

Participants

March 27th: David Archer (Global Campaign for Education), Jo Bourne (DFID), Linn Harkess (Europe AID), Jacques Malpel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France), Anton De Gramwe & Francoise Caillods (IIEP, UNESCO), Temby Caprio & Karin Jahr de Guerrero (BMZ, Germany), Beatrix Van Hemeldoner (Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Walter Dhondt (Belgian Technical Cooperation), Rebekka Van Roemburg (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands), Marja Karjalainen & Felicity Townsend (European Commission), Bob Prouty & Koli Banik (FTI Secretariat) and Rama Gotur & Robin Horn (World Bank).

March 28th: David Archer (Global Campaign for Education), Jo Bourne (DFID), Jacques Malpel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France), Anton De Grauwwe (IIEP, UNESCO), Temby Caprio & Karin Jahr de Guerrero (BMZ, Germany), Beatrix Van Hemeldoner (Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Rebekka Van Roemburg (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands), Marja Karjalainen & Felicity Townsend (European Commission), Bob Prouty & Koli Banik (FTI Secretariat), Cream Wright (UNICEF) and Rama Gotur & Robin Horn (World Bank).

Meeting Summary:

This meeting of the SCLP task team was in the form of a workshop to agree and finalise the process chart, consolidate previous discussions into a set of recommendations for the Tokyo meetings and to map out outstanding issues and tasks for further work.

SCLP Task Team recommendations:

1. Communications/Outreach Strategy

Recommendation 1: The Secretariat should develop a more effective communications strategy for all interested countries prior to entering FTI processes, as well as for donors and civil society stakeholders. The communications will address frequently asked questions, including: the potential added value and transaction costs of FTI endorsement, the meaning of endorsement¹, how endorsement does not automatically equate to a CF allocation, and (without being prescriptive) roles and responsibilities of the Local Education Group (LEG) and Local Donor Group (LDG).

The Secretariat, in coordination with the SCLP TT, should create a user friendly Guide to accompany the process chart and other key documents including the Appraisal

¹ Further guidance from the FTI partnership on the meaning of endorsement is still needed, as different views remain.

Guidelines. This guide will help ensure systematic knowledge sharing at country level and help manage country expectations.

2. Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) Resources

Recommendation 2: EPDF Committee should ensure availability of resources for country LEGs to access funds for the development of the ESP for FTI endorsement, and possible CF programme preparation. This may require changes in how EPDF allocations are made.

3. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of FTI country level processes is best understood as a careful balance between support and control. There is consensus that everything possible should be done to facilitate country level processes through support from the EPDF, the Secretariat and from donor Headquarters. It is recognized that supporting 'upstream' work is much more likely to be effective, especially as preparation for possible CF finance should depend heavily on the quality and completeness of such work.

Bearing in mind the significant variation in the quality of endorsements and subsequent CF applications, new quality control measures are recommended. There are two key points for quality control: before endorsement and before application to the Catalytic Fund. Not wishing to have a mandatory quality control at both points, the task team recommends three forms of quality support and presents two options for quality control, for decision in Tokyo.

Secretariat Quality Support Review (SQSR)

Recommendation 3.1: Prior to endorsement, the Secretariat should strengthen its review of the ESP appraisal before endorsement. This review should be comprehensive, going well beyond the previous notion of a light touch review.

External Quality Support Review (EQSR)

Recommendation 3.2: An additional quality assurance mechanism should be established. This external quality support review would be conducted by an external panel to be drawn from donors, civil society organizations, and international agencies.

Headquarters' Involvement

Recommendation 3.3: LDG members will keep Headquarters' colleagues informed to ensure their involvement in the FTI process, and in particular that HQ staff are consulted on the appraisal report prior to endorsement.

Quality Control Options

Recommendation 3.4: that either Option 1 or Option 2 is agreed.

Option One: Following the SQSR and before endorsement, the Secretariat has the mandate, if necessary, to remit the appraisal to the LEG for further work, to assure quality. An additional external review may be requested by the LEG either before endorsement or before CF application. The EQSR, in this option, is purely supportive.

Or

Option Two: The SQSR before endorsement is purely supportive, although an iterative process is possible to assure quality. There follows a mandatory EQSR of the CF proposal before application to the CFC.

4. Catalytic Fund Supervising Entity (SE)

Recommendation 4.1: The role and responsibilities of the CF supervising entity will be further clarified, in cases where it is the World Bank and where an alternative SE is agreed. The World Bank will present its sub-process chart in Tokyo for discussion, and will also develop internal guidelines to strengthen its partnership with other donors in accordance with aid effectiveness principles.

Outstanding Issues and Further Work

1. Sharing best practice is more important to quality assurance than quality control measures. Once the new process chart is agreed and the mechanisms for support and review are established, the focus of efforts should remain on partnership, learning by doing and ownership of processes at the country level.
2. There is felt to be a need to establish a transparent means of resolving conflicts that may arise in the course of FTI processes.
3. Service standards should be set out for the Secretariat, SQSR, EQSR and for decision-making bodies, defining time limits and communications.
4. If the EQSR is agreed, its definition and establishment becomes an urgent task which will also need resources.
5. More definition is needed of what the FTI regards as minimum standards for ESPs in order for them to be endorsed as credible sector plans.
6. Further work should be done on how financing needs, identified through analysis of priorities, capacity, policy scenarios, etc. could replace the foggy concept of funding gap at country level.
7. More clarity on 'rules', including eligible use of CF, is needed.
8. It is recognized that the FTI processes as set out in the process chart need to be applicable to future developments, such as effective engagement with 'fragile states', possible 'interim endorsement', etc. One set of processes, with the flexibility to be used in varying contexts, is preferred over parallel tracks.
9. The implications of FTI process and quality assurance recommendations for donor staffing and capacity development need to be considered.
10. The role in FTI processes of donors who support the education sector through General Budget Support should be clarified and strengthened where possible.
11. Concerns about quality assurance potentially slowing down the speed of processes need to be addressed through monitoring. However, assured quality of upstream processes should facilitate work and decision-making later on.
12. Further clarity is sought about the necessity of re-endorsement for new (or substantially changed) ESPs, and for quality assurance where appraisals and CF applications have been made prior to new processes.
13. Quality assurance of processes should cover implementation, monitoring (including Joint Sector Reviews) and aid effectiveness principles as well as the production of documents and decision-making.
14. Preparation of the user friendly guide to FTI processes and other tools such as updated Appraisal Guidelines is now urgent. The 'roll-out' should include capacity development of LDGs through workshops and other means, to be determined in more detail.

Fast Track Initiative (FTI) PROCESS CHART

1. Information and Communication

*FTI Secretariat provides information to ensure clear understanding at the country level about the FTI partnership and processes.**

2. Government Declaration of Interest

The government expresses interest in engagement with the FTI through a letter addressed to the FTI Secretariat.

3. Education Sector Status

The government considers the status and needs of the country's education sector, with the participation of development partners and civil society.

4. Local Donor Group (LDG)

The LDG agrees how to support the country gain FTI endorsement of its Education Sector Plan (ESP), and decides on a division of roles and responsibilities. (The World Bank will in most cases lead work on fiduciary assessment.) Work begins on a mapping of current and future aid to the education sector.

5. Education Sector Plan (ESP): Preparation, Appraisal, Endorsement

The ESP is developed / updated by the government in consultation with the Local Education Group (including Civil Society representation). *EPDF support may be requested by the government.** The ESP should be fully costed with links to the PRSP or equivalent, and should include a detailed implementation and monitoring framework for at least the first year.

- a. A draft appraisal of the ESP is conducted by the LDG, using the FTI Appraisal Guidelines fully, and with input from donor HQs and Civil Society representatives.
- b. The FTI Secretariat conducts a Secretariat Quality Support Review (SQSR) and advises the LDG on the need for any further work on appraisal. This may be an iterative process, depending on the readiness of the ESP for endorsement as a credible sector plan.
- c. *An External Quality Support Review (EQSR) may be appropriate at this stage and/or later, following endorsement, in relation to an application to the Catalytic Fund. Such a review may be requested by the LEG.**
- d. The Government finalizes the ESP, which is approved at the highest appropriate level.

- e. The LDG reviews the ESP, finalises the Appraisal Report, and recommends FTI endorsement, which is approved at the highest appropriate level in country by the donor organisations.

6. Responses to Endorsement of ESP

- a. The Government and LDG agree a common action agenda in support of the education sector. Donors confirm commitments and plans to scale-up and align support around the ESP.
- b. Any remaining financing needs are identified, factoring in additional domestic and external contributions.
- c. Where application to the Catalytic Fund will be necessary, agreement is reached on the Supervising Entity (SE) and the most aligned modality for CF support.

7. Catalytic Fund (CF) Program Proposal

- a. Based on the endorsed ESP, and taking into account the appraisal report (including fiduciary assessments) and common action agenda, the government develops a CF program proposal for CF funding in consultation with the LDG and Civil Society representatives. The proposal should outline funding priorities, include the first year's implementation plan, and identify CF modality and SE.
- b. *Either a satisfactory pre-appraisal Secretariat Quality Support Review (SQSR) or a mandatory External Quality Support Review (EQSR) will be conducted before the proposal is presented to the Catalytic Fund Committee.**

8. Review of CF proposal by the Catalytic Fund Committee (CFC)

- a. The CFC agrees CF modality and supervising entity (SE) and decides on CF allocation.
- b. The implementation plan may be adjusted to correspond with the CF allocation decision.

9. Joint Annual Review of ESP Implementation

* SCLP Task Team recommendations on points (in italics) to be discussed by FTI Steering Committee, Catalytic Fund Committee and Technical Meeting, as appropriate