a way that disadvantages or excludes others or is otherwise detrimental to the overall effectiveness of GPE programs and operating model.

Avoidance of Conflict of Interest

GPE takes a broad view of the ethics of its partnerships, extending beyond the strict definition of 'conflict of interest.' Engagement should be made in good faith and a business should not seek to utilize its position as a partner with GPE, its relationship with GPE, or the knowledge and information it has received in connection with its relationship with GPE, to derive a direct business benefit.

Examples of conflicts of interest

When a business seeks to use its position as a GPE member to:

- Influence GPE decision-making for its own individual benefit, or seek a favourable business relationship with the GPE;
- Use information received during GPE proceedings in order to pursue contracts outside official procurement channels, for example relating to the supply of goods and services in an educational setting; or
- Imply an endorsement by the Global Partnership for Education of their products or services.

Businesses are required to disclose any material interests that may place other constituencies in conflict or result in reputation damage due to perceptions of undue influence of the business on the

¹ Approved by the Governance, Ethics, Risk and Finance Committee on April 7, 2016 in its delegated authority from the Board of Directors.

² In case of doubt, the terms 'reputable and responsible' will be defined by the GERF.

GPE or its constituencies. A material interest includes being a party to a contract, or directly involved in a transaction, for the provision of goods and services to an organization funded by GPE grants.

Duty to Disclose

Prospective partners must disclose any material conflicts of interest. Where clear conflicts of interest are identified, GPE's Secretariat will take appropriate action, including rejecting the partnership or contribution. Such measures may potentially be applied also for perceived conflicts of interest.

Failure to Disclose

If GPE learns that a business failed to disclose a material interest or issue (as defined by the above disclosure requirements) at the time the relationship between the GPE and the entity was established:

- The GPE should inform the business of this fact and provide it with an opportunity to respond; and
- Where there is confirmation of a failure to properly disclose, the GPE will take the most appropriate course of action including, if needed, ending or revising the relationship with the business and issuing a public announcement to that effect.

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