

# PARTNERSHIP COMPACT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

**DRAFT**

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## Partnership compact development guidelines

These guidelines are intended to assist GPE partner countries in the development of a partnership compact. A partnership compact should set out a prioritized reform for system transformation, led by governments and supported by development partners and other stakeholders represented in local education groups.

GPE recommends using the compact as a framework for all types of GPE grants, as well as to facilitate alignment between all sources of funding that contribute to system transformation. However, these guidelines are particularly important to the preparation of a request for a GPE System Transformation Grant and for eligible countries, additional funding through the Girls' Education Accelerator.

The partnership compact guidelines begin by contextualizing the compact concept within GPE's strategy, GPE 2025, including a brief explanation of why GPE focuses on system transformation. This background information is followed by an explanation of the key elements and steps of the compact process, linked to specific actions required for the application for a System Transformation Grant/Girls' Education Accelerator.

Annexes provide additional resources on system transformation, an indicative format for a compact, and a checklist to check the compact against.

GPE has adopted a 'learn and adapt' approach to rolling out the operating model that supports the implementation of GPE2025. As these guidelines are applied at country level, the GPE Secretariat welcomes feedback on their use and usefulness so that improvements can be made as needed.

## 1. Context

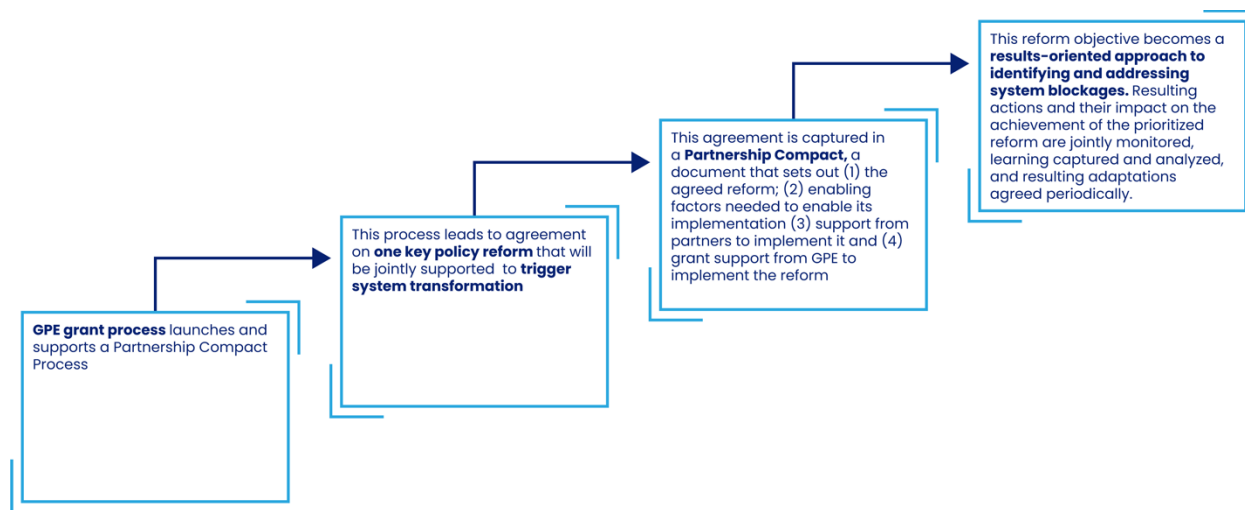
### 1.1 GPE 2025 and mutual accountability for the achievement of SDG4

The partnership compact lies at the heart of advancing GPE's mission to *mobilize partnerships and investments that transform education systems in GPE partner countries, leaving no one behind*.

The partnership compact is a statement articulating how a GPE partner country intends to work together with partners around a priority reform that has the potential to catalyze system change. It is also the basis for determining the focus and modalities of GPE grant resources.

The compact is a blueprint for mutual accountability among partners. As such, it is agreed by partners in the local education group, under the leadership of the ministry of education. The ownership of the compact is firmly at country level. Figure 1 articulates the relationship between GPE grants, the identification of a system transformation reform, the partnership compact, and the intended impact at system level.

**Figure 1. Catalyzing system change**



The GPE Board of Directors will use the compact as background information for the approval of the strategic focus and the amount of the System Transformation Grant. The compact is also the basis on which most additional GPE support (technical or financial) will be sought<sup>1</sup>.

In summary, the compact is intended to enable country partners to:

- Shift the policy dialogue towards catalyzing system transformation and delivery
- Drive a focus on sector bottlenecks and one priority reform with potential to catalyze transformation within complex education systems
- Establish mutual accountability at country level for accelerating system-wide progress towards the achievement of the priority reform
- Adapt critical actions and milestones to the specific country context
- Define GPE support and frame partnership engagement to ensure education support is harmonized and appropriately aligned

<sup>1</sup> See section 3 for an overview of GPE grants

## 1.2 Why focus on system transformation?

Education systems are complex, with multiple interdependent components and different actors pulling in multiple directions – often with different, and even opposing priorities. Fragmentation can happen at all levels of the education system and can act as a powerful brake on the implementation of policies and plans, undermining the achievement of results and limiting impact. *Improving the alignment of education actors in support of a widely agreed and prioritized reform can make the difference between success and failure.*

Education reforms often fail when stakeholders – education leaders, teachers, parents, communities, decentralized administrations – are insufficiently aligned with the reform agenda and policies, and when capacities, delivery models, and available resources and inputs are not aligned. Education reforms are essentially adaptive problems: problems where the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change. For systems to be efficient and reforms to succeed, all these elements must work together in concert.

System transformation through a priority reform is therefore GPE 2025's response to partner countries' ambition to achieve quality education for every child<sup>2</sup>. However, supporting system transformation requires a shift in approach – from a predominant focus on sector-level entry points through a comprehensive sector plan or policy framework to a prioritized focus, adequately resourced for effective delivery within specific education systems. While education sector plans are important frameworks for planning, budgeting and monitoring, evidence shows that they often lack prioritization. In particular, they have not sufficiently led to the effective implementation of actions that unblock systemic challenges to support the transformative progress required to reach SDG4.

A systems approach helps to better apprehend and embrace complexity. It provides a way to understand challenges and adapt strategies accordingly. Instead of targeting symptoms through disconnected actions, interconnected root causes are to be addressed through a coherent reform focused on a critical objective (such as improved learning outcomes, the scaling of early childhood education, removing gender inequalities, etc.) and designed to tackle related changes to interconnected parts of the education system.

## 1.3 Why are prioritization and alignment critical?

Joining forces around a major and prioritized reform is a key element in GPE's approach to system transformation – and is hard to do. Education systems have many important

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<sup>2</sup> See annex 1 for resources on system transformation

priorities, and these will continue to be implemented. *Catalyzing effort in support of one major reform challenge – one area where everyone agrees dramatic improvement is necessary and feasible if everyone pulls together – can become a powerful driver for change.*

The good news is that effective change through the right levers in one major area can have ripple effects across other priorities and provide a foundation for subsequent reform efforts. For example, a country may choose to focus attention on improving foundational literacy and numeracy, but the actions to achieve improved results in this area will stimulate a chain of actions in various components of the system (e.g., curriculum, teachers, budget etc.). Depending on the specific obstacles impeding progress, this may also require actions from other sectors, such as health.

Accelerating progress on education outcomes – especially for those at greatest risk of being left behind – requires detailed understanding of the exact obstacles blocking improved delivery. *Describing the problem is not enough. It is important to understand why something is happening, to get to the root cause of the delivery blockage and determine workable, evidence-informed and context-specific solutions.*

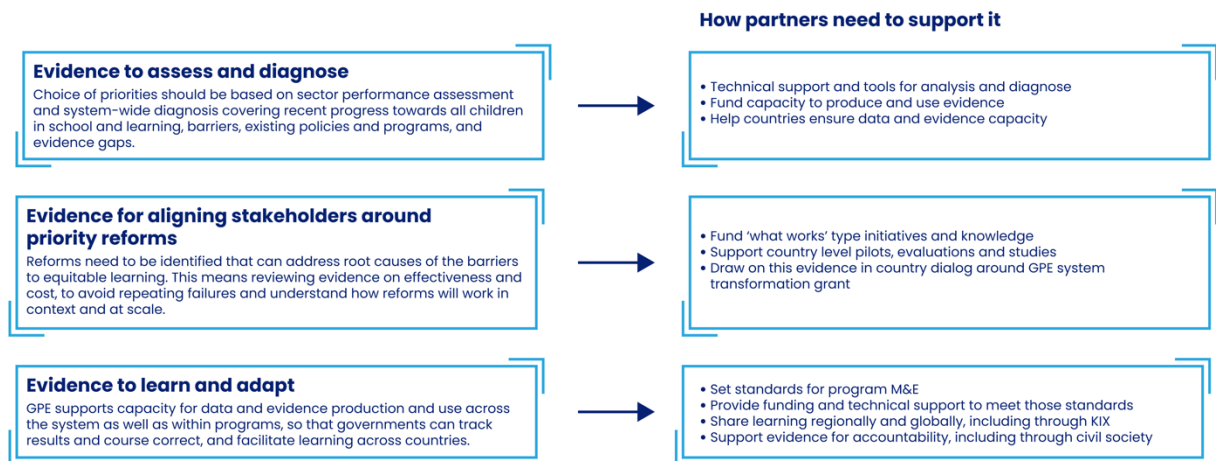
Likewise, it is important to identify how different parts of an education system interact to tackle issues of misalignment and system incoherency – where one policy or approach might unintentionally limit the effectiveness of another, including those outside the education system. For example, two reforms may be underway in parallel: the improvement of literacy and numeracy with a focus on rural areas, and a public service reform across all sectors including education. If the public service reform fails to address issues such as career development, teacher incentives and deployment to rural areas, the investments made to improve teaching skills may fail to have the desired impact across the country.

Once obstacles to delivery are clearly diagnosed – including systematically considering how barriers differ for girls/boys/men/women – interventions can be tailored and sensibly sequenced to address these. *Approaches and interventions should be informed by national, regional, and global evidence. Building on evidence of what works in similar contexts, while acknowledging the challenge of transferability, increases the chance of disrupting a “business as usual approach” and identifying coherent, local, and effective strategies and/or interventions for learning for all.*

Box 1 gives further details on how evidence supports GPE’s operating model and the development of the compact.

# Box 1. How evidence supports system transformation

## Act on evidence



*Critical to supporting system transformation is active learning through evidence-driven feedback, built into regular monitoring mechanisms to allow for real-time adaptation and course-correction if something does not appear to be having the intended results.* The ability to nimbly learn and adapt, using a set of critical implementation data, regular evaluations, transparently available to all actors can help focus attention on delivery and make course-corrections. This is especially important if new or innovative approaches and experimentations are tried to assess their potential to achieve system-wide impacts and results.

## 1.4 How the partnership compact contributes to system transformation

GPE2025 and the operating model designed to achieve it are built on the premise that governments are the only actors with the capacity and scope to truly enable and lead education system transformation at scale. It is also built on the premise that enabling governments to do so is best done in partnership, with all actors pulling in the same direction.

A partnership compact should build on existing policy frameworks, sector plans, evidence and dialogue mechanisms in each country. It should not be a substitute for an education sector plan, but rather a statement of intent describing how partners will work together to accompany a system-wide reform process, from policy intent to delivery.

The partnership compact should identify how different stakeholders align interests, resources and capabilities behind a priority reform with potential for system transformation, including addressing specific bottlenecks that are acting as a brake on

accelerating progress. The compact should also identify how in-country expertise can be deployed or reinforced and describe potential gaps where regional or global capacity might be needed.

The partnership compact is meant to be contextualized, and not 'one size fits all'. Government leadership is critical to the process and its outcomes, and ownership of the compact among partners at country level is essential. The objective of the process should not be to tick boxes to release GPE funding, but to mobilize partners around an evidence-informed, priority reform that will enable the country to unblock system inefficiencies, obstacles or structural weaknesses.

## 2. Developing a partnership compact

This section describes the principles behind a partnership compact, followed by the introduction of GPE's 'critical pathway' to system transformation. We then provide an overview of basic content of a partnership compact and what a process to develop a compact might look like. *Both the content and the process to define it can vary from context to context.* In countries applying for a System Transformation Grant, however, there are specific steps and specific content that must be included to enable the GPE Board to assess that grant criteria are met. These specific steps are explained. The section is concluded with an explanation of compact monitoring and evaluation.

### 2.1 Partnership Compact: guiding principles

The compact is...

- **Country owned.** The process should be led by the government and supported by inclusive local education groups.
- **Adapted to the country context.** Partnership compacts should add value to existing frameworks and processes.
- **An enabler for system change.**

The compact should...

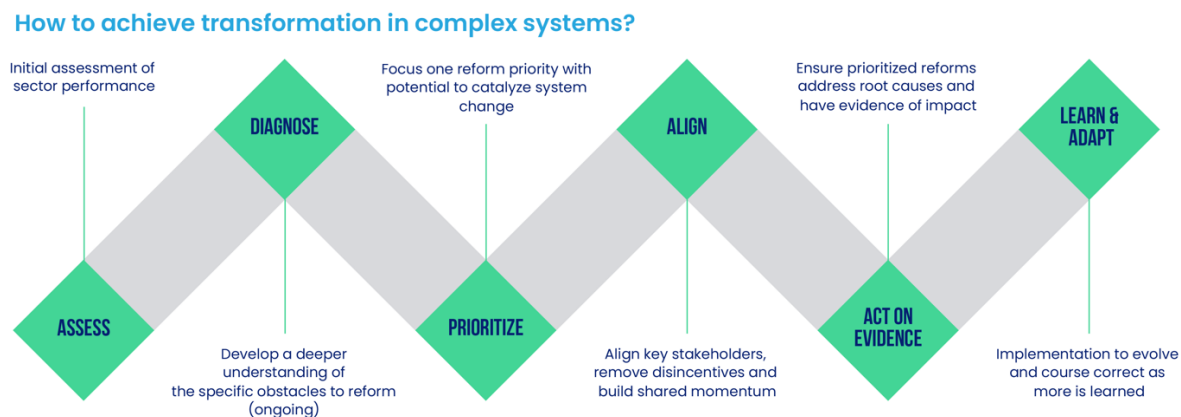
- **Leverage country policy cycles to avoid additional transaction costs.** The compact should build on existing policy dialogue and foster further dialogue in key areas. Governments and their partners should determine how to best align the timing of the compact process to ongoing dialogue and policy processes.

- **Help develop momentum to support system transformation.** Building on sector policies and plans, a critical reform should be prioritized, led by the government and supported by other local education group members, including through GPE grants.
- **Identify opportunities to accelerate progress towards gender equality** within-the prioritized reform.
- **Amplify education sector plans.** Compacts do not replace education sector plans.
- **Encourage country partners to look beyond the performance of a system**, including exploring/diagnosing bottlenecks and root causes while updating planning/programming practices to be problem-driven taking a “systems view”.
- **Lead development partners look beyond “agency priorities”** and contribute to reflecting on critical reforms of the sector.

## 2.2 A critical pathway to system transformation

The partnership compact is designed to help partners agree on one priority reform with potential to catalyze system change and to diagnose related obstacles, define key actions to address these, and align key stakeholders around it all. Six stages are proposed as a ‘critical pathway’ to system transformation in GPE partner countries: **assess, diagnose, prioritize, align, act on evidence, learn and adapt**.

**Figure 2. Critical pathway to support transformation**



These elements of system transformation underpin the operating model for GPE 2025 but have been adapted into three stages for easier operationalization, and to be consistent with GPE 2025 objectives: **preparing, establishing, and implementing**.

**Figure 3. How GPE's model supports system transformation**



Although the stages are presented sequentially, the process is unlikely to be linear. Rather, the critical pathway should be an iterative process. For example, local education groups may start by using available analytics and existing policy priorities to identify potential reforms that could lead to system transformation, diagnose these further, and prioritize again, and in this way gradually arrive at the definition of a priority reform and related actions.

The process can be started at any time in the country's planning cycle. At the local education group's request, the GPE Secretariat may provide support to the process, which will also facilitate the country's access to GPE grants.

### **2.3 Partnership compact content**

Based on the first steps of the '*critical pathway*' (**assess, diagnose**), the partnership compact describes a selected policy reform that the country partners have agreed upon (**prioritize, align**), as well as an overview of 'enabling factors'. The enabling factors build on GPE's previous grant requirements. They are factors that will enable implementation of the reform if they are robust but can also impede it if they are weak. The compact should include specific actions needed to support the selected reform (**act on evidence**) – including through GPE grant funding but also through joined-up efforts by the government, key sector stakeholders and development partners. The compact should also include a monitoring and evaluation component to enable adaptation and adjustment during implementation (**learn and adapt**).

Partnership compacts that form the basis for a System Transformation Grant (and associated Girls' Education Accelerator application where eligible) must include three broad areas preceded by an overview of the selected priority reform:

- **Overview of the priority reform:** Explain how the priority reform advances system transformation including its impact on advancing gender equality.
- **Enabling education system transformation:** An overview of the four enabling factors and how they support the priority reform.
- **Delivering education system transformation:** An overview of the alignment of partner and GPE resources in support to the priority reform. Linked to this, the compact should propose the focus area of the System Transformation Grant.

Countries seeking to access the Girls' Education Accelerator must also provide an overview of how the priority reform and the focus area for GPE resources will accelerate progress on girls' education.

It is recommended to compile the above information in a short, concise document of about 10 pages, including annexes. Gender should be mainstreamed throughout – both in consideration of the enabling factors and the priority reform, regardless of whether the country is eligible for the Girls' Education Accelerator.

Countries should tailor the format and the content of the compact to the country context, considering existing frameworks and tools etc., so that it adds value to the sector. If helpful, an indicative outline is available in Annex 2 and a checklist is provided under Annex 3 to facilitate the review of the draft compact to ensure that all essential elements are included and that the compact is coherent and robust to support system transformation.

## **2.4 Partnership compact process**

The partnership compact should be developed through a collaborative process under the leadership of the government and with active participation of other actors of the local education group. To identify the content, local education groups should adapt the critical pathway to their own needs and set out a process that builds on ongoing policy dialogue and fits the context.

First, the best timing and timeline of the compact process should be discussed and agreed, considering the country's policy cycle as well as GPE grant eligibility. For example, in some countries, the compact can be prepared by building on the implementation of an existing sector plan. In others, a sector plan may be under development and partners may use the compact process to help strengthen and finalize the plan. It is good practice to ensure that data and studies (including sector analysis and other diagnostics) support the discussion and prioritization. Relevant evidence from within and across partner countries, including from GPE's Knowledge and Innovations Exchange (KIX) may be useful.

Different modalities for organizing the work may be appropriate according to country context but having a smaller number of actors working on the process while consulting other actors may help enable an efficient process. Local education groups may wish to initiate the process with the identification of a task team. The task team should ideally represent key stakeholder groups from the local education group. The task team should consult and regularly share updates with the broader local education group.

The Secretariat through its country teams can provide information and advice on the compact and other GPE-supported sector and grant processes, including through a kick-off presentation to the local education group.

If necessary, the system capacity grant can provide funding for this process, including, where applicable, for strengthening the coordination capacity of ministries of education and for services provided to the local education group by the coordinating agency. The development of the compact is a time-bound process, generally expected to be developed within two months where possible.

#### **2.4.1 Preparing for a partnership compact: assess, diagnose**

To get started, local education groups/task teams should begin to identify the different elements of the compact by analyzing key sector underperformance and challenges, based on available country-level data and evidence. They should use analytics and evidence including available policy frameworks to identify potential policies that look likely to deliver system transformation, and then further diagnose obstacles and bottlenecks that may need to be addressed to effectively implement these. This would not likely be a linear process, but would include an iterative process with these key elements:

- **Assess.** Initial assessment of sector performance, identifying and prioritizing needs and gaps using available data (EMIS reports, household surveys) and evidence (education sector analysis, studies). In parallel, country partners discuss key desirable policy outcomes that have the potential to support system transformation at scale. Special attention should be given to the status of the four enabling factors: (i) data and evidence, (ii) gender responsive sector planning, (iii) sector coordination, and (iv) sector financing.
- **Diagnose.** Develop a deeper understanding of the specific obstacles that might impede the achievement of the selected policy outcomes. Describing the problem is not enough – it is important to understand why something is happening, to get to the root cause of the delivery blockage and determine workable and context specific solutions, bearing in mind those at greatest risk of being left behind. It is important to identify how different parts of an education system interact and may be influencing

the situation – including those outside the education system. A robust diagnostic must acknowledge the role of gender in both the root causes and the context specific solutions.

Partner countries applying for a System Transformation Grant/Girls' Education Accelerator will follow particular instructions to assess the enabling factors:

#### **2.4.1. (a) Review of Enabling Factors**

Building on the previous GPE operating model's 'requirement areas', GPE has identified four enabling factors that are critical to effective implementation of system transformation:

- 1) Availability and use of data and evidence;
- 2) Gender-responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring;
- 3) Sector coordination (coordinated finance and funding including harmonized funding, and coordinated action);
- 4) Equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic public expenditure on education.

Countries applying for a System Transformation Grant/Girls' Education Accelerator will complete an *initial screening template* to provide a snapshot of the current status of these enabling factors. This screening is meant to be integrated in the *analyze, and diagnose* process described above, contributing relevant analytics and diagnostics in the identification of bottlenecks and needed actions.

The second step is a system-level review of the extent to which the enabling factors either support or inhibit progress towards achieving the selected key policy outcomes, including in relation to gender equality. In addition, the enabling factors should always be evaluated with a gender lens, considering the different needs of girls and boys at different points and how the enabling factors inhibit or facilitate gender equality in the system.

This is a useful initial exercise in the process of later deciding a priority reform area for the compact. A reform with potential to catalyze system wide transformation is likely to have a high level of interconnectedness with other priority areas, and the enabling factors.

#### **2.4.1. (b) Independent Technical Assessment Panel (ITAP) Assessment of Enabling Factors**

Once the review of enabling factors is completed, countries applying for a System Transformation Grant/Girls' Education Accelerator will submit the enabling factors package to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the ITAP<sup>3</sup> for independent review and

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<sup>3</sup> ITAP consists of seasoned education experts in various domains. Although the members were selected by the Secretariat, the panel works independently under the leadership of the ITAP chair.

assessment. The ITAP review will result in an independent report for the local education group's review and feedback before the ITAP report is finalized. Once finalized, the ITAP's assessment should inform the writing of the compact.

Guidance for reviewing the enabling factors including the templates to submit to ITAP is available [here](#).

#### **2.4.2 Establishing the partnership compact: Prioritize and Align**

During this stage, the actual partnership compact is developed, aligning partners and resources behind a prioritized reform area. Various stakeholders' financial and technical commitments, as well as domestic financing supporting the reform area should be discussed at this stage. A gender lens should be applied, even if the priority reform area may not have a specific gender focus.

- **Prioritize:** Based on the assessments and diagnostics, identify a major priority reform to pave the way for system transformation. While education systems have many important priorities that continue to be implemented, the idea is to catalyze system transformation by supporting one major reform.
- **Align:** Partners agree to align their resources (financial, technical, and operational) behind the priority reform. For the countries applying to the System Transformation Grant, a focus area is defined as a subset of the broader priority reform. The alignment of actors within the system, under the leadership of Government, may be identified for support in some cases.

To get started, the results of the preparatory steps should be compiled and discussed by the local education group, through the help of the task team if applicable to decide on the priority reform, and when relevant, the System Transformation Grant focus area.

The partnership compact is neither a sector plan nor a program document. The compact should identify what needs to be done and who should be doing what in support to the selected priority reform. The selected reform should address root causes of systemic underperformance but should also promote a vision to bring together actors. Evidence supporting the selected reform should help inform how to target efforts through government leadership, budget prioritization and additional support from other partners.

An overview of how different actors, actions and resources will align around the selected policy priority will inform the compact on what partners agree to be mutually accountable for. It involves addressing:

- how different stakeholders could align resources and capabilities behind solutions to unblock the specific bottlenecks and improved policy implementation.

- how in-country expertise – for example in gender equality – can be deployed or reinforced as well as identifying any potential gaps where regional or global capacity might be needed.
- how specific GPE assets – the System Transformation Grant, System Capacity Grant, Multiplier, Girls Education Accelerator (where eligible) might work together to support progress in the enabling factors and priority area.
- where relevant, indicate linkages with KIX and Education Out Loud (EoL) investments and resources can be considered, alongside any other potential partnerships – e.g. with foundations and the private sector.
- roles and responsibilities of involved parties should be identified to reach consensus on task division and complementarity.

Countries can share the draft partnership compact with the GPE Secretariat for review and feedback. Upon receipt of the document, the Secretariat will review the compact to ensure critical elements required for the allocation of a System Transformation Grant are included and will share feedback with the country within 15 days. Upon the receipt of the Secretariat feedback, countries will finalize the compact document and will proceed with the formal approval of the government and endorsement by development partners.

Once the basic content of the partnership compact is agreed, a draft should be shared with members of the local education group for final input, followed by a discussion of any concerns or need for refinement. It is important that the government adopts the compact as a priority and that other partners signal their commitment to it by endorsing it.

#### **2.4.3 Implementing the partnership compact: act, learn and adapt**

Compacts are living documents and should be updated by local education groups as needed. These updates should draw on ongoing sector planning and policy processes, including joint sector reviews, to ensure compact priorities are fully aligned to national plans and policies. A mid-term review will assess progress in key areas of the compact, including the System Transformation Grant.

The local education group should jointly support and monitor compact implementation, in line with the mechanisms defined in the compact. Course correction is integral to increasing chances of success: ongoing stock taking of lessons and obstacles will require adaptation of the reform actions in an agile manner.

- **Act on evidence:** Implementation of what is outlined in the compact will require the development of strategies and interventions that should be based on best available evidence. Participation of various education actors in the implementation is expected, so it is important to ensure that the intent of the compact is kept in sight.

- **Learn and adapt.** Monitor and course correct as more is learned. Critical to supporting system transformation is having mechanisms to monitor real-time progress, and to quickly adapt if something does not appear to be having the intended results. This can be accompanied by evaluations and other sector wide learning in order to understand system wide impacts and results.

To facilitate learning and adaptation, partnership compacts should include Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) elements for tracking progress in the reform area. This will enable course correction as more is learned about what is happening in the system. The following should be considered in developing the compact:

- Building on the enabling factor “gender-responsive planning and monitoring” review, highlight how the current monitoring system including the agreed improvements to be brought will support the monitoring of the policy reform implementation.
- Agree on a set of key indicators that speak to the implementation of key actions at different points in the delivery chain, using where possible real-time data, and ways to nimbly learn and adapt.
- Grant monitoring (determined at a later stage when grants are designed).
- Evaluation recommendations where relevant.

#### **2.4.4 GPE Board decision**

Countries applying for a System Transformation Grant (along with the Girls’ Education Accelerator if eligible) will submit the approved and endorsed partnership compact along with the comments to the ITAP report (if any) to the GPE Secretariat for onward transmission to the GPE Board of Directors.

The GPE Board does not approve the compact – this is entirely done at the country level. However, the Board will use the compact as a background document to either decide on full allocation of the MCA or retain a top-up amount as a leverage for the country to address enabling factors assessed as high priority.

On the basis of the Board decision, the country proceeds to the System Transformation Grant application development, when and as appropriate, starting with the selection of a grant agent.

### **3. Financing the partnership compact: GPE support**

The partnership compact should be supported by different sources of financing, including domestic financing and available external financing including GPE grants as eligible.

GPE grants are dedicated to address priority areas defined in [GPE 2025](#). The following provides an overview of GPE grants, with links to more detailed grant guidelines.

### **System Capacity Grant**

The System Capacity Grant (SCG) ([insert hyperlink to related guideline](#)) provides continually available and flexible funding to support system-wide capacity strengthening across all aspects of GPE's country-level objectives. It is a key lever for further GPE funding and a building block in support of countries' capacity to build stronger education systems.

Although an initial allocation from the system capacity grant could be made available to fund a limited set of activities, including those related to the development of the partnership compact, the compact should identify areas for the system capacity grant, aligning to gaps identified through the assessment of enabling factors and sector bottlenecks. The full amount of the SCG does not need to be programmed at the time of the compact. GPE partner countries can draw down SCG funding flexibly to respond adaptively to needs that arise during implementation of plans or policies.

### **System Transformation Grant**

The System Transformation Grant (STG) aims to help countries use GPE grant resources to focus on key sector bottlenecks and to achieve system transformation. The STG takes a flexible approach to requirements and results-based financing towards identifying and addressing policy gaps, as long as countries demonstrate commitment to education according to their ability.

Up to 40% of a partner country's maximum country allocation is linked to the country's status regarding the gaps identified in the review of enabling factors during the partnership compact development process. To address identified gaps, a limited and agreed set of achievable policy actions or strategies that will enable a shift in trends may be tied to top-up funding, which will be approved by the GPE Board. Progress on the top-up indicators will be assessed in a single mid-term review of the compact, which will determine how much of the additional funding will be released. In this way, incentives allow the operating model to meet countries where they are and introduce levers to drive the implementation of ambitious but achievable reforms.

### **Multiplier Grant**

The purpose of the Multiplier ([insert hyperlink to related guideline](#)) is to further catalyze system transformation in GPE partner countries' education system. Countries access a

Multiplier allocation by collaborating with partners to mobilize external financing that is “new and additional.”

Because the ability to mobilize Multiplier funding is tied to the availability of co-financing, some countries may seek to access a Multiplier allocation before they can develop a full partnership compact, which they would intend to develop when accessing the system transformation grant. Similarly, some countries are only eligible for Multiplier funding and are not able to access a system transformation grant. The partnership compact could represent an opportunity to attract additional financing either from other donors<sup>4</sup> or from the private sector<sup>5</sup> GPE strongly encourages countries to align processes around different GPE funding mechanisms to the greatest extent practicable. This means that countries are advised to seek their Multiplier allocations at such a time that these can be programmed and implemented alongside the STG.

### **Girls’ Education Accelerator**

The Girls’ Education Accelerator (GEA) ([insert hyperlink to related guideline](#)) addresses barriers to girls’ education within and beyond the education sector. Specially, the GEA funding aims to ‘hardwire’ gender equality and girls’ education into the system with the objective of setting in motion target policies and programs while reaching gender equality, addressing inequities within and outside the education sector.

Access to the GEA has been prioritized for 30 eligible countries where girls lag furthest behind in terms of access to primary and lower secondary and where child marriage rate is high. Funding is accessed in conjunction with the STG and/or the GPE Multiplier Grant. The GEA finances interventions that specifically focus on addressing education barriers faced by girls. Countries seeking to access the GEA must demonstrate how the proposed reform to be supported by the STG and/or Multiplier will accelerate progress on girls’ education.

### **Strategic Capabilities**

In 2020, the GPE Board approved the strategic capabilities approach under the auspices of GPE 2025, which enables the GPE Secretariat to establish partnership initiatives to help countries address common challenges through direct support, knowledge-sharing or capacity building. In order to provide partner countries with access to strategic capabilities, GPE Secretariat will play both a sourcing and a convening role to identify and leverage

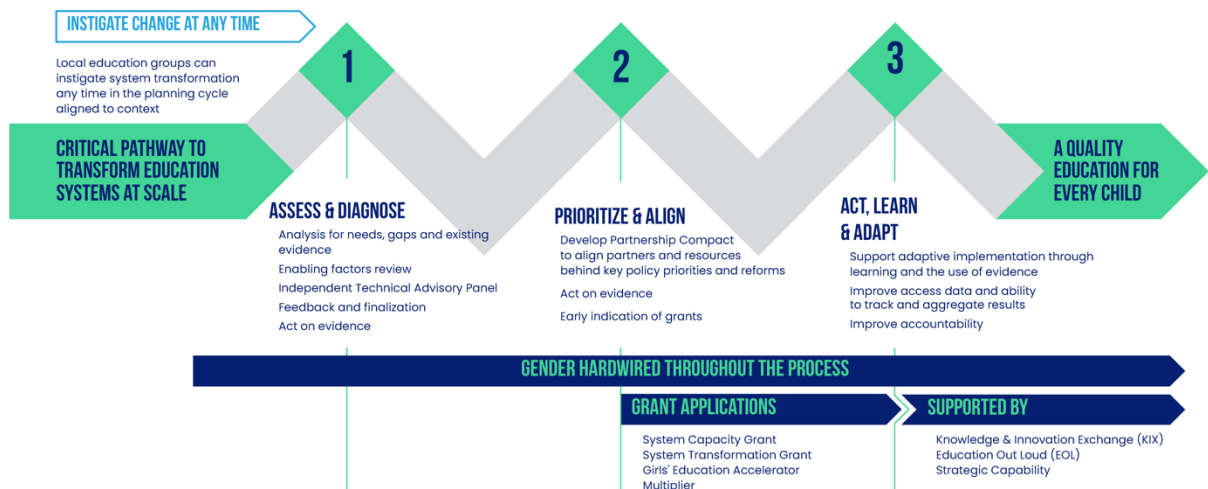
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<sup>4</sup> For each \$1 from GPE. Other donors – including bilateral and multilateral donors – still need to meet the ratio of \$3 in additional resources per \$1 from the Multiplier

<sup>5</sup> Private sector partners and foundations can help unlock a Multiplier grant with a ratio of 1:1, i.e. \$1 in additional contribution

solutions to challenges faced by multiple countries. In practical terms, this can mean facilitating a connection between partner countries and partner organizations that can help to address a particular challenge, or in some cases, procuring the services of a partner to provide advisory services on demand. Some initial strategic capabilities are currently under development based on identification of common needs across multiple countries, which partner countries may then choose to draw from as a complement to other efforts financed through the SCG, STG or KIX.

**Figure 4. Country-led system transformation**



## Annexes

### Annex 1: Selection of resources on system transformation resources

1. Systems Thinking: An introduction for Oxfam programme staff | [Oxfam](#)
2. Why Systems Thinking is Important for the Education Sector | [Education Development Trust](#)
3. Systems Thinking | [RISE](#)
4. Aligning Education Systems for Learning: How Systems Shift | [RISE](#)
5. How the Worlds Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better | [McKinsey & Company](#)
6. Systems Practice | [The Omidyar Group](#)
7. System Craft: How to Tackle Our Toughest Problems | [Wasafiri](#)
8. Learning to Realize Education's Promise | [The World Bank Group](#)
9. Scaling and Systems: Issues Paper | [Scaling Community of Practice](#)
10. Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) Toolkit | [Harvard University](#)

### Annex 2: Partnership Compact outline

#### Introductory note

Brief description of how the compact development process has been inclusive, government-led, and evidence-based, and how the compact has been endorsed by the LEG.

#### Overview of the priority reform:

This describes the priority reform that has been selected by the partners and explains how this reform advances system transformation. It could include:

- A rationale for selection including a discussion on the potential of the priority reform on system transformation: how it is based on current policy frameworks and/or based on evidence
- A brief presentation of the theory of change underpinning the priority reform
- The expected effect/impact of the priority reform on advancing gender equality: *specific risks and opportunities highlighting the different barriers facing boys and girls/men and women, building on existing diagnostics, or committing to further investigation*

#### Enabling education system transformation:

- It includes a brief overview of the four enabling factors based on the review undertaken by the country and the ITAP inputs.

- It should also elaborate on how proposed improvements in enabling factors will support the priority reform implementation and contribute to accelerating results.
- It could also discuss the support the country is envisaging from GPE grants or other partners to achieve the proposed improvements.
- It should include the country proposal for addressing the enabling factors that have been categorized as high priority by the ITAP and which could trigger top-ups as decided by the Board. This includes top-up triggers (actions and targets) as well as the associated amounts.

### **Delivering education system transformation:**

- This is an overview of the alignment of partner and GPE resources in support of the priority reform.
- When applicable, it discusses how the GEA will support the STG and/or Multiplier to address girls' education
- It lists the GPE grants and other assets (KIX, EOL, Strategic Capabilities) to be mobilized in support of the priority reform
- The partners funds and assets already deployed or to be mobilized
- Respective roles and responsibilities of partners

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

- Building on the enabling factor "gender-responsive planning and monitoring" review, highlight how the current monitoring system including the agreed improvements to be brought will support the monitoring of the policy reform implementation.
- It includes a set of key indicators that will be jointly monitored to track progress in the implementation of the compact, disaggregated by gender and disability where applicable.
- It recommends the package of evaluations that would help learning from the priority reform implementation.

### **Statement of endorsement by partners**

### Annex 3 Compact Review Checklist

A. For the Focus Area(s) for system transformation, check whether:	Observations
The focus area(s) based on the priority reform is sufficiently clear and well-defined? Potential evidence-based solutions within the focus area are put forward, or it is clear how these will be identified during grant development?	
Aligned with Government education sector priorities, as expressed in education Plan or policy framework?	
There is clear justification for the selection of focus area?	
The identification of the focus area has been both government-led and inclusive?	
There is potential for transformational impact at scale?	
There is sufficiently strong data and evidence to inform grant development within the focus area, or efforts to strengthen the evidence to inform grant development? (explain efforts)?	
There is indication of sufficient efforts to align partner resources and capabilities behind system transformation priorities?	
Likely to generate a positive impact on gender equality?	
One or more of GPE's Policy Priority Areas* are reflected?	
Conclusion <i>[Focus area(s) of the STG recommended] [If country is eligible and wishes to access a GEA, confirmation of girls' education/ gender equality as a focus area/priority in the Compact]</i>	

\* GPE Policy Priority Areas (from GPE 2025): Learning/early learning, access (12 years plus at least 1 year of pre-primary education), gender equality and inclusion, quality teaching, strong organizational capacity, equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing.

B. For the Enabling Factors, check whether:	Observations
The Compact is underpinned by a sound review of the enabling factors for system transformation?	
The Compact includes a proposal to address areas flagged as bottlenecks, in particular those flagged as High Priority by the ITAP?	
The process to prepare this proposal has been both government-led and inclusive of civil society and teacher organizations?	

The proposal is deemed appropriate and relevant and likely to resolve the bottlenecks flagged by the ITAP?	
If the proposal involves using an STG top-up portion as a financial incentive, the proposal includes clearly defined triggers to access the top-up portion of the allocation?	
The funding linked to each trigger, and the total top-up amount, as applicable, is in line with GPE guidance <sup>2</sup> , meaningful as an incentive, and balanced in the context?	
It is likely that the proposed triggers can be simultaneously verified at the time of the mid-term review of Compact?	
Conclusion [ <i>Funding allocation recommended, including whether full allocation is available immediately, or if top-up portion is linked/partially linked to (reforms likely to lead to) further progress in Enabling Factors</i> ]	

<b>C. Attention to GPE policies and other cross-cutting issues:</b>	<b>Addressed in the Compact? [Yes/No, and brief statement]</b>
Strengthening Government organizational capacity	
Gender equality	
The right to education	
Reaching the most marginalized / “leave no one behind”	
Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States	

## OFFICES

### Washington

701 18<sup>th</sup> St NW  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
USA

### Paris

6 Avenue d'Iena  
75116 Paris  
France

### Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
B-1000, Brussels  
Belgium

## CONTACT

**Phone:** (+1) 202-458-0825

**Email:** [information@globalpartnership.org](mailto:information@globalpartnership.org)