

# STANDARD SELECTION PROCESS FOR GRANT AGENTS

May 2019

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## PART I: PROCESSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. PRINCIPLES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The standard selection process, as set out in this paper, must be applied for the selection of the grant agent (GA) for an education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG). The dialogue leading up to the decision on the choice of GA should be transparent and participatory, with full involvement of the local education group (LEG). Non-transparent or bilateral processes and negotiations do not support the principles of participation and inclusion.

The government and coordinating agency (CA) work together to plan, implement and document the grant agent selection process, in consultation within the broader LEG. In situations where the CA is also a candidate for GA, the government and development partners (DPs) will need to adapt processes to address the conflict of interest. The preferred option in this case is that another agency supports the government to organize the selection of the GA.

The final selection of the GA must be decided by the government, in line with the standard selection process, and be endorsed<sup>2</sup> by the DPs, including civil society (CSO) representation, preferably by consensus. If one or more DPs in the LEG raise concerns regarding the process, recourse can be made to GPE's *Conflict Resolution Procedures*.<sup>3</sup>

The process and dialogue around the choice of GA should be integrated as much as possible in the broader sector dialogue.

The Secretariat acts as a facilitator and advisor, making sure that the government and CA are informed on the minimum required processes, GPE principles and guidelines, and examples of good practice. The Secretariat also carries out a quality assurance review (QAR) to assess whether the GA selection process has been correctly applied. This will be documented through a QAR report, which is normally shared with the LEG within three weeks of the Secretariat's receipt of documentation on GA selection, though this timeline may be longer in cases where there is lack of clarity or problems with the process, requiring further consultation. The Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) will

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<sup>1</sup> Approved by the Grants and Performance Committee on February 22, 2016, in its delegated authority from the Board of Directors, and last revised on May 22, 2019. The process applies to education sector program implementation grants (ESPIGs) and is applicable to all countries that have not – as of July 8, 2019 – informed the Secretariat of their selection of a GA or that their GA selection process has started.

<sup>2</sup> The term “endorse” or “endorsement” in all GPE documentation means to offer public support. It does not imply formal approval or decision-making. Endorsement of the ESP signifies expression of support for its adoption and intent to align technical and financial support to it.

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/conflict-resolution-procedures>.

be informed on GA selection once the Secretariat has shared the quality assurance report with the country and its partners, or earlier should country-level partners or the Secretariat consider GPC feedback helpful to the quality assurance process.

## 2. PROCESS

Selection of a GA must be planned through a comprehensive roadmap. This roadmap should include key sequenced steps and be approved by the government and endorsed by the DPs, through the LEG. The roadmap will need to be relevant to each country context, but should at minimum include:

- As a first step, the LEG under the leadership of the government and preferably as part of the education sector plan (ESP) planning process will discuss country sector priorities and desired modalities for education aid delivery. The LEG will then discuss and make recommendations on ESPIG modalities and sector policy priorities to be supported by the grant, and the desired characteristics of the GA.
  - **Use of funding modality:** As part of the broader sector dialogue, the LEG determines whether conditions are in place for greater use of existing country systems as well as for developing more aligned funding mechanisms, based on modalities used by different partners in the education sector. Applying the principles of aid effectiveness, GPE anticipates that the LEG will prioritize the most aligned modality used in-country and seek to develop more aligned modalities (in cases where this would increase systems strengthening).
  - **Scoping of program:** Based on a general discussion within the LEG, the government identifies the overall scope of work to be funded through the ESPIG, in alignment with the (draft) ESP, or transitional education plan (TEP), and a mapping of funding needs. Government capacity should be supported through ESPIG funding relative to needs, and GPE funding should be used strategically to support achievement of ESP/TEP objectives relative to GPE priorities of equity, learning outcomes and systems building. The ‘scope of work’ refers to a top-level description of the desired focus of the program, without a need to identify specific activities. In cases where the ESPIG is disbursed through budget support or a pooled fund that directly supports the whole ESP/TEP, no specific scoping will be required.
  - **Technical support and capacity building needs:** The preferred modality and scope of activities should enable a broad definition of technical and capacity building support desired from the grant agent, which in turn determines what kind of capacity

the grant agent would require, e.g. in terms of technical expertise, technical resources within the country or accessible to the grant agent, or ability to procure such resources.

- **Definition of criteria to deliberate on the choice of GA:** When modalities, scope of work and technical support needs have been defined, the government in consultation with the CA will set out the criteria to select the grant agent. Along with the ability to use the selected modality and the capacity to support implementation of activities within the defined scoping, criteria mentioned in part II need to be included. The government also needs to decide who will be part of the selection committee. Inclusion of the CA – if not a GA candidate – in the selection committee, either as member or as observer, is recommended. Other agencies can also be involved, as long as they are not GA candidates. The government with support from partners may decide to develop a matrix for scoring and weighting of proposals, based on the criteria.
- **Call for expressions of interest through the LEG:** Based on the defined criteria, the government will request partners that fulfill the selection criteria to express their interest. This can be done at a LEG meeting or through a written communication to LEG members.

Candidates will be asked to present their expressions of interest to the government, with the LEG informed in this process, responding to the defined criteria.

On the basis of the expressions of interest, the selection committee will propose the selection of a grant agent for decision by the government. This decision will be presented for endorsement by the DPs, including CSOs, and preferably by consensus. If one or more DPs raise concerns with the process, recourse can be made to GPE's *Conflict Resolution Procedures*.

Note: When the government and its partners consider it appropriate to have more than one GA, this will need to be justified by them and presented by the Secretariat to the GPC. The GPC may decide to deny a request for multiple GAs if it finds the justification insufficient.

### 3. DOCUMENTATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The process, key steps and final decision will be documented by the government with support from the CA and reviewed by the Secretariat in the initial stage of its QAR process.

For its quality assurance function the Secretariat will pay particular attention to transparency and due process, as well as to the justification of the scope of work, proposed modality and GA selection. The information provided by the government and CA should at a minimum allow assessment of these elements.

## PART II: CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF A GRANT AGENT

The government and DPs are expected to elaborate evaluation criteria for each of the selection criteria below. In particular, in the case of multiple candidates for GA, relevant, clear and objective indicators will need to be included for all criteria.

Criteria	Description
Ability to work through the most appropriate funding modality	Ability to work with the funding modality that is preferred by the LEG for implementation of the ESPIG.
Ability to formulate and support implementation of programs of similar scope of work	Nature, size and performance of the agency's education portfolio in the country should be considered, including past performance as ESPIG grant agent.
Appropriate administrative cost for delivery of the program	Cost for implementation of the grant charged by the GA and implementing partners or charged to the grant for specific fiduciary or implementation arrangement, including for program implementation units, accounting services, etc. In contexts that require a greater degree of GA involvement in implementation, these costs may be justifiably higher.
Ability to discharge fiduciary and administrative responsibilities	Experience in-country with managing fiduciary and administrative risk, relative to (1) the funding modality and (2) the scope of the grant.
Ability to support capacity building of the government in implementing the ESP	Proven experience in-country reinforced by government capacity to deliver education services with domestic resources.
Commitment to joint sector dialogue and coordination	Level and extent of participation in the LEG, development partner group and joint sector dialogue.
Agreement within the candidate GA at the highest appropriate level to take on this role	In most cases this would be clearance and support from the candidate agency's HQ.

## OFFICES

### Washington

701 18<sup>th</sup> St NW  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
USA

### Paris

6 Avenue d'Iena  
75116 Paris  
France

### Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
B-1000, Brussels  
Belgium

## CONTACT

**Phone:** (+1) 202-458-0825

**Email:** [information@globalpartnership.org](mailto:information@globalpartnership.org)