



Government & Non-State Partnerships Toolkit

Toolkit for Governments

Acknowledgements

This toolkit, as a part of the **Government and Non-State Partnerships Evidence Hub**, has been written by Global Schools Forum. We thank Nisha Makan for her invaluable contribution to creating the toolkits and the case studies for the hub. The Evidence Hub comprises a set of resources including toolkits for governments and non-state actors; this includes case studies, policy briefs, and a repository of existing resources on innovative partnerships globally.

The aim of the Evidence Hub is to equip policymakers and non-state education providers with the resources to understand the breadth of possible partnerships, and the tools to initiate and build these partnerships. The intent is to ultimately seed more sustainable, innovative, and impactful partnerships.

For the development of the resources, several experts were consulted, including government representatives, non-state providers, researchers, and civil society organisations. Their valuable inputs and insights were a welcome contribution and are listed in the Appendix.

About Global Schools Forum



Global Schools Forum is a collaborative community, innovation accelerator, and partnership builder for non-state organisations working to improve education at scale for underserved children in low- and middle-income countries. The Global Schools Forum community extends to over 120 organisations supporting 250,000 schools and 800,000 teachers with a reach of over 22 million children in 60 countries. GSF has expertise in school leadership, education innovation, and education financing.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
BEFIT	Building Education Foundations through Innovation & Technology
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BOT	Build- Operate- Transfer
BRAC	Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DFID	Department for International Development
EMIS	Educational Management Information Systems
EE Mission	Ennum Ezhuthum Mission
EOF	Education Outcomes Fund
EoI	Expression of Interest
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (previously DFID)
GEMR	Global Education Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GSF	Global Schools Forum
HIC	High Income Countries
HNI	High Networth Individuals
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
I & I	Inspect & Improve
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation

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Abbreviation	Definition
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LIC	Low Income Countries
LMIC	Low- Middle-Income Countries
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
PEAS	Promoting Equality in African Schools
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
RFP	Request for Proposals
SDG 4	Sustainable Development Goal 4
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLEIC	Sierra Leone Education Innovation Challenge
STAR-G	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Grls
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UWS	United World Schools

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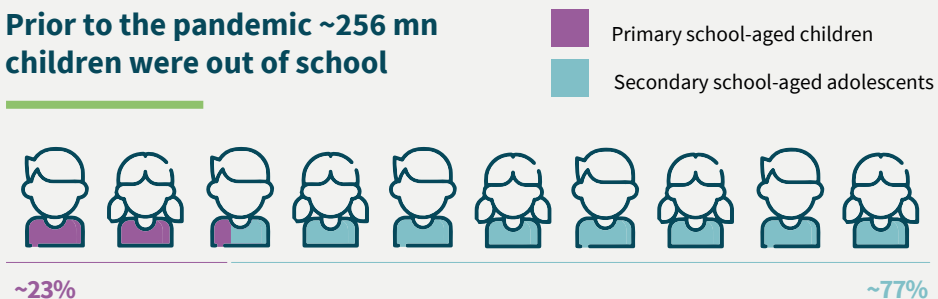
1 State of Education

Challenges & Opportunities

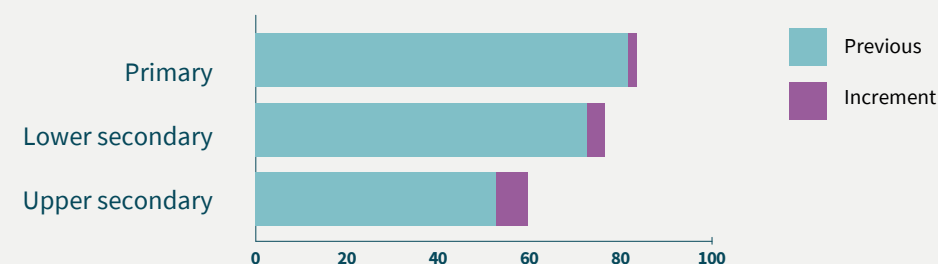
Governments globally have adopted the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to “**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**” by 2030. While strides have been taken, progress towards achieving education for all has been slow as evidenced by UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) in 2023, which sheds light on the progress made since 2015.¹

Before 2020 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 60% of ten-year-olds in low- to middle-income countries (LMICs) faced learning poverty (i.e., they could not read and comprehend a simple story). Since then, school closures due to COVID-19 have escalated global learning poverty levels to nearly 70% and have aggravated pre-existing disparities.² Out-of-school figures, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the marginal improvement in completion rates underscore the urgency for efforts to navigate the evolving educational terrain to achieve SDG targets (see Figure 1).

Prior to the pandemic ~256 mn children were out of school



Increase in school completion rates



Rate of out-of-school children in low-income vs high-income countries



Figure 1: Global education statistics on out-of-school children and completion rates^{3 4}

Navigating Education Challenges Globally

The delivery of education globally has significant challenges – including but not limited to ensuring access and enrolment, enhancing quality of education, and addressing financing constraints. Some complexities and opportunities in the education sector include:

1



Access & Enrolment

Meeting the 2030 SDG4 goal will require substantial efforts, including enrolling an additional 6 million children in early childhood education, enrolling an additional 58 million children, adolescents, and youth in school, and training an additional 1.7 million primary school teachers.¹ The major reasons for the number of out-of-school children across LMICs include: child labour (impacting 150 million children), attacks on education, conflict (affecting ~49 million children), crisis, climate change, child marriage (12 million girls married annually before 18), gender disparity, funding, lack of teaching in mother tongue (500 million children taught in language that is not mother tongue), lack of trained teachers, infrastructure, poverty, disabilities, and safety among others.^{5 6}

2



Quality

To achieve quality education for all, it is fundamental to ensure that there are high-quality learning experiences that prepare students for success in life. Governments need to drive quality in education by investing in education systems, developing policies and regulations that promote quality, and ensuring that teachers and school leaders are well-trained and supported. There is still a shortage of 44 million teachers to achieve the targets globally.⁷ Improving education in developing countries involves overcoming challenges like high absenteeism, rigid curricula, poor data systems, low enrolment, crowded classes with unprepared teachers, and weak school leadership. Collaboration among governments, non-state actors, and education stakeholders is crucial to address these issues.⁸

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Financing

In low-income countries (LICs), government spending per student is approximately USD 52 per student per annum in contrast to USD 8400 in high-income countries.⁹ If we focus on primary school alone, the number is even lower. Additionally, in LMICs households contribute to 39% of total education spending while in high-income countries (HICs) the contribution is 15%.¹⁰ This is primarily driven by lower levels of government tax revenue in emerging or developing economies.

Furthermore, higher spending does not always translate to effective education due to complex coordination, workforce gaps, and need to meet political pressures (e.g., creating highly restrictive job markets by offering education roles to political supporters). With severely constrained government funding, high complexity of education delivery, and reliance on short-term donor projects, the quality of schooling provided by the public sector is often below the standards that governments, parents, and students hope for.

UNESCO's policy paper advocates for a full mobilisation approach to bridge the financing gap for SDG4 targets. This includes domestic revenue mobilisation, increased aid from donor countries, and innovative financing mechanisms. With a USD 97 billion annual gap in 79 low- to lower-middle-income countries, innovative financing solutions like social impact bonds and education bonds, as well as mobilisation of resources from non-state actors including the private sector, are crucial.¹¹

To address education challenges, governments globally are increasingly partnering with the non-state sector. Non-state actors are viewed as valuable partners, free from political pressures, eager to achieve scale and drive innovation. They impact areas across education quality, accessibility, delivery, teacher training, curriculum, food services, and supplementary support.

Government and non-state partnerships come in various models of school provision, contractual arrangements, delivery partnerships, funding mechanisms, accountability protocols. This toolkit will allow you to understand the different kinds of partnerships, funding modalities, and ways to improve accountability within education systems.

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2

Introduction to Government & Non-State Partnerships in Education

Main Actors in Education Delivery

Around the globe, Ministries of Education are responsible for providing all children in their country access to quality education. Education is seen as the basis of social and economic growth¹ and SDG 4 requires governments to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

To fulfil this vital function various government and non-state actors are involved in each country. The table outlines typical education actors in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) for primary and secondary-level education.

1 Government actors in education



The government is the primary provider of education in most countries and is also responsible for setting the education goals and policies for all learners.

Actor	Role
Ministry of Education	Sets policy direction for the entire education system and manages financing
Ministry of Finance	Provides financing for education based on tax revenues and other income to the country
President's / Premier's / Prime Minister's office	Sets national priorities, that involve allocating resources to education and/or focusing on specific education levels, such as tertiary skill development
Regional (state) and local education offices (e.g., counties, districts)	Decentralised entities in most countries, that oversee specific regions. Closer to schools, administrators, and parents, providing them with monitoring and oversight. May hold delegated policy and delivery responsibilities
Government schools (early years, primary, secondary)	Schools built and run by government bodies - many are tuition-free, especially at primary level. Fees are commonly charged in early years or secondary level, and for additional resources like textbooks and uniforms

2 Non-state actors in education



There are an increasing number of non-state actors providing education delivery and services across LMICs. Despite free government provision of education, in many countries, there are persistent challenges in quality of education, financing for education, and in ensuring access. Non-state actors have emerged to fill these gaps in education provision and service delivery.

Actor	Role
Non-state schools (early years, primary, secondary)	In the last two decades, the non-state sector has expanded its role in education, particularly in LMICs. It now represents 18% of primary and 26% of secondary enrolments globally. ² These schools may be run by NGOs, community-based or faith-based organisations, philanthropic foundations, and private entities
Civil society, international and local non-governmental organisations (INGOs and NGOs)	Play a crucial role in holding the national government (Education Ministry, Ministry of Finance, Presidential offices) accountable for providing quality education. Advocate for better standards of education and contribute valuable research, ideas, or innovation
Businesses	Generate demand for specific educational skills. In some countries, they are mandated to establish schools for communities engaged in their projects, either through funding or directly establishing schools
Researchers	Generate evidence and knowledge to identify what works in a particular context to improve education
Technical assistants	International actors supporting governments to enhance long-term education delivery capabilities
Implementing partners	Operate within education systems of LMICs, delivering agreed upon donor education projects. They are also non-state actors that operate within 3-5 year long education programmes

3 Local contributors & beneficiaries of education



Every country has its own set of local stakeholders who determine the quality of education being provided.

Actor	Role
Parents	Key decision makers in choosing the type of education provision for their children. In many LMICs, household expenditure directly contributes to education financing (see Figure 3)
School Governance Boards	These play a crucial role in locally overseeing most schools. There may be a separate Parent Teacher Association (see below), or parents may be part of the School Governance Board
Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)	Support local school governance and facilitate communication between parents and teachers. National PTA representatives engage with government officials to provide input on policy direction, advocating for the interests and needs of both parents and students
Student bodies	Allow for the representation of students at the school and sometimes national level. This is more common at secondary and tertiary level
Teaching unions	Represent teachers and school principals advocating for fair pay, improved working conditions, and equitable treatment. They negotiate with education authorities on issues like class size and TPD, aiming to improve quality of education and promote educator welfare
Quality assurance bodies	Institutions and actors that ensure quality in each country's education system such as examination boards, curriculum development bodies, teacher training institutions, independent school monitoring or school assessment bodies. Donor-funded projects often have additional monitoring and evaluation conducted by third-party evaluators

4 Funders & international development agencies



Governments, households, donors and investors are important sources of funding for education systems.

Actor	Role
Bilateral donors	Institutional donors (e.g., USAID , FCDO) provide aid from one country to another. Bilateral funders usually contract out 3-5 year projects to organisations who compete to deliver the project. Often the implementing partners who win projects are for-profit actors. All implementing partners are non-state actors
Multilateral donors	Institutional actors pool funds from multiple countries (e.g., World Bank and GPE Multiplier Fund). They may be involved in delivery as well as financing and can also influence education policy in the country. They support national and state governments to develop improved capabilities for delivering education long-term
Corporate funders	Corporate funders (businesses) can be local or international and they seek to invest in the future of a country or to contribute as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Philanthropies & impact investors	Donors in education can be philanthropic foundations, high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), family offices, or corporates that could fund direct service delivery in education
Governments / Tax revenues	In high-income countries (HICs), free quality education is primarily funded by governments through tax revenues, covering upto 85% of the education budget, compared to 70% in LMICs and 50% in low-income countries (LICs). In LICs and LMICs, tax revenues may still be growing as economies are nascent or emerging, prompting them to make increasing contributions to education to nurture talent

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Household contributions

Families spend significant portion of their funds on education; over a third of total education spending in LICs and LMICs is from households

Religious funders or charities

Many schools, including free, low-fee and private schools, are funded by religious organisations. They contribute to several aspects of the education system, such as teacher housing or school materials



What are Non-State Actors?

A large number of actors outlined in the preceding tables are non-state actors - as in, they are not government actors themselves. A broad definition of non-state actors would incorporate all the actors highlighted in table 2, including the actors delivering education, providing technical assistance, as well as those influencing policy or offering intermediary services.

Non-state actors can be local or international actors; they can be for-profit and not-for-profit. For

example, non-state actors include charities or NGOs (like [BRAC](#)), international public bodies (like the [World Bank](#)), for-profit actors (like [Chemonics](#) or [Rising Academies](#)). They work at policy level supporting national and regional government decisions, as well as at local level supporting education delivery in schools or with communities.

In [Section 4](#), through our categorisation framework, we show the different parts of the system these actors may work in.

The Role & Types of Non-State Actors in Education Delivery

Non-state actors operate through various funding mechanisms, including bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropic contributions, and community-based sources. This section explores how these different types of funding support their roles in shaping educational outcomes.



1

Non-state actors in bilateral donor projects

Many international development agency-led projects (such as those run by USAID, FCDO, [SIDA](#)) fund for-profit non-state actors such as [RTI](#) and [DAI](#), as well as not-for-profit INGOs like [Save the Children](#). Projects usually operate on 3–5-year cycles ([Star-G Mozambique](#), [Tusome](#) case study, [SLEIC](#) case study), contracted out to organisations (local or international) who have won the procurement.



2

Non-state actors in multilateral donor projects

There are several multilateral donors (such as the World Bank or [African Development Bank](#)) and multi-donor trust funds (such as the [Global Partnership for Education](#)) that operate as non-state actors, as they are not part of the governments of the countries they work in. However, they often work at national government level, influencing policy or supporting specific strategies to be designed and implemented. Again, these actors work on project cycles. Staff often turnover with the project end date and do not live in the country long-term. They may rotate through different country projects and local staff are usually consultants for the duration of the project.

3

Non-state actors in philanthropic & impact-funded projects

Impact funders and philanthropies often fund a different kind of non-state actor. These actors work at school level (running schools), as expert intermediaries (such as providing teacher training, curriculum support and lesson plans, school feeding) or, occasionally, work at policy or national government level and some do a combination of all. A vast majority of non-state providers are not-for-profit, but some are for-profit (for example, GSF's membership is 70% not-for-profit and 30% for-profit).

Philanthropies and impact funders invest in them as these organisations offer new innovative models and solutions that the funder believes can improve education rapidly. They are usually not large enough or set up to win major donor projects. Donor projects typically span 3-5 years with deliverables predetermined by the donor. These non-state actors usually stay in the country long-term or emerge from the country. They are thought partners and innovators for the government. (*contd.*)



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They address the significant educational challenges within their working context, leveraging their resources to solve them. They can innovate more than governments as, they usually begin as pilots working in a smaller number of schools or localities until they have a proof of concept. Subsequently, they collaborate with governments to scale these initiatives, expanding to additional schools or regions, and assisting in adapting the innovation to government schools. The latter can involve working with governments to change policy or enable reform.

4

Non-state actors funded by communities, religious bodies, or businesses



Similar to the philanthropic category of non-state actors, there are a range of private, semi-private, religious or charity schools provided by non-state actors. These are usually funded directly by parents who pay fees; communities who may wish to support schools in a village or top up low teacher salaries; or by religious bodies sharing their faith. Businesses, wealthy individuals, and even politicians sometimes fund these schools to be pillars in their community or to secure a business investment opportunity.

5

Non-state actors funded by parents



Sending children to private schools in LICs costs one and a half to five times as much as using the public system.³ More than a third of the education budget in LICs comes from parents. In many households, education is the highest expenditure after rent. Parents choose to invest in non-state actors (private schools) because they perceive the quality of education to be of a higher standard than in public schools.

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At times, non-state actors receive funding from both parents and impact funders & philanthropies. This funding approach helps maintain low fees for parents seeking to provide their children with a higher quality of education. The quality of education is evaluated collectively by the philanthropic organisation, impact funders, and the parents who opt for that school.

Figure 2 represents the spectrum of actors involved in a country's education system, spanning from state to non-state entities. It highlights their roles across the different parts of the system they may work in.

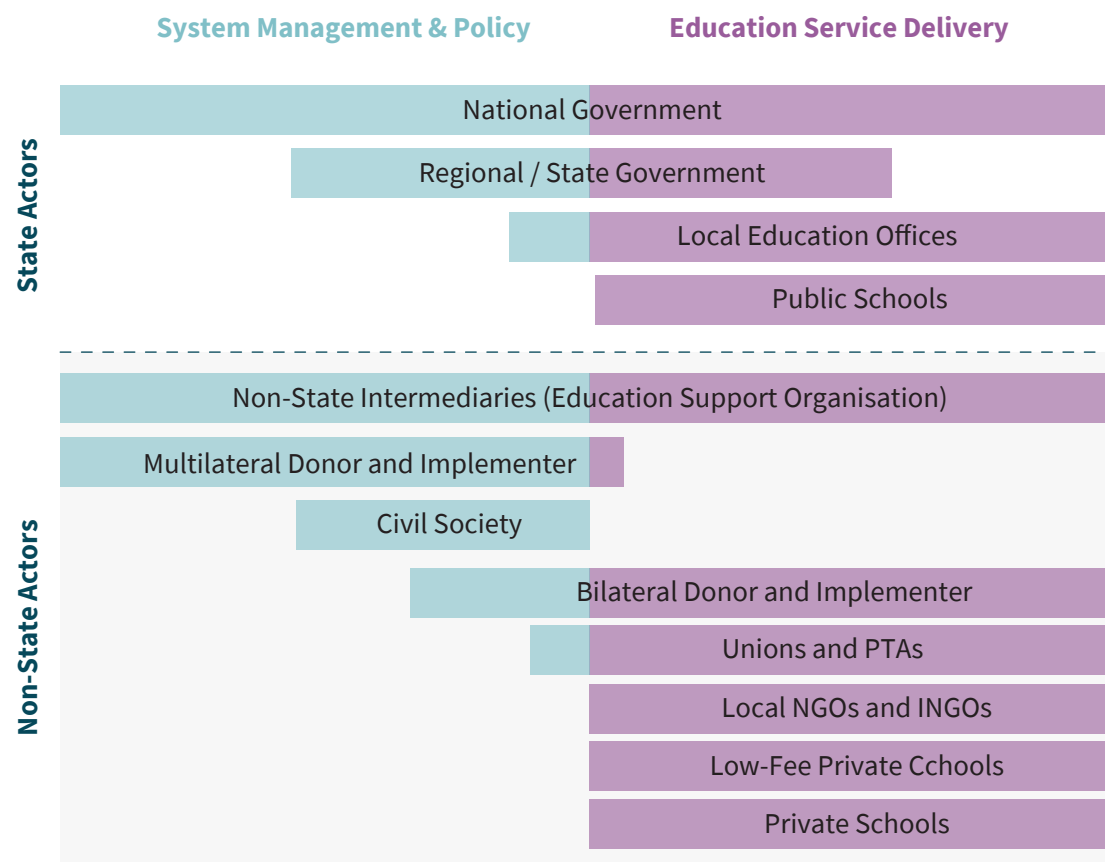


Figure 2: Education system actors: State and non-state entities and their roles

Benefits to the Government in Partnering with the Non-State

1



Finance

Low-income country (LIC) governments spend on an average USD 56 per student to ensure that every child in their country receives an education.³ Of this spending, 90% goes towards paying teacher salaries due to the large number of children in these countries who are of school age.⁴ Despite this, classrooms are often overcrowded. Commitments are made to give 20% of the budget to education but when economies are not growing, that budget is still not enough. We have already seen that aid budgets are usually short-term.

Governments struggling to provide good quality education can turn to businesses to finance other areas of their work. For example, foreign investors in a country might be asked to pay for some of the expenses of local schools. Local businesses can be asked to contribute a fixed component of their profits. In some instances, local NGOs have been asked to fundraise for schools (see [Western Cape Collaboration Schools](#)).

Non-state actors, supported by philanthropies and impact investors, can bring vital resources to under-funded contexts. In addition, parents are making an increasing contribution to education financing – far greater than the contribution from donors (Figure 3). Seeing the low quality of public schools, they also opt for low-fee private schools which have sprung up across low-income countries and are funded by household contributions combined with impact investment or philanthropy.

Distribution of total education expenditure by source, 2021



Figure 3: Household contributions to education³

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2

Innovation & quality

Beyond directly financing schooling, non-state actors often provide innovation that leads to better quality education. This is why, they may bring philanthropic donor funding or impact investment, which means they have more resources to check what works in the local system. Unlike governments who are responsible for all public schools in a country, non-state actors often work on pilot programmes or in a small number of counties or schools. This means they can try new approaches to teacher training, school monitoring, or pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

According to the Global Education Monitoring report on Non-State Actors in Education, non-state involvement leads to the emergence of groundbreaking pedagogical concepts beyond traditional public education frameworks. Non-state entities contribute significantly to innovation in education, accounting for 60% of ~ 3,000 innovations. By engaging in partnerships, governments tap into diverse perspectives and expertise, thus benefitting from lessons learned and flexible

teaching approaches offered by the non-state sector. This collaborative approach allows for the identification and nurturing of innovative ideas within the public education system, promoting quality and responsiveness to evolving challenges.²



3

Scaling innovation & seeing what works

In the context of many different countries, replicating small scale non-state projects in a larger number of schools has led to a fair degree of success (see [Tusome](#), [SLEIC](#), [Ennum Ezhuthum](#)). In some cases, the reforms are taken on by the government. The challenge while scaling is to make the resources that some non-state actors have, reach a larger number of students. Helping governments take on these approaches, adapt the model, or work with large donors to implement aspects of the model for the government to take forward afterwards are all ways of making sure innovation and quality can scale.

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4



Access

Parents in some countries recognise that the quality of education their children receive is poor. This has led to an explosion of low-fee private schools that offer better quality services, or are present in areas that have poor connectivity with the existing network of public schools. Without non-state actors, the responsibility to educate an additional 350 million children would fall on the state. Due to this, governments often contribute to the payment of non-state actors.

Governments support non-state schools in 171 out of 204 countries. This includes:

115 Countries with Private Schools	81 Countries with NGOs & Community Schools	120 Countries with Faith- based Schools
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Private schools now make up 17% of primary and 26% of secondary enrolments on a global scale. A relatively small number of international providers of education are for profit, some of whom work in partnership with the government.²

5



Continuity – long-term, proximal partners

Unlike donor project implementing partners, non-state actors funded by philanthropy, school fees or impact funders tend to be stable in the long-term or be fully localised. They source funding from a variety of sources and are not dependent on 3-4-year donor cycles. This means that they build a deep understanding of the context (or originate from the country's own context) and scale over time.



Challenges in Partnering with the Non-State

1 Maintaining local leadership



Leaders within a country know their context best. Every culture and education system is unique and leaders must decide how and whether to use the full range of non-state actors available or whether they prefer to work with traditional bilateral or multilateral donors and partners. This toolkit outlines how to go about using philanthropic or impact-funded non

state actors if they are an appropriate addition to the education supplier mix in your country. Choosing to either contract out (a PPP), to partner with (see [delivery partnerships](#)) or to hire services from a non-state actor must never take away from a local leaders' ownership of the interventions, or their sovereign responsibility to provide education.

2 Engaging for profit providers



Non-state actors include local, international, charitable, and for-profit actors. In some cases, one may be wary of for-profit actors as they can be perceived as seeking profits at the expense of the education of children. In fact, our [evidence review](#) found that better education outcomes were achieved in all categories of non-state actors, including for-profit organisations. When we looked at public or private partnerships, or the use of non-state actors to improve education, we found all types of non-state actors (local, international, for-profit and not-for-profit) had some features in common, which contributed to their delivery improvements. These were:

- a smaller number of schools to deal with allowing for the trial and test of innovations

- expertise that is different from what governments offer
- access to different resources
- freedom from political pressure (such as demands from unions, provision of employment for party supporters and the need to continue employing teachers, principals, or civil servants who are under-performing)

Even when organisations are for-profit, non-state actors continue to offer pedagogical improvements, build new classrooms for additional students, and provide training, monitoring and technology to teachers or students. Often, they freely share or open source their resources: lesson plans, teaching guides, and monitoring tools that they have spent significant effort on researching and developing.

3 Identifying partners: context & focus



It is important to identify partners who have entered the sector with the primary goal of providing children with better opportunities. Seeking to be financially independent and profitable need not be an issue if the organisation is well-suited and socially responsible. We define socially responsible as sometimes going beyond what is contractually required of them to give children in low-income countries access to a high-quality education. However, these organisations too have financial constraints, and, in some cases, an incorrectly selected actor will deliver only to the word - not the spirit - of the contract. For example, limited class sizes might be in the contract to support more targeted learning for students. However, if class sizes in a rural area did exceed those agreed in a contract, children should not be excluded without being provided a secure place at a nearby school. This

problem would need to be raised with the government and joint solutions found.

Intermediaries, who can help with the contracting and negotiating process, exist. Alternately, a government can consider a delivery partnership model (see [Section 4](#)) whereby it can work with the non-state actors to navigate challenges as the project progresses.

Before entering a contract, you can get to know non-state actors in advance, building relationships and ensuring they meet this list of behaviors and actions of socially responsible for-profit actors developed by [PEAS](#).⁵ Sections 4, 5 and 6 provide advice on how to contract with profit-oriented partners as well as how to identify their attributes.



Important steps taken by the government to avoid risks

- Identify the correct partner for its needs
- Ensure careful contract negotiation and regulation so that unintended consequences do not negatively impact children
- Put in place a clear process for disputes and any other concerns that are raised (or simply maintain strong relationships and actively engage with stakeholders for effective troubleshooting)



4 Protecting human rights & the regulation of non-state actors

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations states that everyone has the right to free, compulsory education at least at the elementary level. Technical and professional education should be made available and higher education should be equally accessible to all based on merit.

Budgets in many LICs make the provision of such support challenging, especially when it comes to quality. Work on tax compliance, advocacy on international debt cancellation, efforts towards economic growth (which improves tax revenues) are excellent sources of increased funding. Generating these finances takes time. In the interim, governments must still meet their human rights obligations.

For some governments, more than 50% of parents have already opted for private schools, easing the burden on them to provide access. Others use a variety of non-state actor partnerships (discussed in [Section 4](#)). In all cases, governments must regulate non-state education providers and ensure they meet required local standards.

Governments are encouraged to explore innovations and resources being provided by private schools and non-state actors to understand if it is of a higher quality than public schools and if they can replicate these innovations. Are some private schools providing a lower standard of education? Can parents in such schools be better supported to ensure the quality of education is equitable?

The legal opinion from GSF states that laws allow governments to meet education access requirements as they see fit.⁶ It also emphasises that governments must ensure private schools and non-state actors are overseen and regulated to ensure equitable access to quality education

In some western countries, Ministries of Education increasingly focus on policy and regulation rather than running schools, which is left to local for-profit and not-for-profit actors who are closely monitored for adherence to the country's laws. Leaders need to find the right fit for their system, or experiment with a mix. Section 4 focuses on the different kinds of partnering and includes tips on how to make choices and [Section 6](#) provides information on how to regulate non-state providers.

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5 Regulation & Monitoring support



Sometimes governments are understaffed, under-resourced and have such wide and difficult terrains to navigate that there is insufficient accountability, oversight and motivation of schools, school leaders and teachers.

Some non-state actors or intermediaries also support monitoring, oversight, and coaching. This includes establishing more cost-effective or community-based monitoring, working in partnership with the government. Tech solutions are also making oversight, monitoring, and teacher feedback sessions easier to conduct on a regular basis.

Even without regular school visits for monitoring and oversight, non-state actor provision of education can and must still be regulated. This can be through appropriate policies, laws, and licenses for operation in a country

It can also include regular reporting and ad hoc checks on the content of reports. Local communities and actors can also be engaged, and a clear line of communication to Ministries of Education for any challenges raised by local people should be in place.

Along with ensuring the adherence of non-state education providers to national laws, it is important to prevent processes from becoming excessively bureaucratic or open to the misappropriation of funds (e.g. bribery for licences) such that the potential for high quality education and innovation is lost, leading to negative impacts on students and parents in the country.

Some “intermediary” non-state actors can be commissioned to support regulation – establishing more cost-effective or community-based monitoring working in partnership with the government. This is an area that multi-lateral donors and bi-lateral donor projects also support. Without monitoring, accountability and support, quality education, whether provided by governments or non-state actors, is unlikely to improve at scale.

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3

Purpose of the Toolkit

Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit supports governments interested in working with non-state actors to improve their education systems. Non-state actors occupy a unique space in developing countries and are often underutilised. They often have different funding sources from traditional donors (e.g., non-state actors are usually funded by philanthropies and impact investors). These funders aim to offer lower cost, sustainable innovations to improve education; innovations that outlast the donor funding cycle of 3 - 4 years. Such investors usually fund smaller organisations directly in contrast to larger organisations that win large-scale donor projects and sub-contract their work to local partners.

As they are supported by impact funders who require more direct and measurable impact on learning, non-state actors offer governments a perspective as long-term thought and delivery partners. These partners are free from political pressures and are able to focus solely on the government's chosen education outcomes

As their models are proven, non-state actors sometimes scale to donor-funded projects or are funded directly by governments who choose to absorb successful innovations into their implementation plans across their schools.

In summary, non-state actors offer	
Testing innovative approaches to evaluate what is effective for students, teachers, and leaders when improving learning outcomes	Scaling of successful innovations across public schools
More varied and independent funding sources	Long-term, locally owned ideas for social change, and delivery partnerships in a country's education system (rather than projects that last only three to four years or until funding dries up)
Radical solutions that can be trialed in a smaller number of schools	

For governments keen to leverage these benefits, this toolkit explains how to begin. It helps identify the form of partnership that works best for a country's particular educational challenges, identifies pitfalls, and suggests ways in which the partnership can align with a country's educational objectives.

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Toolkit Components

This toolkit comprises a categorisation framework, a scoping and design tool, a step-by-step guide on the partnering process and examples of partnerships from around the world.

Categorisation framework for partnerships

The categorisation framework offers a list of partnership modalities for national or local governments, looking to leverage the benefits for non-state partners.

1

Online tool to determine partnership options

The online tool helps identify the potential partnership according to the specific challenges education leaders have identified in their country's education system. These could focus on addressing the root causes of poor learning, or, for example, improving access to education via school buildings or school feeding.

2



Parts of the Toolkit

3

Step-by-step approach to building partnerships

The toolkit then takes the governments designing a reform with non-state actors through a step-by-step approach by helping them decide what problems to solve, how to make the partnership work, how to measure success, how to protect government interests in any negotiation, and how to ensure appropriate oversight of any partners working within government schools.

4

Case studies on unique partnerships globally

The toolkit further includes case studies highlighting inspiring new partnerships globally. These case studies are an integral component of the toolkit as they provide valuable insights into noteworthy partnerships, that will help foster a deeper understanding of government and non-state partnership models across diverse contexts.

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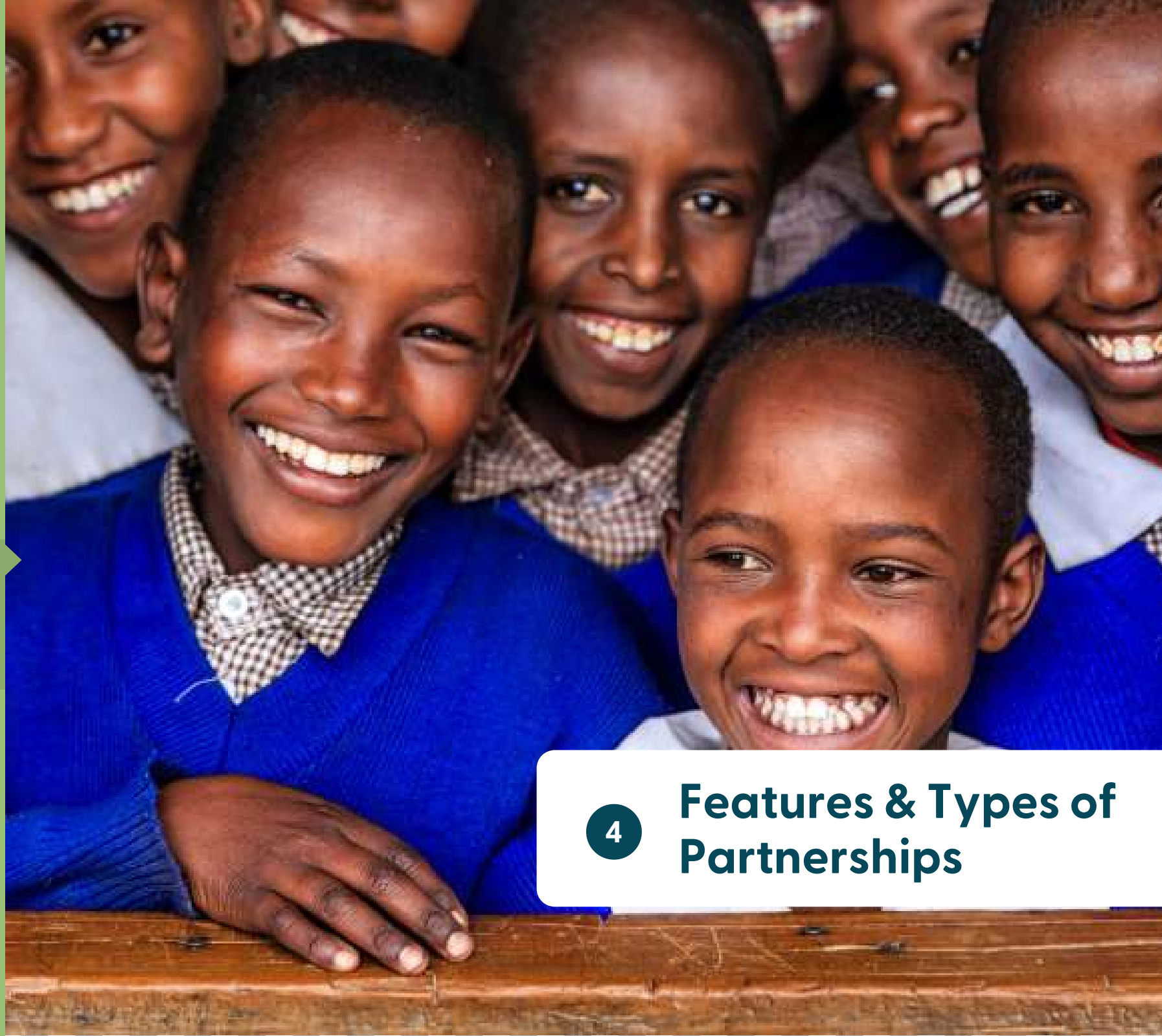
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4

Features & Types of Partnerships



Features & Types of Partnerships

In this section we introduce a framework to categorise the types of partnerships that are possible between governments and non-state actors. Based on our landscape and literature review, we recognised a need to develop an updated framework that is built on existing models and also accounted for more recently developed partnerships. By categorising different types of partnerships between government and non-state actors that have emerged over time, it is possible for those interested in these partnerships to identify new ways of working to suit a country's education needs.

The framework was developed through consultation with [experts](#) as well as a review of [existing literature](#) and current partnerships. The literature review included evaluations of more traditional public-private partnerships (PPPs) between government and non-state actors.

Trends in Partnerships between Government & Non-State Actors

In developing this framework, we observed several trends that have emerged since the original conception of PPPs in education.

1 Evolution of partnerships from 'contracting out' to 'delivery partnerships'



A review of the partnerships that have sustained over time shows that partnership models today tend to be 'delivery partnerships' rather than formalised contracts or PPPs. In the early 2000s a stricter contracting model was more prevalent. There was a wider emphasis on voucher schemes (giving parents from low-income backgrounds greater education choice); subsidies (supporting private schools to take on lower income students or provide greater access, such as Uganda's Universal Secondary Education

programme); Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) models (which contracted out specific services, school feeding and school building).¹

There was an emphasis on procurement and PPP laws to help governments leverage 'competition'. Just as providers might compete to build schools, or win a contract for other services, it was felt that primary and secondary education provision could be contracted out and non-state actors could (*contd*)

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compete to provide different aspects of education in a more cost-effective manner. However, often these were for low-fee private schools rather than for running government schools or other aspects of public education. Few of these models have stood the test of time, with the exception of those in Pakistan and India.

By contrast, in a delivery partnership, the various actors know each other, and the context well, understand shared goals and are able to accommodate needs that emerge after the period of contracting.

In a contract, for example, if a school saw an increase in enrolments, and the PPP contract governing its functioning might have agreed on a maximum class size, the non-state actor could have used this chance to turn children away, even if there were no other schools nearby. In a delivery partnership, the non-state partner would come to the government to work out solutions together



This is a very different approach to having a pre-agreed contract that keeps the government at arm's length, where both parties only do what was agreed at the outset of a project.

Further in this toolkit, you will read case studies from [Transforming Teacher Education in Pakistan](#), [I & I programme](#) in Uganda and [Western Cape Collaboration Schools](#) in South Africa. In each of these case studies, you will see how both governments and the non-state partners adapted the originally agreed model or contract to suit emerging conditions. This is particularly important due to the unpredictability of events in education and changing circumstances in low-income countries. It is not easy to anticipate parental and student choices, but it is important that partnerships avoid unintended consequences, which may not have been factored in by a strict contracting process.

In summary, the strict 'contracting out' of education services has not lasted in its purest form. Instead, 'delivery partnerships' have emerged. The way these have proved effective is by ensuring both the government partners and the non-state actor have built trust and knowledge of each other (see [Section 2](#) on "Identifying partners: context and focus" and [Section 7](#) on "Partner's technical and operational capabilities"), as well as of each other's intentions. They can then work together to chart a way through complexities that emerge, to meet the needs of children, while also ensuring the non-state actor's work is financially sustainable and can show impact to funders.

2 Partnering on specific components over contracting out whole schools



Providing policy advice or intermediary services seems to be less contested than providing direct school management, as found in the literature review of programme evaluations for this toolkit, which primarily discusses school management. For example, models offering advice on: school assessment, pedagogical tools, monitoring processes, teacher scaffolding or other policy reforms, involve intermediaries familiar with the context, who can share low-cost solutions that can be scaled across schools in a country (see [Inspect & Improve](#) and [Ennum Ezhuthum](#) case studies).

Often these innovations have been proven as fit-for-context as they have already been tried in a small number of local schools, or low-fee private

schools working within the country's education system. This intermediary expertise then builds system strength rather than delivering to only a few children who are at the schools being managed by the non-state actor. These intermediary services are usually provided by not-for-profit actors keen to find answers for longer term problems in a country's education system. Intermediaries and non-state actors have also helped strengthen policies around PPPs and the use of non-state actors and their funding sources (see Ennum Ezhuthum and [SLEIC](#) case studies).

3 Diversification of funding sources to support government systems



Partnerships between government and non-state actors bring in private funding and investments from corporations, foundations, social entrepreneurs, think tanks, and consultancy firms for education services.²

Initially raising funds by targeting poor households³, low-fee private schools are now increasingly supported through PPP arrangements (such as in

Pakistan and Uganda⁴) ensuring free education for students.

As these schools expand in underserved areas, philanthropies and impact funders are recognising the potential to improve government-run schools with proven, low-cost innovations.

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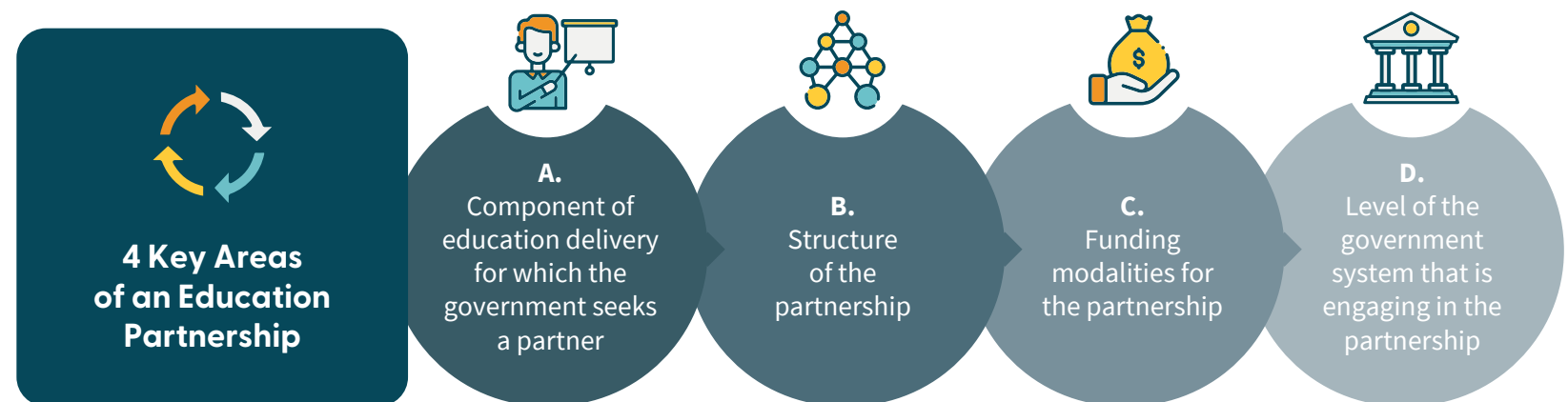
Strategies of philanthropic organisations and funders have now evolved to prioritise scaling these non-state models across entire systems. For example, Madhi Foundation has expanded its model to over 47,000 schools in Tamil Nadu, India, and BRAC in Bangladesh has successfully run schools supported by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Governments can pilot innovative approaches in a small cohort of schools, backed by rigorous research (often supported by philanthropies and impact funders who need to measure results).

Positive results can then be used by the government to engage a range of funders including major bilateral, multilateral organisations, and large philanthropies to support the scaling of successful models. For instance, in Malawi, the expansion of schools under the [Building Education Foundations through Innovation & Technology \(BEFIT\)](#) programme is partly funded by the GPE multiplier fund. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) will consider models that improve foundational literacy and numeracy at scale if models remain low cost and rigorously proven at scale.

Categorisation Framework

The categorisation framework builds on and structures the evidence on possible partnerships between government and non-state actors. Each of the four key areas of an education partnership in the framework, from A to D, should be analysed and selected separately.



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A. Components of education that could be delivered using non-state actors

A1. School management

- School leadership
- Human resources management
- School board, PTA and community engagement
- School vision and priorities
- Policy implementation e.g. child safeguarding
- Finance
- School governance

A2. Infrastructure

- School construction
- ICT infrastructure
- Transport
- School maintenance

A3. Pedagogy in schools

- Teacher training
- Teacher coaching & peer support
- School monitoring
- Core curriculum design
- Remediation support
- Teaching learning material online
- Teaching learning material offline
- Ancillary curriculum design
- Student assessments

A4. Other school services

- Health and nutrition
- After school programmes/clubs
- Community engagement
- Career counselling
- Vocational training
- Learning assessments
- School monitoring and inspection
- EMIS design and operationalisation
- Teacher training system
- Teacher pay and allocation

A5. National policy

- Teacher and leadership capacity building policy
- School construction planning
- School maintenance planning
- School ICT planning
- Inclusion and access strategies
- Policy research
- Policy development (consultation, and advocacy)
- Data-driven decision making

A6. Overall system coordination

- Project, programme or system design
- Education financing and donor engagement
- Overall system coordination
- Project management units (PMU)
- Programme monitoring, evaluation, and learning

B. Form of government engagement with Non-State actors

B1. Non-state actor-led delivery in public institutions

Schools or teacher training colleges run without state intervention

B2. Delivery partnerships for day-to-day schools administration

Non-state actors support government-run schools and have shared responsibilities for outcomes. Delivery partnerships can be for design, fundraising, resourcing, and/or management

B3. Delivery partnerships on specific components of education

Non-state actors support the government in the delivery of specific components within public schools

B4. Partner embedded in government

Government and non-state leadership work at the ministerial level to help design and implement state-wide programmes and policies

C. Funding modality

C1. Entirely donor or private funding

C2. Government funding for staffing and infrastructure

C3. Government funding for additional education services

C4. Blended finance (Outcomes paid for by donors, impact investors or governments)

C5. Entirely government funded

D. Level of system negotiating

D1. National

D2. District, regional, provincial or state

D3. School

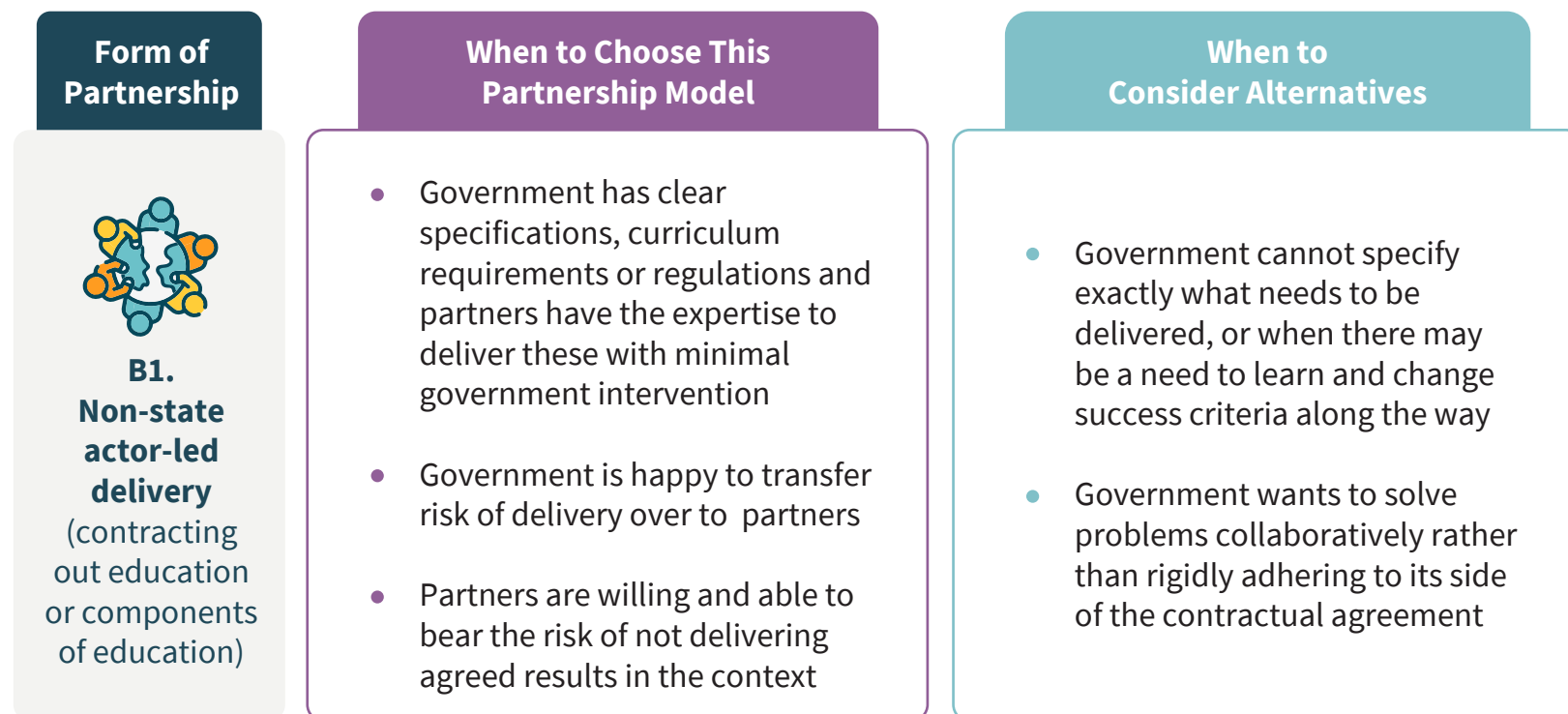
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Framework
and Guidelines

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How to Use the Categorisation Framework

While many governments are experienced in running systems at the national or regional level (see component D of the Categorisation Framework), and at designing interventions for the right part of the education system (see component A of the Categorisation Framework), there is less clarity on what kind of partnering to undertake with actors outside of the government. Often the funding modality, especially if the project is fully funded by a donor, dictates the form of partnership or contracting arrangements the government can have with NGOs, INGOs, private and other non-state actors who will receive the funds.

One advantage of designing a public private partnership or delivery partnership is that both partners can choose the form of government engagement or contracting modality that they find most suitable (see component B of the Categorisation Framework). In Sections 5 to 7 of this toolkit, we provide resources to help governments and non-state actors develop a partnership approach. These will be easier to complete if each partner has clarity about the type of partnership that best suits them.



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B2. Delivery partnership for school management and operations



B3. Delivery partnership on components of the education system

When to Choose This Partnership Model

- Government can set clear specifications but will need to be engaged daily or monthly to jointly solve problems and take decisions that emerge (e.g., if classrooms become overcrowded, or if there are staff shortages)
- Government wants to be an active partner, learning lessons from what is working in different schools and learning, scaling or sharing innovation across the system before the project is complete

- Government wants to harness specific expertise on a service (e.g., learning assessment, curriculum design, improving school inspections) and be actively involved in learning and delivery
- Government shows a willingness to put in regular checkpoints and organise ad hoc meetings to respond to emerging challenges

When to Consider Alternatives

- Government wants a 'hands off' approach and to leave experts to deliver
 - Government does not have time to solve problems on an ad hoc basis and is happy to spend time contracting services effectively up front, whilst checking on progress less regularly during the delivery
- Government wants to leave the experts to understand the context and deliver the agreed service with minimal civil servant or government time
 - Government does not have time to solve problems on an ad hoc basis and is happy to spend time contracting services effectively up front, whilst checking on progress less regularly during the delivery

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B4. Partner embedded within government

When to Choose This Partnership Model

- Non-state partner is keen to work on a daily or almost daily basis to help deliver the government's day-to-day responsibilities
- Levels of trust are high and/or there is a growing positive relationship

When to Consider Alternatives

- Lack of space or lack of willingness to have non-state actors from outside the government working in government offices daily

In summary, before embarking on a partnership there should be a targeted needs assessment of the education system (national or regional level). Additionally, there must be an agreement on the desired results and outcomes that embrace all the stakeholders, from the implementers to the end users.



Decisions to be made
by governments
interested in
partnering with
the non-state

1

Determine if they already have defined objectives, measurable outcomes, and the ability to attract providers to support them

2

Assess if they need to work together with partner(s) to identify problems, desired actions, and intermediate outcomes to measure

3

Consider embedding non-state actors in the day-to-day aspects of improving the education system

It is helpful for governments considering a partnership to understand the category they are likely to fall into. Additionally, this section can be revisited once the issues to be solved within the education system have been decided upon (see [Section 5](#)).

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5

Tool for Scoping & Designing a Context-Appropriate Partnership



Tool for Scoping & Designing a Context-Appropriate Partnership

If you have decided to engage with non-state actors but do not know how to evaluate their functions in relation to your specific needs, this section will provide guidance to begin your partnership journey. It contains a self-assessment tool to help you:

- 1 Prioritise the education challenges your country is facing
- 2 Identify your level of engagement
- 3 Identify your stakeholders and decide their level of involvement
- 4 Identify sources of funding and channels of communication within various departments of government
- 5 Decide on ways to measure the impact of the project
- 6 Decide on how to communicate the new plans to the diverse stakeholders involved
- 7 Decide on an action plan

How to complete the tool

Read the entire assessment tool once before you begin filling out each section.



Complete the tool in order, from Part A to E.



Additionally, you may have to map your stakeholders and identify overlapping areas of decision-making before you undertake this exercise as mentioned in Part C of this assessment tool.

In this section we will be making multiple references to column B from the [Categorisation Framework](#), which describes the various forms of engagement between governments and non-state actors, depending on the level of control the government would like to exert over the project (see categories B1 through B4 in the framework).

Part A: Self-Assessment Tool

This section will assist you in scoping the challenges specific to your education system and determining the type of non-state partnership that can address some of them.

1 What are the top challenges in your country preventing children from learning?

2 Are there existing innovations within government or through non-state education organisations to address these challenges and constraints?

	Innovation 1	Innovation 2	Innovation 3
Who is the actor (government, independent, donor project, other)?			
Which education challenge is being addressed?			
What is being done differently?			
Can it reach more schools?			

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3 Why are you considering non-state-actor-led organisations to solve the challenge?

Please assess yourself against the statements below and look at the key at the end to help you interpret your results. Your total score can help you decide which stage of this entire process you currently find yourself in.

Self-assessment	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Not sure (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
Innovation in Education					
We need innovation and fresh ideas to address the binding constraints in our education system					
We want to change the status quo through experimentation and innovation					
Agile Testing & Learning					
We are willing to test new approaches in a smaller number of schools to see if they work before scaling					
We are happy to work with outside actors to find solutions if they then support us to implement the successful interventions across all schools					
We are ready to test and learn quickly (12-24 month cycles)					
Collaboration & Partnerships					
We are open to partnerships where roles and responsibilities are mutually agreed upon					
We are able to play an equal role in the project, that has been jointly agreed with our partners and funders					
We are willing to collaborate with various funders and philanthropies, providing progress updates every six months					
We have the resources, time and capacity to dedicate to building, and sustaining a partnership					

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Self-assessment		Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Not sure (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
Technology Testing & Adaptation						
We are interested in testing technology tailored to our country's education system, acknowledging the possibility of failure						
Establishing Model Schools						
We want some of our schools to be model schools so that others can learn from them						
Funding Support						
There are funds available that can be offered towards these partnerships						
SCORING	<25	25 - 40		>40		
	You may want to carefully reconsider whether non-state actors offer the best opportunity for your system at this time.	You might consider engaging with an intermediary, a thought partner, or local non-state partner to explore the feasibility of this opportunity further.		This approach appears to be a good fit for your system, and you can proceed to explore the next steps below.		

4 If you have previously partnered with non-state actors, what were your learnings? What aspects were beneficial, and what challenges did you encounter?

Note: See [Section 2](#) for a refresher on the different types of non-state actors who partner with governments to offer education support

My learnings from previous partnerships are:

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5 Note down your concerns if any, in partnering with non-state actors.

Note: You will come back to these after working through the design phase and see if these challenges are addressed or how your model might need strengthening to address these.

My concerns regarding partnering are:

6 What are the legal parameters you need to consider before you initiate a partnership?



Is a new legal framework, law or procurement approval needed to enable contracting out this school or component of the education system? Or is this exercise more about generating ideas and innovations with partners, which might then be scaled across the system?

Note: See procurement, partnership and contracting in [Section 6](#)

Current engagements with non-state partners

Does the government initiate contracting?

Do you need additional contracting expertise from an intermediary?

Need for a procurement contract (specific services for an agreed amount)
Are ideas generated together (with partners)?

Is an MoU or concept note sufficient to commence work?

Risks vs benefits of relying on relationships over formulating the process

Part B: Setting Up the Partnership – Factors to Consider Before Commencing

This section of the tool will help you understand the steps you need to take and the stakeholders you need to consider before you begin the partnership process. You may wish to refer to the [Categorisation Framework](#) to help answer the questions below.

1 What level of government is interested in partnering with non-state actors? Are there specific departments who will be involved?

Will you be working at the national, regional or local level?
(List all that are applicable)

What departments will be involved?

2 Referring to Part A, question 1, the three biggest challenges preventing learning in your education system, where do you want a partnership to focus?

Note: You can find a list of the potential components of education systems here ([Section 4](#))

What part of the education system should the partnership focus on?

Does the part of the education system you are considering, relate strongly to the three biggest challenges for education in your country?

Do you have a view of innovation that has already taken place here (e.g., use of technology to improve learning, better teacher training, better curriculum)? Does this indicate any existing partners who you might want to work with?

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3 What kind of partnership would you prefer?



There is no right answer to this question, only a suggested model through which to partner with non-state actors. In all four options of column B in the framework, there is a government role to play, whether through oversight or more direct delivery. See the [Categorisation Framework](#) for more information about when to use different modes of partnership with non-state actors.

4 What funding models are you open to?

Do you want the non-state actor to be largely self-funded and independent?

Do you want the project to be fully donor funded but in the control of the government?

Do you want to focus on a government funding model?

Do you want a blended approach? (e.g., partly grant- or investment-funded, government-funded or allotted GPE funds that your government can direct)

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5 How will you measure the success of your programme?

What are some of the potential indicators that will help you measure success?

Will these tell you whether the results of the innovation and partnership are successful?

What are some of the potential indicators that will help you measure success?



Alongside mapping your stakeholders, you should consider how you will measure and demonstrate the success of the programme to each one of them. You may also need to plan the resources you will need for this.

Will you need a budget for evaluation to be included in the funding model?

6 What stakeholders do you need to engage in advance to make sure their concerns are addressed?

Note: Feel free to use this [Stakeholder Analysis and Planning Tool](#).

Do existing donor partners need to be informed?

Are teacher workloads or contractual terms likely to be affected?

Will your teacher and worker unions be accepting, or will they need targeted engagement?

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Do parents need to be engaged - are they being required to do or accept something significantly different?

Any other relevant stakeholders that you need to engage?

7 Are there any non-state actors currently in your system who might be interested in a partnership or can share innovations in public schools? Are there innovators or organisations in other countries who interest you?

List of existing non-state actors and examples of their successes and innovations

Examples of successes in other countries that you might like to try in your context

Other examples of innovation to try scaling (e.g., emergent good practices within existing public schools that might be spread to other schools with support)

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8 What is your (the public or government) role in delivering or providing resources to the partnership? What parts of government are involved in providing these resources (e.g., supplying teachers or buildings, or in ensuring longer term financing from donors)?



Regardless of the objectives, outcomes and format chosen, a government, as a minimum, usually wants to be involved in regulation and oversight, as well as making sure local laws and policies are adhered to. Regulation is looked at in more detail in [Section 6](#), which helps you understand how to write a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Note: If other [stakeholders](#) have a role to play in making the partnership work, please make sure they are added to the stakeholder list or engaged specifically.

What is the government's role in delivering or providing resources?

Do you need to work with other departments and/ or levels of government?

Do the other departments, districts or agencies have a discrete role to carry out as part of the public partnership or are they merely stakeholders to be kept informed? If they have a role to carry out, please detail the role.

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9 How much control and day-to-day management of the programme delivery do you wish to have? Please ensure this aligns to your answer to Part B, question 3, on what kind of partnership you would prefer.

There are different ways in which governments can determine their day-to-day engagement with a non-state actor and the management and regulation of their work (see column B of the [Categorisation Framework](#)):

1. Implementation by non-state actor: Commission the work and oversee it (e.g., monitor success measures and define policies) with the non-state actor being responsible for project delivery. After the partnership is set up, expect monthly or quarterly engagement or lower. The public sector is the commissioner and regulator with the non-state actor leading day-to-day management ([category B1](#)).

2. State and non-state actor co-partner project implementation: Implementing the partnership alongside non-state actors. Expect weekly or monthly senior-level engagement. Teams within the Ministry, Bureau or schools manage the partnership on a daily basis. Management is shared with clearly defined responsibilities. Meetings occur on an ad hoc basis as problems and learning emerge ([category B2 and B3](#)).

3. Non-state actor a thought partner and partial delivery partner: Government to lead both design and delivery using non-state actors as thought partners and for smaller components of delivery. The non-state actor may be embedded in the Ministry or government agency, working side-by-side with the government as they make decisions and act. The internal team would lead on the implementation of innovations every day, engaging non-state actors as needed. The government would have 100% control of planning and implementation. ([category B4](#)).

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List down the pros and cons
of each option

PROS

CONS

Option 1:
Using non-state actors as
delivery and implementation
partners

Option 2:
Co-partnering with
non-state actors

Option 3:
Government-led
implementation with partial
inputs from non-state actors

Based on the above, which
option is the best fit for you?

Part C: Commencing the Partnership - Roles, Responsibilities & Funding

This section will guide you through the process of designing your partnership, including defining roles, securing funding, and ensuring legal compliance. **Note:** As you answer the questions below, please ensure you refer to the Risk Assessment Checklist ([Section 7](#)) to anticipate and manage the risks in your design.

1 Who designs the partnership? How collaborative will this process be?

Is the government consulting relevant partners before releasing an RFP?

Is the programme being designed with donors?

Is the programme being designed with non-state actor(s)?

Does a concept note, or plan developed from this tool and [Section 6](#) need to be used to consult or co-create the design of the programme with other stakeholders? Or is the partnership and innovation already quite clear?

2 Who implements the programme? (Please make sure your answer aligns with question 9 of Part B on how much control over the day-to-day management of the programme you wish to have)

Is the non-state actor partner going to have sole responsibility for the delivery process with minimal oversight from the government?

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Is the non-state actor going to be a co-partner while delivering the programme?

Is the government going to 100% own the design and delivery of the programme with the non-state actor partner occupying an advisory role?

3 Is an additional coordinator needed?

If roles are distributed amongst several actors, who will coordinate with all the actors at the ministerial level? (Please refer to your answer to question 9 of Part B)

Should there be a weekly or monthly or quarterly meeting?

Is an external coordinator or intermediary needed?



See page 35 of the [RFP](#) for appointment of transaction adviser for setting up schools through PPP

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4 Who are the potential funders for the partnership?

Are you persuading your existing bilateral or multi-lateral partners to fund the partnership as part of your Education Sector Plan or overall vision to improve education?

Are you using the GPE Multiplier Fund?

Are you funding the partnership or part of the partnership directly using government resources? Might Ministries of Finance be persuaded to provide more funds to education in the future if the results of this partnership can be measured?

Are you working with philanthropies and impact investors who may be able to bring others on board?

Are philanthropies providing risk capital and major multilaterals paying for outcomes? (see [Policy Brief](#))

Are non-state actors partly or fully funding themselves? Or are they funding themselves until they achieve results?

Do you want to access grants or find new opportunities? Can you do this in partnership with non-state actors? Do you need technical assistance or an intermediary who supports this?

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5 What are the different parts of the partnership from a funding perspective and who is funding each part (from the list of potential funders mentioned above)?



Once funds are found or when preparing a fundraising plan, it is good to prepare a budget and designate who is paying for each part of the partnership. This may include listing the government staff time towards setting up the partnership or teacher pay that is included in the partnership as these are part of what the government is already paying for in a partnership. You may also want to consider:

- If funding is needed for measuring results on a regular basis to initiate payment
- If funding is needed to support a coordinator, who can also engage international funders as well as supporting design and procurement led by the government
- If special mechanisms are needed, such as a trust or fund that government can oversee but which also gives funders full transparency

6 How would you like the partnership to be branded and publicly presented?



Would you prefer the partner(s) to operate under a government-branded delivery model, or to promote their brand and hold them accountable for the services until success is demonstrated?

Part D: Communicating the Plans

This section focuses on effective communication strategies for sharing partnership plans with stakeholders. It highlights the importance of building consensus, addressing objections, and using persuasive arguments. It provides guidance on using various communication methods and platforms for transparently sharing partnership information, ensuring stakeholders are informed and engaged throughout the process.

1 How will you engage with each of your relevant stakeholders? What are your key messages for each stakeholder?



Refer to the [Stakeholder Analysis & Planning Tool](#).

2 Can you map out the likely objections, reasons for non-consensus or misalignment?



Here are a few examples of likely objections:

- Unions or workforce concerned about impact on their working hours or competition for jobs if teachers with lower qualifications can be recruited
- Civil society or press objecting to the use of non-state actors in government schools
- Is the Ministry of Finance being engaged so that they can pay or contribute to scale?
- How do school leaders and districts need to be engaged, given change is challenging?

What challenges do you anticipate once the project commences?

What will your biggest hurdles be?

Which stakeholders do you anticipate the most resistance from?

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3 What arguments or persuasion might you use?



Here are a few examples of the arguments you may be using to make decisions:

- "Recruitment may be affected but we anticipate a 30% improvement in learning results after five years".
- "Existing donor projects will not be affected or impacted by this partnership. Existing donor projects will be managed by..."
- To the Ministry of Finance: "Gathering evidence of what works will enable tapping into a wider range of funding streams".

4 Once you are clear about your messages, consider what communication vehicles can be used to share information about your programme for each stakeholder.



- A conference for all interested partners and donors. Would an intermediary or philanthropy consider supporting this?
- Press releases
- School visits or visits to local offices
- Communications on the ministry or regional website
- Engaging local chiefs or attending community meetings to explain changes for schools in a district
- Pre-launch meeting for stakeholders from different programmes operating within the ecosystem

Communication vehicles for each stakeholder	Stakeholder	Communication vehicle

Part E: Summarising

1 Please provide below, a concise summary for each of the following categories: ownership, design, delivery, fundraising, and resourcing

Note: For any role that is split across more than one actor or across a group, please clarify

- What the government will do alone
- What the non-state actors will do
- What the donors, philanthropies, or impact investors will do
- What will be done as a group

Role of stakeholders in the partnership				
Function	Actor(s)	Govt actions	Non-state actions	Funder actions
Ownership				
Design				
Delivery				
Resourcing				
Fundraising				

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2 Next steps

Use this section to note down actions that need to be taken before commencing a partnership RFP.
Please summarise actions below:

Actions before commencing the partnership			
Pre-RFP Tasks	Actions	Lead person/ unit	Due date (optional)
Engage stakeholders			
Secure funding			
Secure approvals (if any)			
Address objections (if any)			
Elicit interest and find good partners			
Put in place processes to measure outcomes (and arrange funding for the same)			
Source funding to achieve scale (if partnership is successful)			

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Setting Up a Non-State Partnership: Writing a Request for Proposals



Setting up a Non-State Partnership: Writing a Request for Proposals

By this stage, you would have used the interactive scoping tool to identify your country or region's needs and assessed whether a non-state partnership is appropriate for your current education priorities (see [Section 5](#)). You may have found a partner, an innovation, or simply defined a problem that you think would benefit from a non-state actor's expertise, financing, and ideas.

Now it is time for you to structure your needs into a more formal proposal. What are your terms? How do you want the entire project to play out on the ground? In this section, you will sharpen your focus and define the terms of reference, which you will then use to identify the partners you need to get started on your projects or programmes.



Non-state actors may have been working in your country or district's education system for many years, perhaps in the private sector, or piloting an innovation you wish to scale. For example, you may procure expertise from local NGOs, those running private schools, or organisations whose work you admire in other countries or regions of your country.

This section helps you commission a partnership that meets the needs you defined in Section 5. By the end of this exercise, you would have created a draft Terms of Reference and Request for Proposals (RFP). RFPs are probably what your government has already used to commission support from non-state actors in improving education in your country or region. As samples, you can read these RFPs in the public domain from [Pakistan](#), [India](#), and [Sierra Leone](#).

Everything you write in your proposal is connected to the insights you gained through the assessments you completed in previous sections.

When is a Formal RFP Needed?

Different types of partnerships require different approaches for engagement. These may include procurement (requiring an RFP), formal contracting, or a more informal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Pre-RFP Stage

In large-scale projects, an Expression of Interest (EOI) might be a useful preliminary step before issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP). It helps governments gather essential information to inform project design, and streamlines the RFP stage by reducing the number of proposals. The EOI includes guidelines on project scope, background, and desired outcomes, providing potential applicants with the context needed to assess their suitability and interest. This process enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the subsequent procurement by refining project design and procurement strategies.

01. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

The first round of procurement process aims to shortlist the most successful applicants and gather information from the applicants to inform the remaining design decisions.

It focuses on the suitability of proposals for implementing the programme based on applicants' track record and a preliminary intervention approach.



02. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Organisations whose expressions of interest have been selected are invited to proceed to the RFP stage.

At this stage, applicants are asked to provide more detailed technical information concerning the planned interventions and budget.



03. CONTRACTING

Successful applicants enter into contractual negotiations with the government.

The contract is signed between the Government and the selected applicant.

RFP Stage

An RFP is most suited to categories B1 through B3 in the Categorisation Framework (see [Section 4](#)). That said, it can also be adjusted to solicit proposals of support for category B4.

Some options and examples are:

Modes of Engagement in a Partnership between Governments & Non-State Actors

Type of Partnership	Modality of Partnership	Need for an RFP
B1. Non-state actor-led delivery in public institutions	Option 1: Commercial contracting out or non-state actor-led delivery	RFP needed
B2. Delivery partnerships for day-to-day school administration B3. Delivery partnerships on specific components of education	Option 2: Partnering with a non-state actor	RFP needed
B4. Partner embedded in government	Option 3: Informal partnering, suited for embedded technical assistance	RFP is optional. MoU or formal letter may also be appropriate here

Read about each option in detail below:

Option 1: Commercial contracting out or non-state actor-led delivery

This option requires asking non-state actors to manage schools or deliver a particular component of the education system with clearly defined commercial benefits or payments, ideally based on results achieved (whether outputs or outcomes).

- It is essential to put in place a procurement and contracting agreement right at the beginning
- Formal and contractually-binding mechanisms for managing disagreements or challenges are needed in such a partnership

Option 2: Partnering with non-state actor(s) in a delivery partnership

- A transparent procurement is highly recommended. Although it can take longer, a transparent procurement:
 - Is a pre-requisite for obtaining any kind of funding
 - Creates opportunities for the involvement of other experts and allows everyone concerned to gain additional experience from people who are authorities in the field
 - Allows stakeholders to make the payment mechanisms for the entire process clear right at the very beginning (e.g., if payment is based on results and the completion of delivery requirements, or if there is a need for the non-state actor and their funders to make a financial contribution up-front, i.e. if financial risk is being transferred, it is useful to specify that upfront)
- Formal contracting is essential in such a partnership. However, this option allows for some degree of negotiation in the way both parties meet to discuss next steps or to address grievances. Both informal and formal methods of meeting to resolve issues can be documented as and when they are called for and the modes of engagement can evolve as relationships build.

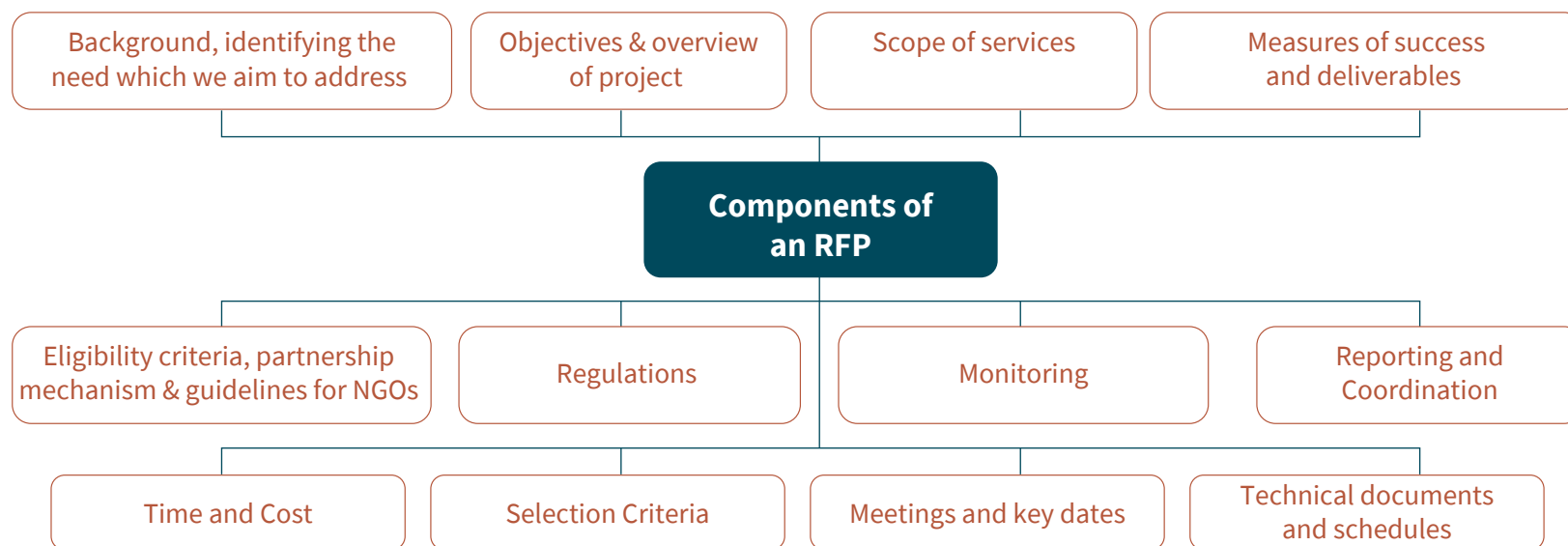
Option 3: Informal partnering for embedded technical assistance

- A more fluid partnership can emerge if you are embedding an agency or set of experts in your Ministry or government agency. This is true especially if the non-state actor is self-funded, and relationships are already built or getting built. In this situation, an MoU, formal letter, and regular check-ins on expectations being met may be appropriate. This has the advantage of encouraging continuity as tasks, and the scope of work gets repeated based on needs that emerge in the education system over time.

Now that you have seen some of the modes of engagement that partnerships follow, read the [Categorisation Framework](#) once again and read the [case studies](#) in this toolkit for more ideas on partnering formats. Even if you are not sure a formal procurement process will be necessary, we encourage you to fill out the light touch RFP template below, as it will clarify emerging ideas of the partnership you envision, to you and to other departments, funders, and non-state actors.

Potential Sections of an RFP

When preparing your RFP, you will need to consider the project from every possible angle to be able to adequately respond to any follow up questions that may come your way. In this segment, we will look at some of the most important aspects of an RFP. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of components. It can be used as a starting point, with other sections being added as needed.



A financial schedule is not necessarily needed from the non-state actor because the partnership can be based on outputs or outcomes achieved. This increases accountability and leaves the non-state actor to manage its funds and to be paid based on results (i.e. partners, or their investors, bear the risk).

If you are planning to scale the partnership to more schools or to more regions of your country, it is worth thinking about what the government would be able to pay for in the medium or long term. Donors are unlikely to be willing to be locked into a partnership that is not 'sustainable' – that is, a partnership that does not give them an exit period where they can move on to funding other needs, whilst the government or longer-term funding partners take over the scaling of an innovation. For example, if a successful model for running schools in a region is to be spread across more regions, the costs of non-state actors need to be kept at a manageable level for it to be realistic for the government to take over in the medium or long term. This could be worked out as the funding likely to be available per pupil after 5-10 years.

Preparing an RFP

Preparing an RFP may make it easier to engage funders who are interested in supporting innovations. Building on your answers in the interactive scoping and design tool in [Section 5](#), please fill out the questions in the pages that follow to plan your partnership project and maximise financing.

In this sample RFP, the areas indicated with a gap need to be filled in based on the needs of your country or region, and the partnership design you created in Section 5. The various sections in this sample RFP contain both guidelines and examples to help you develop an understanding of how to write your own.

Sample RFP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS	
Government of	
Table of Contents	
General	XX
Acronyms/Terms Used in the RFP	XX
Objectives	XX
Scope of Services	XX
Measure of Success	XX
Eligibility Criteria	XX
Regulations	XX
Monitoring	XX
Selection Criteria	XX
Annexure 1: Technical documents/Schedules	XX

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General

This section of the RFP contains general information needed to establish the terms of the partnership. The box below has indicative text that you can use to develop the RFP.

EXAMPLE

The [include name of department, unit or agency commissioning a partnership] invites qualified NGOs, INGOs, local education actors, private schools, and appropriate individuals and/or private entities to submit proposals for the implementation of the [name of project] partnership to improve education in [country or region].

The Government/ Ministry/ Department reserves the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP at any stage. The applicant shall bear all its costs associated with or relating to the preparation and submission of its proposal including, but not limited to, preparation, copying, postage, delivery fees, expenses associated with any demonstrations or presentations as part of the partnership development/ bidding process [select as appropriate for category B1 or B2 and B3 from the [Categorisation Framework](#) in Section 4]

[Optional]: The RFP is pending [agreed funding/ has agreed funders already engaged/ is at x stage of securing funding]

Acronyms & Terms

- List any acronyms commonly used in your education system and in the RFP.
- Designate any formal roles within this section:
 - The Government of X is referred to as 'the commissioner'.
 - Non-state actors are referred to as 'service providers' or 'contractors'.

Objectives

- List all objectives of the partnership you selected in [Part B](#) of Section 5. Objectives can be modified, but it is critical to list the most important ones that will directly result in the success of the project.
- Include measures of success that you have defined in Part B of Section 5.
- Include the intended outcomes of the partnership defined in Part B of Section 5.
- Optionally, include the intent to scale based on success of the partnership. Example: If successful, the intention is to scale the partnership across [the country/more districts/regions].
- Include the overview of project (refer to [Part A](#) of Section 5).
 - Need for the project
 - Analysis of the challenges in your education system
 - Details of what has, or has not, worked in the past, and why this partnering approach is being considered

Scope of Services

Based on the examples in the next page and your answers from Part B in Section 5, detail out the partnership:

- Details of the partnership and scope of services to be rendered by the non-state partner
- Roles and responsibilities of the non-state partner for the duration specified
- Provisions or allocations included as a part of the partnership that the non-state partner will have access to/control over
- Conditions of any additional services or equipment to be provided (e.g., tools, textbooks, methods must be shared with the government to enable replication and learning; any books or equipment provided become the property of the government).

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Examples

Non-State Actor-Led Delivery (category B1)

The partnership will seek to contract out the management of schools to non-state actors with a proven track record, and proposed approach for improving learning in Grades 1-6. The focus will be on improving literacy (in mother tongue and English); and numeracy. The partnership will be for three years in the first instance. The national exam/EGRA and EGMA [insert measurement tool as appropriate] will be used to assess success. The partner(s) will be allocated schools, provided with teachers, buildings, and whatever textbooks or equipment are already existing in the school. The non-state actor will have the freedom to use different pedagogical methods, monitoring mechanisms for schools, teacher training. They can provide new learning materials, equipment, and textbooks, provided these can be provided at scale. (E.g., if the model of learning is to be adapted across more schools/the whole country).

Delivery Partnership on Education System Components (category B3)

The partnership will seek to engage non-state actors in [component of the education system] (e.g., teacher coaching/ using school monitoring data/ improving school performance management/ curriculum design and training for delivery/ building schools/ building laboratories/ providing school food).

Measures of Success

- Based on the outcomes and outputs defined in Part B, Question 5 in [Section 5](#), identify a list of Key Performance Indicators.
- If payment will be dependent on results - mention the proportion of the payment that will be result-based, as some local providers may not be able to absorb too much risk upfront.
- Highlight whether the payment schedule will align with the KPIs. For example, if payment is dependent on learning outcomes, it would be important to identify how soon the outcomes can be measured after commencement of the project.

Eligibility Criteria

- Use the example below to create your own eligibility criteria:
- Example: To be eligible to apply, the applicant must:
 - Be a non-state actor, which includes [NGOs/ for-profit entities/ specify others]
 - Have an experience of at least two years working in an education system similar to [name your country/ region] OR [working within the country/ region]
 - Have a track record of improved learning demonstrated with evidence
 - Meet the licensing criteria or are likely to pass local licensing laws
 - Have evidence of working in the country's context, employ personnel from within the country at decision-making levels

Regulations

- Please include the laws and rules the non-state partner(s) must abide by and the regulations by the government
- Answer the sample questions below, pertaining to different aspects of the partnership to identify some parameters that the non-state actor must work within, or will not be able to affect:
 - Curriculum:
 - Should there be no deviation from the curriculum, or can they teach the curriculum in whatever order they please as long as results are achieved?
 - Workforce:
 - Are they continuing to work with the existing workforce?
 - Can they remove teachers or ask them to be moved?
 - Can they provide bonuses?
 - Classroom overcrowding:
 - Can they say no to more students if classes become overcrowded due to popularity of schools?
 - How will those students then be placed or educated?
 - What communication is needed to ensure you can meet human rights obligations to students?
 - Will they be able to build more classrooms with the help of the community?

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- Who is responsible for that obligation and for the process of negotiation between all the stakeholders involved?
- Highlight any regulations you may be willing to relax for piloting this initiative
For example,
 - Can your partner introduce alternative methods to manage teacher performance or pay reforms?
 - Can minimum qualification levels for teachers be altered as an experiment? E.g., can your partner hire teachers who do not have a teaching degree, a Master's degree, or a University degree?
 - Might there be variations to lesson plans or what gets taught in the curriculum each month?
 - Can students be placed in different grades to that appropriate for their age group, but instead based on their current levels of reading or numeracy?
- Identify the necessary communication and communication channels to ensure that those affected understand the partnership's impact on regulation, laws, or policy
 - Which policies are changing or being adapted? Who needs to understand this? Please include this in the RFP so partners know what changes are coming in as a result of this partnership
 - Is adherence to any legal framework going to be affected by the planned partnership interventions or innovations?
 - Will the partnership support delivery of current legally-binding obligations, including human rights obligations?
 - Will any of these obligations be put at risk? How can these impacts be prevented?
- Outline any minimum criteria (if applicable) for consideration of non-state actors at the outset of proposal submission and any requirements to be maintained throughout the duration of the partnership

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Example 1

The non-state actors will not be able to alter the curriculum. They cannot change what is taught in each semester. They can/cannot alter teacher pay and performance management incentives. They can/cannot ask for teachers who are not performing to be removed. They can/cannot recruit their own teachers.

Schools will be allocated by [name of authority]. There will be a maximum of [mention a concrete number here] of students/schools.

Example 2

The non-state actors will not be able to alter the school monitoring tool. They will not be able to use any of the data in the school monitoring tools. They can/cannot manipulate and present the data differently, for example, in online dashboards. They can/cannot provide additional staff to support monitoring if these staff members are paid at their own cost.

Monitoring

- State whether the government or an independent verifier will provide the monitoring support and ensure that partners understand the consequences of violating agreed-upon laws, rules, or regulations.
- State the verification and monitoring methodology and protocols, if already determined or explain the method of determination.
- Specify how payments will be made based on performance against independently verified results.
- Determine the frequency of verification and monitoring visits, such as annually, quarterly, or before each payment period.



What regulation and oversight will you provide to ensure outcomes are achieved before non-state actors are paid (or to identify when the project needs stopping or altering?) E.g., are you providing monitoring to make sure outcomes are achieved before payment is received? How will you provide that oversight? How often? Do you need support to offer that oversight and how will that impact the total funding needed?

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- Establish a clear process for addressing issues occurring during the partnership. For example, escalating the concern to the Ministerial Partnership Coordinator and requesting a meeting with the relevant ministerial team and ensuring that a meeting with the ministry is guaranteed within the week, unless it is a holiday period, or all relevant personnel are absent.
- Define reporting requirements for partners, including attendance at oversight meetings at the ministry.



- If you are developing a delivery partnership, these meetings could also be to problem solve issues or share learning.
- Consider which departments of the government need to be at these meetings to ensure the relevant policy areas are covered.
- Consider if there should be any public meetings with the government and partners for interested parties /civil society /press to be engaged, ask questions, or see progress.

- Specify visits to school sites, workshops, or project sites as indicated by the non-state actor and clarify whether visits will be scheduled or ad hoc.
- Include the details of the written reports to be submitted to support the formal payment metrics and other agreed upon indicators [the details can be within the schedules, annexure, or within the main body of the RFP].

Selection Criteria

Before you begin your selection process, you need to determine how important different aspects of the project are to all the stakeholders involved. To do this, you may need to allocate a numerical value or weightage to each component of the project. This will help you distinguish between various candidates and choose the one most suited to your specific requirements. At this stage, it would be wise to ensure that the percentages you allocate to various components and the panellists that you choose, conform to local procurement laws or the needs of planned funders.

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1. During the first stage of the selection process, proposals will be evaluated based on each bidder's relevant experience, their understanding of the partnership and RFP and their proposed methodology. Only those applicants whose technical proposals score 70 points or more out of 100 shall be ranked as per the score achieved by them, from highest to the lowest technical score. Proposals will be rejected if the non-state actor scores below 70% on the categories for relevant experience.
2. The government committee assessing bids will include [name staff or department involved]. Independent panellists will be provided by [...] (this may be a funder or a verification expert who will help you set up an outcomes fund or payment-by-results model).
3. The criteria will include weighting of performance on [include your most and least important criteria. Emphasise that the weighting is towards the most important criteria].

Example of Scoring Criteria for Delivery Partnership

The weightage allocated in the example below is complicated. You could make all factors equally important if that helps you complete this task with a sound understanding of how this process works.

S No	Criteria	Weighting	Criteria Detail
1	Country experience	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Understanding of local contextii. Understanding of education systemiii. Knowledge of local communitiesiv. Local staffv. Years in country
2	Education experience	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Years of experience in relevant components of the education systemii. Experience of staff chosen as part of the team for this projectiii. Success measures of previous projects or schools run

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3	Model and/ or innovations proposed and suitability for RFP outcomes	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Applicability/ relevance of the model to problem defined in RFP (and Section 5) ii. Experience of delivering the model or aspects of the model elsewhere iii. Feasibility of the model in the local context
4	Sustainability of financial model for scaling	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the government take over funding in the long-term or are funds required beyond sustainability? ii. Could the use of GPE funds or major donor partner funds enable scaling in the short to medium term? <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Are you satisfied with a few highly resourced model schools spread over the country, and how will equity be maintained? (e.g., competitive examinations at secondary school to allow the highest performers to take up the opportunity)
5	Maturity of organisation and ability to respond to changing needs	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. How long has the NGO/ INGO/ commercial actor been in operation? ii. Have they delivered major projects or programmes before? iii. In a delivery partnership, will they be able to adapt to changing requirements – for example, an increase in student numbers due to high community demand? iv. Does the organisation have the resilience to survive the financial risks inherent in a payment-by-results model, if that is planned?

Key Deadlines

Indicate all the important deadlines including but not limited to:

- Expression of Interest (EOI) launch
- Deadline for bidders to submit questions in writing on RFP
- Pre-bidding conference to clarify questions
- Public summary of conference and any amendments to the RFP
- Deadline for submission of proposals
- Notification of decision to applicants

----- End of Sample RFP Template -----

Further Documents & Schedules to Support RFP Development

Technical documents & schedules

1. Operational Details: What are some of the other operational details that you need from your non-state actor partner in order to process their proposal? For example:

- a. Name of organisation
- b. Name of CEO and number of employees
- c. Registration number and authority
- d. Registration date/ years of similar experience
- e. Years of experience in your country
- f. Education experience and expectations
 - Operational areas (districts, blocks, union councils, etc., they currently work in)
- g. Type/ nature/ number of centres/ schools they currently work in
- h. Existing number of students
- i. Targeted number of students
- g. Monthly budget to reach target mentioned
- h. Affiliations and accreditations
- i. Donor/ funding source (if applicable)

2. Specification documents: Consider what details are needed for your contractors to make an accurate proposal that they can be sure to deliver on:

For example,

- Size of land plots for schools to be built
- Number of students affected by a project
- Number of teachers
- Relevant policies: e.g., performance management laws for teachers to be utilised
- Laws and rules the non-state partner(s) must abide by and the regulations by the government

3. Schedule: Provide a detailed timeline or schedule for the project, including key milestones, deliverables, and deadlines. This schedule should outline the sequence of activities from project initiation to completion, ensuring clarity on the timeline for implementation. Include important dates such as:

- a. Project start date
- b. Completion date
- c. Milestone dates
- d. Submission deadlines for progress reports or deliverables

Closing Comments

If you have stuck with the process outlined in this toolkit so far, we believe that you are on your way to building a successful non-state partnership that could bring lasting change to the education system of your country or region. Before you leave, we recommend that you carefully consider the following points:

Your project design and the challenges in your education system.

The form of contracting, and procurement most relevant to your project based on the type of partnership you have chosen and the kind of non-state actor you are working with (see [Section 7](#)).

The involvement of all necessary government departments in the negotiation and contract development process. You need to manage how these changes that affect these departments will be communicated to them.

Whatever kind of partnership you use (B1-B4), it is important to prepare a comprehensive legal agreement with clear roles and responsibilities in place for each partner. An MoU is only appropriate for technical assistance embedded in the Ministry (B4) where there is easy day-to-day contact and management. This enables easier course correction than when schools or components of the education system are being delivered outside of the ministry.

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Ensuring a Successful Partnership: A Checklist for Anticipating & Managing Risks

Ensuring a Successful Partnership: A Checklist for Anticipating & Managing Risks

Careful design, planning and procurement processes are essential to the smooth running of any programme. They deliver the results required for children in your education system to thrive. But, like all projects, there are ongoing risks that need to be managed if the work being done is to remain on track for success. The template below provides some examples of risks as well as ideas that can help partners manage them.

LEGEND

Likelihood

HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW

Severity

HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW



Risks & Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Lack of Shared Vision for Success

Likelihood: **HIGH**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** All partners may not be sufficiently engaged or have a unified understanding and definition of success.
- **Event:** Differing visions of success among partners can hinder project alignment and progress.
- **Impact:** Misaligned goals and expectations can undermine collaboration, leading to conflicts, inefficient resource use, and delays in achieving project outcomes.

Mitigation Plan

- Establish a shared vision of success through design and norming workshops before finalising agreements before an MoU or contract is signed and during the project kick-off phase.
- Ensure all partners understand, agree with, and commit to the vision and outcomes of the project.
- Involve relevant ministries or departments and other stakeholders (e.g., parents, media) in the visioning process.
- If other ministries or departments are involved in the project, ensure they are engaged in the project from the start and are aligned with the vision for the project.
- Align new projects with existing initiatives in the education system to avoid duplication and enhance synergy.

Risk: Unclear Scope of Work & Objectives

Likelihood: **MEDIUM**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** The scope and objectives of the project are not clearly defined before or during implementation.
- **Event:** Unclear or shifting project scope and objectives can lead to mismanagement and delays.
- **Impact:** Ambiguity in project goals can lead to ineffective execution. This increases the risk of project delays and cost overruns, and may result in misalignment with stakeholder expectations.

Mitigation Plan

- If the scope of the project and objectives are unclear, choose a less formal engagement route (such as an MoU) while you formally define the objectives of the project.
- Update project documentation and procurement processes as the scope and objectives evolve.
- Consider engaging an intermediary or project management unit to manage risks if commercial providers are involved.

Risk: Unclear Roles & Responsibilities

Likelihood: **HIGH**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** Roles and responsibilities of partners are not clearly defined or documented.
- **Event:** Ambiguities in roles and responsibilities can lead to confusion and inefficiencies.
- **Impact:** Potential mismanagement and duplication of efforts, increased risk of non-compliance with regulatory requirements, and delays in project execution, collectively reduce the project's effectiveness.

Mitigation Plan

Note: To better understand the roles or responsibilities you need to consider up front, see Section 5.

- Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities for all the government and all partners in the project.
- All partners must know the nature of the education service being provided (for example, curriculum design, school management).
- Identify and document auxiliary services required for project execution. eg., if the partners are expected to manage a school, clearly define if they are responsible for infrastructure, for teacher pay and/or for pensions. If not, clarify what aspects the partners are responsible for and how is their dependence on those services, which they are not responsible for, going to be managed. If they are providing a service, such as inspections, ed-tech for learning, establish who is providing the teachers, the equipment, the schools, the electricity for any tablets or technology used.
- Establish a regular and documented monitoring process, including who is monitoring the partner and how often. As challenges emerge and roles shift, ensure these are built into project documentation and changes are communicated to all partners.

- Communicate to all partners the regulatory decisions that have been taken to implement the project, whose role it is to ensure that regulations are not broken and manage the implementation of agreed policies.
- Ensure that financing for the project is clearly defined from the outset. Identify the sources of funding and their respective timelines, specifying what each partner, including the government and other funders, will contribute. Establish clear milestones and metrics that will trigger payments, along with a mechanism for course correction if these milestones are not met.

Risk: Inadequate Assessment of Partner's Capabilities

Likelihood: **MEDIUM**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** Insufficient assessment of a partner's technical and operational capabilities.
- **Event:** Partners may not fully understand the operating environment and education system well enough or a trust-based relationship with the partner has not been built.
- **Impact:** Ineffective partnership performance resulting from inadequate assessment of capabilities may lead to increased operational challenges, trust issues, and potential conflicts or misalignment with project goals.

Mitigation Plan

- Visit partner schools or observe their operating models so that you can see examples of their work before initiating a partnership.
- Allocate time for relationship building and trust development before signing contracts.
- Ensure that you have built trust before signing a contract or build-in clear exit clauses for both parties in your contract.
- Make sure you have considered what happens to any intellectual property or other resources developed during the project – even if the partnership ends early.
- Continue to check-in with your partner as your understanding of the model develops and your partner's understanding of the context develops.

Risk Title: Inadequate Project Oversight & Regulation

Likelihood: **HIGH**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** Clear monitoring, regulation, and oversight mechanisms for the project have not been established.
- **Event:** This may result in insufficient tracking of project progress and adherence to standards.
- **Impact:** This could lead to project mismanagement, non-compliance with regulatory requirements, delays, increased costs, and potential failure to meet project objectives.

Mitigation Plan

- If regulation and oversight is to be provided by the government, ensure there are sufficient resources to carry this out effectively and finances are allocated for this in the project plan.
- A regular schedule for monitoring should be set up at the start of the project and a point person assigned.
- If payment is based on outcomes, there may be a need to conduct independent monitoring or the verification of results and needs to be accounted for in the project plan.
- At the outset of the project, it is worth factoring additional resources in, where possible. This can be useful for occasional crises (a complaint about a partner that needs investigation, press or union opposition). There may also need to be alterations to the monitoring frequency over time.
- One way to avoid excessive oversight burdens is to have clear roles and strong penalties for non-compliance with policies to deter partners. This might make a spot-check approach easier (and more cost-effective) to ensure regulatory requirements are not being missed out.



Risk: Unclear Financing Arrangements

Likelihood: **MEDIUM**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** The timeframe for financing the pilot partnership is not established, conditions for maintaining funding are not outlined upfront, and a pathway to sustainability, for a successful pilot, is not defined.
- **Event:** Unclear financing arrangements and lack of a defined sustainability plan may lead to interruptions in funding and challenges in scaling the project effectively.
- **Impact:** Insufficient funding and financial instability can jeopardise the project. Challenges in scaling successful innovations and transitioning to long-term funding may arise, leading to potential discontinuation of successful initiatives due to funding issues.

Mitigation Plan

- Clearly define financing arrangements and conditions for maintaining funding at the outset of the partnership. Establish a clear timeline for evidence collection and metrics required by funders. Identify potential pathways for scaling successful innovations and securing long-term sustainability, including engagement with additional funders or government bodies. For example, if initial costs are too high, the model may not be scalable. The [Ennum Ezhuthum](#) case study is an example of how a higher cost model was used to demonstrate success and then a lower cost model was developed from those successes to enable a wider reach with limited finances. Develop a plan to transition from initial funding sources to sustainable options. Identify how the innovation can be sustained if philanthropies and impact funders exit. For example, can the Ministry of Finance be engaged to increase funding? Can GPE Multiplier or other donor funds be influenced? Can the project transition from philanthropies to larger aid donors while public finances improve? The [BEFIT](#) case study demonstrates how a series of Randomised Control Trials created strong evidence pathways and proof-of-concept for the government to apply its GPE Multiplier Funds, enabling other funders to sustain their match funding for a longer period. Similarly, the [I&I](#) case study highlights how to make innovation work using existing staff within an education system, reducing staffing costs and improving sustainability as the staff are already a part of the government's civil service payroll.

- Monitor the project's financial health and impact regularly to adjust strategies as needed and ensure continued funding and support.
- A successful partnership will identify early on if positive impacts are occurring and start planning beyond the current funding cycle to ensure that educational improvements are sustained and can reach a larger number of students.

Risk: Inadequate Project and Programme Management

Likelihood: **HIGH**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** Absence of a dedicated unit or lead responsible for managing the partnership.
- **Event:** Lack of a team for risk management, stakeholder engagement, and sustaining funding.
- **Impact:** Ineffective project management and oversight occurring due to the absence of a dedicated unit, increasing the risk of misalignment with objectives, stakeholder dissatisfaction, and challenges in sustaining funding and achieving project goals.

Mitigation Plan

- Develop a Project Management Unit (PMU) (that can be built from existing government staff) or team to oversee the partnership.
- Ensure team has clarity on project objectives and team roles such as design, procurement, regulation, monitoring, sustaining funding.

Engage ministerial leadership at the project's inception to secure initial support and alignment (see [SLEIC](#) case study) and establish a dedicated, structured team responsible for advancing the project's vision, overseeing its execution, and addressing challenges as they arise. This approach ensures continuous project management and effective problem-solving.

Time needed by the team will depend on the type of partnership selected (see [Categorisation Framework](#)). Some partnerships are time intensive during negotiation but require only monitoring and planning for sustained funding (B1); others require a partnership approach to problem solving (B2 and B3); others, (embedded unit) (B4), may not require a PMU as they are in the team that regularly handles the project. Here, a clear scope of work is important but can evolve over time with collective agreement.

Other Considerations in Policy & Programme Design

Varying your procurement approach based on the type of partner you are engaging with and potentially increasing your negotiating power (see [Section 6](#))

[Section 2](#) and 6 talk about tailoring your approach to suit the specific requirements of your provider. This approach is summarised below:

Small local NGOS



Such organisations may need support:

- To engage in a larger project. eg., their needs might include up-front investment or finance rather than taking on the risk of payment based on outcomes
- To meet procurement requirements and engage in the procurement process
- With fundraising
- With scaling to different regions

These actors often have the best models for scale as they know the context deeply and already operate on lower budgets. It is important not to exclude their local knowledge and think about how to adapt contracting and engagement processes to include it.

Large for-profit companies



- At the other end of the spectrum, large, commercial education service providers are equipped for procurement and have large funds to take on risks at the outset.
- It's important to ensure that the incentives of large for-profit education service providers are aligned with your goals. Both parties should work towards mutually agreed-upon outcomes to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Having an intermediary or other actors can help manage these interests and protect your position during negotiations.
- Contracting with large for profits can be a complex negotiation and having an intermediary or other actors can strengthen your negotiating power and build-in protections in the contracting process.

International NGOs (INGOs)



- Somewhere in between these two extremes are international NGOs. INGOs often bring a strong commitment to educational improvement, but their approaches can sometimes be less agile due to large, bureaucratic structures. It's important to clearly define objectives and policies from the outset. For example, INGOs may have variants to the curriculum they wish to include, so any constraints on this should be made binding at the outset. This can include measures such as spot checks to observe what is being taught and/or ministry approval for any learning tools used.

Large local NGOs



- These organisations have many of the benefits of smaller local NGOs but with more experience of procurement and an improved ability to absorb financial risk/ invest in schools or education components with staged payment. Should have demonstrable models for you to confirm their suitability and whether you want their items to scale

Social enterprises or socially engaged commercial providers



- These actors, while focused on growth and profitability, are socially responsible and ensure that the needs of children and the education system are prioritised.
- They will be more willing to share learning with other schools and will generally have an interest in seeing the system improve as a whole, not just the schools or components they work on.
- It might be hard to distinguish a socially responsible actor from any other company so it is worth being clear, as with all larger actors, on issues such as intellectual property, what happens when the actor leaves, what policies they must follow and how they will be regulated. Again, this negotiation would benefit from having procurement or expert intermediaries to ensure the needs you define- and needs you might not yet have anticipated are considered.
- For example, what happens if the school becomes overcrowded? What happens if teachers do not attend? These may be the norm but if providers need to provide a certain level of learning to achieve their payment outcomes or satisfy investors, they may have incentives to act differently to how you would like. Working through these scenarios yourself or with an independent intermediary can lead to a stronger partnership.

Equity Considerations and Stakeholder Engagement



As educational partnerships evolve, it is crucial to ensure that these initiatives are inclusive and equitable. Addressing potential disparities and engaging all relevant stakeholders from the outset not only strengthens the partnership but also ensures that the benefits are shared equitably across everyone involved. This section explores two critical aspects of partnership design- ensuring equity and securing stakeholder buy-in.

If you, or opponents to the partnership, have equity concerns, it is worth going through the questions below to put in safeguards in the policy and programme design:

- 1 Does the financing of education being set up favour some learners and exclude others? Is there a plan to extend the benefits to all learners and what is an appropriate time period for that learning and delay?
- 2 Are regulations effective and feasible or do they have unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged learners? For example, will the monitoring put in place incentivise partners to spend less time on the progress of children who are far behind and unlikely to pass exams? Can you put in progress measures to show improved learning over time rather than the final pass rate? Are you ignoring regulation and oversight of schools in rural areas and are standards poorer there? How might this be mitigated?
- 3 Are good ideas for education nurtured or stifled? Is the partner facilitating the spread of innovation through the education system for the common good so that benefits spread to all? This is linked to scaling (see finance section below)
- 4 Are all voices given equal opportunities to shape the public debate in education? Does the partner maintain the transparency and the integrity of the public education policy process so as to block vested interests?

Engaging stakeholders, especially when new policy freedoms or regulatory exceptions are included in the partnership



Who might oppose the partnership and how can their buy-in be secured and maintained over time?

- Is the partnership understood by everyone? Who are the actors who might be against it? Who does it create more work for? Who are the potential ‘losers’? Mapping this out and having a consistent (not one-off) stakeholder engagement plan is crucial
- It is important not only to engage all actors before the partnership commences and while defining contracting roles, but also throughout the partnership. Even those who do not have a role to play can have an opinion and influence, so it is important to regularly manage communications for a programme and address any myths that are beginning to emerge. There might be a specific public engagement process, or regular inclusion and mention of the project at conferences or in press briefings. These are good methods of de-risking the project and ensuring there is transparency on why partners are being used.
- Below are some examples of stakeholders it is important to consistently consider if your partnership is to be a success:

Opposition by different departments within a ministry

- Different parts of the education ministry may not have come up with the idea of the partnership or agree with it as a solution
- The partnership may be creating additional burdens and increasing their workload
- They may be influenced by civil society or other actors who fear that any non-state actor being involved constitutes privatisation

Opposition by civil society or mainstream aid actors

Working with non-state actors is now widespread in a range of countries (see [case studies](#) and [literature review](#)), yielding learning benefits, alternative financing mechanisms and innovation. However, as new players in the education landscape, their role needs greater clarification until there is as much familiarity for their role in the system as there is with major aid donors or technical assistance.

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Appendix



Appendix 1: Stakeholder Analysis & Planning Tool for the Design of your Partnership

Instructions for use

You can use this tool to analyse your most important stakeholders and consider how to engage them. This may include being clear with them on what they are responsible for.

1. List all stakeholders in the first column.
2. Analyse whether that stakeholder has a role in the partnership, if they are the responsible public (or private) partner, if they need to be consulted on the partnership, if they need to be informed (and when).

Make this tool your own

Below is the basic framework for a stakeholder mapping exercise. Feel free to make this tool your own by adding elements to its design such as:

- More stakeholders
- Potential engagement mechanisms (e.g., national conferences, engaging with local education groups, quarterly meetings, etc.)
- A column to consider what objections or questions a stakeholder might have
- Additional stakeholders who may get involved in case scaling occurs (especially if your innovation is being piloted and tested to be potentially scaled if successful)

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Stakeholder(s)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	No Engagement
Ministry of Education & Related Departments [National Level]					
Minister / Deputy Minister of Education					
Other senior education decision makers (List all) • • •					
Relevant departments or bureaus in Ministry of Education (list all roles within departments) • • •					
Education Departments [District/ County/ Regional/ Provincial/ State Level]					
Relevant county/district level teams (list all) • • •					
Relevant local office or inspection teams • • •					

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Stakeholder(s)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	No Engagement
Other Ministries					
Premier's office/ President/ PM's office					
Ministry of Finance					
Other relevant national ministries (e.g., payroll agencies or statistical agencies, inspectorate). • • •					
Other Education Stakeholders at all Levels [National / County / District / Local]					
Community leaders or representatives					
School leaders					
School teachers					
Parents/ PTAs					
Communities					
Unions • • •					

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Stakeholder(s)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	No Engagement
Non-State Actors					
Civil society bodies • • •					
Local education partners (list all relevant) • • •					
Local businesses or private support (list all relevant) • • •					
International donors funding other projects (list all, e.g., World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, Dubai Cares) • • •					
Other international education actors (e.g., Oxfam, Save the Children) • • •					

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Non-State Actors (contd)					
Philanthropies and impact investors who might help scaling <ul style="list-style-type: none">					
Other potential non-state actors whose knowledge might be leveraged for the pilot <ul style="list-style-type: none">					
Academics and policy experts <ul style="list-style-type: none">					
Research organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none">					

Appendix 2: Experts Consulted

Pablo Jaramillo	Alianza Educativa
David Archer	ActionAid
Jana Du Plooy	Apex Education NPC
Benjamin Piper	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Augusta Brandt	Bonnievale418
Abha Thorat-Shah	British Asian Trust
Mathias Esmann	Consultant - Government of Sierra Leone
Wilsona Jalloh	Consultant - Government of Sierra Leone
Petrine Addae	Consultant - Ministry of Education, Ghana
Salma A Alam	Durbeen
Fauzia Shamim	Durbeen
Erin Northey	EducAid Sierra Leone
Juanita Penuela	Education Outcomes Fund
Bethany Fong	Education Outcomes Fund
Louise Albertyn	Education Outcomes Fund
Oana Malcica	Education Outcomes Fund
Kat Patillo	EdWell
Tomas Kessl	EIDU
George Kronnisanyon Werner	Former Minister of Education, Liberia
Antonie Chigeda	Imagine Worldwide
Saka Sokontwe	Independent School Association of Zambia
Sabina Vigani	Jacobs Foundation
Guilherme Barros	Lemann Foundation
Merlia Shaukath	Madhi Foundation

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Srivathsan Ramaswamy

Madhi Foundation

Mang'ombe Tembo

Ministry of Education, Zambia

Francesca Horn

Promoting Equality in African Schools

Jon Molver

Proteus Advisory

Anthony Hall

Public School Partnerships

Darsha Indrajith

Public School Partnerships

George Cowell

Rising Academy Network

Jennifer Artibello

Rising Academy Network

Tuffnel Pratt

Rising Academy Network

Afua Dogbatsey

Rising Academy Network

Amitav Virmani

The Education Alliance

Sreynak Hun

United World Schools

Sina Long

United World Schools

Sokha Mok

United World Schools

Andre Lamprecht

Western Cape Education Department

Yves Jantzen

World Bank

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