TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GRANT AGENTS OF THE SYSTEM CAPACITY GRANT

October 2021
1. INTRODUCTION

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the largest global fund solely dedicated to transforming education in lower-income countries and a unique, multi-stakeholder partnership. GPE aims to deliver quality education so that every girl and boy can have hope, opportunity and agency.

The partnership brings together donors, multilateral institutions, civil society, teacher representatives, philanthropic foundations and the private sector to support the education sector in partner countries, with a particular focus on accelerating progress toward GPE’s strategic plan (GPE 2025).

GPE 2025 provides a platform to bring together GPE’s unique assets and ways of working in support of ambitious education transformation in the most vulnerable countries. It outlines the vision, mission and goals through four actionable objectives (three country-level objectives and one enabling objective) over the 5-year period. The country-level objectives are:

1. Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact
2. Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change
3. Strengthen capacity, adapt, and learn, to implement and drive results at scale

These country-level objectives are supported by an enabling, global objective: to mobilize global and national partners and resources for sustainable results.

The partnership is based on mutual accountability, whereby every partner is expected to commit and adhere to the accountabilities expressed in the compact set out in the GPE Charter and fulfill corresponding roles and responsibilities. Each partner has a necessary and specific role to play to achieve the shared objectives of the partnership.

At country level, the partnership functions within the forum where the primary consultation on education sector development takes place between a government and its partners, referred to in GPE terms as the local education group (LEG). Partnership framework is a general term used by GPE to refer to the terms of reference (TOR), memorandum of understanding or other agreement established between the government and its partners to frame this collaboration.

The following terms of reference sets out the definition and role of the grant agent (GA) for the system capacity grant (SCG).

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1 Available at https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-2025-strategic-plan.
2 The charter is available on GPE website: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/charter-global-partnership-education.
2. DEFINITION AND FRAMING

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

GPE provides system capacity grant to partner countries, through grant agents, to facilitate sector planning, coordination, monitoring and the broader sector capacity strengthening.

The terms of reference sets out the operational framework including responsibilities and accountabilities of GAs in relation to the SCG.

The Government is encouraged to select the GA who can best provide technical support and build capacity for area(s) supported by the SCG. As such, a country can opt for different GAs depending on the type of support as most appropriate in country context. This choice should however incur minimal transaction costs. It is strongly encouraged to streamline the SCG with other existing mechanisms, such as existing joint capacity reinforcement funding.

The selection of the SCG grant agent by the government should be transparent and endorsed by the other members of the local education group. The Secretariat may aid in recommending a selection process by sharing good practices from other contexts and will verify that the process has been transparent.

The World Bank acts as trustee for the GPE Fund. An agency selected as GA must therefore enter into a Financial Procedures Agreement (FPA) with the trustee. The GA at headquarters level ensures that the FPA is signed.

Specific minimum standards are required for all GAs, ensuring that each agency or organization selected as GA has all the required capabilities to perform its role as intended. Minimum Standards for all GPE Grant Agents\(^3\) outlines the standards around financial management, institutional capacity, and self-investigative powers used to screen newly selected GAs.

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\(^3\) Available on GPE website: [https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/grant-agents-minimum-standards](https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/grant-agents-minimum-standards).
3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The SCG grant agent has the following specific responsibilities:

(i) **Support effective, inclusive partnership**
- GPE grants are meant to leverage inclusive policy dialogue, strong sector planning, coordination and monitoring, and the strengthening of critical factors that enable system transformation. The GA is expected to engage in the broader GPE agenda as a partner and a member of the local education group – including in supporting inclusiveness in policy dialogue around the enabling factors: 1) volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic finance; 2) gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring; 3) data and evidence; and 4) sector coordination.

(ii) **Grant preparation**
- Supports the government to prepare a grant application, following the GPE SCG guidelines and in consultation with the coordinating agency (CA), which coordinates consultation with members of the LEG.
- Supports the government in consultation with CA to (a) develop a concept note outlining a common vision, the scope and tasks, (b) set out a realistic planning timeline, and (c) provide a detailed budget with the costs of the activities.
- Ensures the grant application demonstrates that all goods and services to be financed by the grant are directly linked to the needs identified in the country’s partnership Compact.4
- Ensures that its own role in the planning process, including through procurement of services and any direct technical support to the government, is clearly laid out in the application.

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

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4 See the GPE system capacity grant guidelines for exceptional cases, where, for example, an SCG can be accessed prior to the development of the partnership Compact: [https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-development-grants](https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-development-grants).
• Coordinates with the government and the CA to implement and monitor the SCG and ensures that it is properly utilized to support capacity strengthening activities.

• In collaboration with the government, diagnoses in a timely manner and reports to the local education group any SCG implementation issues that may adversely affect the quality and timing of the education sector plan (ESP) development (where applicable), or issues that may adversely affected the success of the grant implementation. Such notification should include an explanation of what is being done to resolve the issue(s).

• If ESP development is covered by the SCG, support the government to ensure linkage between the ESP/TEP planning process and the system transformation grant (STG) development process when there is overlap in the timing of the processes, coordinating with the CA and the STG grant agent to ensure all actors are well informed of the timeline and progress on the ESP/TEP.

• Coordinates with the government to submit to the Secretariat for approval a revision of planned activities and budget – in line with the guidelines for system capacity Grants – when unforeseen circumstances arise that affect grant implementation.

(iv) Reporting

• Keeps the Secretariat and the local education group, through the coordinating agency, informed of progress on implementation of grant activities, notably to flag any issues that lead to delayed implementation – including the finalization of the education sector plan (where applicable).

• Submit the following reporting to the Secretariat:
  1. a periodic performance report for each year of SCG implementation
  2. one final performance report at SCG completion, to be submitted within six months of grant closing date.
  3. grant’s final financial statements (within six months of the grant closing date) as stipulated in the FPA.

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5 A transitional education sector plan (TEP) may be prepared in lieu of ESP by countries coming out of conflict or crises.
## USEFUL DOCUMENTS FOR SCG GRANT AGENTS

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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