



Government and Non-State Partnerships Toolkit

Toolkit for Non-State Actors

Acknowledgements

This **Partnerships Toolkit for Non-State Actors**, 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
DIB	Development Impact Bond
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)
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
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

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Abbreviation	Definition
I & I	Inspect & Improve
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LIC	Low Income Countries
LMIC	Low- Middle-Income Countries
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
PEAS	Promoting Equality in African Schools
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSSP	Punjab Public School Support Programme, Pakistan
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
RFP	Request for Proposals
SDG 4	Sustainable Development Goal 4
SEL	Social & Emotional Learning
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

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Abbreviation	Definition
SLEIC	Sierra Leone Education Innovation Challenge
STAR-G	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UWS	United World Schools

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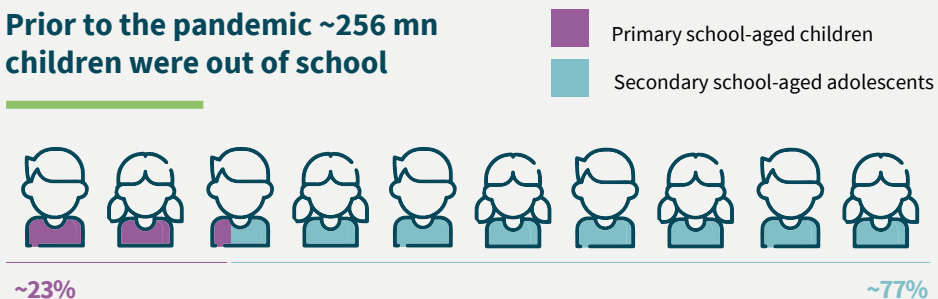
1 State of Education

Challenges & Opportunities

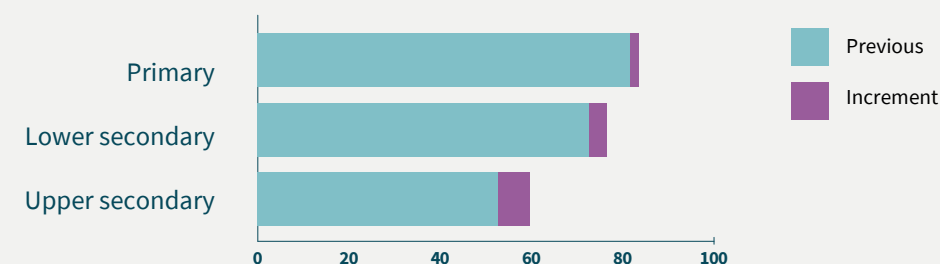
Governments globally have adopted the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) to “**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**” by 2030. While strides have been taken, progress towards achieving education for all has been slow as evidenced by 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

3



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
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 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 (HNI), 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 above. 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.

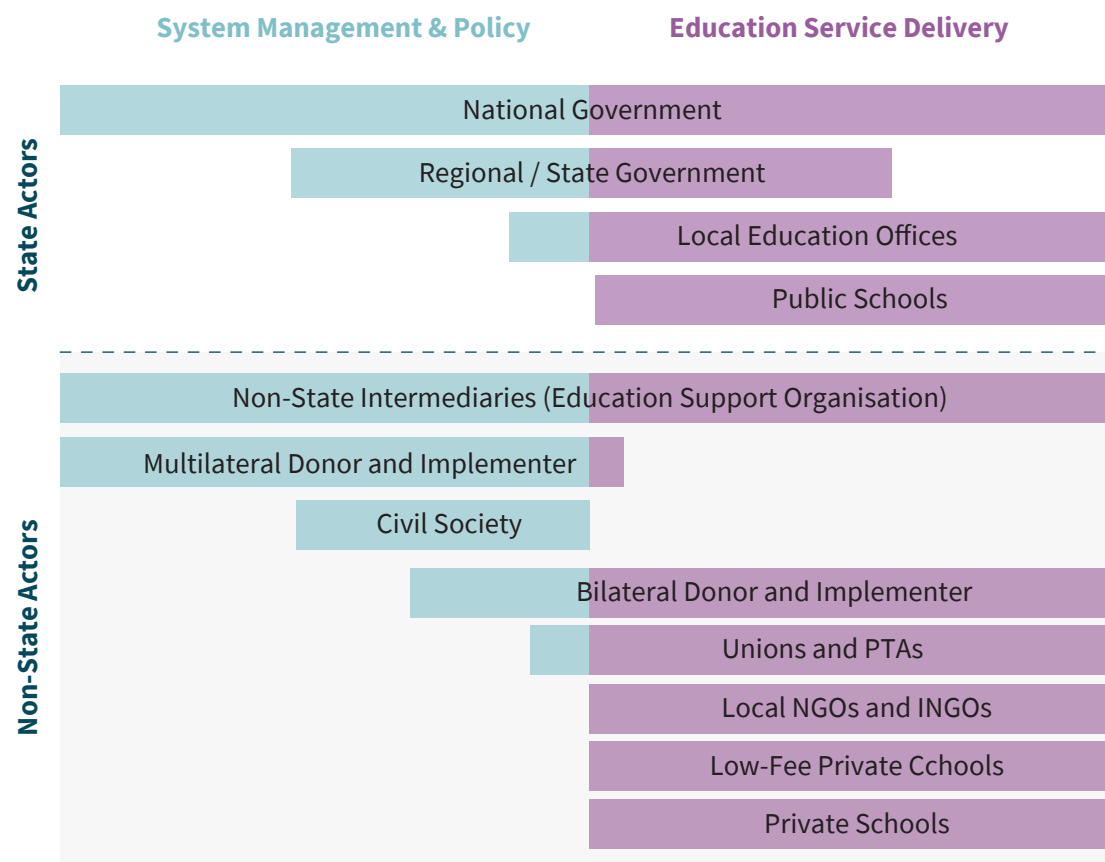


Figure 2: Education system actors: State and non-state entities and their roles

Benefits to the Non-State in Partnering with the Government

1



Access

In several countries, parents recognise that the quality of education their children receive is poor. This has led to an explosion of low-fee, private schools providing better quality schooling, or schools in areas that lack access to government services. 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 18% of primary and 26% of secondary enrolments on a global scale.² A relatively small number of international providers of education are for profit, some of whom work in partnership with



the government. Partnering with governments helps non-state actors expand their reach to a wider set of stakeholders regionally and nationally. Several partnerships grant access to government infrastructure as governments contract out schools and colleges to non-state actors for operations management (see [Transforming Teacher Education in Pakistan](#), [Western Cape Collaboration Schools](#) and the [Punjab Public School Support Programme \[PSSP\], Pakistan](#)). This allows the non-state to provide quality education at scale and the government schooling system also benefits from this arrangement. Non-state actors are also able to provide access in highly remote areas to the most marginalised communities (see [United World Schools](#) case study).

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2

Innovation

Engaging in collaborations with governments fosters an environment conducive to educational innovation. According to the Global Education Monitoring report on Non-State Actors in Education,² non-state entities play a crucial role in driving groundbreaking pedagogical concepts, contributing 60% of approximately 3,000 innovations. Through partnerships, governments gain access to diverse perspectives, expertise, and flexible teaching approaches offered by non-state actors. This collaborative approach facilitates the identification and nurturing of innovative ideas within the public education system, promoting quality and responsiveness to evolving challenges.

Non-state actors are also able to test and refine initiatives through pilots before scaling them. One such example is the Sierra Leone Education Innovation Challenge (see [SLEIC](#) case study) where implementation partners are testing innovations in a few schools before scaling them.



3

Scale & sustainability

Non-state actors are often limited by resource and capacity constraints that hinder the scalability of their programmes. Partnering with governments and government bodies to identify solutions for shared goals and priorities, provides non-state players with resources, manpower, and state endorsement to scale their model (see [Ennum Ezhuthum](#) case study). Partnerships are evolving to enable a shared commitment to the outcome of a project between governments and the non-state sector. Such partnerships also drive capacity building within government systems to ensure continuity and the sustained impact of programmes, with multiple programmes handed over to the government for integration into the system (see [BEFIT](#) case study).



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4

Financing & shared risk



Having governments involved as funders and shared owners of outcomes mitigates the risk for non-state actors in the high-risk stages of project development², increasing the efficiency of programme delivery. Non-state entities face risks from not just potential cost overruns, but also that of reduced accountability and corruption. Additionally, reliance on government payments introduces further risk due to changing political and policy priorities, making investments in social service facilities, like schools, particularly challenging for private investors. Contractual arrangements prioritise minimising the risk of government default to make the investment safer and more appealing to the private entities involved.³ Engaging in partnerships with governments opens several revenue streams for non-state actors; they get support in terms of tax breaks, subsidies, and other incentives. Governments in several countries have raised investment in non-state education by opening funding to non-state schools (e.g., via contracts, subsidies, or discounted land, building material, etc.).⁴ For large-scale system reform projects, ([Ennum Ezhuthum](#) and [Western Cape Collaboration Schools](#) case studies) governments provide funding for specific aspects of programmes with the non-state partner raising funding for the remainder of the programme's costs.



Challenges in Partnering with Governments

1 Navigating complex contracts



Partnership contracts are often complicated and require substantial contracting expertise on the part of governments to ensure the benefits of the partnership are realised. Partnerships in many countries are recent - governments do not have sufficient experience in contracting with the non-state.⁴ In many cases, restrictive contracts lead to non-state actors struggling to meet requirements

or demonstrate considerable progress due to the lack of autonomy. The complexity of contracts can involve financial risks, legal uncertainties, and the lack of clearly-defined roles and responsibilities (see [United World Schools](#) case study) which would hinder non-state actors from bidding for them. [Section 6](#) deals with navigating contracts and responding to a Request for Proposals (RFP).

2 Inadequate regulatory, policy frameworks & political uncertainty



Due to the evolving nature of partnerships, governments often do not have the required policy frameworks and monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability and delivery of high-quality programmes. In some cases, they also struggle to clearly define and communicate the goals and performance metrics to partners, which hinders the successful implementation of education partnerships.¹

Additionally, the uncertain nature of the political landscape in some countries, featuring frequent changes in government leadership, tends to affect the continuity of partnerships in the face of new policies and shifts in priorities and support for partnerships.

3 Lack of support from unions & the community due to fear of privatisation



In most partnerships, a significant challenge is the lack of sufficient evidence or established examples, making it harder to navigate and plan effectively.

Parent communities, school committees and teacher unions tend to be opposed to the involvement of non-state players in education, fearing privatisation.

Teachers perceive partnerships with non-state actors as threats to their jobs and unions see them as diminishing their influence⁵ (see [Western Cape Collaboration Schools](#) and [Ennum Ezhuthum](#) case

studies). Governments fear the loss of accountability and devolving control to the non-state, especially on aspects of curriculum, content, and teaching learning materials.¹

4 Long-term financing



Non-state actors struggle to secure financing for long-term projects, due to the shallow nature of financial markets.⁵ They face challenges in convincing funders, donors, and CSR partners to finance long-term system-strengthening programmes (see [Ennum Ezhuthum](#) case study) due to relatively low visibility and long project gestation periods making them less appealing to potential investors.

Securing private sector funds for long-term projects, especially in emerging markets, is a big challenge for these partnerships. This challenge becomes more significant during disruptions in global credit markets. The issues here involve constraints placed on available funds, the external perceptions of risk, and difficulties in obtaining long-term finance. To tackle these challenges, various methods, led by development finance institutions and governments, aim to reduce risks that might discourage investors. These methods involve using innovative financing mechanisms which often encompass transferring specific risks to third parties or filling gaps left by the private sector (see [SLEIC](#) case study). Overcoming these challenges is the key to unlocking the full

potential, of non-state actors in contributing to, and sustaining long-term development initiatives.⁶

The scarcity of diverse financial instruments and reduced investor participation (banks, insurance companies) hinders the possibility of various funding sources for prolonged initiatives. To address these constraints, policymakers need to prioritise the development of longer-term bond markets, formulate investment policies encouraging financial institution participation, and promote the use of innovative financing instruments to mitigate any risk to lenders.

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Purpose of the Toolkit

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The rationale for non-state actors and governments to partner with each other to improve education outcomes globally is compelling. This toolkit will support non-state actors interested in working with governments to scale their solutions and in turn, help governments strengthen their education systems. Collaborating with governments enhances access, allowing non-state actors to deliver quality education with financial support.

These partnerships foster innovation by allowing non-state actors to test and refine initiatives before widespread implementation (see [SLEIC](#) and [Inspect & Improve case studies](#), contributing substantially to innovative solutions)

Government and non-state partnerships ensure scale and sustainability by providing resources, manpower, and support, facilitating the integration of programmes into the public education system. They create financial opportunities and shared risk, as governments contribute funding, offer incentives, and mitigate risks during project development.

As outlined in [Section 2](#), non-state actors need to decide whether the demands of working with government partners (complex or restrictive contracts, uncertain political landscape, lack of support from community stakeholders) can be managed, to reap the benefits of:

Increased resources for education and opening of new revenue streams	Continuously embedded thought partners and delivery partners in the education system
Scaling and sustainability across public schools	Increasing access

For non-state actors who are keen to leverage the benefits, this toolkit will explain how to begin, how to select the partnership that works best for their model of innovation and offerings while ensuring that their solution addresses the needs and pain points of local governments. The toolkit will aid and equip non-state actors with the knowledge of approaches to build better, and stronger partnerships with governments and understand some common government perspectives. Further it will provide non-state actors with recommendations for working effectively with a government partner to enhance their scale and impact.

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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 toolkit begins by laying out a short framework, or menu of options, depending on the type of solution and expertise of the non-state actor that governments can leverage to improve education at scale.

1

Online tool to determine partnership options

The comprehensive self-assessment tool guides organisations through scoping and designing partnerships with governments. It helps identify key education challenges, align solutions with government priorities, assess readiness for collaboration, and develop strategies for stakeholder engagement, funding, and impact measurement.

3

Parts of the Toolkit

Step-by-step approach to building partnerships

The toolkit helps non-state actors build partnerships with governments using a step-by-step approach, from deciding what problems they can solve, how to make the partnership work, how to measure success, how to respond to government proposals, to understanding how they can protect their interests in any negotiation.

2

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.

4

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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 would have been bound by the rigid contract, to either 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

Delivery partnership is a very different approach compared to a pre-agreed contract that keeps the government at arm's length, where both parties only do what is agreed upon at the outset of a project. It allows for continuing engagement, and revisions when needed, towards achieving the shared objectives.

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 ['I & I programme](#) 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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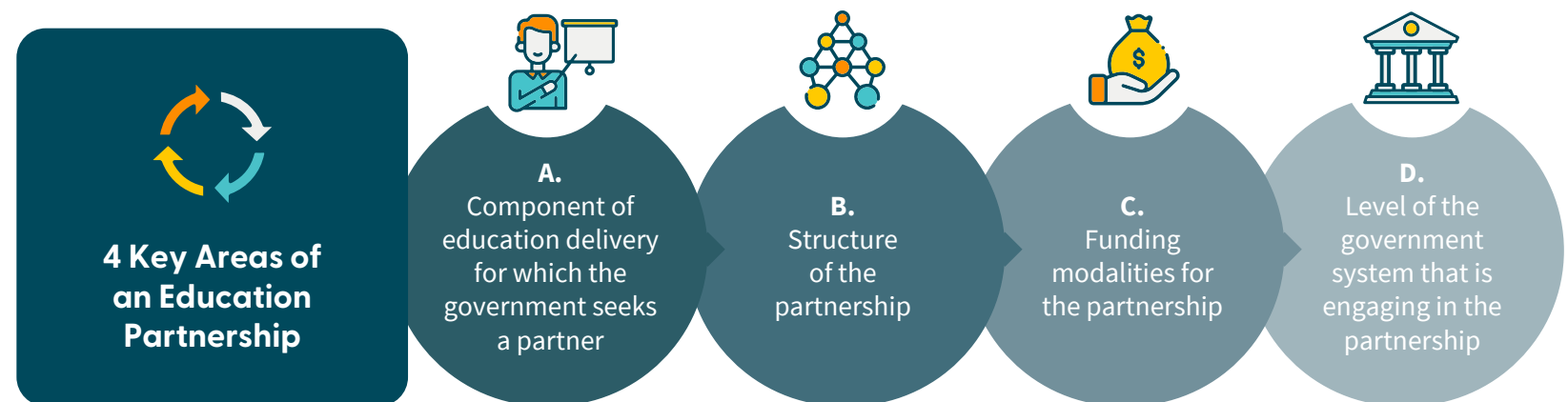
Strategies of philanthropic organisations and funders have now evolved to prioritise scaling these non-state models across entire systems. For example, Madhi Foundation has expanded its model to over 47,000 schools in Tamil Nadu, India, and BRAC in Bangladesh has successfully run schools supported by 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

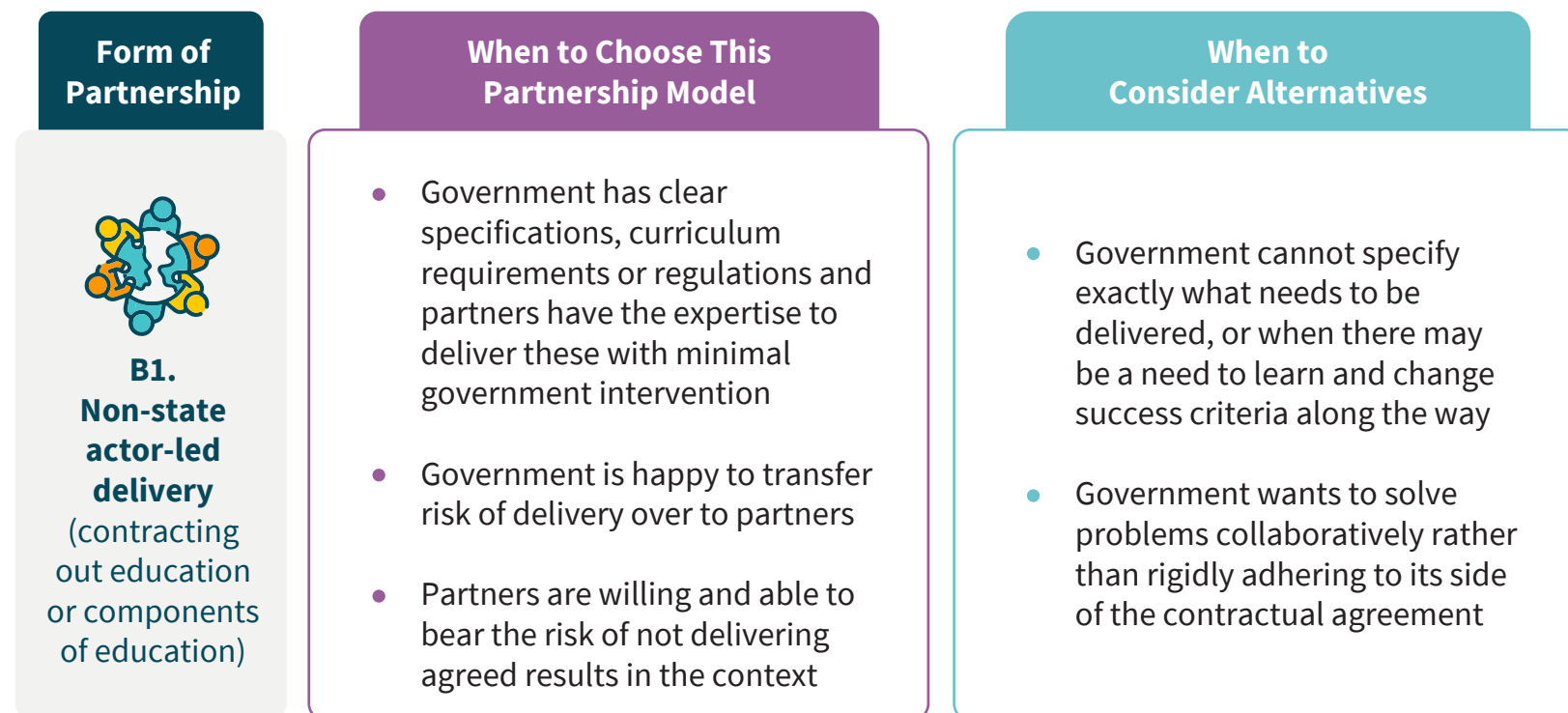
D3. School

Download Categorisation Framework

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. As a non-state actor, before embarking on a partnership you need to ensure that the government interested in partnering has made the following decisions:



1

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

2

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

3

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

It is helpful for governments and non-state actors 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 governments 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 tool will help you scope the challenges specific to the education system you are targeting and the kind of solutions you can offer as a non-state player. It will help you identify what kind of government partnerships, if any, you can leverage to scale your solutions.

1 What are the top three challenges and gaps your country / region is facing that are preventing children from learning?

2 Keeping in mind the three biggest challenges preventing children from learning in your education system and the government's priorities (see your answer to Q1, above), what is your solution(s)? Where do you see your solution filling the gaps?

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



For example, a non-state organisation with a track record of implementing literacy programmes in marginalised communities/ low-fee private schools could indicate their capability to address the challenge of low literacy in underserved areas.

Does your diagnosis of the three biggest problems for education in your country relate to the particular element of the education system that you have chosen to address through your solution?

Identify key areas where your solution can address systemic challenges, aligning with the identified gaps in the education system.

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3 Highlight the outcomes and evidence of impact of your implemented solution(s)

4 Have you partnered with the government before? What did you learn? What are key aspects you will incorporate into future government partnerships?

My learnings from previous partnerships (if any) are:

Or

We have not yet partnered with the government.

5 Please note down any concerns you have with partnering with the government

My concerns regarding partnering are:

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 them.

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6 Is there an existing public-private partnership (PPP) law or a track record for partnerships?

How does the government currently engage with non-state partners?

Can a Request for Proposals or contracting process be initiated without a PPP law in place?

Is government-initiated contracting the norm, or are there opportunities for non-state actors to propose initiatives?

7 What is your readiness to pursue government partnerships going ahead?

Please assess yourself against the statements below and add up your score. 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)
Solutions					
We have an innovative and/or tested solution ready for broader adoption and scalability.					
Engagement History & Openness to Partnership					
The government body has engaged with non-state actors in the past and is open and willing to engage in partnerships.					

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Self-assessment	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Not sure (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
We have previously engaged with the government and have seen positive outcomes.					
Collaboration & Partnerships					
We have identified key partners and decision-makers to engage with (such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, and potential funders).					
We possess the required operational team and technical capability to engage with the government.					
We have developed technical expertise and capabilities that can contribute to scaling programmes or improving education quality operations in alignment with government initiatives.					
Our organisation complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and policies for partnering with the government.					
We have communication strategies and stakeholder engagement plans in place to help engage government officials, partners, community and other beneficiaries.					
Our organisation is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and priorities.					

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Self-assessment		Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Not sure (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
Sustainability & Effectiveness						
We have a business model that is sustainable for long-term operations when scaled with government involvement.						
Monitoring, Evaluation & Risk Management						
We have solutions that have demonstrated impact in the past.						
We have robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanisms to track programme impact and effectiveness.						
We have strategies in place to identify and mitigate potential risks associated with scaling with government involvement.						
SCORING	<25	25 - 40		>40		
	Your alignment with government objectives may be limited with limited capabilities and partnerships, unclear KPIs, underdeveloped sustainability plans, communication mechanisms. Are you certain that partnering with the government offers the best opportunity for your objectives at this time?	Your work shows some alignment with government objectives, with a moderate engagement history, sufficient capabilities, partnerships with room for improvement. Before committing to any engagement with the government, you may need to explore collaborating with other partners and creating more capacity internally.		Your work shows strong alignment with government objectives, with an engagement history, robust capabilities and partnerships, clear KPIs, a sustainable business model and effective communication and monitoring mechanisms. A partnership with the government seems like a good fit for you. Read on to understand your next steps.		

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 (both within and outside the government) before you begin the partnership process. You may wish to refer to the [Categorisation Framework](#) to help answer some of the questions below:

1 Based on your solution (Part A, Question 2) assess your available capacity and resources and identify existing gaps



For example, a non-state actor focusing on teacher training and professional development may have a team of experienced educators and trainers, along with established partnerships with local schools. Capacity and resources would include a network of qualified trainers and access to educational materials, supporting efforts to improve teaching quality in schools facing staffing shortages or providing mentoring and supervision support to teachers in public schools.

List down your available resources and the expertise of the resources and identify the gaps.

Based on the gaps identified, detail out the resources you will need in terms of manpower, material, expertise for the partnership.

2 What kind of partnership would you prefer? Based on your capacity and capability, what level of control would you prefer?



There is no right answer to this question, only a suggested model through which to partner with the government. Each option under [column B of the Categorisation Framework](#) helps you identify the level of risk you are willing to take on and the level of government involvement you are comfortable with in your programme.

Note: Some of the options for non-state actors looking to determine their level of engagement with the government are as follows:

- 1. We have the capacity to take over the entire working, management and delivery of the work, with government oversight only for defining policies and monitoring success. Therefore, after setting up the partnership we can provide updates to the government but run the operations independently. The public sector will be the commissioner and regulator with the non-state actor leading day-to-day management (refer to category B1 in the Categorisation Framework).*
- 2. We would prefer to engage as co-partners in implementing the partnership alongside government entities. This could entail regular senior level meetings on a weekly or monthly basis, with dedicated teams within our organisation managing the partnership's day-to-day operations. Management responsibilities would be clearly defined and shared. Additionally, we meet on an ad hoc basis to address emerging issues and facilitate learning opportunities. (Refer to categories B2 and B3 in the Categorisation Framework, focusing on collaborative partnerships for managing schools or specific components of the education system).*
- 3. We would prefer to provide technical expertise and thought partnership to the government who will be responsible for the design and delivery. We would support the government teams leading the implementation of the programme, engaging with them as needed. We would provide expertise to the government in the form needed (example – advisors, PMUs). Refer to category B4 of the Categorisation Framework, which focuses on the role played by non-state actors embedded in the government, with the government having full ownership over the project's design and delivery.*

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List down the pros and cons of each option	PROS	CONS
<u>Option 1:</u> Taking over the entire management of the school.		
<u>Option 2:</u> Co- partnering with the government on whole school management or education components.		
<u>Option 3:</u> Government led implementation with technical support from the non-state actor.		
Based on the above, which options would be an ideal fit based on your capacity and capabilities?		
<p><i>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. Additionally, you must consider the systemic constraints and evaluate how much you are willing to adjust your ideal partnership to align with these constraints while still keeping it as close as possible to your preferences.</i></p>		

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3 Based on the solutions you can offer and resource capacity, articulate the roles and responsibilities you will be able to take on and deliver in a potential partnership

4 In your context, what are the different government departments, agencies, or bodies operating in education?



Understand existing governmental structures and identify relevant departments or agencies involved in education policymaking and implementation. Collect information for each department, agency, or body in the format below.

Which government agencies/ departments/ bodies are in operation?

Have they engaged in partnership with you before?

5 What stakeholders do you need to engage with in advance to make sure their concerns are addressed? Use this Stakeholder Analysis and Planning Tool in combination with your response to question four above, to help you



Identify relevant stakeholders, including educators, parents, community members, and education experts, and engage with them early in the process to address potential concerns and ensure buy-in.

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6 Are there any other non-state actors already in the system that might be interested in partnering to deliver the solutions?

	Non-state Actor	Success	Innovation
Name of existing non-state actors and examples of their successes and innovations.			
	Country	Project name	Successes
Examples of successes in other countries that you might like to try in your context.			
	Name of Project		Potential for Scaling
Other examples of innovations to try scaling (For example, emergent good practices within existing public schools that might be spread to other schools with support).			

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7 Have you developed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan to guide the assessment of your partnership's progress and impact?

Describe the key components of your M&E plan, including the indicators used to measure progress towards partnership objectives.

Note down indicators that you use to measure your solutions.

Note down any additional potential indicators that will help you measure the solution.

Will these tell you whether the results of the partnership are favourable?

Explain how your organisation plans to collect, analyse, and interpret data to track the effectiveness of your interventions.

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Describe any mechanisms you have in place to capture lessons learned and best practices throughout the implementation process.

Provide details on how findings from monitoring and evaluation activities will be used to inform decision-making and improve programme implementation, enhancing the effectiveness of your interventions.

How frequently will you conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess progress towards achieving your goals?

8 How does your organisation plan to enhance the skills and knowledge of government partners and other stakeholders in monitoring, evaluation, and learning?

Describe training or support initiatives to enhance skills and strengthen MEL capabilities, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are equipped to handle complex projects and partnerships.

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How will you foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making and learning within the partnership?

9 How does your organisation plan to adapt and respond flexibly to changing circumstances within the education system?

Describe any strategies or mechanisms you have in place to revise programme strategies or reallocate resources based on evaluation findings.

How will you ensure that your organisation can adjust its implementation approaches to address emerging challenges or opportunities?

Describe any contingency plans you have in place to ensure the resilience and sustainability of your partnership efforts.

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10 What funding models are you open to?

Note: Being able to bring some initial funds to the table is a good way in, but needs careful management to ensure any scaling assumptions would be funded differently such as with a Development Impact Bond (DIB) or with interested philanthropic or donor partners who the government would need to engage.

How will the funding be structured?

Do you have the resources to be largely self-funded and independent?

Or

Are you primarily interested in securing government funding to scale successful innovations and open to collaborating with government entities to achieve this goal?

Do you know what kind of funding the government has to support the potential partnership?

Note: You also need to check, if you opt for government funding:

1. *Will it let you pursue the kind of partnership you want?*
2. *Do you require to factor in delay in payments and have alternate funding mechanisms to maintain working capital?*

Would you be interested in a blended approach such as impact investment?

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Do you want the project to be fully donor-funded but in the control of the government? Can you use the toolkit to engage funders on this?

11 Depending on the type of partnership you selected in Part B, Question 2, will you hand over the programme to the government in the long term? If yes, do you have a sustainability plan beyond the duration of the current partnership?

Note: It is important to build a long-term sustainability plan including all aspects such as capacity-building initiatives, partnership development with local institutions, community ownership, environmental considerations, and diversification of funding sources in case you plan to hand over to the government.

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

This section will guide you through the process of starting your partnership with the government, including defining roles and responsibilities, securing funding, and clarifying financial arrangements to ensure the successful initiation and management of the partnership.

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 Do you have the ability to initiate a partnership with the government? (refer to [Part A](#), Question 6)

Does the government usually consult with partners before issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP)?

What is the process for initiating a partnership with the government?

2 Who is responsible for implementing the partnership (ensure alignment with [Part B](#), Question 2 on how much control you want to give the government over your programme)?

If the government is leading implementation, focus on Category B4 of the [Categorisation Framework](#), for engaging partnership expertise.

If the government is utilising non-state actors for implementation but providing oversight, and regulation, focus on Category B1 of the Categorisation Framework.

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If non-state actors and experts will support implementation, partnering to solve problems and learn together with a dedicated ministry/ local government team, focus on Categories B2 and B3 of the Categorisation Framework.

Example, partnering on school management or specific aspects of the education system such as coaching or capacity-building.

3 Who is resourcing the partnership?

Are you self-funding, partially funding, or funding yourself until results are achieved?

Do you have donors to support your solution?

Are existing bilateral or multilateral partners being persuaded to finance the partnership as part of the Education Sector Plan or broader vision for education improvement?

Are government resources directly funding the partnership or part of it?

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Are philanthropies and
impact investors being
engaged to attract additional
support?

Is there a desire to access
grants to explore new
opportunities, with
governments and non-state
actors?

4 Who is responsible for financing different aspects of the partnership?

Note: Once financial resources are secured or during the development of a fundraising strategy, it is beneficial to create a budget detailing the allocation of funds. This involves accounting for all expenses such as the time contributed by non-state actor personnel towards establishing and running the partnership, expenses related to their involvement, such as training costs, cost of evaluations if required.

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Part D: Communicating the Plans

Refer to the [Stakeholder Analysis & Planning Tool](#). How will you engage each of these?

1 How do you envision branding and presenting the partnership to your stakeholders?

How do you plan to develop a clear branding and communication strategy to effectively convey the partnership's objectives, activities, and impact, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process?

2 What processes will your organisation implement to ensure accountability and transparency in the partnership's operations and decision-making?

How will you communicate progress and outcomes to relevant stakeholders, including government partners, funders, and the community?

Describe any mechanisms you have in place to involve stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring transparency and inclusivity.

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3 If the process of informing or consultation is about building consensus and alignment, can you map out the likely objections, reasons for non-consensus or misalignment?



Here are a few examples:

- Existing funders threatened by overlap with their existing projects
- Unions or workforce concerned about the impact on their working hours or competition for jobs if teachers with lower qualifications can be recruited
- Civil society or press may object to use of non-state actors in government schools

4 Understanding the challenges in advance can mitigate problems in the future. What arguments or persuasion might you use?



Here are a few examples:

- "Recruitment may be affected but we anticipate a 30% improvement in learning results after five years"
- "Existing donor projects will not be affected/ impacted or existing donor projects will be managed by..."

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5 Once you are clearer on your messages, consider what communication vehicles will be used in collaboration with the government bodies?

In past partnerships, what have the most effective communication tools been?

Conference (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 (perhaps after briefing local education staff on how to engage and providing a Q&A for them to use).

Part E: Summarising

This part of the scoping and design tool includes a summary of the roles and actions that need to be taken based on the answers you gave above.

1 For each of the headings below (ownership, design, delivery, resourcing and fundraising) please summarise:

- What you can do alone?
- What you will prefer to do with the government?
- What you will do/ plan to do with donors, philanthropies, or impact investors?
- What you will do as a group?

For any role that is split across more than one actor or across a group, please clarify what you will do, what the government will do, and what you would want donors or philanthropies to do.

Role of Stakeholders in the Partnership				
Function	Actor(s)	Govt actions	Non-state actions	Funder actions
Ownership				
Design				
Delivery				
Resourcing				

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Function	Actor(s)	Govt actions	Non-state actions	Funder actions
Fundraising				

2 Next steps

Use this section to note down actions that need to be taken before responding to a partnership Request for Proposals.

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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6

Setting Up a Government Partnership: Responding to a Request for Proposals

Setting Up a Government Partnership: Responding to Request for Proposals

By this stage, you would have used the interactive tool for scoping your country or region's needs and self-assessment tool to identify if government partnerships are appropriate for you (see [Section 5](#)). You may have an innovation, or a solution that you think will help the government address its priority areas.

Governments solicit support from non-state actors for various types of partnerships, each requiring different forms of contracting and engagement. These may involve procurement (requiring an RFP) or follow non-procurement models such as those which require a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

There are several different types of partnerships between governments & non-state actors that are highlighted in the table below:

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 socially responsible 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.

Pre-RFP Stage

In several cases there may be a Pre-RFP stage. In large-scale projects, an Expression of Interest (EOI) might be a 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.

Modes of Engagement

The modes of engagement for different options are further explained below:

Option 1: Commercial Contracting Out/ Non-State Actor-Led Delivery (B1)

Non-state actors manage schools or deliver specific components of the education system with defined commercial benefits or payments, ideally based on achieved results.

Option 2: Partnering with Socially Responsible Non-State Actors in a Formal Delivery Partnership (B2, B3)

This option requires transparent procurement and formal contracting. While this process may take longer, it ensures transparency in funding, access to diverse expertise, and upfront clarification of payment mechanisms. Informal and formal methods for issue resolution can be established upfront and adapted over time as relationships evolve.

Option 3: Memorandum of Understanding for Informal Partnering, Especially for Embedded Technical Assistance (B4)

This format involves a fluid partnership where non-state actors are embedded within the ministry or government agency. This is particularly suitable when non-state actors are self-funded, and relationships are well-established or developing.

See the [categorisation framework](#) and [case studies](#) for other ideas on partnering formats.

This tool offers guidance on Options 1 and 2, focusing on responding to government RFPs to engage in partnerships and offer solutions you outlined in [Section 5](#). By following these steps, you will be equipped to draft a response to a government RFP to support them to enhance education in their country or region.

Request for Proposals Response Template

Introduction

This section requires your expertise, offerings, and the partnership design you chose in Section 5. Building on your answer in the design tool please fill out the questions below.

This RFP response template will help you respond to the RFP template linked here ([Section 6 of the Government toolkit](#))



Sample RFP

For the Implementation of [Name of Project] Partnership to Improve [stated outcomes of project] in [Country/Region]

Submitted by: [Name of Your Organisation]

Date: [Submission Date]

Contact Information: [Contact Details]

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[Non-State Actor] is pleased to submit our proposal in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the [Name of Department/Unit/Agency] of [Country/Region]. Our organisation is eager to collaborate with the government and relevant stakeholders to improve education outcomes in [Country/Region].

Executive Summary

Provide a concise overview of your proposal, emphasising your alignment with the government's educational objectives, the innovation and value your organisation brings, and a high-level summary of your approach.



Use your answers under [Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool to pinpoint your strengths and innovative aspects of your proposal that directly address identified educational challenges.

Best Practices

Concisely highlight key proposal points: Summarise the main solutions, the benefits they offer to the education system, and why your organisation is uniquely positioned to deliver these results.

Emphasise on alignment with government goals: Articulate how your proposal aligns with the government's strategic objectives for education.

Keep it focused on outcomes: Mention anticipated impacts and outcomes to draw the attention of government officials looking for effective solutions.

Introduction & Organisational Overview

Begin by introducing your organisation, including its mission, vision, and core values, highlighting those that directly address the educational challenges identified in the self-assessment tool. Emphasise how these align with the government's priorities.



Utilise insights from the self-assessment to illustrate areas where your organisation's strengths align with the project objectives.

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Best Practices

Demonstrate understanding of local context: Show your familiarity with the country or region's educational landscape, reinforcing your commitment to tailored, context-specific solutions.

Explain organisation's mission and vision: Briefly state your organisation's mission and vision, emphasising its relevance to education improvement.

Establish credibility: Include a brief overview of past successes in similar projects or partnerships, especially those involving government agencies.

Alignment with Government Objectives & Understanding of Challenges

Detail the specific educational challenges and objectives the project aims to address, based on your understanding and analysis. Align your proposal's objectives with the government's strategic goals for education.



Refer to [Q1 and 2 under Part A](#), of the self-assessment tool to demonstrate an understanding of the context and your commitment to a tailored approach.

Best Practices

Apply research-based approach: Present a detailed understanding of the educational challenges identified by the government, backed by research or data.

Link challenges to objectives: Demonstrate a clear connection between the identified challenges and your proposed project objectives, ensuring they address the government's priorities.

Include stakeholder insights: Mention insights from stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) to deepen the relevance and comprehensiveness of your understanding.

Proposed Scope of Services & Innovation

Describe the range of services and innovations your organisation proposes to implement in response to the project's needs. Explain how these services are designed to address the specific needs and objectives outlined by the government and assessed in your organisation's readiness to implement a solution.



Refer to [Q2 under Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool. Highlight offerings that align with gaps and needs identified, emphasising your unique solutions.

Best Practices

Provide detailed service description: Clearly describe the services your organisation will provide, specifying how each service addresses identified educational challenges.

Share innovative solutions: Highlight any innovative or proven methodologies your organisation plans to implement, showcasing the value add to the current system.

Elaborate on scalability and flexibility: Indicate how your services can be scaled or adapted over time to meet evolving needs or expand to other regions.

Partnership Model & Engagement Strategy

Outline the partnership model you propose, including roles, responsibilities, and collaboration mechanisms. Also specify how you plan to engage with the government and other stakeholders, leveraging lessons learned from previous collaborations.



Refer to [Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool to justify your chosen model, showing how it aligns with both your capabilities and project objectives.

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Best Practices

Illustrate alignment with government structures: Tailor the partnership model to fit within the government's current operational frameworks, ensuring smooth integration.

Offer model clarity: Clearly define the partnership model, including roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for collaboration and decision-making.

Outline benefits: Explain how the proposed model benefits the project, enhances efficiency, and leads to better outcomes.

Measures of Success & Integration of KPIs

Define specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and success measures that will be used to evaluate the partnership's impact. Ensure they are aligned with both your organisation's and the government's objectives, demonstrating how these measures will track progress towards addressing the identified educational challenges.



Refer to [Q7 under Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool. Ensure these KPIs are aligned with strengths and opportunities identified, reflecting the goals of both your organisation and the government.

Best Practices

List specific and measurable KPIs: Set clear, measurable KPIs that directly relate to the project's objectives and the government's goals.

Include short-term and long-term measures: This is to demonstrate progress and impact over different periods.

Include feedback mechanisms: Incorporate ways to gather feedback on the project's success from stakeholders, using it to inform continuous improvement.

Experience, Eligibility & Previous Engagements

Reference your organisation's past successes, particularly those relevant to the education sector. Include examples of previous government partnerships, if any, and how those experiences have prepared your organisation for this new initiative.

Best Practices

Showcase relevant experience: Highlight previous projects and partnerships, especially those with other government agencies, that demonstrate your capability to deliver.

Highlight credentials: Include information about your team's expertise, credentials, and specific roles in ensuring the project's success.

Share testimonials and case studies: Provide testimonials or brief case studies from past projects to build credibility and trust.



Compliance, Regulatory Framework & Adaptability

Discuss how your organisation meets regulatory requirements and policies for partnering with the government, as determined through the self-assessment process. Highlight your adaptability and readiness to comply with changing regulations and circumstances.



Refer to [Q4 under Part B](#), [Q5 and Q9 under Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool. Reflect on the self-assessment's insights regarding compliance and adaptability, showing preparedness for regulatory requirements.

Best Practices

Detail compliance strategies:
Outline how your organisation will comply with relevant regulations and policies, demonstrating your understanding and preparedness.

Showcase adaptability:
Provide examples of how your organisation has successfully adapted to regulatory changes or unexpected challenges in past projects.

Anticipate changes:
Discuss potential regulatory changes and how your organisation plans to navigate them, ensuring project continuity.

Funding, Sustainability & Business Model

Refer to the self-assessment tool to articulate your organisation's funding strategy, sustainability plan, and financial model. Explain how these elements support the long-term success and scalability of the partnership, ensuring alignment with government funding mechanisms and objectives.



Refer to [Part B and C](#) of the self-assessment tool. Leverage self-assessment findings to underscore your funding approach's viability and alignment with long-term project goals.

Best Practices

Explain clear funding model:

Describe your funding model, emphasising its sustainability and how it aligns with government funding cycles or priorities.

Share long-term financial planning: Include plans for scaling the project financially over time, detailing potential sources of funding beyond the initial phase.

Demonstrate cost-effectiveness: Share the cost-effectiveness of your proposal, offering a clear value proposition to the government.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan

Develop a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation plan that builds on your organisation's capabilities and readiness. Describe how you will collect, analyse, and use data to inform continuous improvement and decision-making.



Refer to [Q7 under Part B](#) of the self-assessment tool. Build on strengths identified in the self-assessment to develop a robust M&E plan that ensures accountability and continuous improvement.

Best Practices

Share comprehensive M&E framework: Present a detailed M&E plan that includes methodologies, frequency, and clearly identifies stakeholders responsible for specific aspects of the programme's functioning.

Align with objectives: Ensure that M&E activities are directly linked to project objectives and can accurately measure progress towards goals.

Include stakeholder involvement: Plan for involving stakeholders in M&E processes to ensure transparency and gather diverse perspectives on project effectiveness.

Risk Management & Mitigation

Identify potential risks to the partnership and outline your strategies for mitigating these risks. Describe how your organisation's readiness and past experiences prepare it to manage and overcome these challenges.



Refer to [Part D](#) of the self-assessment tool to inform risk identification and mitigation, emphasising proactive strategies and resilience.

Best Practices

Identify potential risks: Clearly list potential risks to the project along with their likelihood and potential impact.

Share mitigation strategies: For each identified risk, provide a detailed mitigation strategy, demonstrating foresight and preparedness.

Reveal continual risk assessment: Outline plans for ongoing risk assessment throughout the project lifecycle to anticipate and address risks proactively.

Communication Strategy & Stakeholder Engagement

Develop a plan for engaging stakeholders and communicating project progress and outcomes. This should include strategies for engaging with government officials, partners, the community, and other beneficiaries, ensuring transparency and accountability.



Refer to [Q5 under Part B](#), and [Part D](#) of the self-assessment tool to tailor your communication and engagement strategies, ensuring they meet stakeholder needs and expectations.

Best Practices

Share engagement strategies:

Detail how you will engage with different stakeholders throughout the project, using channels and messages tailored to each group.

Demonstrate transparency:

Highlight mechanisms for maintaining transparency with the government and other stakeholders about project progress and challenges.

Include feedback loops:

Include plans for regular feedback collection and utilisation to adapt project strategies as needed.

Conclusion & Call to Action

Conclude by reiterating the alignment of your proposal with the government's education objectives and the strengths your organisation brings to this partnership. Encourage the government to take the next steps towards formalising the partnership.



Refer to [Q3 under Part B](#) and [Q2 under part E](#) of the self-assessment tool. Highlight how the self-assessment informed the proposal's development, reiterating readiness and commitment to the project's success.

Best Practices

Summarise proposal strengths: Concisely reiterate the strengths of your proposal, and its alignment with the government's objectives.

Outline actionable next steps: Provide clear, actionable next steps for initiating the partnership, setting the stage for immediate progress.

Express commitment: Reinforce your organisation's commitment to the project's success and willingness to collaborate closely with the government.

Appendices

Include any additional documents that support your proposal, such as evidence of past accomplishments, certifications, project plans, or letters of endorsement.

Best Practices

Attach supporting documents:

Include any documents that further strengthen your proposal, such as letters of support, certifications, proof of previous achievements and detailed project plans.

Share relevant data or research: Provide relevant research or data that underpins your project proposal, offering additional context and justification.

Provide additional details:

Any other information that adds value to your proposal but was too detailed for the main body, such as technical specifications or extended case studies.

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Ensuring a Successful Partnership: 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 the 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



Potential Risks & Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Lack of Shared Vision for Success

Likelihood: **HIGH**

Severity: **HIGH**

All partners are not sufficiently engaged towards the success of the project.

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

- Proactively engage with government counterparts to establish a shared vision of success. This could be done as part of the design and norming workshops during the project kick-off phase.
- Ensure all partners know and agree with the vision of success and sign on to the outcomes for the project.
- If other partnerships are already in place in the education system, ensure alignment between the new project and existing ones.

Risk: Unclear Scope of Work and 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

- Advocate for clearly defined project scope and objectives during the negotiation phase.
- Regularly communicate with government partners through scheduled meetings to ensure alignment and address any evolving needs or changes.
- Regularly review and update project documentation to accommodate changes in scope or objectives, ensuring that all parties are informed and aligned.

Risk: Unclear Roles and 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, which collectively reduce the project's effectiveness.

Mitigation Plan

From the perspective of assessing your risk, you will need to ensure that before the partnership commences, you work with the government to ensure that:

- There are clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for the government and the partners in the project. Partners know the nature of the service being provided (e.g., curriculum design, school management).
- Auxiliary services that are needed for the partners to successfully execute their work are identified. For example, if the partners are expected to manage a school, it is clearly defined if they are responsible for infrastructure, for teacher pay and/or for pensions. If not, it is important to clarify the responsibilities of partners and how to manage dependencies on services for which they are not responsible. If they are providing a service such as inspections, ed-tech for learning, it is important to establish who will be providing the teachers, the equipment, the schools and the electricity for any tablets or technology used.

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- A regular and documented monitoring process is established, including details such as who will be monitoring your project and how often. As challenges emerge and roles shift, the government must ensure these are built into project documentation and changes are communicated to all stakeholders.
- You are informed of the regulatory decisions that have been taken to implement the project, whose role it is to ensure that regulations are not breached and how to manage the implementation of agreed policies.
- The financing of the project is determined up front. The government has identified and declared who will provide finance and funding and when and what the government and other funders will pay for in this partnership. Furthermore, the government will need to clearly define milestones and metrics that will trigger payments and a mechanism to course correct in case the milestones for the project are not met.

Risk: Inadequate Understanding of Operating Environment and Lack of Trust-Based Relationship

Likelihood: **MEDIUM**

Severity: **HIGH**

Risk Description

- **Cause:** Partners have a limited understanding of the government's operating environment and education system, coupled with a lack of a trust-based relationship.
- **Event:** The non-state actor may encounter challenges due to not fully grasping government processes or failing to establish a strong collaborative relationship.
- **Impact:** The project may experience ineffective execution, resulting in operational difficulties, misalignment with goals, and potential conflicts.

Mitigation Plan

If you are working with the government/ department you have not worked with before, take time to understand the government system and their ways of working:

- Help the government understand your offerings and models better and showcase technical expertise and operational capabilities through past performance, case studies, and school visits.
- Offer capacity-building support to government counterparts and other stakeholders to enhance their understanding of technical requirements and operational processes.

- Foster a collaborative and supportive relationship with government partners, offering expertise and guidance as needed to ensure successful project implementation. Ensure sufficient time is provided for relationship building in the project start-up phase
- Ensure that you have built trust with the government/departments involved and ensure that there are clear exit clauses in the contract.
- Clarify any clauses in the contract around intellectual property or other resources developed during the project at the start of the project. If you arrive at a consensus, make sure it is clearly documented.

Risk: Inadequate Project Oversight and 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, the non-state actor must ensure that:

- They collaborate with government agencies to establish robust oversight and monitoring mechanisms, including regular progress reviews, reporting requirements, and performance evaluations
- A regular schedule for monitoring is set up at the start of the project and a point person assigned
- They collaboratively implement quality assurance processes to ensure that project activities adhere to agreed-upon standards and best practices.
- Issues or challenges that arise during project implementation are proactively identified and addressed, while working closely with government partners to find solutions and mitigate risks

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 successful pilots, has not been 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

- 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.
- Explore innovative funding mechanisms, or blended finance with the government partner, to diversify funding sources and reduce dependency on external funding.
- Develop strategies for sustainability, including revenue generation, cost recovery mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the continued success of the project beyond the initial funding period. Identify how the innovation can be sustained if philanthropies and impact funders exit. 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 Title: 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 structured 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

- For a successful partnership, it is beneficial to encourage the government to establish a Project Management Unit (PMU), which can be built from existing government staff, or another team that oversees the partnership.
- The non-state actor as part of the PMU must ensure there is clarity on project objectives and team roles, such as design, procurement, regulation, monitoring, and funding.
- With your government counterparts, engage ministerial leadership at the project's inception to secure initial support and alignment (see [SLEIC](#) case study) and support in the establishment of a dedicated, structured team that would be 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.
- The time this team needs will depend on the type of partnership selected (see [Categorisation Framework](#)). Some methods of partnering are time intensive at the negotiation phase but require only monitoring and planning for sustained funding (B1); others require a partnership approach to solving problems (B2 and B3); others, (embedded unit in a ministry or regional office) (B4), may not require a PMU as they are part of the same team that handles the project on a daily basis. Here, a clear scope of work remains important but can evolve over time with collective agreement.

Other Considerations in Policy & Programme Design



Equity considerations

If you, or any of the other stakeholders to the partnership, have equity concerns, it is worth going through the questions below with the government partners 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 reduce the time being spent on the progress of children who are far behind and unlikely to pass exams? Can there be progress measures to show improved learning over time rather than the final pass rate? Is the partnership and programme design 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 partnership and programme design facilitating the non-state actor to spread innovation through the education system for the common good that benefits all?
- 4 Are all voices given equal opportunities to shape the public debate in education? As a non-state implementation partner, are you maintaining transparency and the integrity of the public education policy process so as to block vested interests?

Engaging stakeholders in collaboration with government partners, 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.

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- It is important not only to engage all actors both before and 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.
- Engagement efforts must extend beyond the initial phases, with regular communication to address emerging issues and dispel myths. As a non-state actor, you must ensure transparency in the partnership's objectives and outcomes to build trust.
- 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 the workload for some
 - They may be influenced by civil society or other actors who fear that involving non-state actors constitutes privatisation
 - **Opposition by civil society or mainstream aid actors**
 - Working with non-state actors is now widespread in a range of countries (see [literature review](#)), yielding learning benefits, alternative financing mechanisms and innovation. However, as new players in the education landscape, the role of non-state actors will need greater clarification until there is as much familiarity for their role in the system as there is with major aid donors.

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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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Stakeholder(s)	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	No Engagement
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
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Kat Patillo	EdWell
Tomas Kessl	EIDU
George Kronnisanyon Werner	Former Minister of Education, Liberia
Chirantan Shah	Gyan Shala
Antonie Chigeda	Imagine Worldwide
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Sabina Vigani	Jacobs Foundation
Peter Shikuku	Lake Region Development Program
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Promoting Equality in African Schools

Proteus Advisory

Public School Partnerships

Public School Partnerships

Rising Academy Network

Rising Academy Network

Rising Academy Network

The Education Alliance

United World Schools

United World Schools

United World Schools

Western Cape Education Department

World Bank

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