

GUIDELINES FOR SYSTEM CAPACITY GRANT

October 2021

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1. Introduction

The system capacity grant (SCG) is one of GPE's country-level grants designed to help strengthen countries' capacity to transform their education systems. It was designed as part of GPE [2025](#), GPE's strategic plan for 2021–25, whose main goal is *to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century*. The grant provides funding for a broad range of eligible activities throughout a country's policy cycles.

The SCG adopts a systematic approach for supporting country capacity, particularly for the implementation of education sector plans, beyond planning and sector reviews. The grant also responds to the strong call from partner countries for a demand-driven funding mechanism that builds national capacity to develop, implement and monitor sector plans and policies.

These guidelines describe the grant's main features and provide step-by-step guidance for the grant application process. They also provide general guidance for managing the grant, including monitoring and evaluation, and specify the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved.

2. Features of the SCG

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of the system capacity grant is to provide continually available and flexible funding to support capacity strengthening, especially with regard to factors that enable system transformation.

As part of the GPE 2025 operating model, GPE has identified four sets of enabling factors for strong education systems: (1) volume, equity and efficiency of domestic finance; (2) gender-responsive sector planning, policy and monitoring; (3) data and evidence; and (4) sector coordination. The SCG aims to support countries to make progress in these critical areas, according to their unique needs and context.

2.2. Eligibility

The SCG is available to all countries and territories eligible for GPE funding. Each eligible country or territory can access allocations ranging from US\$1,000,000 to US\$5,000,000 over a 5-year period, 2021 through 2025. Each country's allocation level is determined by a formula based on the school-aged population (70% weighting) and capacity considerations using

the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score (30% weighting) as a proxy for capacity.¹ The full list of eligible countries and territories is available on the GPE [website](#).²

2.3. Activities

The SCG provides funding for a broad range of eligible activities under three financing windows (Table 1). The financing windows correspond to GPE’s country-level objectives, focused on gender-responsive planning, coordinated action and financing, and institutional strengthening and data. Progress in these three dimensions is core for achieving systemwide impact, enabling transformative change and driving results at scale. Appendix A further elaborates the eligible activities under each financing window.

Table 1. Activities eligible for the different SCG financing windows

Financing window 1: Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for systemwide impact	Financing window 2: Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change	Financing window 3: Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale
<p>Activity group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. System diagnostics, partnership compact development and education sector analyses, including gender analysis B. Gender-responsive sector planning, including operational planning and budgeting C. Supporting policies and plans to identify and address multiple forms of exclusion, including planning for children with disabilities, system 	<p>Activity group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. Strengthening sector coordination, including local education groups, joint sector reviews and monitoring the effectiveness of the country-level partnership F. Establishing and operating pooled funding mechanisms G. Strengthening budget processes and ministry of finance engagement; identifying opportunities to improve the equity and efficiency of education expenditure, including 	<p>Activity group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Strengthening data systems, including on improving the availability and use of sex-disaggregated data, and data on children with disabilities J. Training and support for government staff and central and decentralized levels, including on the uptake and use of data and evidence K. Support for implementation capacity, including sector plan implementation monitoring, gender responsiveness of the sector and evaluation of sector

¹ CPIA is the rating of countries against a set of 16 criteria grouped in four clusters: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions. For more details, see “Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, Data Catalog, World Bank,” <https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/country-policy-and-institutional-assessment>.

² See “Countries and Grant Eligibility,” <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/list-countries-and-grant-eligibility>.

<p>resilience and inclusion of displaced children</p> <p>D. Strengthening evidence-based diagnosis of critical implementation bottlenecks and identifying potentially scalable, transformative solutions</p>	<p>processes toward gender equality</p> <p>H. Cross-sectoral convening</p>	<p>plans and policies/programs in priority areas; assessment of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) capacity, including uptake and use of evidence in the policy process</p>
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2.4. Amount

The grant allocations range from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 and can be accessed over a 5-year period, 2021 through 2025.

A country or territory can decide to access its allocation through multiple applications at different times. For example, depending on its need, a country/territory can access parts of its allocation for pre-partnership compact activities (such as assessment of enabling factors), compact development activities, support for any areas of capacity strengthening identified in the compact implementation, and/or conducting the compact mid-term review.

The SCG does not set any limits for the portion of a country’s grant that it can allocate for specific windows or activities.³ The country/territory decides how to spread out its grant between initial activities, such as assessment of enabling factors/compact development, and those activities that come at a later stage, including compact implementation, compact mid-term review and follow-ups.

The SCG is expected to be primarily driven by the compact; therefore, accessing the grant prior to the development of the compact is considered an exceptional case, requiring the country to justify why this support is urgent and how it expects to fund support for capacity reinforcement related to assessment of enabling factors during the compact process. However, such exceptional case justification is not required when the grant is accessed for (1) sector analysis, (2) education sector plan development, or (3) joint sector review prior to compact development—as long as the total amount requested does not exceed \$700,000.

2.5. Duration

The maximum implementation period for the SCG is set at 4 years. However, the duration of

³ The former education sector plan development grant had established such limits (\$250,000 for education sector analysis, \$200,000 for joint sector review and \$250,000 for education sector plan development).

activities will vary (including some that are expected to be completed within a few months), depending on the grant window, activity group and country context. When multiple applications are submitted, each approved application will have a 4-year implementation period.

2.6. SCG grant agents

GPE grants are transferred to the country level through grant agents,⁴ who are accountable for the use of the resources throughout the grant cycle. Governments, in consultation with the local education group, are encouraged to select a grant agent who can best assist them in a particular area to be supported by the SCG. As comparative advantages of agencies could depend on the area of support, a country is allowed to opt for different grant agents, separating applications for different types of support as most appropriate in country context. The advantages of that choice should outweigh the additional transactions that it would require. In general, countries are strongly encouraged to streamline the SCG with other existing mechanisms, such as existing joint capacity reinforcement funding. Where relevant, a country can decide to use the program financed by the system transformation grant as the mechanism to implement the SCG.

The selection process of the SCG grant agent should be transparent and kept as simple as possible to ensure low transaction costs.⁵ The selection is decided by the government and endorsed by the other members of the local education group based on the capacity of the agency to provide technical support and build capacity for area(s) supported by the SCG.

To receive transferred funds, the grant agent must have a financial procedures agreement with the GPE trustee—the World Bank. If such an agreement does not exist, the designated agency should initiate action to secure an agreement with expediency as soon as it has been selected.

3. Grant application process

Application for the system capacity grant will be primarily driven by the need to strengthen enabling factors as assessed by the government and partners in the partnership compact. The compact enables the identification of reforms in areas whose delivery could be supported through the SCG (volume, equity and efficiency of domestic finance; gender-responsive sector planning, policy and monitoring; data and evidence; and sector coordination).

⁴ See *Terms of Reference for Grant Agents*, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/terms-reference-grant-agents-espdg>.

⁵ It is important to ensure that the selection process, key steps and final decision be documented. Minutes of the local education group meeting during which the selected SCG grant agent was endorsed should be communicated to the GPE Secretariat.

However, countries may also apply for the grant to support urgent capacity needs identified prior to the compact or use the resources to develop the compact. In addition, countries have the option to identify (additional) areas for capacity strengthening to be supported with part of the grant at a later stage or identify areas to change after completing the compact—for example, as part of the compact mid-term review.

When the areas supported through the SCG have not been identified in the partnership compact, the submission should include a clear explanation on the reasons to use the grant for support in a specific area and proof of consultation with the local education group on this option.

Regardless of the application scenario, before developing an SCG application, the government or coordinating agency should notify the GPE Secretariat of the government's intent to apply for the grant as well as the timing. There are four steps to the grant application process:

1. Identification of the scope of work
2. Development of the SCG application
3. Submission of the application⁶
4. Application review and approval decision

Details of the steps are presented below.

Step 1: Identification of the scope of work

The identification of the scope of work, activities and timeline should be carefully organized and coordinated. It should be government-led and participatory in a meaningful way and consider the capacity and system strengthening needs of the sector. A well-planned process will help make effective use of available resources and time.

GPE recommends defining the process through the preparation of a **concept note**, allowing the government team, grant agent and partners to develop a common vision and outline scope and tasks. This concept note should include four items: (1) the reasons for addressing specific enabling factors or areas, (2) how what is proposed will address the specific issues identified, (3) how the proposed actions will lead to system capacity reinforcement, and (4) value for money proof that the proposed interventions have reasonable chance of success based on national, regional or global evidence. The concept note should also indicate how **gender equality has been hardwired through the program design, including systematically applying a gender lens and identifying key challenges and design of program activities from a gender-equality perspective.**

⁶ The grant application template is available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/application-form-education-sector-plan-development-grants>.

As indicated, the application for the SCG is expected to be primarily driven by the need to strengthen enabling factors as assessed by the government and partners in the partnership compact. The compact enables the identification of reforms in areas whose delivery could be supported through the grant (volume, equity and efficiency of domestic finance; gender-responsive sector planning, policy and monitoring; data and evidence; and sector coordination). Where the application is thus informed by a compact that identifies the areas of need, the concept note can exclude item number 1.

All activities should be outlined in the concept note and be included in **a detailed budget**. Two elements form the basis for scoping and planning for the SCG application.

Two deliverables to scope the process and frame the SCG application

1. A concept note defining how the program window or activities will be approached and coordinated—and if relevant, the current practices (strengths and weaknesses). It should also include the expected results or outcomes of the SCG.
2. A budget that details the costs of the activities for which GPE’s SCG financing is requested, and which represents value for money.

Step 2: Development of the SCG application

While the government leads the planning process in close consultation with the in-country development partners, the grant agent has the delegated responsibility for developing the SCG application based on the agreed process. The grant agent will work with the government and partners to ensure that the abovementioned deliverables are prepared in accordance with the agreed scope, technical decisions and complementary funding from the grant agent and other partners.

The grant agent should use the SCG application form to provide general information, while the concept note should be prepared in a separate Word document. The specific SCG budget should be prepared in the available template.⁷

If more than one grant agent is selected for different funding windows/sub-windows, there can be multiple applications, which should then be adapted to their specific purposes. The applications can be submitted either together or at different times. Each application has a maximum 4-year implementation period.

There is flexibility on how to structure the concept note, though it would normally include background and rationale, analysis of existing gaps, scope of work, methodological

⁷ The budget template is available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/budget-template-system-capacity-grant>.

approach, modality of work, project timeline and budget.

Upon completion of the SCG application, the government and its partners should have clarity on the processes, resources and time needed to complete the activities. The SCG application should be discussed and endorsed by the local education group prior to its submission.

Selection of currency: Applicants can elect to access the SCG grant in euros, in lieu of dollars. The decision to apply in euros should be made by the grant agent in consultation with the government and the local education group. It has to be communicated to the Secretariat (copying the coordinating agency) before the finalization and submission of the grant application. The conversion of the grant amount from dollars to euros will be based on the prevailing exchange rate at the World Bank as of the date the Secretariat receives the official application.

Safeguards against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment: In preparing the grant programs, the grant agent should consider GPE's policy on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).⁸ The policy aims to ensure that there are adequate safeguards against sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and related misconducts in the implementation of programs funded by GPE. Grant agents are expected to follow their own SEAH policies and procedures; however, the grant application will include questionnaires that seek to ensure that:

- i) The grant agent has considered SEAH risks that are induced or exacerbated by the GPE grant;
- ii) If SEAH risks are identified, then details of risk assessment and proposed mitigation measures are provided; and
- iii) If SEAH risks are not relevant for the GPE grant, then reasons for this conclusion are provided.

When an SEAH incident occurs in the implementation of a GPE-funded program, the grant agent is required to notify the Secretariat immediately. The notification should be sent to the Secretariat country team lead, copying gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org.

Step 3: Submission of the application

The complete SCG application package consists of the following:

- The completed SCG application form
- The concept note (completed in separate Word document)
- Budget for the SCG (completed in SCG Excel template)

⁸ See *Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment*, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-protection-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment-may-2021>.

The package should also include the following:

- Minutes of the local education group meeting during which the application was endorsed

If the local education group wishes to submit any additional documents for consideration, these can be attached to the email when submitting the application.

SCG application submission

The SCG application can be submitted anytime during the calendar year. The government signs and submits the completed application together with the required deliverables to the Secretariat at the following email address:

gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org, copying the coordinating agency, the grant agent and the Secretariat country team lead.

Step 4: Application review and approval decision

Upon receipt of the application, the Secretariat will carry out an initial review. The Secretariat will have 10 working days to complete this screening and notify the coordinating agency, copying the grant agent and the designated ministry focal point, if there are any points needing clarification.

In carrying out the initial review, the Secretariat will determine whether the grant application clearly explains the reasons to address specific capacity gaps in enabling factors or areas and how what is proposed will address the specific issues identified, whether there are any gaps in the expected deliverables for the application, and whether the application includes a reasonable budget and time frame. While this determination will vary according to each grant, in all cases the Secretariat will assess to what extent the concept note addresses the needs of the education system as identified by the local education group.

If the Secretariat has any questions or concerns about the SCG application, it will be returned with written comments to the coordinating agency and copied to the grant agent and the designated ministry focal point. The government and its partners can then address the Secretariat's concerns and resubmit the application.

After the initial screening, the Secretariat's grant application review committee, composed of a cross-team of technical, policy and financial experts, reviews the application, making sure that the SCG grant process and budget are in line with the SCG guidelines, and makes recommendations for allocation decision.⁹

⁹ The assessment checklist used by the grant application review committee (GARC) is available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/system-capacity-grant-garc-review-checklist>.

If an application has failed to address concerns raised during the screening stage, or if the grant application review committee raises significant new concerns, the Secretariat may ask for additional clarifications. Should the Secretariat decide not to approve the SCG application, it will provide written comments outlining why the application was not approved.

Upon approval of the application, the Secretariat will notify the GPE trustee to process a transfer of funds to the grant agent, if a financial procedures agreement already exists. Where no such agreement exists, the Secretariat will continue working with the grant agent to develop this agreement.

Time frame for application processing and grant approval

If no clarifications are needed as a result of the screening, the application will be processed within 30 working days of its receipt, and the Secretariat's decision will be communicated to the ministry focal point and copied to the coordinating agency and grant agent.

If the application is approved, the letter from the Secretariat will indicate the following:

1. The starting date of the grant—the date of the letter or the date in the application, whichever comes later
2. The closing date of the grant—as indicated in the application
3. The date by which a grant final financial statement is expected

4. Grant management, monitoring and learning

4.1. Grant agent responsibility

Minimum standards for grant administration

The terms of reference for SCG grant agents set the general objectives and expectations for administering an SCG. Agencies that are selected as grant agents meet certain minimum standards and are therefore entrusted to follow their own policies and procedures including those related to audit, eligible expenditures, procurement, employment and supervision of consultants, and fiduciary oversight (including continued support and corrective action to ensure effective implementation).

The grant agent is responsible for ensuring that high-quality work is carried out in accordance with (1) its own policies and procedures, (2) the application approved by the Secretariat, (3) the applicable GPE policies and guidelines, and (4) the financial procedures

agreement. The grant agent works closely with the government within a government-led planning process, engages in policy dialogue and provides technical support as needed. In general, a key role of the grant agent is to work closely with the government to ensure full leadership and ownership of the SCG-supported activities and to use the process to build government capacity. It is also key for the grant agent to work with the coordinating agency to ensure that the local education group is consulted and regularly informed on the status of activities, including any delays in the implementation.

In addition, through monitoring the grant, the grant agent is expected to detect issues that may arise during implementation as early as possible and to resolve them. If there are delays or issues that may adversely affect the quality and timing of the work, it is the responsibility of the grant agent to inform the Secretariat and the local education group. In doing so, the grant agent should also include an explanation of what is being done or considered to mitigate the impact of delays and ensure that the SCG will be completed in a timely manner.

4.2. Revisions

Revisions refer to a change or series of changes to (sub-)windows, activities, modification of activity scope, additions or cancellations of activities or group of activities, as compared to the initially approved versions. The country partner, together with the grant agent in consultation with the local education group, may make **minor revisions**. These include the reallocation of resources within sub-windows/activity groups not exceeding 10 percent of the total budget of the specific grant. The revision should be in line with the objectives of the approved SCG and the grant agent must inform the Secretariat of these adjustments.

Non-minor revisions will be submitted to the Secretariat for approval. These revisions include (1) the extension of grant end dates; (2) the reallocation of resources within sub-windows/activity groups above 10 percent of total budget; (3) any reallocation of resources between (sub-)windows, including increases to grant agent country office cost; and (4) changes to objectives and program deliverables. Before submitting a request for non-minor revisions, the partner countries along with the grant agent should first ensure that the local education group is consulted. The request should document the rationale for the change and the amounts involved. The Secretariat will consider the change and either issue a non-objection to the proposed changes or inform the grant agent if the changes are not acceptable.

Submission of revisions

The grant agent should submit requests for revisions to the Secretariat via email (gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org), copying the coordinating agency, the ministry focal point and the Secretariat country team lead.

4.3. Risk mitigation

As for all its grants, GPE has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the misuse of GPE Trust Fund resources. In the event that it does occur, the grant agent's internal processes for dealing with such issues will apply, including procedures to reclaim any misused funds, if applicable. The grant agent should also immediately inform the Secretariat, in writing, of any concerns regarding misuse of funds and remedial actions taken by the grant agent to mitigate the impact on the program in line with the GPE policy in this regard.¹⁰ The notification should be sent to the Secretariat country team lead, copying (next page) gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org.

Zero tolerance policy

The *Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds* should be followed in the event of suspected misuse of funds, in addition to the grant agent's own internal procedures and processes in this regard.

4.4. Reporting, monitoring, evaluation and learning

A. At country level

For the SCG, the consultative process within the local education group is particularly critical to identify areas to be supported by the grant, as well as to report on how the grant has reinforced the government system capacity. This is an evolution from the education sector plan development grant, which contributed to processes that were consultative by themselves, such as education sector plan development and joint sector reviews. As the supported areas of the SCG are broader, expectation on reporting to local education groups will be similar to those of the system transformation grant and the Multiplier, which means the government and the grant agent will be expected to periodically share with the local education group policy-related issues from SCG implementation relative to supported areas. Reporting on SCG performance is expected to be learning-oriented and to seek further opportunities for improvement in system capacity strengthening practices, as well as to gauge the ongoing coherence between the grant and the other actions taken to reinforce the education system. Frequency and intensity of reporting will likely vary depending on the country context, but updates to the local education group must be provided at least twice a year. As relevant, reporting should be integrated in joint sector reviews within the broader sector monitoring.

In addition, the SCG will be mostly linked to the partnership compact, which will identify areas to be supported through the grant, and which will undergo a mid-term review where an

¹⁰ See *GPE Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds*, <http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-and-communications-protocol-misuse-gpe-trust-funds>.

assessment of progress, including on areas supported by the grant, will be undertaken. This mid-term review could serve as a moment to evaluate support provided through the SCG, and possible revision, as relevant.

Finally, it is expected to discuss the grant completion report within the local education group—which will help reflect on the overall successes and challenges of implementation, especially whether it addressed weaknesses with regards to the enabling factors—and to illustrate how these lessons can be incorporated and learned from for future action, including for the next cycle of SCG funding.

B. To the GPE Secretariat

Narrative reports: The grant agent is required to submit two types of implementation reports, using the standard GPE templates:

- 1) A periodic performance report for each year of SCG implementation
- 2) A final performance report at SCG completion, to be submitted within 6 months of the grant closing date

A periodic performance report is expected to be submitted within 3 months after the end of each implementation year. As these reports provide specific information on progress during an implementation year, a periodic performance report will be required for the last year of implementation as well, and thus cannot be merged with the final performance report.

A key purpose of the periodic performance report is to inform the Secretariat on the grant agent's assessment of the progress in a specific area. In addition, these reports will serve to inform on issues that arise during implementation and actions taken to resolve them as early as possible. The grant agent is expected to share the reports with the local education group for their input.

The final performance report requests the grant agent to take stock of performance, relevance and efficiency of the SCG activities/deliverables at completion, in the three SCG capacity area windows, as relevant. It further requests the grant agent to report on the grant's success in addressing weaknesses with regard to the enabling factors, and its contribution to strengthened capacity. Finally, the grant agent is requested to provide an overview of successful practices and lessons, as well as possible areas of continuation or scaling, and related sustainability factors. The final performance report should reflect on successes and problems that the grant experienced, especially whether it achieved its objectives, and see how these lessons can be incorporated and learned from in the next cycle.

The final performance report should be submitted within 6 months after the grant's closing date.

Submission of reports

The grant agent should submit the reports to the Secretariat via email (gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org), copying the coordinating agency and the Secretariat country team lead.

Financial reporting: The grant agent is requested to submit the grant’s final financial statements to the Secretariat as stipulated in the financial procedures agreement (usually within 6 months). Any unspent funds at the close of the grant should be reported to the Secretariat and to the GPE trustee by an authorized signatory using the relevant annex outlined in the financial procedures agreement. The Secretariat and the trustee for the GPE Fund will liaise with the grant agent for further details on how the unspent funds will be returned.

Appendix A: Activities per financing window

It is important to note that the lists below may not be exhaustive. If an activity is not listed but aligns with any of the funding windows or country-level objectives,¹¹ it may be considered eligible for funding with adequate justification in the grant proposal.

Financing window 1

Activity group A1: Gender-responsive education sector analysis and system diagnostics

The first group of activities under financing window 1, which supports gender-responsive education sector analyses and system diagnostics, serves to fill existing gaps and seeks, whenever feasible, to build government capacity in different aspects of sector analysis, including gender analysis. Activities may cover the following:

- Development of partnership compact and related activities
- Comprehensive analysis – e.g., country status report, and diagnostics and analysis of the country’s current education system
- Targeted analysis – e.g., needs diagnosis and/or policy assessments, including public finance management (PFM) analysis, gender analysis or diagnostic (including those related to the main barriers to gender equality in the education sector; the role of social norms in girls’ education; school-related gender-based violence; curriculum, textbooks and teacher knowledge and attitudes from the gender perspective). Also includes diagnostics on learning/learning assessment/ teachers and teaching quality or service delivery studies, in view of

¹¹ See *GPE 2025 Strategic Plan*, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-2025-strategic-plan>.

improving the education sector plan/transitional education plan in areas related to equity, gender equality, efficiency and learning outcomes

- Capacity-building in specific methodological approaches, monitoring and evaluation
- Consultations to ensure a participatory process
- Technical services
- Peer-review arrangements
- Dissemination and knowledge exchange
- Analysis on PFM – If no recent PFM analysis is available for the education sector, this can be part of financing window 1 to inform good sector planning and its budget ceiling.¹²

Activity group A2: Development of capacity for improving the gender responsiveness of the education sector

This sub-window provides funding for activities specifically targeted at improving the gender responsiveness of the education sector. This funding supports the development of capacity, the development and use of evidence and the system strengthening associated with improving the gender responsiveness of the education sector. While gender equality should be a key element of consideration in activities associated with the other SCG windows, this specific set of activities should serve to fill existing gaps and build government capacity in different aspects of gender responsiveness. Activities may cover the following:

- Knowledge exchange, including those related to gender equality, in the education sector, including through links with other GPE grant funding such as the GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)
- Development or strengthening of data systems that track important gendered aspects and barriers of the education sector, such as the prevalence of school-related gender-based violence, early marriage and pregnancy
- Capacity-building and technical assistance related to improving the gender responsiveness of the education sector, including gender mainstreaming in the planning, policy and budgeting processes, and also gender-responsive budgeting
- Gender audit of curriculum, textbooks and any other content

¹² PFM analysis can be needed to assess the extent to which current management systems are underpinned by goals of prudent fiscal decisions, reliable and efficient transactions, and institutionalized accountability. It is also needed to inform the local education group in the context of its task of identifying and agreeing on the most appropriate funding modality for the system transformation grant.

- Gender dimension of teacher recruitment, deployment, performance, career path options, and gender-sensitive curriculum and teacher training

Activity group B: Gender-responsive education sector plan/transitional education plan development

This sub-window provides funding for the activities that follow the completion of the sector analysis and supports the development of a gender-responsive education sector plan or a transitional education plan. As above, activities and technical services under this group should seek, whenever feasible, to build government capacity, and may cover the following:

- Development or revision of sector strategy, programs and actions
- Development of multiyear operational plans and medium-term expenditure frameworks
- Technical services related to education sector plan development
- Capacity-building in specific areas related to gender-responsive planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Consultations to ensure a participatory process
- Independent assessment of the education sector plan/transitional education plan, follow-up on its recommendations
- Dissemination of the education sector plan/transitional education plan or operational plans to a broader audience

Activity group C: Identify and address multiple forms of exclusion, including strengthening system resilience and inclusion of displaced children

This sub-window provides funding to activities in support of policies and plans to identify and address multiple forms of exclusion, including planning for children with disabilities and other excluded groups. It also includes funding for activities that strengthen system resilience, defined as the ability of the education system to prepare for, respond to and recover from adverse events. These can be related to climate change, disasters, public health emergencies, conflict, forced displacement, political crises or economic shocks. The SCG activities and technical services under this financing sub-window should serve to fill existing gaps and seek, whenever feasible, to build government capacity in different aspects of system resilience. Activities may cover the following:

- Diagnostics/analysis to help determine whether policies and plans adequately address multiple forms of exclusion; activities to help build capacities to address the gaps diagnosed

- Diagnostic of external/contextual risks to the education system—e.g., climate and disaster risk screening, analysis of hazards, exposure and ability of the education system to cope with adverse events
- Analysis of forced displacement trends, impacts on the education system and pathways to improve inclusion of displaced children in the national system
- Conflict analyses, including two-way relationship between education and conflict
- Development or strengthening of data systems that track risks and their impact on the education system, and/or track the education needs of displaced and refugee populations
- Knowledge exchange related to strengthening resilience of the education system
- Capacity-building and technical assistance related to integrating resilience and risk management in planning, monitoring and evaluation, in the short to long term
- Capacity-building and technical assistance related to the full realization of the right to education for all children, such as applying a rights-based assessment of policies
- Development or revision of sector plan, strategy, programs, budgets and actions to include preparedness, response, and recovery strategies and/or inclusion of displaced populations
- Climate-sensitive planning for both adaptation and mitigation (approaches to school construction, curriculum content, teacher professional development, evacuation measures)
- Development of contingency plans or mechanisms that allow the system to respond to and recover from adverse events

Ineligible activities include procurement and delivery of contingency and/or response supplies, school-level planning and capacity-building, and any other activities whose purpose is the implementation of preparedness, response and/or recovery strategies, unless specifically mentioned above. Activities associated with resilience without a direct link to the education sector are also ineligible.

Activity group D: Strengthen evidence-based diagnosis of critical implementation bottlenecks

This sub-window provides funding for activities to help strengthen evidence-based diagnosis of critical bottlenecks in the implementation of other GPE grants, such as the system transformation grant or the Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA), and to identify potentially scalable, transformative solutions. Activities covered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Diagnostics, analysis and other activities to help determine and address bottlenecks in the implementation of GPE grants
- Activities to help strengthen or reinforce capacity for the implementation of other GPE grants

Financing window 2

Activity group E: Strengthening sector coordination and monitoring

This sub-window provides funding to support the engagement and coordination of education sector stakeholders/partners to strengthen capacity for system transformation. This includes support to sector monitoring activities, including the organization of effective joint sector reviews, as well as support to coordinating agencies, ministries of education or other eligible partners for the effective coordination and administration of the local education group. This sub-window can also be used to support the development and monitoring of the country's GPE partnership compact. Activities covered include the following:

- Activities related to joint monitoring—e.g., gathering and assessing data for and drafting the annual implementation report, dissemination and implementation of aide-memoire and its action points. Also includes other joint sector review-related costs, such as cost of venues, hiring of facilitators and interpreters/translators.
- Strengthening the capacity for subnational representation and effective participation in policy dialogue and sector monitoring, including participation of local civil society actors and representatives of teachers' organizations. This may also include travel costs for joint sector review participants.
- Activities/technical services to help build and sustain the ministry of education's capacity for effective coordination, leadership and ownership of sector engagement and processes.
- Activities that support greater inclusiveness of the local education group, for example by fostering the participation of civil society, actors focused on gender equality, human rights and children with disability to name a few.
- Activities that enable coordinating agencies to better support local education group coordination.

- Activities that help build and retain capacity for monitoring and reporting on local education group coordination.
- Activities that may help address capacity gaps for coordination identified in the local education group self-assessment as areas where improvements are needed.
- Support for coordination between central and local levels (state/provincial), across the different tiers of government, or among multiple ministries working on education (e.g., ministry of education, ministry in charge of preschool/early childhood education, ministry in charge of vocational, and/or higher-education ministry in charge of refugee education or education in emergencies).
- Support to build and retain capacity for sector coordination in response to needs identified in the partnership compact.
- Activities and technical services to help develop and monitor GPE partnership compact.

Activity group F: Strengthening budget processes and ministry of finance engagement

This financing seeks to support the budget-related planning and coordination capacity of the ministry of education and strengthen its engagement with the ministry of finance on matters of domestic financing for education. Activities covered include the following:

- Activities to strengthen the ministry of education's capacity to engage with the national budgeting process or increase domestic financing for education. This may include studies and analyses on the equity and efficiency of education expenditure or other activities that help make a compelling case for increased domestic funding for education.
- Targeted training, technical assistance and other services to strengthen the capacity of staff at the ministry of education budgeting and planning offices. This may include efforts to improve budgeting efficiency, proper costing of budget through simulation models.
- Activities to strengthen procurement and human resource management.
- Activities to support clarity and transparency in budget reporting and strengthen budget data credibility, including but not limited to teacher data, student enrollment data and cleaning up of teacher payroll.
- Activities and technical assistance to establish or strengthen gender-responsive budgeting.

- Activities that help facilitate education sector budget dialogues and negotiations with the ministry of finance to ensure important education-related activities are factored into the national budgeting process.

Activity group G: Funding to establish and operate pooled funding mechanism

The use of a pooled funding mechanism contributes to aid harmonization. Funding for activity group F can be accessed by countries that have indicated (in their partnership compact) an interest to develop a pooled funding mechanism or reinforce an existing one. The funding may cover the following:

- Activities that help establish or strengthen the pooled fund. This includes support for the smooth operation of the pool fund modality, including scheduled and ad hoc decision meetings of the partners to receive and approve results, disbursements and reports.
- Activities that support education sector resource mobilization and alignment dialogue between the partner countries and its education sector development partners.
- Activities that support greater use of country PFM systems (alignment of pooled funding).
- Hiring of consultants to support setting up or strengthening existing pooled funding.
- Studies/analyses on PFM, pooled funding or aid effectiveness.
- Coordination of development partners for the purpose of establishing/strengthening pooled fund mechanism.

Activity group H: Support to cross-sectoral convening

This financing supports activities that help facilitate engagement and coordination between the ministry of education and stakeholders from other sectors, with the aim of strengthening the ministry's capacity to address relevant education challenges. This includes, but is not limited to, engagements between the education ministry and ministries of finance and health and other government agencies that deal with gender and humanitarian affairs and the strengthening of links between humanitarian and development coordination mechanisms.

While some cross-sectoral coordination activities are also supported by other financing windows/activity groups, financing for cross-sectoral convening specifically focuses on activities that are not covered elsewhere in these guidelines.

Financing window 3

Activity groups I-K: Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale

Financing window 3 provides funding to help strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale. This window may cover the following activities:

- Strengthening capacity for uptake and use of data and evidence (including EMIS and learning assessment systems). This also includes improving the availability and use of sex-disaggregated data and other types of data (such as learning outcomes) on the most marginalized children, including displaced children.
- Training and support for government staff at central and decentralized levels (including capacity strengthening for staff working on EMIS and learning assessment systems).
- Support to strengthen capacity for ongoing monitoring at central and decentralized levels in order to adapt, learn and correct course.
- Support to strengthen capacity for greater gender responsiveness of the ministry of education, including for training and support for staff working on the gender unit.
- Technical assistance to support implementation capacity, including sector plan implementation monitoring, strengthening of data systems (including EMIS and learning assessment systems) and evaluation of specific policies and programs in priority areas.¹³
- Strengthening capacity for efficient management of resources, including policies on teacher management and policy/capacity for procurement of textbooks and school construction.

Appendix B: SCG reporting

Features	Annual SCG implementation report	Final SCG performance report
Purpose	To periodically monitor progress in SCG implementation and its ongoing suitability vis-à-vis systemic capacity strengthening needs, for improvement purposes.	To account for and learn from information on relevance, strategic coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and inform any future capacity strengthening programming efforts.

¹³ The technical assistance could take different forms, including mobilization of external expertise as needed.

Frequency	Once per year throughout SCG implementation.	Once, at SCG completion. There may be cases where the completion report is due less than 12 months from the date the ultimate implementation progress report was submitted. In such cases, the Secretariat still requires that ultimate progress report.
Format	An annual SCG implementation report template is available on the GPE website and should be used by the grant agent.	A final SCG performance report template is available on the GPE website and should be used by the grant agent.
Contents (highlights)	Analysis of progress and performance on each of the three SCG windows. Indication of any (current, previous) challenges and proposed remediation, and their degree of success at subsequent follow up. Emerging successful practices and lessons.	Stocktaking of performance, relevance, and efficiency of the SCG activities/deliverables at completion, in the three SCG capacity area windows. Success in filling identified capacity gaps. Contribution to strengthened capacity in the SCG capacity areas. Picture of fiduciary performance. Successful practices and lessons. Possible areas of continuation or scaling, and related sustainability factors.
Reporting process	The report should be prepared by the grant agent and then shared for input with the government and the local education group, or as per alternative governance arrangements, before submission to the Secretariat.	
Timing of report	Within 3 months after the end of the implementation year.	Within 6 months after the actual SCG grant closing date.
Submission details	The grant agent should submit the report to the Secretariat via email (gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org), copying the coordinating agency, the Secretariat Grant Operations contact, and the Secretariat country team lead.	

Appendix C: Key documents

Templates for the SCG application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SCG application form• Budget template
Secretariat assessment template	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant application review committee (GARC) assessment checklist
Reporting templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual SCG implementation report template – <i>(forthcoming)</i>• Final SCG performance report template – <i>(forthcoming)</i>

OFFICES

Washington

701 18th St NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
USA

Paris

6 Avenue d'Iena
75116 Paris
France

Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2nd floor
B-1000, Brussels
Belgium

CONTACT

Phone: (+1) 202-458-0825

Email: information@globalpartnership.org