

GRANT AGENT SELECTION



WHAT IS GRANT AGENT

- Grant agent is the term used to refer to any GPE partner assigned to receive GPE grant funds either:
 - a. on behalf of a partner country, or
 - b. for specific programs such as Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) or Education Out Loud (support to CSOs)
- GPE depends on grant agents to ensure efficient and effective program implementation. => GA has a critical role to play in GPE's efforts to strengthen education systems in partner countries.
- Grant agents are accountable for their support to program implementation to governments and to the GPE Board via the Secretariat. In addition, grant agents have accountabilities as GPE partners who are represented in GPE's governance structures

ROLE OF GRANT AGENT

- GPE provides financial support to countries through Grant Agents. Grant agents therefore also provide an essential service to GPE partner countries.
- Grant agents play a critical role in delivering GPE's vision, mission, goals and objectives.
- Hence this can strengthen the grant agent's relationship with the partner government and position the grant agent as an influential local education group partner.
- Grant agents must work closely with government and other partners to ensure that grant-funded programs are well designed, effectively implemented and aligned with overall education sector plans, policies and systems.
- GPE-financed programs should contribute to improve the capacity of the national education system to deliver results

- Grant agents develop a program for GPE financing at the country level and provide fiduciary oversight, technical support, and capacity building to ensure effective implementation. They do this in close collaboration with the government, consistent with the education sector plan, and in consultation with coordinating agency and other LEG members.
- It is important that grant agents (both in-country and at headquarters) are aware of GPE principles, processes and requirements in order to ensure oversight of the specific accountabilities assigned to grant agents, and to ensure accurate communication around GPE grant funding
- There is no expectation that the GA for system transformation grant (STG) should be the same as the GA for the education sector plan implementation gran (ESPIG)

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANT AGENT



RESPONSABILITY OF GA (1)

- **1. Support effective, inclusive partnership:**
- GPE grants are meant to leverage inclusive policy dialogue.
- The GA is expected to engage in the broader GPE agenda as a partner and a member of the LEG – including such areas as systems building, sector planning and inclusive policy dialogue – in collaboration with the Coordinating Agency (CA),

RESPONSABILITY OF GA (2)

2. Grant application preparation

- Supports the government's proposal for GPE financing and preparation of the grant application package in consultation with the LEG
 - - Supports the government in developing the program within the agreed scope of work and implementation modality according to an agreed timeline.
 - - Works with the government to clearly define its own role in relation to grant implementation – which can be limited to fiduciary oversight and monitoring, including technical support and capacity building, or encompass direct implementation, including program performance and achievement of results– and ensures this role is explained and budgeted for in the application.
 - - Evaluates the quality and effectiveness of the program and works with the GPE Secretariat to define the respective roles of the GA and the GPE Secretariat in quality assurance processes within an agreed timeline, ensuring they are well coordinated and complementary.
 - - Utilizes and aligns with country procedures and systems according to agreed GA criteria for the

RESPONSABILITY OF GA (3)

3. Fiduciary responsibilities

- - Enters into a Financial Procedures Agreement (FPA) with the GPE Trustee and performs its fiduciary accountabilities in compliance with the FPA.
- - Enters into a formal agreement with the grant recipient (usually the government) or recipients as appropriate to the GA's own policies and practices and the country context.
- - Maintains books, records, documents and other evidence in accordance with its accounting procedures to sufficiently substantiate the use of transferred funds.
- - Ensures the use of GPE funds is carried out in accordance with:
 - its own policies and procedures, including those related to audit, eligible expenditures, employment and supervision of consultants and the procurement of goods and works and its framework to combat fraud and corruption.
 - the applicable decisions of the GPE Board, including the purpose for which the specific allocations have been approved by the Board.
- - In the event of suspected misuse of funds, the GA follows its internal procedures on misuse of funds as well as the GPE Policy and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds.

RESPONSABILITY OF GA (4)

4. Program implementation and monitoring

- Ensures that the implementation of activities is in line with the endorsed compact and approved program document.
- Follows and implements the Policy on STG, with respect to approval and notification processes, implementation period, reporting requirements, revisions and amendments.
- Builds government capacity and provides technical support, as laid out in the approved program document for use of supervision fees and operational budgets.
- Supports the government to assess quality and effectiveness of the program outcomes and/or outputs and to pursue the best programmatic solutions.
- Diagnoses in a timely manner and works with the government to resolve any implementation issues that may adversely affect the desired outcome of the program.
- Supports the government to notify the LEG of any actions that impact the overall progress of the program, and how it impacts the reform implementation. Such notification should include an explanation of what is being done to resolve the issue(s).

RESPONSABILITY OF GA (5)

5. Reporting

- Uses the GA's own procedures and reporting formats and the GPE standard reporting template to track overall grant performance.
- Provides an annual progress report through the tools described above to the GPE Board via the GPE Secretariat.
- Supports the government to periodically share with the LEG policy-related issues from STG implementation. Frequency and intensity of reporting will vary depending on the modality and the role of the GA vis-à-vis the government, but updates to the LEG must be provided at least twice a year. As relevant, reporting should be integrated in JSRs within the broader assessment of reform implementation.
- Holds semi-annual portfolio meetings with the GPE Secretariat to facilitate joint problem-solving and keeps the Secretariat regularly informed on performance of the STG
- GA must submit a completion report within six months of the STG's closure.

GRANT AGENT SELECTION CRITERIA



CRITERIA FOR A GRANT AGENT

Meet a set of specified minimum standards regarding **financial** management, **institutional capacity** and **self-investigative powers**

Financial capacity:

1. Has robust financial management and accounting systems ensure accuracy of financial management and reporting
2. has appointed an independent external audit firm or organization, whose work is consistent with recognized international auditing standards
3. Has internal audit mechanism, independent
4. Has control frameworks: has adequate policies and procedures in place for risk assessment and management; adequate policies and procedures in place to guide activities and ensure staff accountability

CRITERIA (2)

2. Institutional capacity:

- ✓ Legal status: a legally registered organization has the authority to enter into legal agreements and receive funds
- ✓ Has a good track record for timely implementation of similar projects, and has a good track record of achieving appropriate programmatic results
- ✓ organizational structure and quality of management enables it to competently manage or oversee the execution of funded projects, including through management of subrecipients.
- ✓ has procurement procedures (for both internal/administrative procurement and procurement by recipients of funds, with written standards based on widely recognized processes and an internal control framework to protect against fraud, corruption and waste
- ✓ Demonstrate existing capacities for monitoring and independent evaluation of projects

CRITERIA (3)

3. Transparency, self-investigative powers and anti-corruption measures

- Has robust policies and procedures for addressing misuse of funds, act as Supervising Entities or Implementers, the entity can demonstrate competence to deal with financial mismanagement and other forms of malpractice; has policies and procedures in place to protect individuals from retaliation due to providing information in relation to misuse.

4. Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment safeguards

- The entity has clear written policies and procedures regarding safeguarding of children, staff and other beneficiaries
- has publicly available avenues to confidentially report incidents of abuse, violence or exploitation.
- has the ability to ensure independent and objective investigation of reported incidents of abuse, violence or exploitation

Has policies and procedures in place to protect victims and

whistleblowers from retaliation



WHICH ENTITIES CAN BE GRANT AGENTS?

- To be able to exercise their role, all grant agents must be accredited and have a signed Financial Procedures Agreement with the GPE trustee.
- Grant agent accreditation is assessed based on the above criteria, and including the following:
 - (a) the **capacity to support efficient implementation** of the program within the focus area defined in the compact,
 - (b) the ability to **use the selected modality**,
 - (c) the **ability to help the government to develop a program within six months after selection**.
It is encouraged to request the interested agencies to draft a program development timeline as part of their candidacy
 - (d) **administrative cost** for delivery of the program

CURRENT ACCREDITED GRANT AGENTS

1. Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)
2. Agence française de développement (AFD)
3. Asian Development Bank (ADB)
4. CAMFED International Jun-23]
5. CARE - USA [18-Oct-17]
6. Concern International
7. Department for International Development (DFID)* [Inactive effective September 2020]
8. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) [25-May-23]
9. Enabel (Belgian Development Agency) [formerly The Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC)]
10. Global Campaign for Education (GCE)* [CSEF only]
11. Inter-American Development Bank (IaDB) [25-Oct-21]
12. International Development Research Centre (IDRC)* [KIX only] [02-Oct-18]
13. Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

CERTIFIED GA (2)

14. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) [25-May-23]
15. Organization of Eastern Caribbean States [11-Feb-20]
16. Oxfam IBIS* [EOL only] [02-Oct-18]
17. Plan International - Plan Canada [25-May-23]
18. Save the Children - Australia [03-Nov-20]
19. Save the Children - Italy [17-Aug-22]
20. Save the Children - Norway [26-Apr-23]
21. Save the Children - UK
22. Save the Children – USA
23. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
24. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
25. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
26. UNESCO
27. The World Bank Group

- **Current accreditation pipeline, actively undergoing assessment:**
- BRAC International
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- World Food Program (WFP)

GRANT AGENT

SELECTION PROCESS



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- GA is selected **by the government assisted by the coordinating agency**, through **an open and transparent process** laid out in GPE's grant agent selection guidelines and **endorsed by the LEG**
- Selection of the grant agent should depend on the **availability and capacity to support efficient implementation of an effective program within the focus area defined in the compact through the financing modality determined as part of the enabling factors analysis and compact development process.**
- Any other selection of a grant agent for a system transformation grant, Multiplier grant and Girls' Education Accelerator prior to this moment will not be considered as final by GPE.
- All agencies that have strengths and weaknesses should be carefully considered. The selection is not about the best agency, but rather about who can offer adequate support within the given circumstances.

GRANT AGENT FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRANT

- **System capacity grant:** possible to select a grant agent for specific urgent actions that need to be financed based on the comparative advantages of agencies in the area(s) of support
 - possible to opt for different grant agents for different support areas (gender, finance, data...)
- For **system transformation grant:** normally expected that there is one grant agent for the system transformation grant (including the Girls' Education Accelerator and Multiplier grant where available)

CRITERIA FOR SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION GRANT GRANT AGENT

1. **Capacity to support efficient implementation** of the program within the focus area defined in the partnership compact;
2. **Ability to use the most aligned funding modality** available and appropriate in the context;
3. **Ability to help the government to develop a program within six months** after selection —it is encouraged to request the interested agencies to draft a program development timeline as part of their candidacy/ expression of interest;
4. **Administrative cost for delivery of the program:** costs to cover implementation, support and/or supervision costs for the grant agent, those related to implementing partners as well as program implementation units, or other costs to be borne by the grant agent to comply with implementation, reporting and verification arrangements.

WHAT CAPACITIES?

- The **capacity to support efficient implementation** of the program should include both (a) the *agility to take action to help activities progress* and (b) the *ability to provide technical support and capacity building*.

The **government and coordination agency, in consultation with the local education group**, either:

- (i) Broadly *define the technical and capacity-building support desired from the grant agent* and test potential agencies in this regard (to determine what kind of capacity the grant agent would require, e.g. in technical expertise, technical resources within the country or accessible to the grant agent, or ability to procure such resources); **or**
- (ii) *Request the agencies to indicate support they could deliver*.
- With **regard to the agility to take action** to help activities progress, **prospective agencies should indicate which resources they could use should activities not start or progress as expected**. The prospective agencies should also reference past education programs they have supported in the country.

SEQUENCE OF STEPS TOWARD GRANT AGENT SELECTION

1. Draw a **roadmap** towards GA selection **right now** (to specify *timing, key sequenced expected steps*). Roadmap to be approved by the government and endorsed by the development partners, through the local education group. The whole **GA selection should not take more than 6 weeks** (from call for interest to LEG endorsement)
2. Government in consultation with CA (if CA is not a candidate) **sets out the criteria** to select the grant agent, and **sets up a selection committee**
3. **Selection committee** - inclusive, representing different constituencies in the local education group. Agencies and persons with a conflict of interest should abstain from membership of the selection committee, and from engaging in the definition of the process and criteria.
4. Government sends to (accredited) partners a call for **expression of interest** . Interested entities send their expression of interest within 10 days of receiving the invitation, based on GA TOR
https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2022-07-terms-reference-coordinating-agencies_0.pdf

5. Selection committee- assess and propose GA for Government decision (two weeks).
6. Government approves (1 week), LEG endorses (1 week).

The whole **GA selection should not take more than 6 weeks**

If one or more partners raise concerns with the process, recourse can be made to GPE's Conflict Resolution Procedures.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NEW GA SELECTION

Principles

- **First identify focus areas**
 - **Exception for SCG, MLT, EOI pre-compact**
- **Efficiency & transparency**
 - possible to restart non-transparent process

Roles & responsibilities

- **Same as before**
- **But more attention to QA**



Selection criteria

- **Set by govt consulting CA**
 - Selection committee balanced & inclusive; no conflict of interest; Align with GPE criteria:
 - **Capacity for focus area programs**
 - **Capacity to use chosen modality**
 - **Help develop program within 6 months**
 - **Administrative costs**

Duration of selection process

- **6 weeks duration (adjustable for urgency/ SCG):**
 - **2 weeks – submission of EOI**
 - **2 weeks – selection committee**
 - **1 week – government decision**
 - **1 week – LEG endorsement**

Secretariat Quality assurance of GA selection process

Sample documentation

- Selection roadmap
- Call for EoI
- Submitted EoIs
- Assessment of EoI
- List of committee members
- Selection decision note
- LEG endorsement

Checklist QA questions

- Process/roadmap followed?
- Transparent?
- Selection criteria?
- Inclusive committee?
- Endorsed by LEG?
- Concerns with selection process?
- Alignment (implementation modality decided before GA selection)?

DOCUmentation and Quality Assurance

- The process, key steps and final decision is to be documented by the government with support from the coordinating agency and reviewed by the GPE Secretariat in a dedicated quality assurance report.
- For its quality assurance function, the Secretariat will pay particular attention to transparency and due process. The information provided by the government and coordinating agency should at a minimum allow assessment of these elements.

after grant agent is selected...

- The selected GA develops the **program outline** for GPE grant program within one month of the GA selection, **based on the GPE approved compact with strategic parameters**.
- The **program outline is shared with the LEG** for LEG feedback (response **within 1 week**).
- GA finalizes program outlines based on LEG's feedback. The feedback from the LEG can be requested on a finalized program outline and thus be considered for the actual program development.
- The program outline is expected to include (a) program objectives, (b) proposed components and key interventions (high level) that mainstream gender accompanied by (high-level) theory of change/results chain, (c) key results and indicators, and (d) an overview of implementation arrangements
- The outline is shared with the GPE Secretariat for comments