# GUIDELINES

## ACCELERATED FUNDING

October 2023

**GPE** Transforming Education

# CONTENTS

# QUICK START

**What is this document?**

These guidelines explain how a country **eligible for GPE financing** can quickly access accelerated funding to support education when confronting a new or escalating **crisis**.

**When can a country seek accelerated funding?**

At times when crises such as natural disasters, armed conflict, forced displacement or health emergencies **threaten to impact education** systems.

**How much is available through accelerated funding?**

Eligible countries can ask for **advanced disbursement of up to 20 percent** of an outstanding **system transformation grant** or **Multiplier** allocation (for those countries only eligible for the Multiplier) or seek **reallocation** of up to $10 million under an existing program.

**What do I need to do?**

The government and local education group decide whether the crisis warrants triggering a request to GPE for accelerated funding and confirms eligibility with the GPE Secretariat before filling out an **application**.

**What do I provide?**

1. **Grant application**
2. **Budget** applying to the activities to be funded (Excel file)
3. **Minutes** of the local education group meeting that **endorsed** the application

The application should also contain a **results framework** and a **risk analysis and mitigation outline**, inserted as annexes or attachments.

**What's next?**

The final application should be submitted to the GPE Secretariat via email to gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org, copying relevant government officials (including the education ministry), the grant agent and coordinating agency as well as the GPE focal point and country team lead.

The accelerated funding process is expected to be completed in **8 weeks**, beginning from the notification of intention to apply, to the funding decision. After reviewing the application, the Secretariat will communicate its decision to the government, its grant agent and the coordinating agency.

# INTRODUCTION

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is committed to ensuring quality education for all children, including those living in **fragile and conflict-affected situations**, by boosting resilience and mitigating the systemic impacts of crises.

Since 2012, the accelerated funding mechanism has allowed GPE to maintain continuous, flexible support to education in countries affected by sudden or worsening crisis events. It assists governments and their partners in sustaining continuity of the education system, building back better and institutionalizing response capacities. The mechanism prioritizes vulnerable populations, including girls, and promotes the inclusion of crisis-affected children into national education systems.

**Eligibility**
**All** countries eligible for GPE financing are also eligible to access accelerated funding at the sudden onset of a crisis or the escalation of a protracted emergency.

The term "crisis" can include (but is not limited to) disasters driven by climate-induced hazards, armed conflict, forced displacement, health emergencies and any other situations that could either disrupt learning for all (or specific groups) of girls and boys or might degrade the level of public education across the country.

**Format**
To finance urgent activities planned to mitigate crisis impacts, affected countries may either apply for:

- **Advanced access** to a portion of an **outstanding** system transformation grant and/or GPE Multiplier allocation
- **Reallocation** of GPE funds **within** an existing program or from an existing program to a different program

**Amount**
Under advanced access, the eligible amount is: up to 20 percent of allocation in **system transformation grant–eligible countries,** up to 20 percent of the potential allocation in countries only eligible for the **GPE Multiplier**, or **US$10 million**, whichever is lowest of these three.

Countries can **combine** system transformation grant and Multiplier funds within a **single** accelerated funding grant.

For example: a country could obtain $5 million in Multiplier funds (secured with $15 million in cofinancing) and $5 million in system transformation grant funds for an overall accelerated funding grant from GPE of $10 million; i.e., a total resource mobilization of $25 million from all sources.

Countries seeking up to 20 percent of their **Multiplier allocation** work with external partners to obtain new and additional cofinancing, set out in an expression of interest. If a country's access to its system transformation grant allocation includes a top-up portion linked to triggers, it **cannot** apply for accelerated funding from that portion.

Under a reallocation, GPE's chief executive officer is mandated to cancel up to 20 percent or $10 million of any grant, whichever is lower, to facilitate financing of a proposed mitigation program. The GPE Board considers approval of higher amounts.

The cancellation and withholding of transfers to a grant agent **do not apply to the allocation amounts that are subject to outstanding financial obligations**. They also do not apply to **liabilities incurred in the implementation of activities** related to the allocation **prior** to the date the grant agent receives a notice of the decision to withhold transfers or to cancel all or part of such that allocation.

### Decision Timeline

As explained in the following table, GPE typically makes a decision on an accelerated funding application in around 8 weeks:

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

### Duration

Activities funded by accelerated funding are expected to be fully implemented within 18 months of the approval of the program. Any extension request should fully report on implementation of the different activities, with proper justifications that outstanding activities are still relevant and can be implemented within an additional 6 months, i.e., 24 months overall.

GPE will consider supplemental accelerated funding in cases of continued risk to the continuation of education or the education system, depending on availability of GPE funds in an outstanding allocation and/or other programs.

The government and grant agent are expected to consult with the local education group whether such continued support should be prioritized and communicate their proposed approach to the GPE Secretariat 6 months before the closing of the existing accelerated funding grant. The government and grant agent will be expected to demonstrate the progress made toward including response activities in national plans and budgets as a condition for further GPE support.

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

# INITIATION

### Beneficiaries and Eligible Activities

The application for accelerated funding asks for details on the nature and scope of **proposed interventions**, as well as the expected **beneficiaries**. Prioritization of beneficiaries should be guided by humanitarian needs assessments, post-disaster needs assessments or other joint assessments, and should include the following:

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

Program **activities** should have demonstrated alignment to existing or evolving regional and/or national education and emergency response plans, including but not limited to:

- National disaster response and recovery plans
- Humanitarian response plans, multi-year resilience programs and refugee response plans, where established
- Cross-sectoral plans as relevant; e.g., child protection, gender, etc.

As laid out in the **Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts**, following the emergence of a crisis, the local education group (in collaboration with humanitarian coordination mechanisms where relevant) will determine how support to education needs to be adapted, including short- to medium-term priorities and the expected joint planning framework.

There are three streams of eligible activities for accelerated funding grants, and the grant proposal should address all three:

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

These activities support maintaining educational services and investments following the emergence or escalation of a crisis. They can include but are not limited to activities that continue school functioning and/or offer alternatives such as sustainable temporary learning spaces, school meals and repairs to increase safety and security, etc. (sustainable structures are understood as low-cost and energy efficient, using local renewable or recycled materials and safely meeting the needs of their occupants).

Activities can also support remote or at-home learning, including during school closures, as well as associated training, monitoring, supplies and incentives for students, teachers and parents to maintain engagement in education, particularly for girls and other marginalized learners. Activities may also support student and teacher well-being, including through psychosocial support.

**2. Recovery in the medium term**

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

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

Preparedness and prevention activities are meant to support different components of the education system to mobilize quickly and effectively in the future to ensure continuity of education delivery once a crisis emerges, and that these capacities are institutionalized to allow systems to transition between immediate responses and sustainable approaches that support recovery and building back better.

Such activities can include but are not limited to contingency planning at different levels of the education system; teacher training on disaster risk and emergency response, capacity building on risk management; efforts to integrate 'education in emergencies' data into an education management information system and evidence-building to learn from ongoing crisis response, to strengthen capacities and planning for the future.

Countries are also encouraged to incorporate preparedness and prevention activities as they develop more resilient plans, accessing GPE's **system capacity grant** for this purpose if needed.

## Defining the Scope of Work

As per the Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts, following the emergence of a crisis, the Secretariat will engage in discussions with the coordinating agency and local education group and/or development and humanitarian partners, including grant agents, about whether and how support to education needs to be adapted in light of the situation.

Taking into consideration available funding from other sources, including humanitarian funding, the local education group should decide whether accelerated funding should be sought, define the specific actions to be financed and notify the Secretariat of the intention to apply for accelerated funding.

## Grant Agent Selection

Selection of a grant agent should follow the following principles:

1. The government in consultation with the coordinating agency and partners should first identify the **scope of work** under the grant, taking into account selection of beneficiaries, eligible activities (including alignment with education and emergency response plans) and duration.

2. **Based on the identified scope of work,** the government (in consultation with the coordinating agency) issues a **request for expressions of interest** from already accredited GPE grant agents that are also members of the local education group, preferably at one of its meetings and followed by written communication to all members. This is in the interest of time, as GPE's grant agent accreditation process currently takes a minimum of 3 months for bilateral/multilateral agencies and 6 months for international nongovernmental organizations. The recommended deadline for submission of expressions of interest is one week. Grant agent selection criteria should include the ability to (i) support efficient implementation of activities within the envisaged timeline, and (ii) assist the government in developing a program within 8 weeks of selection.

3. The government (in consultation with the coordinating agency) creates a **selection committee** with representation from different constituencies in the local education group. However, no single constituency can hold majority and agencies or persons with any conflict of interest should abstain from the selection committee or from defining its work. The final selection of the grant agent must be decided by the government on the basis of a recommendation from the selection committee and be endorsed by development partners (including civil society), preferably by consensus.

4. The selection **process** should be efficient and **transparent.** Any selection of a grant agent prior to a public call for expressions of interest will not be considered as final by GPE. The Secretariat may produce a quality assurance report on the grant agent selection to assess whether due process has been followed.

---

**Defining "endorse" in GPE processes**

The term "endorse" in all GPE documentation means to offer **public support**. It should not be taken to imply **formal** approval or decision-making.

---

## Justification for Multiple Grant Agents

Normally, a country would select a **single** grant agent. It is possible to seek more than one grant agent or to divide the grants between different entities but such a decision needs to be **justified**; e.g., implementation arrangements where grant agents use other agencies—that are also eligible to be a grant agent—as implementing partners (who in turn may further subgrant) can generate significant administration costs and hamper implementation.

Where more than one grant agent is used, GPE will provide direct grants to each grant agent, but coordination arrangements between the entities should be clearly described in the proposal(s), including any interdependencies that may impact implementation.

# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Either as part of the grant agent selection or immediately after having been selected, the grant agent prepares a program development timeline in line with that outlined during the selection process.

The timeline needs to be confirmed with the government and shared with both 1) the local education group to ensure continued collaborative decision making and 2) the GPE Secretariat to facilitate the approval process.

The timeline should include specific opportunities for consultation with the local education group and representatives of humanitarian coordination mechanisms. (Consultation differs from endorsement, as it is not limited to submitting a document to the local education group in seeking the public support of its members).

The timeline is expected to be established within one week after grant agent selection and any changes should be communicated immediately to the local education group and the Secretariat.

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

## Consultations and Safeguards

In selecting eligible activities and beneficiaries, the grant proposal must follow humanitarian principles and do no harm in accordance with GPE's Policy on Protection from **sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and related misconduct**. The Secretariat will share its quality assurance standards to aid partners in the development of the proposal.

Ideally, **consultations within the local education group** will include relevant 'education in emergencies' actors as regular and active members. However, in cases where such partners do not regularly participate in the local education group, it is advisable to invite focal points from humanitarian response groups (cluster, emergency or disaster working groups, refugee response, etc.) to participate in reviewing the accelerated funding proposal. They should receive the application, be invited to share data and to comment as with other group members. They should also be asked to the local education group meeting where the proposal will be discussed.

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

# SUBMISSION

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

## Revisions

The application package is considered an integral part of GPE's approval. Any changes to any of these documents after submission to GPE should follow GPE grant policy regarding revision. This includes any changes to the program during the grant agent's internal approval process.

The grant agent should submit requests for revisions to the Secretariat via email to gpe_grant_submission@globalpartnership.org copying the coordinating agency, the ministry focal point and the Secretariat country team lead.

# REPORTING, MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING

As with all GPE grants, the evidence-based learning process is critical for an accelerated funding grant throughout its life cycle, but the unique features of this grant necessitate some distinctions. These include, for example, its shorter term, often rapidly changing contexts and needs, and the necessity of having learning processes inclusive of humanitarian agencies and sectors beyond education.

Country-level monitoring in contexts of conflict or fragility should use conflict-sensitive approaches and quick feedback loop mechanisms to maximize data utility for beneficiaries. Keeping monitoring flexible and adaptive ensures that data collection remains both pragmatic and opportunistic; some essential data may not always be readily or easily accessible, while new information discovered by chance might become available and prove helpful for implementation.

It is vital to embed a systematic focus on gender equality, girls and vulnerable populations in country-level monitoring and reporting for accelerated funding grants to drive results for those children who are hardest to reach during crisis and at most risk of falling further behind.

Monitoring should be participatory among all levels of actors, beneficiaries and sectors involved. Governments and grant agents are expected to periodically collect and share information on grant progress and risks with the local education group and the education cluster, and any other groups engaged in addressing the crisis.

Close and regular coordination and reporting among country actors on implementation and education context monitoring seeks to ensure continued harmonization of interventions, shared understanding of how education is being affected by the crisis, areas of progress and needed remediation, and ongoing relevance of the grant within the broader challenges.

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

**Narrative reports**

The grant agent is required to submit two types of implementation reports, using standard GPE templates (a summary table concludes this section):

1) Progress report. **If the grant meets one or more of these conditions:** (i) implementation period exceeds 18 months, starting from the grant start/effectiveness date (and thereafter provide a progress report every 12 months, as applicable) and/or (ii) as part of any request for extension, whichever comes first. If the grant does not exceed 18 months and there is no request for an extension, then the grant agent is not required to provide a progress report to the Secretariat.

2) Final performance report at grant completion. Submitted within 6 months of the actual grant closing date.

**Financial reports**

The grant agent is asked to submit the grant's final financial statements to the GPE trustee as stipulated in the financial procedures agreement.

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 will liaise with the grant agent for further details on how the unspent funds will be returned.

## Reporting Overview

| | **During implementation** | **At completion** |
|---|---|---|
| **Purpose** | **If applicable:** To understand how much progress has been made toward the grant's objectives and the challenges encountered, for accelerated funding grants that exceed 18 months or when government and grant agent are requesting an extension. | To reflect on, and use evidence for forward-looking planning on emergency response and building back better education systems: continued relevance especially for crisis-affected beneficiaries, efficiency, efficacy especially vis-à-vis girls and vulnerable groups, coherence, and sustainability. |
| **Frequency** | **Such a report is due only if:** (i) implementation period exceeds 18 months, starting from the grant start/effectiveness date (and thereafter provide a progress report every 12 months, as applicable) and/or (ii) as part of any request for extension, whichever comes first. | Once, at accelerated funding grant completion. There may be cases where the completion report is due less than six months from the date the last implementation progress report was submitted. In such cases, the Secretariat still requires that ultimate progress report. |
| **Format** | Grant reports should be submitted in the GPE reporting portal for grant agents following the GPE implementation and completion report templates available online. Please contact the grant operations officer responsible for your country if you require assistance in accessing the portal. | Grant reports should be submitted in the GPE reporting portal for grant agents following the GPE implementation and completion report templates available online. Please contact the grant operations officer responsible for your country if you require assistance in accessing the portal. |
| **Contents (highlights)** | Analysis of progress and performance on each of the accelerated funding objectives. Indication of any challenges and remediation. Continued relevance in the context of ongoing crisis. Emerging successful practices and lessons. Reporting on accelerated funding standard indicators, global numbers and number of beneficiaries. | Self-assessment at completion of relevance, efficiency and efficacy by grant objective. Coordination and partnerships forged. Snapshot of management and fiduciary performance. Successful practices and lessons. Potential for sustainability and related factors. Reporting on accelerated funding standard indicators, global numbers and number of beneficiaries. |
| **Reporting process** | The report should be prepared by the grant agent and then shared for input with the government, local education group, education cluster or any other group as applicable or as per alternative governance arrangements before submission to the Secretariat. | |
| **Timing of report** | Within 15 months after approval of the accelerated funding. | No later than six months after the actual grant closing date. |
| **Submission details** | GPE has launched a reporting portal for grant agents to submit implementation and completion reports online. If you require assistance in accessing the portal, please reach out to the grant operations officer responsible for your country. | |

## OFFICES

### Washington
701 18th St NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
USA

### Paris
6 Avenue d'Iena
75116 Paris
France

### Brussels
Avenue Marnix 17, 2nd floor
B-1000, Brussels
Belgium

## CONTACT

**Email:** information@globalpartnership.org

**GPE** Transforming Education