

Terms of Reference for Grant Agents of the GPE Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG)

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GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION

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](#), GPE's strategic plan, 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 plan development grant (ESPDG).

II. Definition and Framing

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

GPE provides ESPDGs to developing country partners, through Grant Agents, to *facilitate sector planning*. GPE grants are meant to leverage inclusive policy dialogue around quality, government-owned sector plans.

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

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 all 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.

An ESPDG GA should be selected by the government and endorsed¹ by the LEG, based on the capacity required to perform the role in the given context, and as part of a broader sector dialogue. The selection process is not the same as that of the ESPIG, and should incur minimal transaction costs and be facilitated by the coordinating agency (CA). The Secretariat may aid in recommending a process by sharing good practices from other contexts, and will verify that the process has been transparent.

There should preferably be the same GA covering all the financing windows of the ESPDG. Should there be a need for multiple GAs, appropriate justification should be provided, and the GAs must work closely together to ensure links between analysis and planning. There is no expectation that the ESPDG GA be the same as the GA for the education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG).

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

The ESPDG 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 in such areas as systems building, sector planning and inclusive policy dialogue.

(ii) Grant preparation

- Supports the government to prepare a grant application, following the GPE [ESPDG guidelines](#) and in consultation with the CA, which coordinates consultation with members of the LEG.
- Supports the government in consultation with CA to set out an agreed roadmap of activities and a realistic planning timeline for the ESP process.
- Ensures the grant application demonstrates that all goods and services to be financed by the grant are directly linked to sector analysis and the development or revision of an evidence-based ESP/TEP.
- Ensures that its own role in the planning process, including through procurement of services and any direct technical support to the government, is clearly laid out in the application.

(iii) Support inclusive and effective planning process

- Promotes government leadership and ownership of the planning process.
- Provides sector planning support and assistance to the government in accordance with the approved grant application.
- Coordinates with the CA to ensure the LEG is consulted in accordance with the agreed planning process and timelines and is informed on the status of activities, including any delays.
- Works closely with the government, and depending on context and agreed application, uses the ESPDG process to ensure that work supported through the grant aligns with ongoing strategies to build individual, organizational and institutional capacities in the national entities charged with sector analysis and planning.
- Coordinates with the CA to ensure that the sector planning takes into account, as appropriate, a focus on equity, efficiency and learning outcomes as the basis for variable part development.

(iv) Grant implementation and monitoring

- Provides fiduciary oversight and ensures grant implementation complies with: (i) the approved application; (ii) GPE policies and guidelines; (iii) the GA organization's own policies and procedures; and (iv) the financial procedures agreement with the GPE Trustee.

- Coordinates with the government and the CA to implement and monitor the ESPDG and ensures that it is properly utilized to support the development of an evidence-based and credible ESP/TEP.
- In collaboration with the government, diagnoses in a timely manner and reports to the LEG any ESPDG implementation issues that may adversely affect the quality and timing of the ESP development. Such notification should include an explanation of what is being done to resolve the issue(s).
- Supports the government to ensure linkage between the ESP/TEP planning process and the ESPIG development process when there is overlap in the timing of the processes, coordinating with the CA and the ESPIG GA to ensure all actors are well informed of the timeline and progress on the ESP/TEP.
- Coordinates with the government to submit to the Secretariat for approval a revision of planned activities and budget when unforeseen circumstances arise that affect grant implementation in line with the [Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Development Grants](#).

(v) ESP appraisal

- If the ESP/TEP appraisal is covered by the ESPDG budget, the GA should coordinate with the CA and development partners to arrange the independent appraisal of the ESP and ensure that the appraisal process is in line with the [Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal](#).

(vi) Reporting

- Keeps the Secretariat and LEG through the CA informed of progress on implementation of grant activities, notably to flag any issues that lead to delayed finalization of the education sector plan.
- Submit the grant's final financial statements to the GPE Secretariat (usually within six months of the grant closing date) as stipulated in the FPA.

Annex: Useful documents for ESPDG 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 ESPIG 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](#)