

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

**DRAFT**

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# 1. The grant

## 1.1. Purpose of the grant

The purpose of the program development grant is to enable the grant agent, working under the leadership of the government, to cover expenses related to the preparation of the program and supporting documents for a country's application for GPE system transformation grants.<sup>1</sup>

Grant agents can receive funding up to US\$200,000.<sup>2</sup> The funds will not be transferred to the national government and the grant agent will work in accordance with its own internal administrative processes. The program developed with the grant is expected to support the implementation of the priority reform that a country and its partners agreed on in the partnership compact.

### **Deliverable of the program development grant**

The expected deliverable of the grant is the regular system transformation grant and/or GPE Multiplier grant application package, to be submitted to the GPE Secretariat.

## 1.2. Eligibility

All grant agents meeting the grant agent minimum standards<sup>3</sup> and duly selected in accordance with the GPE grant agent selection process to support the government in the development of the regular system transformation grant and/or GPE Multiplier grant are eligible to apply for a program development grant.

In a given context, it may be appropriate to have more than one grant agent for the regular system transformation grant or a separate grant agent for the regular system transformation grant and the Multiplier grant. In such a case, the different grant agents can each access a program development grant. Also, in countries with federal systems where multiple subnational entities (states or regions) can access GPE grants, grant agents appointed at these levels may each apply for a program development grant. Where one grant agent is operating in several subnational regions, only one program development grant will be given, unless a strong justification is provided to the GPE Secretariat explaining the need for more than one grant.

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<sup>1</sup> GPE grants for system transformation include the GPE Multiplier, regular system transformation grant and Girls' Education Accelerator.

<sup>2</sup> Up to \$400,000 in exceptional cases. See details in section 1.3.

<sup>3</sup> See *Standard Selection Process for Grant Agents*: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/standard-selection-process-grant-agents>.

### 1.3. Amount

**The program development grant has a standard allocation of \$200,000.** The amount requested should be substantiated in the activities to be undertaken and activity costs. As the program should build on the focus area identified in the partnership compact, analytical work is expected to be reduced in comparison to GPE 2020.

Nevertheless, on an exceptional basis, grant agents can request up to \$400,000. Any request of more than \$200,000 must demonstrate why the country requires exceptional effort and resources to develop the program. Such circumstances are expected to be limited to applications in large federal countries and/or combined applications from different islands. In addition, they can be justified by security cost.

In the case of a joint program, it is expected that the program development costs be distributed among different funding sources, and thus that the requested amount would not reach the program development grant ceiling. Likewise, if the application for a program development grant constitutes additional financing for an existing program or pooled fund, it is also expected that the requested amount be reduced.

### 1.4. Activities

The program development grant finances activities, goods or services needed for the development of an education program and other documentation needed for the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant application package in the specific country context. Sample activities include:

- Stakeholder consultations;
- Fiduciary assessment or any technical appraisal that can help illustrate implementation readiness and inform program design;
- Preliminary designs for infrastructure; and
- Development of implementation manuals, preparation of procurement processes and so on.

### 1.5. Duration

The activities financed through the program development grant are expected to be completed within seven months.<sup>4</sup> This period should include preparation of the draft regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant program and GPE's quality assurance review (QAR) of the draft program documentation, which is carried out prior to the final readiness review. It may also include preparatory activities to ensure timely

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<sup>4</sup> In some cases, the duration may be longer than seven months in order to support transition to implementation of the transformation grants.

effectiveness and implementation of the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant.

The official start and end dates of the program development grant are specified in the Secretariat's approval letter sent to the grant agent upon the allocation decision. The start date is usually the same date as the letter, while the end date is determined based on the application, approval and effectiveness timeline of the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1. Transfer of resources and fiduciary responsibility of the grant agent

GPE grants are transferred to grant agents, designated to receive transferred funds and to be accountable for the use of these resources in line with the application and GPE's program development guidelines.

To receive transferred funds, the grant agent must meet GPE's minimum standards for grant agents and have a financial procedures agreement with the trustee of the GPE Fund.<sup>5</sup> If this is not already in place, the grant agent should initiate action to secure an agreement with expediency. If a financial procedures agreement already exists, the transfer of resources for both the program development grant and the regular system transformation grant and/or the Multiplier will be greatly accelerated.

### 2.2. Specific responsibility on gender equality

The grant agent is responsible for ensuring that a gender equality perspective is taken into consideration when developing the program with the government and local education group. The grant agent's roles and responsibilities, like those of other key players vis-à-vis the program development grant, are summarized in the table below, for mutual accountabilities, and further described in the step-by-step guidance.

Roles and responsibilities in relation to the program development grant	
<b>Partner country government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leads the development of the regular system transformation grant and/or GPE Multiplier program that is being prepared with GPE support.</li><li>• Signs off on the grant agent's request for the program development grant before the grant agent submits the application to the Secretariat.</li></ul>

<sup>5</sup> A financial procedures agreement is any agreement or arrangement established between the trustee of the GPE Fund, the World Bank and the organization or agency that has been nominated as grant agent.

<b>Grant agent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that a financial procedures agreement is in place to channel the program development grant funds, once approved, and manages the funds, including any subcontracting.</li> <li>• Develops the grant application in consultation with the government.</li> <li>• Is responsible for ensuring that the gender equality perspective is taken into consideration when developing the program with the government and local education group.</li> <li>• Works with the coordinating agency to ensure that all local education group members are consulted on the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant application process and informed on the program development grant application, including on timelines and issues that may adversely affect implementation.</li> <li>• Prepares the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant program document under the leadership of the government.</li> <li>• Manages activities in line with its own internal processes and policies and GPE guidelines, requesting revisions, if necessary, in line with the program development grant guidelines.</li> <li>• Ensures the program development grant is used for the intended purpose and submits a financial report at the completion of the grant.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinating agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fosters open and inclusive communication within the local education group on the grant development process.</li> <li>• Signs the program development grant application, confirming it has ensured that members of the local education group have been consulted on the organization of the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier application process.</li> <li>• Communicates in writing to the Secretariat any concerns about the timing and/or the content of the proposal at the time of program development grant application submission.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with the grant agent to ensure that the local education group is updated regularly and has all the necessary information to contribute to the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier program development process.</li> </ul>
<b>Local education group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a forum for dialogue and consultation in an advisory function.</li> </ul>
<b>Secretariat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assures the application and implementation, especially through (1) screening of the grant application and (2) general and technical guidance during the program development process.</li> <li>• Verifies that the application is complete, approves it and notifies the trustee of the GPE Fund to transfer funds.</li> <li>• Sends approval letter to the grant agent and a copy to the coordinating agency for distribution to the local education group, specifying official start and end dates.</li> <li>• Acknowledges receipt of the grant final financial report.</li> <li>• Distills good practices for cross-country sharing as relevant.</li> </ul>

### 3. Grant application process

#### Step 1. Timeline and identification of activities

The grant agent is eligible to apply for the program development grant as soon as it has been duly selected in accordance with the GPE grant agent selection process to support the government in the development of the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant.<sup>6</sup> The grant agent develops a system transformation grant and/or Multiplier program in line with the timeline set out and agreed on with the government and the local education group.

A program development timeline should be established within four weeks of the grant agent selection, during which time a kickoff meeting is scheduled with the Secretariat to streamline the quality assurance reviews.<sup>7</sup> The grant agent shares the timeline with the local education group to ensure continued collaborative decision making. The timeline

<sup>6</sup> It is important to ensure that the selection process, key steps and final decision are documented. Minutes of the local education group meeting during which the selected grant agent was endorsed should be communicated to the Secretariat.

<sup>7</sup> At the kickoff meeting to discuss the program development timeline, the Secretariat will share with the grant agent the quality standards against which the final grant application will be assessed.

includes specific moments for consultation with the local education group. Consultation is different from endorsement, as it is not limited to submitting a document to the local education group for their approval.

In consultation with the government, the grant agent identifies the activities to be funded through the program development grant.

## Step 2. Preparation of the program development grant application

### Program development grant application

The program development grant application package consists of (1) the signed-off program development timeline for the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant, and (2) a detailed budget of the program development activities.<sup>8</sup> If the grant agent wishes to share additional documents for consideration, it can attach them to the application.

Next to the program development timeline, a detailed budget will need to be submitted, with the following information:

- Names and contact information of the grant agent, partner ministry representative and coordinating agency representative
- Short description of each activity
- Schedule for all activities
- Budget for the activities, with specified expected unit costs
- If applicable, any specific circumstances that require more than \$400,000

## Step 3. Submission

Before the grant agent submits the program development grant application to the Secretariat, the partner country's ministry signs off on it, while the coordinating agency also signs the application confirming that the local education group has been consulted in the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant development timeline and process. The coordinating agency informs the Secretariat if it has any concerns about the application process and timeline. The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of the application and further process it.

### Submission of application

A program development grant application can be submitted anytime throughout the year. The grant agent should send the application package to [gpe\\_grant\\_submission@globalpartnership.org](mailto:gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org), copying the GPE country team lead and the coordinating agency.

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<sup>8</sup> A budget template for the program development activities is available on GPE website, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/budget-template-program-development-grant>.



## Step 4. Screening

Upon receipt of the application, the Secretariat will carry out an initial assessment. It will have 10 working days to complete an initial review and notify the grant agent, copying the coordinating agency, in case there are any points needing clarification. In carrying out the review, the Secretariat will determine whether the grant application meets the eligibility criteria and is reasonable in its budget and time frame.

### Critical aspects of the application

- **Clear timeline on program development:** Are steps to develop the program, including the Secretariat quality assurance steps, clear and within six months after the grant agent selection?
- **Participation:** Are there indications that the consultation process indicated in the program development timeline provides sufficient opportunity for inclusive dialogue?
- **Budget:** Is the budget for completing the activities described reasonable? Are the indicated unit costs acceptable?
- **Exceptional increase:** Does the information to request more than \$200,000 reflect the need linked to an exceptional circumstance, as mentioned in the guidelines?

If the Secretariat has serious questions or concerns related to the content of the application, it will return the application with written comments to the grant agent, copying the coordinating agency. The grant agent, in consultation with the government and local education group, will have the opportunity to address the Secretariat's concerns, if necessary, before resubmitting the application.

## Step 5. Approval

After the initial screening, the Secretariat's grant application review committee—composed of a team of technical, policy and financial experts—reviews the application, making sure that the grant process and budget are in line with GPE guidelines. The review committee makes recommendations to the designated manager within the Secretariat for further allocation decision.

Where an application has failed to address concerns raised during the screening stage, or where the Secretariat's grant application review committee raises significant new concerns, the Secretariat may ask for additional clarifications. Should the Secretariat decide not to approve the application, it will provide written comments outlining why the application was not approved.

### Time frame for application processing

If no clarifications are needed, the application will be processed within two weeks of receipt, and the Secretariat's decision will be communicated to the grant agent, with a copy sent to the coordinating agency.

Upon approval, the Secretariat will request that the trustee process a transfer of funds to the grant agent, where a financial procedures agreement already exists. Where there is no preexisting financial procedures agreement, the Secretariat will continue working with the grant agent to develop one.

## **4. Grant administration and monitoring**

### **4.1. General management**

The grant agent is responsible for the implementation of the program development grant and will use its own monitoring system to ensure that high-quality work is carried out on time. This includes financial management and monitoring in accordance with the grant agent's own policies and processes.

The grant agent may, at its discretion, subcontract program activities to other entities. The Secretariat encourages grant agents to source domestic or regional expertise as relevant and appropriate to foster local or regional capacity development. Contracting relationships will be the sole responsibility of the grant agent.

A basic principle of grant management is to detect issues that may arise during implementation as early as possible and resolve them. If there are delays or issues that may adversely affect the quality and timing of the work, it is the responsibility of the grant agent to inform the Secretariat and the local education group. In doing so, the grant agent should also include an explanation of the action being taken to mitigate the impact of delays and to ensure that the grant will be completed on time.

In general, a key role of the grant agent during implementation is to work closely with the government to ensure ownership of the program financed by the system transformation grants, and with the coordinating agency to ensure that the local education group is consulted and regularly informed on the status of activities, including any delays in the work plan.

### **4.2. Revision**

The grant agent may revise the grant activities, provided that the adjustments to the grant budget are in line with the objectives of the grant. The grant agent must inform the Secretariat of these adjustments.

If the grant agent needs to extend activities beyond the time frame indicated in the original application, it should prepare a request in consultation with the local education group. The Secretariat will consider the request and either issue a no-objection to the proposed changes or will inform the grant agent if the changes are not acceptable. Should

the Secretariat decide not to approve the request, it will provide written comments outlining its rationale.

#### **Submission of revisions**

The grant agent should submit requests for revisions to the Secretariat, copying the country team lead, using the following address: [gpe\\_grant\\_submission@globalpartnership.org](mailto:gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org).

### **4.3. Risk mitigation**

#### **4.3.1. Misuse of funds**

GPE has a policy of zero tolerance on misuse of GPE Fund resources. In the event that misuse does occur, the grant agent's internal processes for dealing with such issues will apply, including procedures to reclaim any misused funds, if applicable. The grant agent should also immediately inform the Secretariat, in writing, of any concerns regarding misuse of funds and remedial actions taken by the grant agent to mitigate the impact on the program in line with GPE's Policies and Communications Protocol on Misuse of GPE Trust Funds.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Safeguards against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

In preparing grant programs, the grant agent should consider GPE's Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment.<sup>10</sup> The policy aims to ensure that there are adequate safeguards against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and related misconducts in the implementation of programs funded by GPE. Grant agents are expected to follow their own SEAH policies and procedures; however, the grant application will need to flag if any SEAH risks are identified, and then provide details of such risk and mitigation measures. When an SEAH incident occurs in the implementation of a GPE-funded program, the grant agent is required to notify the Secretariat immediately. The notification should be sent to the country team lead, copying [gpe\\_grant\\_submission@globalpartnership.org](mailto:gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org).

### **4.4. Completion**

As mentioned in section 1.1, the main deliverable of the program development grant is the regular system transformation grant and/or Multiplier grant application package. However, the grant may cover some initial transformation grant program preparation activities.

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<sup>9</sup> Available at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-and-communications-protocol-misuse-gpe-trust-funds>.

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

If the transformation grant application is rejected and needs to be resubmitted, the grant agent is entitled to apply for additional program development grant resources. It is expected that much of the work would have been completed under the previous program development grant, and any application would need to fully explain how the new work under consideration would contribute to addressing the weaknesses identified as reasons for the non-approval of the initial grant application.

#### **4.5. Reporting**

The grant agent is requested to submit the grant's final financial statements to the Secretariat as stipulated in the financial procedures agreement (usually within six months). Any unspent funds at the close of the grant should be reported to the Secretariat and to the GPE trustee by an authorized signatory using the relevant annex outlined in the financial procedures agreement. The Secretariat and the trustee for the GPE Fund will liaise with the grant agent for further details on how the unspent funds will be returned.

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