MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE | **BOD/2020/11/12 DOC 10** | **FOR DECISION**

GPE 2025 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Please note: Board documents are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are considered to be public documents only after their appraisal by the Board. It is understood that Board members will circulate Board documents among their constituency members prior to Board consideration for consultation purposes.

Input from the Strategy and Impact Committee following its October 28-29, 2020 meeting:

1. The Committee was broadly supportive of the direction of the MEL framework in particular:

– The country-level stream of work is especially welcome, as it rebalances a centrally-focused MEL towards the needs and demands of partners at the country level;

– The emphasis on evidence-based learning and capacity development is an important element of this framework;

– Greater focus on GPE-supported processes and programs will facilitate improved understanding of how GPE's work supports results;

– Annual reporting based on both the results framework and evaluations is also in the right direction.

2. Some areas were considered to require additional clarification and strengthening for the next stage:

- **Monitoring and evaluation**
  - Clarify the balance between specificity and flexibility in the approaches used in diagnostics and establishing baselines. Issues to consider include comparability across countries in reporting results and technical rigor; GPE should help define diagnostics and measurements in complex areas (e.g., organizational capacity);
  - Strengthen attention to inclusion; ensure data and evidence on inclusion (e.g., children with disabilities, refugee children, and so forth) are also collected and reported.
  - Ensure that monitoring data are robust and can support good evaluations;
  - Ensure coverage of all GPE instruments and interventions, including strategic partnerships mobilized under the "enabling objective."
  - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different partners (e.g. ministries of education, grant agents, LEGs) to ensure that diagnostics and evaluations are government-driven and don't become an extractive exercise

- **Results Framework and Reporting:**
  - Ensure measures of grant effectiveness are included in the results framework
  - Specify the criteria used for including or excluding indicators in the results framework (including those on the domestic and international financing and service delivery)
  - Focus on a wider basket of indicators on the volume of domestic financing that consider for example tax revenue, debt servicing, GDP growth, macroeconomic policies, public sector wage bill policies and any bottlenecks that constrain increases in education spending.
  - Address what range of data can be collected and included on inclusion
  - Ensure that the key links in GPE's causal logic are reflected in the results framework.

- **Learning**
  - Ensure that the newly proposed Secretariat-managed KM and learning programs are articulated with the existing KIX and EOL programs
  - Better articulate how periodic learning will work, especially the proposed network for high-level policy officials

- **Strategic capabilities**
  - Better specify how a strategic partner would support MEL at the country level; how can local capacity be better leveraged for this purpose.

Objective

1. This document presents the Global Partnership for Education 2025 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework for decision. The main body of this document presents the overall framework. **Annex A** presents the ISE recommendations, secretariat review, and

stakeholder feedback, **Annex B** outlines examples of overarching MEL Questions by Stakeholders, **Annex C** includes the policy outline and **Annex D** the draft results framework.

Recommended Decision

BOD/2020/11/12-XX—Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework: Based on the approval of the strategic plan included in Annex 1 of BOD/2020/09 DOC 03 and in order to support GPE's strategic direction of becoming a learning partnership, the Board approves the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and requests the Secretariat to begin the work outlined in section 7 of BOD/2020/11/12 DOC 10.

Background

1. Introduction

This document explains how an integrated Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework can support the effective functioning of the new GPE 2025 strategy. The aims are to: drive evidence-based learning and decision-making for improved performance across the Partnership, and to strengthen accountability and transparency.

The framework builds and elaborates on the GPE 2025 strategy proposals to the Board in December (BOD/2019/12 DOC 05) and June (BOD/2020/06 DOC 04), which highlighted three main thrusts: **a focus on delivery, leveraging the power of inclusive partnership, and becoming a learning organization by *putting country learning at the center*.** It supports the achievement of the GPE 2025 goal and objectives (BOD/2020/06-07), which are:

GOAL: *To accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century* (BOD/2020/06- 07).

Goal Priority Areas

- Learning/early learning
- Access (12 years plus at least 1 year of pre-primary education)
- Gender equality and inclusion
- Quality teaching
- Strong organizational capacity
- Equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic financing

Objectives

Country-level

- *Strengthen gender-responsive planning, policy development for system-wide impact.*

- *Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change.*
- *Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale*

Global

- *Mobilize global and national partners and resources for sustainable results*

Organization of the document

The document is organized as follows:

- Section 2: Evidence-based MEL principles and design going forward
- Section 3: Overview of the proposed MEL design to support GPE 2025 Goal and Objectives
    - 3.1) MEL Policy
    - 3.2) Monitoring
    - 3.3) Evaluation
    - 3.4) Results Framework and reporting
    - 3.5) Learning from evidence
- Section 4: Strategic capabilities and partnerships for MEL
- Section 5: Financing the MEL framework
- Section 6: Secretariat workprogram
- Section 7: Next steps

As part of its decisions regarding GPE 2025 goal and objectives, the Board requested the Secretariat to develop a measurement strategy either through indicators or a set of evaluations to align with the priority areas of the goal.

2. Evidence-based MEL principles and design going forward

The proposed MEL framework responds to the recently completed Independent Summative Evaluation's (ISE; 2020) key recommendation on GPE 2020 theory of change and results framework (and the M&E strategy). The ISE states that *to date, GPE has primarily used these frameworks for communication and accountability purposes, and less as tools to steer and learn from its operations*. Its main recommendation is to *improve and complement frameworks with utility-focused management tools and learning processes.*

The proposed MEL framework also addresses:

- Related ISE findings and recommendations,
- The findings of GPE's evaluation portfolio (e.g., country-level and Education Sector Plan Development Grant and other evaluations)

- Lessons from the Secretariat's review of the current GPE 2020 M&E Strategy and its implementation
- Feedback provided by DCPs, SIC, and other constituents during the consultation phase in July and August 2020

The framework draws on reviews of the approaches taken by other Global Programs and development institutions, as well as current thinking in the M&E profession and public sector management about how best to mainstream learning and use of evidence in policies and programs. Importantly, the design is also based on the Effective Partnership Rollout (EPR) principles that underpin the GPE 2025 strategy, and the Board's direction that GPE become a learning organization and put country learning at the center.

Finally, the design is to reflect the key takeaways from the DCP Focal Point Consultation on 8th October:

- MEL framework must help promote teaching and learning at the country level to help drive local decision-making.
- MEL framework should help build country capacity for data, information systems and evidence, with development partners signing up to a single, aligned approach.
- Indicators must reflect a baseline of post-COVID 19 traumatic shock to the system.

Annex A provides a summary of the ISE findings and recommendations, a Secretariat review, feedback from the SIC and constituents and how this information has informed and been addressed in the proposed framework.

To put evidence-based learning, actions, and decisions at the center of GPE's work, the MEL framework is guided by answers to the questions:

- *Learning by whom?* Who in the partnership needs to learn?
- *Learning for what?* What decisions and actions do they need to take, based on this information?
- *Learning from what?* What data and evidence do they need for the decisions and actions?

Annex B provides examples of how these questions can be addressed.

To support a learning and action-focused MEL, the framework is based on the following principles:

- Enhance country demand and capacity for learning from evidence: Take a more demand-based and context-specific approach to evaluations and strengthen country capacity for learning from and use of data and evidence

- Mainstream gender and equity into MEL: Introduce a gender and equity lens on all relevant aspects of MEL, so that questions regarding GPE's work on gender and equity can be supported with data and evidence.

- Strengthen accountability: Develop a results framework that measures key components of GPE's strategy with fewer, more actionable indicators, while keeping some continuity across GPE's strategy periods.

- Increase efficiency: Generate actionable data as part of regular operational processes and at the level at which the data are likely to be used for behavior change and timely action during regular policy and program cycles

- Leverage partnership expertise: Use existing global indicators and measurements where possible, and leverage partnership expertise for more complex areas of measurement, so that data and evidence are robust and quickly and easily available.

Concretely, this MEL framework will translate into a MEL policy that is put into practice through three interrelated mechanisms as described below.

- **The M&E policy** will define the core purposes (accountability, transparency, decision-making, learning), principles, standards, and the accountability structure (key roles and responsibilities) of GPE's MEL function. The MEL function is an integral part of an organization's operations and is consistent with its project and programming cycles. It defines how the information will support the organization achieve its goals through the provision of data and evidence at key points in time[1].

- The policy will be put into **practice through three integrated mechanisms,** noted below:

  1. **Two core operational components**: monitoring and evaluation, with sub-streams within each, to operationalize the MEL.
     a. **A monitoring system**, with a set of key indicators at the grant, Partnership, and sector levels for accountability and to inform implementation on an ongoing basis
     b. **A system of reviews and evaluations** to provide a foundation for evidence-based learning, test innovations, and to guide a range of decisions and actions by different actors in the Partnership

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[1] Modified from the Global Environment Fund 2019 policy

2. **A Partnership-wide results-framework and reporting.** The partnership results framework will integrate key information from both the monitoring and evaluation streams of work, complemented by nuanced annual reporting that can lead to clear decisions and actions

3. **A knowledge-management and learning program** which draws on the monitoring and evaluation streams of work

Figure 1: Integrated MEL in GPE
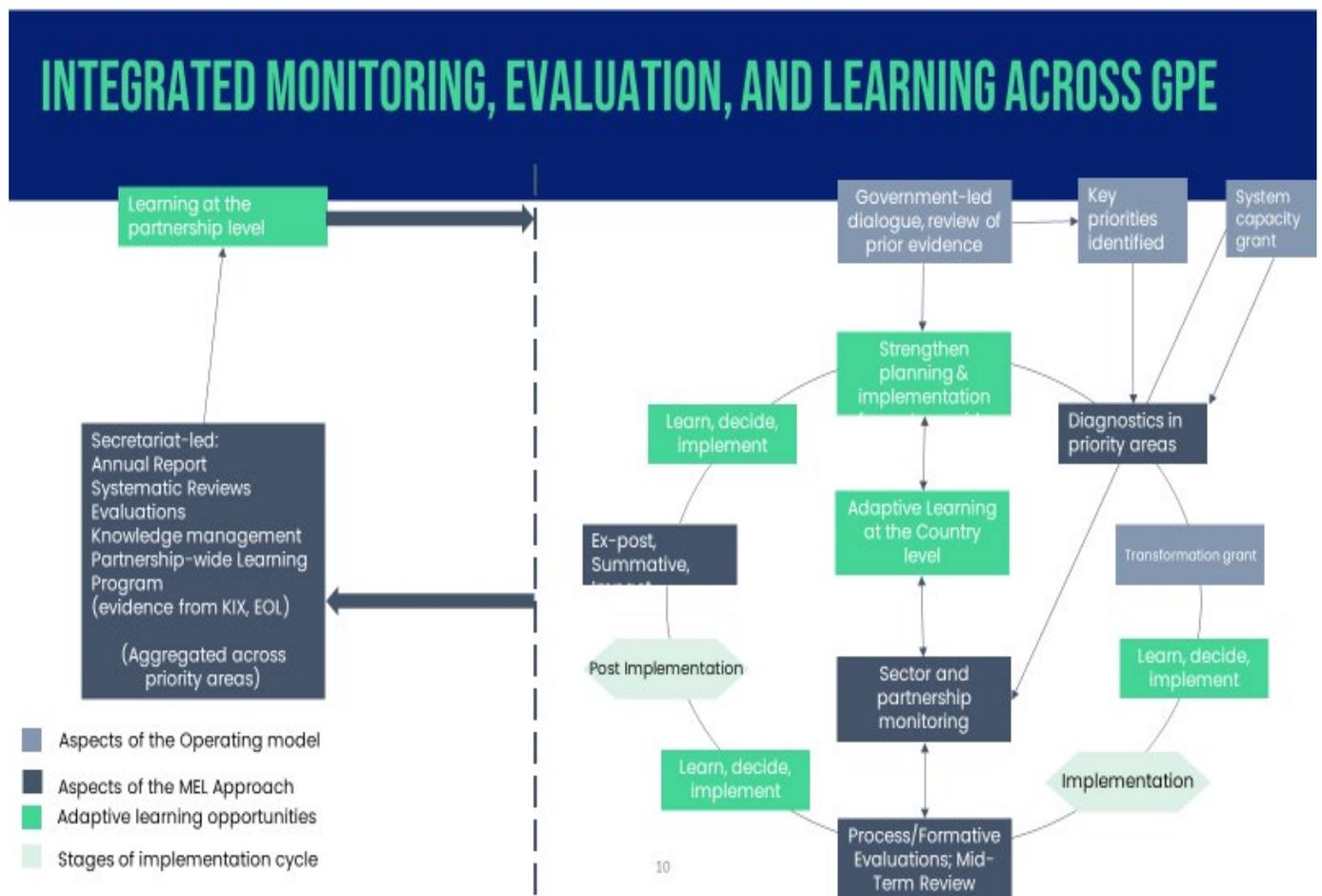
3. Overview of MEL Design: Policy into Practice

The sections below discuss at a high level the rationale for, and the features of, the proposed GPE policy and the integrated mechanisms to put it into practice to support the achievement of the GPE 2025 goal and objectives.

3.1. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Policy**

Several global funds and partnership programs have a policy in place to guide their MEL functions, which GPE currently lacks. In keeping with this practice, GPE's MEL policy would define the core purposes (accountability, transparency, decision-making, learning), principles, standards, and the accountability structure (key roles and responsibilities) of GPE's MEL function. The MEL function is an integral part of an organization's operations and is consistent with its project and programming cycles. It defines how the information will support the organization achieve its goals through the provision of data and evidence at key points in time (Modified from GEF, 2019 policy). And it therefore sets the foundation for evidence-based learning, decisions, and action at all levels of the Partnership. This policy will also guide the questions of *Learning by whom? Learning for what? Learning from what?*

Annex C provides a comparison of GPE's current MEL approach and a preliminary outline for a more complete policy.

Action Item =› Develop a GPE MEL policy

3.2. **Monitoring: grant, partnership, and sector**

GPE defines monitoring as a system of data design and regular data collection pertinent to the implementation of GPE grants throughout their lifecycle. This concept of regular data design and collection is proposed to be refined and applied more systematically to GPE-funded grants for improved assessment of grant performance. The concept will also be extended to sector plan implementation and to the functioning of the Partnership, to reinforce the Effective Partnership Review (EPR) principle of rebalancing and focusing on sector and implementation.

Thus, the GPE 2025 MEL framework proposes to build on the strengths of the current approach to enable all constituents to have key information readily available so that they can act on that information for the benefit of the Partnership. It proposes the following new or modified elements to improve monitoring. (Annex A.3 provides details on GPE's current approach.)

3.2.1. <u>Grant Monitoring</u>

A review of implementation grant completion reports[2] finds that grant monitoring currently does not allow GPE to assess effectiveness in areas of interest to the Partnership vis-à-vis gender, equity, and other priorities in a systematic way. A key MEL proposal is to introduce a common but simple framework for GPE grant progress monitoring and project/program completion. This approach would allow grant agents and partner countries flexibility, and at the same time enable GPE as a partnership, both at the grant and aggregate corporate levels, to learn about results and attain a common understanding of the achievement of GPE funds with respect to GPE priority areas (as they are operationalized and addressed at the country level), other objectives (such as knowledge) and country-supported processes. (Also see section 3.3 on evaluation.)

In tandem, the grant approval processes will include a strengthened structured review of grant results frameworks to assist with improving its quality, especially for measuring, monitoring, and reporting the results of grants' interventions in programmatic priority areas (learning, gender equality, teaching quality, organizational capacity, and domestic financing), and how grant monitoring instruments make use of/fit within the country's overall sector monitoring mechanisms for alignment purposes.

The proposal also aims to explore platforms for more efficiently capturing and curating grant data through technology. This includes the development of a grant-level electronic dashboard that provides regularly updated information on grant disbursement, implementation, and progress on key indicators, to be accessed by any member of the Partnership. This dynamic view of the grant would allow the Partnership to have user-friendly and timely access to information.

Action Items (including but not limited to the following) => Develop a common grant progress and completion reporting framework; a grant dashboard (also exploration of feasibility of joint grant data entry portal); and the harmonization of Partnership-level grant achievement data (also by priority areas).

3.2.2. <u>Country-level Sector and Partnership Monitoring</u>

GPE's results framework captures important sector-level outcomes but contains insufficient information on sector processes that would serve as leading indicators and signal whether outcomes are likely to be achieved. For example, sector plan implementation is not tracked

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[2] https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/review-completion-reports-gpes-implementation-grants-2016-2018

systematically, highlighting an area of insufficient knowledge regarding a main link in GPE's implicit country-level theory of change. Similarly, although some dimensions of the country-level partnership are monitored, such as the quality of the Joint Sector Reviews, others are not, such as the alignment of other partners' contribution to the sector plan.

The MEL proposal is to continue to monitor sector-level outcomes as part of the results framework, but strengthen the monitoring of plan/policy implementation and partnership functions at the country level, based on a country-level process for gathering, consolidating, and reporting these data in the GPE results framework. This process would also include supporting and strengthening country capacity for better sector monitoring, by embedding it within the proposed operational model (see section 3.3. below) and use of the monitoring information for improvement. This approach would reinforce the principles of building government ownership, strengthening country capacity, and focusing on implementation.

Action Items => Develop ways to capture and assess important sector plan/policy implementation processes and partnership monitoring and use the information in the new Results Framework.

3.3. Diagnostics, Evaluations, and Reviews

The aims of the GPE 2020 M&E strategy evaluation stream were to support evidence-based learning and answer questions about GPE's contribution to the results outlined in GPE 2020. This objective was well achieved at the global level for strategic decision-making (as the findings are being used in the development of the new strategy and operational model) but only moderately so at the country level. It yielded insufficient evidence on which approaches worked for which areas of GPE's priorities (which at the country level would be country priorities, depending on the focus and choice of the country's policies and plans). It also yielded little information on GPE grants' contributions to those areas. See Annex A.1 for more details on ISE findings and Secretariat lessons learned.

A major ISE observation is that "many of the valuable M&E insights have not (yet) been translated into action due to time constraints or because this was not deliberately aimed for." It recommended that "the future strategy is more explicit about the specific learning purpose of its diverse M&E *interventions* and that there should be ...*a more deliberate periodic reflection and learning process at both the global and country level to ensure that the benefits of GPE's extensive M&E efforts are fully utilized throughout the partnership. For such learning processes to be effective, a deliberate prioritized learning agenda needs to be set, reflecting the learning interests of the targeted 'learners' and audience.*" (pg. 139)

To institute a more targeted approach to generating and learning from evidence, the MEL framework proposes two streams of diagnostics, evaluation, and reviews, as described below.

3.3.1. <u>**Country-led stream**</u>

The MEL framework proposes that diagnostics, particularly as they pertain to the GPE goal and priority areas, and the evaluations of policies, programs, or interventions designed to address the priorities are integrated as part of the operational model to build a foundation for evidence-based learning at the country level.

- *Diagnostics*. This sub stream of work will be linked directly with the first country-level objective: *strengthen planning for system-wide impact*. These system diagnostics will be context specific and demand driven. They will be based on the country's priority in one or more specific areas, such as teaching quality, domestic financing, or data, to be targeted for systemic change, and to be included in the Partnership Compact (see the operational model paper). The diagnostic will, in effect, provide a baseline for improvement and will be followed up periodically, either through additional diagnostic monitoring or through evaluations, to determine the country's progress in those priority areas.
- *Evaluations*. This stream of work will be designed to contribute to the third country-level objective: *strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale.* In collaboration with strategic partners (as relevant), countries will conduct evaluations of:
  - *Aspects of education sector plans* – policies, programs, or other system-level conditions that support ESP implementation, based on country demand or need
  - *Interventions and innovations* proposed in Implementation Grants that require evidence for their efficacy and effectiveness, including value for money, and that would add to evidence-based knowledge in GPE countries.

The Secretariat will develop options for diagnostics in the different areas as part of the Operating Model. Information from these diagnostics will be used for reporting progress on the GPE results framework. For example, TEACH is one approach for measuring quality of service delivery in the classroom, but there are other tools as well, that could fit into broader diagnostics. The Partnership will need to consider the range of options between a standardized methodology vs. an approach specifically tailored to the country or potentially a mix of the two. If a somewhat standardized approach is desirable, then a strategic

partnership capable of providing measurement support will be important for its implementation.

As part of its MEL policy, the GPE Secretariat will develop a set of evaluation standards for the gender and equity dimensions and effects of policies, programs, interventions. The standards will also focus on efficiency and support for "building back better". Finally, the standards will include how beneficiary voices should be included and matters of data privacy and confidentiality[3]

Annex C provides an outline of the proposed MEL policy and how the standards could be defined.

Diagnostics and evaluations, together with strengthened country-level monitoring (see section 3.2.2 above), will yield robust data and evidence on a country's progress towards GPE's goals (as they are specifically translated, owned, and addressed at the country level). The countries will be supported in using this information to improve their policies and programs in an ongoing, dynamic way, with an integrated approach to learning and decision-making as part of the evaluations (see also Section 3.5 on learning from evidence).

Strategic capabilities established for such evaluations would help conduct the evaluations and support continuous learning and decision-making processes, while strengthening country capacity. Options for how such strategic capabilities could be could be leveraged and mobilized are discussed in Section 5. Options for how the country-level evaluation workstream is financed are outlined in section 6.

Action Items => Develop conditions for evaluations as part of the grant approvals; develop standards for country-led evaluations as part of the MEL policy

3.3.2. <u>**Secretariat-led stream**</u>

The GPE 2020 strategy included an evaluation work program consisting of primary evaluations managed by the Secretariat. Going forward, the Secretariat-led stream of evaluation work will address two areas:

o **Systematic summaries of country-level diagnostics evaluations**, as they become available, to generate Partnership knowledge and support learning

o **Evaluations** (Secretariat-led or independent but managed by the Secretariat that are of strategic priority and importance to the Board and the broader Partnership, and where a cross-country approach would be relevant. This will include a smaller set of some

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[3] Several standards exist, and the proposed GPE standards will build on this available information. For example, see: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/evaluation_standards

country-level evaluations to assess GPE's operational model at the country level, financing instrument-focused evaluations (e.g., Education Out Loud and KIX; Sector Support Grants), and cross-cutting priority areas such as GPE gender-equality and domestic financing, and GPE processes, such as evidence-based learning. (See Section 3.5 on Embedded and Periodic Learning)

A final strategic review, based on the full set of monitoring and evaluation on GPE 2025 to inform all stakeholders about progress in education in GPE countries (and how the Partnership contributed to that progress), and progress in the Partnership itself. This review will also be managed by the Secretariat, although it could also engage a committee of external experts to ensure its independence and impartiality. This will be carried out in late 2024 to inform the next strategic plan.

Strategic capabilities are also proposed to be deployed for the Secretariat-delivered stream of evaluations, as discussed in Section 5.

Action Item => Develop an agreed 5-year work program for Secretariat-led stream of evaluations.

3.4 Bringing Monitoring and Evaluation Together to Inform Action: Integrated Results Framework and Annual Reporting

The purpose of the GPE 2020 results framework is to help the Partnership monitor progress on key aspects of its strategy and to hold itself accountable for results. It is also to provide diagnostic information on areas of progress and areas that need improvement from a strategic perspective. These purposes for the results framework will remain in the new MEL, with improvements based on the findings and recommendations of the ISE, the lessons learned from Secretariat's own experience of producing RF indicators and reporting on them in the annual results report, feedback from GPE constituents, and good practices in other comparable organizations.

The direction proposed is in line with a key ISE recommendation for GPE 2025:

> *Develop a more complex-aware RF aligned with a revised ToC (immediately after finalizing the post-2020 strategy) (pg. 139).* The report observes that this can be achieved by *introducing more complex-aware M&E methods like outcome mapping/harvesting, which would lead to a combination of behavior-oriented progress markers to measure changes in capacities and motivation, with a (reduced) number of key indicators (pg. 139).* The ISE also notes that *the effective implementation of the M&E Strategy at impact level has been complicated by having*

to rely on data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), which collects country data that is often limited and out of date (pg. 30).

Key features of the updated results framework will include:

- Alignment with the agreed strategy goal, priority areas, and objectives
- A smaller set of meaningful indicators
- Elevated importance of the key links between planning and implementation and of mutual accountability
- Disaggregation of the indicators on gender and disability, wherever possible and based on data availability (the operational model will in tandem seek to strengthen a country's system capacity to generate and use data)
- Focus on utility and simplicity to support comprehension and encourage specific actions at all levels of the Partnership
- Qualitative information from areas that are more complex to measure (such as service delivery – for example through teaching quality) through diagnostics and evaluations; information from these sources will be an integral aspect of the results framework
- Data generated as part of the operational model processes

Annex D provides an early draft results framework, a crosswalk of the 2020 indicators and the proposed indicators going forward, and links to 2020 indicator reviews.

Once the Results Framework indicators are agreed, the Secretariat proposes to develop baselines, milestones, and measurement options for the more complex areas of the strategy and goal priority areas.

The new MEL framework also proposes to provide one annual report that consolidates all information from the monitoring and evaluation streams, with analysis to support decision-making by the Board and its Committees. The broader Partnership will have access to all data so that disaggregated analysis could be used by stakeholders for different purposes. In addition, as is the current case, the Secretariat will continue to provide disaggregated country-level information to country-level partners for their information and use.

Overall, the results framework and the complementary annual report will help the Partnership monitor comprehensively the status of the goal priority areas in GPE countries, as well as the Partnership objectives. The indicators will provide the status of key outcomes and processes. The evaluation and review stream will help the Partnership diagnose, address, and learn from evidence, focusing on both the *what* – what are the intended and unintended effects – and the reasons *why* those effects were achieved or not achieved.

Action Items => Update Results Framework with indicators, baselines, and targets.

3.5   **Embedded and Periodic Learning from data and evidence**

A key direction proposed for the GPE 2025 strategy is for GPE to become a learning partnership. The MEL function will play an important role in operationalizing this direction.

"Learning" is defined as using evidence (interpretation of data and/or research in relation to other factors such as organizational context, prior experience, goals of a policy or program) for generating improvements in investments and processes that contribute to intended results. In this context, investments and processes incorporate both country-level policies, programs, interventions, and innovations, and GPE operations and its partnership dimensions.

For learning to be successfully operationalized, it must become "embedded" and "habitual" and lead to adaptation and change. This means that:

- *Data and evidence are generated for specific purposes and target audiences at the right time.* Data and evidence are generated and disseminated when and where they are most likely to be used by the right audience for specific purposes and therefore have the potential to inform improvements in policy and programs. For example, evaluations of interventions at the country level that engage a country's policy makers to generate evidence can be used during a country's regular program/policy cycle. Similarly, monitoring by those who have a direct stake in the success of a policy, program, or grant, and so forth. This could also be in the form of a corporate results framework and systematic reviews for strategic decisions by the Board.
- *Demand for learning from evidence*. There is demand (direct and supply induced, but timed correctly) for both learning from evidence as well as for accountability – decisions, for example, that impact funding.
- *Capacity to use evidence*: Countries and other stakeholders have the capacity to use the evidence that emerges from monitoring and evaluation to influence or action needed improvements.
- *Data and evidence are transparent and trusted.* Relevant knowledge (GPE as well as external) is transparent, trusted, and easily accessible by all members of the Partnership.

Enabling Environment for Learning

The design of each monitoring and evaluation piece will endeavor to *embed learning within the monitoring and evaluation processes* so that these processes yield *the right information for the right actors at the right time* and do not become stand-alone exercises only. However, each aspect of the monitoring and evaluation components – the *from what* - is likely to have multiple audiences and a hierarchy of purposes and uses. Therefore, in

addition to *how* the monitoring and evaluation components will function (as described in the sections above), the Secretariat will need to systematically capture, curate, and use evidence-based knowledge itself and establish an *enabling environment for learning to take place for the entire partnership.*

The support to this enabling environment will include:

- **Developing guidelines and standards for monitoring and evaluation** across the Partnership, including attention to learning plans that focus on specific stakeholders. They will also focus on transparency in methodologies and data systems that can be accessed easily by any partner for further analysis[4]

- **Curating and making evidence readily accessible** in designing new policies, programs, or interventions, and bridging the information gap between country and global levels. This would include knowledge around innovations in different contexts, and using the KIX and EOL for disseminating GPE-generated evidence. (Also see Section 3.2.2 on sectoring monitoring and Section 3.2.3 on Diagnostics and Evaluations.)

- **Incentivizing the use of that evidence through the operating model,** using approval and quality assurance processes for GPE funding to strengthen M&E frameworks and assess the need for diagnostics and evaluations.

- **Aggregating GPE-generated evidence and lessons for strategic decisions** that have future operational implications (see Section 3.3.2 on Secretariat managed evaluations).

- **Establishing periodic learning and knowledge-exchange meetings**. Despite the embedded approach to learning through the operational model, there is value in creating specific, stand-alone learning programs that provide opportunities for cross-fertilization and engagement across countries and partners at the regional or global levels. The Secretariat will support:

  a. Organizing specific stand-along knowledge-sharing and learning opportunities on GPE-generated evidence linked across other sources of knowledge. Both KIX and EOL will play a role in this agenda by using lessons from country-level monitoring and evaluation, as well as Secretariat-led evaluations and studies, and facilitating links with relevant networks and institutions, as applicable. Where

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[4] See for example: https://www.cgdev.org/publication/link-it-open-it-use-it-changing-how-education-data-are-used-generate-ideas

A quality education for every child

there is a gap for broker/curator of knowledge, the Regional Hubs could play a role in engaging with networks and institutions. (Also see section 3.3 on Diagnostics and Evaluations)

b. Supporting a network of high-level GPE partner country officials with online and face-to-face knowledge-sharing and learning on specific topics, such as gender equality and inclusion.

Annex B provides information on how targeted learning mechanisms for specific groups could function as part of MEL.

Action Items => Develop a 5-year work program for Secretariat-managed Learning-from-Evidence program. Develop a MEL dissemination system linked to GPE's KM system.

4   Strategic Capabilities and Partnership for MEL

To achieve efficiency and encourage the Partnership to engage in generating useful evidence and lessons learned, the MEL proposal is to leverage a full set of strategic capabilities across the Partnership for:

➢ Analysis of and reporting on country progress on relevant goal-level indicators (linked to section 3.2.2 on monitoring)

➢ Supporting countries with robust diagnostics in gender, teaching quality, domestic financing, and other complex areas of measurement (linked to sections 3.2 on monitoring and 3.3 on diagnostics and evaluations)

➢ Working with country stakeholders – policymakers and program implementation staff - on conducting and learning from evaluations on an ongoing basis (linked to section 3.4 on learning)

Goal-level indicators. Several aggregated country-level indicators will be drawn from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) database. These indicators provide an overview of the status of learning, access, and other key sectoral issues in GPE countries. A strategic partnership could be deployed to produce and analyse this set of publicly available indicators as a chapter in GPE's annual report. The specific GPE process and fund-related indicators will continue to be processed and analysed by the GPE Secretariat.

Country-level diagnostics and evaluations. Given the prominence of dynamic, evidence-based learning in the new MEL framework and the operational model, the proposal is to establish one or more strategic partnerships with competitively selected global organizations (with regional and country reach and partnerships) competent in research, analysis, evaluations, and engagement with policy makers and program implementers.

This partnership would allow GPE countries garner skilled support for generating, learning from, and using evidence, and to strength their own capacity through a "learning by doing" approach.

See also Annex 4 of the paper on the operating model.

Action => Develop a proposal for Strategic Partnerships for MEL (pending Board decision on the operating model).

5   Financing MEL

Given that GPE's updated MEL strategy will be "decentralized" and woven into the fabric of how GPE works through its operational model, with the core engagement of countries and strategic partners, the funding of the strategy will also require resource flows from different GPE financing instruments (pending Board approval of the financing instruments) (see Table 1, below.)   The proposed level of funding for the Secretariat-led program and the strategic partnership for MEL will be including in the draft MEL framework, once this overall approach is agreed.

Table 1: Financing MEL

MEL Element	Funding*	Notes
Monitoring		
Grant monitoring + completion	System Transformation Grant	Existing stream of funding through implementation grants
Sector – country-led	System Capacity Grant	Proposed
Partnership – country-led	System Capacity Grant	Proposed + contributions of partners
Grant/monitoring dashboard	Secretariat allocation for MEL	Proposed
Results Framework and Annual report		
UIS-based indicators	Strategic partnership	Proposed

Other indicators/Results Framework	Secretariat allocation for MEL	Proposed
Grant completion review	Secretariat allocation for MEL	Proposed
Evaluation		
Country-led	System Capacity Grant Implementation Grant Strategic partnership for support	Proposed
Secretariat managed	Secretariat allocation for MEL	Ring-fenced Board-approved MEL budget was provided for the 2016 M&E strategy
Learning		
Through monitoring and evaluation	Embedded within each MEL stream Secretariat allocation for MEL for knowledge management: data dashboard and Information System and dissemination	Proposed
Leadership workshops/dissemination Learning Network	Secretariat allocation for MEL, managed through strategic partnership	Proposed
Secretariat KM system	Secretariat allocation [not specific to MEL]	Proposed

*Subject to Board approval of grant instruments/funding streams

6 Secretariat Workprogram on MEL

As part of the MEL framework, the Secretariat proposes to develop a high-level annual work plan with a five-year ring-fenced budget that reports progress on the MEL program and results of the GPE 2025 strategy. This program will be delivered by the Results and Performance team reporting directly to the Deputy CEO of GPE. The five-year plan would include:

1. An updated Results Framework, with indicators, targets, and measurement methodologies and a dashboard of country-level and grant-level results (see section 3.4)
2. An annual report to the Board, based on results framework, the evaluation portfolio, and grant portfolio reviews (see section 3.4)
3. Systematic reviews/summaries of diagnostics, by priority area, and other key areas of the Partnership (see section 3.3.2)
4. A series of evaluations on strategic topics and priority areas (agreed with the Board; see section 3.3.2)
5. A program of learning based on the monitoring and evaluation information noted above, including a learning network for high-level country officials (see section 3.5)
6. Development of guidelines and policies for grant monitoring and completion, sector and partnership monitoring, and standards and guidelines for country-led evaluations (see section 3.2 and 3.3)
7. Management of strategic partnerships to support the GPE MEL (see section 4)

7 Next Steps

The next steps are to further define the MEL framework components for SIC and Board approval, with specific elements defined after approval of these main components outlined in this document.

Table 2: MEL Framework Main Elements and Timelines

No.	Action items – Main Elements for Committee and Board Approval	Timelines
1	GPE MEL Policy	SIC: April 2021; Board: June 2021
2	Results Framework and Indicators	SIC: April 2021; Board: June 2021

No.	Action items – Main Elements for Committee and Board Approval	Timelines
3	Five-year MEL Secretariat Work Program and Budget	SIC: April 2021; Board: June 2021
4	Strategic Partnership Proposal	SIC: April 2021; Board: June 2021
	Action Items – Elements for Secretariat	
5	Framework and guidance for country-led evaluations + learning from evaluations	June 2021 (GPC + SIC consultation)
6	Grant monitoring and completion framework	June 2021 (GPC + SIC consultation)
7	Quality assurance framework for grant M&E	June 2021 (GPC + SIC consultation)