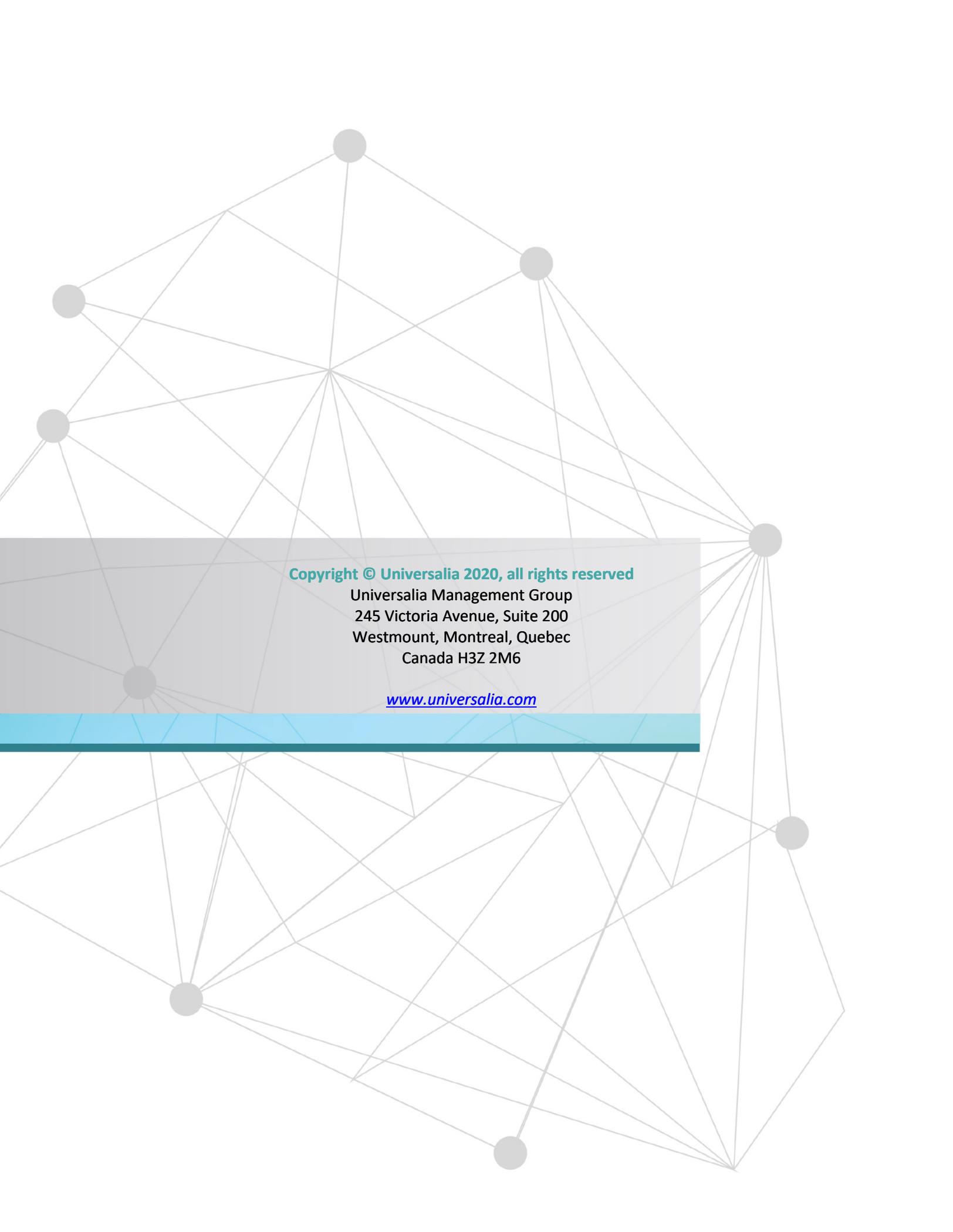


Evaluation of GPE's Support to Sector Plan Development

Including through Education Sector Plan Development
Grants (ESPDG) in the context of GPE 2020

Phase 2

FINAL REPORT | APRIL 2020



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Acronyms

CA	Coordinating Agency
CLE	Country Level Evaluation
DCP	Developing Country Partner
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education for All
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESPDG	Education Sector Plan Development Grant
ESPIG	Education Sector Program Implementation Grant
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GA	Grant Agent
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRA	Global and Regional Activities Program
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
JSR	Joint Sector Review
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoE	Ministry of Education
QA	Quality Assurance
TEP	Transitional Education Plan
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Terminology

Alignment	Basing support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures. ¹
Capacity	The ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. The notion of capacity incorporates the key dimensions of capabilities (knowledge, skills), motivation (e.g., incentives), and opportunities (conducive environment, funding, time). ²
Capacity development	The process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain that ability over time. ³
Capacity building	Capacity building is often used interchangeably with capacity development, however, the term usually preferred now is capacity development or capacity strengthening, to reflect the understanding that (i) capacity strengthening does not start from zero but always bases on existing capacity, and (ii) capacity cannot be 'built' by others, i.e., external support can assist in or facilitate capacity development, but cannot 'build it'; and (iii) the realization that capacity development is a non-linear and emergent process that is different from a linear, planned and always deliberate 'building' process.
GPE standards	GPE standards refer to the seven criteria (five criteria in the case of transitional education plans) used by the Secretariat to evaluate the quality of education sector plans. The standards are based on the GPE/IIEP guidelines for education sector plan preparation. The GPE standards are used to help DCPs develop better quality and robust sector plans.
Harmonization	The degree of coordination between technical and financial partners in how they structure their external assistance (e.g., pooled funds, shared financial or procurement processes), to present a common and simplified interface for developing country partners. The aim of harmonization is to reduce transaction costs and increase the effectiveness of the assistance provided by reducing demands on recipient countries to

¹ OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms.

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm>. GPE understands 'country systems' to relate to a set of seven dimensions: Plan, Budget, Treasury, Procurement, Accounting, Audit and Report. Source: Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (29) Proportion of GPE grants aligned to national systems.

² OECD DAC 2006: *The challenge of Capacity Development. Working towards good practice*. DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. Paris; Mayne, John. "The COM-B Theory of Change Model." Working Paper, February 2017

³ Over the past decade, important changes in the global discourse on capacity development (CD) include: (i) a shift from a focus on the skills of individuals to placing emphasis on performance of wider groups or organisations, which was then replaced by the notion that the capacity to deliver results is but one dimension of capacity that must extend to the broader abilities needed to make an organization or system endure and perform over time; and, (ii) a shift from viewing capacity development as linear and externally generated or stimulated, especially by technical assistance (Boesen, in Greijn et al 2015), to seeing it as self-organizing, emergent and part of a complex adaptive system (Baser and Morgan 2008, De Weijer and Mc Candless, in Greijn et al 2015).

meet with different donors' reporting processes and procedures, along with uncoordinated country analytic work and missions.⁴

Technical assistance

One modality that can be used to support capacity development. It refers to non-financial assistance provided by local or international specialists. It can take the form of sharing information and expertise, instruction, skills training, transmission of working knowledge, and consulting services and may also involve the transfer of technical data.⁵

⁴ Adapted from OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm>, and from Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (30) Proportion of GPE grants using: (a) co-financed project or (b) sector pooled funding mechanisms.

⁵ Source: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/programmes/technical-assistance/what-is-technical-assistance/>

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The second phase of the evaluation of the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) support to education sector planning examined the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of GPE modalities of support to sector planning, especially through the ESPDG funding mechanism. Through a review of GPE's country-level evaluations (CLEs) carried out in FY 2019 and interviews with stakeholders from five countries in which CLEs had been conducted in FY 2018, it explored the conclusions and hypotheses of the [Phase 1 Desk Study](#) (2019). The evaluation covered the period 2012 – 2019. The findings and recommendations will help inform the post-2020 GPE strategic agenda and guide reflections on the operational model's approach to planning support.

GPE aims to contribute to quality learning outcomes, equity and gender equality for all children by strengthening systems and efficiently promoting coordination, harmonization and alignment of international development support to countries' education policies, strategies and priorities, in support of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. Three core levers underlie GPE's Operational Model: (i) national sector planning cycles, (ii) education sector coordinating mechanisms, and (iii) sector financing, all of which have to work together in ways that are appropriate and adapted to local contexts. GPE seeks to influence and support all three of these areas by influencing development cooperation and financing, as well as through its financial support.

Methodology

The overall evaluation (i.e., Phases 1 and 2) responded to three questions:

- To what extent have ESPDG and other types of GPE support for sector planning been relevant and appropriate?
- To what extent has GPE support led to improved quality of sector plans and sector planning?
- How well has GPE managed its support to sector planning?

This Phase 2 report explored 14 hypotheses linked to the four conclusions of the Phase 1 evaluation:

- 1) Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are *strategically* relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards.
- 2) It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently *operationally* relevant to helping country governments implement sector plans.
- 3) GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.

- 4) Overall, GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals. There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.

The sources of data for Phase 2 of the evaluation were i) a review of the CLE reports and interview data from the 21 CLEs carried out in FY 2019, and ii) telephone interviews with 12 stakeholders in five countries in which CLEs had been conducted in FY 2018 (to triangulate insights). The CLEs analyzed 48 education sector plans (ESPs)/transitional education plans (TEPs) in 26 countries. There were several limitations to Phase 2 of this evaluation, including resource constraints, which meant that there was often insufficient new data to respond to all of the hypotheses.

Strategic relevance of GPE support to sector planning

The quality of sector plans has improved since 2016, when significant changes were introduced to GPE's support to sector plans. The Phase 1 Desk Study noted that the overall quality of ESPs/TEPs improved when comparing plans that were endorsed pre- and post-2016 and this finding held in the Phase 2 evaluation. Among the seven GPE sector plan quality standards for ESPs (indicator 16a), the 'achievable' standard remains the weakest both for ESPs approved pre and post 2016. Some key issues with the design of sector plans were: lack of prioritization, overambitious objectives in light of funding gaps, and short timelines.

Complementary types of GPE support to and incentives for sector plan development: As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, the various modalities of GPE support for sector planning have largely provided a complementary set of support and incentives for DCPs. The ESPDG and the incentive of obtaining ESPIG funding had a consistent positive influence on sector plan development across a variety of contexts.

GPE support for Education Sector Analyses (ESAs): GPE funding for education sector analyses (ESAs) and related targeted studies via ESPDGs generate findings that are incorporated into plans. Issues raised by ESAs were integrated in sector plans in 15 of the 21 countries for which CLEs were conducted in FY 2019. This does not necessarily speak to the quality and relevance of ESA findings and the extent to which sector analyses are sufficiently addressing the underlying causes of system performance; the Phase 1 Desk Study pointed to potential limitations in this regard. However, there were several examples where ESAs at least helped foster consensus building among stakeholders on the main gaps in the education sector.

GPE support to sector planning processes through the ESPDG mechanism: There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the introduction of the integrated roadmap helped countries develop more realistic timelines and better sequencing for completing their sector plans. Overall, ESPDG funding has had a positive effect on some elements of plan development processes, but it is not possible to establish a direct link between ESPDG-funded activities and the quality of the final plan document.

GPE support through quality assurance for sector plan development: New quality assurance (QA) procedures, especially the enhanced independent appraisal mechanism, have contributed to better quality sector plans according to GPE standards in 12 countries. Interviewed stakeholders and CLEs provided mixed views on whether Secretariat comments on the sector plan, as part of the revised QA process, contributed to improvements in sector plan quality.

Operational relevance of GPE support to sector planning

Quality of sector plans and plan implementation: While sector plans of higher quality (as measured by GPE quality criteria) are slightly more likely to be implemented than weaker plans, Phase 1 and 2 evaluations found that good quality plans do not guarantee effective implementation. Country capacity for sector plan implementation and monitoring is not sufficiently taken into consideration in sector planning processes or in related GPE support mechanisms such as ESP quality criteria and QA processes.

Ownership of sector plans: The Phase 1 Desk Study and stakeholders interviewed in Phase 2 indicated that in-country stakeholder ownership of sector plans influences the extent to which a plan is used. Government ownership, mainly at the central level, was reported to be high or to have increased from one sector plan to the next in 13 of the 26 countries reviewed. The majority of countries have recorded greater inclusiveness in plan development processes, including the participation of previously excluded groups and civil society organizations. In countries that have several ministries for education (responsible for different sub-sectors), those not in charge of basic education tend to show less ownership of the plan during planning and implementation. Limited ownership of sector plans at decentralized levels (district, province, school, etc.) is a challenge in some countries.

CLEs did not provide sufficient evidence of a link between the level of ownership of sector plans and the degree to which plans have been disseminated at different levels of government and among other education stakeholders. Stronger government ownership of sector plans at the development stage did not necessarily result in stronger ownership at the implementation stage. Government ownership of sector plans during implementation is further determined by the extent to which roles and responsibilities for implementation were assigned clearly at centralized and decentralized levels and in a manner that adequately reflects actors' implementation capacity.

Except in the case of fragile and conflict-affected countries, GPE does not apply fully differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts. The operational relevance of sector plans and GPE's support to sector planning is adversely affected by external/contextual factors, including changes in government, war and emergencies, macro-economic changes and corruption, civil unrest and strikes. DP harmonization, and to a lesser extent alignment, were discussed as a challenge in the majority of CLEs that commented on this issue.

Strengthening sector planning capacity

GPE support to sector planning capacity: Various types of GPE support, including ESPDG funding, aim to help strengthen country capacity for sector planning but there is insufficient data to track the results of this support. ESPDGs have contributed to strengthening sector planning by providing funding and promoting and supporting participatory, evidence-based plan development processes, but it is less evident how ESPDGs or other support mechanisms have contributed to strengthening national sector planning capabilities. Nine of the countries in the Phase 2 evaluation study allocated ESPDG funding for capacity building activities but CLEs did not provide evidence that these activities resulted in increased capabilities for sector planning. It remains difficult to capture GPE contributions to capacity development for sector planning as the concept itself is insufficiently defined in the GPE operational model.

Cross-cutting nature of country capacity gaps: Staff turnover in ministries of education posed a significant challenge to plan preparation processes in several countries in this study and stakeholders noted the lack

of institutionalized planning capacity. Gaps in sector planning capacity are likely related to broader institutional and system-level challenges and span across sector plan development, monitoring and implementation. Weaknesses in data quality and the ability to engage in evidence-based decision-making in many countries negatively affected not only sector plan development, but also sector monitoring and plan implementation.

There is insufficient evidence from CLEs to determine whether a good action plan that is used systematically to track the delivery of planned activities leads to better implementation of sector plans. In most countries reviewed for this study such action plans were either not in place, had significant weaknesses, or were not used or updated.

GPE management practices

The Phase 1 Desk Study found that the ESPDG approval process was efficient, in line with the targets that the Secretariat had set, with clear guidelines and transparent approval criteria, and suited to minimizing financial risk for GPE. The grant approval process was found to be more structured, including a technical review and financial review. In particular, the post 2016 ESPDG approval criteria require a risk assessment to mitigate against any potential risks to a timely and effective implementation of activities.

Phase 2 of the evaluation yielded limited additional insights on the management practices of ESPDG as the FY 2019 CLEs and interviewed stakeholders were mostly silent on ESPDG management practices and how they affect country-level stakeholders. However, a few CLEs and stakeholders interviewed raised questions about the level of transactions that the current grant application represents for countries. Stakeholders in five CLE countries felt that the ESPDG has a cumbersome application process given the small amount of funding provided by the grants.

Neither the grant agents for ESPDGs, nor the coordinating agencies for countries, were noted by CLEs as having an effect on the effectiveness or overall management of ESPDG processes. There was also no substantial evidence that other country-level actors played significant roles in ensuring effective and efficient ESPDG processes.

Conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are based on Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation. The preliminary conclusions from the Phase 1 Desk Study were largely corroborated by the information collected and reviewed for Phase 2. Where conclusions result in several recommendations, the first is considered the most pressing.

Conclusion 1: Modalities of GPE support to sector planning have been relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards. The modalities of GPE support have not given equal emphasis to helping countries assess and build capacity for sector plan implementation and related monitoring.

Related recommendations:

1.1 The GPE Secretariat, in consultation with the Board, should review the partnership's quality standards with a view to revising the content, increasing flexibility in how criteria are applied, and reconsidering the relative weight of each of the criteria.

- In line with a more flexible and customized approach that GPE is considering for the next GPE strategic plan, GPE will want to reconsider (i) if every plan really has to meet at least five out of seven criteria; and (ii) if, for example, a country can opt to have sub-sector plans rather than one comprehensive sector plan.
- Additionally, GPE quality standards should not be weighted equally given that a plan should not be considered ‘credible’ if it is not ‘achievable’. Achievability should be given a priority, while recognizing that sector plans are by nature political documents, with inherent challenges for prioritization.
- GPE may further want to explore whether the sub-criteria of the ‘achievable’ criterion can be revised to capture additional key aspects of a country’s technical and administrative capacity to implement the plan. This, in turn, will require stronger assessments of capacity at central and sub-national level.

1.2 The GPE Board should explore whether it can provide further support or incentives to help countries better address (i) how to translate high-level and visionary sector plans into realistic action plans and related accountability frameworks; (ii) how progress in plan implementation will be tracked and measured, when and by whom, and how course correction will take place when necessary.

- Related measures may include the creation of a new window under the ESPDG that relates specifically to plan monitoring, evaluation, and learning (this could include but would also go beyond JSRs). Given that CAs often act as grant agents for the ESPDG, the new window may also facilitate a stronger CA role in ongoing and meaningful sector plan monitoring. A new window is being piloted under the Effective Partnership Rollout.
- At the country level, the Secretariat may want to advise ministries of education and LEGs to develop and monitor clear expectations of what endorsing a plan should mean in terms of development partners’ aligning and monitoring their own work within the plan.⁶
- The Secretariat, based on a review of the current Terms of Reference for Grant Agents and existing GA’s organizational capacities, should make suggestions to the Board on whether and how to modify the GA role so as for it to play a stronger role in support of overall sector plan monitoring and implementation beyond ESPIG administration. At a minimum, this could include incorporating elements in the M&E component of ESPIGs that address how ESPIG-funded achievements contributed to progress in sector plan implementation and related targets.
- For action planning to be more effective, there is a need to take the ESP to decentralized levels. GPE should encourage DCPs to place greater emphasis on developing a communications strategy to present the ESP to the public and different interest groups, with products in plain language, and with simple objectives.

1.3 To help strengthen wider ownership of sector plans, the Secretariat should clarify its position and strengthen related communication with country-level stakeholders around the intended and permitted uses of GPE funds for different sub-sectors in order to address the widespread perception of GPE funds being exclusively reserved for basic education (except where pooled funding/sector budget support

⁶ This related to the broader concept of mutual accountability, which was not the focus of this assignment. The Final CLE Synthesis Report (2020) concluded that GPE’s current approach to strengthening mutual accountability is effective in relation to sector plan development, but less so in relation to development partners, grant agents and coordinating agencies systematically rallying behind and supporting sector plan implementation and monitoring.

mechanisms are being used). This had been found to limit plan ownership in settings where responsibility for the education sector is shared by several ministries.

Conclusion 2: GPE support has the potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.

ESPDGs provide countries with financial means to pursue capacity development-related activities, both in terms of strengthening staff capabilities and in strengthening the evidence base for sector planning through ESAs and related deliverables. Also, going through sector planning processes repeatedly over time can contribute to key stakeholders (individuals and organizations) gaining experience in related processes and content. However, GPE has not clearly defined its envisaged role in capacity development for education sector planning, monitoring and evaluation, and it does not have a way to track country progress in this regard. GPE needs to explore how it can further contribute to addressing key gaps in country capacity that influence both sector plan development and plan implementation, including both technical capabilities and institutional arrangements that can facilitate or hinder the policy process.

Related recommendations:

2.1 The GPE Secretariat, in consultation with the Board, should explore how it can further support countries in realistically assessing 'implementation capacity' and taking stock of related findings – either through its existing or new types of support/incentives. This may require different approaches in different countries, but could include:

- Strengthening ESAs in terms of assessing plan development, implementation, and M&E capacity at central and local levels. ESAs should also address coordination and leadership issues in the stages of the policy cycle. Related measures could include targeted GPE financial support for clear, government-led country-level education management assessments, to identify issues or blockages in education sector management (e.g., procurement and supply chain processes, financial management systems, institutionalized incentives for school principals, electronic data reporting for accountability, etc.). These management assessments would provide a more in-depth analysis of known problems, as opposed to an ESA, which might provide a broader diagnostic.
- GPE criteria for assessing the quality of sector plans should take into account to what extent the country was successful in using the sector plan as a tool that is updated regularly to guide the sector and in implementing the previous sector plan or equivalent. This would help decide whether adjustments are needed to align complexity and ambition of a new plan with existing capacity and/or address key capacity gaps.
- GPE could also consider including a quality criterion related to implementation capacity in its results framework indicator 16a.

2.2 The GPE Board should encourage partners to more consistently address and help remediate planning and implementation capacity gaps.

- The partnership can encourage and support countries to create plans for capacity development for the education sector that are integral to the education sector plans/actions plans and that could be supported by DPs.
- The GPE Secretariat should clarify the purpose of ESPDG and other support to sector planning with regard to the intent to support in-country capacities. First, this would help clarify that sector planning is an on-going/regular process linked to annual/multi-annual monitoring, planning and budgeting processes. This would also include the envisaged complementarity with other actors in

the partnership, such as UNESCO IIEP or other development partners, for plan development, implementation, and M&E.

- The GPE Board should recommend that developing country governments use GPE financial support (through ESPIG, ESPDG or other mechanisms) more consistently to strengthen in-country capacity in areas such as, for example, institutionalization of quality data collection and analysis, targeted support for planning units, procurement/financial management systems, etc., as identified in countries' capacity assessments and as prioritized by the governments and the local education groups.

Conclusion 3: GPE has increased efficiency in the Secretariat's approach to managing ESPDG applications and approvals, but there is room for improved streamlining of those procedures for countries and for greater monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support to sector planning.

As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, GPE's ESPDG grant approval process is relatively efficient and suited to minimizing financial risk for GPE; monitoring and learning from experience was noted as a gap in ESPDG management. DCPs consulted in Phase 2 raised concerns about the perceived heaviness of ESPDG procedures.

Related recommendations:

3.1 The GPE Secretariat should ensure that ESPDG application and review processes consider past experience with ESP/TEP development and implementation and with the use and effectiveness of ESPs to ensure that any gaps in implementation are addressed during the next planning phase. This type of review would draw on sector plan implementation reports and ESPDG completion reports. The review process should systematically apply a capacity development lens.

3.2 The partnership should also review and strengthen the role of the CA/GA in monitoring and learning from the ESPDG and its contributions to sector planning.

3.3 The GPE Secretariat should review the ESPDG application process to identify ways in which it could be further streamlined so that country level actors' efforts in applying for the grant are proportional to the value of the grant.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. Established in 2002, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), formerly the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (EFA FTI), is a multi-stakeholder partnership focused on supporting and financing basic education in developing countries. It provides its developing country partners (DCPs) support to build and implement sound education plans.⁷ GPE aims to achieve quality learning outcomes for all children by strengthening systems and efficiently promoting coordination, harmonization and alignment of international development support with country processes and mechanisms or country systems.
2. Given the central role of robust education sector plans in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 at the country level, and thus their central role in GPE's overall theory of change, the GPE Board mandated the Secretariat to pursue a programmatic evaluation of GPE's support to sector plan development, including through Education Sector Plan Development Grants (ESPDG) and other modalities.

1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

3. This report summarizes insights deriving from the second phase of the *Evaluation of GPE Support to Sector Planning* to explore the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of GPE modalities of support to sector planning, especially through the ESPDG funding mechanism.⁸ The evaluation covers the period 2012 – 2019.⁹
4. The evaluation is formative in nature in that it aims to assist GPE in taking stock of achievements made to date and – if and as required – further improving its approach to supporting country-level education sector planning processes. As outlined in the inception report for this assignment, the intention of the [Phase 1 Desk Study](#) (2019) was to formulate preliminary conclusions and related hypotheses. During the second phase, these hypotheses were further explored through a review of GPE's country-level evaluations (CLEs) carried out in FY 2019¹⁰ and additional interviews with stakeholders from five countries in which CLEs had been conducted in FY 2018. Findings and recommendations will help inform the post-

⁷ This includes providing support for effective, inclusive and participatory sector dialogue and monitoring, and for more and better education sector financing.

⁸ Other modalities include but are not limited to, depending on country context, quality assurance mechanisms for sector plan development, Secretariat advice, guidance documents on sector plan preparation and education sector analysis, and direct technical assistance provided by the grant agent, coordinating agency and/or other development partners.

⁹ The time considered in the study began in 2012 as the EFA-FTI was rebranded as GPE in 2011 and GPE's first Strategic Plan was 2012-2015. The Education Sector Plan Development Grant was also established in 2012. Some of the Country Level Evaluations considered in this report also covered part of 2019.

¹⁰ A total of 21 CLEs were conducted in FY 2019 which aimed to assess, at the country-level, (i) GPE contributions to strengthening national education systems and, ultimately, impact in terms of education results related to learning, equity, equality and inclusion; and hence (ii) the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's theory of change and country-level operational model.

2020 GPE strategic agenda and guide reflections on changes to the operational model's approach to planning support.

1.3 Structure of the report

5. Following the introduction, the report is presented in three sections:
 - Section 2 presents the methodology employed
 - Section 3 presents the key findings along the four themes of the conclusions of the first phase of the evaluation
 - Section 4 provides overarching conclusions from Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation and related recommendations.
6. Appendices include the evaluation framework, CLE observations on action plans, the evolution of GPE's approach to support sector planning, a list of stakeholders consulted, a list of CLEs reviewed, mapping of data availability, a mapping of sector plan quality standards and progress in implementation.

2 Methodology

2.1 Areas of Inquiry

7. The overall evaluation (i.e., both Phases 1 and 2) was designed to respond to three overarching questions:

- To what extent have ESPDG and other types of GPE support for sector planning been relevant and appropriate?
- To what extent has GPE support led to the improved quality of sector plans and sector planning?
- How well has GPE managed its support to sector planning?

8. This Phase 2 report explores the 14 hypotheses (see review framework in Appendix I) linked to the four conclusions deriving from the Phase 1 evaluation:

- 1) Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are *strategically* relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards.
- 2) It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently *operationally* relevant to helping country governments implement sector plans.
- 3) GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically
- 4) Overall, GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals. There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.

2.2 Data sources

9. Phase 2 of the evaluation integrated two sets of primary and secondary sources of data.

- Document review – A systematic review of all 21 CLE case study reports (13 summative and 8 prospective evaluations) carried out during FY 2019. The review was structured along the Phase 1 Desk Study's main conclusions and the related hypotheses. These 21 CLEs were the key source of data for this second phase of the evaluation.

- Interview data – In-country interviews conducted for all 21 ‘summative plus’¹¹ and prospective¹² CLEs finalized during FY 2019 included questions on sector planning that related to the conclusions of the desk study.¹³ Additional telephone interviews were conducted with 12 stakeholders in five countries in which summative CLEs had been conducted during FY 2018 (The Gambia, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) to triangulate insights from the systematic review of FY 2019 (see Appendix IV). These interviews aimed at exploring GPE contributions to sector planning in greater depth, especially with regard to its quality assurance (QA) process and ESPDG mechanism, as had been done in ‘summative plus’ CLEs, but not necessarily for CLEs conducted in FY 2018.

10. These sets of data reflect stakeholder feedback and CLE analysis of a total of 48 education sector plans (ESPs)/transitional education plans (TEPs) in 26 countries, as illustrated in Table 2.1. Appendix VI provides an overview of the data available to test related hypotheses and sub-hypotheses.

Table 2.1 *ESPDG Evaluation Phase 2: Characteristics of DCPs considered*

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF ESPDGS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF ESPS AND TEPs IN SAMPLE RATED BY GPE SECRETARIAT ¹⁴	COVERED IN PHASE 1 AND/OR PHASE 2 OF THE EVALUATION	ESP/TEP PERIODS
Bangladesh	1	1	Phase 2	2011-2017 ESP
Burkina Faso	1	2	Both	2012-2020 ESP 2017-2030 ESP
Cambodia	2	2 ¹⁵	Both	2014-2018 ESP Revised 2014-2018 ESP

¹¹ The ‘summative plus’ CLEs were conducted in FY 2019 and explored more than one policy cycle, i.e., from sector planning and related sector dialogue to sector plan implementation and monitoring during the period covered by the most recent fully or mostly disbursed ESPIG. These CLEs explored, in greater depth than summative CLEs conducted in FY 2018, GPE support to sector planning, including through the revised GPE Quality Assurance and ESPDG mechanism.

¹² Prospective CLEs assessed if GPE’s inputs and influence were orienting in-country education sector planning, implementation, financing and dialogue/monitoring toward the intermediary outcomes as outlined in the Theory of Change (ToC) at the time it was conducted. The CLEs were forward-looking and focused on initial decisions, activities and involvement of key stakeholders early in their periods under review in order to make it possible to understand whether progress is being made and whether GPE is making a contribution.

¹³ These studies consulted more than 1,000 governmental, multilateral, bilateral, and non-governmental stakeholders in total from their respective countries of focus. The studies covered a broader set of issues related to GPE’s theory of change at the country level. Thus, these stakeholders were consulted about sector planning, monitoring, implementation, finance, and overall progress of the education sector.

¹⁴ Seven ESPs/TEPs listed in the far-right column of Table 2.1 were not rated by the Secretariat. Six of these plans were not rated as they preceded the introduction of the Secretariat’s approach to rating (Côte d’Ivoire 2010-2013, Ethiopia 2010-2015, Liberia 2010-2020, Mauritania 2011-2021, Togo 2010-2020, Uganda 2010-2015). The 2021-2030 ESP for the Kyrgyz Republic was not rated by the Secretariat as of writing, as the sector plan was still under development in 2019.

¹⁵ Cambodia’s 2014-2018 ESP was rated twice, once before and once after the plan was revised in 2016. The pre- and post-revised plans are counted separately in our sample.

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF ESPDGS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF ESPS AND TEPS IN SAMPLE RATED BY GPE SECRETARIAT ¹⁴	COVERED IN PHASE 1 AND/OR PHASE 2 OF THE EVALUATION	ESP/TEP PERIODS
Congo DR	1	2	Both	2012-2014 TEP
				2016-2025 ESP
Côte d'Ivoire	1	1	Both	2010-2013 ESP
				2016-2025 ESP
Ethiopia	2	1	Phase 2	2010-2015 ESP
				2015-2020 ESP
The Gambia	2	2	Both	2014-2022 ESP
				2016-2030 ESP
Guinea	3	1	Both	2015-2017 TEP
Kenya	1	2	Phase 2	2013-2018 ESP
				2018-2022 ESP
Kyrgyz Republic	1	1	Phase 2	2012-2020 ESP
				2021-2030 ESP ¹⁶
Liberia	1	1	Both	2017-2021 ESP
				2010-2020 ESP
Malawi	1	1	Phase 2	2008-2017 ESP (extended to 2020) ¹⁷
Mali	1	2	Phase 2	2014-2019 TEP
				2019-2028 ESP
Mauritania	0	0	Phase 2	2011-2021 ESP
Mozambique	1	2	Phase 2	2012-2016 ESP ¹⁸
				2015-2018 Operational Plan
Nepal	1	1	Phase 2	2016/17-2022/23 ESP
Nigeria ¹⁹	2	5	Phase 2	Kaduna State 2005-2016 ESP

¹⁶ Still under development as of 2019.

¹⁷ Malawi developed two education sector implementation plans (ESIP) that accompanied the 2008-2020 ESP. The 2013/14-2017/18 ESIP was rated by the GPE Secretariat.

¹⁸ The 2012-2016 ESP and the 2015-2018 Operational plan extending the planning cycle were rated separately by GPE along indicator 16a.

¹⁹ There is no national ESP in Nigeria. Instead, there were five state-level ESPs, all in place prior to the country joining GPE in 2012, which were appraised against GPE RF criteria in 2014.

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF ESPDGS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF ESPS AND TEPs IN SAMPLE RATED BY GPE SECRETARIAT ¹⁴	COVERED IN PHASE 1 AND/OR PHASE 2 OF THE EVALUATION	ESP/TEP PERIODS
				Kano State 2009-2018 ESP
				Jigawa State 2013-2022 ESP
				Katsina State 2011-2020 ESP
				Sokoto State 2011-2020 ESP
Rwanda	1	2	Both	2013/14-2017/18 ESP
				2018/19-2023/24 ESP
Sierra Leone	2	2	Both	2014-2018 ESP
				2018-2020 ESP
South Sudan	1	2	Both	2012-2017 ESP
				2017-2021 ESP ²⁰
Senegal	1	2	Phase 2	2013-2025 ESP
				2018-2030 ESP
Togo	2	1	Phase 2	2010-2020 ESP
				2014-2025 ESP
Tajikistan	2	1	Both	2012-2020 ESP
Uganda	2	1	Phase 2	2010-2015 ESP
				2017-2023 ESP
Zambia	1	2	Phase 2	2011-2015 ESP
				2017-2021 ESP
Zimbabwe	1	1	Phase 2	2016-2020 ESP
Total: 26 countries (i.e., 21 CLE case studies completed in FY 2019 and 5 completed in FY 2018) ²¹	35 ESPDGS	41 (37 ESPs and 4 TEPs)	15 countries covered in Phase 2 only of the evaluation; 11 countries covered in both phases	48 ESP/TEPs

²⁰ Rated by GPE Secretariat as a TEP.

²¹ The final drafts of all summative and summative plus CLEs included in this study's sample have been approved by the Secretariat, with the exception of Tajikistan and Uganda which are awaiting final approval from the Secretariat as of writing (February 2020). All prospective CLEs included have had first annual reports and final reports officially approved by the Secretariat, with the exception of the DRC and Kenya, whose final reports are awaiting final approval from the Secretariat as of writing.

2.3 Limitations and mitigating strategies

11. The evaluation faced several limitations, which are described below, particularly as they relate to this second phase of the study.

- The scope of the evaluation (time, resources) meant that the evaluation team could only conduct a limited number of additional interviews of stakeholders from countries in which summative CLEs were conducted in FY 2018 (in terms of countries and the number of stakeholders in each country) and this had implications for the extent to which the evaluation team was able to deepen the evidence to inform hypotheses that emerged from the Phase 1 Desk Study. Data deriving from these additional interviews is therefore used sparingly throughout this report, and only to complement more complete data deriving from the CLEs.
- The CLEs, which had a broader remit to address all of GPE support to the education sector, vary in the level of detail that they provide on sector planning and the factors that influence a country's planning process. In particular, while CLEs discuss the level of country ownership of sector planning and the factors that affect ownership, they do not systematically define, or explore in-depth, these factors and different dimensions of country ownership (e.g., differing levels of ownership of sector planning by stakeholder type, and the level of ownership at different stages in the planning process).
- For countries where CLEs had been completed in FY 2018, the sector planning processes discussed in the CLEs were often quite far in the past. This meant that some consulted stakeholders had limited recollection of related details or their recollection was in some cases overlaid by more recent new sector plan development processes. There was no suitable mitigation strategy to this, but the evaluation team went back to consult with evaluation team leaders for the CLEs to obtain further details on stakeholder views and/or confirm areas where no information was available.
- There was insufficient data on four of the 14 hypotheses tested in this second phase of the study. The primary reason for limited data was limited respondent recall with regard to the specific hypotheses and the broad set of issues to be covered in each of the CLE interviews, which limited the ability to probe deeply in all of these areas. In addition, as noted above, time and budget did not allow for any additional review of other secondary or primary data. Appendix VI maps the level of data availability by hypothesis and provides more details on the lack of data for these hypotheses.

12. It is important to note that from the outset there has been considerable overlap between this evaluation and the two CLE synthesis reports. The available data agreed upon to inform this second phase was almost identical with that used to compile the final CLE synthesis report and, as such, there are limited additional/new insights in this report.

3 Findings

3.1 Introduction and overview of whether the hypotheses are supported or not by Phase 2 data

13. This chapter discusses the four conclusions and 14 hypotheses in the results framework (Appendix I). Several hypotheses are related to more than one conclusion, but to reduce repetition each hypothesis is discussed in only one section, as indicated in the table below. A summary of the assessments for these four conclusions and 14 hypotheses is provided in the table below. Green indicates that a conclusion/hypothesis is “supported” by Phase 2 data. Amber indicates that a conclusion/hypothesis is “partially supported”. Conclusions/hypotheses are marked in grey when there was “insufficient new data” at Phase 2.

CONCLUSION	RELATED HYPOTHESES	SECTION OF REPORT
1. Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are <i>strategically</i> relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards as defined by the GPE partnership.	1.1. The revised QA process for sector plan development provides a more systematic approach to quality assurance that contributes to improving the quality of the sector plans.	Section 3.2
	1.2. The revised ESPDG application process – especially the requirement to develop an integrated roadmap – helps countries develop more realistic plans for developing the ESP and TEP.	Section 3.2
	1.3. The availability of a separate funding window for ESAs, and the increased overall amount available for ESPDGs, helps countries carry out sector analyses that are relevant to and reflected in the development of quality sector plans.	Section 3.2
2. It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently operationally relevant to helping country governments implement sector plans.	2.1. If DCPs perceive QA processes for ESP development, including the independent appraisal process, not as obstacles to overcome in order to access GPE funding, but as opportunities for strengthening the education system, then implementation will become a more central task.	Section 3.2
	2.2. Applying differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts could be more relevant and effective in certain country contexts.	Section 3.3
	2.3. The existence of a detailed action plan that spells out roles and responsibilities of key actors as well as realistic indicators and targets, and that is linked to national annual planning/budget systems would increase the likelihood of successful sector plan implementation	Section 3.4

CONCLUSION	RELATED HYPOTHESES	SECTION OF REPORT
	2.4. Increased government capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience, data and monitoring systems) will lead to more effective monitoring that informs implementation. One specific issue in this context on which more information is needed are what factors support or hinder countries in using data deriving from education sector analyses.	Section 3.4
	2.5. Motivation (right types/number of incentives, political will, sense of ownership) is essential to encourage implementation.	Section 3.3
	2.5.1. Ownership of sector plans is influenced by a variety of factors, including the extent to which the DCP government has exercised (and perceives itself as having demonstrated) active leadership for and influence on both the content and processes leading to ESP/TEP development. More insights are required to better understand key factors, and correlations among these factors that determine degrees of ownership.	Section 3.3
	2.6. The stronger leadership the Ministry of Education displays for sector plan development, the more likely development partners are to align and harmonize their own activities with the plan.	Section 3.3
	2.7. If country-level stakeholders ²² , have adequate opportunities (such as adequate amounts and types of funding and a conducive external environment) there is greater use the sector plan and more effective implementation.	Section 3.3
3. GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.	3.1. If demand for planning capacity development from ministries in charge of education goes beyond addressing competencies of individuals to reflecting the capacity needs of ministries in charge of education and the institutions of the sector as a whole (including related organizational and political economy challenges) there is greater potential for capacity development effects.	Section 3.4
	3.2. Varied factors support or hinder DCPs in applying new approaches to sector planning introduced by GPE (or other DPs).	N/A

²² In particular government actors, but also other sector actors including development partners and civil society organizations.

CONCLUSION	RELATED HYPOTHESES	SECTION OF REPORT
<p>4. Overall, GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals.</p> <p>There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.</p>	<p>4.1. When country-level actors' (including GA) roles in the overall management of ESPDG and other modalities of support to education sector planning play out in practice as theoretically intended, it facilitates the effectiveness of grant processes.</p>	Section 3.5

3.2 Strategic relevance of GPE support to sector planning

14. This section on strategic relevance of GPE support discusses the three hypotheses related to conclusion 1, and one hypothesis on QA processes which is related to conclusion 2, as shown in the table below.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
Conclusion 1: ²³ Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are <i>strategically</i> relevant ²⁴ to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plan that meet common standards as defined by the GPE partnership.	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 1.1: The revised QA process for sector plan development provides a more systematic approach to quality assurance that contributes to improving the quality of the sector plans. 	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 1.2: The revised ESPDG application process – especially the requirement to develop an integrated roadmap – helps countries develop more realistic plans for developing the ESP and TEP. 	Insufficient new data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 1.3: The availability of a separate funding window for ESAs, and the increased overall amount available for ESPDGs, helps countries carry out sector analyses that are relevant to and reflected in the development of quality sector plans. 	Supported

²³ This conclusion responds to the following Phase 1 evaluation questions: 1) To what extent have ESPDG and other types of GPE support for sector planning been relevant and appropriate? and 2) To what extent has GPE support led to the improved quality of sector plans and sector planning?

²⁴ In the context of this study, we differentiate between two aspects of relevance: (i) *strategic* relevance, which refers to alignment with organizational priorities, in this case, alignment with the goals and objectives outlined in the GPE strategic plan; and (ii) *operational* relevance, which refers to alignment with the practical needs of intended beneficiaries, in this case DCP governments.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion 2, Hypothesis 2.1: If DCPs perceive QA processes for ESP development, including the independent appraisal process, not as obstacles to overcome in order to access GPE funding, but as opportunities for strengthening the education system, then implementation will become a more central task 	Partially supported

Overview of quality of sector plans

15. **The quality of sector plans has improved since 2016, when significant changes were introduced to GPE's support to sector plans.** The Phase 1 Desk Study noted that the overall quality of ESPs/TEPs improved when comparing plans that were endorsed pre- and post-2016. As shown in Figure 3.1, this finding held in the Phase 2 evaluation, when considering sector plans for which data on GPE results framework (RF) indicator 16a was available.²⁵ Indicator 16a measures the number of ESPs and TEPs that meet the minimum standards of a credible plan, as defined by the GPE partnership.²⁶ The year 2016 was chosen as the cut-off for comparison because significant changes in GPE's approach to sector plan support were introduced then, notably the revised QA process. Appendix III provides an overview of the changes in GPE support to sector planning between 2012 and 2018.

Table 3.1 GPE Sector Plan Quality Standards (indicator 16a)

STANDARD ¹	DEFINITION
Guided by an overall vision (n/a for TEPs)	Indication of overall direction through development policy, approaches to reach goals, and principles and values
Strategic	Identification of strategies to achieve vision, and setting of priorities
Holistic (n/a for TEPs)	Covering of all sub-sectors, including non-formal education and adult literacy
Evidence-based	Development of strategies and programs based on information from data and assessments from an ESA
Achievable	Analysis of trends to overcome financial, technical and political constraints to implementation
Sensitive to context	Inclusion of analysis of country-specific vulnerabilities and risk mitigation
Attentive to disparities	Recognition of differences in education quality and participation by gender, location, or socio-economic/ethnic characteristics

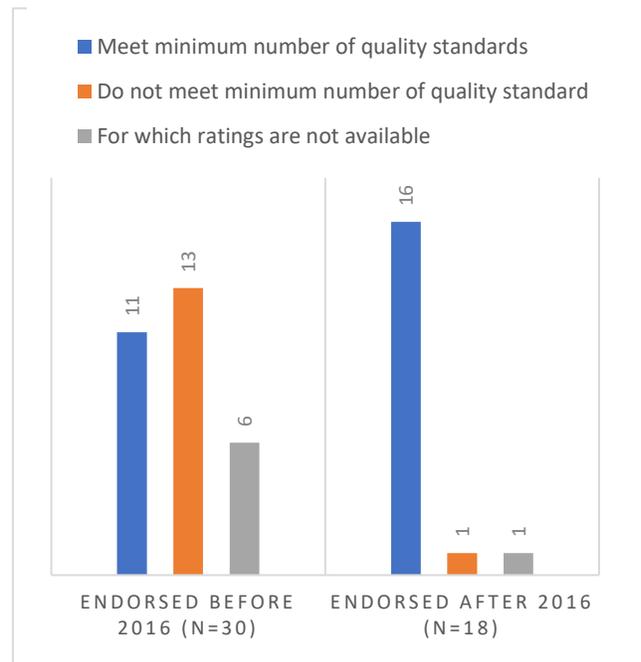
²⁵ Data for indicator 16a was not available for seven ESPs/TEPs. The 2021-2030 ESP in the Kyrgyz Republic was still in development in 2019 and had not been rated by the Secretariat at the time of writing. Six others were not rated by the Secretariat as these plans preceded the introduction of the Secretariat's approach to rating: Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2013 ESP), Liberia (2010-2020 ESP), Mauritania (2011-2021 ESP), Togo (2010-2020 ESP), Uganda (2010-2015), Ethiopia (2010-2015 ESP).

²⁶ The sample of ESPs/TEPs for Figure 3.1 also includes each of the five state-level ESPs in Nigeria (Kaduna 2005-2016, Kano 2009-2018, Jigawa 2013-2022, Katsina 2011-2020 and Sokoto 2011-2020), where there is no national ESP. All state sector plans in Nigeria were already in place prior to the country joining GPE in 2012 and were appraised against GPE RF criteria in 2014. There was no Indicator 16 data for state sector plans in Nigeria which covered periods from 2018 onwards (Kano 2018-2027, Katsina 2018-2027, Kaduna 2019-2028).

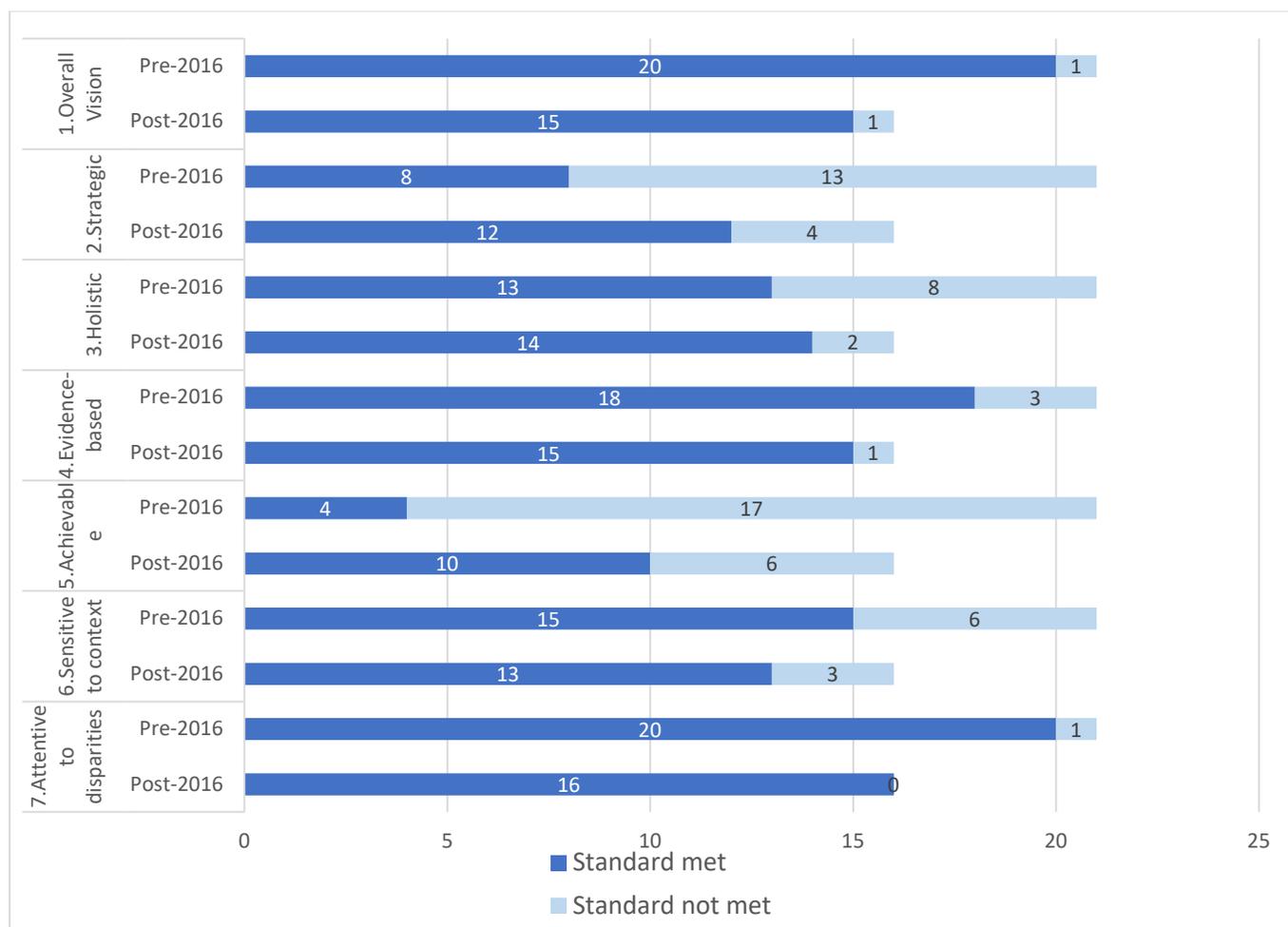
16. Among the seven GPE sector plan quality standards for ESPs (indicator 16a), the 'achievable' standard remains the weakest both for ESPs approved pre- and post-2016 (see Figure 3.2). This is similar to the observation made in the Phase 1 Desk Study in which a more detailed analysis of sub-criteria for the Achievability standard (Standard 5) was carried out. Sub-criteria related to sector plans based on realistic financial gap estimations raised concerns over the financial sustainability of sector plans included in the study. Only 11 out of 20 ESPs met these sub-criteria.²⁷

17. Some key issues with the design of sector plans noted in countries included in this study were: lack of prioritization, overambitious objectives in light of existing funding gaps, and short timelines. CLEs for six countries (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda) noted a lack of prioritization within sector plans, which constituted a risk to their achievability. While specific reasons for the lack of prioritization varied across the six countries, an overarching insight emerging from CLEs was that sector plans are not exclusively a result of technical processes and a strategic vision, but also a reflection of political considerations by various stakeholders. In other words, prioritization can bring political risks if priorities leave out some issues and lead to protest from pressure groups.

Figure 3.1 Number of ESPs/TEPs in sample (n=48) that met quality standards before and after 2016



²⁷ see Phase 1 Desk Study, p. 25.

Figure 3.2 Number of ESPs (N=37) meeting each Indicator 16a standard before and after 2016²⁸

Complementary types of GPE support to and incentives for sector plan development

18. As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, the various modalities of GPE support to DCPs for sector planning have largely provided a complementary set of support and incentives for DCPs. Modalities of GPE support include:²⁹

²⁸ Figure 3.2 only includes the 37 ESPs in this study's sample that were rated by the GPE Secretariat. As noted previously, seven ESPs were not rated by the Secretariat. The four TEPs in this study's sample were not included in the graph as the methodology and the number of standards changed (from seven standards to five), making pre-post 2016 comparisons impossible.

²⁹ Other possible types of GPE support which may have had positive influence on sector planning include the funding of joint sector reviews (JSRs) and support for education sector monitoring mechanisms. However, such types of support are not specifically geared towards sector plan development, and thus are not included in the modalities of GPE support for sector plan development listed here. Also, in very few cases, ESPIGs have included support to finance sector planning activities or capacity development for planning. As this was seen in only a small number of countries in this study's sample, this has not been included in the list here.

- Secretariat advice provided at a distance and during field monitoring visits
- Education Sector Plan Development Grants (ESPDGs), which fund activities related to conducting sector analyses, non-financial support for the preparation and finalization of sector plans³⁰
- The application of a quality assurance (QA) process, which was revised in 2016
- Direct technical assistance to partner countries through the grant agent (GA), coordinating agency (CA) or other development partners
- Guidance documents developed jointly with UNESCO/IIEP³¹
- Knowledge exchange supported through GPE's Global and Regional Activities (e.g., Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning workshops).

19. In addition to the modalities of support listed above, ESPIG funding requirements for a credible sector plan (requirement 1) also provide a financial incentive for the development of sector plans. CLEs for 14 out of 21 countries indicated a strong contribution from GPE towards plan development during their respective review periods; all of these countries reported a significant contribution from more than one GPE modality for sector planning support. An example of how different types of GPE support complemented each other to support sector plan development is provided in Box 3.1. The ESPDG and the incentive of obtaining ESPIG funding had a consistent positive influence on sector plan development across a variety of contexts (e.g., Cambodia, Guinea, Nepal, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda).

Box 3.1: Modalities of GPE support to sector planning provided a particularly comprehensive package of support - Zambia

GPE support to sector planning contributed to the improved quality of Zambia's 2017-2021 Education and Skills Sector Plan (ESSP), both in terms of improvements to the sector plan *document* as well as plan development *processes*, via a range of support modalities.

While Zambia has a long history of developing ESPs, ESPIG requirements for a credible plan served as an incentive to develop a comprehensive sector plan. Furthermore, the ESPDG provided critically needed funding for an ESA, technical assistance and the facilitation of national and sub-national consultations. The QA process, in terms of both the independent appraisal and Secretariat comments, led to improvements and brought insights to the draft ESP. GPE guidelines for ESP development also helped orient education ministries through the plan development process, ensuring the plan included inputs from all ministries as well as CSOs. Further to this, in-country visits by the Secretariat Country Lead provided assistance to stakeholders in terms of clarifying GPE guidelines and galvanizing stakeholder cooperation towards the finalization of the ESP. The CA, who was also ESPDG GA, played a crucial role in facilitating consensus between Zambia's education ministries on developing one ESP rather than two separate plans.

³⁰ ESPDG-funded activities aimed at supporting plan preparation include technical assistance, capacity development and facilitation of dialogue and consultations.

³¹ The Phase 1 Desk Study noted that GPE guidelines on sector planning provided greater clarity on what constitutes a good quality sector plan and on how to develop such a plan. FY 2019 CLEs added in this study did not provide any additional insight on other possible contributions of the guidelines for country planning, and interviewed stakeholders did not mention the guidelines.

GPE support for Education Sector Analyses

20. **GPE funding for education sector analyses (ESAs) and related targeted studies via ESPDGs generate findings that are incorporated into plans.** Issues raised by ESAs were integrated in sector plans in 15 of the 21 countries for which CLEs were conducted in FY 2019 (e.g., Mali, DRC, Cambodia, Guinea, Mauritania, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Mozambique).³² However, this does not necessarily speak to the quality and relevance of ESAs and the extent to which sector analyses are sufficiently addressing the underlying causes of system performance. Most ESAs reviewed in the Phase 1 Desk Study addressed three of the core issues (context, costs and finance, and education system performance)

identified by GPE/IIEP guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation,³³ but omitted or did not fully assess existing education policies and system capacity.

21. ESAs were noted as having helped foster consensus building among stakeholders on the main gaps in the education sector in three countries (see Box 3.2). In some other countries (South Sudan, Kyrgyz Republic and Nigeria) ESAs did not generate consensus due to limited participation of non-government stakeholders in sector planning processes (South Sudan) and issues with data availability or quality (e.g.,

Box 3.2: Examples from CLEs of ESAs building consensus on main sector gaps

At least three CLEs provide examples of ESAs building consensus among stakeholders on the main gaps in their education sectors.

In **Kenya**, the ESA identified access to education for vulnerable populations (especially children with disabilities and refugees) as a key gap in the sector, prompting discussions between government and development partners on better including planning for such populations.

In **Zambia**, the 2018 ESA gave weight to the low levels of progress in Grade 5 learning outcomes since 1999, and to high primary repetition and low secondary retention rates, which led to the ESSP 2017-2021 emphasis on education quality and efficiency.

Uganda conducted its first ESA in 2019, and the CLE highlighted the consultative process undertaken in its development, collecting data and input from all MoE departments and from other sources across the education sector. Overall, the ESA is highlighted as having developed shared knowledge on the current status of the education sector among government stakeholders, development partners, and non-government stakeholders (civil society, teachers associations and the private sector).

³² The evaluation's assessment of incorporation of ESA findings in sector plans was based primarily on the extent to which an ESA was explicitly referenced in a given ESP, supplemented by in-country stakeholder feedback on the use of ESAs during the planning process. The evaluation was not able to assess all factors related to the degree of ownership of ESAs by country stakeholders or engage in a deeper analysis of the quality and relevance of ESA findings. Research conducted jointly by DFID and GPE suggests that whether an ESA is donor-led or coordinated by the DCP government, and whether the DCP government is able to commit the time required for the development of the ESA, were significant factors affecting the ownership of an ESA by DCP government stakeholders. Furthermore, this research also found that ESAs were largely used by governments for development or revision of ESPs, despite some variation across countries (see DFID and GPE, Education system diagnostics: What is an 'education system diagnostic', and why might it be useful and what currently exists? October 2019, p. 24).

³³ The guidelines identified five core issues which should be analyzed in an ESA: context, existing education policies, costs and finance, education system performance and system capacity. The evaluation team did not conduct an in-depth review of each ESA but assessed which core issues were covered.

Kyrgyz Republic, Nigeria).³⁴ ESAs in Bangladesh and Ethiopia were in development at the time their CLEs were completed, and as such it is not yet clear whether they created consensus on sector gaps or have been incorporated into sector plans.³⁵

GPE support to sector planning processes through the ESPDG mechanism

22. **Available evidence does not allow confirming or refuting the hypothesis that the introduction of the integrated roadmap helped countries develop more realistic timelines and better sequencing for completing their sector plans.** Furthermore, available evidence does not allow confirming or refuting the notion that the integrated roadmap helped countries devise inclusive planning processes, enhance transparency of planning, or emphasize capacity development as part of planning processes. As part of the new ESPDG application package, the integrated roadmap was introduced to require countries to provide a timeline for planned activities as part of their sector planning process, along with sources of funding. The Phase 1 Desk Study noted that no clear link could be made between the quality of roadmaps and whether the development of a given sector plan was considered rushed. Stakeholders interviewed for Phase 2 did not mention or identify concerns with the integrated roadmap, and thus provided no additional evidence. While the majority of countries included in this study did not face significant issues in the timing and sequencing of planning processes, sector planning timelines were affected by country-specific factors in three countries (Mozambique, South Sudan and Mali). Such factors included the need to develop a sector plan before national elections, or disruptions to sector planning processes brought about by conflict.³⁶

23. **Overall, ESPDG funding has had a positive effect on some elements of plan development processes, but it is not possible to establish a direct link between ESPDG-funded activities and the quality of the final plan document.** As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, ESPDG-funded activities aimed at facilitating stakeholder consultations for plan development had a positive effect on more inclusive and participatory processes for sector planning. However, available evidence does not allow making a clear link between these processes and sector plan quality (as per GPE sector plan quality standards).

GPE support through quality assurance for sector plan development

24. **New quality assurance (QA) procedures, especially the enhanced independent appraisal mechanism, have contributed to better quality sector plans according to GPE standards.** The revised QA process, overall, contributed to the quality of final drafts of sector plans in 12 countries (Cambodia, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Mozambique, Senegal, Zambia, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe). The independent appraisal, in particular, was noted as having identified shortcomings within sector plans (e.g., in adequately addressing sectoral challenges, sufficiently utilizing available evidence), and as having

³⁴ In South Sudan, while its ESA did not generate consensus on sector-wide gaps, its findings were nevertheless noted by its CLE to have fed into its sector plan. This was not the case in the Kyrgyz Republic, as noted earlier in the paragraph. In Nigeria, as the development of its ESA was still ongoing at the time of its CLE, it remains to be seen whether the ESA's findings will be incorporated into the country's various state sector plans.

³⁵ Malawi was the only country which did not receive ESPDG funding for an ESA during the period 2012-2019. Instead, it received funding from the EU and UNICEF for its ESA.

³⁶ In Mozambique, internal pressures among in-country stakeholders to develop the 2020-2029 ESP before the 2019 national elections resulted in a significantly compressed timeline for plan development, with its CLE noting the negative effects this will likely have on the quality of the resulting sector plan. In South Sudan, internal political pressures to complete the 2012-2017 ESP before the declaration of independence resulted in rushed planning processes, while the 2017-2022 TEP development process was compressed from one year to six months largely as a result of active conflict in 2015-2017. The development of Mali's 2019-2028 ESP was also profoundly affected by conflict and political instability, with high rates of turnover in its MoE playing a significant role in overall delays in the development of the plan.

resulted in subsequent revisions to sector plans in four countries (Cambodia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Nepal). For the most part, interviewed stakeholders noted the value-added of the independent appraisal in providing credible, technical feedback on sector plan quality, and to a lesser extent in evaluating sector plans against international standards. Yet interviewed stakeholders and information in CLEs provided mixed views on whether Secretariat comments on the sector plan, as part of the revised QA process, contributed to improvements in sector plan quality. Interviewed stakeholders from three countries noted the value of Secretariat comments that pointed out areas of weakness in sector plans and prompted revisions to sector plans. See also Box 3.3, however, which reflects stakeholder comments on relative to the heaviness of the QA processes. The Phase 1 Desk Study noted issues in the timeliness of provision of Secretariat comments in some countries, which posed difficulties for the incorporation of the comments in draft sector plans before their appraisal.³⁷ This issue was not raised by stakeholders interviewed for Phase 2 of the study, nor in the CLEs conducted in FY 2019.

Box 3.3: DCP perspective on the QA process

“The QA process is a useful mechanism that allowed [my country] to fill gaps, challenged some of the indicators, allowed [my country] to make relevant modifications [to the sector plan]. It provided a much-needed external perspective to the plan, allowing to see the forest, not the tree. However, the QA process was [initially] perceived as a pass or fail test with limited opportunity to adjust the plan according to the country’s needs (i.e., criteria for a plan were defined outside of the country’s reality). This perception gradually evolved, due to constant dialogue between the GPE Secretariat and the Government, with multiple attempts made by the Secretariat (country lead) to explain the purpose of the QA process, and clarify its intentionality of coaching rather than judging.”

(ESPDG Phase 2 Interview with DCP stakeholder)

3.3 Operational relevance of GPE support to sector planning

25. This section on operational relevance of GPE support discusses five of the eight hypotheses related to conclusion 2.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
Conclusion 2: ³⁸ It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently <i>operationally</i> relevant ³⁹ to helping country governments implement sector plans.	Supported

³⁷ See Desk Study, p. 40-41.

³⁸ This conclusion responds to the following Phase 1 evaluation questions: 1) To what extent have ESPDG and other types of GPE support for sector planning been relevant and appropriate? and 2) To what extent has GPE support led to the improved quality of sector plans and sector planning? Hypotheses 2.3, on action plans, and 2.4, on sector monitoring capabilities, are addressed under section 3.3, as part of this study’s discussion of GPE support to strengthening sector planning capacity.

³⁹ As defined in Section 3.1, *operational* relevance refers to the degree of alignment with the practical needs of intended beneficiaries, in this case DCP governments.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 2.2: Applying differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts could be more relevant and effective in certain country contexts 	Insufficient new data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 2.5: Motivation (right types/number of incentives, political will, sense of ownership) is essential to encourage implementation 	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hypothesis 2.5.1: Ownership of sector plans is influenced by a variety of factors, including the extent to which the DCP government has exercised active leadership for and influence on both the content and processes leading to ESP/TEP development. More insights are required to better understand key factors, and correlations among these factors that determine degrees of ownership. 	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 2.6: The stronger leadership the Ministry of Education displays for sector plan development, the more likely development partners are to align and harmonize their own activities with the plan. 	Insufficient new data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 2.7: If country-level stakeholders,⁴⁰ have adequate opportunities (such as adequate amounts and types of funding and a conducive external environment) there is greater use the sector plan and more effective implementation. 	Insufficient new data ⁴¹

Quality of sector plans and plan implementation

26. **While sector plans of higher quality (as measured in terms of GPE quality criteria) are slightly more likely to be implemented (at least partly) than weaker plans, good quality plans do not guarantee effective implementation.** This finding of the Phase 1 Desk Study was also supported by additional evidence from countries included in Phase 2.⁴²

27. Figure 3.3 shows the relationship between the degree of sector plan implementation⁴³ and whether the respective sector plan had or had not met the required minimum number of GPE quality criteria. It illustrates that among those sector plans which had met the minimum number of criteria the vast majority made at least modest implementation progress (13 out of 16 plans or 81 percent), while three made minimal progress. In comparison, among those plans that had not met the minimum number of criteria, only 1 out of 11 plans made strong progress, 4/11 (36 percent) made modest progress, while 5/11 (45 percent) made minimal progress. This indicates that in terms of implementation success it is better to have

⁴⁰ Government actors in particular, but also other sector actors including development partners and civil society organizations.

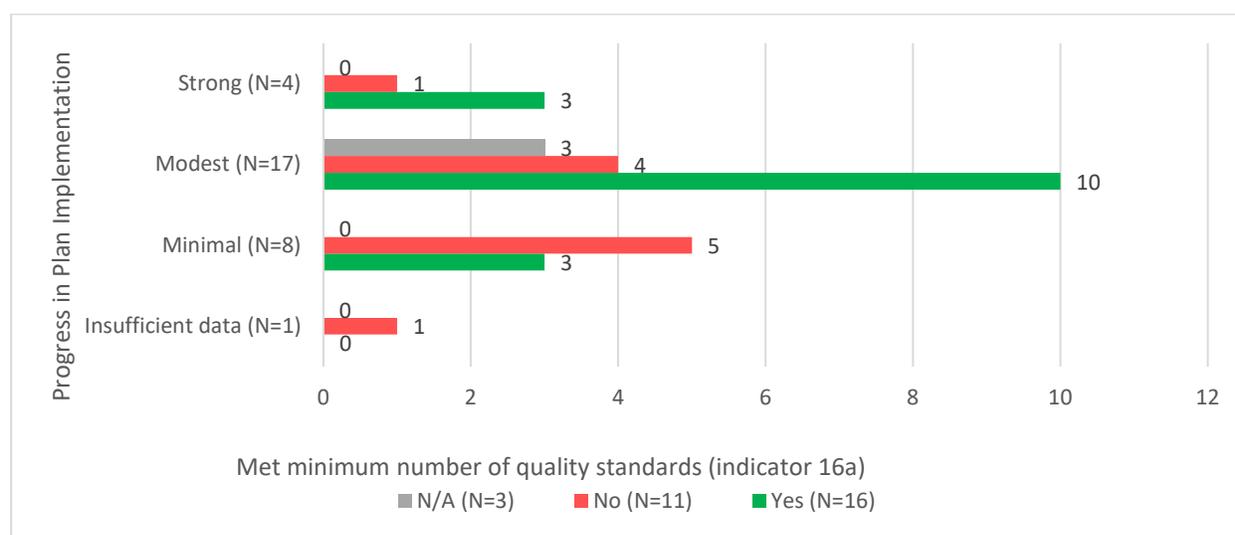
⁴¹ There is not enough evidence to confirm or disconfirm hypothesis 2.7. While some CLEs comment on various factors pertaining to the external environment and funds (see, for instance, paragraphs 36 and 37, they do not provide clear insights on which factors suffice to maintain/improve sector plan ownership and strengthen its implementation).

⁴² These observations are based on the small sample of 30 sector plans (27 ESPs and three TEPs), which is indicative at best of a link between sector plan quality and implementation. The evaluation team is also aware that assessing sector plan quality based solely on GPE quality criteria neglects other important dimensions of plan quality that are critical for plan implementation, such as country/government ownership.

⁴³ As observed by CLEs. CLEs only assessed the strengths and weaknesses of implementation of one, principal sector plan during their respective review periods, and as such do not offer information regarding possible progress in implementation across sector plans.

a good quality plan than not. On the other hand, the fact that the majority of all plans made ‘modest’ implementation progress at best indicates that plan quality (as measured by formal quality criteria) is only one among several factors that determine implementation progress, and as such do not guarantee success. This observation is not trivial since GPE tends to focus on these formal quality criteria. GPE funding criteria, guidelines, and support through key GPE actors are geared to helping countries meet the quality criteria, and these criteria are the only way in which sector plan quality is tracked in the GPE results framework.

Figure 3.3 Relationship between CLE rating of progress in ESP/TEP implementation and GPE quality ratings (indicator 16a)⁴⁴



28. **Country capacity for sector plan implementation and monitoring is not sufficiently taken into consideration in sector planning processes or in related GPE support mechanisms such as ESP quality criteria and QA processes.** At present, GPE mechanisms for supporting sector plan development tend to focus on the quality of sector planning processes and of the final sector plan but pay very little attention to helping countries assess or address gaps in their sector plan implementation capacity. Similarly, as noted in paragraphs 20 and 21 on ESAs, the quality and relevance of sector analyses may be uneven, thus not providing a diagnostic of the education system capacity for implementation.⁴⁵ There is currently no agreed upon understanding among GPE stakeholders of what ‘implementation capacity’ entails or how it can be measured or strengthened. CLEs indicate, however, that the challenges countries face in using their sector plans on a regular basis include funding shortfalls for the implementation of planned interventions,⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Figure 3.3 includes only ESPs/TEPs for which CLEs provided an assessment of the progress on sector plan implementation. The sample covers a total of 30 sector plans (27 ESPs and three TEPs) from all 26 countries reviewed for this report. With the exception of sector plans for Nepal, the DRC, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Zambia, all sector plans included in this sample came into effect before 2016. As there were only three TEPs in this sample, the number of TEPs was too low for the evaluation to be able to identify or comment on any differences between ESPs and TEPs.

⁴⁵ See also Desk Study, p. 34.

⁴⁶ The extent to which governments had access to adequate sector plan funding (both domestic and external financing) varied considerably across countries. Nevertheless, significant funding shortfalls negatively affected

difficulties translating high-level sector plans into shorter-term action plans (see section 3.4), and difficulties establishing and using effective accountability frameworks for plan implementation and monitoring. While GPE's revised QA process made positive contributions to sector planning processes and plan quality, CLEs provided no indication that it helped assess or resolve issues around a country's implementation capacity.

Ownership of sector plans

29. **The Phase 1 Desk Study and additional evidence from countries included in Phase 2 raised in-country stakeholder ownership of sector plans as a factor that influences the extent to which a sector plan is used as a common and evolving reference document.** In 12 of the 21 CLEs conducted in FY 2019, the analyses found limitations in in-country stakeholder ownership of sector plans.⁴⁷ This was also noted as a challenge by stakeholders interviewed in two of five countries for Phase 2 (Liberia, Burkina Faso). However, neither GPE's 2020 Strategy nor the related corporate Results Framework explicitly define or measure the notion of 'ownership', thereby implying that it is a clear and unambiguous concept. However, the discussions of ownership in FY 2019 CLEs show that this is not the case, requiring a more nuanced approach to understanding the various dimensions of the concept (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 *Dimensions of ownership presented in CLEs*

TYPE	DIMENSIONS OF OWNERSHIP
<i>Whose ownership?</i>	<p>Government leadership and ownership at the highest political level: Prime ministers or presidents have to see the education sector (and the sector plan) not only as necessary for development but also as politically feasible and a positive lever for strengthening their own power.</p> <p>Government ownership at the centralized and decentralized levels: Some CLEs distinguish between ownership by government institutions at the central level (e.g., national ministries of education), and ownership by stakeholders operating at decentralized levels (e.g., provincial, district, school, teachers, citizens). (e.g., Guinea, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nepal, Uganda, Liberia, Burkina Faso)</p> <p>Government ownership within different ministries: At the national level, the relationship between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance is particularly critical given that finance officials may not see clear returns from funding education. Also, when responsibility for education is split among different ministries (i.e., separate ministries for basic education, TVET and higher education), ministries may have differing levels of ownership of a sector plan, and differing views of the benefits of sector-wide planning (e.g., Guinea, Ethiopia, Senegal).</p> <p>Government ownership at the technical vs. policy level: A sense of ownership at the level of decision-makers (policy level) does not automatically translate into ownership by staff operating at the technical level (technocrats). (e.g., Bangladesh, Togo, Kyrgyz Republic)</p> <p>Ownership by Development Partners, CSOs and private entities: As sector plans are in principle developed and implemented in collaboration with non-government stakeholders operating in the education sector, ownership of sector plans needs to be thought of beyond the realm of the government. Furthermore, civil society is not monolithic and there are</p>

countries' ability to implement planned interventions and contributed to fragmented plan implementation in many contexts (e.g., Mozambique, the Kyrgyz Republic, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia). For a more detailed discussion of factors that affected progress in sector plan implementation across CLEs, see Final Synthesis Report.

⁴⁷ These are Rwanda, Malawi, South Sudan, Uganda, Sierra Leone, DRC, Guinea, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nepal, Senegal, Kyrgyz Republic.

TYPE	DIMENSIONS OF OWNERSHIP
	differences between business, ethnic and linguistic groups, urban and rural settings, etc. (e.g., Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Rwanda, Guinea)
<i>Ownership at different planning stages</i>	<p>As sector plan development, monitoring and implementation constitute different phases of sector plan usage, the analysis of ownership requires looking at the evolution of ownership across each phase.</p> <p>Sector plan development: Ownership at the planning stage manifests itself by stakeholders seeing their needs and priorities reflected in the sector plan, actively participating in plan development and approving the final sector plan document. (e.g., Cambodia, DRC, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Nepal)</p> <p>Sector plan monitoring and implementation: Ownership at these stages requires stakeholders to commit to monitor and implement the approved sector plan. Ownership can vary based on the capacity of stakeholders (i.e., availability of funds and resources) and the degree of harmonization among donors and other stakeholders (i.e., the extent to which the focus is on the implementation and monitoring of individual projects rather than the whole sector plan). (e.g., Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Senegal, Bangladesh, Mozambique, South Sudan, Guinea, Mali, Malawi)</p>

30. **Government ownership of sector planning, mainly at the central level, is reported to be high or to have increased from one sector plan to the next in 13 out of 26 countries reviewed.** There is limited information available on underlying factors that supported government ownership. Some CLEs mention factors such as planning and consultation processes led by government instead of by external consultants (Cambodia, Nigeria) and a long history of sector planning in the country (Rwanda, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kyrgyz Republic). CLEs comparing two cycles of sector planning note that sector plan development is increasingly led by the key ministries of education as they take on a more active coordination role.

31. **The majority of reviewed countries have recorded greater inclusiveness in plan development processes, including the participation of previously excluded groups or ensuring the meaningful participation of various stakeholders such as civil society organizations.** However, the CLEs do not always comment on the extent to which participation translated into greater ownership among stakeholders beyond central government entities. There are a limited number of examples (Rwanda and Bangladesh) in which broad-based consultations appear to have resulted in stronger ownership among stakeholders beyond the government. In Cote d'Ivoire, consulted stakeholders reported that the consistent inclusion of decentralized entities (teachers unions, NGOs, etc.) during sector planning and monitoring (e.g., JSRs) has led to greater ownership and awareness of the sector plan targets by a wider set of stakeholders, positively influencing implementation. In contrast, in Guinea, while stakeholder participation increased during planning, it did not mitigate the overall limited ownership of the sector plan. Hence, the link between participatory processes/inclusiveness of varied groups and ownership is not evident and requires further analysis.

32. CLEs for Togo, Bangladesh and Kyrgyz Republic commented on the **variance in ownership within central government hierarchies, in particular between staff operating at the technical and decision-making levels.** When there is a high discrepancy in awareness and ownership of plans among decision-makers, technocrats reportedly faced challenges in achieving timely implementation of sector plan activities. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the CLE further reported that several stakeholders suggested that the EDS 2020 process was centralized among only a few key ministry individuals, which limited broader government ownership over the plan. The concentration of plan ownership among only a handful of ministry stakeholders was also reported for the EDS 2030 and was linked in part to reductions in strategic planning capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science. Hence, this underlines that sector plan

development requires the buy-in and involvement of a broad-based set of stakeholders at multiple government levels to facilitate sector plan implementation.

33. Ownership when there are multiple ministries responsible for education: The current set of data does not allow for generalizable conclusions about the effect that GPE funding modalities, such as the ESPIG or the variable tranche, have on in-country stakeholder ownership of sector plans and sector plan implementation. ESPIGs function as an incentive for sector planning. However, as ESPIGs are generally focused on a specific level of education (primarily basic education), in countries that have several ministries for education sub-sectors, those not in charge of basic education tend to show less ownership of the plan during planning and implementation (e.g., Senegal, Guinea, Ethiopia). In Guinea, uneven ownership of the sector plan among the different education ministries negatively affected the extent to which activities were implemented. In Ethiopia, the ESPIG has the potential to create an imbalance of incentives between the Federal Ministry of Education (responsible for basic education) and the more recently established Higher Education Ministry and challenges in engaging the latter in coordinated planning.

34. Limited ownership of sector plans at decentralized levels (district, province, school, etc.) is a challenge in some countries (Guinea, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nepal). In Mozambique the lack of provincial and district-level targets in the ESP and the Operational Plan resulted in lower accountability and incentives for implementing the sector plan at the district and provincial levels. The Nepal CLE raised concerns that federalization has negatively impacted implementation as ownership and understanding of the national early grade learning program is uneven among local governments and at school level. In Burkina Faso, despite improved regional consultative processes, ownership of the sector plan was still considered weak as plan implementation was not sufficiently aligned with timelines and needs at the regional and community levels.

35. CLEs reviewed do not provide sufficient evidence on the link between the level of ownership of sector plans and the degree to which sector plans have been disseminated at different levels of government and among other education stakeholders. The CLEs commenting on national dissemination practices generally note that sector plan dissemination, in particular to decentralized levels of government and civil society, remains weak (e.g., Togo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia), yet they do not comment on whether this had any effect on stakeholder ownership or on the level of implementation. Overall, there is also no information available on the extent to which GPE support contributed to dissemination of sector plans, except for Zambia, where ESPDG funding was used to help disseminate the ESP.

36. Looking at ownership across the policy cycle stages, stronger government ownership of sector plans at the plan development stage does not necessarily result in stronger ownership at the implementation stage. CLE case studies and interviews reported the highest level of government ownership at the stage of sector planning. In a few cases, GPE support to sector planning was specifically cited as contributing to enhancing ownership. In Ethiopia, the GPE funding requirement for a credible plan as part of the application process for the next ESPIG funding cycle allowed for greater emphasis on ownership at the central level and on quality of sector planning. CLEs and interviews discuss a number of factors influencing government ownership at the implementation stage, namely changes in government priorities due to elections (Liberia, Sierra Leone), the level of government funds (Uganda, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Bangladesh, Mozambique), and humanitarian emergencies (South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Guinea). These are factors that GPE is less likely to influence.

37. **Government ownership of sector plans during implementation is further determined by the extent to which roles and responsibilities for implementation were assigned clearly at centralized and decentralized levels and in a manner that adequately reflects actors' implementation capacity** (Malawi, Senegal, Uganda, Liberia, DRC, Mali).⁴⁸ This is linked in part to challenges around designing and operationalizing annual action plans guiding the implementation of sector plans, which will be further explored in section 3.4. Stakeholders interviewed in Sierra Leone noted that the departments responsible for planning and implementation operate in silos and that while sector plan development was conducted in a consultative process, assessments of who would be best suited for implementing the sector plan and how implementation would be done were not adequately addressed. In contrast, in Mali strong government ownership was recorded among the ministerial staff, which took on the coordination of technical teams and key responsibilities in program management and implementation. In Ethiopia, structural changes (including splitting responsibilities between two education ministries⁴⁹ and greater decentralization of decision-making) have likely created challenges in coordination between the various implementing actors. In Malawi, there was initial confusion regarding the ownership of sector plan implementation between Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) departments (in particular between Planning and Basic Directorates).

Box 3.4: Example of Uganda

In Uganda, while government ownership of and mutual accountability for the sector plan increased, in part due to GPE's use of an on-budget project modality and increased use of government systems, implementation of sector plans primarily takes place at the district/lower levels. Since local governments lacked the financial and technical responsibilities for service delivery and received limited attention in terms of capacity building, greater government ownership of the plan did not translate into better implementation overall.

38. **Except in the case of fragile and conflict-affected countries, GPE does not apply fully differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts.** GPE is committed to providing support to fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCACs) by providing guidelines for such countries to develop TEPs for a more targeted and flexible approach for countries emerging from a crisis.⁵⁰ However, the majority of FCAC countries in this study's sample did not develop TEPs, choosing instead to develop ESPs.⁵¹ As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, it is unclear why so few FCACs develop TEPs, and there were no consistently cited reasons for this in the CLEs reviewed or from the stakeholders interviewed for

⁴⁸ The issue of capacity will be further unpacked in the next section.

⁴⁹ The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) is responsible for higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Federal Ministry of Education (FMoE) is responsible for general education, pre-primary, primary and secondary education, children with special needs, and out-of-school children.

⁵⁰ There are fewer GPE quality standards for TEPs than for ESPs (five instead of seven) and only three standards are required to be met for a TEP to be considered quality standards overall. The TEP guidelines are oriented towards allowing governments and partners to address immediate needs, ensure support to education in the short and medium-term while working towards meeting longer-term goals (GPE, "GPE's Work in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Countries", Policy Brief, April 2016).

⁵¹ Of the 48 ESP/TEP across the 26 countries included in the sample, 23 were in countries classified by GPE as FCACs in the year that their sector plans were endorsed (Cote d'Ivoire 2010 and 2017, the DRC 2010 and 2016, Ethiopia 2016, The Gambia 2013 and 2016, Guinea 2014, Liberia 2010 and 2017, Mali 2016 and 2019, Nepal 2016, Rwanda 2015 and 2018, Sierra Leone 2013 and 2018, South Sudan 2012 and 2016, Togo 2010 and 2013, Uganda 2017, and Zimbabwe 2016). Of the 23 ESP/TEP, only four TEPs were developed (DRC 2012-2014, Guinea 2015-2017, Mali 2015-2018, and South Sudan 2017-2021).

this phase of the study. While some CLEs indicate that GPE demonstrated some flexibility with regard to requirements, no CLE found that it used a fully differentiated approach to support for sector planning among the countries included in this study.

39. **The operational relevance of sector plans and GPE’s support to sector planning is adversely affected by external/contextual factors**, including changes in government (Liberia, Sierra Leone), war and emergencies (Guinea, South Sudan, Sierra Leone), macro-economic changes and corruption (Kyrgyz, Zambia, Uganda), civil unrest and strikes (Senegal, Guinea). These factors have been cited in CLEs and interviews as limiting the political will, ownership and capacity of national stakeholders to use and implement the sector plan. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that if country-level stakeholders have adequate opportunities (i.e., adequate funding and resources and a conducive external environment), there would be greater use of sector plans and more effective implementation.

40. **The ongoing challenges to align and harmonize DP contributions also reflect on the operational relevance of sector plans.** DP harmonization, and to a lesser extent alignment, are discussed as a challenge in the majority of CLEs that comment on this issue (e.g., South Sudan, Rwanda, Zambia, Cambodia, DRC, Mauritania, Guinea). CLEs indicate that while DPs, as LEG members, partake in reviewing sector plans, and commit to supporting their implementation by endorsing them – this does not seem to consistently influence behaviors during plan implementation. Some CLEs note a projectized approach to implementation, and that individual donors do not systematically monitor or report on their initiatives through the lens of the sector plan (Mauritania, Zambia, Cambodia, DRC). It is not clear to what extent increased leadership by the Ministry of Education during sector plan development influences DP harmonization and alignment.

3.4 Strengthening sector planning capacity

41. This section on sector planning capacity discusses the two hypotheses related to conclusion 3 and two hypotheses related to conclusion 2.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
Conclusion 3: ⁵² GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 3.1: If demand for planning capacity development from ministries in charge of education goes beyond addressing competencies of individuals to reflecting the capacity needs of ministries in charge of education and the institutions of the sector as a whole (including related organizational and political economy challenges) there is greater potential for capacity development effects. 	Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 3.2: DCPs view the utility of applying new approaches to sector planning introduced by GPE. 	Not addressed ⁵³

⁵² This conclusion responds to the Phase 1 evaluation question, “To what extent has GPE support led to the improved quality of sector plans and sector planning?”

⁵³ Given the limitations of the study, it was not possible to investigate new approaches to planning that are being tested through GPE global and regional initiatives. Initially, the Gender Responsive Sector Planning (GRESPP) program was going to be analyzed, but this program has been covered by separate reviews over the past year and this study could add no further value.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion 2, Hypothesis 2.3: The existence of a detailed action plan that spells out roles and responsibilities of key actors as well as realistic indicators and targets, and that is linked to national annual planning/budget systems would increase the likelihood of successful sector plan implementation. 	Insufficient new data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion 2, Hypothesis 2.4: Increased government capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience, data and monitoring systems) will lead to more effective monitoring that informs implementation. 	Supported

GPE support to sector planning capacity

42. **Various types of GPE support, including ESPDG funding, aim to help strengthen country capacity for sector planning. Available data do not permit, however, to systematically identify and track the results of this support.** This finding of the Phase 1 Desk Study was also supported by the additional data collected during Phase 2.

43. According to ESPDG guidelines, the value-added of the ESPDG to sector plan development and implementation is ensuring that “education aid, including that from GPE, is based on a solid, nationally owned analysis which builds institutional capacity to deliver education services.”⁵⁴ ESPDGs have contributed to strengthening sector planning particularly in terms of *opportunity*, through provision of funding, and elements of *motivation*, through promoting and supporting participatory, evidence-based plan development processes across a variety of countries (see Box 3.6 for discussion of three dimensions of ‘capacity’).⁵⁵

44. However, it is less evident how ESPDGs, or other GPE support mechanisms for sector plan development, have contributed to strengthening national sector planning *capabilities*. As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, GPE as a partnership has not systematically pursued the strengthening of sector planning capabilities, and the extent to which countries allocated ESPDG funding to activities for strengthening planning capabilities varied. Among the countries included in this study, only nine explicitly allocated ESPDG funding for capacity building: Burkina Faso (2016), Cambodia (2013), Cote d’Ivoire (2016), the Gambia (2016), Sierra Leone (2012), South Sudan (2015), Tajikistan (2013), the DRC (2015) and Guinea (2012).⁵⁶ CLEs for Cambodia and Guinea confirmed that ESPDG funds were useful in supporting in-country capacity for sector planning by providing related funding and/or incentives in the form of ESPDG funding requirements. At the same time, these CLEs did not provide any conclusive evidence that such capacity strengthening activities resulted in increased capabilities for sector planning.⁵⁷ CLEs for Burkina Faso and

⁵⁴ GPE, Guidelines for ESPDG, December 2018, p. 1.

⁵⁵ For further information on GPE contributions to sector planning capacities in terms of opportunity and motivation, please see the Final GPE CLE Synthesis Report.

⁵⁶ Based on GPE Secretariat Coding exercise of ESPDGs, which specified amounts of funding within ESPDGs allocated to technical assistance, capacity building, policy dialogue, communication and dissemination, and other costs. Insights from this data, across countries for which CLEs were conducted in both FY 2018 and 2019, have been discussed in greater depth in the Desk Study, p. 46.

⁵⁷ For Guinea, there was a lack of information on whether ESPDG-funded capacity development activities resulted in increased capacities for sector planning due to the lack of a completion report for the grant. For Cambodia, neither its CLE nor the completion report of the ESPDG note whether capacities were strengthened as a result of capacity

Cote d'Ivoire noted that the combination of GPE financial and non-financial support contributed to strengthened stakeholder capabilities, motivation and opportunities for sector planning, but did not refer specifically to any ESPDG-funded activities.⁵⁸

45. As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, ESPDG support for capacity strengthening is not limited to grant allocations explicitly dedicated to capacity building. For example, ESPDG-funded technical assistance (TA) can be another channel through which capacity development support is provided, e.g., when TA is combined with formal (on the job) training of national government staff on issues such as sector analysis and education sector management.⁶⁰ However, the utilization of such an approach was not mentioned in CLEs reviewed or by stakeholders interviewed in this phase of the study.⁶¹ According to GPE/IIEP ESP preparation guidelines, the overall process of sector plan preparation in itself is considered a form of 'learning by doing' capacity development.⁶² Yet, as noted also in the Phase 1 Desk Study, available data do not allow for identifying whether and what specific capacity improvements have resulted from engaging in the sector planning process, for which actors, and how.

46. Although ESPDG applications, ESPDG completion reports, and ESPIG program documents provide indications of budgeted, planned and completed activities related to capacity development, they do not constitute evidence of actual capacity development results. Therefore, **it remains difficult to capture GPE contributions to capacity development for sector planning, overall.** CLEs conducted in FY 2019 confirmed that the concept of capacity development is insufficiently defined in the GPE operational model, and there

Box 3.6: The notion of 'capacity'

The evaluation team understands individual or organizational 'capacity' as incorporating the three interrelated dimensions of: capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience), motivation (e.g., incentives, habitual patterns of decision making), and opportunity (e.g., funding, conducive external environment).⁵⁹

Most stakeholders consulted during the course of the summative and prospective CLE evaluations, as well as GPE documents (including the ToR for the country-level evaluations) tend to use the term 'capacity' synonymously with 'capabilities' (i.e., the technical ability of individuals or organizations to fulfill specific tasks in order to achieve a particular goal) and with 'experience'.

building activities funded by the grant. As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, ESPDG completion reports were not available for all ESPDGs, and this was the case for the DRC, South Sudan, the Gambia and Sierra Leone.

⁵⁸ While the completion report for Burkina Faso's 2012 ESPDG indicates that training was delivered to government stakeholders involved in the preparation of its sector plan, the report does not provide further detail or evidence of increased sector planning capabilities as a result of this training. The completion report for Cote d'Ivoire's 2016 ESPDG notes that five in-country stakeholders received training on comprehension and utilization of ESAs in sector planning. While the report indicates that the training resulted in better understanding of education sector diagnostics among government and civil society stakeholders, it does not provide evidence for or detail on the measurement of this improvement (see GPE, Rapport de fin d'exécution du financement pour la preparation d'un plan sectorial de l'éducation, June 2016, p.6).

⁵⁹ Mayne, John. *The COM-B Theory of Change Model*. Working paper. February 2017.

⁶⁰ As noted in an IIEP evaluation cited in the Desk Study (ICON INSTITUTE Consulting Group, Évaluation de l'IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, 12 November 2018.)

⁶¹ The Phase 1 Desk Study noted, for example, that "it was not always clear why some budget items were coded as technical assistance and some as capacity building. In the case of Guinea, for example, which is an outlier with 76 percent of its budget dedicated to capacity building, the majority of this was for hiring local and external consultants to conduct a targeted sector analysis." (paragraph 113).

⁶² GPE and UNESCO/IIEP, Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation, 2015, p.12.

is ambiguity in what is meant by, and expected of, capacity development.⁶³ Two factors noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study continue to pose challenges in assessing GPE contributions to planning capacity: (i) absence of tailored metrics, plans and performance data on GPE activities aimed at strengthening planning capacity, notably the lack of sector planning capacity-related indicators in the GPE 2020 Results Framework; and (ii) the contributions of a variety of actors (including those within GPE) in providing training, technical advice, research, and policy advice that may feed into any improvements in country-level planning capabilities observed during the period covered by CLEs and this evaluation (2012-2019).⁶⁴

Cross-cutting nature of country capacity gaps

47. **Staff turnover in MoEs posed a significant challenge to plan preparation processes** in several countries included in this study, potentially reflecting the poor salary base and the absence of processes to minimize risk of loss of corporate memory or technical skills, through training and handover of responsibilities to successors (see Table 3.3). Furthermore, the lack of institutionalized planning capacity was

Box 3.7: DCP perspective on need for capacity development at institutional level

“[My country] has a relatively good set of human capacities in planning ... What is lacking, however, is the approach of planning for results as opposed to planning through inputs. What is also lacking is an adequate M&E system to allow the ministries to monitor the implementation of the plan and take corrective measures if plans are to lead to expected results.”

(ESPDG Phase 2 Interview with DCP stakeholder)

highlighted by interviewed stakeholders in terms of needs to improve institutional ability to conduct capacity gap analyses to feed into planning, adopting a planning for results approach, and establishing M&E systems for plan implementation in their respective countries (see Box 3.7).

48. Overall, across a variety of countries, **issues in sector planning capacity were likely related to broader institutional and system-level challenges**, with several capacity gaps spanning across sector plan development, monitoring and plan implementation. Examples of such capacity gaps are shown in Table 3.3. The cross-cutting nature of these gaps suggests that efforts to improve capacity in sector planning often lacked a holistic, sector-wide focus, on the part of both education ministries and development partners. Despite the notion that many countries faced a multitude of sector-wide capacity limitations, Cambodia and Guinea were the only countries that had mechanisms or frameworks specifically aimed at developing sector-wide capacity across dimensions of capabilities, motivation and opportunity (see Box 3.8).

⁶³ The notion that capacity development is insufficiently defined in the GPE operational model was also noted by the Year 1 and 2 synthesis reports, as well as a 2018 examination of the roles of GPE key actors (Nicola Ruddle, Kelly Casey, Gabi Elte, Anaïs Loizillon (2018): “Examination of key actors’ roles in GPE’s country-level operational model towards GPE 2020 delivery”. Oxford Policy Management, May 2018, p.64).

⁶⁴ Examples of such actors have included EFA-FTI, UNICEF, UNESCO/IIEP, the EU.

Table 3.3 Capacity gaps noted in CLEs

TYPE OF GAP	CAPABILITIES	MOTIVATION	OPPORTUNITY
Capacity gaps specific to plan development	Lack of staff with technical expertise in plan development (Kyrgyz Republic, Uganda, Zimbabwe) Concentration of plan development capabilities among individuals at central levels (Rwanda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Togo and Nigeria)	No information available	No information available
Sector-wide capacity gaps (across sector plan development, sector monitoring, and plan implementation)	Lack of technical capabilities to collect and analyze data (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe) Lack of data analysis capabilities to inform decision-making (DRC, Kyrgyz Republic, Senegal, Uganda)	Limited coordination and/or cooperation among different education ministries (Guinea, Mauritania, DRC, Malawi, Senegal, Togo, Zimbabwe) Differing extent to which donors “rally around” sector plans, and resulting fragmentation in planning processes, plan versus project monitoring, and plan versus project implementation (South Sudan, Kyrgyz Republic, Ethiopia, Togo, Guinea)	Lack of system to disseminate data on sector performance (Senegal, Togo, Uganda) Lack of financial resources (South Sudan, Togo) Conflicts, health and political crises (South Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Senegal) Staff turnover at MoEs (Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, South Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe)

Box 3.8: Examples from CLEs of capacity development frameworks with a sector-wide focus: Cambodia and Guinea

While most countries included in this study's sample did not have mechanisms or frameworks specifically aimed at capacity development with a sector-wide focus, Cambodia and Guinea stand as exceptions.

Cambodia's Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD) was first introduced in 2011 and its second iteration covered the period 2014-2018, in alignment with the country's ESP 2014-2018. The MPCD stands as the principal framework in the sector to guide the MoE and development partner efforts to improve sector management and build individual and institutional capacities at both central and sub-national levels. Objectives of the MPCD aim at building capacities in a multitude of areas across the sector, including policy research and dialogue, results-based planning and M&E, data collection and analysis, financial accountability and personnel management. The Master Plan is supported by the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism. This mechanism was an enabling factor, both in terms of ensuring the presence of funding for capacity development activities within the plan, but also in allowing an approach to capacity development that is not linked to one DP, thus demonstrating greater aid effectiveness, and which also responds to the Ministry's demands for greater system-level capacity to implement ESPs.

Guinea's Programme de renforcement des capacités was designed to accompany the country's forthcoming sector plan, the *Programme Décennal de l'Éducation (ProDEG) 2020-2029*, and is financed by the multi-donor pooled fund which will support the implementation of the sector plan. The sector-wide capacity development program outlines objectives and activities which span across the country's three education ministries, as well as across institutional and individual levels. Activities are aimed at improving individual capacities in sector plan development and project management, M&E, data use and collection. There was no information from the Guinea CLE on factors which led to the formulation of the capacity-development program, and as the ProDEG was still being finalized at the time of Guinea's CLE, there is no information on the extent to which the program has been implemented.

49. **Weaknesses in data quality and the ability to engage in evidence-based decision-making were particularly emphasized in many countries as negatively affecting not only sector plan development, but also sector monitoring and plan implementation.** As noted in Table 3.3, limitations in technical capabilities to collect and analyze data, in the amount or quality of data produced by education management information systems (EMIS), and in the ability to use existing data to inform decision-making were seen in the majority of countries. Interviewed stakeholders noted issues in data collection and quality, and weaknesses in their countries' EMIS, as key factors that negatively affect planning units' abilities to make projections for the medium or long term, make changes to feed into implementation decisions, or engage in evidence-based decision-making in general. Limited results-based planning capacity also has effects on plan implementation, and the absence of realistic results frameworks, often combined with ambitious sector plans, negatively influenced plan implementation in 11 countries (Cambodia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Nepal, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan and Togo). Yet, while GPE provides financial and technical support for sector monitoring across a number of contexts,⁶⁵ the strengthening of EMIS and learning assessment systems remains an under-emphasized

⁶⁵ Notable GPE contributions to sector monitoring were observed in CLEs through a variety of modalities including ESPIG funding (as well as funding requirement 3 for data availability), ESPDG funding of ESAs, Secretariat advocacy and facilitation, and the variable tranche, in terms of providing an incentive to strengthen monitoring of progress made in areas covered by chosen disbursement-linked indicators (noted in Rwanda, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe). Of note, ESPIG funding was allocated towards the strengthening and conduct of Joint Sector Reviews

area of support for GPE based on available data. Despite the demonstrated weaknesses in data collection and quality noted across contexts, just 17 of 38 active ESPIGs in FY 2019 allocated funding for EMIS strengthening. Such support represents a small proportion (2.6 percent) of the total value of these ESPIGs.⁶⁶ The GPE Secretariat is aware of these limitations and is trying to address them, in particular through the ESPIG (fixed tranche) funding requirement #3, which addresses the “availability of critical data and evidence for data planning, budgeting, managing, monitoring and accountability or alternatively a strategy to develop capacity to produce and effective use critical data.”⁶⁷

50. There is insufficient evidence from CLEs to verify or refute the hypothesis that a good action plan⁶⁸ that is systematically used to track the delivery of planned activities leads to better implementation of sector plans. This is due to the fact that in most countries reviewed for this study such action plans were either not in place (e.g., Kenya and Zimbabwe), showed significant weaknesses (see Box 3.9 for examples), and/or, even when in place, were not used or updated by in-country actors CLEs (e.g., in Rwanda, South

(JSRs) in Guinea, Mauritania, South Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe. For further details, see GPE Country-Level Evaluations – Final Synthesis Report.

⁶⁶ The total amount of grant funding allocated to EMIS strengthening within the 38 active grants in FY 2019 with such funding was US\$51.2m, out of a total portfolio value of US\$1.9 billion. Only one ESPIG allocated more than 10 percent of its grant amount to EMIS strengthening (in Afghanistan [27.5 percent]). On the other hand, seven ESPIGs allocated less than 5 percent of their grant amount to EMIS (source: GPE Secretariat, ESPIG coding database).

⁶⁷ GPE: Guidelines for Education Sector Program Implementation Grants – ESPIG, p.9. Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2019-11-Guidelines-education-sector-program-implementation-grants.pdf>

⁶⁸ I.e., a plan with realistic targets, which spells out roles and responsibilities of key actors and is aligned to short- or medium-term expenditure frameworks.

Sudan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Togo and Uganda).⁶⁹ Countries included in this study's sample also demonstrated weaknesses in setting measurable indicators and targets, outlining roles and responsibilities of key actors, tracking the delivery of planned activities against monitoring indicators. Some countries also faced the added challenge of a lack of ownership of action plans among government stakeholders and development partners (see Appendix II for CLE observations on action plans).

Box 3.9: Weaknesses in action plans as noted in CLEs

Several weaknesses in action plans were observed across countries, which posed challenges in the ability of such plans to emphasize structural linkages between national planning and national budget processes.

Lack of measurable output-level targets, such as in Rwanda's Multi-Year Action Plan for 2015/16-2017/18 which accompanied the country's 2013-2018 ESP, and which did not systematically provide annual implementation targets for planned interventions. A lack of quantifiable output indicators within action plans was also seen in the case of Cambodia's Annual Operational Plans (AOPs) throughout the ESP 2014-2018 period.

Lack of roles and responsibilities of key actors: The DRC's five-year action plan, which accompanied its 2016-2025 ESP, lacked precise definitions of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders for the implementation of the sector plan's planned activities, which in turn posed challenges to the coordination of actors around the implementation and funding of activities and reforms. The lack of outlining responsibilities in action plans was also seen in South Sudan's action plan for its GESP 2012-2017.

Issues in alignment of action plans with other planning or monitoring documents: In Cambodia, due to differing structures of the AOP and the Budget Strategic Plan (BSP) in relation to the ESP 2014-2018,⁷⁰ the MoEYS faced significant challenges in estimating annual budget allocations to each sub-sector and in monitoring expenditures against ESP financial projections. A similar issue in alignment was noted in Mali where ESP implementation reports, which included information on sector trends and education budget execution, did not report on implementation of activities according to the structure of the action plan or the ESP results framework. This hindered the ability of such reporting to reflect implementation of activities, or the use of resources (expenditures), according to planned targets.

Lack of ownership of action plans: Guinea's multi-year action plan, the *Plan Triennal d'Activités Budgetisées* (PTAB), much like the country's education sector plan (PSE-2), was not strongly owned by the non-basic education ministries, which resulted in the lack of reporting on activity implementation according to the PTAB across all years covered by the PSE-2. Furthermore, the sector plan's coordination unit (C/PSE) focused more on the implementation of FoCEB, a multi-donor co-funded project which included ESPIG funding, rather than on the PTAB or the sector plan as a whole.

⁶⁹ Nevertheless, overall progress in plan implementation was rated 'strong' in four of these countries (Bangladesh, Mozambique, Kyrgyz Republic and Rwanda), indicating that the absence or lack of use of a good action plan alone does not suffice to explain differences in implementation progress.

⁷⁰ The BSP is an education sector-specific plan outlining projected allocation of resources for implementation of planned activities under the ESP. More specifically, activities and programs in the BSPs and AOPs are structured according to the various MoEYS departments and administrative units, while ESP programs and activities are structured according to sub-sectors covered by the plan. For more information see Cambodia CLE, p. 23.

3.5 GPE management practices

51. This section on GPE management discusses conclusion 4 and its related hypothesis.

PHASE 1 DESK STUDY CONCLUSIONS/HYPOTHESES	SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED BY PHASE 2 DATA
Conclusion 4, ⁷¹ Part 1: Overall GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals.	Partially supported
Conclusion 4, Part 2: There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.	Insufficient new data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothesis 4.1: When country-level actors' (including GA) roles in the overall management of ESPDG and other modalities of support to education sector planning play out in practice as theoretically intended, it facilitates the effectiveness of grant processes. 	Partially supported

52. GPE's management of its support to education sector planning refers to the way that the Secretariat and other actors in the partnership manage the ESPDG funding mechanism and other modalities of support such as quality assurance of sector plans, knowledge exchange, the development of guidance, as well as direct technical assistance and capacity building.

53. The Phase 1 Desk Study findings focused on the GPE Secretariat's ESPDG management processes and improvements made since 2016. GPE's ESPDG grant approval process was found to be efficient, in line with the targets that the Secretariat had set, with clear guidelines and transparent approval criteria, and suited to minimizing financial risk for GPE. The grant approval process was found to be more structured, including a technical review and financial review. In particular, the post 2016 ESPDG approval criteria require a risk assessment to mitigate against any potential risks to a timely and effective implementation of activities. Phase 2 of the evaluation yielded limited additional insights on the management practices of ESPDG.

54. **Country-level stakeholders question whether the requirements for the ESPDG⁷² are commensurate with/proportional to the overall value of the grant, which signals potential for greater streamlining of grant processes.** The FY 2019 CLEs and interviews in this phase of the study are mostly silent on ESPDG management practices and how they affect country-level stakeholders (16 out of 26 countries). However, country-level perspectives provided by a few CLEs and stakeholder interviews raise some questions about the level of transactions that the current grant application represents for

⁷¹ This conclusion responds to the Phase 1 evaluation question, "How well has GPE managed its support to sector planning?"

⁷² As per the ESPDG guidelines (GPE, 2016), there are four deliverables that form part of the application: 1) a concept note that provides the rationale and background for the application, as well how the ESA, ESP and Appraisal will be coordinated; 2) ToRs for the technical assistance needed during the plan preparation process; 3) an integrated roadmap that provides a timeline for planned activities along with sources of funding; and 4) a detailed budget that shows the costs of activities for which ESPDG funding is requested as well as the overall costs for plan preparation.

countries.⁷³ Stakeholders in five CLE countries (Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, and Guinea) felt that the ESPDG has a “cumbersome” application process given the small amount of funding provided by the grants. In Cambodia, where there were alternative sources of funding to support plan preparation, ESPDG transaction costs were a deterrent for applying for an ESPDG to develop the most recent ESP.

55. **Neither the GAs for ESPDGs, nor the CAs for countries, were noted by CLEs as having an effect on the effectiveness or overall management of ESPDG processes. There was also no substantial evidence emerging from CLEs to indicate that other country-level actors played significant roles in ensuring effective and efficient ESPDG processes.** Only three CLEs from FY 2019 make specific references to the roles of the GA of the ESPDG or the CA (in the context of the ESPDG), usually in terms of the stewardship role that the GA plays with regard to the ESPDG application and resources (Zambia, Senegal and Uganda). Stakeholders interviewed during the Guinea CLE questioned the rationale for the GPE practice of tying the ESPDG (and even the ESPIG) to a given DP (as the GA), rather than to the Developing Country Partner, further positing that this was a missed opportunity to encourage greater ownership of the grants and of sector plan processes among DCP governments (and more cynically referred to this as “infantilization of the DCP”).

⁷³ The present evaluation faced challenges in systematically obtaining a greater level of detail, in all sampled countries, with regards to which specific areas of the ESPDG application process were thought to be more or less challenging. This mainly relates to whether interviewees who were familiar with GPE’s sector planning support: a) were involved in the last ESPDG application process, and b) remembered the specifics about that application.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

56. The following conclusions and related recommendations are based on Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation. The preliminary conclusions from the Phase 1 Desk Study were largely corroborated by the information collected and reviewed for Phase 2. Where conclusions result in several recommendations, the first is the recommendation that the evaluation team considers the most pressing for GPE to address. While the issues raised are relevant for all partnership members, these recommendations are addressed to the Board and Secretariat as the primary intended users of this report.

Conclusion 1: Modalities of GPE support to sector planning have been relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards. The modalities of GPE support have not given equal emphasis to helping countries assess and build capacity for sector plan implementation and related monitoring.

57. The combination of a specific funding mechanism for planning (ESPDG), ESPIG requirements for a credible sector plan, content and process guidance on ESP and TEP development, and quality assurance processes provides a comprehensive support package that provides countries with: i) an incentive to develop a comprehensive sector plan aligned with GPE quality criteria, ii) a common definition of standards and systematic process for assessing sector plan quality, iii) encouragement to conduct inclusive planning with diverse stakeholder groups, and iv) help to eliminate potential roadblocks (financing and/or technical expertise required) that might stand in the way of this objective.

58. Phase 2 of this evaluation also indicates that the existence of a quality plan (as per GPE standards) does not necessarily translate into use/implementation of the plan. The GPE criterion for sector plans to be considered 'achievable' does not sufficiently consider developing countries' implementation capacity at both national and sub-national levels.

Related recommendations:

1.1 The GPE Secretariat, in consultation with the Board, should review the partnership's quality standards with a view to revising the content, increasing flexibility in how criteria are applied, and reconsidering the relative weight of each of the criteria.

- In line with a more flexible and customized approach that GPE is considering for the next GPE strategic plan, GPE will want to reconsider (i) if every plan really has to meet at least five out of seven criteria; and (ii) if, for example, a country can opt to have sub-sector plans rather than one comprehensive sector plan.
- Additionally, GPE quality standards should not be weighted equally given that a plan should not be considered 'credible' if it is not 'achievable'. Achievability should be given a priority, while recognizing that sector plans are by nature political documents, with inherent challenges for prioritization.
- GPE may further want to explore whether the sub-criteria of the 'achievable' criterion can be revised to capture additional key aspects of a country's technical and administrative capacity to implement the plan. This, in turn, will require stronger assessments of capacity at central and sub-national level.

1.2 The GPE Board should explore whether it can provide further support or incentives to help countries better address (i) how to translate high-level and visionary sector plans into realistic action plans and related accountability frameworks; (ii) how progress in plan implementation will be tracked and measured, when and by whom, and how course correction will take place when necessary.

- Related measures may include the creation of a new window under the ESPDG that relates specifically to plan monitoring, evaluation, and learning (this could include but would also go beyond JSRs). Given that CAs often act as grant agents for the ESPDG, the new window may also facilitate a stronger CA role in ongoing and meaningful sector plan monitoring. A new window is being piloted under the Effective Partnership Rollout.
- At the country level, the Secretariat may want to advise ministries of education and LEGs to develop and monitor clear expectations of what endorsing a plan should mean in terms of development partners' aligning and monitoring their own work within the plan.⁷⁴
- The Secretariat, based on a review of the current Terms of Reference for Grant Agents and existing GA's organizational capacities, should make suggestions to the Board on whether and how to modify the GA role so as for it to play a stronger role in support of overall sector plan monitoring and implementation beyond ESPIG administration. At a minimum, this could include incorporating components in the M&E component of ESPIGs that address how ESPIG-funded achievements contributed to progress in sector plan implementation and related targets.
- For action planning to be more effective, there is a need to take the ESP to decentralized levels. GPE should encourage DCPs to place greater emphasis on developing a communications strategy to present the ESP to the public and different interest groups, with products in plain language, and with simple objectives.

1.3 To help strengthen wider ownership of sector plans, the Secretariat should clarify its position and strengthen related communication with country-level stakeholders around the intended and permitted uses of GPE funds for different sub-sectors in order to address the widespread perception of GPE funds being exclusively reserved for basic education (except where pooled funding/sector budget support mechanisms are being used). This had been found to limit plan ownership in settings where responsibility for the education sector is shared by several ministries.

Conclusion 2: GPE support has the potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.

59. ESPDGs provide countries with financial means to pursue capacity development-related activities, both in terms of strengthening staff capabilities and in strengthening the evidence base for sector planning through ESAs and related deliverables. Also, going through sector planning processes repeatedly over time can contribute to key stakeholders (individuals and organizations) gaining experience in related processes and content. However, GPE has not clearly defined its envisaged role in capacity development for education sector planning, monitoring and evaluation, and it does not have a way to track country progress in this regard. GPE needs to explore how it can further contribute to addressing key gaps in country capacity that influence both sector plan development and plan implementation, including both technical capabilities and institutional arrangements that can facilitate or hinder the policy process.

Related recommendations:

2.1 The GPE Secretariat, in consultation with the Board, should explore how it can further support countries in realistically assessing 'implementation capacity' and taking stock of related findings – either

⁷⁴ This related to the broader concept of mutual accountability, which was not the focus of this assignment. The Final CLE Synthesis Report (2020) concluded that GPE's current approach to strengthening mutual accountability is effective in relation to sector plan development, but less so in relation to development partners, grant agents and coordinating agencies systematically rallying behind and supporting sector plan implementation and monitoring.

through its existing or new types of support/incentives. This may require different approaches in different countries, but could include:

- Strengthening ESAs in terms of assessing plan development, implementation, and M&E capacity at central and local levels. ESAs should also address coordination and leadership issues in the stages of the policy cycle. Related measures could include targeted GPE financial support for clear, government-led country-level education management assessments, to identify issues or blockages in education sector management (e.g., procurement and supply chain processes, financial management systems, institutionalized incentives for school principals, electronic data reporting for accountability, etc.). These management assessments would provide a more in-depth analysis of known problems, as opposed to an ESA, which might provide a broader diagnostic.
- GPE criteria for assessing the quality of sector plans should take into account to what extent the country was successful in using the sector plan as a tool that is updated regularly to guide the sector and in implementing the previous sector plan or equivalent. This would help decide whether adjustments are needed to align complexity and ambition of a new plan with existing capacity and/or address key capacity gaps.
- GPE could also consider including a quality criterion related to implementation capacity in its results framework indicator 16a.

2.2 The GPE Board should encourage partners to more consistently address and help remediate planning and implementation capacity gaps.

- The partnership can encourage and support countries to create plans for capacity development for the education sector that are integral to the education sector plans/actions plans and that could be supported by DPs.
- The GPE Secretariat should clarify the purpose of ESPDG and other support to sector planning with regard to the intent to support in-country capacities. First, this would help clarify that sector planning is an on-going/regular process linked to annual/multi-annual monitoring, planning and budgeting processes. This would also include the envisaged complementarity with other actors in the partnership, such as UNESCO IIEP or other development partners, for plan development, implementation, and M&E.
- The GPE Board should recommend that developing country governments use GPE financial support (through ESPIG, ESPDG or other mechanisms) more consistently to strengthen in-country capacity in areas such as, for example, institutionalization of quality data collection and analysis, targeted support for planning units, procurement/financial management systems, etc., as identified in countries' capacity assessments and as prioritized by the governments and the local education groups.

Conclusion 3: GPE has increased efficiency in the Secretariat's approach to managing ESPDG applications and approvals, but there is room for improved streamlining of those procedures for countries and for greater monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support to sector planning.

60. As noted in the Phase 1 Desk Study, GPE's ESPDG grant approval process is relatively efficient and suited to minimizing financial risk for GPE; monitoring and learning from experience was noted as a gap in ESPDG management. DCPs consulted in Phase 2 raised concerns about the perceived heaviness of ESPDG procedures.

Related recommendations:

3.1 The GPE Secretariat should ensure that ESPDG application and review processes consider past experience with ESP/TEP development and implementation and with the use and effectiveness of ESPs to ensure that any gaps in implementation are addressed during the next planning phase. This type of review would draw on sector plan implementation reports and ESPDG completion reports. The review process should systematically apply a capacity development lens.

3.2 The partnership should also review and strengthen the role of the CA/GA in monitoring and learning from the ESPDG and its contributions to sector planning.

3.3 The GPE Secretariat should review the ESPDG application process to identify ways in which it could be further streamlined so that country level actors' efforts in applying for the grant are proportional to the value of the grant.

Appendix I ESPDG Evaluation Phase 2 Framework

This table provides an overview of the emphases of Phase 2 of this evaluation. It illustrates the four conclusions drawn in the Phase 1 Desk Study and a consolidated set of hypotheses to be explored – as feasible – during Phase 2. Questions and prompts were used to guide the data collection for this study.

Conclusions and (restructured) hypotheses

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS
1. Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are strategically relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards.	QA process	1.1 The revised QA process for sector plan development provides a more systematic approach to quality assurance that contributes to improving the quality of the sector plans.	Do the CLEs/consultations continue to suggest that improvement in quality of the sector plans are linked to the QA process? Does the Appraisal use relevant criteria ⁷⁵ to provide a fair review that identifies the ESP strengths and areas in need of improvement?
	ESPDG processes and funding	1.2 The revised ESPDG application process – especially the requirement to develop an integrated roadmap – helps countries develop more realistic plans for completing the ESP and TEP.	How do stakeholders perceive the planning process in terms of timing, sequencing, etc.? Did the ESPDG grant application (integrated roadmap) help design a feasible and strategically relevant planning process?
		1.3 The availability of a separate funding window for ESAs, and the increased overall amount available for ESPDGs, helps countries carry out sector analyses that are relevant to and reflected in the development of quality sector plans.	Did the <u>Education Sector Analysis</u> (ESA) that fed into the sector plan help to create consensus on the main sector gaps to be addressed in the ESP? Did the ESP incorporate the main challenges based on evidence (linkages between ESP and the ESA)? What difference did ESPDG (or other funding) make? Would the DCP have conducted the ESA differently if funding had not been available? Does having a separate ESPDG funding window focused on ESA make a difference?

⁷⁵ The GPE/IIEP Guidelines for ESP Appraisal recommend assessing: 1) Leadership and participation, 2) Soundness and relevance, 3) Equity, efficiency and learning, 4) Coherence, and 5) Feasibility, implementability and monitorability.

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS
<p>2. It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently operationally relevant to helping country governments implement sector plans.</p>	Approach to sector planning	<p>2.1. If DCPs perceive QA processes for ESP development, including the independent appraisal process, not as obstacles to overcome in order to access GPE funding, but as opportunities for strengthening the education system, then implementation will become a more central task.</p>	<p>How do stakeholders perceive the utility of the QA process, including the independent appraisal, for improving the ESP? Are these seen as “tick-the-box” exercises or are they perceived to contribute to the usefulness of the sector planning process to address issues of improved implementation?</p>
		<p>2.2. Applying differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts could be more relevant and effective in certain country contexts.</p>	<p>How do stakeholders in the DCP frame their policy cycle (ESP, annual plans, etc.)? What do they see as the strengths and limitations of their current approach especially with respect to improving ESP implementation? How can GPE support be tailored and integrated more effectively into this policy cycle?</p>
		<p>2.3. The existence of a detailed action plan that spells out roles and responsibilities of key actors as well as realistic indicators and targets, and that is linked to national annual planning/budget systems would increase the likelihood of successful sector plan implementation</p>	<p>Does the DCP have an action plan/operational plan? To what extent does a clear operational/action plan help during implementation?</p>
	Sector monitoring capabilities	<p>2.4. Increased government capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience, data and monitoring systems) will lead to more effective monitoring that informs implementation. One specific issue in this context on which more information is needed are what factors support or hinder countries in using data deriving from education sector analyses.</p>	<p>Is there any evidence emerging from CLEs that improvements in sector monitoring are having positive effects on implementation? What are the factors that lead to greater use of education sector analyses, in particular? To what extent are implementation lessons from the past and/or evaluation of results from the previous ESP implementation helpful in enhancing the ESP and ESP implementation of the current period?</p>
	Ownership	<p>2.5. Motivation (right types/number of incentives, political will, sense of</p>	<p>What are the incentives that appear to affect ESP implementation? What is role of political will in</p>

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS
		ownership) is essential to encourage implementation.	implementation? How does the degree of ownership affect implementation?
		2.5.1. Ownership of sector plans is influenced by a variety of factors, including the extent to which the DCP government has exercised (and perceives itself as having demonstrated) active leadership for and influence on both the content and processes leading to ESP/TEP development. More insights are required to better understand key factors, and correlations among these factors that determine degrees of ownership.	<p>What are the key factors affecting ownership and how ownership affects the use of the plan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it make a difference if sector plan development is led by the Ministry of Education? • Does it make a difference if sector plan development based on participatory policy dialogue processes? • What role does ESP dissemination play? Have the plan and elements of the ESA (as appropriate) been disseminated in meaningful and accessible ways (to government, DPs, citizens)? Does this increase the prospects of implementation? • Does ownership by relevant government actors other than the Ministry of Education (e.g., Ministry of Planning, Finance, Economic Affairs, Prime Ministers' office, and different levels of government in federal systems) make a difference for ESP implementation? • Is sector plan development perceived as a hurdle to overcome on the way to accessing the ESPIG? Does this affect the degree to which countries rely on external consultants to develop the ESP?
	DP alignment and harmonization with ESP	2.6. The stronger leadership the Ministry of Education displays for sector plan development, the more likely development partners are to align and harmonize their own activities with the plan.	Does MoE leadership facilitate the extent of DP alignment and harmonization with the ESP? Does that alignment and harmonization contribute to better implementation? Do other factors (other than Ministry leadership) have greater effects on alignment and harmonization, and on effective ESP implementation?

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS
	Other factors affecting use and implementation of sector plan	2.7. If country-level stakeholders ⁷⁶ , have adequate opportunities (such as adequate amounts and types of funding and a conducive external environment) there is greater use the sector plan and more effective implementation.	What are the other factors that affect use of/implementation of the ESP? How does lack of funding affect the integrity of the ESP and its ownership? What are the elements of a conducive environment that seem to make a positive/negative difference for ESP implementation?
3. GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.	Planning capacity development	3.1. If demand for planning capacity development from ministries in charge of education goes beyond addressing competencies of individuals to reflecting the capacity needs of ministries in charge of education and the institutions of the sector as a whole (including related organizational and political economy challenges) there is greater potential for capacity development effects.	What is the nature of the demand for capacity development in the DCP and how is it prioritized? What types of capabilities are being strengthened through existing efforts?
		3.2. What factors support or hinder DCPs in applying new approaches to sector planning introduced by GPE (or other DPs)?	<i>Special probes on GRESP, where relevant.</i> In countries that have participated in workshops on Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning (GRESP): Does the planning director/unit perceive utility in such regional workshops? Why? What has happened after the workshop? Was there a national workshop to develop an action plan? What factors enabled that to happen (leadership, political will, resources)? What is the likelihood that the next ESP will be more gender-responsive? Why?

⁷⁶ In particular government actors, but also other sector actors including development partners and civil society organizations.

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS
<p>4. Overall, GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals. There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.</p>	GPE management	<p>4.1. When country-level actors' (including GA) roles in the overall management of ESPDG and other modalities of support to education sector planning play out in practice as theoretically intended, it facilitates the effectiveness of grant processes.</p>	<p>Are there any insights emerging with regards to GPE management of the ESPDG and other modalities of support to education sector planning? To what extent do country level actor roles facilitate/limit the effectiveness of grant processes?</p>

Appendix II Country-Specific Observations on Action Plans

The following table provides a country-by-country breakdown of observations on action plans from CLEs which were included in this study. For countries which had CLEs conducted in FY 2018, stakeholder interviews did not provide additional insights on action plans.

COUNTRY	ESP/TEP	OBSERVATIONS ON ACTION PLANS FROM CLE
Prospective CLEs		
DRC	SSEF (2016-2019)	The government has not developed annual action plans following the endorsement of the SSEF possibly due to a lack of government capacities and a lack of funding.
Ethiopia	ESDP V (2014/15-2019/20)	The ESDP V had a multi-year action plan developed, but the top-down planning approach highlighted the lack of ownership of the federal plan and the MYAP at the regional level – ‘the MYAP was not talked about’ or ‘not used much by regions’ – with adaptation to regional context made possible only with the support of other DPs.
Kenya	NESP (2013-2018)	No action plan
Malawi	ESIP II (2013/14-2017/18)	MoEST’s NESP was operationalized by two five-year Education Sector Implementation plans. The lessons learned from ESIP I (2008-2012) informed ESIP II (2013-2017) and its action plan, according to the 2016/17 Education Sector Performance Plan.
Mali	PIRSEF (2015-2018)	Even though there was an implementation report of trends in the education sector, including how much of budgets were executed, the report had a different format than the action plan such that activities implemented could not be monitored accurately to see whether activities are on-plan. There were limited learning opportunities on efficient use of funds as the results framework was not used to reflect on actual implementation (or was not set up to do so).
Nigeria	2013-2019⁷⁷	There are yearly UBEC action plans, but there is no sense of a “plan being implemented” at the sector-level, nor at the federal-level. There is currently no national ESP in Nigeria. Instead, there were five state-level ESPs, all in place prior to the country joining GPE in 2012, which were appraised against GPE RF criteria in 2014
Nepal	SSDP (2016-2018)	No information

⁷⁷ There is no national ESP in Nigeria. Instead, there were five state-level ESPs, all in place prior to the country joining GPE in 2012, which were appraised against GPE RF criteria in 2014

COUNTRY	ESP/TEP	OBSERVATIONS ON ACTION PLANS FROM CLE
Zimbabwe	ESSP (2016-2019)	No action plan
SUMMATIVE CLEs		
Bangladesh	PEDP-3 (2011-2017)	<p>There were two action plans in the country.</p> <p>Both plans are strong in terms of having solid action plans (Implementation Guidelines), financial simulation models, capacity building strategies, and a monitoring framework.</p> <p>The large unspent amount at the completion of the revised PEDP-3 is indicative of government capacity limitations to absorb large amounts of the size of PEDP. This is likely to remain a challenge as program budget has doubled under PEDP-4</p>
Cambodia	ESP 2014-2018	<p>There is a lack of clear, measurable targets across years within the AOPs posed an issue in thus assessing ESP implementation.</p> <p>There are issues in the alignment of these plans with the overarching ESP.</p> <p>There is an ongoing issue in the lack of alignment/harmonization of structures between the AOPs and BSPs and the ESP itself</p> <p>The CLE does not recall as having had a positive effect on ESP implementation</p>
Guinea	PSE-2 (2015-2017)	<p>Despite the PSE-2 and its multi-year action plan (PTAB) being of satisfactory quality, they have not been strongly owned by ministries other than MENA.</p> <p>The annual implementation plans for the sector have not been prepared in several years, and the plan's coordination unit (C/PSE) has focused more on FoCEB implementation than on PSE-2 implementation.</p> <p>The PSE-2 was never implemented as a plan per se. Instead, progress relied on the piecemeal implementation of several donor-funded projects.</p>
Mauritania	PNDSE II (2011-2021)	Three-year action plans (PATs) are not adequately sectoral in focus or realistic with regard to existing resources and capacities
Mozambique	2015-2018 Operational plan	<p>The 2015-2018 OP acknowledged many of the weaknesses of the 2012-2016 PEE and developed action plans that were more realistic and achievable.</p> <p>There was a lack of accountability and incentives for implementation at lower levels, specifically a lack of provincial- and district-level targets within the PEE and Operational Plan.</p>
Kyrgyz Republic	EDS 2012-2020	<p>MoES began the process of developing the third Education Development Strategy for 2021-2030 (EDS 2030) and its accompanying three-year action plan for 2021-2023, with anticipated completion date of October 2019.</p> <p>The MoES does not have a systemic approach to tracking the implementation of Education Development Strategies, as such there</p>

COUNTRY	ESP/TEP	OBSERVATIONS ON ACTION PLANS FROM CLE
		<p>is a lack of a common reliable framework to measure implementation progress.</p> <p>Triangulation of other sources suggests that the majority of actions outlined in the 2012-2020 EDS were delivered or partially delivered during the review period.</p>
Rwanda	ESSP 2013-2018	The multiyear action plan did not systematically provide annual implementation targets (against the ESSP monitoring matrix) and stakeholder consultations did not indicate that it was actively used during ESSP implementation or monitoring.
Senegal	PAQUET 2013-2025	Very complex framework of planned objectives and activities limited ability to monitor implementation.
South Sudan	GESP 2012-17	<p>Action plan not implemented.</p> <p>There were issues with implementation mechanisms and capacities: the GESP action plan did not clearly outline who was responsible for funding or implementing targets, and the “fully costed implementation plan” recommended by the appraisal was never developed.</p>
South Sudan	GESP 2017-21	It is not clear if implementation is happening because of, or against, the GESP II or its action plan. When asked whether GESP II was being monitored, a senior governmental stakeholder answered that what was being monitored, by donors and the government together, are major donor development projects in the sector.
Tajikistan	NSED 2012-2020	The NSED is operationalized through three-year Medium-Term Education Action Plans (MTEAPs) describing the medium-term activities. Both the 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 MTEAPs include vague performance measures with no clear baselines or dated targets. The 2018-2020 MTEAP, on the other hand, does include indicators for monitoring the implementation of expected results, and for increasing the accountability of relevant partners, illustrating increased capacity and awareness within the MoES to monitoring plan implementation.
Togo	PSE 2010-2020 and 2014-2025	<p>Under the 2014-2025 PSE, the country developed a 3-year action plan for 2014-2016 (in line with ESPDG), but there was no update to the action plan for 2014-2016 due to no ownership (seen as tick-box exercise).</p> <p>The three-year action plan was never adequately used and never updated. The action plan was never operationalized under PSE 2014-2025 and no subsequent three-year plan was developed after 2016.</p>
Uganda	ESSP 2017-2020	The ESSP 2017-2020 had a multi-year action plan, which broke down each intervention by activity, cost and fiscal year, over half of the planned activities were underfunded.
Zambia	ESSP 2017-2021	No information, but CLE does state that the NIF III was the guiding policy document for the sector, and that its implementation was uneven.

Appendix III Evolution of GPE's approach to supporting sector planning⁷⁸

Earlier process	Current process	Timeline of changes
<p>ESPDG (max \$250,000)</p>	<p>ESPDG (max \$500,000, half for ESA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014: Increased maximum amount; separate funding window for ESAs; • 2015: Streamlined application form (incl. roadmap); new ESPDG guidelines. • 2016: Stronger review of application, more comprehensive completion assessment.
<p>ESP development (2012 guidelines)</p>	<p>ESP development (2015 guidelines)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014: ESA methodological guidelines (Volume I and II) • 2015: New ESP guidelines (no substantive changes from 2012 guidelines). • 2016: TEP preparation guidelines
<p>QA process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPE Secretariat feedback (no formal approach) 2. Independent appraisal (recommended, but not required) 3. <u>External quality review of appraisal and plan</u> 4. LEG endorsement 	<p>QA process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Formalized Secretariat feedback through Initial comments</u> 2. Independent Appraisal: This part is now mandatory and must be conducted by a trained appraiser. This phase now also includes the <u>Appraisal quality check</u> and Appraisal memo by DCP govt. 5. ESP finalization and LEG endorsement 7. Final assessment (indicator 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015: Strengthened Operational Model adopted by the Board; New ESP appraisal guidelines (previous ones from 2012); Strategic Plan (GPE 2020) and new monitoring and evaluation strategy (incl. Indicator 16); Updated GPE country-level process guide • 2016: Revised QA process introduced; TEP appraisal guidelines developed • 2017: Mandatory trainings for appraisers; new QA process fully implemented; New Funding and Financing Framework (FFF)
<p>ESPIG funding (2010 country-level process)</p> <p>Resources to implement ESP available, defined by MCA. Two key requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country has developed a credible plan 2. LEG has endorsed the plan and commits to align their support to it 	<p>ESPIG funding</p> <p>Introduction of New Funding Model. Three key requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country have developed a credible and evidence-based plan. The plan must include a multi-year costed implementation plan. 2. LEG has endorsed the plan and commits to align their support to it. DCP commits to increase domestic financing (towards overall 20%/ primary education 45% threshold). 3. Data requirements: (1) must have done ESA in last 3 years, must have or plan to develop (2) EMIS and (3) LAS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014: New Funding Model (NFM) with introduction of a fixed and variable (performance-based) portion of MCA: credible, endorsed ESPs now a condition for ESPIG fixed portion. Variable tranche (30%) is dependent on performance according to pre-determined indicators. • 2018: Study on Key Actor's Roles in GPE country-level operational model; GPE country-level evaluations year 1 synthesis report

⁷⁸ The QA process includes both country-level and Secretariat-level processes. The latter has been underlined for clarity. Although the revised QA process was introduced in 2016, elements of the new QA process were introduced in stages and some may have pre-dated 2016.

Appendix IV List of Stakeholders Interviewed

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/F
Burkina Faso	SISSAO, Moussa	Director, UNICEF	M
	TAPSOBA, Ambroise	Education Specialist, Canada Field Support Service Project	F
Côte d'Ivoire	ARISTIDE, Toti Gahoue	Education Statistician	M
	BINATE, Mamadou	Coordinator the Task Force for ESP implementation	M
	BROU NOËL, Kouakou	Task Force Education Economist	M
	CORTESE, Laurent	Director, AFD	M
	SEYDOU, Maiga	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	F
The Gambia	TOMITA, Ryoko	Senior Economist, Global Education Practice, World Bank	F
Liberia	DARVAS, Peter	World Bank (recently retired)	M
	MASSAQUOI, Binta Beatrice	Education Specialist, World Bank (previously worked with the Ministry of Education)	F
Sierra Leone	MUTSINZI RUKUNDO, Heinrich	Education Specialist, Programme Section UNICEF Sierra Leone	M
	DUPIGNY, Albert C.T.	Change Unit Coordinator (team lead)	M

Appendix V List of CLEs Reviewed

- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "GPE 2020 Country-level Prospective Evaluation- Democratic Republic of Congo" December 2018.
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "GPE 2020 Country-level Prospective Evaluation-Kenya" December 2018.
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "GPE 2020 Country-level Prospective Evaluation-Mali" December 2018.
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "GPE 2020 Country-level Prospective Evaluation- Nepal" April 2019.
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education- Ethiopia". November 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education-Malawi". October 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education-Nigeria". September 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Prospective evaluation of GPE's country-level support to education-Zimbabwe". August 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education- Bangladesh" October 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Burkina Faso" May 2018
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Cambodia" August 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Côte d'Ivoire" August 2018
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education- Liberia" August 2018
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education- Mauritania" December 2018
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Sierra Leone" May 2018
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Senegal" August 2019
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-Tajikistan"
- Universalia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. "Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level support to Education-The Gambia" August 2018

- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative Evaluation of GPE’s Country-level support to Education-Togo” October 2019
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative Evaluation of GPE’s Country-level support to Education-Uganda”
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation-Kyrgyz Republic” December 2019
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation-Mozambique” July 2019
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation-Republic of Guinea” January 2020
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation- Republic of South Sudan” April 2019
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation-Rwanda” April 2019
- Universalialia Management Group, Results for Development and ITAD. “Summative GPE country program evaluation-Zambia” August 2019

Appendix VI Mapping of data availability

This table provides an overview of the density of evidence available to test the related hypotheses under each of the four conclusions assessed in this report. The sources of data for this study include a small number of stakeholder interviews (in 5 countries where CLEs were carried out in FY 2018) and CLEs completed in FY 2019.

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	DATA AVAILABILITY	WHERE ADDRESSED?
1. Current modalities of GPE support to sector planning complement each other and are strategically relevant to the GPE objective to help countries develop education sector plans that meet common standards.	ESPDG processes and funding	1.1. The revised ESPDG application process – especially the requirement to develop an integrated roadmap – helps countries develop more realistic plans for completing the ESP and TEP.	CLEs: No data available Interviews: No mention or are not aware of the particular roadmap requirement.	Section 3.1
		1.2. The availability of a separate funding window for ESAs, and the increased overall amount available for ESPDGs, helps countries carry out sector analyses that are relevant to and reflected in the development of quality sector plans.	CLEs: Limited data. While CLEs for countries which applied for ESPDG funding via the separate window mentioned the window, they did not comment on whether it made a difference, with the exception of the Togo CLE. Interviews: No mention or are not aware of the separate funding window for ESAs.	Section 3.1
	QA process	1.3. The revised QA process for sector plan development provides a more systematic approach to quality assurance that contributes to improving the quality of the sector plans	CLEs: Mentioned in all CLEs, except Kyrgyz Republic and Togo. Interviews: All stakeholders interviewed were aware of QA process and provided feedback on the QA process effect on sector plan quality.	Section 3.1
2. It is less evident to what extent GPE support to sector planning is equally and consistently operationally	Approach to sector planning	2.1. If DCPs perceive QA processes for ESP development, including the independent appraisal process, not as obstacles to overcome in order to access GPE funding, but as opportunities for strengthening the education system, then	CLEs: CLEs largely focused on QA processes effect on sector plan quality, with some CLEs commenting on the link between QA processes and plan implementation. With the exception of Guinea, no	Section 3.1

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	DATA AVAILABILITY	WHERE ADDRESSED?
relevant to helping country governments implement sector plans.		implementation will become a more central task.	CLEs mention QA processes as “tick-the-box exercises.” Interviews: All interviewees commented.	
		2.2. Applying differentiated approaches to sector planning that are adjusted to specific country contexts could be more relevant and effective in certain country contexts.	CLEs: Majority of CLEs do not mention any effects of alignment of ESP and ESPIG cycles. Interviews: Only some interviewees commented.	Section 3.2
		2.3. The existence of a detailed action plan that spells out roles and responsibilities of key actors as well as realistic indicators and targets, and that is linked to national annual planning/budget systems would increase the likelihood of successful sector plan implementation	CLEs: The majority of CLEs mentioned and commented on action plans. Interviews: No interviewees mentioned action plans.	Section 3.3
	Sector monitoring capabilities	2.4. Increased government capabilities (knowledge, skills, experience, data and monitoring systems) will lead to more effective monitoring that informs implementation. One specific issue in this context on which more information is needed are what factors support or hinder countries in using data deriving from education sector analyses.	CLEs: All CLEs provide information on country planning, monitoring and implementation capabilities, but do not always draw linkages between them. No CLEs mentioned factors in use of data derived from ESAs, instead CLEs commented on use of ESAs, more broadly, and use of EMIS data. Interviews: Some interviewees commented on linkages between sector monitoring capabilities and plan implementation. Interviews: Some interviewees commented on linkages between sector monitoring capabilities and plan implementation.	Section 3.3
	Ownership	2.5. Motivation (right types/number of incentives, political will, sense of ownership) is essential to encourage implementation.	CLEs: Majority of CLEs comment on country-specific motivations, but do not consistently refer to political will, ownership or specific types of incentives.	Section 3.2

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	DATA AVAILABILITY	WHERE ADDRESSED?
			Interviews: Majority of interviewees commented on the factors limiting implementation and to a lesser degree factors encouraging implementation.	
		2.5.1. Ownership of sector plans is influenced by a variety of factors, including the extent to which the DCP government has exercised (and perceives itself as having demonstrated) active leadership for and influence on both the content and processes leading to ESP/TEP development. More insights are required to better understand key factors, and correlations among these factors that determine degrees of ownership.	CLEs: Majority of CLEs mention and comment on ownership. However, the analyses of ownership do not systematically comment on each of the variety of stakeholders and stages of sector plan development, monitoring and implementation. CLEs do usually not focus on GPE's contribution to increasing sector plan ownership. Interviews: Majority of interviewees commented on ownership but did not systematically comment on each of the dimensions of ownership.	Section 3.2
	DP alignment and harmonization with ESP	2.6 The stronger leadership the Ministry of Education displays for sector plan development, the more likely development partners are to align and harmonize their own activities with the plan.	CLEs: Majority of CLEs do not comment on the link between the degree of leadership by the Ministry of Education during sector plan development and donor alignment and harmonization. While harmonization and alignment are mentioned in most CLEs, analyses are limited and do not go into detail. Interviews: Only some interviewees commented.	Section 3.2
	Other factors affecting use and implementation of sector plan	2.7 If country-level stakeholders ⁷⁹ , have adequate opportunities (such as adequate amounts and types of funding and a conducive external environment) there is greater use the sector plan and more effective implementation.	CLEs: All CLEs commented on this. Interviews: Most interviewees commented on this.	Sections 3.2 and 3.3

⁷⁹ In particular government actors, but also other sector actors including development partners and civil society organizations.

CONCLUSION	THEME	RELATED HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED (IF/AS FEASIBLE)	DATA AVAILABILITY	WHERE ADDRESSED?
<p>3. GPE support has some potential to help strengthen in-country capacity for sector planning but does not yet pursue this aim consistently and systematically.</p>	<p>Planning capacity development</p>	<p>3.1. If demand for planning capacity development from ministries in charge of education goes beyond addressing competencies of individuals to reflecting the capacity needs of ministries in charge of education and the institutions of the sector as a whole (including related organizational and political economy challenges) there is greater potential for capacity development effects.</p>	<p>CLEs: All CLEs provided information on country planning capacities, as well as capacities for sector monitoring and implementation.</p> <p>Interviews: All interviewees commented on capacity needs in their respective countries.</p>	<p>Section 3.3</p>
		<p>3.2. What factors support or hinder DCPs in applying new approaches to sector planning introduced by GPE (or other DPs)?</p>	<p><i>Special probe on GRESP, where relevant.</i></p> <p>CLEs: Only mentioned in Guinea CLE, and not commented on extensively. Interviews: Stakeholders interviewed were not from countries which participated in GRESP workshops.</p>	<p>Section 3.3</p>
<p>4. Overall, GPE is employing good management practices for its support to sector planning, especially in managing ESPDG applications and approvals. There is room for improvement, however, in monitoring and learning from past experience in providing ESPDGs and other types of support.</p>	<p>GPE management</p>	<p>4.1. When country-level actors' (including GA) roles in the overall management of ESPDG and other modalities of support to education sector planning play out in practice as theoretically intended, it facilitates the effectiveness of grant processes.</p>	<p>CLEs: Few CLES (only three) provided further information on the roles of GA or CA in the management of ESPDG and it was not very detailed</p> <p>Interviews: Interviews did not speak to these roles, but provided additional perceptions about the ESPDG application process.</p>	<p>Section 3.4</p>

Appendix VII ESP/TEP Quality Standards and Progress in Implementation by Country

COUNTRY (REVIEW PERIOD)	ESP OR TEP ⁸⁰	PROGRESS IN SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	MET MINIMUM NUMBER OF QUALITY STANDARDS, INDICATOR 16A (NUMBER OF STANDARDS MET) ⁸¹	MET QUALITY STANDARD 5 "ACHIEVABLE"
Prospective CLE				
DRC - SSEF (2016-2019)	ESP	Minimal	Yes (7/7)	Yes
Ethiopia- ESDP V (2014/15-2019/20)	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	No
Kenya- NESP (2013-2018)	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	No
Malawi – ESIP II (2013/14-2017/18)	ESP	Modest	No (4/7)	No
Mali - PIRSEF (2015-2018)	TEP	Modest	No (1/5)	No
Nigeria - 2013-2019 ⁸²	ESP	Minimal	Kaduna 2005-2016: Yes (5/7)	No
	ESP		Kano 2009-2018: No (3/7)	No
	ESP		Jigawa 2013-2022: Yes (5/7)	No
	ESP		Katsina 2011-2020: No (4/7)	No
	ESP		Sokoto 2011-2020: No (3/7)	No
Nepal - SSDP (2016-2018)	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	No
Zimbabwe - ESSP (2016-2019)	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	No
Summative CLEs				
Bangladesh - PEDP-3 (2011-2017)	ESP ⁸³	Strong	Yes (6/7)	Yes

⁸⁰ This table includes only ESPs/TEPs for which CLEs provided an assessment of the progress on sector plan implementation. The sample covers a total of 30 sector plan (27 ESPs and three TEPS) from all 26 countries reviewed for this report.

⁸¹ For ESPs, the minimum is 5 out of 7 quality standards. For TEPS, the minimum is 3 out of 5 quality standards.

⁸² There is no national ESP in Nigeria. Instead, there were five state-level ESPs, all in place prior to the country joining GPE in 2012, which were appraised against GPE RF criteria in 2014

⁸³ PEDP-3 was a pre-primary and primary education plan and not an education sector plan covering the whole sector, yet was accepted by the GPE Secretariat as a *de facto* ESP and was rated accordingly as an ESP.

COUNTRY (REVIEW PERIOD)	ESP OR TEP ⁸⁰	PROGRESS IN SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	MET MINIMUM NUMBER OF QUALITY STANDARDS, INDICATOR 16A (NUMBER OF STANDARDS MET) ⁸¹	MET QUALITY STANDARD 5 “ACHIEVABLE”
Burkina Faso – <i>ESP (2012-2021)</i>	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	No
Cambodia - <i>ESP 2014-2018</i>	ESP	Modest	Yes (6/7) ⁸⁴	Yes
Cote d’Ivoire – <i>ESP (2012-2014)</i>	ESP	Modest	N/A ⁸⁵	
The Gambia – <i>ESP (2014-2022)</i>	ESP	Insufficient data	No (4/7)	No
Guinea - <i>PSE-2 (2015-2017)</i>	TEP	Modest	Yes (4/5)	No
Mauritania - <i>PNDSE II (2011-2021)</i>	ESP	Modest	N/A ⁸⁶	
Mozambique - <i>2015-2018 Operational plan</i>	ESP	Strong	Yes (6/7)	No
Kyrgyz Republic - <i>2012-2020 EDS</i>	ESP	Strong	No (4/5)	No
Liberia – <i>ESP (2010-2020)</i>	ESP	Modest	N/A ⁸⁷	
Rwanda - <i>ESSP 2013-2018</i>	ESP	Strong	Yes (5/7)	No
Senegal - <i>PAQUET 2013-2025</i>	TEP	Modest	Yes (4/5)	No
Sierra Leone – <i>ESP (2014-2018)</i>	ESP	Minimal	No (4/5)	No
South Sudan - <i>GESP 2012-17</i>	ESP	Minimal	No (4/7)	No
Tajikistan - <i>NSED 2012-2020</i>	ESP	Modest	No (4/7)	No
Togo - <i>PSE 2014-2025</i>	ESP	Modest	Yes (7/7)	Yes
Uganda - <i>ESSP 2017-2020</i>	ESP	Modest	No (2/7)	No
Zambia - <i>ESSP 2017-2021</i>	ESP	Modest	Yes (5/7)	Yes

⁸⁴ Cambodia’s 2014-2018 ESP was rated twice, once before and once after the plan was revised in 2016. The values here reflect the ratings of the post-revised plans.

⁸⁵ Not rated by the GPE Secretariat.

⁸⁶ Not rated by the GPE Secretariat.

⁸⁷ Not rated by the GPE Secretariat.