



**EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FUND COMMITTEE MEETING
PARIS-SEPTEMBER 18, 2008
MINUTES**

A. SUMMARY OF KEY DECISIONS

EPDF Support for Civil Society Advocacy

1. The EPDF Committee agreed that GCE will prepare a fully costed proposal for EPDF support for Civil Society Organizations, taking into account the points raised by members, that would be circulated by November 15, for consideration in Oslo, December 2008. This 3-year proposal will be presented directly to the Committee for consideration, on an exceptional basis.

EPDF Strategic Vision

2. The EPDF Committee agreed that a summary of the brainstorming session will be produced by the Secretariat, to be circulated to the Committee (see [Annex 1](#)). Committee members will submit comments by mid-October to help prepare the draft EPDF guidelines. The draft EPDF guidelines will be circulated to the Committee by November 15 and will be presented for discussion in Oslo, December 2008.

B. INTRODUCTION

3. A meeting of the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) Committee of donors was held in Paris, France, on September 18, 2008. It was chaired by Robin Horn, Education Sector Manager, Human Development Network, World Bank. The agenda is attached in [Annex 2](#), and the list of participants and observers can be found in [Annex 3](#).

4. The Chair welcomed participants and thanked donors for their continuous support. The meeting had two objectives: first, to allow the EPDF Committee an opportunity to hear a presentation from the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) for the EPDF to support civil society capacity development; and, second, to give the Committee the opportunity collectively and informally to consider the strengths and weaknesses of EPDF, as well as to brainstorm on ways to meet the challenges of making EPDF more strategic and with better performance. As planned, the Committee heard no requests for EPDF resources.

C. GCE PROPOSAL FOR EPDF SUPPORT

5. The Committee heard a presentation by David Archer of GCE, in which GCE requested the Committee's agreement to receive a proposal for EPDF support directly from GCE rather than it being directed to the Committee via the World Bank. The Committee was briefed on the

intended content of the proposal (developing the institutional capacity of CSOs in respect to their further involvement into FTI country level process).

6. The Committee agreed to accept the direct submission, on an exceptional basis, of a fully costed three-year proposal for EPDF support for CSOs. The Committee requested that GCE take into account the points raised by its members. The proposal is to be provided to the EPDF Committee by November 15, for consideration in Oslo, in December 2008. The Committee stated that a different agency could be chosen for the execution of this proposal, if appropriate.

7. The following points were raised by the Committee in respect to the GCE proposal: the proposal should (i) explain clearly how it will support harmonization; (ii) indicate that it avoids any duplication of effort among agencies and CSOs; (iii) detail how CSOs intend to hold government accountable; (iv) explain clearly both the process of deciding which CSOs will receive support from EPDF and who is responsible within GCE/CSOs for decisions in respect to the use of EPDF funds; (v) detail how accountability by CSOs will be handled by GCE; (vi) ensure that EPDF resources would only target CSOs in FTI countries; (vii) explain clearly how funded activities would be sustained and articulate GCE's recent experience in this regard with activities financed via DfID/Commonwealth Secretariat; (viii) respond to the suggestion that it was unreasonable to expect that the three regional secretariats proposed would function for only a short time; (ix) articulate clearly that financed activities would not sidestep national or local parliaments; (x); ensure that activities financed had a strong link to the strategic focus of EPDF; and (xi) contain a detailed budget and a comprehensive implementation plan.

D. MEETING CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH MAKING EPDF MORE STRATEGIC AND IMPROVING EPDF PERFORMANCE

8. The FTI Secretariat presented a summary of options for improving EPDF performance and improving its strategic focus. Key options presented for consideration were: (i) prioritizing EPDF allocations to countries which still do not have Education Sector Plans; (ii) prioritizing long-term rather than short-term capacity building activities; (iii) adjusting EPDF objectives to improve their clarity and relevance; (v) preparing EPDF guidelines (as agreed in Tokyo); (v) providing for implementation/management by agencies other than the World Bank update; and (vi) involving Local Education Groups (LEGs) in that approval process for EPDF proposals

9. The presentation was followed by an informal brainstorming session facilitated by Rosemary Bellew. Participants included both Committee members and representatives from the World Bank's regional units who are currently managing EPDF funds. Key issues and challenges raised by the Committee were the need to: (i) better communicate existing EPDF processes, outcomes and products, thus improving transparency and understanding both at the Committee, donor-HQ, and in-country levels, and improving cross-regional knowledge sharing; (ii) more closely link EPDF support to FTI processes and FTI countries (current and potential); (iii) identify and eliminate inconsistencies among processes used by different World Bank regions in respect to EPDF processes and management; (iv) more clearly demonstrate that EPDF is demand-driven, thus promoting the involvement of LEGs in the proposal process; (v) fund more downstream activities including institutional development; (vi) clarify EPDF objectives and an EPDF results framework (within the boundary of the Administrative Agreement). Annex 1 contains a paper produced by the session facilitator, "*EPDF Issues and Next Steps*".

10. The EPDF Committee members expressed concern over the delay in delivering an EPDF approach paper, which has been promised by the Secretariat in Tokyo.

E. OTHER BUSINESS

11. The meeting concluded with the presentation of a major, soon-to-be finalized study on the costs of financing the expansion of post-basic education in 33 sub-Saharan countries, prepared by a joint World Bank-AFD team comprising Mamy Rakotomalala (AFTHD), Blandine Ledoux (AFD, now with Pole de Dakar) and Alain Mingat (AFD consultant).

F. LIST OF ANNEXES AND ATTACHMENTS

ANNEX 1: **Draft, EPDF Next Steps, September 2008,
by consultant Rosemary Bellew**

ATTACHMENT A: **Recommendations of the EPDF Task Force**

ATTACHMENT B: **Selected Conclusions of the EPDF Desk Review**

ANNEX 2: **Final Agenda of EPDF Committee Meeting, September 18, 2008, Paris**

ANNEX 3: **List of Participants in EPDF Committee Meeting,
Paris, September 18, 2008**

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Draft
EPDF ISSUES AND NEXT STEPS
By Rosemary Bellew - Consultant

INTRODUCTION

This note summarizes the main issues raised by the Strategy Committee over the past year and proposes next steps for their resolution. The proposed next steps are divided into immediate actions that can be taken immediately and made effective as of January 2009, and those that will require further consultation during 2009. The launching of a second phase of the EPDF in 2010 will provide an opportunity to re-visit any fundamentals of the current design that require more discussion, reaching consensus and changes to the Administration Agreement and other documents that establish the fund. The note draws from the recommendations of the EPDF Task force report issued in March 2007 (*Annex 1*), key findings of a desk review of April 2008 (*Annex 2*), and a Strategy Committee brainstorming session of September 18, 2008.

A. SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

1. IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY IN HOW EPDF FUNDS ARE ACCESSED AND UTILIZED

- (a) To improve knowledge of how EPDF funds are accessed, comprehensive guidelines for all stakeholders will be prepared. These will be made available through the FTI website. The guidelines will provide an explanation of the EPDF to include, *inter alia*:
- The role, financial responsibilities and accountabilities of the Bank, country government, in-country donor group, and in-country donor coordinator (or partner agency for agency-executed grants), and the processing of agreements or contracts needed to disburse funds, within the current arrangement of the World Bank as Trustee of the EPDF;
 - Procedures, forms and process charts for the accessing, approval and utilization of country-specific allocations (inspired by the process utilized in the Africa region of the World Bank);
 - Funding priorities and eligibility criteria, the first priority being program preparation and policy dialogue around education sector plans;
 - The three broad categories of activities funded as:
 - Technical and analytical support for preparation of education sector plans;
 - Knowledge generation through multi-country/regional studies and strategy formulation
 - Knowledge sharing and policy dialogue through national and international fora to foster common understanding of issues and to build commitment to and ownership of reforms.
 - The conditions under which other agencies may apply for funding for regional activities, along with the application, review and approval criteria and processes, the respective responsibilities of the World Bank as the Trustee and the executing

agency in preparing, reviewing, approving, contracting, monitoring, quality assurance and reporting;

- The guiding operational principles of the EPDF, which include promoting:
 - Synergy and collaboration with international and regional agencies,
 - Capacity building of country-level and regional institutions, and
 - Flexibility, speed and responsiveness of funding allocations to country needs.

(b) The FTI Secretariat will make available through the FTI web site, and update semi-annually:

- EPDF guidelines and application forms,
- Funding decisions,
- Resulting products, and
- Schedule of activities

2. STRENGTHEN THE INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENTS AND LOCAL PARTNER AGENCIES IN DETERMINING FINANCING PRIORITIES AND EXECUTION OF EPDF-FUNDED ACTIVITIES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

The World Bank will systematically require the sign off on major (to be defined) country-specific funding requests by the in-country lead coordinating agency, and the World Bank Task manager.

3. ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF COUNTRIES WHERE THE WORLD BANK HAS SUSPENDED ITS ENGAGEMENT OR DOES NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE PROGRAM

The guidelines will describe the process by which management of EPDF resources could be delegated to a partner in countries where the World Bank has suspended its financing or where the World Bank Task Team Leader is unable to work.

4. STRENGTHEN THE LINKAGES BETWEEN EPDF FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND COUNTRY-LEVEL FTI PROCESSES AND THE BROADER FTI GOALS OF ADDRESSING DATA, POLICY, FINANCING AND CAPACITY GAPS AND THEMATIC AREAS OF INTEREST (HIV/AIDS, GENDER, VULNERABILITY)

The World Bank will:

- Align future EPDF country allocations to countries that are working within the FTI framework;
- Align EPDF capacity building support to strengthen and retain existing national capacity; and
- Prioritize activities that contribute to the broader FTI gap filling goals and priority thematic areas.

B. ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN PREPARATION FOR EPDF GUIDELINES

Several issues and suggestions expressed by EPDF donors will require further discussion to reach consensus, and may also require adjustments to the current EPDF design. Such

modifications would be best addressed in their entirety when the EPDF will come up for renewal in 2010. These issues and suggestions are stated below.

1. **Results Framework.** Review and make adjustments to the development objectives and results framework as may be desirable, in particular with respect to if and how the EPDF might be framed to focus greater priority on the broader FTI goals of improving policy, data, capacity, and country-level partner coordination.
2. **Eligible Recipients and Executing Agencies.** Define the conditions under which country-governments, UN agencies, regional associations, NGOs/civil society organizations, “technical teams”, etc. could be eligible recipients or executing agencies, and the application and review process and funding mechanism.
3. **Processes and procedures.** Review the processes and procedures for multi-country/regional programming and options to nurture greater regional ownership.
4. **Responsibilities and Accountabilities.** Determine the actors critical to the functioning of the EPDF and articulate their responsibilities and accountabilities.
5. **Linkages with the broader aid architecture.** Clarify the complimentary role of the EPDF and its value added within broader global and institutional efforts in capacity development.

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MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EPDF TASK FORCE

1. Priorities for EPDF funding. The work under the four development objectives of the EPDF can be classified into three broad categories of activities to be funded:
 - (a) Technical and analytical support to national teams for preparation of national education sector development programs;
 - (b) Knowledge-generation through multi-country/regional studies and strategy formulation;
 - (c) Knowledge-sharing and policy dialogue through national and international fora to foster common understanding of issues and build commitment to and ownership of reforms.
2. Among these, program preparation and policy dialogue around education sector programs is the *first priority for funding*. Activities aimed at implementing elements of sector programs should normally *not* be eligible for EPDF funding. However, EPDF may provide *selective financing* for technical support, information exchange and policy-dialogue/development to help resolve technical or policy issues constraining implementation of sector programs.
3. All activities should be conducted in a way that seeks to strengthen collaboration and synergy between the work of different partner organizations and that helps build capacity in recipient countries and in regional institutions.
4. Involvement of recipient countries and executing agencies (other than the World Bank) in EPDF country-specific funding decisions and execution at the country level. The main concern of broadening the involvement of countries and agencies other than the WB in both (a) EPDF funding decisions and (b) execution of EPDF-funded activities, should be addressed within the current arrangement of the WB remaining the trustee of the Fund. In this regard, the following actions should be taken:
 - **Improve the knowledge of how EPDF works:** The World Bank should develop an *Explanatory Note* for in-country donor groups and other potential recipients of EPDF funds describing how the Fund works. The Note should cover:
 - ⇒ the implications of the Bank's fiduciary responsibilities as the Trustee;
 - ⇒ the roles and accountabilities of key actors involved – i.e., the government, the lead in-country donor, and the World Bank as trustee -- in preparing, reviewing, approving, monitoring, assuring quality, and reporting on country-specific work, whether executed by the Governments, the World Bank or partner agencies (and approved by the concerned legal and trust-fund services in the WB to ensure compliance with the rules governing the WB's accountabilities as Trustee; and
 - ⇒ the Bank's processing of the grant agreements or contracts needed to disburse funds at a higher rate.
 - **Stimulate ownership of in-country donors and government:** Require sign-off on major country-specific EPDF funding requests by three parties: the Government, the in-country lead donor and the World Bank task manager.

- **Involve Regional Advisory Groups in defining regional work programs:** The challenge is to keep the process informative while minimizing the transactions costs and allowing the task teams to implement their work.
 - **Enhance the responsiveness and flexibility of EPDF funding:** This requires actions on part of the Trustee to expedite processing and limit bureaucratic hassles for regional WB staff responsible for processing EPDF funding requests, and on the part of in-country lead donors and beneficiaries to play effectively their respective roles as defined in the Explanatory Note.
5. Further reflection would be needed on the idea of “notional” annual EPDF allocations, the idea being that all countries eligible for EPDF funding would receive an initial “small” allocation for work decided upon at the country level, and spent in a way consistent with the rules governing EPDF fund use under World Bank trusteeship.
 6. Government vs. WB-execution at the country level: Government execution of EPDF-financed activities should not be the general rule, but should be an option when warranted by special circumstances.
 7. Countries receiving EC/ECF grants should be eligible for EPDF-support managed by the World Bank or other partners to help conduct the analytical work required to underpin and evaluate sector programs. Furthermore, countries receiving ECF grants should benefit from support for resolving technical and policy issues occurring during program implementation, preferably through technical assistant components included as a *routine* part of their ECF allocations.
 8. The FTI partners urgently explore options for addressing the apparent decline in their technical capacity resulting from the current evolution in the international architecture for education aid.
 9. The FTI partners urgently agree on what is required for an agency to take on the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of being “in-country lead agency” for the FTI partnership including for EPDF-financed activities.
 10. All agencies executing EPDF-funded activities must do this in a way that seeks to stimulate increased collaboration and synergy among the agencies, and in close cooperation with the host government and national and/or regional institutions.
 11. Expanding regional analytical work, policy dialogue and knowledge dissemination needs to be done in a way that broadens the involvement of agencies other than the WB in both EPDF funding decisions and in execution of EPDF-funded regional activities. This requires that the respective roles and responsibilities of the World Bank as Trustee of the EPDF, and partner agencies executing EPDF-financed work be clarified.
 12. The process of preparing the legal instrument for transfer of resources from the WB as trustee to the executing partner needs further refinement to both ensure that EPDF-financing can be approved quickly in response to evolving needs, and that the work involved becomes far less cumbersome, time-consuming and frustrating to all parties.
 13. Support for regional technical teams to provide technical support to countries. Support should be provided in a way that helps build national capacity by helping countries better

mobilize, utilize, strengthen and retain *existing national capacity* rather than providing traditional training and long-term technical assistance that often ends up substituting for national capacity. Technical teams, such as the Pôle de Dakar, should be eligible for EPDF support.

14. “Responsive support” for ‘Thematic Work’: Global/multi-regional studies and activities should be eligible for EPDF funding. However, due care must be given to avoid overlap with work financed by other trust funds. Also, the process for selecting, managing and implementing this type of work needs to be determined. The Task Force suggested that the topics be selected by the Strategic Committee, the process be managed by the FTI secretariat, and the work be executed by various partners including the World Bank’s education Hub.
15. Synergies with existing Trust Funds: All trust funds, including the EPDF, needs to be used in a way that benefits from the comparative advantages of each fund, strengthens the synergy among them and avoids overlap and duplication. Within the World Bank, this process is generally best managed by the respective regional managers.
16. External evaluations of the EPDF should be conducted every 3-5 years, and a set of indicators should be developed to assess the Fund’s impact in each of the three main categories of activities.

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SELECTED KEY FINDINGS OF EPDF DESK REVIEW

1. ***EPDF-supported activities are responsive to the Fund's development objectives.*** All EPDF-funded activities can reasonably be linked to one (or more) of the four EPDF objectives.
2. ***EPDF supported activities and expenditure are largely responsive to the intended focus on primary education.*** However, EPDF proposals and progress reports should more clearly identify the main level of education targeted by the activity and expenditure.
3. ***Intra-regional allocations are responsive to the IDA-country priority.*** Nearly 99 percent of EPDF funding for country-specific activities was allocated to IDA-eligible countries. However, nearly half of all IDA countries received no country-specific support for their ESPs through the EPDF.
4. ***Country-specific support is largely allocated to countries working within the FTI framework with the exception of South Asia.*** The median country-specific allocation was US\$ 150,000. Four countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India) were the top recipients with grants ranging between US\$ 500,000 to over US \$1.4 million, whereas it is not obvious how these countries are working within the FTI framework.
5. ***There is a strong correlation between EPDF support and endorsed education sector plans in all regions except South Asia.*** In the Africa region, in view of the large number of IDA countries without endorsed sector plans, one might expect to see a heightened focus on this objective in the future.
6. ***EPDF allocations are mainly responsive to two FTI priority gap and thematic areas of interest*** -- data and analysis and improving education quality. Allocations vary by region. The Africa region allocated a larger share of EPDF funds (25 percent) to data and analysis, while EAP and LAC allocated a larger share to activities related to improving the quality of education (30 and 98 percent, respectively).

Prepared by: Rosemary Bellew, principal author of the desk review

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EPDF COMMITTEE MEETING, PARIS, SEPTEMBER 18, 2008
AGENDA
UNESCO, FONTENOY BUILDING , ROOM VII (7)

The meeting will be chaired by Robin Horn, Education Sector Manager, Human Development Network, the World Bank		
8.30 – 9.00am	Opening, confirmation of Agenda and consensus on expected outcomes	Chairperson
9.00 – 9.45 am	Proposal on EPDF support for civil society advocacy (request by co-chairs)	GCE
9.45 – 10.30 am	Improving the strategic focus and processes of EPDF Secretariat's as contribution for strategic brainstorming	FTI Secretariat
10.30 – 10.45 am	Coffee Break	
10.45 – 12.15 pm	Strategic Brainstorming Brainstorming on the strategic direction of EPDF), covering the full range of issues: targeting, priorities, eligibility, procedures, M&E, transparency; etc; highlight: conclusions, and follow up	Moderator & a Committee member
12.15– 1.15pm	Lunch	
1.15 – 1.45 pm	Conclusions of Strategic Brainstorming & next steps	Moderator & a Committee member
1.45 – 2.45 pm	Sustainability of post primary expansion Presentation on the findings of a joint study (requested by Claude/France)	AFD/WB

(*) When moderator is in charge, chairperson contributes to discussion as any other Committee member.

**EFA-FTI EPDF Committee Meeting Paris, France September 18, 2008
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