

Annex Two: GPE Management Response to the mid term evaluation of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)

Overall response to the mid-term evaluation

The GPE Secretariat welcomes the mid-term evaluation of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), conducted between September 2021 and March 2022 by Delivery Associates to assess whether KIX is on track to meet its objectives and identify opportunities to improve its impact. We find the mid-term evaluation to be balanced and fair with helpful recommendations and agree with the principal finding that KIX has made significant progress, is valued by its stakeholders, and is well positioned for impact. We also agree that the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a capable grant agent and implementing partner, evidenced by the evaluation finding that the program is run efficiently from both time and money standpoints.

Based on the mid-term evaluation findings and recommendations, we believe the initial investment in KIX is showing promising results. We consider the findings on program performance and the grant agent to be positive and the recommendations for improvements to be useful.

We note that some of the recommendations can be actioned immediately and are funding neutral while bolder adaptations including widened functions for the Hubs and expanded grant modalities would require additional financing and time.

Response to the recommendations

Recommendation	Management Response
<p>1. Leverage GPE's system transformation and system capacity efforts</p> <p><i>GPE has tremendous leverage to create positive change in focus countries' education systems and is committed to evidence-based politics and system-level change. KIX works in the same spirit and could help inform what those transformations could look like. KIX can become 'the intellectual engine of GPE' by informing, advising, and supporting policy and implementation changes</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat agrees and considers KIX has significant unrealized potential to support GPE's aim of supporting education system transformation. The features of system transformation resonate strongly with the aims of KIX and its current practice; further adaptations would yield even stronger coherence. The Secretariat will work with the grant agent to help improve links between local education groups and KIX Hubs, explore a wider range of options for Hubs to respond to countries' evidence</p>

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<p><i>through innovation and evidence. The new Operating Model (specifically, the system transformation and system capacity efforts) provide a great opportunity for creating that leverage. This will allow KIX to expand its influence and help GPE and IDRC achieve their goals in strengthening education systems.</i></p>	<p>needs for system transformation, and consider differentiated modalities for grant making to provide opportunities for governments to co-create research directly related to their system transformation priorities and approaches.</p>
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<p>2. Strengthen links between the main components of the program</p> <p><i>KIX can clearly define how applied research grants and regional hubs collaborate, so there is a clear path for both applying research learning and tailoring the research to local needs. This can help inform how each mechanism strengthens the other and ensure that knowledge exchange and capacity-building happen at the system level.</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat agrees. Systematic links between the KIX Hubs and KIX grants are important to maximise learning, exchange, and use of KIX-generated knowledge at national level. We note the mid-term evaluation focused on the portfolio of 12 global grants which began in January 2020 and did not examine the portfolio of regional KIX grants that began in July 2021, which were based on priorities identified by the Hubs. The Secretariat will follow up with the grant agent to help ensure these component links continue to be strengthened.</p>
<p>3. Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels</p> <p><i>There is already demand from highly committed countries to receive support in putting ideas and knowledge in to practice, with a focus on adapting innovation to local realities and helping officials overcome implementation challenges. KIX can maximise program impact by providing this additional, tailored support for a select group of highly committed countries. This approach could create success cases that prove the concept, build a clearer path for impact, and create motivation for other countries. Every country could be eligible for this additional support if they reach a participation threshold.</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat partially agrees. KIX Hubs are unique in the global knowledge ecosystem and Hubs should not only reward those countries that already have strong engagement with further support but also incentivize and support those countries whose engagement is lagging. The Secretariat will work with the grant agent and KIX Hubs to leverage links between KIX country delegations, local education groups and national policy dialogues.</p>

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<p>4. Identify key roles in the education department to engage with KIX efforts</p> <p><i>The closer the country participation who engage with regional hubs are to policy and decision-making, the more likely hub ideas will be adopted. Identifying key characteristics, including links with policy dialogue and decision-making, as well as the conditions of success for her/his engagement, can help 1) target who the ideal members of the delegations should be, and 2) refine outreach and engagement efforts.</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat agrees and will work with the grant agent to identify and target key education ministry stakeholders to engage more systematically in KIX.</p>
<p>5. Simplify Communication</p> <p><i>KIX has a broad scope (3 objectives, 6 education priorities, and 70 target countries) and complex dynamics. Acknowledging this complexity, the communications strategy could be refined to transmit a more straightforward message overall. Telling the story of KIX with a clear, communal narrative will motivate, engage, and build cohesion among different stakeholders so they can successfully navigate the complexity of the program which returning to the shared values and goals. This will reinvigorate them to serve as champions who expand KIX's reach and impact.</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat agrees that strategic communications around KIX, while improved over the past year, will benefit from further work as some stakeholders continue to be unsure how best to engage with KIX, or what the benefit of doing so may be. Augmenting strategic communications around KIX will be a priority of the GPE Secretariat's support to KIX going forward, undertaken jointly with the grant agent. The Secretariat will also build on its broader partner engagement strategies to build greater understanding around KIX and what it has to offer.</p>

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<p>6. Refine the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) model</p> <p><i>KIX can support a shared narrative around the program’s progress and success by reducing ‘busy work’ and prioritizing a smaller set of meaningful indicators in a collection, reporting, and reflection process for regional hubs and research grantees. This could also lead to more precise and practical evaluations, translating data and insights that better support decision-making and continuous improvement. MEL and communications strategies could be aligned, generating opportunities to elevate achievements, accelerate learning, and generate a shared sense of purpose.</i></p>	<p>The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation.</p>
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