

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING FOR ADDITIONAL MAXIMUM COUNTRY ALLOCATION

June 2020

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE GUIDELINES

The Global Partnership for Education Financing Conference in Dakar, Senegal, in February 2018 was a demonstration of unprecedented worldwide support for our collective goal of ensuring every child and young person has the opportunity for an equitable and quality education. Invigorated with new resources, we now have a fresh chance to build a stronger partnership and accelerate progress to meet the ambition of the GPE 2020 strategic plan.

Following the success of the Financing Conference, the Global Partnership for Education's Board of Directors decided to provide **additional** Maximum Country Allocations (MCAs) to countries that obtained an Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) between July 2017 and June 2018. This is a new arrangement for the Global Partnership for Education, as those countries will be eligible to apply for these additional amounts without adhering to the normal rule that at least 75% of the active ESPIG must be committed before submitting a new request. Moreover, GPE has changed some elements of the application process to reduce transaction costs for those countries that have recently applied for an ESPIG under the 2014 funding model.

To help applicants prepare a successful ESPIG package, these guidelines provide step by step guidance for the application process. They include the quality assurance steps designed to help ensure that the country meets the applicable GPE funding requirements and that the proposal is robust and responds to expected quality standards. The key features of the ESPIG financed through the additional maximum country allocation are largely the same as those of the ESPIG financed by the initial MCA, and can be found in annex I.

However, the following three elements are specific to these additional MCAs:

1. In June 2018, the GPE Board decided to allow countries applying for an MCA of up to US\$5 million to decide whether the ESPIG will include an ex-post variable part. The same applies to the additional MCAs up to US\$5 million, where the amount of the initial MCA is not taken into consideration. In other words, an application for an additional MCA of up to US\$5 million does not have to include an ex-post variable part, even if the total ESPIG amount including the initial MCA would exceed US\$5 million.
2. The program implementation period of an ESPIG is expected to be 3-4 years (with the possibility of an additional year for the disbursement of the Variable Part). The same is applicable for a new, separate ESPIG financed by the additional MCA. However, in the preferable scenario that the additional MCA will provide additional funding to the ESPIG financed by the initial MCA, the government in consultation with the grant agent and the local education group may consider whether maintaining a 3-5-year implementation period is still feasible and, if not, request a longer total implementation period.

3. There are specific considerations regarding the selection of the grant agent which are explained in more detail in section VI of these guidelines.

These guidelines are primarily intended for the government leading the application development process and grant implementation, and the ESPIG grant agent who has the responsibility of preparing the full ESPIG application package and administering the grant. They are also intended for the coordinating agency whose role is to facilitate a collaborative process among all members of the local education group during program development and implementation to enable collective and aligned support to the government.

II. WHICH COUNTRIES CAN APPLY FOR AN ADDITIONAL MCA?

The additional MCAs have been made available by the GPE Board of Directors as additional financing for countries and entities that obtained an ESPIG between July 2017 and August 2018. Specifically, this includes Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, and Somalia (Federal).

At its June 2018 meeting, the GPE Board increased MCAs for some countries that have not obtained an approved ESPIG since the Brussels 2014 replenishment. Those countries may opt to apply for the original, lower MCA first, and then for the additional MCA through this process.

III. WHEN CAN COUNTRIES APPLY?

The additional MCAs are valid until 2020, therefore, the last date to apply will be approximately October 2020. For additional maximum country allocations above US\$10 million, applications need to be submitted by the regular ESPIG application deadlines. Dates for 2019 and 2020 can be found in Annex II. Applications for additional maximum country allocations up to US\$10 million, used to provide additional funding to the ESPIG financed by the initial MCA, can be submitted at any time.

The government, in consultation with the grant agent and the local education group, should decide on the best time to apply. Options may include applying during the midterm review of the ESP or the program financed by the ESPIG to allow for the proposed program financed by the additional MCA to be integrated into that process. However, the government can choose to apply whenever convenient, even after approval of the ESPIG financed by the initial MCA to streamline the implementation of the additional maximum country allocation with the previously approved grant. It is important to note that the rule for regular ESPIGs that 75% of the current grant needs to be committed before a new application can be submitted does **not** apply.

Prior to developing an application, the government, in consultation with the coordinating agency, should notify the Secretariat of its intent to apply, to agree on a broad timeline leading to the final application submission.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Access to an ESPIG financed by the original maximum country allocation is dependent on the government fulfilling the three requirements elaborated below.

Three requirements

1. An independently appraised and endorsed quality ESP/TEP. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that education aid, including from the GPE, (i) is based on a solid, nationally owned analysis of the challenges of delivering quality basic education to all boys and girls, including those from marginalized groups, and (ii) builds institutional capacity to deliver education services equitably and efficiently.

2. Evidence of commitment to finance the endorsed ESP/TEP, including both government commitment and development partners' commitment. The purpose of this requirement is to promote mutual accountability among GPE partners for progress towards access to quality education for all children. This requirement therefore has two elements: (i) government commitment and (ii) development partners' commitment.

3. Availability of critical data and evidence for data planning, budgeting, managing, monitoring and accountability or alternatively, a strategy to develop capacity to produce and effectively use critical data. The requirement is divided into three sub-components concerning the availability of: a) An education sector analysis, b) Basic financial and education data, and c) A system or mechanisms to monitor learning outcomes. The purpose of this requirement is to contribute to improving data as a tool to diagnose, draw evidence from education needs and challenges, develop relevant, appropriate sector strategies and track progress towards realistic targets.

Governments that have been approved for an ESPIG based on the initial MCA under the 2014 funding model have been deemed to have met these requirements, and should therefore note the following points:

- i) If the application is submitted to the Secretariat **within a year** following *approval* of the existing ESPIG, a new review of the funding model requirements will not be necessary.
- ii) If the application is submitted to the Secretariat **more than a year but less than two years** following approval of the existing ESPIG, it will be necessary to verify that the domestic resource commitments linked to the existing ESPIG are on track.
- iii) If the application is submitted to the Secretariat **two years or more** following approval of the existing ESPIG, it will be necessary to verify that the ESP is still valid and that the domestic resource commitments linked to the existing ESPIG are on track.

With regards to domestic financing, the local education group will be requested to update the information provided at the time of the original application by filling out the domestic financing matrix and including the most recently available information.

To demonstrate the validity of the ESP, the local education group will be requested to provide an update on sector planning and implementation. This will include the updated multi-annual implementation plan, the annual implementation report, and the aide-memoires from the joint sector reviews held since the approval of the existing ESPIG. If the application is submitted less than two years before the end date of the current ESP, the local education group will be requested to provide a roadmap towards the development of the next ESP.

V. VARIABLE PART

The additional MCA consists of a Fixed Part (requirements-based) and a Variable Part (incentives-based), making up 70 percent and at least 30 percent of the additional MCA respectively. However, the GPE Board has decided to allow countries applying for an additional MCA of up to US\$ 5 million to decide whether the application will or will not include an ex-post variable part.

To apply for the Variable Part of the additional MCA, the government, in consultation with the local education group, must identify priority policies and strategies for 1) equity; 2) efficiency; and 3) learning outcomes. Based on these priorities, the government must choose actions and indicators to access the Variable Part. Unless specific justification is provided, the government is expected to select core indicators of the ESP, reflecting progress on key strategies and policies designed to drive overall progress in the sector and incentivize the unlocking of key sector bottlenecks.

Since countries applying for the additional MCA will probably already be implementing an ESP, best practice would be to assess the implementation of the ESP (through a joint sector review), and look at progress with regards to different strategies, including those linked to the variable part of the already approved ESPIG. This could help the LEG assess whether the choices at the time of the original application are still valid, or whether changes should be made, including to integrate the additional financing. Countries have the option to maintain the same strategies or to include others for the additional financing. If countries maintain the same strategies, they can still add other indicators related to the implementation of the strategy, such as further in the results chain. It is possible to add additional funding to reach indicators which were included in the original ESPIG¹, however, this is not allowed for situations where the indicator targets have already been reached at the time of applying for the additional MCA. If appropriate, it is possible to combine the request for the additional MCA

¹ In this case, it would be necessary to assess whether including additional funding would impact the ambitiousness of the target, especially for output related indicators and considering the disbursement mechanisms of the variable part.

with a revision of the original variable part. In that case, a clear justification for the change in the original variable part needs to be provided.

Normally, the variable part is disbursed after targets on the selected indicators have been reached (ex-post approach). In exceptional circumstances, when the ex-post approach is not feasible, governments, in consultation with the local education group can request an ex-ante approach. For countries that have pursued an ex ante approach for the initial MCA, this approach will automatically apply to the additional MCA. For other countries, the additional MCA will follow an ex-post approach. If the local education group determines that an ex-ante approach is needed for the additional MCA, the country lead will provide specific guidance.

VI. AGREEMENT OF FUNDING MODALITY, SCOPE OF WORK AND GRANT AGENT

Based on discussions within the local education group, the government identifies the overall scope of work to be funded through the additional maximum country allocation. This should be aligned with the ESP/TEP and a mapping of funding needs in the approved ESP multiyear action plan, identifying insufficient source of funding to date. This is not applicable if the ESPIG financed through the initial MCA is disbursed through budget support or a pooled fund, which directly supports the whole ESP/TEP. In such cases, the additional MCA would be disbursed through the same mechanism, unless specific justification is provided for another approach.

It is strongly encouraged that the additional MCA complement the program financed by the initial MCA, especially where the additional MCA is relatively limited in comparison with the initial MCA. However, the government, in consultation with the local education group, may decide that the additional MCA should be focused on another scope of work. If so, this decision should be justified, especially when it leads to a separate program. There may be justification for such a choice based on the size of the additional MCA, as compared to the initial MCA; the absorptive capacity in the country; or limited scalability of the activities financed through the initial MCA. In addition, the local education group should consider whether more aligned modalities have become available to be co-financed through the additional MCA.

As part of the process to apply for the ESPIG financed by the initial MCA, the local education group selects a grant agent, following the specific guidance provided in the *Standard Selection Process for Grant Agents* and based on the *ToR for Grant Agents*. For the additional MCA, the same grant agent should be retained, and the program financed through the additional MCA should be merged with the program financed through the original ESPIG (and the Multiplier ESPIG where available), except in cases where specific justification is provided. There may be justification for a change in grant agent if there are changes in the scope of work, different geographic areas of interventions or other financing modalities that would give another grant agent a

comparative advantage (e.g., if it could lead to co-financing of another existing program). If the government, in consultation with the local education group decides that another grant agent should be considered, the selection should be done in line with the specific guidance provided in the *Standard Selection Process for Grant Agents* and based on the *ToR for Grant Agents*. If the same grant agent from the existing ESPIG financed by the initial MCA is agreed for the additional MCA, it is not necessary to follow a full selection process. However, the coordinating agency is requested to obtain confirmation that there is no objection. If there is an objection, the local education group will need to consider whether it is necessary to start a new selection process. If no consensus can be found, the *GPE Conflict Resolution Procedures* will apply.

The local education group is requested to immediately inform the Secretariat of its selection regarding scope of work, modality and grant agent. The Secretariat will inform the Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) of any changes in grant agent and/or decisions to finance a separate program through the additional MCA. The Secretariat will inform the local education group if the GPC raises any objections. When mapping out the scope of work and funding needs, it is important for the government to take into consideration the principle that no GPE funds can be used to support for-profit provision of core education services, unless in certain exceptional circumstances. Should it seek to apply for an exemption, the government, with endorsement from the LEG, should signal initial intent to the GPE Secretariat and ensure to apply the process as described in the exemption policy.²

Selected grant agents may apply for a program development grant (PDG) to finance program and application preparation. However, funding for PDGs is limited in cases where the additional maximum country allocation is relatively small and/or where it is used to expand the original program activities.

VII. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)

For regular ESPIG applications, the Secretariat accompanies the program and application development process on a continuous basis and as needed. The designated Secretariat country lead works with the local education group, in particular the Ministry, coordinating agency and the grant agent, to ensure and facilitate the preparation of high quality applications that support and are aligned with country processes and GPE's guiding policies and principles.

² For the exemption policy, see GPE Board paper on "Exceptional circumstances exemptions for the private sector engagement strategy," available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/exceptional-circumstances-exemptions-private-sector-engagement-strategy-december-2019>.

A. Additional maximum country allocations up to US\$10 million

For additional maximum country allocations up to US\$10 million and where the grant agent is the same, the Secretariat will **not** provide a new QAR I and QAR II report. In consultation with the local education group, an exception can be made when requirements to access funding need new verification (QAR I) and/or when the scope of work, financing modality and/or the strategies related to the variable part have substantially changed (QAR I and/or II).

B. Additional maximum country allocations above US\$10 million

For additional maximum country allocations above US\$10 million or when the grant agent has changed, the Secretariat will update the QAR I and QAR II report. There may be exceptions, for example in cases where the requirement does not need to be verified and the additional MCA adds resources to expand components in the existing ESPIG. Quality assurance reviews are sequenced to fit an ESPIG submission date envisaged by the local education group.

(i) QAR I

To update the QAR I report, the local education group will need to provide the Secretariat with information on the scope of work, financing modality, and the decision process and grant agent selection. It will also need to provide information on the fulfillment of the requirements when they need to be reverified (see the Requirements section above for specific information needed). If the scope of work and/or financing modality changes substantially, the grant agent will need to prepare a written outline for the program to be funded and/or the justification of the change in the financing modality. If the local education group wants to include additional strategies related to equity, efficiency and/or learning outcomes for the variable part of the ESPIG, they should be presented to the Secretariat during the QAR I phase. After sharing the outline with the local education group to ensure continued collaborative decision-making and consistency with the scope identified prior to grant agent selection, it is sent to the Secretariat for QAR review.

(ii) QAR II

Taking into consideration the agreed scope of work, technical decisions and, when applicable, the recommendations of QAR I, the grant agent under the leadership of the government is responsible for developing the application package according to the agreed process. The grant agent shares the draft program document³ with the LEG, and invites the coordinating agency and other LEG members (according to the agreed

³ In case of additional financing of the program financed by an existing ESPIG, this may refer to that document already submitted in combination with a document that explains changes to the program.

process) to provide feedback on the draft at an appropriate stage aligned with its internal review process and before submitting the draft program document to the Secretariat.

At this stage, the package submitted for the Secretariat's review should also include:

- ✓ A description of the strategies to access the Variable Part of the MCA
- ✓ Related actions, indicators, targets and a results chain
- ✓ Information on when and how it will be determined that actions have been completed and indicators reached in a timely manner, including the means of verification
- ✓ Which disbursements of budget support and/or a pooled fund and/or which components of a program will be financed through the fixed part of the grant, and how the components financed through the variable part will be integrated.

The package should specifically indicate changes in comparison with the variable part of the existing ESPIG. The grant agent, copying the government, coordinating agency, and GPE country lead, should submit the draft ESPIG application package to the Secretariat at the following address: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org by the set deadline.

VIII. SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

Based on the inputs and recommendations provided in the QAR II report, the grant agent, in close collaboration with the government and in consultation with the local education group, reviews and finalizes the ESPIG application package. The finalized application consists of:

Required documents:

- ✓ ESPIG Application Form
- ✓ Latest evidence of domestic resource commitment (required if application is being submitted more than a year following the approval of existing ESPIG)
- ✓ Program document prepared for ESPIG funding⁴ or other appropriate documents for budget support or pooled funds

⁴ In case of additional financing of the program financed by an existing ESPIG, this may refer to that document already submitted in combination with a document that explains changes to the program.

- ✓ QAR Phase II memo (summary of how the QAR II recommendations have been addressed in the final application package)⁵
- ✓ Latest report on implementation or completion of ongoing/previous grant, where applicable.

Supporting documents⁶:

- ✓ ESP Annual Implementation Report, as available
- ✓ Joint sector review reports since the previous ESPIG application, as available
- ✓ Draft grant agreement, where applicable and if available.

The government validates the completed application and the development partners and grant agent endorse it. The coordinating agency submits it to the Secretariat, with a copy to the government and grant agent. The coordinating agency works with the government and grant agent to identify who needs to be copied on the submission to facilitate country-level processes. The coordinating agency also ensures that the submitted application package is shared with all the members of the local education group.

Submission of final application package – For QAR III

The coordinating agency submits the final ESPIG application package to the Secretariat at the following address: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org by the set deadline, copying the ministry focal point, GPE country lead, and the grant agent who have previously signed off on the application.

QAR III – Final readiness review

The Secretariat verifies that the application package is complete and then proceeds with QAR III as its final review of the application, preparing the necessary documentation for final review and the allocation decision.

In QAR Phase III, the Secretariat determines whether:

- The application package meets the quality standards.
- When applicable, sufficient information on the requirements for accessing the grant have been submitted.

⁵ This is only applicable when the Secretariat has provided an update of the QAR II, so in principle only for applications above US\$ 10 million.

⁶ When the country opts to develop a new ESP/TEP or to substantially revise its ESP/TEP, an ESP package needs to be submitted. This consists of:

- The ESP/TEP, including a costed multi-year implementation plan that covers at least the first two years of the grant cycle.
- Final appraisal report of the ESP/TEP conducted by independent reviewer(s) and commissioned by the development partners of the LEG.
- Appraisal memo, established as a follow-up to the appraisal report, providing a brief summary of how the recommendations were addressed prior to the endorsement of the final ESP/TEP and how the recommendations for the medium and longer term will be addressed;
- The government's approval of the ESP/TEP, including its commitment to finance the plan.
- Endorsement letter by the development partners, including commitment to finance the ESP/TEP.

The Secretariat compiles the findings of the final readiness review into a QAR III report for further processing. Should the Secretariat determine that the application submitted does not meet the minimum standards, it will inform the coordinating agency of these findings. The coordinating agency will inform the local education group who can subsequently indicate to maintain or revise the application, with the possibility to retract and resubmit at a later application round.

Decision

In line with delegated authority from the Board, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GPE will approve an ESPIG amount⁷ US\$10 million or less (or its equivalent in Euros) plus agency fees.⁸

For an amount over US\$10 million and up to US\$25 million, the Secretariat will share the findings of its final readiness review (QAR III report) with the GPC for further review and approval decision. The Secretariat may also refer a grant amount US\$10 million or less to GPC for decision if the grant application requires further deliberation/ exceptions.

Any amount over US\$25 million will be recommended to the Board for further review and decision. For all grants, the approving entity (CEO, GPC, or the Board) will examine the findings of QAR III and make a decision based on whether the ESPIG application represents a good investment for GPE that would strengthen the education system and lead to improved outcomes in equity, efficiency and learning in the particular country context.

The decision, together with the expected timeframe for commencement of program implementation, is communicated to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Education, with copy to the grant agent and the coordinating agency, within ten business days after the allocation decision is made (approval date). The communication includes the decision on:

- Grant amount and duration
- Amount of the variable part along with the actions and indicators that will be the basis for its release and its disbursement modality (ex-post or ex-ante, if applied for)
- Designation of the grant agent
- Additional conditions or requirements for funding
- Observations and report-back items, where appropriate.

⁷ This includes Multiplier grant, Accelerated Financing and Additional Financing. Also, the grant amount considered in the delegation is based on the total value of a country's application at one time. For example, if a country submits an application for a US\$10 million ESPIG together with an application for a US\$5 million Multiplier grant, GPC approval is required as the total value exceeds US\$10 million.

⁸ See BOD/2019/12-10, available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-12-gpe-board-decisions-rev.pdf>.

The application package is considered an integral part GPE's approval. Any changes to these documents after submission to GPE should follow the *ESPIG Policy* regarding revision. This includes any changes to the program documents during the grant agent's internal approval process.

Disclosure of ESPIG documents

In line with its transparency policy, GPE publishes all approved ESPIG applications and program documents on its website under the country pages of developing country partners, as well as all Joint Sector Review reports or aide memoires, unless an objection is received from the individual country.

If the application is not approved, the country can re-submit its application in a following round of ESPIG submissions, as long as the period for its MCA has not passed.

ANNEX I – DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE, AND KEY FEATURES OF AN ESPIG

DESCRIPTION

The ESPIG provides support to the implementation of national Education Sector Plans (ESPs) or Transitional Education Plans (TEPs)⁹ to create stronger education systems capable of delivering improvements in equity and learning.¹⁰

Funding through the ESPIG builds on an evidence-based planning process and inclusive policy dialogue, and leverages financing of national priorities identified in the ESP/TEP endorsed by developing partners. The grant is designed for results-based financing by ensuring stronger quality standards for educational planning, programming and monitoring, and by providing specific incentives to focus resources on achieving improved performance in equity, efficiency and learning outcomes, and to go beyond past trends in these areas. The grant application process and the grant monitoring modalities aim to add value to sector developments by enabling inclusive partnerships that engage governments, donors, civil society, teachers, philanthropy, and the private sector.

The ESPIG is intended to complement other funding sources. Applications therefore require evidence on the *complementarity* of GPE funds in relation to projected domestic financing by the government and financing from other external partners. It is also expected that work supported through the ESPIG be aligned with GPE’s strategic goals, collectively supported by GPE partners and member countries.

No GPE funds can be used to support for-profit provision of core education services, including provision of services by internationally owned network (chain) schools, or part-internationally owned (majority or minority investment). However, in certain circumstances, exemptions may be considered. Exemptions may be granted to allow for bottom-up, community-derived networks and sole proprietor-owned schools that do not pay dividends. Such exemptions can only be considered as a last resort where there is no available public provision of core education services for marginalized populations and no alternatively available not-for-profit provision.¹¹

MODALITIES

The choice of the funding modality for the ESPIG support should be underpinned by the principles of aid effectiveness, and is made through the local education group based on existing fiduciary risks. **Budget support** is the preferred modality where conditions permit to allow for full use of country systems. In countries with an operational **joint financing** mechanism (pooled fund), GPE financing will be expected to co-fund. In other instances, **a project** in support of the ESP/TEP may be the appropriate option where a more aligned modality is not considered to be viable. In the last case, it is encouraged to envisage co-financing mechanism.

⁹ A TEP may be suitable for countries where the education sector operates in a particularly challenging and complex context; for instance, when a country is affected by or emerging from conflict.

¹⁰ GPE financing, including ESPIG funding, continues to focus on basic education, defined as pre-primary, primary, lower secondary education and second-chance learning. However, it is encouraged that GPE funds contribute to a wider pooled fund or budget support (sector or general).

¹¹ See GPE private sector engagement strategy paper: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/private-sector-engagement-strategy-2019-2022>. See also the GPE Board paper on exceptional circumstances exemptions for the private sector engagement strategy: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/exceptional-circumstances-exemptions-private-sector-engagement-strategy-december-2019>.

The application must indicate which disbursements of budget support and/or a pooled fund and/or which components of a program will be financed through the fixed part of the grant, and how the components financed through the variable part will be integrated.¹²

DURATION

The program implementation period is to be three to four years. The Variable Part can be disbursed:

- 1) concurrently with the Fixed Part *as part of* a three or four-year grant, or
- 2) as an additional phase of the program, *after* the Fixed Part is implemented (therefore as fourth and/or fifth-year disbursements).

The implementation period is indicated in the application form, as is the expected start date. It is expected that the program starts within six months after Board approval. A request for a later start date will need to include a strong rationale and justification.

The grant agent must notify the Secretariat¹³ once the program has effectively started, marked by the occurrence of an event defined in the grant application. The GA must also notify the Secretariat when the grant agreement is signed, if applicable.

Any delay to the expected start date, the signing of the grant agreement (if applicable), or the grant closing date may be acceptable within the provisions of the *Policy on Education Sector Program Implementation Grants*. As stated in the Policy, such delays must also be communicated to the Secretariat.

GRANT AGENTS

The responsibility for GPE grants is entrusted to grant agents. Grant agents use their own policies and administrative procedures to develop and subsequently execute a grant implementation mechanism,¹⁴ in conjunction with GPE guidelines and policies. ESPIG grant agents are selected through a transparent process, approved by the government and endorsed by the development partners in the local education group.¹⁵

In order to be able to exercise their fiduciary role, all grant agents must have a signed Financial Procedures Agreement (FPA) with the GPE Trustee. If a prospective or designated grant agent does not have a signed FPA it should initiate action by its Head Office to secure this. The signing of an FPA can in some instances involve protracted legal and administrative negotiations.¹⁶

¹² A country can choose to integrate the components to be funded by the variable part in the original ESPIG application package OR submit a separate program document when it has been decided that the variable part can be disbursed.

¹³ The grant agent's communication to the Secretariat should be sent to the following email address: gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org, copying the country lead.

¹⁴ Including the bilateral fiduciary agreement between the Grant Agent and the Government.

¹⁵ For GPE's standard selection process for grant agents, see "Useful Resources" section of this Guideline.

¹⁶ The following organizations are currently authorized to receive GPE funds in the capacity of grant agent: AFD (France), AsDB (Asian Development Bank), BTC (Belgium), Concern Worldwide, DFID, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, SIDA (Sweden), SDC (Swiss), Save the Children (US and UK), Global Campaign for Education (for CSEF).

Appointed grant agents may apply for a program development grant to finance program and application preparation.¹⁷ In countries with federal systems where there may be multiple ESPIGs due to the existence of multiple education sector plans at the sub-national level, grant agents appointed at these levels may each apply for a GPE program development grant. Where one grant agent is operating in several sub-national regions, only one program development grant will be given, unless a strong justification is provided to the Secretariat for the need for more than one grant.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the ESPIG are embedded in the partnership compact of mutual accountabilities, and intended to enhance sector dialogue under government leadership and collaboration among all actors involved in education sector development and implementation.

Overall, the developing country partner takes the lead in identifying the ESPIG program scope and contents and in ensuring alignment with the ESP/TEP, while being strongly supported by the grant agent and by other development partners of the local education group, in particular the coordinating agency. The latter ensures that key milestones in the process go through consultation with the local education group to facilitate partner collaboration, including engagement of civil society organizations, and transparent and consensual program preparation. To facilitate this collaboration, the grant agent has the responsibility to duly and timely inform the coordinating agency on the key steps of program development.

The Secretariat accompanies the above through a clearly sequenced process and technical support. It stays engaged in country developments during implementation through the designated country lead who supports the grant agent in addressing any emerging issues, and in making sure that the implementation of the grant complies with GPE's policies and principles.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

The multiplicity of viewpoints inherent in a multi-stakeholder partnership constitutes a strength, but may also lead to conflicting interests and opinions between key players. Conflicts may emerge in the negotiation of roles, responsibilities and decisions related to the grant development process; the choice of components, activities and design and delivery modalities of a GPE-financed program; or the selection of the grant agent.

The *GPE Conflict Resolution Procedures* sets out steps for resolving such conflicts effectively, as it is paramount that such conflicts are addressed in a timely and constructive manner.

¹⁷ The grant agent can apply for a program development grant (PDG) to help cover its expenses for formulating the program and developing the ESPIG application package. Due to the purpose of the PDG, the funds will not be transferred to the government and the grant agent will work in accordance with its internal administrative processes. For details, see link to *Terms of Reference for GPE Grant Agents* in the see "Useful Resources" section of this Guideline.

ANNEX II – TIMELINE AND MILESTONES CALENDAR FOR SUBMITTING ESPIG APPLICATIONS 2019-2020

The calendars below detail the various deadlines and documents to be submitted by partner countries seeking education sector program implementation grants from GPE.

2020

Activity	January 2020 Application Dates	March 2020 Application Dates	July 2020 Application Dates	October 2020 Application Dates
Draft requirement matrix submitted to GPE Secretariat	August 6, 2019	October 31, 2019	January 22, 2020	March 25, 2020
Program outline including a description of the variable part submitted to the GPE Secretariat	Approximately 10-12 weeks prior to submission of the draft program document	Approximately 10-12 weeks prior to submission of the draft program document	Approximately 10-12 weeks prior to submission of the draft program document	Approximately 10-12 weeks prior to submission of the draft program document
Quality Assurance Review Phase I based on program outline - completed by the Secretariat	September 6, 2019	November 8, 2019	March 13, 2020	June 9, 2020
Grants and Performance Committee meeting (reviews the requirement matrices)	October 21-23, 2019	January 21-23, 2020	April 7-9, 2020	June 9-11, 2020
ESP package submitted to the GPE Secretariat	October 21, 2019	December 17, 2019	April 28, 2020	July 22, 2020
Draft program document, including the variable part, submitted to the GPE Secretariat	November 6, 2019	January 8, 2020	May 13, 2020	August 7, 2020
Quality Assurance Review Phase II completed by the Secretariat	December 9, 2019	February 10, 2020	June 15, 2020	September 9, 2020
Final application package for GPE funds submitted to the Secretariat	January 21, 2020	March 24, 2020	July 28, 2020	October 15, 2020
Grant and Performance Committee meeting	April 7-9, 2020	June 9-11, 2020	October 13-15, 2020	January 12-14, 2021
Board allocation decisions*	Mid/late May 2020	Mid/Late July 2020	Mid November 2020	Mid February 2021

* by affirmative vote (approximately 5 weeks after the GPC meeting).

2019

Activity	January 2019 Application Dates	April 2019 Application Dates	August 2019 Application Dates	November 2019 Application Dates
Quality Assurance Review Phase I based on program outline	Date decided in consultation with LEG			
Draft requirement matrix submitted to GPE Secretariat	July 30, 2018	November 1, 2018	January 28, 2019	April 5, 2019
Grant and Performance Committee meeting (reviews the requirement matrices)	October 10-12, 2018	January 29-31, 2019	April 9-11, 2019	July 1-3, 2019
ESP package submitted to the GPE Secretariat	October 29, 2018	January 10, 2019	May 6, 2019	August 1, 2019
Draft program document, including the variable part, submitted to the GPE Secretariat	November 14, 2018	January 25, 2019	May 23, 2019	August 22, 2019
Quality Assurance Review Phase II completed	December 17, 2018	February 26, 2019	June 24, 2019	September 23, 2019
Final application package for GPE funds submitted to the Secretariat	January 28, 2019	April 10, 2019	August 5, 2019	November 1, 2019
Grant and Performance Committee meeting	April 9-11, 2019	July 1-3, 2019	October 21-23, 2019	January 28-30, 2020
Board allocation decisions*	Mid-May 2019	Early/mid August 2019	Late November 2019	Mid/late February 2020

* by affirmative vote (approximately 5 weeks after the GPC meeting).

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