

Terms of Reference and Selection Process

Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP)

1. Introduction

The [GPE 2025 strategic plan](#) includes a “system transformation” approach which seeks to source, support, and sustain transformative education reforms in partner countries with the potential for impact at scale.

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.

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.

GPE 2025 aims to support countries in identifying their own critical pathway to system transformation. This includes support and incentives to address key system enabling factors, as well as supporting local education groups to identify and align behind a priority reform with potential to catalyze system-wide change. A key step is a local-level assessment of these enabling factors, designed to identify which factors pose opportunities or risks to accelerating progress in any given context.

The four enabling factors are:

- Use of data and evidence;
- Gender-responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring;
- Sector coordination; and
- Equity, efficiency, and volume of domestic financing of education

Country status vis-à-vis these four factors can give an indication of potential bottlenecks to a country's successful implementation of a reform agenda. Identifying and seeking to address these challenges is seen as an important step along a system transformation pathway.

One feature of the operating model is the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP), which provides an assessment of country status against the four enabling factors. The ITAP assessment will feed into country dialogue on system transformation priorities and bottlenecks and inform the development of a partnership compact of the country around a priority reform to catalyze transformation. The assessment also informs GPE Board decision-making on GPE grant financing of the reform prioritized in the compact.

A provisional ITAP was established in the spring of 2021 to pilot the model and completes its service on June 30, 2022, to be replaced by a permanent ITAP starting July 1, 2022.

2. Mandate

The ITAP performs two key functions:

- **Assessment and Advisory:** The ITAP provides an independent assessment of country status against the GPE 2025 operating model enabling factors to local education groups and to the GPE Board. The operating model includes a contextualized and multi-dimensional approach to the assessment, inclusive of placing a greater emphasis on incentivizing country progress relative to its own context.
- **Reporting on lessons learned:** The ITAP will produce an annual lessons learned report. The report will provide summary reflections on the functioning of the ITAP, its independence and compliance with conflict of interest procedures, and the approach to assessment of the enabling factors. A detailed TOR for the lessons learned report will be developed by the Secretariat. The report will be shared with the GPE Board and its committees, as appropriate.

3. Composition, Roles, and Member Profile

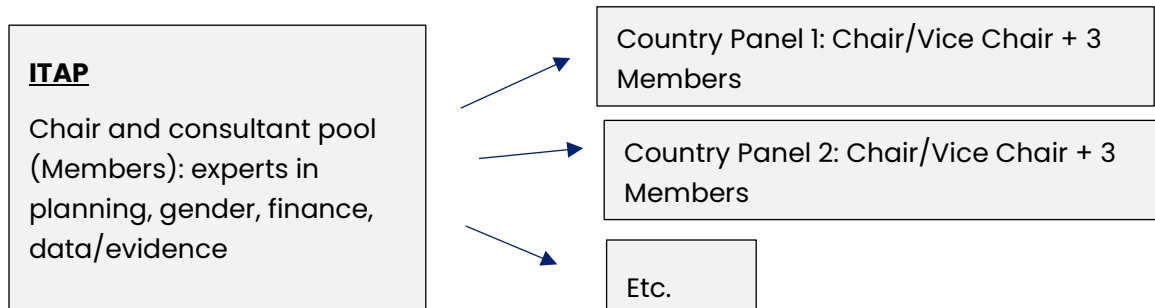
- **ITAP Composition and expertise.** The ITAP will be comprised of a Chair and a pool of 24–26 seasoned consultants (Members). The Chair is responsible for coordinating the work of the ITAP, including selecting Members to serve on country panels. It is expected that the ITAP Chair will identify four Members to staff panels (including the Chair).¹ Assuming 20 panels per year, this approach will allow each Member to work on 3–4 panels annually. This is expected to support assessment continuity across

¹ Where a country assessment is complex and/or requires additional expertise, the Chair may increase the size of the panel

panels and the development of lessons learned.

One or more Vice Chairs would be designated from the pool of experts by the Chair, in consultation with the Secretariat and based on panel experience and skills requisite for the Chair. The Vice Chair(s) would lead specific panels in order to accommodate concurrent panels or unavailability of the Chair. The Chair is expected to regularly lead panels.

Composition of ITAP and Country Panels



Detailed TORs for the Chair and ITAP Members are included as annexes to this document.

- **Country panel profile.** Collectively, each panel should have:
 - Strong technical expertise (methodological, programmatic, and operational) in the following areas: education planning, finance, gender equality, human rights in education, data and evidence, and sector coordination. TOR for experts provide further detail. However, expertise in areas of education equity and inclusion, education reform expertise/experience, fragile and conflict-affected contexts, public financial management, teacher policy, and aid effectiveness would further strengthen the panel.
 - Diverse professional experiences and backgrounds and include persons who work or have worked with a broad range of organizations and government at country levels across multiple countries and reflect geographic and gender diversity. Relevant academic and research backgrounds are also desirable. It will be particularly important to ensure each panel reflects gender diversity and includes representation from the Global South.
 - Regional experience, with country-specific experience preferred.
 - Familiarity with state-of-the-art thinking across enabling factor areas.
 - Proven experience in delivering strategic assessments based on in-depth technical analysis.

- Proven experience in effectively communicating strategic assessment to diverse stakeholders at country and global levels.
 - Relevant language proficiency in line with the country assessment (desired)
 - Expertise in fragile and conflict-affected contexts for panels assessing a fragile/conflict-affected country (requested)
- **Member profile.** Members for each panel will be identified based on relevant expertise, skills, knowledge and availability (see Member TORs). While it is not a pre-requisite that Members are familiar with GPE to serve on the ITAP, it will be important for each Member to become familiar with GPE 2025 and the role of the ITAP within the operating model.
 - **Language:** GPE working languages include English and French. All panel members will have advanced English language skills. Where relevant to the country context, the working language of specific country panels will be French; fluency in Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, is a major asset.
 - **Eligibility.** ITAP membership is restricted to individuals who are not employed by a GPE member. Each panel is composed with due consideration of any potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest (COI).
 - **Role of the Chair.** The Chair is responsible for ensuring the timely completion of panel assessments and the annual ITAP lessons learned report. The Chair's work will include composing and coordinating the work of country panels, ensuring the methodology for assessing enabling factors is followed, facilitating consensus among different reviewers, and consolidating panel conclusions and recommendations.

4. Review Modality and Key Deliverables

The ITAP is expected to complete some 20 assessments annually. The proposed country assessment process is as follows:

1. *Compose a country panel:* Approximately two weeks in advance of receipt of the country file, the ITAP Chair will identify Members to staff the panel and clarify the expected contributions of each Member to the assessment.
2. *Submission of country enabling factors package:* The ITAP will receive a file comprising elements required to make an assessment of the country status against the operating model enabling factors.
3. *Kick-off meeting:* Approximately one week after receipt of the file by the panel, the panel meets virtually to receive a briefing from the Secretariat and identify queries/information gaps to be requested of the country. Follow-up should only be required in cases where critical information is missing.

4. *Preliminary assessments:* Approximately one week after the kick-off meeting, panel Members share draft assessments with the ITAP Chair/Vice Chair, as applicable, and in accordance with agreed formats and level of detail.
5. *Internal consultation:* The ITAP Chair/Vice Chair, may call a virtual meeting for the panel to discuss their assessment and arrive at a consensus and key messages. Following the meeting, panel Members collaborate on the joint report virtually under the leadership of the ITAP Chair/Vice Chair.
6. *Secretariat Review:* The Secretariat reviews the report to ensure assessment guidelines are adequately followed.
7. *Complete and clear draft report:* The ITAP Chair/Vice Chair finalizes and clears the draft report and shares with the local education group, through the Secretariat.
8. *The local education group reviews the draft report for any major factual errors and disagreements.* Any response is submitted within two weeks.
9. *Report finalization and clearance:* The ITAP Chair completes the report, taking into consideration the response from the local education group, and sends the cleared report to the Secretariat for sharing with the country and for inclusion in the country's partnership compact package for Board decision. *ITAP assessments and communications will follow GPE guidelines and templates.*

The proposed timeframe is three weeks for completion of steps 2–7; and up to an additional week to clear the final report in step 9, starting from the time the ITAP receives feedback from the government/local education group.

The ITAP Chair will lead completion of a lessons learned report, with the TOR for this report to be developed by June, 2022 and the first report expected to be completed by May 2023.

5. Engagement with the Secretariat and the Board

Secretariat

- **ITAP Recruitment**
 - Conducts an open and transparent process (see Annex A) to recruit and present candidates for the positions of Chair and Members to the Performance, Impact and Learning Committee for appointment via a non-objection decision. The Secretariat will manage the HR process to ensure smooth and timely appointment of panelists.
- **Facilitates Communication Between Countries, ITAP, and the Board**
 - With support from the Secretariat, the local education group conducts a self-assessment of the operating model enabling factor areas. The self-assessment is

shared with the Secretariat for ITAP review, along with the country documents on which the self-assessment is based.

- Following the ITAP assessment and once the local education group has submitted the partnership compact package to the Secretariat, the Secretariat conducts a quality assurance review of the compact's proposed focus area for system transformation and assesses whether the challenges identified by the ITAP in enabling factors rated by ITAP as "high" are adequately addressed. The Secretariat submits the package to the Board, along with the ITAP report, to inform Board decision-making on GPE financing of country education reform agendas.

- **Board Oversight**

- The Performance, Impact and Learning Committee oversees the performance of the ITAP and approves appointments via a non-objection decision.

6. Staffing, Term, Costs

Staffing: 24–26 independent consultants will be recruited, with one designated Chair and a minimum of three Members to cover each of the five required expertise area. Education finance/economics is ideally better represented in the pool as a more specialized area of expertise. Additional consultants may be recruited as the need arises.

Recruitment and Selection: The recruitment of the Chair, and roster of Members takes place via an open and transparent process in accordance with World Bank policies and procedures (see below).

ITAP Term and Level of Effort : The Chair and Members serve a three-year term and may submit an application for subsequent terms following any call for nominations.² The term of Members starts when they start work on a country panel. Any service on the provisional ITAP does not count towards the three-year term.

Each panel is expected to require up to 23 days of time, based on a four-person panel (including the Chair), with a maximum of five days from each Member and a maximum of eight days from the Chair to deliver the draft and final reports additionally. Where a country assessment is complex, the Chair may increase the size of the panel and/or timeline, in consultation with the Secretariat. Such scenarios would increase the number of days.

An additional 20 days is required to ensure completion of a lessons-learned report. Induction of ITAP Members on GPE guidance and methodology is expected to require a further 2 days per consultant.

² Subject to annual renewal of the STC contract per WB procurement rules.

7. Selection process: Recruitment of ITAP Chair and Member Pool

Selection is based on an open and transparent process for recruitment of the ITAP Chair and Members. Please see Annex A for details.

8. Ethics, Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

ITAP members will be subject to the GPE ITAP Conflict of Interest Procedures and sign an acknowledgement statement for the policy, as well as a confidentiality statement. They would agree to uphold the integrity and independence of the panel and disclose any affiliations that may affect their independence in assessing the enabling factors of a particular country.

9. Oversight / Point of Contact and Reporting

The Chair and Members of the ITAP will be appointed by the Performance, Impact and Learning Committee via a non-objection decision, who will inform the Board of this appointment, and will liaise with the Secretariat ITAP Coordinator, Finance and Grant Operations. ITAP Members will report to the ITAP Chair regarding technical work on country panels and liaise with the Secretariat on HR matters.

10. Resources

In its work the ITAP is guided by the following:

- [Guide for Enabling Factors Analysis for GPE System Transformation Grants](#)
- [Enabling Factors Analysis Template](#)
- ITAP Guidance Note and Report Template
- Completion reports for GPE grants
- Global evidence and best practices
- GPE conflict of interest procedures for ITAP Members and confidentiality statement

Annex A –ITAP Selection Process

Annex B –[ITAP Chair Terms of Reference](#)

Annex C –[ITAP Member Terms of Reference](#)

Annex A –ITAP Selection Process

1	RECRUITMENT March 10–April 4
	a. Recruitment launched for ITAP Chair and Members b. Positions shared with partners and professional networks, including through DCP focal points and social media c. An information webinar will be organized during the recruitment period for interested individuals
2	LOGLISTING AND SHORTLISTING Early/Mid April
	a. Secretariat technical staff longlist candidates for Member and for Chair based on TOR selection criteria and diversity and conflict of interest guidance b. <u>ITAP Chair Selection Task Force</u> (Secretariat CTO, FGO-QA Lead, PILC Representative-DCP constituency, CEP Regional Manager, Sr. QA Focal Point) discuss longlist and identify 4–5 candidates for interview c. <u>ITAP Member Selection Task Force</u> (Secretariat EPL Lead, CEP Regional Manager, FGO-QA Focal Point, ITAP Coordinator, TBD) discuss longlist and identify 24–26 Member candidates to shortlist d. Member shortlist is reviewed and endorsed by Secretariat CTO e. n.b. Shortlisting for all ITAP positions will include consideration that each country panel include gender diversity and representation of the Global South, as well as adequate representation in areas of expertise
3	CHAIR INTERVIEWS AND SELECTION, APPROVAL late April–mid May
	a. Chair candidates are interviewed by the respective task force. b. Candidates selected for the Chair position, endorsed by the CEO, and Member positions, endorsed by the CTO, are presented to the Performance, Impact and Learning Committee for approval via non-objection, then invited to serve, with contracting following World Bank STC guidance ³
4	OPERATIONALIZE PANEL Early July
	a. Contracted members attend orientation b. Chair composes country panels, as needed c. ITAP is effective

³ ITAP Chair and Members serving on country panels will be contracted as Short-Term Consultants in accordance with World Bank HQ Guidelines on HQ Appointments Short Term Consultant (STC)