
[Education sector plan appraisal](#)

BRIEF 6

[Educational planning methodology](#)

Education sector plan (ESP) appraisal is a process that aims to provide an independent and external opinion of the content of the plan. The aims of an appraisal include to ultimately endorse or validate the plan, but also to provide a further window of opportunity to improve its quality, through the formulation of expert recommendations.

The appraisal process may be mandatory, as when a country intends to apply for international funding, in which case it is a step in the quality assurance review process stewarded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). It may also be voluntary, initiated by national decision-makers to provide a new perspective, in the form of a self-appraisal (by the strategic planning team), internal appraisal (national review process), or a peer-review (involving education ministry officers from abroad).

Either way, the criteria that are deemed key to determining an ESP's credibility, coherence, relevance and feasibility are worth keeping in mind from the early stages of planning. Several apply directly to quality and learning. They are organized according to five dimensions in the GPE/IIEP Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal (GPE and IIEP-UNESCO, 2015):

1. Leadership and participation,
2. Soundness and relevance,
3. Equity, efficiency and learning,
4. Coherence,
5. Feasibility, implementation and monitoring.

The third dimension, 'Equity, efficiency and learning', provides several precise pointers in terms of questions that strategic planning teams may want to consider in developing strategies to improve quality and learning outcomes. They include:

- 'Are the key dimensions of ... learning soundly addressed to increase sector performance?'
- 'Does the sector analysis clearly identify the key issues relating to ... learning?'
- 'Are available data sufficient to assess: ... learning improvements (quality and availability of inputs, learning outcomes)?'
- 'Are the underlying causes relating to the key dimensions of ... learning properly addressed in the strategies and programmes?'
- 'Are the issues of efficiency addressed in relation to access, quality, and learning outcomes? Is there evidence that the strategies related to equity and improved learning are cost-efficient and cost-effective?'

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- 'Are there specific strategies to manage and remedy learning issues? To what extent can inputs related to learning (e.g. number of instructional hours, language of instruction, teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers) promote and incentivize improvements in student learning processes and learning outcomes?'
 - 'To what extent can the planned programmes and actions be expected to have a leverage effect on the sector performances in terms of ... improved learning?'

Should a country intend to access international funding for the implementation of its ESP, the appraisal will be instrumental. As such, planning teams will benefit from a broader perspective of the GPE partner countries' aims. The organization's [2020 strategic plan](#)'s first goal is to achieve: 'Improved and more equitable student learning outcomes through quality teaching and learning' (GPE, 2016: 7). Great focus is placed on teachers, as the single most unequivocally effective way of improving learning. As such, the partnership's chosen indicators measure the improvement of learning outcomes, the quality of learning assessment systems, and the availability and distribution of trained teachers. The GPE operates a results-based funding model, that encourages partner countries to review their policies and strategies to focus specifically on learning outcomes. A precondition for the receipt of a grant is to either have an operative system to monitor learning outcomes or a costed plan to develop one.

References and sources

GPE (Global Partnership for Education). 2016. [GPE 2020 strategic plan](#). Washington: GPE.

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