

# GUIDELINES FOR ACCELERATED FUNDING

October 2022

## 1. Introduction

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is strongly committed to ensuring quality education for children living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Strengthening resilience and mitigating the systemic impacts of crisis continue to be critical to GPE's mission. As with the COVID-19 pandemic, there are events that can force even the most stable countries into crisis. The Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts outlines how GPE support can be adapted to respond to changing circumstances.<sup>1</sup> A key mechanism is accelerated funding, which since its introduction in 2012 has allowed GPE to maintain continuous support to education in countries affected by crisis.

## 2. Features of the mechanism

### 2.1. Purpose

The accelerated funding mechanism provides partner countries flexible support when a crisis emerges or escalates. It aims to support governments and partners in sustaining continuity of the education system, building back better and institutionalizing response capacities, resulting in more effective, responsive and inclusive education systems. The mechanism prioritizes vulnerable populations, including girls, and promotes the inclusion of crisis-affected children into national systems.

### 2.2. Eligibility

All countries eligible for GPE financing are also eligible to access accelerated funding. The sudden onset of a crisis or the escalation of a protracted crisis can activate the mechanism.

Crisis is inclusive of, but not limited to, disasters driven by climate-induced hazards, armed conflict, forced displacement and health emergencies, and any other situations that pose risks to education continuity for all or specific groups of children or threaten the continuity of the education system itself.

While education continuity for children mostly refers to situations where there is a risk of education provision being temporarily discontinued for all or specific groups of children because of a natural or climate change-related hazard, health emergency or escalation of a protracted crisis, the continuity of the education system refers to situations where the

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the GPE website at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-operational-framework-effective-support-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states>.

government may no longer be able to continue the previous level of public education across the country.

Following the emergence of a crisis that risks substantially impacting education continuity for all or specific groups of children or threatens the continuity of the education system itself, partners may apply for accelerated funding in two ways:

- By accessing a portion of an outstanding system transformation grant and/or GPE Multiplier allocation through an application for an accelerated funding grant.
- By reallocating GPE funds within an existing program or from an existing program to a different program as accelerated funding under the same or different grant agent. This option could entail cancellation of the allocation of an existing GPE grant or part thereof, in order to finance other activities developed to mitigate the impact of the crisis. The CEO is mandated to cancel up to 20 percent or US\$10 million of any grant, whichever is lower, to allow for financing of a proposed program developed to mitigate the impact of the crisis, within certain limits.<sup>2</sup> Any additional cancellation for an amount exceeding this limit will need to be decided by the GPE Board of Directors.

### **2.3. Amount**

The eligible amount is up to 20 percent of the system transformation grant allocation in system transformation grant–eligible countries, up to 20 percent of the potential Multiplier allocation in countries only eligible for the Multiplier, or \$10 million, whichever is lowest of the three.

To secure up to 20 percent of the potential Multiplier allocation, countries would work with external partners to obtain new and additional cofinancing, set out in an expression of interest. Countries can combine Multiplier and system transformation grant funds in a single accelerated funding grant.<sup>3</sup> Partners should refer to the guidance available on the GPE Multiplier to secure an allocation.

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<sup>2</sup> Cancellation and withholding of transfers to the grant agent do not apply to amounts of the allocation that are subject to outstanding financial obligations and liabilities incurred in the implementation of activities related to said allocation prior to the date of receipt by the grant agent of notice of the decision to withhold transfers or to cancel such allocation or a part thereof.

<sup>3</sup> For example, \$5 million in Multiplier funds secured with \$15 million in cofinancing and \$5 million in system transformation grant funds, for a total accelerated funding grant from GPE of \$10 million and total resource mobilization of \$25 million.

## **2.4. Selection of beneficiaries**

Prioritization of beneficiaries should be informed by need, as demonstrated by humanitarian needs assessments, post-disaster needs assessments and/or other joint assessments, and should include the following:

- Children and youth most directly affected by the crisis because of geographic location, identity and severe secondary effects
- Within that population, marginalized/vulnerable groups, including but not limited to girls and women, children with disabilities and the forcibly displaced.

GPE 2025 expands focus to one year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education, including upper secondary.

## **2.5. Eligible activities**

Activities should have demonstrated alignment to existing and/or evolving regional and/or national education and emergency response plans, including but not limited to the following:

- National disaster response and recovery plans
- Humanitarian response plans, multi-year resilience programs, and refugee response plans, where in place
- Cross-sectoral plans as relevant (child protection, gender and so on).

As laid out in the Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts, following the emergence of a crisis, the local education group—in collaboration with humanitarian coordination mechanisms where relevant—will determine how support to education needs to be adapted, including short- to medium-term priorities and the joint planning framework that will be used. There are three streams of eligible activities for accelerated funding grants, and the grant proposal should address all three:

### **1. Safe, inclusive and quality educational continuity**

These activities support maintaining educational services and investments following the emergence or escalation of a crisis. They can include but are not limited to activities that continue school functioning and/or offer alternatives such

as sustainable temporary learning spaces,<sup>4</sup> school meals, repairs to increase safety and security, and so on. Activities can also support remote or at-home learning, including during school closures, as well as associated training, monitoring, supplies and incentives for students/teachers and parents to maintain engagement in education (particularly for girls and other marginalized learners). Activities may also support student and teacher well-being, including through psychosocial support.

## **2. Recovery in the medium term**

Recovery efforts comprise medium-term approaches that bridge between short-term response and mitigation efforts and longer-term efforts to build the capacity of systems for continued functioning of the public education system and, where possible, to address the underlying causes of crisis. They can include but are not limited to support to disaster-resistant/climate-adaptive school design, teacher remuneration, school-based grants and activities that improve the quality of learning for crisis-affected children. The proposal should indicate how the financing of these activities will be sustained after the end of the proposed program, ideally by including them in national plans and budgets.

## **3. Preparedness for and prevention of future crises**

Preparedness and prevention activities are meant to support different components of the education system to mobilize quickly and effectively in the future to ensure continuity of education delivery once a crisis emerges, and that these capacities are institutionalized to allow systems to transition between immediate responses and sustainable approaches that support recovery/building back better. Such activities can include but are not limited to contingency planning at different levels of the education system; teacher training on disaster risk and emergency response, capacity building on risk management; efforts to integrate education in emergencies (EiE) data into an education management information system; and evidence-building to learn from ongoing crisis response, to strengthen capacities and planning for the future. Countries are also encouraged to incorporate preparedness and prevention activities into their education sector plans as part of developing resilient plans, and they can also access funding from the system capacity grant for this.

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<sup>4</sup> Sustainable structures are understood as low cost and energy efficient, using local renewable or recycled materials and safely meeting the needs of their occupants.

## **2.6. Duration**

Activities funded by accelerated funding are expected to be fully implemented within 18 months of the approval of the program. Any extension request should fully report on implementation of the different activities, with proper justifications that outstanding activities are still relevant and can be implemented within the extended period, which would be limited to an additional six months (thus, 24 months total).

In case of continued risk to the continuation of education or the education system, and availability of GPE funds in an outstanding allocation and/or other programs, supplemental funding to an ongoing accelerated funding program can be considered. The government and grant agent are expected to consult with the local education group whether such continued support should be prioritized, and develop a pathway that is shared with the Secretariat six months before the closing of the existing accelerated funding grant. The government and grant agent will be expected to demonstrate what progress has been made toward including response activities in national plans and budgets as a condition for further GPE support.

The Secretariat will confirm with the grant agent of the other program whether such reallocation is in line with the financial procedures agreement and discuss the timeline for application with the government, grant agent and coordinating agency. Next to the criteria for the original request, the assessment will consider progress on implementation of the first accelerated funding grant.

## **3. Initiating the process**

### **3.1. Defining the scope of work**

As per the Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts, following the emergence of a crisis, the Secretariat will engage in discussions with the coordinating agency and local education group and/or development and humanitarian partners, including grant agents, about whether and how support to education needs to be adapted in light of the situation. Taking into consideration available funding from other sources, including humanitarian funding, the local education group should decide whether accelerated funding should be triggered and define specific actions to be financed through the mechanism. If accelerated funding is triggered, the local education group should notify the Secretariat of its intention to apply for accelerated funding.

### **3.2. Grant agent selection**

Selection of a grant agent should follow these principles:

1. The government in consultation with the coordinating agency and partners should first identify the **scope of work** under the grant, taking into account selection of beneficiaries, eligible activities (including alignment with education and emergency response plans), and duration.
2. **Based on the identified scope of work**, the government in consultation with the coordinating agency will launch a **request for expressions of interest** from already accredited GPE grant agents<sup>5</sup> that are also members of the **local education group**, preferably at one of its meetings, followed up by written/email communication to its members. The recommended deadline for submission of expressions of interest is one week. The **grant agent selection criteria** should include the ability to (i) support efficient implementation of activities within the envisaged timeline, and (ii) help the government develop a program within eight weeks after selection.
3. The government in consultation with the coordinating agency will set up a **selection committee** with representation from different constituencies in the local education group; no single constituency can hold majority on the committee.<sup>6</sup> The final selection of the grant agent must be decided by the government on the basis of a recommendation from the selection committee and be endorsed<sup>7</sup> by the development partners, including civil society representation, preferably by consensus.
4. The selection **process** should happen in an efficient and **transparent** manner.<sup>8</sup> Any selection of a grant agent prior to a public call for expressions of interest will not be

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<sup>5</sup> This in the interest of time, as GPE's grant agent accreditation process currently takes a minimum of three months for bilateral and multilateral agencies and six months for international nongovernmental organizations. To be able to exercise their role, all grant agents must be accredited and have a signed financial procedures agreement with the GPE trustee. GPE encourages interested entities to undergo the grant agent accreditation process. The current list of accredited GPE grant agents includes the Aga Khan Foundation USA; Asian Development Bank; Agence Française de Développement; Enabel, Belgian Development Agency; CARE USA; Concern International; Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank; Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States; Save the Children (Australia, UK, and USA, respectively); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; UNESCO; UNICEF and World Bank.

<sup>6</sup> Agencies and persons with a conflict of interest should abstain from membership in the selection committee and from engaging in the definition of the process and criteria.

<sup>7</sup> The term "endorse" in all GPE documentation means to offer public support. It does not imply formal approval or decision making.

<sup>8</sup> Nontransparent or bilateral processes and negotiations between a potential grant agent and the government and/or other members of the local education group would lead to the obligation to restart the

considered as final by GPE. The Secretariat may produce a quality assurance report on the grant agent selection to assess whether due process has been followed.

#### **Justification for multiple grant agents**

Normally, a country would select one grant agent. The decision to have more than one grant agent and/or to divide the grants between different entities is possible but should be justified. One justification would be (cost-) efficiency. For example, implementation arrangements where grant agents use other agencies—that are also eligible to be a grant agent—as implementing partners (who in turn may further subgrant) can absorb significant amount of funds as overheads and administration costs and slow down implementation. Where more than one grant agent is used, GPE will provide direct grants to each grant agent, but coordination arrangements between the entities should be clearly described in the proposal(s), including any interdependencies that may impact implementation.

### **3.3. Program development timeline**

Either as part of the grant agent selection or immediately after having been selected, the grant agent prepares a program development timeline. This timeline needs to be in line with the timeline set out at the grant agent selection stage. Once the grant agent has been selected, the timeline needs to be confirmed with the government and shared with both the local education group to ensure continued collaborative decision making and the Secretariat to facilitate the approval process. The timeline should include specific moments for consultation<sup>9</sup> with the local education group and representatives of humanitarian coordination mechanisms.. The timeline is expected to be established within one week after grant agent selection. Any changes to the timeline will need to be communicated immediately to the local education group and the Secretariat.

If the proposal is to be funded through a reallocation of resources from an existing grant, the grant agent of the existing program should communicate any outstanding financial obligations and liabilities incurred in the implementation of activities related to said program.

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process. If one or more partners in the local education group raise concerns regarding the process, recourse can be made to GPE's Conflict Resolution Procedures (available at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/conflict-resolution-procedures>).

<sup>9</sup> Consultation is different from endorsement, as consultation it is not limited to submitting a document to the local education group seeking the public support of its members.



## 4. Grant application process

### 4.1. Suggested timeline

Given the time-sensitive needs in a crisis, the accelerated funding process is meant to be agile and swift. It is expected to be completed in eight weeks, starting from the notification of intention to apply to a decision on the funds.

Timeline	Steps
Week 0	Local education group discusses priorities for education support and notifies Secretariat if accelerated funding is triggered. Secretariat confirms eligibility for accelerated funding in a letter to country.
Weeks 1-2	Grant agent selection, including launch of expressions of interest, formation of selection committee, final decision and endorsement
Week 2	Program development timeline is communicated to partners
Weeks 3-4	Grant agent prepares proposal based on priorities identified by local education group
Week 5	Local education group and representatives of humanitarian education coordination mechanisms review the proposal (and restructuring request, if relevant)
Week 6	Grant agent(s) makes revisions and proposal (and restructuring request, if relevant) is circulated for endorsement
Weeks 7-8	Secretariat reviews proposal (and restructuring request, if relevant) and makes decision

a. As relevant, education cluster, EiE working group, refugee education working group.

### 4.2. Considerations for proposal development and consultation

Under the guidance of the government, the grant agent develops a proposal as per the provisions in these guidelines that concern the selection of beneficiaries and eligible activities. The proposal must follow humanitarian principles and do no harm in accordance with GPE's Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and

Harassment.<sup>10</sup> The Secretariat will share its quality assurance standards to aid partners in the development of the proposal.

Ideally, consultations within the local education group will include relevant EiE actors as regular and active members. However, in cases where EiE partners do not regularly participate in the local education group, it is advisable to invite focal points from humanitarian response groups (cluster, emergency/disaster working groups, refugee response and so on) to participate in the review of the accelerated funding proposal. They should receive the application, be invited to share data and comment along with other local education group members. They should also be invited to attend the local education group meeting when the proposal will be discussed.

Invitation of select subject matter experts (researchers, policy advisors and so on) and advocates for disability inclusion, indigenous rights and other vulnerable or marginalized groups for participation in the consultation in relevant risk areas is encouraged. This may include experts in public health, gender-based violence, protecting education from attack, disaster risk reduction, social protection, climate change adaptation, forced displacement and peace building.

### **4.3. Submission**

Submission of proposal: The coordinating agency should submit the proposal to the Secretariat via email ([gpe\\_grant\\_submission@globalpartnership.org](mailto:gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org)), copying the government, grant agent and the Secretariat country team lead.

## **5. Reporting, monitoring, evaluation and learning**

### **5.1. At the country level**

As with other GPE grants, the evidence-based learning process is critical for an accelerated funding grant throughout its life cycle. Meanwhile, the unique features of this grant necessitate a distinct approach. These features include, for example, its shorter-term nature, often rapidly changing contexts and needs, and the necessity of having learning processes inclusive of humanitarian agencies and sectors other than education.

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<sup>10</sup> Available on the GPE website at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-protection-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment-may-2021>.

Country-level monitoring in contexts of conflict or fragility should use conflict-sensitive approaches and quick feedback loop mechanisms to maximize data usefulness for beneficiaries. Keeping monitoring flexible and adaptive to shifting circumstances ensures that data collection remains pragmatic and opportunistic—some needed data may not always be readily or easily accessible, while new information discovered by chance may become available and helpful for implementation. Embedding a systematic focus on gender equality, girls and vulnerable populations in country-level monitoring and reporting for accelerated funding grants is necessary to focus results for the children who are the hardest to reach during crisis, and at risk of falling further behind.

Monitoring should be participatory among all levels of actors/beneficiaries and sectors involved. Governments and grant agents are expected to periodically collect and share information on grant progress and risks with the local education group and the education cluster, and any other groups or institutions engaged in tackling the crisis. Close and regular coordination and reporting among country actors on implementation and education context monitoring seeks to ensure continued harmonization of interventions, shared understanding of how education is being affected by the crisis, areas of progress and needed remediation, and ongoing relevance of the grant within the broader challenges.

The intensity and nature of monitoring and reporting will vary by country, but it is expected that updates be provided to the local education group at least twice a year and that reporting be integrated in countries' joint monitoring reviews within the broader sector and humanitarian aid monitoring, as applicable. Similarly, the grant completion report should also be discussed with country stakeholder groups and within sector/humanitarian monitoring mechanisms with a forward-looking outlook.

## **5.2. To the GPE Secretariat**

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

- 1) Progress report, **only if the grant meets one or more of these conditions:** (i) implementation period exceeds 18 months, starting from the grant start/effectiveness date (and thereafter provide a progress report every 12 months, as applicable) and/or (ii) as part of any request for extension, whichever comes first. If the grant does not exceed 18 months and does not request an extension, then the grant agent is not required to provide a progress report to the Secretariat.

- 2) Final performance report at grant completion, to be submitted within six months of the actual grant closing date.

Features	Periodic reporting during implementation	Final performance report at completion
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>If applicable:</b> To understand how much progress has been made toward the grant’s objectives and the challenges encountered, for accelerated funding grants that exceed 18 months or when government and grant agent are requesting an extension.	To reflect on, and use evidence for forward-looking planning on emergency response and building back better education systems: continued relevance especially for crisis-affected beneficiaries, efficiency, efficacy especially vis-à-vis girls and vulnerable groups, coherence, and sustainability.
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Such report is due only if:</b> (i) implementation period exceeds 18 months, starting from the grant start/effectiveness date (and thereafter provide a progress report every 12 months, as applicable) and/or (ii) as part of any request for extension, whichever comes first.	Once, at accelerated funding grant completion. There may be cases where the completion report is due less than six months from the date the ultimate implementation progress report was submitted. In such cases, the Secretariat still requires that ultimate progress report.
<b>Format</b>	An annual accelerated funding implementation report template is available on the GPE website and should be used by the grant agent.	A final accelerated funding performance report template is available on the GPE website and should be used by the grant agent.
<b>Contents (highlights)</b>	Analysis of progress and performance on each of the accelerated funding objectives. Indication of any challenges and remediation. Continued relevance in the context of ongoing crisis. Emerging successful practices and lessons. Reporting on accelerated funding	Self-assessment at completion of relevance, efficiency and efficacy by grant objective. Coordination and partnerships forged. Snapshot of management and fiduciary performance. Successful practices and lessons. Potential for sustainability and related factors. Reporting on accelerated funding

	standard indicators, global numbers and number of beneficiaries.	standard indicators, global numbers and number of beneficiaries.
<b>Reporting process</b>	The report should be prepared by the grant agent and then shared for input with the government, local education group, education cluster or any other group as applicable or as per alternative governance arrangements before submission to the Secretariat.	
<b>Timing of report</b>	Within 15 months after approval of the accelerated funding.	Within six months of the actual grant closing date.
<b>Submission details</b>	The grant agent should submit the report to the Secretariat via email (gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org), copying the government, 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 six 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.

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